

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION
IN EKITILAND, 1915 - 1951

BY

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ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses attention on the development of British Administration in Ekitiland from 1915-1951. It discusses the British occupation of Ekitiland and analyses the efforts made by the British to consolidate their administration through the creation of a centralised political authority. It examines the administrative structures evolved and observes that the Ekiti Oba were generally used as instruments of British Administration. It is shown that under the new political dispensation, the Oba virtually became ciphers in the hands of British Administrative Officers. It is argued that some of the responsibilities assigned to the Oba eroded their traditional power, authority, status and prestige.

The thesis also examines the efforts made at creating a central Administration in Ekitiland between 1920 and 1936. The attendant problems of this political experiment are discussed. In particular, the political agitations for secession, autonomy and other political reforms by some communities such as Ado-Ekiti, Akure, Igbara-Odo, Ilawe, Osi etc between 1938 and 1946 are discussed. It argues that these agitations not only threatened political integration in Ekitiland but

also contributed largely to the failure of central Administration put in place by the Colonial Government. The re-organisation efforts made by the British to re-invigorate their tottery administration in Ekitiland between 1946 and 1951 are analysed. The new political dispensation, which was a shift from a rigid centralisation of political authority that was unpalatable to Ekiti Oba to that of loose centralised Administration which allowed them (the Oba) to retain their sovereignty, succeeded to a large extent up to 1951.

The economic dimension of British Administration in Ekitiland during the study period is also examined. While contending that British Administration was largely exploitative and resulted in a monumental disruption of the pre-colonial economic structure of the Ekiti society, it identifies certain sectors where the British Administration achieved some measure of development.

The study concludes that though the British Administration tried to consolidate itself in Ekitiland, their initial objective of rigid political centralisation that would have brought Ekiti Kingdoms under one central authority was not realised. Furthermore, it

observes that British Administration was a mixed blessing to the people of Ekitiland. The Ekiti accepted some of the changes considered beneficial to their society while rejecting those they considered detrimental to their well-being.

The thesis has complemented the existing studies on British Administration in Nigeria in general and has also revealed the abysmal failure of British attempt to create a Central Administration in a society which was hitherto apparently segmentary.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Thesis to my parents:

Mr. William Ogunmola Adeloye

and

Mrs Lydia Oluwayemi Adeloye

for their moral and financial support
towards my acquisition of a Doctorate
degree.

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I also express thanks to the Baale, Chiefs, Religious and community leaders as well as some past functionaries of the British colonial administration who supplied me information during the period of data collection. I owe inexpressible thanks to the other Informants who supplied information on this research work. In particular, my post-humous indebtedness is due to the late Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi who granted me interviews on eight different occasions on various aspects of this study.

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as well as his invaluable advice during the preparation of the thesis. However, I wish to state that any surviving imperfections in the work are entirely my responsibility.

I would like to place on record my indebtedness to Mr. J.O. Ojo, who taught me History in the Sixth Form at Ondo Boys' High School, Ondo for giving me the initial inspiration to study the subject at the University level. In the same breath, my post-humous gratitude goes to the Late Dr. A.O. Anjorin, formerly Senior Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) for kindling my interest in pursuing historical research to a Doctorate degree level.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by
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List of Abbreviations

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Abbreviations

D.O.	District Officer.
A.D.O.	Assistant District Officer.
BEN.PROF.	Benin Provincial Files.
D.C.	District Commissioner.
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society.
C.O.	Colonial Office.
C.S.O.	Chief Secretary's Office, Lagos.
J.A.H.	Journal of African History.
J.H.S.N.	Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria.
N.A.I.	National Archives, Ibadan.
O.A.U.L.	Obafemi Awolowo University Library.
ONDO PROF.	Ondo Provincial Files.
OYO PROF.	Oyo Provincial Files.
PP.	British Parliamentary Papers.
P.R.C.I.	Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute.
U.I.L.	University of Ibadan Library.
SP.	Sessional Paper
W.E.A.D.M.	Western Equatorial Diocesan Magazine.

P R E F A C E

A cursory look at the works that have emerged on British Administration in Nigeria would reveal three groups of writers on the subject. The first group comprising early writers tends to emphasise the legal framework of the Local Government system called Indirect Rule. Prominent among the group are Margery Perham in her book titled, Native Administration in Nigeria, (O.U.P., 1937), Lord M. Hailey, Native Administration in British African Territories Part III, (London, 1951), A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents, 1940-47, (London, 1963), W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria under British rule, (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965) and I.F. Nicolson, The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960: Men, Methods and Myths, (Oxford, 1969).

The second group comprises scholars who have written on some aspects of British Administration in Nigeria. A few of these writers focus attention on a global view of British rule in Nigeria while some

others devote a few chapters of their works to the subject. The remaining others write on some aspects of British Administration. The scholars in the category and their works are as follows: T.N. Tanno, The evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase, (Longman, 1972), J.F.A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891, (Longman, 1965), E. A. Ayandele, The Missionary impact on Modern Nigeria, 1875-1914, (Longman, 1966), O.A. Adewoye, The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria, 1854-1954, (Longman, 1977), O. Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom, (London, 1947), A.O. Anjorin, "The British occupation and the development of Northern Nigeria, 1846-1914," (Ph.D. London, 1965), J.C. Anene, Southern Nigeria in Transition, (Cambridge, 1966), A. Burns, History of Nigeria, (London, 1958), M. Crowder, The Story of Nigeria, (London, Faber and Faber, 1962), J.J. White, "The Development of Central Administration in Nigeria, 1914-1935," (Ph.D. Ibadan, 1970).

The third category is made up of scholars who have examined in detail how the general Ordinances promulgated by the British officials worked in particular localities.

In their respective case studies, they emphasise the response of the indigenous people to British Administration as well as its impact on their political, social and economic life. Scholars who fall into this category and their works are as follows: O. Ikime, Niger Delta Rivalry: Itsekiri-Urhobo Relations and the European Presence, 1884-1936, (London, Longman, 1969, 1977), A.E. Afigbo, The Warran^o Chiefs: Indirect Rule in South eastern Nigeria 1891-1929, (Longman, 1972), J.A. Atanda, The new Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria, 1894-1934, (London, Longman, 1973), B. A. Agiri, "Development of Local Government in Ogbomoso 1850-1950", (M.A. Thesis, Ibadan, 1966), C.O. Akomolafe, "Akoko under British rule 1900-1935", (M.Phil.Thesis, Ife, 1976), A.I. Asiwaju, Western Yorubaland under European Rule 1889-1945: A comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism, (Longman, 1976), P.A. Igbafe, Benin under British Administration: The impact of colonial rule on an African Kingdom 1897-1934, (Longman, 1979), and A.O. Olukoju, "A History of Local Government in Akokoland, 1900-1962: A Study in Political Integration and change", (M.A. Project Essay, Ibadan, 1982).

Since this study is based on the approach of the third group of writers referred to above, I would like to make some passing remarks about their works. First and foremost, all the scholars agree in their respective areas of study that the British colonial Administration introduced far-reaching changes into the political, social and economic life of the people. Secondly, they (except Asiwaju who focuses attention on the comparison of the British and the French Administrations) emphasise the importance of Native Courts and Native Treasuries as effective instruments of the British Administration. Thirdly, in most of the works, it is abundantly clear that direct taxation led to riots and disturbances in many areas in Nigeria. Also, there is a consensus among the scholars that the status of Paramount Chiefs changed considerably during the period of British rule. While Afigbo, Ikime and Igbafe emphasise mainly the excesses of Warrant Chiefs, Atanda, Agiri, Akomolafe and Olukoju stress how the authorities of paramount Chiefs were bolstered up by the British who brought other towns and villages hitherto independent under their suzerainty, a phenomenon that generated discord, ill-feelings and disaffection not only between the people of those towns and villages and the new

suzerains but also against the British Colonial authority.

However, one area of disagreement is discernible among some of these scholars. While Professor Igbafe believes that British Administration in Benin was nothing more than a 'direct' one, Ikime, Afigbo, Atanda, Agiri, Akomolafe and Asiwaju firmly believe that the British actually practised the Indirect rule system in the respective areas of their study though they express the reservation that the degree of 'Indirect rule' practised in these areas fell short of what obtained in the Northern Provinces.

From the review of literature undertaken above, it is obvious that no attempt has been made to undertake an in-depth study of British Administration in Ekiti-land. In fact, apart from Professor S.A. Akintoye's article entitled 'Obas of the Ekiti Confederacy since the advent of the British' in M. Crowder and O. Ikime (eds), West African Chiefs: Their Changing status under Colonial Rule and Independence, (University of Ife Press, Nigeria, 1970), there is no in-depth and comprehensive work on British Administration in Ekiti-land. Prof. S.A. Akintoye only undertook a study of the

'Ekiti Parapo and the Kiriji War' and his Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the University of Ibadan in 1966 has been published as Revolution and power Politics in Yorubaland 1840-1898: Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapo. (Longman, 1971). Dr. G.O.I. Olomola, in his Ph.D. Thesis, Ife, 1977, studied the 'Pre-colonial patterns of Inter-State Relations in Eastern Yorubaland.' The present study is, therefore, designed to fill the existing gap in the historiography of British Administration in Yorubaland. It is different from the earlier studies in that it seeks to explain the failure of the British attempt to establish Central Administration in a politically segmented society.

All the seventeen kingdoms in Ekitiland were autonomous of one another before the advent of British Administration. There was no centralised political umbrella under which all the Oba in Ekitiland were brought. In view of the political situation, some pertinent questions arise in analysing British Administration in Ekitiland. These are: How did Ekiti Oba perceive British rule which attempted to bring them under a centralised political authority? How did their subjects react to the various policies introduced in

Ekitiland by the British? What were the attitudes of the British political officers to the Oba in Ekitiland? Did they behave like Captain W.A. Ross in the Oyo Province? What were their concrete achievements, if any, in their areas of Jurisdiction? Having regard to the peculiar political evolution and administration of the Ekiti kingdoms, did the era of British rule forge political cohesion among the Ekiti Oba? Or did it result in disunity, acrimony and disaffection among them? Why did the Ekitiparapo Council which emerged with the advent of the British Colonial Administration fail to endure to the present day as a corporate and indivisible entity? What was responsible for the failure of the British experiment of rigid central Administration in Ekitiland?

It is crystal clear that in view of the political evolution and administration of the Ekiti Kingdoms before the advent of British administration, answers to these questions cannot be derived from Prof. Atanda's findings on the indirect rule system in Oyo Province. Consequently, the need for an independent and detailed study of British Administration in Ekitiland between 1915 and 1951 cannot be over-emphasised.

In this regard, it is of paramount importance to note that unlike in Oyo, Ijebu and Abeokuta Provinces where the Alaafin, the Awujale, and the Alake were the most dominant paramount Chiefs in their respective domains, Ekitiland had no such recognised Paramount Chief who towered over and above other Chiefs. All the sixteen crowned Oba in pre-colonial Ekitiland were independent of one another. This thesis, therefore, addresses the threat to the British Administration by the problem of existing non-centralised Administration in Ekitiland. As earlier pointed out, there has not been an in-depth study of British Administration in Ekitiland hence by prodding into the political and economic changes which occurred in the area as well as the people's reactions to the policies enunciated under the new dispensation, the thesis affords the opportunity for the understanding of the unique problems confronting the British Administration in Ekitiland. It also illustrates that it is not in all areas of Nigeria that the British policy of rigid political centralisation succeeded.

The study begins from 1915 and ends in 1951. The year 1915 was a great landmark in the history of British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in general

and Ekitiland in particular. It was in this year that the Native Courts Ordinance was applied to the Ekiti Division of Ondo Province like most parts of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria. Consequently, a "C" grade court was established in some parts of Ekiti Division notably Akure, Ado-Ekiti, Oye and Ogotun. Indeed, it was the year 1915 that the Ekiti and Ondo Divisions were merged together to form the Ondo Province. Although the Ekiti Division had been created as far back as 1913, it was placed in the newly formed Ijebu Province following the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Provinces on 1st January, 1914. At that time, the headquarters of the Ekiti Division was situated at Ado-Ekiti but following the creation of Ondo Province in July, 1915, Akure became the headquarters of the Province. Consequently, since no significant event took place from 1913 to 1915 in the Ekiti Division, I have decided to adopt the year 1915 as the starting-point of the thesis.

The year 1951 has been taken as the end of our period of study because it was that year that the Seven Provinces of Lagos (Colony), Abeokuta, Ijebu, Ibadan, Ondo, Benin and Warri (Delta Province in 1952) became the Western Region after the adoption

of the MacPherson Constitution. Also, elections into the new Western Regional House of Chiefs took place between August and December 1951. Thus from this year, Ekiti Oba began to send representatives to the Regional House of Chiefs at Ibadan. Since Ekitiland had no Paramount Oba, election of representatives was through the Electoral College System.

The foregoing historical landmarks prepared the ground for the 1952 Local Government Law which vested the control of Local Government bodies in the Regional Government which could set up Councils by instrument and appoint Local Government Advisers (formerly called District Officers). The significance of this Enabling Law will be appreciated if it is realised that it made far-reaching changes as it transferred the control of Local Government from the British to a responsive government (comprising Local Government Councillors). Against this background, the year 1951 had been seen by writers as the end of the Indirect rule system and the beginning of the 'era of Councillors.' In view of the significance of the year 1951 to Nigeria in general and Ekitiland in particular, it is, therefore, a convenient point to end the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: EKITILAND BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE BRITISH

For a proper appraisal of the development of British Administration in Ekitiland, it is pertinent to examine the historical background as well as the socio-political and economic system of the Ekiti people before the advent of the British.

Ekitiland was one of the five Administrative Divisions¹ in the defunct Ondo Province of Nigeria. It lied within Longitude 4° 45' East of the Greenwich Meridian and Latitude 7° 15' N and 8° 15' N North of the Equator.² It was bounded by the Ilerin Division to the North, the Kabba Division to the North-East, the Owo Division to the South and

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1. Other Administrative Divisions were Owo, Akeke, Okitipupa and Ondo.
 2. Harold Fulland, Modern Atlas for Africa, (Phillips, 1971), p.66.

the Ilesa Division to the West. Ekitiland covered an area of 2,359 square miles (3,774 kilometres)³. According to the 1931 census, the population of Ekitiland was 200,143 comprising 58,472 Adult Males and 70,994 Adult Females and 70,677 children.⁴ By 1963, the population of Ekitiland had risen to 1,440,926.⁵

In the present-day set-up, Ekitiland covers twelve out of the 26 Local Governments in Ondo State. These are Irepodun/Ifelodun, Emure-Ise-Orun, Ido/Osi, Ekiti-West, Moba, Ekiti East, Ado-Ekiti, Ikere, Ikole, Ekiti South-West, Ijero and Oye. Their population,

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3. Prof. G.J.A. Ojo put the area of Ekitiland at about 2,100 square miles (3,360 square kilometres). See G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Palaces: A study of the Afins in Yorubaland, (London, 1966), p.25.
 4. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, The Broad Outlines of the Past and Present organisation in the Ekiti Division, (February, 1934), p.7. It should be noted that at the time these figures were estimated, Otun District was still part of the Northern Provinces.
 5. Ondo State on the Move, (Published by the Ministry of Local Government and Information, Akure, 1977), pp.14-15.

according to the 1991 census Provisional figure, was put at 1,628,603.⁶ This represents 41.9 percent of the total population of Ondo State.

The hilly nature of Ekitiland is the most striking physical feature. A great part of the land is either studded with large granite formations or dominated by chains of rugged hills. In fact, the name "Ekiti" is derived from "Okiti" (mound) which denotes the rugged mountainous nature of the country.⁷ This hilly region forms a valuable watershed discharging streams which flow to the Creek districts. A very pronounced range of hills runs

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6. Owena News, Sunday, 26th April - Saturday, 2nd May, 1992, p.5. See also Col. Ahmed Usman Military Administrator, Ondo State: 365 Days of Dynamism, Simplicity and Firmness, (Published by the Ministry of Information, Youth, Sports and Culture, Akure, 1995), p.8.
 7. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti from the beginning to 1939), p. 5., Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the beginning of the British Protectorate, (Lagos, C.S.S. Bookshops, 1921), pp.22-23 and G.J.A. Oje, Yoruba Culture, (London and Ife University Press, 1966), p.208.

through the Western and Southern parts of Ekiti with lofty hills in Efon-Alaaye, Okemesi, Ogotun, Ijare, Ikere and Ado-Ekiti, all ranging from 440 to 670 metres above the sea level.⁸ Another range of hills runs northwards from Ijero and Eastwards through Usi, Ifaki and Ikole to Isinbode.⁹ The hill tops and rugged environments served as places of refuge during the period of the 19th Century wars. Ekitiland also lies within the thick deciduous forest which is fairly rich in mohogany and iroko trees in its southern part.¹⁰ In places like Akure, Ikere-Ekiti and Ado-Ekiti, the most notable features are steep-sided dome-shaped inselbergs rising abruptly from

8. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29734, Intelligence Report on Ado District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, Vol.1, pp.12-13 N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29762, Intelligence Report on Ogotun District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, (1934), pp.5&6 and W.H. Clarke Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland 1854-1858, (ed) J.A. Atanda (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1972), pp.144-145.

9. Ibid. See also G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.209.

10. G.J.A. Ojo, Ibid., p.115.

the surrounding country and displaying bare rock faces.¹¹

The people of Ekitiland are monolingual. They speak mutually intelligible dialects with tonal differences of the Yoruba language which belongs to the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family. These mutually intelligible dialects made Rev. H. Dallimore, who had earlier worked for a number of years in Oyo before his long missionary career in Ekitiland, to comment in 1930 that "there are numerous words still in use in Ekitiland which do not appear to have connection with Yoruba".¹² Also, Fadipe, in his classification of Yoruba dialects, has grouped the people of Ekitiland with the Ife and Ijesa people as people of Eastern Yorubaland who speak similar dialects as distinct from Oyo people in the West.¹³

11. S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893, (Longman, 1971), p.1.

12. Rev. H. Dallimore, 'The Religious beliefs of the Ekiti people' in Western Equatorial Africa; Church magazines representing the Dioceses of Lagos and the Niger, March 1930, p.60.

13. N.A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba, (eds) F.O. Okediji and C.O. Okediji, (Ibadan University Press, 1970), p.37.

Similarly, Adetugbo has classified the people of Ekitiland with the Ife and Ijesa people who speak the Central Yoruba dialect as distinct from the north-western dialect spoken in Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ibadan and the northern part of the Egba territory.¹⁴

The Origin of the people of Ekitiland

The aborigines of Ekitiland came from different parts of Yorubaland in search of land for farming and hunting. They had occupied and lived in their present places of abode establishing several mini-states before the Sixteenth century when the Oduduwa group came from Ile-Ife and imposed its rule on them. It seems obvious that there already existed well developed political systems in Ekitiland before the coming of the immigrant settlers called the Oduduwa group. For instance, Ourokutu and his brother

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14. A. Adetugbo, "The Yoruba Language in Western Nigeria: Its major dialect areas" in S.O. Biobaku (ed.), Sources of Yoruba History, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973), pp.183-185 and 192.

Omoloju, who were the children of Yangede, the Olu of Epe, a town about fourteen kilometres from Ondo, had evolved a centralised political system in Akure before Asodeboyede, the leader of the immigrants from Ile-Ife, supplanted him as the leader of the community after a six-month struggle for political supremacy.¹⁵ Similarly, according to tradition, the first Ewi of Ado-Ekiti referred to as Awamaro, is said to have found, on arrival at the present-day Ado-Ekiti, a flourishing kingdom called Ilesun. The Kingdom is said to be a large polity incorporating the villages of Isinla, Isao, Ulero, Ulegemo, Aso, Ulamoji, Agbaun (near Igbimo), Ikere and Ifaki.¹⁶

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15. T.S. Adeloye, The Origin and Development of the monarchy in Akure from the earliest times to 1897, (M.A. Thesis, Ife, 1981), pp.5-6. See also Chief J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati Agbegbe re, (Akure, Duduyemi Commercial Press, n.d.), p.15.
 16. A.O. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, (Akure, Aduralere Printing Works, 1952), p.8 and I. Olomola, A thousand years of Ado History and Culture, (Ado-Ekiti, Omolayo Standard Press and Bookshops Company Nigeria Limited, 1984), pp.3-4.

The Ilesun people are said to have developed a centralised political system headed by the Elesun before the arrival of the Ewi who, with the assistance of the Odolofin, one of the Chiefs of the Elesun, subjugated the latter after an intense struggle for political mastery between the two of them.¹⁷

After beheading the Elesun, according to tradition, Awamaro who could no longer see due to the darkness which had enveloped his own quarter in the town, carried the head of the Elesun and shouted, "Emi eru Elesun ni e"¹⁸ (It is the slave of the Elesun that is coming). Thereafter, he buried the severed head of the Elesun at a spot where re-enactment ceremonies of the Ogun Ilesun (the battle of

17. A. O. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.11 and I. Olomola, op. cit., p.5. Dr. G.O.I. Olomola has dated this episode to about 1310 A.D.

18. A. O. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.11.

Ilesun) between the Ewi and the Elesun are still performed at the old site of Ilesun whenever a new Ewi is to be installed in Ado-Ekiti today.¹⁹

Awamaro thus laid the foundation of a new kingdom. He united the people - the rump of Ulesun and his followers at Oke-Ibon²⁰ and became their ruler.

Awamaro then named the settlement 'Ado'²¹ (Here we encamp). Also, oral traditions claim that the first Alara of Aramoko, the first Ajere of Ijero as well as the first Elekole of Ikole found some older settlers

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19. Ibid., p.12.
See also H.U. Beier and L.Levi, 'Before Oduduwa' in ODU, Journal of Yoruba and related Studies, No.3, n.d., p.29.
20. Its present location is opposite St. Paul's C. A. C. Church, Odo-Ijigbo Street.
21. Interview. Msgr A.O. Oguntuyi, on 4th July, 1986. See also I. Olomola, op. cit., p.5.

at Aramoko,²² Apa²³ and Oke-Isole (Asin)²⁴ respectively on their arrival at those places. Many of the rulers of these communities wore royal and chiefly regalia and performed religious and political functions before the advent of the immigrants.²⁵

Moreover, evidence in oral traditions about ancient communities in parts of Ekitiland has been corroborated by the discovery of relics of stone age habitation at Iwo Eleru, 40 kilometres north of Akure.

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22. (NAI), H.F. Mashall, Intelligence Report on Ara District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, (1932), p.4.
 23. F. Alufa, Itan Kukurú nipa Ijero ati Orile-ede Ijero-Ekiti. (Ado-Ekiti, Ileri Printing Service, 1953), p.20 and H.U. Beier and L. Levi (eds), 'Before Oduduwa' op. cit., p.29.
 24. Information collected from Chief J.O. Filani, 82, the Rewa of Ikole on 2nd April, 1986.
 25. See (N.A.I), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., p.22 and G.O.I. Olomola, Pre-Colonial patterns of Inter-state Relations in Eastern Yorubaland, (Ph.D. Thesis, Ife, 1977), p.37.

This pre-historic relic has been dated to 9,200 B.C.²⁶ Also, the remains of human skeleton found in this cave has been described as that of the oldest Homo sapiens in West Africa and the oldest Nigerian yet discovered"²⁷ In fact, the age of the human skeleton is dated to 10,000 years.²⁸ From the foregoing, it is apparent that human habitation at Iwo Eleru predated that of Ile-Ife. In fact, excavation carried out at the site of Orun Oba Ado at Ile-Ife produced radio carbon dates indicating occupation only as from the Sixth century B.C.²⁹

26. Thurstan Shaw, 'Radio Carbon dating in Nigeria' in J.H.S.N., Vol.IV, No.3, December, 1968, pp.458-9.

27. See D.G.H. Daniels, 'The Middle and Late Stone Age' in Thurstan Shaw (ed), Lectures on Nigerian History and Archaeology, Ibadan University Press, 1969), p.27 and Thurstan Shaw, 'The prehistory of West Africa' in History of West Africa, Vol. One, (eds) J.F. Ade Ajayi and M. Crowder, (Longman, 1976), p.53.

28. M. Crowder, West Africa: An Introduction to its History, (Longman, 1977), p.10.

29. Ibid.

Furthermore, Oba,³⁰ a town of about five kilometres from Akure, appears to have a long history of antiquity. The origin of the early inhabitants is still, to a large extent, shrouded in obscurity. However, according to Oba tradition, the aborigines of the land did not migrate from anywhere but found themselves where they were. It is said that the Oloba's tradition of origin is similar to that of the Ife mythology which claims that Oduduwa descended from heaven with a chain. Finding the 'whole world' covered with water, the Oloba poured some quantity of earth which he brought from heaven on the water and this led to the emergence of land³¹ hence the claim 'Oloba lo nile' (Oloba is the owner of land).³²

30. The name of this town was changed to Oba-Ile in 1975 to differentiate it from other towns like Oba-Akoko, Oba near Onitsha in Anambra State, etc.

31. See H. U. Beier, 'Before Oduduwa', op. cit., p.30.

32. Information collected from Chief Jacob Alade-rotoun, (77), at Oba-Ile on 1st December, 1986.

Consequently, the people of Oba do not claim descent from Ile-Ife. They worship no god or goddess except 'the earth' which is believed to have been created by the Oloba. In fact, H. U. Beier has suggested that the people were not only autochthonous to the place but also that the 'conquering Ifes' must have adopted and transferred the myth of the origin of the Oloba to Oduduwa, their ancestor, to legitimise their authority.³³ Besides, recent historical studies have shown convincingly that Oba is an old settlement; it is as old, if not older than Ife.³⁴

From the foregoing, it is apparent that Ekitiland had been inhabited for a very long time. Most of the oral traditions of the people refer to some ancient inhabitants of unknown antiquity who were either

33. H. U. Beier, loc. cit., p.30.

34. S. A. Akintoye, 'The North-Eastern Yoruba District and the Benin Kingdom' in J.H.S.N., Vol.IV, No.4, June 1969, p.544 and T.S. Adedoye, The Origin and Development of the Monarchy in Akure, op. cit., p.76.

subjugated or absorbed by the immigrant settlers from Ile-Ife who later established their political authority over them. Rev. H. Dallimore has inferred from these traditions that the Ekiti people "are remnants of the tribes which have occupied South-Western Nigeria probably for a thousand years."³⁵ Biobaku seems to have corroborated the antiquity of the early inhabitants of Ekitiland by arguing that the migrants to the place met on arrival 'some thinly spread predecessors'.³⁶

It is plausible to argue that the migration into Ekitiland from Ile-Ife probably started with the dispersal of princes³⁷ by the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century.³⁸ According to

35. H. Dallimore, op. cit., p.60.

36. See S. O. Biobaku, The Origin of the Yoruba, (Humanities Monography series, University of Lagos, 1971), p.21, Appendix II.

37. Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yoruba, op. cit., p. 22.

38. I. A. Akinjogbin and E. A. Ayandele, 'Yorubaland up to 1800' in O. Ikime (ed.), Groundwork of Nigerian History, (Ibadan, 1980), p.125.

Ife tradition, the children of Oduduwa were given crowns by him and left Ile-Ife with a common consent, after a meeting at a place still called "Ita Ijero" (the place of consultation) in Ile-Ife, to found new kingdoms in Yorubaland.³⁹ Some of them migrated to Ekitiland subjugated the pre-existing political system there and established their own dynasties.

39. Ibid., p.124. Various other reasons have been given for this dispersal. For details see E. A. kenyo, The Origin of the Progenitor of the Yoruba race, (The Yoruba Historical Research Company, 1950), pp.16-19; W. Bascom, The Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria, (Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, inc 1969), p.11; N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.38, I.A. Akinjogbin, 'The Expansion of Oyo and the rise of Dahomey 1600-1800' in J.F. Abo Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds), History of West Africa op. cit., p. 376-7, J.A. Atanda, An Introduction to Yoruba History, (Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1980), p.9, M. Crowder, West Africa, opp cit., p.38; I.A. Akinjogbin, 'Ife, the Home of a New University', Nigeria Magazine, 92, March 1967, p.43; Oba Adesoji Aderemi II, the Ooni of Ife, "Notes on the city of Ife", Nigeria Magazine, No.12, 1937, p.4., B. Idowu, Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief, (Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1962), p.23; S. O. Ojo, the Bada of Shaki, The Origin of the Yoruba: their tribes, language and Native laws and Customs, (Ibadan, Abiodun Printing Works, 1952), p.18.

The end-result of these conquests was the emergence of the sixteen traditional crowned heads of Ekitiland who were said to have brought their beaded crowns from Ile-Ife. Various views have been expressed on the exact number of the kingdoms in Ekitiland in the pre-colonial era. Rev. S. Johnson mentioned only sixteen kingdoms namely, Otun, Ijero, Ado, Ikole, Ara, Efon, Imesi, Akure, Ogotun, Ido, Aiyede, Oyo, Omuo, Ire, Ise and Itaji.⁴⁰ However, Prof. S.A. Akintoye and Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi have put the number at seventeen. They are Otun, Ikole, Ado, Akure, Oye, Ijero, Ido, Ikere, Ise, Emure, Efon, Okemesi (traditionally Imesi-Igbodo), Ara, Isan, Itaji, Obo and Ogotun.⁴¹ Prof. Akintoye went further to assert that the

40. Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.321.

41. S. A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, op. cit., p.6 and A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti from the beginning to 1939, op. cit., p.49.

eighteenth kingdom, Aiyede, emerged in the middle of the 19th century.⁴² Johnson differs from Akintoye and Oguntuyi by including Aiyede, Omue and Ire in the list while excluding Ikere, Emure, Obo and Isan from it. Also, Prof. G.J.A. Ojo⁴³ has put forward the view that the number of kingdoms in Ekitiland was seventeen though he did not name them. In the same vein, Chief D. Atolagbe, the traditional historian of Mobaland, has posited that there were seventeen crowned Oba in Ekitiland coterminous with the seventeen kingdoms. He argues that the Oore of Otun was their head.⁴⁴

42. S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

43. G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Palaces, (London, 1966), p.25.

44. See D. Atolagbe, Itan Oore, Otun ati Moba, (Ibadan, Olanrewaju General Printers, 1981, Reprint), p.11. Evidence would be provided in Chapter Four to controvert Chief Atolagbe's claim that the Oore was the head of the Ekiti Oba.

It may seem problematic trying to establish the exact number of the original kingdoms in Ekitiland. However, having regard to the age as well as the pre-colonial historical significance of the kingdoms enumerated by Akintoye and Oguntuyi, their contention that there were originally 17 kingdoms in Ekitiland could be acceptable. Aiyede, Omuo and Ire which Oguntuyi included in his classification are not known to be among the early kingdoms in Ekitiland. In the same breath, Oguntuyi's non-inclusion of Ikere, Emure, Obo and Isan in his list of early kingdoms would appear not to have been based on any historical evidence. Besides, Prof. Afolabi Ojo seems to have corroborated Prof. Akintoye and Msgr Oguntuyi's claim that there were 17 kingdoms in Ekitiland.

Although all the Oba of the 17 Ekiti kingdoms claim to have brought their beaded crowns from Ile-Ife, historical evidence at our disposal shows that only a few of them actually derived their

beaded crowns from the place. First, there is no consensus of opinion as to the number of Oduduwa's children who were given beaded crowns in Ile-Ife. While one school of thought⁴⁵ claims that only the seven grandchildren of Oduduwa were given beaded crowns and despatched to found kingdoms of their own, another⁴⁶ contends that the number of princes

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45. It is suggested by this School of Thought that Oduduwa gave birth to only one son called Okanbi who in turn gave birth to seven children. See D.O. Fagunwa and L.J. Lewis, Taiwo ati Kehinde Iwe Kerin, (Ibadan, O.U.P., 1969), p.2. However, Rev. S. Johnson and Mr. E.A. Atilade contended that Oduduwa gave birth to seven children (two daughters, the mother of the Olowu, the mother of the Alaketu and five sons namely the Oba of Benin, the Orangun of Ila, the Onisabe of Sabe, the Olupepe of Popo and Oranmiyan, founder of Oyo). See Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., pp.7-8 and E. A. Atilade, Akoka Yoruba Apa Karun, (Lagos, Amalgamated Press of Nigeria, n.d.), pp.59-60. The list does not include any of the Oba in the 17 Ekiti Kingdoms.
46. They are enumerated as the Ooni of Ife, Alaafin of Oyo, Alake of Abeokuta, Awujale of Ijebu-Ode, Ajere of Ijere, Alara of Aramoko, Osemawe of Ondo, Orangun of Ila, Oba of Benin, Olowu of Owu, Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Elekole of Ikole, Oore of Otun, Alaketu of Ketu, Onisabe of Sabe and Alaafin of Oyo. See The Daily Sketch of September 3, 1975, p.6.

given beaded crowns was sixteen. What is more, another school of thought argues that the number of Princes who derived their beaded crowns from Ile-Ife was twenty-one.⁴⁷

47. When the Ooni, Oba Adelekan Olubuse, was invited to Lagos by the Colonial Government to settle the question of whether, or not, the Elepe of Epe near Sagamu had the right to wear a beaded crown, Ooni Olubuse listed those who derived their crowns directly from Ile-Ife as follows: The Alake of Abeokuta, the Olowu of Owu, the Aqura of Gbagura, the Oloke of Oko, the Alaketu of Ketu, the Alaafin of Oyo, the Akariqbo of Ijebu-Remo, the Awujale of Ijebu-Ode, the Osemawe of Ondo, the Olowo of Owo, the Oba of Ado (Benin), the Owa of Ijesa, the Orangun of Ila, the Olosi of Osi, the Oore of Otun, the Olojude of Ido, the Ajere of Ijero, the Alara of Ara, the Elekole of Ikole, the Alaaye of Efon and the Ewi of Ado. See W. Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, (New York, Reinhart and Winston Inc., 1969), p.11. See also D. Atolagbe, Itan Oore, Otun ati Moba, *op. cit.*, pp.15-16. Atolagbe claims that the Oore came to the earth as an Oba with a crown and ileke (beads) on his neck and arms. He seems to counter the notion that the Oore derived his crown from Ile-Ife, D. Atolagbe, *Ibid.*, p.2. Still on the enumeration of the Oba who derived their beaded crowns from Ile-Ife, the Ooni Adelekan Olubuse on 24th February, 1903, listed the following Oba and Oloja: Ooni of Ife, Olowu of Owu, Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Ado (Benin), Oore of Otun, Orangun of Ila, Awujale of Ijebu-Ode, Ajere of Ijero, Olojude of Ido, Alara of Aramoko, Elekole of Ikole, Owa of Ilesa, Ewi of Ado, Oloye of Oye, Alake of Abeokuta, Alaaye of Efon, Ologotun of Ogetun, Akariqbo of Sagamu, Oloyi of Ife

From the last three lists enumerated above, it would be observed that only five or eight of the Oba of the 17 Ekiti kingdoms are mentioned. However, majority of the Oba in Ekitiland still claim that their beaded crowns are derived from Ile-Ife. In fact, it has been difficult for historians to distinguish between traditions connected with the origins of the various Ekiti kingdoms and the traditions of the origins of their kingship. For example, according to tradition, Ifaki was initially made up of four villages of Iwore, Ilere, Ilogbe and Egun which came from Ile-Ife. The four villages later came together as a

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(Oyi Ife-Ijebu), Aqura (Abeokuta), Oqoqa of Ikere, Osemawe of Ondo, Oshile (Abeokuta), Elemure of Emure, Aringbajo of Igbajo, Gbajoqun of Ajase, Oba Dada (Republic of Benin), Onibara of Ibara, Owa of Igbara-Odo, Ido (Ido Osun), Oniseri of Iseri, Oloja-Oke of Imesi I, Oloja-Oke of Imesi II, Ologere of Ogere, Olore (Obagun), Elepe of Epe (near Sagamu), Owalobo of Obo, Onilawe of Ilawe, Onipekia of Ipokia, Onitede (Tede), Olohan of Olan Ara (Erijiyan), Onire (Ire ti Oyo), Oloton (Oton Koto), Alapa (Agbonda), Oloba of Oba (near Akure) Oniro (Iro) Olota of Ota and Ontori (Abeokuta See N.A.I. Iba Enclosure II in Oyo Prof. 1. 1372 Yoruba crowns: Right and Privileges to wear by certain Chiefs.

result of inter-tribal wars in order to present a united front against external aggression.⁴⁸ The people of Ifaki claimed that the Olufaki derived his beaded crown from Ile-Ife.⁴⁹ Yet the Olufaki is not mentioned as one of the Oba who derived their beaded crowns from Ile-Ife.⁵⁰ Similarly, the Ilawe tradition claims that the town was founded by Oniwe Oriade, a grandson of Obalufon, one of the Oonis of Ife.⁵¹ The Oniwe is also said to have brought a beaded crown from Ile-Ife. This claim has not been corroborated by any past or contemporary scholar on Yoruba history. In the same breath, the traditions of origin of the people

48. Interview, Oba Agbaje Aladegbami, the Olufaki of Ifaki, aged 62, on 5th January, 1988. See also N.A. Ojo, Iwe Itan Ifaki, (Ifaki, Ominira Printing Press, 1959), p.4.

49. Ibid.

50. See the lists earlier enumerated.

51. Information received from Mr. O. Ajayi, aged 82, on 6th January, 1988.

of Orin-Ekiti claims that Apelua, their ancestor, was the son of the Ooni of Ife. He is said to be a hunter who settled near River Ero. Because the place was fertile, he called it Ile-Irin which was later changed to Orin.⁵² It is also claimed that Apelua brought a beaded crown from Ile-Ife.⁵³ This claim, like those of Ifaki and Ilawe, has not been substantiated by any historical work on Yoruba history.

The people of Ikole-Ekiti are said to have migrated from Ile-Ife. According to this tradition, Akinsale, who was later nicknamed Alakole, was the founder of Ikole. He is said to be one of the grandsons of Oduduwa given 250 gods before leaving Ile-Ife. This tradition has it that when he was apparently not satisfied he was nicknamed 'Alakole' (Literally meaning a man that would not be satisfied). This was later contracted to 'Elekole', the present title of the Oba of Ikole-Ekiti.⁵⁴

52. Interview, Mr. E.O. Falodun, aged 83, on 27th January, 1988.

53. Interview, Mr. E.O. Falodun on 27th January, 1988.

54. Interview, Oba-Adetunla Adeleye II, the Elekole of Ikole-Ekiti, on 1st May, 1988.

crowns, was the first Onitaji of Itaji. Agbagbede Edure is said to have settled at Ipole near Efon-Alaaye where he died. On his death, his son, Owasun, left Ipole to found Itaji.⁵⁶ Also, the people of Efon-Alaaye are said to have migrated from Ile-Ife. The migrants are said to have been led by Ijemegan, one of the two sons of Oduduwa given some Okro seeds to plant on their farms. The first, who is said to have reported to Oduduwa that his seeds had not germinated, was given the title 'Alara' while the second, Ijemegan whose seeds had taken root was given the title "Alaiye" (literally meaning fruitful life). He is said to have left Ile-Ife later to found Efon-Alaaye.⁵⁷ The town itself is said to have been christened "Efon" by the the Edo people (Bini) who passed through the area (long after its establishment) due to the numerous buffaloes that were present there.⁵⁸

56. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, EKITI DIV 1/1/223, Intelligence Report on Itaji District for Ekiti Division, 1934, paras. 15-16.

57. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, CS026/30/69, Intelligence Report on Efon District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, para. 28.

58. Ibid., para.30.

Similarly, the people of Okemesi claim to have migrated from Ile-Ife.⁵⁹ Also, the people of Ogotun-Ekiti and Ido-Ekiti claim descent from Ile-Ife. The Ologotun is reputed to be a descendant of one of the sons of an Ooni of Ife said to have been so loved by his grandfather who named him "Omo Owo Otun" (Child of my right hand) and gave him "Ogbolu", one of the gods as its custodian.⁶⁰ The first Olojudo called Obakuta is said to have arrived at the site of "Ido" (place to lodge or rest) earlier founded by Odofin Ogboye and Emila, a warrior who came from Ile-Ife.⁶¹ Oye, Ire and Ikere-Ekiti have similar traditions of origin. It is claimed that the ancestor of the Oye and Ire left Ile-Ife at the same time. While the Oye people first settled at Odo Ora before moving to the present site, Ogunlire, who led the Ire people

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59. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, EKITI DIV.1/1/252, Intelligence Report on Okemesi District, para.4.
60. (N.A.I.), CS026/29762, Intelligence Report on Ogotun District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, para.26.
61. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper and A.C.C. Swayne, CS026/31015, Intelligence Report on Ido District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, para.13.

had a stop-over at Iremogun before moving to the present site of Ire. Both the Oloye and the Onire are said to have brought their beaded crowns from Ile-Ife.⁶² Similarly, Oloje, who came from the Obaloran compound of the Ilodi quarter in Ile-Ife, is said to be the founder of Ikere-Ekiti. He is said to be a farmer who appreciated the hilly site of the present Odo-Oja quarter of Ikere-Ekiti and settled there. Oloje later worshipped Olosunta, the inselberg located in the place and thereafter named himself the Olukere.⁶³ It should be noted that this tradition does not claim that the Olukere brought a crown from Ile-Ife.

62. (N.A.I.), A.C.C. Swayne CS026/31318, Intelligence Report on the Oye District in the Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, paras 16, 17 and 20

63. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir CSO 26/29799, Intelligence Report on Ikere District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province 1934, para.4. Interview, Oba John Adebusuyi, (80), the Olukere of Ikere-Ekiti, on 5th March, 1988.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that most of the towns in Ekitiland trace their descent as well as the origin of their beaded crowns to Ile-Ife. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. There is no doubt that Ile-Ife occupies a significant place in the traditions of the Yoruba. The town appears to be the earliest of Yoruba kingdoms to attain a very high level of organisation and artistic excellence. In fact, the Yoruba believe that the "centre" of this world was at Ile-Ife which was revered as the place where all mortals came and to which they returned after death.⁶⁴ As a result, virtually all the towns in Yorubaland developed traditions tracing their origin and those of their dynasties to Ile-Ife.⁶⁵ This is

64. See A.I. Mabogunje and J. Omer-Cooper, Owu in Yoruba History, op. cit., p.71; D. Forde, The Yoruba-speaking peoples of South-Western Nigeria, (International African Institute, London, 1962), Reprint, p.4 and J.F. Ade Ajayi and R.S. Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century, Second Edition, (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1971), p.1.

65. T. Euba (Miss), 'The Ooni of Ife's Are Crown and the concept of Divine Head' in Nigeria Magazine, Vol.53, No.1, January - March, 1985, p.1.

68. G.O. Olowu, Pre-colonial patterns of Inter-State Relations in Eastern Yorubaland, op. cit., p.81.

also strengthened by their belief in a common descent from Oduduwa.⁶⁶ They also maintain some special relations for having come from the same Ebi (Family), the Ooni of Ife being regarded as Olori ebi (head of the lineage). This relationship is still maintained till the present day.⁶⁷ Also, Ile-Ife occupies a significant position in the religious tradition of the Yoruba. It is claimed that, in the undated past, all the Oba of the principal Yoruba kingdoms sent envoys annually to Ile-Ife to perform a kind of re-dedication ritual at the shrine standing on Oduduwa's grave.⁶⁸

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66. See Oba Adesoji Aderemi II, Ooni of Ife, memorandum to the D.O. Ife, 9 October, 1931 in (N.A.I.), Yoruba crowns: Rights and Privileges to wear by certain chiefs, Oyo Prof.2/3, 1372, p.3; P.C.Lloyd, 'Sacred kinship and government among the Yoruba, Africa, XXX, July, 1960, p.223 and I.A. Akinjogbin, "The concept of origin in Yoruba History, the Ife Example", A seminar paper delivered at the University of Ife on 19th March, 1980, pp.70-71.
67. See I.A. Akinjogbin, "The Ebi System Reconsidered", A seminar paper presented at the University of Ife, on 10th January, 1979, pp.17-18 and 24, I.A. Akinjogbin, Dahomey and its Neighbours, 1708-1818, (Oxford, 1967), pp.15-16, A. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., p.119 and J.C. Olubobokun, Itan Iyin, op. cit., p.5.
68. G.O.I. Olomola, Pre-colonial patterns of Inter-State Relations in Eastern Yorubaland, op. cit., p.81.

It is also said that, "it was customary with them (the Oba) to visit their father, Olofin, once a year to receive his blessings, to participate in the national festivals and return with the tree called Oju Iwa Igi Ife which is by the gate⁶⁹ (of Ile-Ife). From the foregoing, it would appear that while some people were aborigines of Ekitiland, others were immigrants who came from Ile-Ife who later found new kingdoms and imposed their political authority on the autochthonous inhabitants.

Apart from the immigrants from Ile-Ife, Ekitiland was also subjected to the incursion of people from Benin as from the 17th century. During the period, there were also immigrants from Ijebu-Ode and Oyo.⁷⁰ For instance, Oba Ewuare is reputed to have installed the Ogoga as the ruler of Ikere-Ekiti after the latter had supplanted the Olukere.⁷¹ According to this

69. J.O. George, Historical Notes on the Yoruba country and its tribes, (Baden, E. Kanfmann, 1895), pp.25-26.

70. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.3.

71. Ibid., pp.17-18 and R.C.C. Law, 'Traditional History' in S.O. Biobaku (ed.), Sources of Yoruba History, op. cit., pp.34-35.

tradition, during the Ado-Ikere war (C.1444-71 A.D.) the Olukere enlisted the support of Ogoga, a very skilful Bini elephant hunter who had lived for a long time at Agamo near Ijare. Ogoga sent for Ewuare⁷² who later conquered Ado and he (Ogoga) subsequently supplanted the Olukere as ruler.⁷³ However, there is the Akure tradition of origin of Ogoga which claims that he was the son of Oba Imolumode, who, after losing a contest for the vacant stool of the Deji of Akure to his brother Oja-Iyara, left Akure angrily and settled at Agamo, a village between Igbara-Odo and Ikere, where he later became an Oba in that town (Ikere-Ekiti). After the death of Obagbeyi

72. Chief J. Egharevba dates Ewuare's reign to C.1440-73. See J. Egharevba, A short History of Benin, (Ibadan, 1968), p.73.

73. See Rev. A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., pp.17-18. The people of Are, Afao, Igbo-Omoba (Ilu-Omoba) and Agbado formerly under Ado-Ekiti were taken captives in 1815 to Ikere-Ekiti. This resulted in a great demographic change. Today, the descendants of these people occupy different quarters in Ikere-Ekiti. Interview, Oba A. Akaiyejo, the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti, 55, on 8th June, 1988. See also A. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.43.

(C.1313-1363 A.D.), the eleventh Deji of Akure, Ogoga is said to have been brought from Ikere to become the Deji of Akure. He reigned from c.1363 to 1393 A.D.⁷⁴

This second tradition on the place of origin of the Ogoga is more plausible. In the first place, oral traditions in Akure and Ikere-Ekiti corroborate the claim that Ogoga and Oja-Iyara were brothers and that the former reigned as an Oba over the two towns at different times.⁷⁵ Secondly, there is a courtyard in the palace of the Deji of Akure today called Ua Ogoga named after this Oba.⁷⁶ Thirdly, both the Deji and the Ogoga share the same cognomen of 'Oloyemekun'.

74. See T.S. Adeloye, The Origin and Development of the Monarchy in Akure from the Earliest Times to 1897, op. cit., p. 133.

75. Ibid.

76. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III, Deji of Akure, on 2nd March, 1987. See also J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati agbegbe re, op. cit., p.26 and G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Palaces: A Study of the Afins in Yorubaland, op. cit., p.103.

In fact, this is a living testimony to the fact that both Oba have the same ancestor.⁷⁷ Against this background, it seems plausible, therefore, to posit that Ogoga must have been an indigene of Akure who left the town for Agamo after losing a tussle for the stool of the Deji and later became the Oba in Ikere-Ekiti after enlisting the support of the Bini forces to crush the invading Ado army. He must have fought on the side of the Olukere during the war but later supplanted him with the assistance of the Bini forces.

Apart from Ikere-Ekiti, Akure was infiltrated by refugees from Benin in the wake of the Akure-Benin war of C.1818 A.D. The Edo community called Ado-Akure settled at Igiso, Eyinke and Oritagun quarters in Akure.⁷⁸ There were also some Oyo immigrants to Omu,

77. See S.A. Akintoye, 'The North-Eastern Yoruba District and the Benin Kingdom,' op. cit., p.540.

78. The Ado-Akure are still largely endogamous in Akure. They maintain their cultural identity by worshipping Bini traditional gods up till today. The Ado-Akure also speak both the Akure dialect and Bini (Edo) language fluently. See T.S. Adeloye, op. cit., pp.103-105 and R.S. Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba, (Suffolk, 1969), p.60.

Itapaji and Ikere-Ekiti.⁷⁹ In fact, following the fall of the Old Oyo Empire and the attendant ravages perpetrated by the Fulani armies in the regions South-east of Oyo, Ilorin and Igbomina refugees fled to Ife,⁸⁰ Ibadan, Osogbo,⁸¹ Ila, Ijesaland as well as some parts of Ekitiland notably Ido, Ijero, Ikere and Ado-Ekiti,⁸² Also, from the third decade of the

79. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.6.

80. Chief J. Olufidipe, the Obalaye of Ife, Brief Autobiography, (Ile-Ife, Fadehan Printing Works, 1969), p.51.

81. See D. Olugunna, Osogbo, The Origin and Growth and Problems, (Osogbo, Fad's Printing Works, 1959), p.27.

82. S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893, op. cit., p.10, (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District C.S.O.26/29734, Vol.1, p.34. See also G.O. Oguntomisin and Toyin Falola, 'Refugees in Yorubaland in the Nineteenth century' in Journal of the Isreal Oriental Society, Vol.21, No.2, July 1987, p.167 and Oba Alaiyeluwa Adegoriola I, Ogoga of Ikere, 'A note on the administration of Ikere before the advent of the British' in ODU, Journal of Yoruba and related studies, op. cit., p.19.

nineteenth century, refugees fled the land of the Iyagba, Owe, Abunu and Aworo from the Nupe invaders into some parts of Ekiti and Akokoland.⁸³ Thus before the imposition of the British Colonial Administration at the beginning of the 20th century, the demographic composition of Ekitiland was made up of the autochthonous inhabitants now fused with the Oduduwa group from Ile-Ife, the Bini (Edo) immigrants as well as the Oyo and Igbomina refugees who had settled in the place in the wake of the internecine wars of the nineteenth century. I would now discuss the political organisation in Ekiti kingdoms before British Administration.

Political Organisation in Ekiti Kingdoms

Like other parts of Yorubaland, the system of government in Ekitiland was monarchical. Each of the seventeen kingdoms comprised a cluster of towns and

83. See D. Forde, The Yoruba-speaking peoples of South-Western Nigeria, op. cit., p.60 and K.V. Elphinstone, Assistant Resident, Ilorin, Northern Province: Gazetteer of Ilorin Province, (London, Waterloo and Sons Ltd., 1921), pp.18-19.

villages with a central town where an Oba (king) lived. Thus, the central town was called Olu-ilu (capital town) while the subordinate town was referred to as Ereko.⁸⁴ At the village level, we had the Oloja or Baale (uncrowned ruler).

The Oba in Ekitiland, like their counterparts in other parts of Yorubaland, were regarded as omnipotent rulers. Each Oba was the Chief Executive and the fountain of honour and justice in his domain. He wielded immense powers commensurate with that of an envoy of God on earth.⁸⁵ The Oba had a right to

84. See S.A. Akintoye, 'Obas of the Ekiti Confederacy since the Advent of the British' in M. Crowder and O. Ikime (eds), West African Chiefs: Their changing status under Colonial Rule and Independence, (University of Ife Press, 1970), p.255.

85. Chief K. Balogun, 'From sacred kinship to Democratic Gerontocracy: Impact of change on Yoruba Traditional Political System' in I.A. Akinjogbin and G.O. Ekemode (eds), The Proceedings of the conference on Yoruba civilisation held at the University of Ife, Nigeria, 20th-31st July, 1976, p. 306.
See also W.D. Macrow, 'Natural Ruler - A Yoruba conception of monarchy' in Nigeria Magazine, No.47, 1955, p.244.

wear Ade (a crown with fringes) unlike an Oloja⁸⁶ or Baale who could only wear akoro(a crown without fringes). The Oba was not only regarded as an earthly king but also a "companion of the gods".⁸⁷ His personality was considered too sacred to be gazed at by strangers, hence whenever he appeared in public the royal attendants would shout "So oju re nu, o je yere ka bo jo 'ba re?"⁸⁸ (Do not gaze at him, does he look like your father or mother?). If he was greeted by anybody, he did not have to answer. He was not allowed to see either a corpse or blood. Consequently, the Olori (Oba's wives) never had their babies in the palace. In Akure, the highest oath a person could take was to swear by the head of the Deji. If a

86. This term is normally used in Ekitiland to refer to a Baale. The word "Oloja" is coined from "Baba oni ile" (literally meaning Father who is the owner of a land or territory). See N.A. Fadipep The Sociology of the Yoruba, op. cit., p.198.

87. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida, Deji of Akure, on 11th January, 1988.

88. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida.

housewife quarrelled with her husband, she could run to the palace shouting, "Deji, mo mo ya e o"⁸⁹ (Deji, please save me). If he fancied her, the Deji would take her as one of his Olori. If not, the Oba would settle the quarrel and the woman would be allowed to return to her husband after a ransom fee of ookanla (55 kobo) had been paid. Also, if two suitors quarrelled over a girl, the Oba would settle the matter by simply taking her as a wife. Adultery with or seducing an Olori was viewed as a serious offence which attracted a capital punishment or banishment from the town.⁹⁰ The Oba was so revered by the subjects that he was regarded as Uku Ekeji Orisa, Oluaiye, Olomimi, Agbogbomoja, a gbomo olibuku ori"⁹¹ (Death, Companion of the gods, Terror personified, the Supreme Judge who deals most ruthlessly with a bad citizen).

89. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida.

90. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III.

91. Part of the oriki (praise-name) of the Deji of Akure. See T.S. Adelaye, op. cit., p.56.

In each of the 17 Ekiti kingdoms, the Oba was addressed as 'Kabiyesi'.⁹² His attribute was "Oba alase ekeji orisa"⁹³ (The king, the ruler and companion of the gods). In theory, the Oba had the power of life and death over his subjects whereas, in practice, he was more or less a constitutional monarch since he was bound to consult his Igbime⁹⁴ (Council of Chiefs) at meetings on sensitive issues affecting the town. The Igbime comprised important senior lineage chiefs called Iwerefafa mefa⁹⁵ whom the

92. This term is said to be a contracted form of Klabi yin ko si (There is no question of anyone quering your authority). See J.A. Atanda, An Introduction to Yoruba History, op. cit., pp.19-20.

93. Ibid. See also ^{P.C.}Lloyd, Local Government in Yoruba towns, (D.Phil.Thesis, Oxford, 1958), pp4.

94. This type of Council is called Oyo Mesi in Oyo and Ilamuren in Ijebu. See P.C. Llyod, Yoruba Land Law, (London, O.U.P., 1962), p.39.

95. This is made up of the six most senior lare Chiefs. The number of lare Chiefs vary from town to town. In Akure, they were 21 in number while the number ranged from 18-21 in other Ekiti kingdoms.

Oba could not brush aside while taking decisions on important issues.⁹⁶

In fact, the long process involved in the installation and coronation of an Oba afforded him the opportunity of being trained in the art of government. A period of about three months normally elapsed between his selection and coronation. His selection was normally done through consultation with the Ifa oracle by the Afobajes (kingmakers). The names of all the eligible Princes would be presented by the various ruling houses to the kingmakers who would consult the Ifa oracle to select the best candidate.⁹⁷ On an appointed date, the Oba-elect would be taken to the place set aside for the consecration and coronation of

96. This was not peculiar to Ekitiland. For instance, the Alaafin of Oyo could not take important decision without reference to the Oyo Mesi. See J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and change in Western Nigeria, 1894-1934, (Longman, London, 1973), p.19 and Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.20.

97. Information received from Oba Adegboye Akaiyejo, 55, the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti, on 8th June, 1988.

Oba where certain rituals would be performed. In Ekiti and some parts of Yorubaland, the Oba-elect would be flogged.⁹⁸ The objective of this was to test his power of endurance. It was also aimed at making him experience the hardship of the poor so that in his exalted position as an Oba, he would always be mindful of the plight of the common man.⁹⁹ Thereafter, the Oba-Elect would spend about three months in confinement during which he was tutored on the history of his kingdom as well as his duties as the traditional ruler. The Oba-Elect would also be made to eat the

98. Installation ceremonies differ from one place to the other in Yorubaland. With regard to Oyo, see the process in Rev. S. Johnson, Ibid., pp.41-46, P.A. Talbot, The peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol.1, (London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1969), p.568 and for Ijebu-Ode see (N.A.I.), T.B. Bovell-Jones, Intelligence Report on Ijebu-Ode towns and villages, Ije Prof. 2, No.C.55/1 (1943).

99. See G.O. Oguntomisin, New forms of Political Organisation in Yorubaland in the Mid-nineteenth century: A comparative study of Kurunmi's Ijaye and Kosoko's Epe. (Ph.D.Thesis, Ibadan, 1979), p.9.

heart of his predecessor.¹⁰⁰

After all the traditional rites had been performed, the Oba received the sacred powers of all his predecessors and his personality became sacrosanct.¹⁰¹ From then on, the Oba began to perform his traditional duties. The objective of the induction was to ensure that the Oba-elect acquired the necessary mystic powers as well as to be tutored in the art of government so that he might not resort to the use of arbitrary power.¹⁰²

After the induction, the Oba, throughout the period of his reign, could not afford to neglect the Igbimo (Council) because it could take serious sanctions

100. Interview, Chief Kole Oluwatuyi, the Lisa of Akure, on 5th June, 1987. See also P.C. Lloyd, 'Sacred Kinship and government among the Yoruba', op. cit., p.227 as well as his article titled, 'Installing the Awujale' in Ibadan, No.12, 1961, pp.7-10.

101. G. O. Oguntomisin, op. cit., p.9.

102. Interview, Chief Kole Oluwatuyi, on 5th June, 1987.

against him for misrule or oppression.¹⁰³ The power of the Oba in Ekitiland were also checked by religious duties and taboos. The people of Ekitiland, like their counterparts in other parts of Yorubaland, believed that the general well-being of their community depended on the amount of favour bestowed on them by Heaven through the Orisas (gods) and their ancestors. In order to avert the anger of the gods which could come in form of misfortune and general crises like famine, epidemics, etc., the gods and ancestors had to

103. This is similar to the situation in Oyo whereby the Oyo Mesi could formally reject the Alaafin for ruling tyrannically by taking political and religious sanctions against him so that he would be constrained to commit suicide. Among the Alaafin so rejected in the Mid-Eighteenth century were Odarawu, Jayin, Ayibi and Ojigi. See Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.20 and R.C.C.Law, 'The constitutional troubles of Oyo in the Eighteenth century', J.A.H., XII, 1971, p.32. Similarly, among the Ijebu and Egba, the Osugbo or Oqboni could depose an offending Oba. See N.A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba, op. cit., pp.243-245; S.O. Biobaku, 'An historical sketch of Egba traditional authorities', Africa XXXII, 1, 1952, p.38; A. Pallinda-Law, Government in Abeokuta 1830-1914 with special reference to the Egba Government 1898-1914, (Ph.D., Goteborg, 1973), p.9, P.C. Lloyd, 'Government of Yorubaland: Political and social structure' in Sources of Yoruba History, op. cit., p.212 and L.J. Munoz, 'Political Representation in the Traditional Yoruba kingdoms' J.H.S.N., Vol.10, No.4, June, 1981, p.26.

be constantly propitiated by festivals and sacrifices.¹⁰⁴ It was the duty of the Oba to see that these festivals were observed and necessary sacrifices made. In addition, the Aworos (Priests), through whom these gods were consulted, often prescribed taboos that the Oba must obey. The Chiefs and the Priests sometimes colluded to use a taboo, for political reasons, to check despotism. For example, in the Old Oyo Empire, a taboo that their Oba must not/^{be} touched by an egunqun (masquerade) was used to get rid of Alaafin Jayin in the Seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵

Thus there was no room for unfettered despotism in the political system of the Yoruba in general and Ekitiland in particular. In Ekitiland, the Chiefs who comprised the Igbimo were themselves representatives of their lineage. After holding council meetings with

104. See G.O. Oguntomisin, op. cit., p.13. See also Toyin Falola and Dare Oguntomisin, The Military in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics, (Ile-Ife, 1984), p.17.

105. See J.A. Atanda, An Introduction to Yoruba History, op. cit., p.21.

the Oba, they often briefed their people usually through family or compound heads about the major issues discussed. It was through this channel that the people expressed their wishes, where necessary, to the Chiefs for onward transmission to the Igbimo and to the Oba.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the members of the Igbimo not only represented their own lineages but also the kingdom as a whole.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, in a sense, it can be argued that the government in Ekitiland was the 'peoples' government.

In Ekitiland, the more senior Chiefs were members of the Igbimo. In Ado-Ekiti, they were five in number and were called the Olori-marun.¹⁰⁸ In Ikere-Ekiti, they were three namely the Sao of Ijo Uro, the Oloqotun of Odo-Oja (after 1870) and the Sapetu of Okekere.¹⁰⁹

106. Ibid.

107. L.J. Munoz, op. cit., p.25.

108. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29734, Intelligence Report on Ado District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, (1933).

109. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29799, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, (1934), para.16.

In Efon-Alaaye, they were four namely the Obanla of Aaye, the Obaloja of Obalu, the Oisaiqan of Ejigan and the Alayo of Odemo (otherwise called Irayo).¹¹⁰

In Okemesi-Ekiti, they were seven made up of the Obanla of Odowo Obanla, the Odofin of Odowo Odofin, the Ejemo of Odowo, Ejemo of Odowo Odofin, the Aro of Ooba, the Osolo of Odo Ese, the Sajuku of Odobi and the Edumarun of Okerena.¹¹¹ In Itaji, they were nine comprising the Odofin of Idofin, the Aro of Odo-Emo, the Olu of Ijaiye, the Asalu of Idofin, the Obaleko of Atiba, the Alara of Idofin, the Elemo of Odo-Emo, the Edomorun of Atiba and the Ejigbo of Idofin.¹¹² In Akure, they were six called Iwarefa mefa namely the Olisa, the Odopetu, the Elemo, the Aro, the Ojomu and the Asae.¹¹³

110. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, CS026/30169, Intelligence Report on Efon District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, para.19.

111. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, EKITI DIV.1/1/252, Intelligence Report on Okemesi District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, para.14

112. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, EKITI DIV.1/1/223, Intelligence Report on Itaji District of Ekiti Division, para.34.

113. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/4/30014, Intelligence Report on Akure District of Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, (1934), p.3. See also T.S. Adeloje, op. cit., p.136.

The Oba and his Igbimo made laws for the town as a whole and took decisions on other matters affecting the welfare of the people. The implementation of these decisions were entirely his responsibility. Evidently, government was not the concern of the Oba and his Chiefs alone. Each town was divided into wards or quarters called Oqbon or Aduqbo. Each Oqbon or Aduqbo was headed by the Olori Oqbon or Olori Aduqbo (Quarter Chiefs). An Oqbon or Aduqbo comprised a number of Agbo-Ile (compounds), Each Agbo-Ile (compound) was headed by Baale¹¹⁴ (compound head). The Baale, usually the eldest man in the family, generally saw to the welfare of members of his compound. He was responsible for the settlement of disputes among the members of his family. Other duties of the Baale included the mobilisation of the adult members of his compound for communal work,

114. This is an informal title borne usually by the most senior member of the family unlike the title of Ijoye which required the approval of the Oba. See J.A. Atanda, 'Government in Yorubaland in the pre-colonial period', op. cit., p.6.

taking care of the family shrine and distribution of land among family members.¹¹⁵

The Olori Aduqbo (Quarter Chief) was usually appointed from the senior family of the quarter. He was responsible for the maintenance of discipline within the Quarter. Decisions taken by the Iqbimo were usually passed through the Quarter Chiefs to the people in different compounds. The people in turn also expressed their views and wishes through their compound heads to the Quarter Chiefs for onward transmission to the Iqbimo, (Council). Also, some young men formed Egbe (age-grades) usually expressed their views through their respective age-grades in the Iqbimo (Council).¹¹⁶

In order to facilitate the administration of justice, there existed three types of courts namely

115. Interview, Mr. A. Oladapo, (60), at Emure-Ekiti on 2nd January, 1986. This was also corroborated by Chief Michael Omotoso, 82, at Ogotun-Ekiti on 14th March, 1986.

116. Interview, Mr. A. Oladapo and Chief M. Omotoso, on 2nd January and 14th March, 1986 respectively.

ile ejo ti Baale (Court of the compound head),
ile ejo ti Ijoye (Court of the Quarter Chief) and
ile ejo ti Oba (the court of the Oba). Usually, the
administration of justice began in the compound.
The compound head was responsible for settling dis-
putes among the members of his compound.¹¹⁷ The
Baale's court charged no fees neither did it impose
fines. In fact, the main concern of the court was to
settle disputes by arbitration.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the
Baale often assisted in apprehending any offending
members of the family for trial at higher courts.
Appeal could be made from the Baale's court to the
court of the Quarter or Ward Chief.

The second court which was that of the Quarter or
Ward Chief tried all civil cases involving persons
belonging to different compounds within his Quarter
or Ward. As a formal court, it imposed punishments

117. D. Forde, op. cit., p.23.

118. P. Brown, 'Patterns of Authority in West Africa'
in Africa, XXI, 4, 1951, p.266.

mostly fines on guilty persons. Besides, the court conducted preliminary investigation into criminal cases which could only be tried at the highest court, that is, the court of the Oba where civil and criminal cases were finally settled.¹¹⁹

Among the civil matters brought to the Oba's court were disputes over debt, matrimony, minor assault and land. Criminal matters or cases brought to the Oba for settlement ranged from rape, adultery, arson, stealing, witchcraft, murder or manslaughter.¹²⁰ Rape carried a fine of between Oke meji (₦1.00) and Oke meji abo (₦1.50k) at Ikere.¹²¹

Larcency (including yam stealing) was punishable by a forfeiture of pig while persons caught engaging

119. See J.A. Atanda, An Introduction to Yoruba History, op. cit., pp.22-23.

120. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para.68. See also (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Itaji District, op. cit., p.50.

121. Interview, Oba A. Akaiyejo on 8th June, 1988. See also T. S. Adeloye, op. cit., p.57.

in Burglary were publicly flogged. Any person involved in incest was made to sacrifice a goat at the spot where the offence was committed. Also, in case of adultery with an Olori (Oba's wife), the two parties involved were beheaded.¹²² However, adultery with another person's wife attracted a fine, a sum which varied from one town to the other. People suspected of witchcraft were subjected to trial by ordeal. In Akure for instance, the suspect would be given Obo¹²³ which was administered by the Ikomo Chiefs. It was believed that if the accused was innocent, he or she would survive the ordeal.¹²⁴ The use of this concoction for judicial inquiry was prevalent in Ekitiland. However, this system of judicial inquiry was subject to abuse. Wicked people

122. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District of Ekiti Division, op. cit., para, 122-125. T. S. Adeloje op. cit., p.58.

123. This is a concoction made from sasswood.

124. T. S. Adeloje, op. cit., p.58

seeking vengeance often levelled unfounded allegations against their enemies who were subsequently compelled to take the concoction to prove their innocence. In this regard, the concoction could be poisoned so as to eliminate the undesirable elements from the society. In Akure, it became an instrument in the hands of wicked Oba like Obarisan and Eye-aro to silence any of their deviant Chiefs. Such Chiefs were called upon by the Oba, "In Ujoye mi in a bo ya ra nu rin nu"¹²⁵ (come over my Chiefs to prove that you are not wizards). In this regard, any of them who was a wizard died after taking the concoction. Also, persons convicted of murder were publicly hanged generally in Ekitiland while kidnapping carried a penalty of losing a ear. There was no appeal against any judgement passed down by the Oba's court since it was the highest court of the land.¹²⁶ This was the extent of the power which the Oba in Ekitiland wielded over their subjects up to the period of the imposition of the British colonial rule.

125. Ibid., p.59.

126. Ibid.

To enable them carry out their multifarious duties effectively, the Oba and Chiefs in Ekitiland derived revenue from various sources. In the first place, they derived revenue from the proceeds of their farms. They had many wives, children, personal servants, and pawns who worked for them on these farms. In particular, Oba in Ekitiland had a large number of slaves under their control who were either prisoners of war or fugitives who fled from justice to seek refuge in other towns. On arrival at the town gates, such people were usually taken to the Oba who would give them accommodation and later turn them into their slaves.¹²⁷ Slaves constituted a tremendous asset to the Oba who used them as farm hands to produce crops like yams, maize, plantains and cassava primarily for the maintenance of the inmates of the palace. While the Oba could enlist the assistance of some age-grades to work on his farmland, the Chiefs often called on the members of their Quarters or Wards to render free labour on their respective farms.

127. Ibid., p.62.

Proceeds from such large farms earned the Oba and Chiefs in Ekitiland a substantial income.

Secondly, the Oba received revenue from land which he held in trust for the people. Land was communally owned and apportioned to needy individuals by the Chiefs on the order of the Oba. Consequently, whenever any allocation of land was made, the Oba received Isakole (royalties) in form of food crops such as yam, palm oil, etc. However, after the seventeenth century when cowries shells were introduced into the Yoruba country generally the isakole was paid, inter alia, in cash. ¹²⁸

Thirdly, some payments had to be made before two people who quarrelled with each other could be allowed to see the Oba for the settlement of the dispute. The amount paid varied from one town to the other in Ekitiland. Fourthly, a death-duty was paid to the Oba on the death of any rich citizen in their respective

128. N.A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba,
op. cit., p.58.

domains. Also, when an Oba died, his property as well as his wives and slaves were inherited by his successor. 129

Fifthly, the Oba received gifts from time to time from their subjects. These gifts, mostly in kind, included yam, plantains and maize. Three suggestions can be made to explain why such gifts were given to the Oba. In the first place, the gifts were given in appreciation of the maintenance ^{of} peace, stability and prosperity by the Oba. Secondly, since they were not earning any salary or remuneration, their subjects probably thought that the only way of maintaining them in the palace was by sending them gifts regularly. Thirdly, the people of Ekitiland probably sent gifts as bribes to their Oba to seek their favour on some

129. In Akure, for example, this tradition was confined to the Chiefs. The amount payable was also determined by the status of the deceased Chief. Thus, a death-duty payable on the Iwarefa mefa was higher than that of other members of the lare. Interview, Chief Kole Oluwatuyi, the Lisa of Akure, on 5th June, 1987.

personal matters or cases pending before them. This was aimed at mitigating the gravity of judgement which they (Oba) might hand out to them for the offences they might have committed.¹³⁰

Furthermore, tolls were other sources of revenue to the Oba in Ekitiland before colonial rule. Tolls were collected at all gates leading to all the towns. Tolls were levied on all valuables brought into the towns by the inhabitants as well as strangers. Such valuables included slaves, horses, cattle, etc. In most parts of Ekitiland, the Onibode (Toll collectors) were usually placed at the gates to collect tolls. In Akure for example, each of the six gates leading into the town was manned by an Olodi (Customs Officer) who ensured that appropriate tolls were paid. Before a man could become an Olodi, his ears would be severed from his head. Consequently, the Olodi were the most obstinate men in the town.¹³¹

130. Interview, Chief Kole Oluwatuyi.

131. Ibid., See also T.S. Adeloje, op. cit., p.60.

Moreover, the Oba derived revenue from the hearing fees paid by litigants who had cases in the Oba's courts. Fines were paid by culprits found guilty of certain offences. These fines and fees resulting from the administration of justice were usually shared between the Oba and the Chiefs, the former taking a lion's share.¹³² In some parts of Ekitiland particularly Akure, cash collected as revenue, for the most part, was paid into a Treasury head which could be differentiated from the private purse of the reigning Oba principally because its disposition after their demise did not lie in the hands of their next-of kins or children.¹³³ Also, the Oba in Ekitiland received gifts from their Chiefs on the occasion of major festivals as well as during harvesting period. Tributes were also paid by subordinate rulers to the Oba.¹³⁴

132. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., pp.220-221.

133. Ibid., p.222.

134. Interview, Oba Aderibigbe Agede Ogidi II, the Olowa of Igbara-Oke, on 11th January, 1987.

A substantial part of the foregoing revenue accruing to the Oba was spent in performing rituals for the welfare of their respective kingdoms.¹³⁵ Out of the funds, the Oba feasted the Chiefs regularly especially during major festivals. From the revenue accruing to them, the Oba also maintained a number of palace officials as well as entertained personal visitors. They also spent part of the revenue in dispensing largesses to friends and relatives, acquiring new wives and maintaining the royal ward-ropes.¹³⁶

On their own part, the chiefs received gifts from members of their lineages as well as strangers who put themselves under their protection. Like

135. See B. Idowu, Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief, (London, Longman, 1966), p.132.

136. N. A. Fadipe, op. cit., pp.222-223.

the Oba, the Chiefs derived revenue from the fines imposed in their courts. They also used part of the revenue accruing to them to perform sacrifices to the gods as well as feast the members of their respective lineages during traditional festivals.¹³⁷

Apart from the Oba and Chiefs, Palace Servants also played a significant role in the administration of towns in Ekitiland before the imposition of colonial rule. The desire to have people in the palace to assist the Oba in their day-to-day administration of their respective kingdoms led to the emergence of palace servants

137. Interview, Chief Kole Oluwatuyi. See also N. A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.223.

called Omode-Owa.¹³⁸ There were many ways by which one could become an Omode-Owa in Ekitiland.

138. They were given various names in some parts of Yorubaland. In Ile-Ife, they were in two categories namely the Modewa and the Emese. While the Modewa were palace Chiefs, the Emese the male royal servants recruited from the Modewa lineages. Thus they were lower in status than the Modewa. See A. A. Adediran, A Descriptive Analysis of Ife Palace Organisation (Physical and Administrative), An original Essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the B.A. (Special Honours) History of the University of Ife, Ile-Ife in June, 1975, pp.22-26. In Oyo, these Palace Officials were in two categories namely the Iwefa (Eunuchs) and the Ilari (court messengers). The Iwefa were three in number: Ona Efa (Eunuch of the right), Osi Efa (Eunuch of the centre) and Otun Efa (Eunuch of the left). The Iwefa performed administrative, judicial and religious functions in the palace. But the Ilari, a grade lower than that of the Iwefa who could be male and female, apart from serving as body guards to the Alaafin, they also performed some rituals for the Oba as well as served as court messengers. They were the equivalent of the Emese in Ile-Ife. See B. I. Omole, Oyo Palace: An Historical Analysis of its Organisation, An original Essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the B.A. (Special Honours) History of the University of Ife, Ile-Ife in June 1976, pp.19-20, K. Balogun, Government in Old Oyo, (Ibadan, 1985), p.41, P. Morton-Williams, 'The Yoruba' Ogboni cult in Oyo', Africa, Journal of the international African Institute, (London, Oxford, 1960), p.363. In Ijebu Ode, the palace servants were called Odi recruited

Firstly, Ekiti Oba usually requested their subjects to send some of their children to the palace to help them. In most cases, some of their subjects usually heeded the call. Secondly, some male individuals were actually forcibly taken to the palace to become Omode-Owa. For instance, in the Akure kingdom, any male who climbed the Okiti omolore¹³⁹ would be instantly made an Omode-Owa.

138 continued.

from slaves as well as strangers. Apart from performing messengerial duties, the Odi performed intelligence service to the Awujale. They had to keep both their eyes and ears to the ground so as to report to the Oba anything that was likely to cause disaffection on the part of the people against the Oba or his Chiefs. See N.A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba, op. cit., p.203.

139. This is a sacred hill in front of the Oba's palace. Tradition has it that the Oba used to stand on this hill to address the Akure community. The only set of people who could climb the hill apart from the Oba was the Omo-Odo group of Omode-Owa who normally did so during the Owa-Orope festival. See details in T.S. Adelaye, op. cit., p.24.

The Omode-Owa was divided into four groups namely the Aqbadibo, the Eqbele, the Eqbedi and the Omode-Owa. The Aqbadibo, headed by the Osukute, advised the Oba on matters relating to the administration of the palace. The Oba delegated some powers to the Osukute to settle disputes between any Omode-Owa and an Olori (Oba's wife), punishing any erring Omode-Owa as well as holding brief for the Oba whenever he was out of the palace.¹⁴⁰ The Eqbedi made of leaders of the five groups of Omode-Owa namely the Omolaare, the Osukute, the Isarun, the Obagberi and the Oyeseri, served as a liaison between the Oba and the Iwarefa-mefa.¹⁴¹ The Eqbedi, headed by the Isarun, took care of the palace while the Omode-Owa group, (a group within the Omode-Owa cadre) headed by the Obagberi ran errands within and

140. Oral evidence collected from Chief Adebayo Olubi, the Osukute of Akure, on 11th December, 1987.

141. As earlier pointed out in this chapter, they were six in number who were the most senior members of the Iare group of Chiefs.

outside the palace for the Oba. The last group called the Omo-Odo was headed by the Oyeseri. The group was charged with the responsibility of running annual race round the township for three consecutive days during the Owa Oropo festival. It was the belief of the people of Akure that there would be a drastic reduction in infant mortality rate as well as an increase in the number of children born by the inhabitants of the town.¹⁴²

In Ikere, the palace servants called the Emese were headed by the Obabiri who held a minor palace title of Iyare. He was assisted by the Osopo and the Elesi.¹⁴³ In Ado-Ekiti, there were three minor palace Chiefs appointed by the Ewi from the ranks of the Omode-Owa. First, we had the Ologun-Adele who was the head of the Omode-Owa. He acted as a go-between for anybody willing to see the Ewi. Second, there

142. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III, the Deji of Akure.

143. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District of Ekiti Division, op. cit., para.118.

was the Elesi who acted as the Iko (messenger or ambassador) to the sub-towns and villages around Ado-Ekiti. We also had the Saruku who performed the role of a mediator between the Ewi and other Oba during the time of conflict.¹⁴⁴ In Otun-Ekiti, the palace servants supervised work within the palace as well as carried messages to distant towns. Apart from assisting in searching for run-away wives of the Oba, the palace servants advised the Oore on the performance of his ritual duties.¹⁴⁵

The Olori (Oba's wives) also played a significant role in the political organisation of Ekitiland before colonial rule. Every Oba in Ekitiland had a harem of wives usually called the Olori. The Olori lived in Aafin (Palace) and were normally

144. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para.146.

145. P.C. Lloyd, A comparative study of the Political institutions in some Yoruba Kingdoms, (B.Sc. Thesis, Oxford, 1952), p.159.

forbidden from wearing buba (blouse) and gele (headtie).¹⁴⁶ It was an offence against the Oba for any male citizen to touch, sit or discuss with an Olori publicly or privately. Any person who contravened this taboo was made to buy a goat for sacrifice in order to appease the gods. As earlier stated, adultery with an Olori was punishable by death.¹⁴⁷

The Olori dealt with recalcitrant women who could no longer be controlled by their husbands. If two women married to the same husband quarrelled and were brought to the palace, the Olori would put them in confinement and they would not be released until they were sober.¹⁴⁸

146. Interview, Madam Mary Adesida, (89) the Eye-Owa of the Deii's palace, on 11th January, 1988.

147. Interview, Madam Mary Adesida on 11th January, 1988.

148. Interview, Madam Mary Adesida.

Secondly, a jilted lover who had spent a large sum of money on a girl could report the case to the Oba who would order the girl to be brought to the palace. The man would 'give' the girl to the Oba as 'opiri'.¹⁴⁹ The girl would remain in the palace where the olori would give her odd jobs to do until her parents were able to refund the sum of money which the man had spent on her; otherwise the girl would have to change her mind and marry the man.¹⁵⁰

Thirdly, the Olori had a group of debt collectors called Osan.¹⁵¹ If a debtor refused to pay his debt, the creditor would go to an Olori to hire an Osan. The latter would be asked to collect the money by force. Whether the debtor was unable to pay his debt or not, he had to pay the cost of hiring the Osan who should not spend a night in the debtor's

149. This is the name given to any girl detained in the palace.

150. Interview, Madam Mary Adesida on 11th January, 1988.

151. Interview, Madam Mary Adesida on 11th January, 1988.

house without collecting the money. Therefore, the longer he spent in any debtor's house, the more he (debtor) had to pay.¹⁵²

Moreover, the Olori usually sang special ballads which recounted the achievements and failures of the present and past Oba in Ekitiland. In this way, the Olori had the opportunity of calling attention to the short-comings of the Oba in their respective towns.

Apart from the Olori, women chiefs also played a role in the administration of towns in Ekitiland before colonial rule. Their titles varied from place to place. In the Ado kingdom, the head woman of each of the towns within the kingdom attended council meetings.¹⁵³ In Ado-Ekiti town, the Head woman Chief was normally appointed from Oke-Ewi.

152. Interview, Madam Mary Adesida.

153. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para.123.

The head woman appointed from Oke-Ewi was called Ayeba while the one appointed from Odo-Ado was titled Olule Ori.¹⁵⁴

At Iyin-Ekiti, the Head woman Chief was called Iya Odofin while she was known as Osemore in Osi-Ekiti. In Agbado, Ode, Lasigidi and Egbe, the head woman Chief was designated Olori Obinrin while she was called Oluwa in Igbe.mo and Ilu-Omoba. At Ilawe and Igbara-Odo, she was called Olofi and Iyelule respectively.¹⁵⁵ At Ikere-Ekiti, the three principal Quarters of Odo-Oja, Iro and Okekere had their own respective head women Chiefs. They were the Osemowe of Odo-Oja, the Ojumu of Iro and the Aro of Okekere. The head women Chiefs presided over the women council meetings held regularly in their respective quarters. The President of the women's General Council was the Osemowe. The three head women chiefs also had their judicial councils and

154. Ibid., para.126.

155. Ibid.

it was the same Olokorun (Police) that served both men and women judicial councils. A woman judicial council had the power to impose fines in kind such as palm oil, two fowls, two pigeons and a goat. However, such a judicial decision must receive the assent of the Ogoga before implementation.¹⁵⁶

In the Akure kingdom, the Senior women in each village took titles and formed themselves into clubs. In Akure town, there were three in number namely the Apate, the Ukoju and the Esare.¹⁵⁷ The Apate comprised women granted the privilege of carrying Ate (board) to the market places.¹⁵⁸ They

156. Interview, Oba A. Akaiyejo, the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti. See also Oba Alaiyeluwa Adegoriola I, Ogoga of Ikere, 'A note on the administration of Ikere before the advent of the British' in ODU, Journal of Yoruba and related studies, op. cit., pp.23-24.

157. See (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para.45.

158. Interview, Madam F. Adelusi, (75), a member of the Apate in Akure, on 22nd May, 1987.

granted permission to women willing to sell meat and other food items in the market. The Apate also kept the Oba and his Chiefs informed of the day-to-day occurrences in the markets. The head of the group was the Eyelobinrin, who was also the head of all the women in Akure. She had to be consulted before decisions were made on major issues affecting women in Akure. The Apate also provided meat for the Deji during the celebration of the annual Ogun festival when members of the group had to assemble at Idi-agba where they offered sacrifices to ensure prosperity and peace in the markets.¹⁵⁹ The second group of women Chiefs called the Ukoju comprising daughters of titled men in Akure normally deliberated with the Apate on matters affecting women in the town. During the important festivals, the Ukoju entertained the Oba and his Chiefs with their agere and agogo music.¹⁶⁰ The third group called the Esare

159. J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati aqbeqbe re, op. cit., pp.165-167.

160. Ibid., p.169.

comprised all the daughters of the past Oba in Akure. This group, headed by the Elesare, also entertained the Oba during the Olokun festival when all roads leading to Akure were cleaned up.¹⁶¹

The roles performed by women in Ekitiland were similar to those of their counterparts in other parts of Yorubaland. Some women wielded some political influence which differed from one community to the other. A few Yoruba women were reputed to have reigned as Oba in Yorubaland. For example, Ooni Luwo, a woman, is said to have reigned at Ife.¹⁶² In Akure, the following women reigned as Oba: Eye-Aro c.1393-1419 A.D.; Eyemoin c.1705-1735 A.D., and Amaro c.1850-1851 A.D.¹⁶³

In Ondo, the Lobun was a powerful Women Chief. She was not expected to participate in any farming

161. Ibid., p.175.

162. See M.A. Fabunmi, Ifè Shrines, (Ile-Ife, 1969), pp.23-24.

163. J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati Agbeqbe re, op. cit., pp.26, 27, 36 and 52. See also T.S. Adeloje, The Origin and Development of the Monarchy in Akure from the Earliest Times to 1898, op. cit., pp.133-4.

activities and was secluded to her house like the Osemawe of Ondo to his palace. The Lobun played a significant role in the appointment of a new Osemawe, settled quarrels among the male Chiefs and officiated in the opening of new market.¹⁶⁴ In addition, she was regarded as the Priestess of Aje (literally meaning god of money). There were other Women Chiefs to assist the Lobun. They were the Lisa Lobun who settled quarrels among the women, Oqese Lobun and Sara Lobun both of them were 'rememberancers' to the Lobun. These offices were duplicated in the Ondo non-metropolitan area where the Oloja or Baale (Village head) together with his Chiefs appointed a Lobun. In Ajue and Aiyesan, the Women Chiefs were called Iyalode not Lobun.¹⁶⁵

In Ilesa, the head of the Women Chiefs was the Arise who was assisted by the Risa Arise, Odofin Arise,

164. (N.A.I.), F.F. Bridges, Intelligence Report on Ondo Division, 1934/35, p.10.

165. Ibid.

Odole Arise and Yeye Saloro.¹⁶⁶ Each Ward had a female head too.¹⁶⁷ Other towns and villages had their Iyalode as head of Women Chiefs.¹⁶⁸ In Oyo, we had eight women of the 'highest rank'. According to Johnson, the roles of these women could not be dispensed with in the palace. They were Iya Oba, Iya Kekere, Iya Naso, Iya Monari, Iyalagbon, Orun Kumefun and Are Orite.¹⁶⁹ Johnson explained that Iyakekere was in charge of the Alaafin's treasures. She also had the royal insignia and all the paraphernalia used at State functions in her custody. What is more, she reserved the right to withhold them and thus prevent the holding of such ceremonies

166. T. Falola, 'A descriptive analysis of Ilesa Palace Organisation', The African Historian, Vol.VIII, 1976, pp.78-9.

167. Ibid., p.79.

168. See J. Blair, Intelligence Report on Abeokuta, 1937, p.48 and E.A. Hawkersworth, Intelligence Report on Ijebu Ife, 1935, p.9.

169. See S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., p.63.

if she so desired. Above all, she was the person entitled to place the crown on the Alaafin's head during coronation ceremony.¹⁷⁰

A few Women Chiefs constituted part of the membership of secret societies who were responsible for executive and judicial functions in some Yoruba settlements. In Ago village in Ijebuland, some women were members of the Osuqbo¹⁷¹ society. The Erelu were consulted in all matters that concerned women even though they did not sit with other members in judicial matters.¹⁷² However, Women membership of secret societies was not very common.

There were marriage ties among neighbouring Yoruba Kingdoms. Women were used to cement existing

170. Ibid.

171. Otherwise called Oqboni society in Oyo and some other parts of Yorubaland.

172. See (N.A.I.), A. F. Abell, Intelligence Report on Ago, 1934, p.iii.

relationship or create new ones.¹⁷³ Also, they were employed to monitor and influence foreign policy decisions. For example, there is a tradition at Ife that it was Moremi who enabled Ife to resist and defeat the Igbo. It is said that the Igbo people repeatedly attacked Ife until the beautiful Moremi married the King of Igbo from whom she learnt the secrets of Igbo's military prowess. Thereafter, she escaped from there and returned to Ife to expose the secrets.¹⁷⁴

However, these roles played by Women underwent some slight changes under British Administration. In spite of the pervading influence of British Administration, some of the roles performed by women still persist till the present day.

From the foregoing, it is clear that apart from the Oba and Chiefs, palace servants, the Olori and

173. T. Falola, 'The Place of Women in Yoruba Economy', A Seminar Paper delivered at the University of Ife, Ile-Ife, on 29th November, 1978.

174. Ibid., pp.141 and 158.

women chiefs also played significant roles in the administration of towns in Ekiti kingdoms before the advent of colonial rule. The indigenous social organisation of the people is the **subject** of our next discussion.

Indigenous Social Organisation

In the pre-colonial Ekitiland, there were some social organisations which played significant roles in the functioning of the society. First and foremost, there was the Ebi (lineage) system.

The Ebi, in Yoruba usage, is a much larger version of the Euro-American family. It includes every one who can be traced to or related in blood no matter how far removed in time and space to the ancestor. What binds the people together is the blood which is regarded as being stronger than ^{any} other tie.¹⁷⁵ The Ebi manifested the feelings of belonging in all that they did within the lineage. In fact,

175. See I.A. Akinjogbin, The Ebi System Reconsidered, A Seminar Paper presented at the University of Ife, Ile-Ife, on 10th January, 1979, pp.20-21.

the order of precedence within the Ebi depended on their age and not their social status. Within the Ebi, members could be resident in one single Agbo ile (compound) or scattered over in several Agbo ile (compounds) which were not necessarily contiguous. Each Ebi had a head known as the Olori-ebi¹⁷⁶ (lineage head) who had complete authority over every member of the Ebi.¹⁷⁷ In the Ebi assembly, the Olori-ebi spoke last and whatever opinion he expressed represented the collective will of the entire Ebi.¹⁷⁸ He also had the power to mete out punishments to offenders within the Ebi.¹⁷⁸ He presided over any ceremony held in the lineage. The only exception was during the funeral ceremony of a member of the Ebi who was junior to him in age.¹⁷⁹

176. It is called Elerebi in some parts of Ekitiland.

177. See I.A. Akinjogbin, op. cit., p.23.

178. Ibid., p.24.

179. Interview, Mr. Matthew Apata on 18th April, 1987.

Another social organisation in the pre-colonial Ekitiland was the Egbe (age-grade). The Egbe comprised a number of men and women of the same age. The Egbe was not normally formed until the children attained the age of nine or ten years when they were old enough to play freely within the compound.¹⁸⁰ The procedure adopted for forming an Egbe was mostly for the mother of a child to take the initiative of collecting together all the boys or girls of the same age-group. As soon as the age-group was constituted, the members met weekly.

In Ado-Ekiti, the age-grades were basically five: namely the Ejewere comprising children up to nine years of age, the Orisu, children between 9-15 years, the Ipaiye or Origbo, 15-25 years, the Egiri, 25-35 years, and the Igbame or Agbakin or Ijegun comprising of men from 35 years and above.¹⁸¹ In Ikere-Ekiti,

180. See P.C. Lloyd, A comparative study of the political institutions in some Yoruba Kingdoms, op. cit., p.126.

181. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para.119.

we had the following age-grades: Egbe Mojaiyera (16-20 years), Egbe Monimusu (24-28 years), Egbe Monigbae (28-32 years) Egbe Ibede (32-36 years), Egbe Egiri (36-40 years) Egbe Agbakin (40-41 years) and Egbe Osaka (44-48 years).¹⁸²

In all parts of Ekitiland, each age-grade had its own insignia, songs and dances which were responsible for its distinct identification. On some occasions they wore the same uniform called anke. This select costume of the Egbe usually attracted a crowd whenever they were out on social engagements.¹⁸³ It sometimes attracted people to join the Egbe. The Egbe entertained their members with potlatch feasts on meeting days in all parts of Ekitiland. For example, in Akure, the amount of money expended on the potlatch feast was so enormous that it had to be decried by Oba Afunbiwo Adesida I, the reigning Deji at the time.¹⁸⁴

182. Oba Alaiyeluwa Adegoriola I, 'The Ogoga of Ikere: A note on the administration of Ikere before the advent of the British', ODU, op. cit., p.20.

183. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.259.

184. Ibid.

Promotion from one age grade to the other was automatic. In Ado-Ekiti for example, although there was no entrance ceremony to the first two grades mentioned above nevertheless, a feast would have to be given by a new member to the succeeding grades. In Oye-Ekiti, it cost a prospective member to the fourth age-grade a pot of palm wine.¹⁸⁵ Also, movement from one grade to the other by the members of the Egbe generally in Ekitiland depended on the improvement of the status of the individual either by being given a gift of land or by the procurement of a wife. However, as soon as a man reached the approximate age of 45 years, he left the age-grades to join the Aqba-llu.¹⁸⁶ For instance in Oye, the Egbo and Ire societies were drawn from this group of men. While the former were members of the Igbimo,

185. P.C. Llyod, op. cit., p.129.

186. Ibid., p.161.

the latter were warriors. On the death of the Oloye, it was the responsibility of the Elegbo to control the town and preside over meetings until a new Oba was selected.¹⁸⁷

Each Egbe had an acknowledged leader called Olori-egbe. In some Ekiti towns, each Egbe also had the Baba-Egbe (father of the association) as the head of the male section and Iya Egbe (the mother of the association) as the head of the female section.¹⁸⁸ Although it was not compulsory to belong to an Egbe, however, it was more or less a convention to belong to one. Any person who had no Egbe was not properly regarded as a 'socialised being.'¹⁸⁹

Each age-grade performed specific functions. The first age-grade of between age of one and nine years was considered too young to do any public work except to stay in the family compound but those in the second age-grade worked in their father's farms.

187. Ibid.

188. N.A. Fadipe, /The Sociology of the Yoruba, op. cit., p.257.

189. Ibid.

Those in the third age-grade of generally between 15 and 20 years provided thatch for public buildings. People in the next age-grade of between 20-25 years were responsible for carrying out repairs of the Oba's compound and other public buildings.¹⁹⁰ They also made bridges across streams with the trunks of trees. At this stage, a boy was initiated into the Egungun¹⁹¹ masquerade. Between the age of 26 and 35 years, a man was regarded as matured for military service. Beyond the age of 35 years, a man was regarded as an elder. At this stage, he would have already got children working for him in his farm. This would afford him more leisure at home to engage in the administration of the town or village. At this age also, he no longer engaged in any public manual work. Generally, a man was made a Chief in Ekitiland after reaching this grade because he was considered matured in age

190. Interview, Mr. Elijah Abidakun, (68), at Igbara-Odo on 7th June, 1987.

191. This is a shrouded apparition of the dead. See P.C. Lloyd, op. cit., p.129.

and mind to hold a chieftaincy title.¹⁹²

Generally speaking, the female Egbe in Ekiti-land were responsible for the sweeping of the market places as well as the streets. They also provided water during communal works such as erecting public buildings or road construction.¹⁹³

During the period of courtship, a young man had the unflinching support of members of his Egbe in whatever labour services were required by custom to be rendered to the parents-in-law.¹⁹⁴ The members of the Egbe sometimes accompanied him to pay formal visits to them. Similarly, the female members of the Egbe graced the occasion of the courtship of their members with their presence. The male Egbe gave financial assistance in form of paying the dowry of the brides of their members or defraying

192. P.C. Lloyd, op. cit., p.130.

193. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.258.

194. Ibid.

the expenses of a funeral ceremony of a deceased relative or father or mother-in-law of members.¹⁹⁵

A member of the Egbe who needed the assistance of the Egbe either to clear his farm or that of his in-law normally applied to the Egbe through the Olori-egbe. Such request was never rejected since it was reciprocal.¹⁹⁶

Members of the Egbe had economic ties through the formation of inter-town guilds. They engaged in local industries such as blacksmithing, pottery, cloth-weaving and carving. These local industries provided the needs of the people in the neighbouring towns and villages thereby contributing to the improvement of the standard of living of the people.¹⁹⁷ The Egbe also promoted inter-town relations by

195. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.258.

196. See A. Fajana, 'Age-group in Yoruba Traditional Society' in Nigeria Magazine, No.98, September/November 1968, p.236. See also A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., pp.59-61.

197. B.F. Adeniji, A comparative study of the Indigenous and Western-style Adult Education Systems in Yorubaland 1842-1945, (M.Phil. Thesis, Ife, 1983), p.39.

inviting their counter-parts in other towns to some important festivals. For instance, the Egiri age-grade at Ifaki-Ekiti normally invited their counterparts in Aaye, Ifishin, Ora and Orin to the celebration of the Okorobe festival in their town.¹⁹⁸

In terms of social control, the age grade system was the "guardian of public morality".¹⁹⁹ Fajana states succinctly that each Egbe was a censor morum for its members.²⁰⁰ For example, whenever a man infringed a societal norm, he was often given a reprimand by the Egbe and thus admonished to turn over a new leaf.²⁰¹ Subsequent occurrences of the same offence by the member might result in his expulsion from the Egbe, a situation which would not only put a social stigma on the affected erring

198. Ibid., p.38.

199. A. Fajana, op. cit., p.236.

200. Ibid.

201. Ibid.

member but also on his entire family. The watchword of the Egbe was respect for elders and constituted authority. Consequently, rudeness and insubordination as well as disrespect to elders were never condoned as they were severely dealt with.²⁰² Members of the Egbe were forbidden from seducing the wives of one another.²⁰³

In Ekitiland, each Egbe could discuss in their respective meetings such matters which were required to be brought to the notice of the Igbimo (Town Council) and the generality of the people when matters of public interest were to be discussed.²⁰⁴ The Olori-egbe also informed the Igbimo of any disturbing situation which might necessitate the summoning of an emergency meeting of the Igbimo

202. Interview, Mr. Olusanya Ojo, 70, on 7th April, 1987.

203. P. C. Lloyd, op. cit., p.127.

204. Interview, Mr. O. Ojo on 7th April, 1987.

to resolve. Usually, a general meeting was convened at the market place to settle such and other matters.²⁰⁵

Another organisation which played a significant role in the functioning of the society in Ekiti kingdoms was the Elegbe. The Elegbe were the equivalent of the present-day soldiers. Their duties included the defence of the town or village against external aggression, punishment of public offenders like thieves, witches, wizards, etc and the management of clubs.²⁰⁶ In Ikere-Ekiti, they were divided into three groups namely the Elegbemefa, the Otu-Emi and the Iqboran. The appointment of the Elegbemefa was confined to a particular family. With regard to the Otu-Emi, it was chosen by a family with the concurrence of the Ogoqa of Ikere while the Iqboran was chosen by quarter

205. Interview, Mr. O. Ojo on 7th April, 1987.

206. See Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.40.

councils from any family within a quarter. The Elegbe served as an intermediary between the town councils and the people by communicating the decisions of Town Chiefs to the latter.²⁰⁷ In Oye-Ekiti, the Elegbe were known as the Baloqun (War captains). The title Baloqun was designed primarily to reward prowess and distinction in battle. Each Quarter had a head Baloqun who was responsible to the overall Baloqun of Oye-Ekiti. The Baloqun were much respected. They attended the meetings of the Igbimo (Town Council) but it was their leader who could speak at such meetings.²⁰⁸

However, in Efon-Alaaye and Aramoko, the Elegbe were not members of the Igbimo. They waited outside while the council met. Nevertheless, the decision of the council was communicated to them

207. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, op. cit., para.13(2).

208. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/31318, Intelligence Report on Oye District, Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, (1933), paras.68 and 69.

after the meeting and the Elegbe had to execute these decisions on communal work.²⁰⁹ The Elegbe in Aramoko were so powerful that the Alara had to be careful in taking a decision which was diametrically opposed to the wishes of the Elegbe. However, where the Igbimo and the Elegbe did not reach a consensus on an issue, the Alara had to make a final decision which was binding on the two groups.²¹⁰

In Itaji, the Elegbe were so powerful that they tried cases of criminal nature, leaving the civil cases to the Oba and the Agba-ilu. They were entitled to carry "abebe" (large round fans) like the Chiefs.²¹¹

In Akure, apart from organising communal labour, the Elegbe took part in war. They were elected by

209. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, CS026/29834, Intelligence Report on Efon District, op. cit., paras 58 and 59 and H.F. Marshall, Intelligence Report on Ara District of Ekiti Division, (1932), para.41.

210. (N.A.I.), Intelligence Report on Ara District, Ibid., para.41.

211. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Itaji District, op. cit., para.35.

the Igbime but only the most senior of them were influential in town affairs; the junior ones were rarely consulted by the Igbime.²¹² Apart from the Elegbe, the Ikome Chiefs also participated in war in Akure. The position of the Sao²¹³ in Akure could be likened to that of the Are-Ona-Kankanfo in Oyo.²¹⁴ As soon as war was declared, the Sao would summon the war Chiefs to his house where a decision would be taken to mobilise able-bodied men in Akure for action. Before going to war, the Sao would perform some rituals at the Uponranyin stream after which he was never to return to Akure alive whether he won the war or not. The Deji had to give the Sao a beaded crown which he wore outside the kingdom hence the Sao was called "Alade Igbo". If the Sao died on the battle-field,

212. See (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para.43.

213. T.S. Adedoye, op. cit., p.38.

214. This title is akin to a Field-Marshal. See Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., p.14.

his corpse was preserved by drying and brought to the town after a period of three months. This was why members of the Sao family were called "Omo Oloku ayangbe"²¹⁵ (Children of those who dry their dead). Should the Sao be victorious in war and attempted to enter Akure, he would be killed by the Oba's agents at the town gate.²¹⁶

In Ado-Ekiti, the Elegbe controlled the police and prison services. Like in other parts of Ekiti-land, they produced the war captains as well as served as an intermediary between the Oloye, (Town Chiefs) and the people. The Oloye were not supposed to issue out orders directly to the people; they did so through the Elegbe.²¹⁷ In Ido-Ekiti,

215. See J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati aqbeqbe re, op. cit., p.35.

216. T.S. Adeloye, op. cit., p.39.

217. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para.117.

the Elegbe seemed to have progressed to a position which was regarded as an equal status with the Chiefs.²¹⁸

Another socio-political organisation which played a significant role in the functioning of the society in Ekiti kingdoms was the traditional police force given various names. In Akure, they were called the Erinse while they were called the Olokorun at Ikere-Ekiti. In Akure, the Erinse had their headquarters at Oke-Igbon.²¹⁹ Headed by the Ologbosere, the Erinse, apart from reinforcing Akure army during wars, also maintained law and order in the town. They administered capital punishments on any criminal apprehended on the instruction of the Oba. The Ologbosere was assisted by the Olusogan in supervising the members of the Erinse who looked after the accused persons kept at Oke-Igbon. People

218. See (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper and A.C.C. Swayne, Intelligence Report on Ido-Ekiti, op. cit., para.30.

219. This literally means the house of wisdom. The then Oke-Igbon is located at Eruoba Street in Akure today. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III on 7th May, 1987.

accused of robbery, kidnapping, murder, witch-craft etc. were kept at the Iqbon pending trial. They were kept in small rooms where holes were bored in the walls in which the legs of the accused persons were passed through to the other side and tied with a strong rope. As soon as the cases of the accused persons were decided, punishments were quickly meted out. These ranged from beheading, lynching with the Oduro (a wooden club), nailing to the baobab tree with eserin (giant nails) at the Erekesan market to drowning.²²⁰

In Ikere-Ekiti, the Olokorun were six in number. They were charged with the responsibility of guarding the town. The choice of the Olokorun was usually made from two of the three main quarters of the town. The Olokorun had two different uniforms. One was a wrapper tied round the waist with a cap on and the osan (a whip with two heads and a handle) hung

220. Ibid. See also T.S. Adeloye, op. cit., p.48.

securely on the left shoulder while the other uniform comprised a pair of woven shorts with a cap and a woven sleeveless jumper over it and the "osan" being carried on the left shoulder.²²¹ The duties of the Olokorun were to arrest and take any accused person to Ajo Iyare (Iyare Council) which also served as a Judicial Council for punishing the offenders. The Ajo Iyare imposed fines of goats and bales of cowries according to the gravity of the offence.²²² The economic system of the Ekiti people before colonial rule is the subject of our next discussion.

Traditional Economic Structure in Ekitiland

Before the imposition of colonial rule, the economy of Ekitiland, like that of other parts of Yorubaland, was essentially based on subsistence farming. In fact, the pre-colonial economy was

221. See Oba Alaiyeluwa Adegoriola I, Ogoga of Ikere, 'A note on the administration of Ikere before the advent of British,' ODU, op. cit., p.23.

222. Ibid.

agrarian; men cleared the site for farmlands, tilled the soil planting food crops.²²³ Women helped in the farm during the planting and harvesting seasons.

During the dry season, the bush was cleared in preparation for hoeing and planting which normally began with earliest rains. Thereafter, weeding was done. The next stage was harvesting of crops. The farm implements consisted of hoes and knives. There were two types of hoes. The first was a large heavy type used in making 'earth heaps' or farm ridges for planting root crops while the second type was the lighter one used for weeding and other less heavy farm work. The cutlasses were used for clearing the bush as well as for digging out root crops like yam and cassava.²²⁴ The system of

223. See O. Aboyade, Issues in the Development of Tropical Africa, (Ibadan University Press, 1976), p.2.

224. Interview, James Akomolafe, (80), at Iyin-Ekiti, on 4th March, 1987.

farming was based on mixed cropping, shifting cultivation, rotational bush-fallow and permanent cultivation.²²⁵ The food crops planted included yam (dioscorea spp), Okro (hibscus esculentus), Plantain (musa para disaca), maize (zea mays), vegetables, lime (orombo wewe) (citrus lemonis), cocoyam, cassava, melon, sugar cane, egusi melon (cucumeropsis edulis), plantain (musa spp) and awusa (tetracarpidium conophorum).²²⁶ Yam was the staple food crop as well as the main crop of cultivation.²²⁷ Indigenous kolanut called

225. See T. Falola, 'Nigeria's indigenous economy' in R. Olaniyan (ed.), Nigerian History and Culture, (Longman, 1985), p.100.

226. S. A. Agboola, 'Agricultural changes in Western Nigeria 1850-1910' in Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History, (eds), I.A. Akinjogbin and S.O. Osoba (University of Ife Press Ltd., Ile-Ife, 1980), pp.129-130.

227. See S.A. Agboola, Ibid., p.128 and S.A. Agboola, 'The Traditional significance of Yam in Yorubaland in the Pre-colonial Times' in Nigerian Agricultural Journal, Vol.5(2), October, 1968, p.60.

obi abata²²⁸ (Kola accuminata) was also planted in Ekitiland predominantly in Ijare. The Ekiti people regarded Ijare as the home of indigenous kolanut hence the folk song, 'Ma yara lo s'ujare ki mi ya robi abata (I will make haste to go to Ijare to buy kolanut).²²⁹ Cotton was also grown to provide raw material for the indigenous domestic cotton industry. Also, palm trees grew wild in the bush, providing the vegetable oil needed for domestic consumption²³⁰.

Like in other parts of Yorubaland, the system of cultivation in Ekitiland was based on 'shifting

228. This is different from cola nitida, the kolanut specie that was introduced during British colonial rule. See B. A. Agiri, 'The Yoruba and the Pre-colonial Kola Trade' in ODU, No.12, July 1975, p.55, O. Nzeku, 'Kolanut' Nigeria Magazine, No.71, December, 1961, p.301 and P.O. Ogunbowale, Asa Ibile Yoruba, (Ibadan, O.U.P., 1973), p.3.

229. See J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati aqbeqbe re, op. cit., p.104.

230. R.O. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960, (New York, Africa Publishing Company, 1973), p.41.

cultivation'.²³¹ The system involved the clearing of the forest and the use of the land for two or three years before moving to another place.²³²

Prof. Afelabi Ojo called this 'land rotation',²³³ with long periods of bush fallowing, which in a longer or shorter period restored its fertility and rendered the land capable of being cleared and put into use again. It is instructive to note that under this system, the settlements were never shifted with farms.²³⁴ In view of the reproductive soil coupled with the climatic condition which allowed a wide variety of crops to be grown, the Ekiti people were self-sufficient in food production.

Land in pre-colonial Ekiti, like other parts of Yorubaland, was corporately owned. This land tenure system served as a cohesive force which united all the inhabitants of each town or village. The system also ensured that majority of young men

231. W. Bascom, The Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria, op. cit., p.20.

232. See A. Milson, 'The Yoruba country, 'West Africa' in Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol.13, (second series), (London, 1891), pp.584-5.

233. G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.61

234. Ibid.

in the town or village had enough land for farming. There were religious beliefs and sanctions to back up the land tenure system. First and foremost, there was the common belief that land belonged to the ancestors and that the living only held it in trust. Consequently, land was deified and its sale was regarded as sacrilegious. Second, it was believed that anyone who sold a piece of land invited the wrath of the ancestors on himself.²³⁵

As a result of this, any alienation of land by any individual occupier led to the forfeiture of his interest in the land.²³⁶ The concept of inalienability of interests in land had its roots in the family ownership of land. Family, in the context of

235. T. Falola, 'Nigeria's indigenous economy', op. cit., p.98.

236. See R.O. Adegboye, 'An analysis of Land Tenure structure in selected Areas of Nigeria ', in Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, Vol.VII, No.2, July, 1966, pp.259-268, T.O. Elias, Nigerian Land Law and Custom, (London, 1951), p.176, and Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., p.95.

Yoruba, as previously pointed out, consisted of a man, his wife or wives, children as well as a large number of collaterals claiming blood or kinship affinity with him.²³⁷ A community had a right to a piece of land which was used for legitimate economic pursuits. To dispossess any person of land was tantamount to excommunicating him from the town or village.²³⁸

There were many ways of acquiring interests in land in Ekitiland before colonial rule. First and foremost, there was the individual's right to ownership of land from birth. In fact, from birth, every individual member of a family was entitled to a stake in the family land. There existed what was tantamount to a permanent or perpetual interest in land in the sense that an individual family

237. R.O. Ekundare, op. cit., p.37. See also S. Famoriyo, Land Tenure and Agricultural Development in Nigeria, (London, N.I.S.E.R., 1979), p.57.

238. T. Falola, op. cit., p.98.

member exercised control over the use of land with a proviso that he could not alienate it without the consent of the entire members of the family.²³⁹ Secondly, land could be acquired through pioneer clearing. Like in other parts of Yorubaland, pioneer clearing was largely based on the principle that "he who clears a piece of land is the owner of it."²⁴⁰ However, slaves were not entitled to land ownership in Ekitiland.²⁴¹ Thirdly, a person could borrow land from another family. In this regard, such a person would offer some kegs of palm-wine and a few kolanuts to the owner.²⁴²

Under the land tenure system, the Oba or Baale had additional rights to land by virtue of his position as the administrator of the town or village.²⁴³

239. S. Famoriyo, op. cit., p.57.

240. See C.K. Meek, Land Law and Custom in the colonies, (Oxford, University Press, London,), p.23.

241. Ibid.

242. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.10.

243. S. Famoriyo, op. cit., p.57.

He was regarded as a trustee of the land of the community. Any individual who wished to use any family land had to seek the consent of the Oba or Baale. In some cases, after consent had been obtained, allegiance was paid to the Oba or Baale in form of isakole (royalties).²⁴⁴ The Oba or Baale also re-distributed land. By so doing, he acted as arbitrator on several occasions. For instance, when a family increased in size to necessitate the acquisition of more land, it was the Oba or the Baale who provided such lands. Conversely, if a family dwindled in size, perhaps as a result of heavy emigration or war, it was the Oba or Baale who restored a new balance between the inhabitants and the available resources within the town or village.²⁴⁵ The Oba or Baale also granted leases

244. See P.C. Llyod, 'Some Problems of Yoruba land Tenure', African Studies, Vol.12, No.3, 1953, p.32.

245. S. Famariye, loc. cit., p.57.

to stranger occupiers or elements who were required to pay isakole (royalties) annually. Whenever a group of people migrated to the kingdom or territory of an Oba or Baale, such people had to pay annual tributes to him.²⁴⁶

Three major problems faced the land tenure system in Ekitiland. Firstly, there was the problem of succession. After the death of an individual occupier of family land, the land reverted to the family estate and it was shared among family members in accordance with custom. Secondly, the system did not cater for the female members of the family as they were considered ineligible, according to native customs, to claim or share out of the family land. The adverse effect of this was that women were prevented from exercising or improving their expertise in crop and animal husbandry. Consequently, women were not allowed to partake in any decision-making

246. Ibid.,

process relating to land.²⁴⁷ Thirdly, there was the problem of insecurity. Individuals found it difficult to expand their land holding unit with the result that investment in agriculture was greatly inhibited.²⁴⁸

In Ekitiland, the work force on the farms consisted mainly of the family. A man organised his wife or wives, children and close relations for farm work. He paid them no wages but was expected to cater for their needs. In view of the enormity of the farm-work, most men had more than one wife for each additional wife and her offspring increased the labour force on the farms.²⁴⁹ Slaves labour supplemented the family labour on the farms. Slaves were obtained as captives in wars, raids or as gifts.²⁵⁰

247. Ibid., p.100.

248. Ibid.

249. Interview, Mr. Adebayo Ojo, (75), at Efon-Alaaye, on 4th March, 1987. See also R.O. Ekundare, op. cit., p.41.

250. See G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.60 and C.D. Forde, The Yoruba-speaking peoples of South-Western Nigeria, op. cit., p.16.

Women played a significant rôle in the domestic economy of Ekitiland in particular and Yorubaland in general in the pre-colonial era. A woman was expected to supplement her husband's resources for purchasing food items and clothes. If she belonged to a social or savings club like the Esusu, she had to meet the requirements set by the club on its members. There was a number of social functions such as marriage and funeral ceremonies which required a large sum of money to be expended upon especially if the parties involved were closely related to her.²⁵¹

However, there were occasions when women were not expected to work at all or when they were restricted to light duties. Those who were temporarily prohibited or precluded totally from performing strenuous jobs were pregnant women, nursing mothers,

251. See T. Falola, 'The place of women in Pre-colonial Yoruba Economy' op. cit., p.143.

252. Ibid.

old people, new brides, physically handicapped individuals and invalids. Nevertheless, some aged women sometimes engaged in spinning thread, cracking palm kernels and tending domestic animals. These were tasks that did not demand much physical exertion.²⁵²

The activities of women in pre-colonial Yoruba economy were basically farming, craftsmanship and trading. With regard to farming, there were some women who had their own farms since they had access to land. For example, Madam Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan is said to have had "2,000 slaves in her farms."²⁵³ Yoruba women were also involved in cutting, hoeing, planting and weeding. Women were particularly involved in the harvesting of farm

252. Ibid.

253. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit.,
p.393.

products which were mostly put in large calabashes and baskets. Such products included pepper, maize, yam, plantain, banana, tobacco and vegetable. Besides, women usually collected other farm produce like fire-wood, snails, mushroom and kolanut.²⁵⁴

Women helped in storing farm products so as to preserve them until they were needed to be sold, consumed or planted. Produce were preserved by removing them from the reach of children, thieves, heat and water by putting them on rafters and in vaults. Some were regularly dried by exposure to sun or fire. Others could be fried, smoked or kept inside the kitchens where they could be heated. Some others could be put inside baskets or wrapped inside clothes or leaves. They could also be stored in baskets or pots.²⁵⁵

In the realm of animal husbandry, women played a predominant role in the pre-colonial Yoruba domestic economy. Among the domestic animals reared by them

254. T. Falola, op. cit., p.146.

255. Ibid.

were chickens, ducks, pigs, cattle, sheep, cats and goats. Women engaged in dyeing, hairdressing, potmaking, beer brewing, cloth weaving etc. Pottery was also an important occupation. Potters used clay to make different kinds of pots, plates and other kitchen utensils. They usually set up their sites very close to where clay was abundant. The clay was moulded into the desired shape by hand and was later burnt in the open to complete the processing.²⁵⁶

However, the most important activity of women was trading. This economic activity of women predated the 19th century Yoruba wars. Women traders were either found in markets or engaged in long distance trade. However, some items such as yam, flour, pepper, Aasa (snuff), dried fish and meat were sold by some women in their homes. Such traders were patronised by those who could not go to the markets or by regular customers

256. Ibid., p.151.

who were sometimes allowed to buy on credit.²⁵⁷

This practice of trading at home was prevalent among old people and new brides who were not allowed to commence full-time trading until they had spent a few years at home. Some women traders were in the habit of going round some village markets to scout for goods from producers and farmers with the intention of obtaining cheaper prices than the market rates. Women went outside the town to sell food to travellers on popular routes.²⁵⁸

Women also participated in long distance trade in the pre-colonial Yorubaland. They carried their goods to neighbouring towns and villages sometimes beyond the borders of Yorubaland. It was not uncommon to find wives of Oba and Chiefs engaging in long distance trade. For instance, in 1830, the Lander Brothers happened to have lodged under the same roof with some

257. Ibid.

258. Ibid., p.153.

of the wives of the Alaafin in Oyo who came to Jadoo, a town fifty miles north of Badagry to trade.²⁵⁹ Also, Mr and Mrs Townsend met the wives of Chief Ogunbona of Abeokuta on the Iluku-Saki road going to trade.²⁶⁰

Through participation in various economic activities, women had the opportunity of becoming wealthy and thus improved their socio-political status within their respective communities. For example, Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan rose to the highest position of Iyalode of Ibadan. Her wealth and influence were so great that she was able to afford a large army of bodyguards.²⁶¹ Another wealthy lady of note was Adu Ijanna, a town under Ijaye.²⁶²

Also, additional labour was got on the farms through group farming. There were two types of group

259. See John and Richard Lander, Journal of an Expedition to Explore the course and termination of the Niger, (J and J. Harper, New York, 1833), Vol.1., p.122.

260. See CMS Intelligencer, Jan. 1856, p.20.

261. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., p.331.

262. Ibid.

farming namely Aaro and Owe. Aaro was a form of rotational communal labour in which a member was bound, when called upon, to return the services of other members one by one. It involved two or more people of equal strength. In fact, the system was a form of 'mutual aid association'.²⁶³ The need for many people to supply the necessary labour on the farms was met by the Aaro. It was less prominent during the planting season as women supplied part of the required labour. Members of the Aaro were mostly men of 'an agnatic kin and those of an age-group or a mixture of both'.²⁶⁴

A member of the Aaro could call upon the entire group to help him on the farm, either to clear the land of weeds preparatory to planting or to plant seeds.²⁶⁵ There were informal rules guiding the Aaro practice.

263. See G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.60 and C.D. Forde, The Yoruba-speaking peoples of South-Western Nigeria, op. cit., p.16.

264. G.J.A. Ojo, op. cit., p.60.

265. N. A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba, op. cit., p.150.

Firstly, every member of the Association must cooperate and reciprocate the services of members when it came to his turn. Secondly, it was obligatory on the host to feed his associates as well as reciprocate their services in kind. There was no fixed order of rotation, and a man who had no special work to do on his farm might not call on other members of the Aaro to render him any form of service.²⁶⁶

The second type of group farming called Owe or Ebese²⁶⁷ was used mostly for clearing or hoeing farm-lands. Like Aaro, it initially pooled labour from blood relations and later from kith and kin. But unlike Aaro, the Owe involved a larger number of people and was not operated on a rotational basis hence immediate reward was given by entertainment with food, palmwine and kolanuts by the Olowe (the organiser of the farm work) at the end of each day's job. Compared

266. Ibid.

267. G.J.A. Ojo, op. cit., p.61.

with Aaro, the entertainment was much more elaborate.²⁶⁸

Owe was used for the building of a house or re-roofing of one as well as for clearing land or forest for farming.²⁶⁹ In this regard, a long notice was usually given to allow those invited enough time to plan ahead for the appointed day. On the day in question, members worked with great enthusiasm to finish the job before sunset. In Ekitiland, the Aaro had an advantage over the Owe or Ebese in the sense that while a kind of contract was implied in the former, the latter was informal and voluntary.

Another form of labour which the Ekiti people used on their farms was Iwofa (pawn).²⁷⁰ Pawns were individuals pledged as collateral security for loans borrowed by their parents. The Iwofa worked for the creditor until the loan and the interest on it were paid. When a man

268. Interview, Mr. Adebayo Ojo.

269. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.150.

270. Rev. S. Johnson called him a "service man". See Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.127.

borrowed money usually Okemarun (₦2.50) the borrower was charged Egba (5k) per day as interest which was heavy in those days.²⁷¹ Since he was not normally required to repay the loan by cash under this system, he sent his son, brother or sister to work for the lender for Egba (5k) a day. However, as soon as the borrower was able to refund the amount borrowed, the Iwofa was set free.²⁷²

There were many reasons why people resorted to the peonage system as a means of raising money in Ekiti-land. Firstly, money might be needed for the purpose of paying off debts owed another person. Secondly, it might be required for the purpose of making a projected expenditure. Whenever money was raised under the iwofa system, the borrower had to find a guarantor on whose responsibility the lender would part with his money.²⁷³ In a Yoruba week of four days, the iwofa

271. See Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.26.

272. Ibid.

273. Interview, Mr. Adebayo Ojo on 4th March, 1987.

was expected to give two days service on his master's farm while he spent the remaining two days on his own farm.²⁷⁴ Generally, the work demanded was not very exacting. It was a minimum of 160 yam heaps per day and the task was usually carried out between 6.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.^{275.}

An iwofa (pawn) was different from Eru (Slave) in the following ways: Firstly, while the iwofa stayed with his parents and reported for duty from there, the Eru (Slave) stayed permanently with his master. Secondly, while an iwofa was regarded as a free born and retained his rights and privileges as full-fledged members of the society,²⁷⁶ the Eru (Slave) did not enjoy such a privilege. Thirdly, while an Eru could be killed, the iwofa could merely be flogged. Also, while a slave was fed and clothed by his master, a pawn ate his own food and clothed himself. Moreover,

274. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.190.

275. Ibid.

276. Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.126.

although a female slave might be impregnated by her master, nevertheless, her child remained a slave.²⁷⁷

As soon as an iwofa was impregnated by his master, she automatically ceased to be an Iwofa and the debt was written off. However, if he wanted to marry the girl, he had to pay a bride price on her.²⁷⁸ In a situation where a master committed adultery with an iwofa who had been betrothed, he not only forfeited his money but also had to pay damages to the fiancé of the girl.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, while an iwofa was expected to make 200 heaps daily, no limit was set for the work which a slave could do on the farm.²⁸⁰ Also, while the death of a slave put an end to his servitude, the death of an iwofa did not relieve his next-of-kin of the obligation to repay the loan for which the iwofa was pawned.²⁸¹

277. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.26.

278. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.190.

279. Ibid., p.192. See also Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.128.

280. A. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.26.

281. N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.193.

Under the peonage system, it was not uncommon to 'forget' an Iwofa in a creditor's farm. For example, a man who pawned his younger brother in order to pay the bride price on his wife might forget his obligation to redeem the child thereafter. Also, girls were sometimes neglected in peonage. In that circumstance, such a girl had to wait until her fiance came along to redeem her by paying the amount owed in lieu of bride price or other incidental pre-marriage expenses.²⁸²

Apart from raising funds to pay loans, the peonage system was sometimes used to subject a youth to 'external training, discipline and industry' to complement the home training given him in the pre-colonial Ekitiland.²⁸³ It was believed that when a youth was subjected to such 'external training' especially under a person who

282. See N.A. Fadipe, op. cit., p.193 and Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.129.

283. Information received from Mr. A. Ojo on the 4th March, 1987.

would have little or no parental consideration for him, he would come off as a wise, hard-working, honest and reliable personality. Such youths were usually apprenticed to craftsmen and some important personalities in the community to perform domestic work. The youths were returned to their parents after they (parents) were satisfied that they had been efficiently trained.²⁸⁴ With the foregoing exploitation of land as well as the various resources of labour, the people of Ekitiland were able to produce different kinds of goods hence farming became their most important occupation.

Another economic pursuit of the people of Ekitiland was hunting. The common chase consisted mainly less wild animals particularly the herbivorous: cane-rats, giant-rats, squirrels, a variety of dulikers and monkeys, bush-cows, porcupine, tree hyrax, bush-duck,

284. Ibid. See also Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

warthog, roan, water-duck and large birds. Ekiti hunters also chased wild animals such as buffaloes, lions, leopards, hyenas, wild dogs and elephants.²⁸⁵

Among the earliest weapons used in hunting expedition were the wooden clubs and cutlasses. Ekiti hunters also used cross and long bows made of various kinds of wood while the unfeathered arrows were made of reed and cane.²⁸⁶ Traps of various sorts were also used to catch animals along their tracks or in their feeding and sleeping grounds were commonly used by hunters in Ekitiland. Due to the high density of the forest, the regular tracks of many of the large animals were easily recognisable in the narrow tunnel-like passage at the base of the thick tangles of bush or forest. Their feeding grounds were usually located in the relatively clear spaces in the undergrowth or

285. G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.33.

286. Sir A. Moloney, 'On cross Bows, long Bows, Quivers from Yoruba country', Africa, Vol.XIX, 1889-90, pp.213-215.

on the open farms while their sleeping grounds could be found in the bush usually in the form of burrows for rodents, tree-top for monkeys and dens for wild animals.²⁸⁷ Rats, rodents and snakes known to reside in burrows were usually killed through asphyxiation.²⁸⁸ All the outlets to the burrows were blocked with sticks or banana stumps. The only hole left was covered with a small pot containing lightly damped leaves and pepper. Thereafter, the contents were ignited through a small hole bored in the pot; the hunters blew the smoke towards the animals in the burrow. As their prey wanted to escape through the only outlet, the hunters dealt severe blows on it with cudgels and cutlasses. There were occasions when the animals died of asphyxiation in their burrow. In that case, they were dug out with hoes and cutlasses.²⁸⁹

287. See G.J.A. Ojo, op. cit., p.34.

288. Ibid. p.36.

289. Ibid., p.36.

Hunting was commonly carried out in the night until dawn. Hunting activities were at their highest during the first and last quarters of the moon when there were longer hours of darkness. It was also commonly done during the dry season when the forest was more penetrable and the hunters had the opportunity of sighting their preys at long distances.²⁹⁰ In the course of a hunting expedition in Ekitiland, a hungry hunter was free to take anything he wanted to eat from a neighbour's farm; he must not carry any of the farm products away. In that case, the hunter left a sign by which the owner of the farm would know it was a hungry hunter who tampered with his farm products.²⁹¹ Generally, hunting was a highly respectable profession in Ekitiland. A great number of the male adults especially herbalists took to hunting especially when they had little work to do on their farms.

290. Interview, Mr. James Bada, (71), at Ipogun near Akure, on 15th July, 1987.

291. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.12.

The Ekiti people also engaged in fishing. This was done in big rivers and streams. The most important implements used to catch fish were traps of different types, nets, paddles and dugouts. The fish traps were made of split branches of the oil palm (Elaeis guineensis) and wine palm (Raphia vinifera).²⁹² Most of the catches were eaten by the members of the family of the fisherman. The rest were smoked, dried or salted to preserve them for sale.

Another method used to catch fish was by draining the water in a pond in order to expose the fish. As soon as the water was drained, the fish in the mud was then caught. Another method of fishing employed was by poisoning the fish in a pond. Fish poisons were obtained from the foliage, seeds, barks and roots of some plants usually cultivated for that purpose. Such plants included the stupefying fish plant (morelia senegalensis), the fish poison plant (Tephrosia vogelli), the 'mourning for small fish' plant

292. G.J.A. Ojo, op. cit., p.45.

(mundulea suberosa) and the ubiquitous wine palm (Raphia Vinifera).²⁹³ The poisons were very much effective during the dry season when the volume of the streams was greatly reduced, sometimes only showing their courses by stagnant detached pools.²⁹⁴

The people of Ekitiland also engaged in craft and other local industries. Craft industries like wood work, calabash-making, yarn, Dyeing, cloth, mat and bead-making were also part of the economic pursuits of the people before the advent of colonial rule. The Ekiti people used wood types varying from soft to hard to make wooden farming and household implements like knives, axes and cutlassess. Other wooden household utensils were pestle and mortar produced from stone-hard wood that could withstand constant pounding such as iroko (chlorophora excelsa) and oro (cistanthera papavifera).²⁹⁵ Trays of different sizes, plates,

293. Ibid., p.44.

294. Ibid.

295. Ibid., p.81.

dishes, spoons and ladles were also made from woods. Brooms were made from the mid-ribs of the leaflets of palm-trees while baskets were made from bamboo trees. Calabash was made from the bottle gourd species (Lagenaria vulgaris) while mat was made from the stems of sarcophyrynium.²⁹⁶

The craftsmen were organised into guilds. These guilds recruited apprentices, disciplined and trained them, controlled the production of goods, made laws against under cutting and inflation of prices as well as fixed the prices of goods. There were guilds of Wood Carvers, carpenters, weavers, leather workers, etc. These guilds, created as crafts, became important in Ekitiland. There were three main factors which determined the strength and influence of each guild. Firstly, the nature of the production technique and the degree of co-operation necessary in the production tended to bring some craftsmen together. Secondly,

296. Ibid., p.82.

the special skill and experience involved in the production technique forced many craftsmen to associate in order to maintain their jealously guarded secrets. Thirdly, the high demand for the goods produced by an industry and their economic success inevitably led to the formation of guilds which could effectively control output as well as entry into the trade.²⁹⁷

With regard to dyeing, Ekiti women normally obtained elu (indigo) from the indigofera trees whose leaves were later subjected to certain regulated processes which separated the blue-stuff known as indigotin from the unrequired indigo-red called indirubin.²⁹⁸ The indigo leaves were pressed together in a mortar in local shed called Ebu.²⁹⁹ The balls

297. Information received from Mr. Oyinade Ogunleye, a craftsman at Ise-Ekiti, on 8th December, 1987.

298. Ibid., p.85.

299. This is a place where dyeing was done though the word could also be used to refer to a place where palm-oil or pottery is made.

which resulted from the compression were made to dry. The indigo and ash-filtered water were mixed in equal proportion in a vat or pot, the proportion being determined by the colour envisaged. From time to time, the resultant product was stirred in the vat and after some days when the correct dye had been formed, the vegetable sediments of the indigo was then removed. As soon as the required colour was formed, a cloth was dipped into the dye.³⁰⁰

Dyeing was practised in all the towns and villages in Ekitiland. According to Prof. Afolabi Ojo, an average dyeing yard in Ekitiland was "as large as 500 square yards containing different sizes of dyeing pots fixed into the ground, ash-water filtering construction, pegs of sticks of about five feet high at fixed spaces apart from stretching, drying and spooling hanks of thread with trees providing the much needed shade."³⁰¹ Among the clothes dyed by Ekiti women was adire (pattern dyed cloth).

300. G.J.A. Afolabi Ojo, op. cit., 85-86.

301. Ibid., p.86.

Cloth-weaving was another important economic activity in Ekitiland before colonial rule. It was an industry practised mostly by women. Two types of loom were used for weaving. The one used by men was a narrow upright type worked with pedals while the one used by women weavers was an upright broad loom of between 20 and 36 inches wide, installed inside the house.³⁰²

In Ekitiland, vertical weaving was more important than the horizontal one. The vertical loom comprised two upright poles about ten feet high erected about seven feet apart usually made from the straight stem of either Okinkun palm or the African fan palm (Borassus aethiopicum).³⁰³ The horizontal bars were tied to the vertical bars with ropes made mainly from the outer cover of palm branches. All the bars which formed the frame work of the vertical loom were erected in permanent

302. Ibid., p.87.

303. Ibid.

positions against the wall of the veranda of the weaver's house. The weaving tools included two cylindrical raphia sticks used for separating the warp, a thick stick which carried the weft thread, and a flattened well-smoothed piece of wood used for compressing the weft.³⁰⁴

Among the indigenous cloth woven was kijipa, which was woven on the vertical loom. The vertical loom was a preserve of women in Ekitiland. Although the weaving done on the vertical loom was very tedious and took a long time to finish, nevertheless, its products were often admirable and had immense market value. The horizontal loom was introduced into Ekitiland from the northern part of Yorubaland. And it was used entirely by Ekiti men under sheds specially built for weaving.³⁰⁵

Leather-work was also another economic pre-occupation of Ekiti people. In this regard, leather-mats

304. Ibid.

305. Interview, Mr. Omolayo Olomofe, (75), at Okemesi-Ekiti on 10th June, 1987.

and hunting dresses were made from the skins of animals. Also, the skins of animals such as those of lion and leopard were used as furniture for the houses of Oba, Baale and Chiefs.³⁰⁶ Animal skins were also used in encasing amulets for weaving around the neck, arm and waist. Bags, slippers and sheaths for swords were made from leather.³⁰⁷ Bead-making was also an important industry in Ekitiland before colonial rule. It was common in Efon-Alaaye. Similarly, pottery was an important industry. It was an exclusive preserve of Ekiti women. Ekiti women used clay with locust beans wood for firing the pot and ira trees (*Bridelia ferrugine*)³⁰⁸ in the pottery making industry. Consequently, they produced various domestic utensils like cooking-pots, vats for dyeing, roasting and earthen plates as well as dishes from clay. Areas

306. Information received from Mr. Ezekiel Olofinsao at Akure on 22nd April, 1988.

307. Ibid.

308. See G.J.A. Ojo, op. cit., p.94.

where pottery was practised on a large-scale included Isan, Ayede, Afao, Aramoko and Igbara-Ode.³⁰⁹

Earthen-ware products from Isan and Ayede were conveyed by head porters to far away places like Okitipupa for sale.³¹⁰

Another economic activity in Ekitiland during the period was blacksmithing. Like in other parts of Yorubaland, locally smelted iron was the main raw material for black-smithing in Ekitiland. Other materials were ordinary charcoal and palm-kernel shells, both used for the furnace. The tools used by blacksmiths included huge blocks of stone as anvils, smooth surfaced smaller stones employed as whetstones; belows constructed with hollow-wooden pipes, goat or sheep skin and bamboo sticks, hammers and princers made from locally smelted iron.³¹¹ Blacksmiths produced hoe-blades,

309. Ibid.

310. Ibid.

311. Ibid., p.99.

cutlasses, axes, knives, chisels, razors, iron rods, chains, armlets, hair-pins, iron-traps, ida kukuru (daggers), Ida qigun (long swords), oko (spear), and apata asa (shields).³¹² Blacksmithing was a very important industry in Ekitiland as it was found in practically all towns and villages.

Also, a large number of men, women and children were employed in Ekitiland in extracting palm-oil from the palm-fruit. The palm-kernel oil called adin was prepared by slightly burning ekuro (Palm kernel nut) and beating the nut in a mortar and the crushed kernel was boiled. Thereafter, the end-product would turn brown in colour. This was used in soap-making as well as lamp oil at home.³¹³

Most of the goods produced in Ekitiland were sold in the markets. The market was a place for buying and selling. It was the limb of the economic activity of

312. Interview, Mr. O. Agidigbi, (68), a leading blacksmith in Akure, on 22nd May, 1988.

313. Information received from Mr. Joshua Oluwadare, (75), at Oda near Akure on 11th November, 1986.

every community in Ekitiland. There were three types of markets namely daily, local and nodal. Daily markets were attended by the local inhabitants of a town or village for buying and selling items of daily needs. They were usually located in front of or in lineage courtyard in the front of the houses of Quarter Chiefs in a town or village. Such markets were usually stocked with the goods produced in the locality. Local markets were located in front of or adjacent to the palace of the Oba or Baale in a town or village. Local markets in Ekitiland probably originated from the local diversification of produce within a particular kingdom. This facilitated trade intercourse among the towns and villages in Ekiti kingdoms.

There was the operation of market periodicity among the local markets in Ekitiland. Generally, the

Yoruba week comprised four days³¹⁴ and the name of each day was to be the "actual names of the main places in which a market is held on these days"³¹⁵ The first days of the market week was generally called Oba's markets. The three days that followed were fixed after other local markets located in the subordinate towns. For instance, the first day of the week was named Umuri (Oba's market) at Efon-Alaaye while the second, third and fourth days were called Obalu (Obalu market), Omoba (Omoba market) and Iraye (Iraye market) respectively.³¹⁶ Similarly, the first day of the week in Ade-Ekiti was called Erekesin (Oba's market) while the second, third, fourth and fifth days were called Ilawe, Igede, Iqbimo and Ojido

314. See N.A. Fadipe, op, cit., p.190.

315. P. Hill, 'Notes on Traditional Market Authority and Market Periodicity in West Africa in Journal of African History, Vol.VII, No.2, 1966, p.305.

316. See G.O.I. Olomola, Pre-Colonial Patterns of Inter-State Relations in Eastern Yorubaland, op. cit., pp.142-143.

respectively, all named after the principal local markets in Ado Kingdom.³¹⁷ Like some other parts of Yorubaland, the four-day week (Orun) applied in respect of local trade while the eight-day bi-week (isan) applied to long-distance trade.³¹⁸ Thus, Ekiti people were able to spend the interval between the two market days in producing the goods they sold.

The third type of markets called nodal markets were the meeting points of two or more commercial highways connecting neighbouring and far distant communities. They were usually the entrepots of local and long-distance traders. Some of the nodal markets were Akure, Otun and Egosi.³¹⁹

Generally, the earliest form of trade in Ekiti-land was by barter. The craftsmen had to sell their products to buy foodstuffs while the farmers had to

317. Ibid., p.144.

318. P. Hill, op. cit., p.348.

319. See S.A. Akintoye, 'The North-eastern Yoruba District and the Benin Kingdom', op. cit., p.544 and D.J. May, 'Journey in the Yoruba and Nupe countries in 1858', Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, XXX, 1860, pp.212-233.

sell their farm produce to purchase farming tools , cloths and other essential commodities. Thus, there was the exchange of goods within each community.

In order to ensure that markets functioned properly and peacefully as centres of societal harmony, certain conventions evolved in Ekitiland. First and foremost, the Oba or Baale or Oloja was regarded as the overseer of markets. All transactions were carried out with fairness in the belief that the Oba, Baale or Oloja and their guardian spirits were witnesses.³²⁰

Secondly, some officials were appointed to supervise market transactions as well as ensure the maintenance of law and order. Such officials were given different names in many parts of Ekitiland. They were called

320. Interview, Madam A. Adetinu, (65), at Akure on 11th June, 1987.

Amosan in Ogotun, Olubudu in Aramoko, Agba in Ado-Ekiti and Eyelobinrin in Akure.³²¹ The officials settled disputes arising from market transactions and this went a long way in ensuring amity among the generality of market goers in Ekitiland.

Traders in Ekitiland mostly carried their goods themselves or made use of their family labour or slaves. Men undertook long journeys especially during the dry season or slack farming period when the bush paths were free from normal obstruction.³²² Obviously, human portage had a limited capacity. There were limits to the carrying capacity of human beings especially on long distance trips with heavy loads on their heads. The situation was compounded by the intense heat of the sun as well as torrential rain which more often than not made transportation very

321. Ibid., Also, information collected from Mrs Adenike Olatunji and Mrs Iyabo Ajayi at Aramoko and Ado-Ekiti on 4th and 10th July, 1987 respectively.

322. G.J.A. Ojo, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.102.

cumbersome.³²³ As earlier indicated, all trade transactions were carried out by barter. However, the cowries were introduced in Ekitiland to replace the inconveniences of the barter trade.³²⁴

The foregoing is the socio-political and economic setting which Ekitiland was before the coming of the British. The circumstances leading to the advent and subsequent occupation of Ekitiland by the British are discussed in the next chapter.

323. See R.O. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria, 1860-1960, op. cit., p.46.

324. Details of this are discussed in Infra, pp. 362-6.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ADVENT OF THE BRITISH AND THEIR OCCUPATION
OF EKITILAND, 1899 - 1915

It is very germane to discuss the background to the advent of the British to Yorubaland as a whole in order to enable us appreciate the setting which the area was at the time of the British arrival. This will also facilitate our understanding of the circumstances leading to the extension of British occupation to Ekitiland. I, therefore, intend to discuss the antecedents of British occupation of Ekitiland, the factors responsible for the occupation as well as the process of British occupation of the area. I shall examine the foregoing interrelated issues in turn.

Antecedents of the British Occupation of Ekitiland

Following the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1807, the palm oil trade was developed. This was because palm oil was needed by Britain and other European countries for the manufacture of lubricants, candles, soap, margarine etc.¹ There was also the emergence of Christian Missionary activity. Initially,

1. See C.W. Newbury, The Western Slave coast and its rulers, (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1961), pp.42 & 60 and M. Crowder, The Story of Nigeria, (London, Faber and Faber, 1966) p. 152.

the Christian Missions were geared toward converting people to christianity so as to dissuade them from the trade in slaves.² Consequently, the first batch of missionaries arrived in Badagry in 1842. In 1846, another batch landed in Abeokuta. After establishing British influence and 'civilization', the missionaries started to work in collaboration with the British consular officials.³

The British re-invigorated its incursion into Yorubaland in 1851 when Kosoko, the Oba of Lagos, was deposed by John Beecroft, Her Majesty's Consul for the Right of Benin and Biafra, on the ground of taking part in slave trade. He was replaced by his more tractable Uncle Akitoye, after having guaranteed to suppress slave trading in Lagos.⁴ The installation of an Oba that

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2. E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis, (Longman, 1966), p. 6.
 3. See E.A. Ayandele, Ibid., p.7 and J.F.A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite, Seventh Impression, (Longman, 1983), p.23.
 4. E.A. Ayandele op. cit., p.7. See also M. Crowder, op. cit., p.155 and J.A. Atanda, An Introduction to Yoruba History, (Ibadan University Press, 1980), p.45.

was sympathetic towards British interests and its replacement by one who would be largely dependent on British Authority marked the beginning of the erosion of the powers of the Yoruba Oba by the British. Under Akitoye and later Dosumu, there was^a tremendous growth in the 'legitimate trade' in palm oil. For instance, under Dosumu, over 20,000 tons of palm oil were exported.⁵

By 1853, a full-time Consul, Benjamin Campell, had been appointed for Lagos.⁶ Campell meddled freely in the local affairs in which Akitoye easily acquiesced since he owed his position to the British. And when Akitoye died later that year, Campell was largely instrumental to the enthronement of Dosumu who he perceived could equally prove tractable.⁷ Thereafter, the Foreign Office issued an instruction to the Consul for the annexation of Lagos "to secure forever the free population of Lagos from the slave traders and kidnappers who formerly oppressed them; to protect and develop the important trade of which their own town is the seat;

5. K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, (O.U.P., 1956), pp. 100 - 1

6. M. Crowder, The Story of Nigeria, op. cit., p. 165

7. Ibid., p. 166

and to exercise an influence on the surrounding tribes which may, it is hoped, be permanently beneficial to the African race"⁸.

Thus on 30th July, 1861, Dosumu ceded Lagos to Acting Consul McKosky in return for a pension of £1,030 a year. The handing over ceremony was concluded by the singing of the British National Anthem by 300 School children conducted by two missionaries.⁹ Henry Stanhop Freeman was appointed Governor of the Colony of Lagos.¹⁰ With this development, Britain had gained a foothold along the coast of Yorubaland. This was no doubt an impetus for the British to push their way into the hinterland. British representatives on the coast had the conviction that if the Yoruba hinterland were to be opened up to legitimate trade then British influence and authority had to be paramount.¹¹

8. Cited by S. O. Biobaku in The Origin of the Yorubas, (Lagos, 1955), p.68.

9. See A. Burns, History of Nigeria, (London, 1958), p. 126.

10. M. Crowder, op. cit., p.169 .

11. Ibid., p. 172.

At that time, the Yoruba hinterland was a very disturbed one. Ibadan was at war with Ijaiye; the Ekiti-parapo-Ibadan war, which lasted for 16 years, was the last of the main Yoruba wars in the 19th century.¹² Since neither side was able to win a decisive victory, the task of securing peace with honour became the major pre-occupation of the combatants.¹³

In the circumstance, therefore, both sides looked desperately for a third party that would intervene to bring the war to an end. This was where the missionaries came in. With some Yoruba Oba, they solicited the help of the British Government to bring the war to an end. One fundamental fact put the British at a vantage point in the settlement of the crisis. It was highly essential then that whichever third party who intervened in the

12. O. Ikime, The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest, (London, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1977), p.53.

13. Ibid., p. 54.

war should not only be capable of negotiating peace but also possess the physical force to guarantee the peace accord. No single Yoruba group could do this at that time. It was the British who possessed the capability of negotiating peace between the warring parties as well as enforcing it. Thus, the peace treaty of 1886 which brought the war to an end was signed.¹⁴

The Ijebu people had managed to escape the worst ravages of the Yoruba wars. Consequently, they had enjoyed relative tranquillity and built considerable wealth through trade. Their pre-occupation by 1886 was how to continue to enjoy this prosperity without their sovereignty being eroded by the growing British influence in Yorubaland. Little wonder that the Ijebu saw the missionaries as the British agents who should be relentlessly kept out of their territory. The reaction of the British to the hostility of the Ijebu was the opening up of the western route which, using the Lagos Lagoon, by-passed Ijebu territory resulting in a tremendous decline in trade passing through the area.

The Ijebu also exercised the fear of political domination by Ibadan. Hence they had sought through the

14. Ibid.

control of trade from Lagos to starve Ibadan of arms and ammunition. And by taking advantage of the Eastern route just opened by the British, Ibadan was able to obtain arms and ammunition from Lagos in furtherance of her ambition of dominating the entire Yorubaland.¹⁵

The anti-British stance of the Ijebu was so great that when Captain G.C. Denton, the Colonial Secretary, became Acting Governor of Lagos following Moloney's retirement, he saw the need to secure a peaceful solution to the problem of non-cooperation of the Ijebu. Denton visited the Awujale of Ijebu where he presented him with some customary presents but the Oba refused to accept the presents. Denton viewed the action as a calculated insult on his person.¹⁶

This incident did not go unnoticed by the British. The British Government decided to use coercive measures against the Ijebu. Consequently, when Sir Gilbert Carter succeeded Denton, he (Carter) demanded an apology from the Ijebu over the shabby treatment meted out to former Governor Denton by ^{the} Awujale in 1891.¹⁷

15. Ibid., p.55.

16. See M. Crowder, op. cit., p. 206.

17. Ibid.

In fact, on his arrival in Lagos in September 1892, Carter was determined to deal ruthlessly with the Ijebu. As a result of this, he wrote a letter to the Awujale of Ijebu-Ode in December 1892 demanding for deputation to be sent to Lagos to apologise for an alleged insult meted out to Denton in 1891. Although the deputation was accordingly sent, nevertheless, Carter went beyond the purpose of the meeting by castigating the Ijebu for stubbornness in refusing to accommodate missionaries. He then requested them to sign a treaty which would guarantee free trade and abolish tolls in return for £500 annual subsidy from Lagos. Despite the fact that the delegation refused to sign the treaty, Carter got a few Ijebu based in Lagos to sign.¹⁸

Naturally, the Missionaries and the Ibadan people who had always smarted under the stranglehold which the Ijebu had over trade, took advantage of the treaty. And to demonstrate their discontent over the fact that a free trade treaty had not been signed with the British by the accredited representatives of the Ijebu people, the Ijebu decided to close their trade routes once again,

18. O. Ikime, The Fall of Nigeria, op. cit., p. 56.

much to the chagrin of Governor Carter who accused them of breaking the trade treaty with impunity.¹⁹

Meanwhile, the Awujale accused Rev. D. Olubi of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) of bringing the Europeans into his territory as well as passing European goods through Ijebu-Ode through his (Olubi) son. The Awujale, therefore, demanded the heads of Rev. Olubi and Rev. T. Harding, his English colleague whom he saw as an accomplice. In the circumstance, the Ibadan alerted Sir Carter of the threat and the need to nip it in the bud.²⁰

In a swift reaction, Governor Carter got the Colonial Office to sanction a punitive military expedition against the Ijebu. The Ijebu expedition lasted from 12th to 15th May, 1892.²¹ During the four-day expedition, the Ijebu army comprising over 7,000 men were defeated by the British forces numbering less than 1,000 soldiers. Although the Ijebu forces put up a stout resistance,

19. Ibid.

20. M. Crowder, op. cit., p.206 •

21. See O. Ikime, op. cit., p.56 and E. Isichei, A History of Nigeria, (Longman, 1893), p.365.

they were mowed down by the British forces with superior military weapons. However, the fact remains that the Ijebu was one Yoruba group which really engaged the British in combat in defence of their sovereignty.²²

It is instructive to note that some Ibadan soldiers served in the British force that defeated the Ijebu. The reason for this is not far-fetched. The Ibadan wanted the Ijebu to be routed so as to pave the way for them for direct trade with Lagos. Unfortunately, they did not realise that by the 1890's the pre-occupation of the British was to secure political control of the hinterland of Yorubaland. Thus in 1893, the British stationed the first Resident and Travelling Commissioner in Ibadan as well as established a garrison there. Captain R.L. Bower, the Resident and Travelling Commissioner, had orders to bring not only Ibadan but also Oyo, Ekiti and Ijesa under British rule. And by 1897, a Resident had been appointed for the Ekiti-Ijesa area.²³

22. O. Ikime, op. cit., p.57.

23. Ibid. Details of this will be discussed later.

The defeat of the Ijebu generally over-awed some other Yoruba groups. In fact, the British were able to secure unfettered commercial intercourse between the Coast and the interior of Yorubaland. Thus following the defeat of the Ijebu, the Egba people sent emissaries to Governor Carter apologising over their closure of trade routes against the British in the past.²⁴ Encouraged by these developments, Sir Gilbert Carter set out in early 1893 on his famous trek in which he effectively brought Yorubaland under British influence, if not control. At Abeokuta, Carter signed a treaty with the Chiefs whereby all disputes between the Egba and the British were to be settled by the Governor. Other provisions of the treaty were the abolition of human sacrifice and that roads were only to be closed with the consent of the British. In effect, a British Protectorate had been established in Egbaland.²⁵

In 1898, the Egba accepted the so-called Egba United Government and a British Commissioner was stationed in Abeokuta. Although the Commissioner was

24. M. Crowder, op. cit., p.207.

25. Ibid.

expected to act as an Ambassador, however, he acted more like a British Resident. And when the Egba decided to resist British encroachment on their mistaken 'sovereignty' they, like the Ijebu, were crushed by the superior military force of the British in August 1914.²⁶ By this development, Egbaland was formally brought under British rule.

I would now discuss the advent of the British to Oyo. It would be recalled that the Egba had welcomed the missionaries to their land since 1846. The missionaries had helped the Egba in their war against Dahomey by providing them with arms and ammunition as well as instructing them (the Egba) how to manipulate the weapons effectively. Alaafin Adeyemi I, who ascended the throne in 1875, had expressed the hope that the missionaries would do the same thing for him i.e. assist him in dislodging the Dahomeans from the Oke Ogun area.²⁷ The Dahomeans had begun a series of raids on the Oke Ogun area in 1881.²⁸ The Alaafin

26. O. Ikime, The Fall of Nigeria, op. cit., p.58.

27. Ibid.

28. For the nature of the Dahomean menace see J.A. Atanda, 'Dahomean Raids on Oke Ogun Towns, 1881-1890: An Episode in 19th Century Yoruba - Dahomey Relations', Historia, iii, April, 1966, pp.1-12.

and the Oke Ogun people could not muster enough force to check the menace of the Dahomeans. Only the Ibadan were capable of achieving this feat but could not render the required assistance while the Kiriji war lasted.²⁹

In the circumstance, therefore, Abraham Fasina Foster, the C.M.S. agent in Iseyin, requested the Alaafin to approach the Lagos Government to help in ending the Kiriji war. The Alaafin then wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor, who was then the head of the Administration in Lagos, soliciting British help in ending the Kiriji war. Initially, the Lagos Government showed a lukewarm attitude towards the matter. However, following persistent appeals by the Alaafin, his Chiefs and some other Yoruba Oba to the Lagos Government, it (Lagos Government) accepted the invitation to intervene in 1886. Thus a treaty was signed between the warring parties thus bringing the Ekiti-parapo-Ibadan war to an end. Alaafin Adeyemi I was one of the signatories to the Peace Treaty. And by 1893, the Yoruba wars had been brought to an end. The Alaafin was soon disenchanted that instead of assisting him in his wars against Dahomey and Ilorin,

29. See J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire: Indirect rule and change in Western Nigeria, 1894-1934, (London, Longman, 1973), p.46.

the British gradually began to push their influence and power into his territory.³⁰

The British started to establish their authority formally in the Oyo area in 1894. In that year, Captain Bower had interfered in the internal strife among the Chiefs of Okeiho. Okeiho was a regrouping of Eleven (11) towns namely Isia, Olele, Isemi, Imoba, Igboje, Oke Ogun, Ogan, Bode, Pamo, Alubo and Ijo during the early 19th Century wars. The Onjo, the ruler of Ijo, was recognised as the overall head of the newly constituted town of Okeiho.³¹ The Okeiho amalgamation was one in which the other towns migrated to Ijo for protection. The enlarged settlement was named Okeiho with ten (10) refugee towns forming separate quarters of the new town. But after the Fulani and Dahomey menace had subsided, the other head Chiefs were no longer prepared to recognise the authority of the Onjo. What they wanted was that one of them should replace the Onjo as the overall authority or a situation whereby ~~the~~ Onjo would merely be a puppet who could be easily manipulated.³²

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p.57.

32. J.A. Atanda, Ibid., p.57.

This was the nature of the Okeiho politics when Captain R.L. Bower assumed duty as Resident and Travelling Commissioner. Early in 1894, Labiyi, the Onjo, was deposed by his Chiefs obviously for refusing to be a puppet. He was replaced by one Itihanlu. This was done without reference to the Alaafin of Oyo who had earlier approved the appointment of Labiyi as the Onjo. Naturally, the Alaafin disapproved the appointment but since he (Alaafin) had no means of punishing the Chiefs or imposing his will on them, he accepted the offer of Captain Bower, who had heard of the incident, to help him restore Labiyi. The Alaafin erroneously thought that the invitation extended to Bower was nothing more than a continuation of the effort of the British to end any form of strife in Yorubaland. In this regard, the Alaafin miscalculated. Bower's interest was to use the occasion as a pretext to establish British Authority in Okeiho. In fact, effort had been made by the Lagos Government to establish its influence at Okeiho independent of the Alaafin.³³

33. Ibid., p.58.

Accordingly, Captain Bower proceeded to Okeiho with a few soldiers in 1894 and restored Labiyi, banishing Itihanlu to Iseyin. The Alaafin, thinking that his authority was being enhanced by the British by restoring Labiyi, decided to punish the Chiefs who deposed Labiyi. Consequently, the Alaafin sent Kudefu, a principal Ilari, to Okeiho demanding the heads of the affected Chiefs. But the Alaafin mis-fired as the Chiefs became more desperate and daring by deposing Labiyi again and enthroning Itihanlu. Captain Bower left for Okeiho in company of Labiyi with a view to restoring the latter. On his way, he stopped over at Iseyin on 18th October, 1895 to inquire into a case which had earlier been reported to him. It was in respect of one Bakare who had been charged with having an affair with one of the Oba's wives and sent to the Alaafin of Oyo to be castrated.³⁴ It was the custom in the Oyo area that any person found guilty of having sexual intercourse with the Alaafin's wives or that of one of the important vassal Chiefs like the Aseyin of Iseyin would either be sentenced to death or castrated. The objective of the stiff penalty was to discourage, if not prevent, immoral sexual relations with the Oba's wives. When

34. Ibid., p.60. See also O. Ikime, op. cit., p.116.

caught, a culprit was often allowed to make a choice between death and castration. However, the choice of castration was sometimes encouraged to enable the Alaafin recruit more personnel into the category of his palace officials made up of Eunuchs³⁵.

Against this background, it was obvious that the action taken by the Aseyin and the Alaafin against Bakare was perfectly legal in accordance with tradition. Neither did it violate any treaty signed by the British with the Alaafin. However, for fear of Bower's soldiers, the Aseyin dared not argue with the Resident on the legality of the action taken against Bakare. Rather, he apologised profusely to Bower for forgiveness. Apparently encouraged by the Aseyin's capitulation, Captain Bower sent a message from Iseyin to the Alaafin asking for Bakare. He (Bower) thought the Alaafin, like the Aseyin, would tremble, make confessions and apologise on receiving the message. But Captain Bower was proved wrong. Since no one had ever questioned his predecessor in dealing with such cases, the Alaafin must have been amazed, if not amused, that Bower was questioning his traditional right to deal with a case in his domain. Thus the Alaafin merely sent a reply that Bakare had escaped. On receiving the

35. J. A. Atanda, op. cit., p.61.

message, Captain Bower made up his mind to deal with the Alaafin after restoring Labiyi to the throne at Okeiho. He, therefore, proceeded to Okeiho to restore Labiyi. After staying for five days, Bower left a detachment of 12 soldiers, on Labiyi's request, to stay for a month or more to enforce the restoration.³⁶

Thereafter, Captain Bower proceeded to Oyo. He arrived in the town on 8th November, 1895 with Captain Mugliston and 60 soldiers. In spite of the mutual ill-feelings between them over the Bakare issue, the Alaafin accorded Captain Bower and his entourage a warm reception. However, Captain Bower was too impatient to reciprocate the respect.³⁷

In fact, according to Ayandele, "Bower's manners in the Palace of Oyo were brusque, hectoring and peremptory from the out-set"³⁸. Indeed, Captain Bower was the aggressor in the Bower - Oyo conflict. Having thrown qualms and mutual respect to the winds, Captain Bower requested the Alaafin to hand over Kedefu and Bakare to

36. Ibid., p.62.

37. Ibid., p.65.

38. See E.A. Ayandele, 'The Mode of British Expansion in Yorubaland in the second half of the Nineteenth Century: The Oyo Episode', ODU, ii, 2, 1967, p.18.

him. The Alaafin refused bluntly to meet Bower's demands. In fact, Bakare had been killed before Captain Bower's arrival in Oyo. The Alaafin later wrote a letter to Captain Bower at the place where he resided to explain that Bakare had been castrated in accordance with tradition.³⁹

This notwithstanding, Captain Bower went to see the Alaafin the following day with all his 60 soldiers and Captain Mugliston.⁴⁰ The soldiers were armed to the teeth. At the sight of the soldiers at the Akesan market, a hostile crowd of Oyo people started to gather. They were armed with dane guns, cutlasses etc ready to resist Bower should he launch an attack on the Alaafin's palace. At the sight of the surging crowd, Bower ordered his soldiers to fall in and he himself fired two gunshots thus killing a man and wounding eight others.⁴¹ After realising that Captain Bower was determined to shell the town, the Oyo Chiefs made desperate attempts to sue for peace. They installed white flags at the Palace as an

39. See J.A. Atanda, op. cit., p.66.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p.68.

Olive branch but this was to no avail. The field gun and the maxim were already 'placed in a position under a large tree near Iseyin gate and trained upon the town upon the area on which the palace stood'.⁴²

Consequently, at 7.30 a.m. on 12th November, 1895, Captain Bower and his troops shelled Oyo. In fact, by mid-day the exercise had been completed.⁴³ The Alaafin's palace and about half of the town had been destroyed by fire thus rendering thousands of people homeless. Meanwhile, Alaafin Adeyemi I had escaped from the Palace to his farm at Owinni on the Ogbomoso road. Thereafter, he was restored to the throne following appeals to Captain Bower by the Oyo Chiefs. Thus, by the use of naked force, Captain Bower established British authority over Oyo.⁴⁴

Although the bombardment of Oyo by Bower was indefensible, callous and high-handed, nevertheless, Governor Gilbert Carter surprisingly commended Captain Bower for this apparent act of carnage at Oyo. This could be explained against the background of the overall policy

42. See S.G. Pinnock, The Romance of Missions in Nigeria, (Richmond, Virginia, 1971), p.74.

43. Ibid.

44. J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p.73.

of establishing British authority in Yorubaland. As a result of the bombardment of Oyo by Captain Bower in 1895, the Oyo Chiefs and people not only accepted the supremacy of the British but also became subservient to the British Colonial Authority thereafter. For instance, when Captain Neal and a detachment of Hausa soldiers were stationed in Oyo after the bombardment of 1895, the Alaafin could not question the propriety of their presence or make representations for their removal from his domain. Secondly, when the Okeiho and Iseyin people resisted certain innovations in British Administration in 1916-17, the Alaafin and the people of Oyo ironically stood behind the British officials.⁴⁵ Rather than joining forces with the protesters to present a united front against British colonialism, the Oyo people warned the Iseyin and Okeiho people of the disastrous consequences of resisting the British.⁴⁶

It would appear that the bitter experiences of the bombardment of their town in 1895 still lingered in the minds of the Oyo people at the time. In fact, the bitter lesson like that of the Ijebu expedition

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

of 1892, was not lost to some other parts of the Yorubaland which had no alternative other than to acquiesce to the imposition of British Administration. I shall now discuss the prelude to the British occupation of Ekitiland.

Ekitiland witnessed an intensive military warfare in the Nineteenth Century. The Bini attacked Akure in about 1818 A.D. under the command of the Ezemo, the Erebo, the Ologbotsere and the Imaran and the town was subjugated. The Deji of Akure, Oba Osuan, was executed while Prince Adesoro (who later became Deji Osupa t'a do la wa) was captured as hostage.⁴⁷ Similarly, the Bini army under the leadership of Omumu or Omemu invaded Ogotun,⁴⁸ Ado,⁴⁹ Aramoko,⁵⁰ Ijero,⁵¹ and the southern

47. See details of the war in T.S. Adeloje, The Origin and Development of the Monarchy in Akure from the earliest times to 1897, op. cit., pp.91-97 and S.A. Akintoye, 'The North-eastern Yoruba District and the Benin Kingdom', Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol.IV, No.4, June 1969, p.552.

48. J.U. Egbarevba, A Short History of Benin, Third Edition, (Ibadan University Press, 1960), pp.45-47 and (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, (C.S.026/29762), Intelligence Report on Ogotun District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, pp.7-8.

49. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, (C.S.026/29734 Vol.i), Intelligence Report on Ado District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, pp.18-19 and A. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, (Akure, Aduralere Printing Press, 1952), p.36.

50. (N.A.I.), H.F. Marshal, (CS026/29834), Intelligence Report on Ara District, Ekiti Division Ondo Province, p.6. 1932, p.6.

51. (N.A.I.), ONDO PROF.1/1/906/Vol.ii, Intelligence Report on Ijero-Ekiti 1936-55, p.1.

parts of Otun. In some places, the Bini removed the population of subordinate towns to places outside their Kingdoms. For instance, it is stated that the Bini forces carried off the people of Igbemo, Afao, Are, Igbo Omoba (now Ilu Omoba) in Ado kingdom, Iroko and Idao in Ijero kingdom and resettled them at Ikere-Ekiti where there was already a Bini garrison.⁵² Ikere was thus transformed into a mighty town capable of threatening neighbouring kingdoms. In a sense, it can be argued that the Benin invasion of the early nineteenth century marked the end of an epoch in the Military tradition of the kingdoms in Ekitiland in which wars were not fought mainly for the purpose of annexation. Hitherto, Resident consuls were not stationed in vanguard kingdoms as was the case generally in accordance with Yoruba custom. However, the Bini stationed consuls in Aramoko, Akure, etc to extort tributes.⁵³

Also, as from 1845, the Ilorin-Fulani made an incursion into Ekitiland. They conquered Otun, Isan, Ido, Ijero, Ara, Oye, Ire, Egosi and Ikole.⁵⁴

52. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, (CSO 26/29799), Intelligence Report on Ikere District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, p.12 and S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.549.

53. (N.A.I.), H.F. Marshal CSO26/29834, Intelligence Report on Ara District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, PP.6-7 and S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., pp.550-551.

Similarly, Ibadan army, ostensibly protecting the entire Yoruba country from the Ilorin-Fulani as well as responding to an invitation by Oba Adifagbade, the Oore of Otun, intervened in 1847 in the Otun-Aaye conflict and since then began the invasion of the Ekiti country.⁵⁵ Thereafter, Ibadan conquered Ikoro, Ijero as well as Ara. in 1852.⁵⁶ The army also campaigned in Efon-Alaaye, Iyapa (now Aiyetoro), Isan and Itaji.⁵⁷ Ibadan led military expeditions into the Ado Kingdom as well as Ise.⁵⁸ Ibadan army also overran the territory stretching

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54. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper and A.C.C. Swayne, CS026/31015 Intelligence Report on Ido District, EKITI DIV.1/1/198A Vol.ii, p.3 and P.A. Talbot, The people of Southern Nigeria, (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1969), Vol.1, pp.16, 17 & 19.
55. See Enclosure 2 in No 26, Oore, king of Otun etc 20 April, 1886 in Comd.5957, British Parliamentary Papers Vol.63, Nigeria, op. cit., p.67 and K.V. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province, (London, 1921), p.17.
56. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29799, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, and Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., pp.318-320.
57. (N.A.I.), Captain Vosper, Intelligence Report on Efon District Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1934, p.10, N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Itaji District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1934, p.6.
58. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, p.24 and Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.232.

from Ifaki to Ayede and Omu-Ijelu.⁵⁹

As a result of these military incursions into Ekitiland, many towns and villages were sacked while many people were taken as slaves with the result that there was depopulation in some towns like Aramoko, Itaji, Ado and Akure.⁶⁰ Also, Ibadan stationed Ajeles (Resident Consuls) in Aramoko, Ijero, Itaji, Ado, Ise, Okemesi⁶¹ while Ilorin consuls were stationed in Isan, Otun, Ayede and Ikole.⁶² The Ajele (Resident consul) maintained a cohort of household officials and enforced compliance with the imperial decrees of their respective authorities. They collected tributes (in form of cowries, kola and other form of palm produce) as well as tolls on goods from people entering the various kingdoms where they were stationed. The Ajele lived and behaved like potentates. In fact, they were, more often than not,

59. See (N.A.I.), H.F. Marshal, Intelligence Report on Ara District, op. cit., p.6. N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1934, pp.11-13.

60. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Itaji District, op. cit., p.6. and A. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., p.46.

61. W.H.C. Clarke, Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland 1845-1858 (ed.) J.A. Atanda, (Ibadan University Press, 1972), p.120.

62. K.V. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province, (London, 1921), pp.16, 17 and 19.

the de facto rulers of these kingdoms.⁶³ Nevertheless, they had a great loyalty to their imperial overlords since they were usually recruited from the vanquished states or towns. For example, Alomeja, the first consul in Ade-Ekiti, was an Ijesa man while Opale, his successor, was from Aramoko. In the same breath, Atere, the Ibadan's Ajele at Ise-Ekiti, was an Ijesa man.⁶⁴

Generally, wars and conflicts in Ekitiland before colonial rule occurred for a number of reasons: Firstly, some of the wars were fought to contain the imperial ambition of some states or kingdoms. Secondly, some were punitive expeditions against neighbours for aiding an enemy during war. For example, the war between Ado and Ikere was the culmination of the hostility between the two kingdoms arising from the assistance which Ikere gave to the Ibadan army during the siege of Ado in January 1873.⁶⁵ In fact, the 'unprovoked war'⁶⁶

63. W.H. Clarke, op. cit., pp.120-123.

64. See A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., pp.46, and 48.

65. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, op. cit., p.13 and J.O. Olubobokun Odofin Okelawe, Itan Iyin, (Yaba, Forward Press, 1952), p.20.

66. See Rev. S. Johnson, History of the Yorubas op. cit., p.390.

declared by Ibadan on Ado in 1875 was partly due to the aid which the latter gave to Aramoko against Ibadan in the 1852-1854 war,⁶⁷ and partly due to the participation of Ado in the Igbo Alawun war (This forest was located between Ogotun and Igbara-Odo) during which Ijesa, Akure and Ado-Ekiti formed a military alliance against Ise in 1874/75⁶⁸.

There was also a desire for territorial aggrandisement. Some local warrior Chiefs like Esubiyi of Ayede, Fabunmi of Imesi-Igbodo and Aduloju of Ado waged war with their private armies against weaker neighbouring communities in Ekitiland for trivial reasons to masquerade their territorial aggrandisement.⁶⁹ Some of the warrior Chiefs brought home war booties like slaves, weapons which enhanced their status.

Moreover, the maladministration of the Ajele over the Ijesa and Ekiti people sparked off a revolt against Ibadan imperialism.⁷⁰ The opportunity was provided by

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67. See A. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., p.390.
68. T.O. Jegede, Iwe Itan Ise-Ekiti, (Ibadan, Micho Printing Works, n.d.), pp.28-45, J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati agbegbe re, op. cit., p.258 and A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., p.44, T.S. Adeloye, op. cit., p.117 and Msgr A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.73.
69. Interview, Msgr A.O. Oguntuyi, on 4th July, 1986. See also G.O.I. Olomola, Pre-colonial patterns of Inter-State Relations in Eastern Yorubaland, Ph.D.Thesis, Ife, 1977, p.252.
70. T.S. Adeloye, op.cit., p.120. See also S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, op. cit., Introduction, p.xviii.

the explosive situation created at Imesi-Igbodo (Okemesi) through the killing of an Ajele by Fabunmi Ologbenla, a Prince in the town.⁷¹ One of the Ajele stationed there was alleged to have stolen the food which one of Fabunmi's wives was carrying to a man who had sewn a piece of cloth for her. The woman reported the incident to Fabunmi who, out of annoyance, killed the Ajele and his Ibadan followers except one who was asked to report the incident at Ibadan.⁷² In fact, a pogrom of over 400 Oyo residents at Okemesi was carried out.⁷³ Fabunmi, then under 30 years of age, raised a banner of rebellion against the mighty power of Ibadan.⁷⁴

71. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/4/30014, Intelligence Report on Akure District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1934, para.28.

72. S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.90.

73. See S.O. Ojo, the Bada of Saki, Itan Oyo, Ikoyi ati Afijio, op. cit., p.111, A.O. Awolo, Awon Itan Atijo, (Ebute Metta, 1955), p.22 and Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., pp.429, 439 and 469.

74. S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.90.

Apparently, in anticipation of Ibadan's reaction to the killings, Fabunmi urged the Oloja of Imesi-Igbodo to summon all the Ekiti Oba to Imesi-Igbodo and prepare for war.⁷⁵ There was a positive response among Ekiti Oba to this clarion call except the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti and the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti who were then at war with each other.⁷⁶ Consequently, the Ekiti came together with the Ijesa, Akoko and Igbomina people to form the Ekitiparapo,⁷⁷ in 1878.⁷⁸ This was a multi-state organisation formed for the objective of liberating their communities from the imperial yoke of Ibadan. Ilorin, Ife and Ijebu later joined the alliance to stop Ibadan's ravages as well as its attempt to assume the leadership of

75. Ibid., p.91 and Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, p.75.

76. A. Oguntuyi, Ibid.

77. The word "Parapo" is a contraction of "Pe ara po" which means "call many people together". See (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para.28. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi explained it as "Ekiti come together". See A. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.75. However, Akintoye suggested that the name was probably imported into the interior by the Ekiti educated elite based in Lagos. See S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.75.

78. See S.A. Akintoye, Ibid., pp.77-80, B. Awe, 'The end of an experiment: the collapse of Ibadan empire 1877-1893, J.H.S.N., Vol.3, No.2 December, 1965, pp. 263-265 and British Parliamentary papers, cmd 4957, op. cit., pp.70-74.

the entire Yoruba country.⁷⁹

At the inauguration of the Association, four Ekiti Oba namely the Elekole of Ikole, the Ajero of Ijero, the Alara of Aramoko and the Alaaye of Efon were present. Representatives of some Oba were present. The Owa of Ilesa sent Ogedemgbe, the Orangun of Ila and the Oore of Otun sent a Balogun each (War Captain) while the Deji of Akure sent Sao Ofobutu who was accompanied by the Ajana, the Odoo, the Imi, and the Olusogan⁸⁰. Some other Ekiti Oba sent troops to the Ekitiparapo. Such Oba included the Olojudo of Ido (who sent Faboro), the Oloye of Oye (who sent Olugbosun), the Atta of Ayede, the Onisan of Isan, the Onitaji of Itaji, the Olosi of Osi and the Owa of Osun-Ekiti.⁸¹

79. Ogunsigun, the Seriki of the Ijebus, to His Excellency the Governor of Lagos, 26 April, 1886 in cmd. 4957, op. cit., and Derin, Chief of Oke-Igbo and King-elect of the Ifes to His Excellency, Captain A.C. Moloney, CMG, Governor of Lagos, 28 April, 1886 in cmd. 4957 British Parliamentary Papers, op. cit., p.74.

80. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para 28 and J.O. Atandare, op. cit., pp.260-262.

81. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.76.

What followed was the Kiriji war which began on 1st November, 1878 when the Ibadan took the field against the Ekitiparapo and their allies.⁸² The members of the Ekitiparapo society based in Lagos taxed themselves to buy gifts of ammunition for the Ekitiparapo movement. The society also sent troops of volunteers from Lagos to the Ekitiparapo forces to act as advisers and Secretaries to the war Chiefs.⁸³ The war dragged on until 1886.⁸⁴

An armistice was signed in September 1886 while the agreement on the termination of hostilities was signed in March 1893. The armistice of 1886 enacted for the abolition of human sacrifice and the treaty of March 1893 marking the termination of hostilities

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82. Prof. S.A. Akintoye has dated the war to 1879-1886. See S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.102. Also S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.99, S.A. Akintoye, 'The Economic background to the Ekitiparapo 1878-1893, ODU, Journal of African Studies, Unife, Vol.4, No.2, January, 1968, p.30, Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.439 and T.O. Jegede, Iwe Itan Ise Ekiti, op. cit., p.48.
83. See S.A. Akintoye, 'The Economic background of the Ekitiparapo 1878-1893, ODU, Vol.4, No.2, January, 1968, p.49.
84. See the details of this war in S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., pp.102-131, Oba T.A. Akinyele, Outline History of Ibadan, Part III, Revised and enlarged by Kemi Morgan, (Ibadan, The Carxon, Press Ltd., West Africa, n.d.), pp.72-85, Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., pp.440-493, D.F. Omidiran, Itan Ogun Ekitiparapo ati ti ilu Okemesi, ilu Agan, (Ibadan, 1955), pp.2-15 and O. Fagbamigbe, Ogun Kiriji, (Akure, 1978), pp.3-34.

between the Ekitiparapo and Ibadan formed the basis of the British occupation of Ekitiland.⁸⁵

The impact of the above-mentioned wars was grave. In the first place, the wars resulted in a widespread insecurity while the migrations and flight led to the desertion of houses, towns and villages. Secondly, by 1860's, some adventurous youths started to build private armies for themselves. Among them were Esubiyi of Iye who later founded Ayede and took the title of Ata (Oba of Ayede), Fabunmi of Okemesi Igbo Odo, Fasawo (called Aduloju) of Ado, the Olugbosun of Oye, Ala of Aisegba, Faboro of Ido, Ajana and Olotugbangba of Ise, etc.⁸⁶ Some of these private armies exploited the military weakness of their neighbouring kingdoms and declared war against them. For example, Aduloju attacked and captured Osi, a town in Ado kingdom, in utter disregard of an order from the Ewi Atewogboye and his Chiefs to cease hostility with the town (Osi).⁸⁷

85. S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., Appendix III, Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p.665 and (N.A.I.), CS05/IXXII and 5/2 XI Treaties with Ijesa, Idanre and Ekiti rulers.

86. See A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., pp.70 and 70 and S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893, op. cit., pp.76-77.

87. A. Oguntuyi, Aduloju Dodondawa, oko Ekiti, oko Akoko, (Ibadan, Ogun Press, 1971), p.27.

In fact, after the Ekitiparapo war, Aduloju's personal army, with its headquarters at Imesi-Lasigidi, not only raided Ikole for booty but went as far as Irun and Ogbagi in Akoko between 1893 and 1894.⁸⁸ He also carried his military campaign to the Afenmai country.⁸⁹ It was during the rise of these 'professional warrior Chiefs' that fire-arms like dane guns and ammunition were introduced in Ekitiland.⁹⁰ As earlier point out, indigenous weapons manufactured by blacksmiths namely matchets, daggers, axes, spears, etc., were used. Secondly, these professional warrior Chiefs adopted the military tactics of Ibadan in their warfare.

Also, the rise of this new class of leaders to prominence led to a new development in the traditional political organisation in some kingdoms in Ekitiland. Before the 19th century, the Oba and Chiefs in Ekitiland were the de jure authorities in their respective

88. Ibid., p.65. See also S.A. Akintoye, 'The North-eastern Yoruba District.', op. cit., p.553 and I.E. Babamuboni, Irohin Ekiti, n.d. p.8. in (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/287, EVI AND ELEKOLE.

89. G.O.I. Olomola, Pre-colonial Patterns of Inter-State relations, op. cit., p.242.

90. Interview, Msgr .O. Oguntuyi. See also G.O.I. Olomola, op. cit., p.284.

kingdoms. Although there were military Chiefs, they did not play any prominent role in the internal relations of the kingdoms. However, after the 19th century wars, the members of this military aristocracy became very powerful and influential men in their respective communities.⁹¹ In many instances, they became a law unto themselves and treated the civil authorities with disdain. They later superseded the traditional authorities and had influential voices in king-making.

In fact, on many occasions, they were the de facto rulers of their communities. The civil authorities seemed to have bowed to the pre-eminence of these military Chiefs in internal and external affairs particularly the latter. The "new war lords" and the powers they wielded represented a departure from the Yoruba tradition and also constituted a powerful challenge to the traditional leadership of the Oba and Chiefs. Their relationship with Oba was, more often than not, characterised by hostility.⁹²

91. Ibid.

92. S.A. Akintoye, 'The Military among the Yoruba of South-western Nigeria in the nineteenth century', A paper read at Accra in August, 1975, pp.21-22. See also Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., pp.377 and 384.

In view of the fact that the civil rulers could not curb these military aristocrats, they had to adjust themselves to the situation. This was the position of things before the advent of the British in Ekitiland towards the end of the Nineteenth century. In order to remedy the situation, the British started by stopping the harassment of military Chiefs and disbanding their armies.⁹³ Thus, military Chiefs like Fabunmi and Aduloju were arrested by the British.⁹⁴

The factors responsible for the British Occupation of Ekitiland

Three factors have been adduced by scholars as being responsible for the British occupation of Ekitiland. One School of thought⁹⁵ has put forward the view that it was the pressure mounted by commercial concerns which prompted the British Government, through the Lagos Administration, to intervene in the inter-state

93. Ibid., p.646.

94. See A. Oguntuyi, Aduloju Dodondawa, op. cit., p.53, A. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., p.57 (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/287, EWI AND ELEKOLE, p.8 and Enclosure 1 in No.12, Captain R.L. Bower to Hon. Acting Colonial Secretary, 4 June, 1894 and G.T. Carter, Governor to the Marquis of Ripon, Secretary of State for the colonies, 19 June, 1894 in CO 147/95.

95. (N.A.I.), CO147/60 Captain A. Moloney to Rt. Hon. Sir Henry F. Holland Bart, Secretary of State for the colonies, 19th September, 1887 in Colonial Office Records.

wars then ranging in parts of Yorubaland in general and Ekitiland in particular. It is claimed that the objectives of the commercial bodies was to strengthen the commercial position of Lagos which had been a British Colony since 1861 as well as a depot for their trade. According to this school, it was the hope of the commercial bodies that British intervention would engender peace thus facilitating the flow of the much-needed agricultural and industrial raw materials into the entire Yorubaland in general.

This view-point was predicated upon the ground that wars had adversely affected the flow of trade, a phenomenon which was of grave concern to the commercial bodies.⁹⁶ What is more, the British Government shared the optimism expressed by the commercial firms. Consequently, Captain G.C. Denton, the then Acting Governor of Lagos, expressed the view in 1899 that "the imports and exports of Lagos would soon nearly doubled" when the Ekitiparapo-Ibadan wars were ended.⁹⁷

96. Ibid.

97. See R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians: the official mind of Imperialism, (London, Macmillan and Co., 1965), p.387.

The second school of thought has put forward the argument that British occupation of Ekitiland was a product of the clarion call made by the missionary bodies on the British Government to intervene in the Kiriji war. It was the opinion of these missionary bodies that British intervention would guarantee peace as well as facilitate free movement of missionary agents, thus hastening the tempo of the spread of the gospel.⁹⁸ Hitherto, missionary activities were limited to the western part of Yorubaland especially the area coterminous with the present-day Oyo and Ogun States. Although the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) had established stations at Ile-Ife and Ibadan in 1856 as well as Ondo in 1875, these stations seemed to have stagnated because of the prevailing general insecurity in Yorubaland at the period.⁹⁹ Thus, the missionaries have been described as "the pathfinders of British influence in Yorubaland".¹⁰⁰ It would be recalled that missionary propaganda had been introduced in Badagary and Old

98. E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis, (Longman, 1966), p.33.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid., p.29.

Calabar as far back as 1842 and 1846 respectively, phenomenon which, according to Prof.E.A. Ayandele, marked a turning point in the political and social evolution of Nigeria.¹⁰¹ Before the end of 1896, mission stations had been established in Ado-Ekiti, Ijero, Akure, Ise and some other places in Ekitiland.¹⁰²

It is pertinent to point out that the British Government and the missionaries maintained a symbiotic relationship. The missionaries depended on the prestige of the government for their safety while the government used the missionary agents as a propaganda machinery to make Ekiti people accept colonial Administration.¹⁰³

Thus, it was common place for people to have the erroneous belief that the missionaries were the officials of the government and therefore used them as a go-between in their dealings with the government. Ekiti people also enlisted the assistance of the missionaries to write and read letters written to them by the British government.¹⁰⁴

101. Ibid., p.4.

102. See S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, op. cit., p.217.

103. Ibid., pp.217-8.

104. Ibid., p.218.

The third school of thought¹⁰⁵ has contended that the British Government used its mediatory role in the then ranging Kiriji War to occupy Ekitiland. As earlier stated, the Ijesa, Ekiti, Akoko and Igbomina people came together in 1878 to form the Ekitiparapo, a multi-state organisation whose objective was to liberate their communities from the shackles of Ibadan imperialism. This resulted in the Kiriji War which lasted from 1878-1893.¹⁰⁶ The initial peace effort made by the British was towards the signing of the 1886 Peace Treaty. The treaty was signed by the Ekitiparapo and Ibadan under the aegis of Messrs Henry Higgins, the Acting Colonial Secretary and Oliver Smith, a Queen's Advocate. The following were the signatories to the treaty on behalf of the Ekitiparapo Oba: Agunloye, the Owa of Ilesa, Okinbaloye, the Oore of Otun, Oyiyosaye, the Ajero of Ijero, Odundun, the Olojudo of Ido as well as Ogedemgbe, the Seriki (the Commander-in-Chief of the Confederation army) as well as Fabunmi, the Baloqun.¹⁰⁷

105. See Rev.S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., pp.663-665.

106. Ibid. See also B.A. Awe, The Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power in the Nineteenth Century, (D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1964), pp.273-328.

107. Ibid. See also S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., pp.236-240.

The treaty provided, inter alia, for the abolition of human sacrifice. The second treaty signed in March 1893 marked the termination of hostilities between the Ekitiparapo and Ibadan.¹⁰⁸ According to this school of thought, this formed the basis of British occupation of Ekitiland.

It has been argued that the validity of some of the treaties signed in Yorubaland generally following the advent of the British was questionable owing to language difficulties as well as fundamental "differences in the political concepts between the British and the indigenous communities".¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the British and the leaders of the Ekitiparapo did not fully understand themselves. The British neither spoke nor understood the Yoruba language. In the same vein, the leaders of the Ekitiparapo neither spoke nor understood the English language. Consequently, the British resorted to the use of interpreters such as Philip Jose Meffre, Charles Phillips, James Thompson and Samuel Johnson who were present at the Ekitiparapo camp

108. See the details of the Treaty in S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, Ibid., pp241-242.

109. See O. Adewoye, 'The judicial agreements in Yorubaland, 1904-1908', J.A.H., Vol.XII, No.4, 1971, p.607.

between 1886 and 1893.¹¹⁰ Aside from the fact that the mastery of the two languages by the interpreters during the transactions was very difficult, if not impossible to determine, many of them were interested parties who represented a group which had the objective of benefiting from the outcome of the treaties. For instance, Rev. Charles Phillips, who was one of the Interpreters and Intermediaries between the Ekitiparapo and the British officials, between 1886 and 1897, belonged to the Ondo mission. Secondly, Mr. T.A.J. Ogunbiyi, a catechist in Akure, interpreted for the British officials and garrison commander during their transactions with the Akure leaders in 1897.¹¹¹

Strictly speaking, the leaders of the Ekitiparapo did not actually understand the intentions of the treaties. As Lord Lugard rightly pointed out, African leaders would most probably have declined to sign treaties if they understood the implication on their

110. See S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., p.535 and J.H. Kopytoff, A Preface to modern Nigeria: the Sierra Leonians in Yoruba, 1830-1890, pp.196-7.

111. See J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati agbegbe re, (Akure, Duduyemi Commercial Press, 1972), p.71.

sovereignty.¹¹² The British officials generally often resorted to making vague promises, giving gifts as well as using coercion to obtain the assent of the indigenous authorities. Thus Oba and Chiefs in Yorubaland in general were given very little opportunity of making negotiation with the British officials who were accompanied by soldiers of the Lagos constabulary. Apparently, the soldiers were dreaded by the local communities due to their superior fire-arms and notoriety for ruthlessly getting down any opposition to British incursion.¹¹³ As a result of the foregoing, the Ekitiparapo leaders had to give their concurrence to the terms of the treaties.

Having regard to the foregoing, I am of the opinion that the views expressed by the three schools of thought could be collectively taken as being responsible for the British occupation of Ekitiland. In fact, I believe the three schools of thought on the issue are inter-related and complementary to one another. Evidently, there were pressures from both the commercial concerns

112. See details of this argument in Lord F. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965), pp.16, 17 & 18.

113. Inspector W. Higginson, Report on the Lagos Constabulary for the half year ending 31 December, 1894 in CO 147/98/Vol.1.

and missionary bodies for the British intervention in the Kiriji war, however, it would appear that the third school of thought best explains the British occupation of Ekitiland. As earlier stated, the British used ^{their} mediatory role in the Kiriji war to occupy Ekitiland. The signing of the 1886 and 1893 Peace Treaties was the effective weapon used by the British to achieve this goal though the Ekitiparapo Oba did not understand the implications of the treaties on their sovereignty. There is no doubt that by implication, the Ekiti Oba who signed the treaties had unwittingly ceded away their territory to the British. In other words, the British tactfully occupied Ekitiland through the signing of treaties. And unlike in Ijebu, Abeokuta and Oyo, no single shot was fired by the British before their occupation of Ekitiland.

British Occupation of Ekitiland

After signing treaties with the various Oba and Chiefs in the Yoruba hinterland, the British Government, in a bid to consummate its objective of total and effective occupation, stationed some Political Officers and troops of the Lagos Constabulary in some strategic

places.¹¹⁴ For example, two garrison posts were established at Odo-Otin, eight kilometres north-west of Ikirun as well as Igbobini in the Ilaje Country. The former garrison was manned by Captain L.B. Bower while the latter was headed by Major Erhardt.¹¹⁵

Captain Bower was transferred to Ibadan as Resident early in 1894. The area where he was Political Officer was coterminous with the present day Oyo and Osun States and the northern half of Ondo State excluding Owo and Akoko. He had his headquarters at Idi Ape¹¹⁶ in Ibadan with his 100 men of the Lagos constabulary. Although this constabulary was referred to as "Hausa", it was made up principally of men from the present-day Benue, Niger, Borno and some Yoruba-speaking states.¹¹⁷ Although the establishment of the garrisons led to a tremendous increase in the volume of trade, the exports

114. Captain A. Moloney, Governor to the Rt. Hon. Sr. Henry F. Holland Bart, op. cit..

115. See Walter Higginson, (Inspector of Hausa Force), Report on the Lagos constabulary for the half year ending 31 December, 1894 in CO 147/98, Vol.I.

116. This is situated along Iwo Road in Ibadan.

117. See A. Haywood and F.A. Clarke, The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force, (Aldershot, Gale and Polden, 1964), pp.15-16.

having risen 'to a quarter of a million sterling,'¹¹⁸ it is obvious that the ostensible reason for stationing the garrisons was to intimidate the people of the affected areas and consequently prevent them from putting up resistance to British occupation.

As mentioned earlier, the nineteenth century wars in Yorubaland led to the emergence of professional warrior Chiefs who constituted a danger to the civil authorities as well as the sovereignty of neighbouring communities. The situation reached a head with the disbandment of the Ekiti-parapo-Ibadan armies. In view of the fact that the primary objective of the British was the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the growth of import and export trade, Captain Bower was determined to launch a campaign of intimidation and repression against the Warrior Chiefs. Consequently, he drew up a list of leading Warrior Chiefs to be dealt with. The first was Ogedemgbe who was arrested at a meeting of Ilesa Chiefs in June 1894 and imprisoned at Iwo. His arsenal of rifles, dane guns, kegs of gunpowder, bullets and boxes of cartridges were impounded. Some of his 'war boys' were arrested while

118. See Sir W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria under British Rule, (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965), p.51.

the rest were disbanded.¹¹⁹

Thereafter, Captain Hawtayne, the successor of Bower, ordered the arrest of Chief Fabunmi. As a result of this order, Captain Reeve-Tucker, the Officer in charge of Odo-Otin garrison, arrested Chief Fabunmi with the aid of 20 Hausa men. He (Fabunmi) was then taken to the District Commissioner at Ibadan where he was sternly warned before being released.¹²⁰ Later on, Aduloju was arrested at Imesi-Lasigidi by officers and 30 Hausa men from the Odo-Otin garrison and was taken to Captain Tucker who warned him to desist from acts prejudicial to peace before he was released.¹²¹ Having regard to the fact that Chiefs Ogedemgbe, Fabunmi and Aduloju were the leading war Chiefs among the Ekiti and Ijesa, the news of their arrest and the disbandment of their private armies greatly enhanced the prestige of the British before the people. It also instilled fear into the people and enforced their belief in the invincibility of the British. It was also realised that no one was above arrest and punishment before the British.

119. See G.T. Carter, Governor to Macquis of Ripon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 19 June, 1894
CO 147/195.

120. See A. Oguntuyi, Aduloju Dodondawa, op. cit., p.65.

121. Ibid.

As earlier stated, the fear of the British was further strengthened as a result of the news of the military expedition against the Ijebu in 1892, the bombardment of Oyo on 12th November, 1895, the conquest of Nupé in January 1897 as well as the conquest of Benin and Ilorin in February of the same year.¹²²

It needs to be emphasised that the harassment by the British Political Officers through the use of 'Hausa' force as well as the arrest of war leaders drove the Ekiti communities into acquiescence. In fact, this state of affairs was least expected by the Oba and leaders of the Ekitiparapo who welcomed the British intervention as a kind gesture. It would be recalled that from the mid-1880's the Ekitiparapo and Ibadan leaders were already exhausted and had apparently over-stretched their human and material resources. Consequently, the belligerents regarded the British as peace-makers. For instance, Oba Adeyemi I, the then Alaafin of Oyo, is said to have contemplated paying the British Government for its services.¹²³

122. See Sir W.N.M. Geary, op. cit., pp.50-51, J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p.71 and P.A. Igbafe, Benin under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial rule on an African Kingdom 1897-1939, (Longman, 1979), p.89.

123. See S.O. Ojo, Itan Oyo, Ikoyi ati Afijio, op. cit., p.116.

In the same vein, Ogedemgbe, the Seriki of Ekitiparapo, sent greetings and presents to Governor Carter when the latter arrived at Ikirun early in March 1893 in a bid to personally end the war.¹²⁴ Similarly, Oba Aladesanmi I, the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, presented a beautiful elephant tusk to Oba Daddy, a slave of Ado origin who had just returned from captivity, for onward transmission to Captain Bower, the District Commissioner of the North-eastern District, for his commendable role in bringing the age-long Ado-Ikere war to an end.¹²⁵

Although the Ekiti people were grateful for the cessation of wars caused by the British intervention, it would be erroneous to draw the conclusion¹²⁶ that they willingly succumbed to British occupation. In fact, the Ekiti people were apparently cowed to submission by the 1892 Ijebu expedition, 1895 bombardment of Oyo, the conquest of Nupe, Ilorin and Benin in 1897. The stationing of garrisons in strategic places near Ekitiland was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Consequently, the Ekiti people could not put up any resistance to British occupation.

124. S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., pp.178-180, 210-211 and 238-242.

125. See A. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, op. cit., p.67.

126. This was the view expressed by Sir William Geary in respect of the British occupation of the entire Yorubaland. See Sir W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria under British Rule, op. cit., p.52.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION
IN EKITILAND, 1915-1920

Imposition of Colonial Rule

Having effectively occupied Yorubaland, the British felt that the whole land was too large and unwieldy to be supervised by the District Commissioner based in Ibadan; hence it was decided that a Resident be appointed to take charge of the Ekiti and Ijesa areas. Thus in April 1897, the Lagos Government proposed the appointment of an additional Resident (earning £600 per annum and having under his command a force of sixty Hausas) to take charge of the Ekiti-Ijesa areas.¹

In August 1897, Lt. A.O. Scott was sent to Akure with a small detachment of the Lagos Hausa force which had earlier been stationed at Oyo. He was ordered,

1. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 1/1/18, Denton to Chamberlain, 10 April, 1897. See also S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.219.

inter alia, to take charge of the country northward of Akure to the Ilorin boundary under the direction of the Resident of Ibadan. He was not to be absent from Akure for more than a few days at a time because of the unsettled nature of the country.² Captain Scott, whose official title was 'O/C Akure', was sent to the town at the request of Ralph Moor, the Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate who was of the view that Akure was strategically important to his pacification of Benin. Thus the Lagos Government agreed to accommodate a political agent of the Niger Coast Protectorate at Akure who would communicate with the Resident at Benin through Lt. Scott on matters affecting the Benin Chiefs then believed to be at large in the neighbouring forests following the punitive expedition against the town that year.³

Under this semi-military arrangement which lasted for a period of three years, the following officers served as 'O/C Akure': Captain A.O. Scott (August 1897.

2. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 1/1/19, Memorandum of Instruction to A. O. Scott, enclosure in McCallum to Chamberlain 5 August, 1897. See also L. C. Gwan, A preliminary Inventory of the Administrative Records assembled from Ondo Province, (1963), p.3.

3. See S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.220.

- February, 1898), Lt. L.N. Blackwell (February - July, 1888), Captain E.L. Cowie, (July 1898 - January, 1899), Captain H.V. Neal (January - February, 1899), Mr. F.P. Pinkett (February - May, 1899), Captain Neal (May - September, 1899), Dr. T.E. Price (September - October, 1899), Captain C. Anderson (October, 1899 - February, 1900) and Captain Cochrane (February - March, 1900).

After undertaking a tour of the Ekiti and Ijesa areas in 1897, an Acting Resident of Ibadan advised the British Government to use the Ekitiparapo as a basis of ruling the areas. He contended that the Ekiti and Ijesa areas should be ruled from Ilesa. This advice was based on the erroneous belief of British Political officers that the Owa of Ilesa was the leader of the Ekitiparapo.⁴ Consequently, in order to ensure an efficient administration, the British Colonial Government in Lagos broke Eastern Yorubaland into two districts namely Eastern and North-eastern in 1899. The

4. (N.A.I), Iba. Prof. 3/6 Notes attached by F.C. Fuller to Ibadan Residents' Travel Journal, 1897. See also C.S.O. 1/1/18, Mc Callum to Moor, 2 June, 1897.

Eastern District comprised Ondo, Idanre, Ikale and Ilaje communities with its headquarters at Ondo while the North-eastern district consisted of Ekiti, Ijesa and a greater part of the Igbomina country. The headquarters of the District was sited at Ilesa in November, 1899. It was removed to Oke-Imo⁵ (Imo Hill) in April, 1900 where it remained until the dissolution of the district in December, 1912.

The objective of creating the District was to ensure that colonial administration was brought nearer to the people. In fact, the District effectively superseded the former garrisons set up at Odo-Otin and Akure for expeditionary force as well as police duties designed to overawe the local populations into compliance with treaty terms and guarantee the protection of trade.⁷ Thereafter, the North-eastern District was placed under a Travelling Commissioner stationed at Ilesa and given wide military, administrative and judicial powers for the overa

5. The site is behind Babalola Memorial Grammar School, Ilesa.

6. See Church Missionary Intelligencer, A monthly Journal Christian Information, Vol. XXII, New Series, p. 106-108

7. See W.N.M. Geary, op. cit., p.5

objective of maintaining law and order.⁸

In November, 1899, Major W.R. Reeve-Tucker, the first Travelling Commissioner for the North-eastern District, arrived Ilesa. On 21st June, 1900, Captain Cochrane, the last 'O/C Akure', formally handed over the detachment at Akure to him.⁹ Tucker had at his disposal soldiers and the police who were to put down any organised resistance in his bid to maintain law and order. These officers were provided with residential quarters "equipped with a clerk's house, a guard room, a goal house, 2 store rooms, a 'palaver' hut and servants' quarters."¹⁰ In fact, the apparatus set up in 1899 provided the weapons with which the British began the steady and systematic destruction of the erstwhile autonomy of the Ekiti Kingdoms.

8. S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. 220.

9. W.R. Reeve-Tucker, Travelling Commissioners' Travel Diary, entry for 21 June, 1900.

10. See the Lagos Annual Report for the year, 1900 - 1901, pp. 2 and 17.

Presumably to familiarise himself with the people of the district, Major Reeve-Tucker undertook a tour of the District between December 1899 and 26th February, 1901. According to his diary entries, Reeve-Tucker visited Aiyede and Agbado on 9th January, 1900, Ijan on 13th January and Ado-Ekiti on 14th January, 1900. He also visited Igbara-Odo between 31st January and 1st February, 1900 and on 21st March, 1900 he visited Are and Iworoko.¹¹ In August, 1900, Tucker visited Osi, Ode and Lasigidi. Early in 1901, he resumed his tour by visiting Ilawe, Igede, Iyin, Esure, Iropora, Awo and Eyio.¹²

Tucker's policy during the tour was to assemble all the Baale of the neighbouring communities in some metropolitan towns and enforce their submission to the paramount Oba of the area. In fact, on 26th February,

11. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 73.

12. Ibid., para. 75.

1900, he informed the Colonial Secretary in Lagos that he had completed a tour of the North-eastern District in accordance with the directive of the Governor adding that:

"I have called in all the tributary villages to the Capitals of the several Ekiti Kingdoms and have placed the Baales securely under their kings. The Baales who were endeavouring to make themselves independent, a lingering remnant of their old wars and disputes, I have effectively placed under their proper kings."¹³

What is more, Reeve-Tucker was very high-handed in the way he treated these towns and villages. For instance, he fined the Olosi of Osi a sum of £5 (₦10.00) for refusing to prostrate himself for the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti on 18th January, 1900.¹⁴ Secondly, despite

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13. See (N.A.I.), NAC Weir, Ekiti Div. 1/1/613, The broad outlines of the past and present organisation in the Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, (13 Feb. 1934), pp. 62-5 and 153-160.
14. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para 73. See also Reeve-Tucker's Travelling Diary, entries for December, 1899 and January, 1900. Reeve Tucker's Diary.

the vehement protest of the people of Ido-Irapa, he informed them that they were under the suzerainty of the Alaaye of Efon.¹⁵

The Travelling Commissioner's action of assembling the Baale of neighbouring communities in some metropolitan towns to enforce submission to a paramount Oba went a long way in destroying the erstwhile autonomy of some of the rulers of the communities involved. Unknown to the colonial officers, some of the so-called Baale were independent heads of their mini-states and to subject them to submission to any paramount Oba was very unfair.¹⁶ As will be seen in Chapter Four, the British designated some paramount Oba "Native Authorities" who served as intermediaries between the Colonial Administration and the people of the District. Under the new dispensation, these Oba were vested with powers far in excess of

15. Ibid.

16. G.O.I. Olomola, op. cit., p.331.

what they actually possessed in the pre-colonial era. This phenomenon dealt a fatal blow to the autonomy of the small states.¹⁷

Similarly, a fine of five pounds (£5) was imposed on the Onijan of Ijan while the Owa of Igbara-Odo was severely reprimanded.¹⁸ The Olowa of Igbara-Oke, and the Olojudo of Ido,¹⁹ were similarly dealt with.²⁰ This action was taken by the Travelling Commissioner with the objective of destroying the desire of 'petty chiefdoms' to retain their old autonomy with a view to reducing the arduous task of coping with the administration of innumerable chiefdoms. The Oba in Ekitiland regarded the Commissioner's action as an evidence that the British Colonial authorities were the defenders of their rights over their old kingdoms and vassals.

17. (N.A.I.), A.F. Bell, EKITI DIV. 1/1/ED.444, OTUN DISTRICT pp.3-4, N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., p.5, Captain R.A. Vosper, Intelligence Report on Okemesi District, op. cit., CSO26/30169), p.5, N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, op. cit., pp.4 & 71. Oba Adegoriola, 'The Administration of Ikere before the British Rule,' op. cit., p.21, A.F. Bell, Intelligence Report on Ayede District, the Ata of Ayede to D.O. 8 May, 1934 and the D.O. to Ata of Ayede 8 June 1934 EKITI DIV.1/1/233 and F.W. Macrow, 'Natural Ruler: The Yoruba conception of monarchy,' Nigeria Magazine, No. 47, 1955, p.24.

18. A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti, Part II, op. cit., p.81.

19. This town was renamed Ido-Ajinare in 1946.

Reeve-Tucker also dispensed justice. During his tour, early in January, 1900, he personally tried one Onike, a native of Itaji, for the murder of Oba Amojoye, the Onitaji of Itaji. The culprit was sentenced to death and was personally executed on the spot by Major Reeve-Tucker.²¹ Also, the Oloye and his Chiefs were apprehended in 1901 and brought to Oke-Imo virtually in chains on the allegation that economic trees were felled at Oye in contravention of the Forestry Ordinance promulgated in December 1898 by Acting Governor Denton of Lagos. The British Political officers were of the opinion that local cultivators, through their shifting cultivation, destroyed economic trees and forests. They, therefore, strove to protect these economic trees especially those designed

20. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, Intelligence Report on Efon District, op. cit., (1934), pp. 5 - 7 and 10.

21. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Itaji District, op. cit., p. 7.

by the Colonial Administration as first class trees, like palm trees, rubber, iroko, etc.²² It is very pertinent to recall that Governor McCallum in 1897 had proposed the appointment of Inspector of Forests for conserving forest produce and this resulted in the promulgation of the Forest Ordinance.²³ The Culprits were fined a total of £25 sterling. A couple of weeks later, the Oloye and his chiefs were brought to Oke-Imo to give evidence on a reported case of murder in his domain. Although they were to be detained pending investigation into the case, Captain A.A Blair, the Commissioner, left them in detention and went on leave. The Oloye and his Chiefs were only released by G.E.H Humphrey, Captain Blair's successor,

22. See L. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, op. cit., p.218.

23. A forestry Department was consequently created and economic trees were to be felled only on the issuance of a licence granted with the consent of the Governor. The Law started to be enforced in the North-eastern District in 1901. See C.W. Newbury, British Policy towards West Africa: Select Document 1875 - 1914, (Oxford, 1971), pp. 544-5 and L. Lugard, The Dual Mandate, op cit., p. 218 and Lagos Weekly Record, 19th March, 1910, p. 77.

after they had spent a total of ten weeks in detention over an offence they did not commit.²⁴

This high-handedness was not limited to Tucker as some of his successors followed his foot-prints. For example, in October, 1901, Captain W.G. Ambrose threatened to deal with the Olosi of Osi if he did not abandon his claim that he was a crowned head. The Olosi was also obliged to settle a land dispute which he had with the Olojudo of Ido.²⁵ Similarly, Mr. G.E.H. Humphrey ordered the deportation of the Onimesi of Imesi and the Olode of Ode to Oyo for refusing to acknowledge the suzerainty of Oba Adewumi Agunsoye, the then Ewi of Ado Ekiti. The two Oba were banished for 6½ and 5 years respectively.²⁶ Also, in 1906, the Olowa of Igbara-Oke was fined a sum of £100 for refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Deji of Akure. It would be recalled that following the

24. Ibid. 25th June, 1910 and 9th July, 1910 .

25. N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 76 .

26. Ibid., para. 79 .

defeat of Akure by the Benin in C.1818 A.D., some of its (Akure) vassal states like Igbara-Oke came under the tutelage of Benin until the turn of the twentieth century. However, when the British Political Officers attempted to bring Igbara-Oke back under the suzerainty of the Deji of Akure, the Igbara-Oke people resented it. And it took the imposition of fines of £10, £12 and £20 respectively on Igbara-Oke before the Olowa could succumb.²⁷

Having revived what he considered to be "the ancient purity of the Kingdoms", Reeve-Tucker went on to launch the Ekitiparapo Council otherwise called the Pelupelu. The Council, which was inaugurated at Oke-Imo in Ilesa on 21st June, 1900, comprised Oba of the Ekiti and Ijesa areas.²⁸ The towns in Ekiti and whose Oba were represented at the meeting, in order of precedence, were as follows:-

27. N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para. 27.

28. See L.C. Gwam, A Preliminary Inventory, op. cit., p.4 and S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. 224 .

1. Otun
2. Ado
3. Obo
4. Ijero
5. Ara
6. Akure
7. Efon
8. Ise
9. Ido
10. Oye
11. Ogotun
12. Ikere
13. Okemesi (Imesi-Igbodo)
14. Itaji
15. Isan
16. Ayede²⁹

For a short time in 1900, Reeve-Tucker appeared to have regarded Ikole as part of Akoko with the result that the

29. See Reeve-Tucker, Travelling Journal, entries for June 1900 and L.C. Gwam, op. cit., p. 4.

Elekole was not invited to the first meeting of the Ekitiparapo Council. However, the Elekole was invited to the second meeting of the Council held in August 1900.³⁰

Reeve-Tucker used the occasion of the first meeting to reiterate the old proclamation, intimate the Oba with government intentions concerning the encouragement of export production and exploitation of forest resources. He also urged them to provide conscript labour for road construction in the district. Thus, the Ekitiparapo Oba conceived British policy as aimed at making them partners in government. The next Pelupelu was held in 1919 with the objective of getting the Oba to disseminate information on poll tax among their subjects.

In the perception of the British, all the Ekiti and Ijesa communities constituted the Ekitiparapo upon which they could base their administrative machinery. Ilesa was regarded as the most important town of the

30. See W.R. Reeve-Tucker, Travelling Commissioner's Travel Diary, entry for 21st June, 1900.

organisation (Ekitiparapo) and the Owa its supreme overlord. Consequently, the headquarters of the British administration was located at Ilesa. In the same vein, the British had the assumption that the Oore of Otun was the head of all the Ekiti Oba. Little wonder that Major Reeve-Tucker created a non-conventional order of precedence placing the Oore as first, followed by the Elekole, the Ewi, the Owal'obo, etc.; the Deji of Akure was placed seventh.³¹ The assumption of the British on the status of the Oore of Otun stemmed from the fact that out of the three Oba who lived at Imesi-Ipole near the camp of the Ekitiparapo army, Oore Okinbaloye was the oldest and the other Ekiti Oba namely Oyiyosaye, the Ajero and Odundun, the Olojudo deferred to him on this account.³²

Despite the zeal of Major Reeve-Tucker and his successors, the Ekitiparapo in so far as the Ijesa and

31. Enclosure 2, No.8 in British Parliamentary Papers, Cmd 4957.

32. In fact, Captain W.G Ambrose in his North-eastern Travelling Commissioner's Diary, Entry for 20 November, 1901 refers to this Oba as "Ore of Otun, head of Ekiti confederacy".

Ekiti were concerned had been disintegrating since shortly after the peace treaty of 1893. In fact, the circumstances which brought the confederacy together had disappeared with the restoration of peace. The spirit of the Ekitiparapo could no longer be sustained. For example, when the Oore of Otun called upon members of the Ekitiparapo to assist him in warding off the advance of the Ilorin forces in 1896,³³ response came only from Ekiti. Isan, Ayede, Ikole and some other towns rose to the occasion by killing or expelling Ilorin Agents amongst them.³⁴ In other parts of Ekitiland, forces were mobilised to meet the Otun forces which had encamped at Erinmope awaiting the arrival of the Ilorin army. However, only the Obo contingent reached Erinmope before the military encounter came to an end.³⁵

33. S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., pp. 22-6 .

34. P.A. Talbot, 'From the Gulf of Guinea to the Central Sudan', Journal of African society, No. 44, July, 1912, p.315.

35. S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. 226.

Also, the Ijesa began to do certain things which were reminiscent of their pre-Ekitiparapo expansionist ambitions in Ekitiland. For instance, it is said that when Oba Ajimoko I became the Owa of Ilesa in 1896, he began to meddle freely and unabatedly in the internal affairs of some Ekiti kingdoms like Efon, Ogotun and Akure.³⁶ Indeed, the Owa acted as if Akure was under his suzerainty by ordering arrests of Akure citizens as well as demanding the payment of tributes to him.³⁷ The Akure people protested by telling him that "We have often told you that our town has never once been under jurisdiction"³⁸ The action of the Owa arose from the pre-1893 campaign among the leaders of the Ekitiparapo society that the Ekitiparapo should

36. Ibid.

37. (N.A.I.), Phillips 1/1, Phillips to the Head Chief Ogboni of Ilesa, 31 August, 1895; Phillips to Capt. Hawtayne, 20 Sept. 1895 and Ben. Dist. 3/1/1' Akure Chiefs to Roupell, 21 April, 1897 .

38. (N.A.I), Ben. Dist., 3/1/1' Akure Chiefs to the Owa of Ilesa, 24 April, 1897.

become a single political entity under the leadership of the Owa of Ilesa.³⁹

The British also carried out some boundary delimitation in the North-eastern District. In fact, most of the boundary delimitations were done with little or no cognizance for the ethnic affinities and in some cases political allegiance. It would be recalled that Captain (Later Lord) Lugard on behalf of the Royal Niger Company and Captain Bower representing the Yoruba hinterland had carried out boundary delimitations in 1894 and 1898 respectively.⁴⁰ The boundaries agreed upon during the two occasions ran through the Igbomina Communities under the Royal Niger Company as well as Ila under the Lagos Government. The line of demarcation ran through the Moba Kingdom thus placing Ilofa, Ekan Aye, Ekan Eniku, Idofin, Ilale, Erinmope, Oko Osi under the Royal Niger

39. See S.A. Akintoye, op. Cit., p.226 .

40. See M. Perham and M. Bull, The Diaries of Lugard, p.259, (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/320 North-South Boundary, p.15 H. Bridel, Intelligence Report on Ayede District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, EKITI DIV.1/1/220 A, pp. 32-35, K.V. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province, op. cit., p. 8 .

Company. However, Otun and a few of the other Moba Kingdoms were placed under Lagos. Towns like Obo, Oke Ako, Ogbe and Erinle were placed under the jurisdiction of the Royal Niger Company. Also, the Kabba-Ekiti boundary ran five kilometres North of Ilesa and then Southwards along the Western bank of the river Ose. Thus the Ekiti communities of Omuo, Oyin, Iro, Afin, Ese, Irun, Ogbagi and Erusu, which hitherto belonged to Ikole⁴¹ were grouped with the Akoko Communities and constituted into a sub-district of Kabba District⁴². Communities west of river Oyinmo namely Ikole and Ado were put under the Lagos Administration. Similarly, some towns in the Iyagba country viz: Omu-Ijelu, Ipao, Irele, and Itapaji were placed under Ikole.⁴³

41. See. R.D. Ramage, Acting Secretary, Southern Provinces to Hon. Secretary, Northern Provinces (N.A.K)' SP. 10210/36, 28 June, 1934 and (N.A.I), Bridel, Ayede District, op. cit., p.35 (N.A.I.), H.Bridel, Ayede District, EKITI DIV.1/1/220A The Elekole Oba Adeleye I, to D.O. Ekiti Div. 15 June' 1934, p.32.

42. See S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.31ff. It is the opinion of Prof. S.A. Adejuyigbe that this type of boundary is "super imposed". See S.A. Adejuyigbe, 'The Re-adjustment of Super-imposed boundaries in Africa', A seminar paper presented to the institute of African studies, University of Ife, Ile-Ife during the 1973/74 session, p.2.

43. S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. 221.

The boundary lines were not sacrosanct as they were subject to subsequent adjustments in 1909, 1917 and 1920. The result was that some communities were placed at different times under different administrative districts. For instance, the 1905 adjustment transferred Ayede to the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in July 1900.⁴⁴ Also in July 1900, Akure was separated from Ekiti in the North-eastern District and placed in the Eastern District of the Lagos Protectorate with the headquarters at Ondo. Akure did not return to the North-eastern District until January 1915.

It is very pertinent to observe that the delimitations were done with little or no consultation with the local people. It would, therefore, appear that the administrative delimitation in so far as it affected Ekitiland were imposed on the people. Little wonder that the political arrangement ran counter to the historical

44. Following Otun's agitation for separation from Ilorin and merger with Ekiti, the request was granted in 1936. See (N.A.I), EKITI DIV.1/2/ED.144., A.F. Abell, Otun District, the Oore and (N.A.I), J. Wann, Covering Report on Otun Intelligence Report, (1938), EKITI DIV.1/2/ ED. 144, op. cit., p. 2.

and cultural relations of the affected communities. To some extent, the anomalies were a child of historical antecedents. At the out-set of the British involvement in the inter-state politics of Yorubaland up to 1894, the hegemony of Ilorin was still apparent in Moba and Obo. In fact, Ilorin stationed Ajele (Residents) in Otun, Ayede, Isan, Obo, etc. up to a few days before the arrival of the delimitation Commissioners.⁴⁵ This might have influenced the decisions to place many of the Moba and Obo⁴⁶ communities under the Royal Niger Company. After 1900, the communities were placed under the protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Similarly, some Ekiti communities were placed under the Royal Niger Company because some of them had been conquered alongside some Akoko communities by the Nupe between 1869 and the 1890s and incorporated into the Nupe province with the headquarters at Kabba.⁴⁷

45. See K.V. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin, op. cit., p. 19 and M. Perham and M. Bull, op. cit., pp.259-60

46. Obo is now in Kwara State of Nigeria.

47. See P.T. Davis, Historical Notes on Kabba, 1960, p.6 and E.G.M. Dupighy, Gazetteer of Nupe Province, (Lond., 1920), pp. 15 - 19.

Against this background, it would appear that, in a sense, the Boundary Delimitation Commission merely confirmed the existing political arrangement.

Having said this, the fact remains that the exercise could **not** be justified on account of the historical and ethnic affinities of the various groups of people involved. For example, it would be recalled that a Benin hegemony had been established over some parts of Ekitiland for many centuries, however, the new political dispensation at the turn of the century put these Ekiti towns and villages under the Lagos Administration. The objective of the British was to discourage Benin from laying claim to the Districts west of the rivers ogbese and ofosu. In this regard, the British had established a garrison at Akure in 1897 with its Commander having **jurisdiction** over Ekiti communities up to the boundary with Ilorin which was then under the purview of the Royal Niger Company. In spite of this, many of the Ekiti communities continued to pay tributes to Benin after 1897.⁴⁸

48. (N.A.I), Benin District, 3/2/1 Akure Chiefs to Captain Roupell, O/C odo-Otin 15 April, 1897.

However, the Lagos Government fixed the boundary between itself and the Niger Coast Protectorate (after 1900 the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria) at the River Ogbese which was half way between Akure in the North-eastern District and Owo under Benin. Another loophole in the boundary delimitation was that the British placed Moba and Obo in Northern Nigeria instead of the North-eastern District with the result that the people of the two communities were separated from their kith and kin in Ekitiland. This would have been in conformity with the political arrangement whereby Akure, Ise and other Southern Ekiti Communities up to Ikere were placed in the North-eastern District on the basis of ethnicity. In the same vein, one can stretch the argument further to say that the placing of eleven Ikole Communities,⁴⁹ notably Omuo, Oyin, Iro and Afin as well as Irun and Ogbagi under Kabba was an error of judgement on the part of the Boundary Delimitation Commission.⁵⁰

49. See (N.A.I.), EKITI DIVISION 1/1//110A' The Elekole of Ikole to the District Officer, 15 June, 1934 .

50. Ibid .

Generally, major developments connected with the British re-organisation of Nigeria affected the North-eastern District. On 1st May, 1906, the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos was amalgamated with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in accordance with the instructions contained in the Southern Nigeria Order-in-Council of 16th February, 1906.⁵¹ The new Protectorate was constituted into three Provinces namely: the Calabar or Eastern, Niger or Central and Lagos or Western Provinces.⁵² Each Province was made up of Divisions.

Each Province was placed under a Provincial Commissioner or Resident who was responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Southern Provinces (based at Lagos from 1915 - 1925 and at Enugu from 1926 - 1938⁵³ for the maintenance of law and order as well as for the

51. See L.C., Gwan, op. cit., p.5 .

52. Before this amalgamation, the following officers served as Travelling Commissioners of the North-Eastern District: Major Reeve-Tucker (Oct. 1899 - April 1901), Mr. T. Sydney (April - July 1901), Captain W.G. Ambrose (July 1901 - Oct. 1902), Dr. (Captain) W.H.G.H. Best (Oct. 1902 - Jan. 1903), Captain W.G. Ambrose (June 1903 - July 1904), Captain F. E. Werry (July 1904 - Feb. 1905) and Captain W.G. Ambrose (Feb. 1905 - May 1906). See L.C. Gwan, op. cit., p.5.

53. See L.C. Gwan, Ibid., p.8.

efficient running of the administration. The Lieutenant-Governor was in turn responsible to the Governor of Nigeria for the maintenance of law and order as well as the efficient conduct of all business in the Province.⁵⁴ Similarly, the administration of the Divisions and Districts within the Provinces were entrusted to Divisional, District and Assistant District Officers. .

In this regard, the Provincial Commissioners of the Western Province were based in Lagos between 1906 and 1914. Officers who substantively held the post were Messrs W. Fosbey (1906), F.S. James (1906 - 1910), Mr. H.C. Moorhouse (1911-1914), A.B. Harcourt (1908), H.G. Moorhouse (1909, 1910, and 1911), G. A. Bosanquet (1909 and 1911) and D.G. Cameron (1901 and 1911) held the post in an acting capacity.⁵⁵

The North-eastern District remained under Lagos with its headquarters still located at Oke-Imo.⁵⁶ With the introduction of the Lugardian system of indirect rule, a general re-organisation of Nigeria took place. In the

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. See S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. 222.

exercise, the North-eastern District was dissolved on 31st December, 1912.⁵⁷ We shall now turn our attention to how Ekiti Kingdoms were constituted into a District under Colonial rule.

The Constitution of the Ekiti Kingdoms
into a District under British Administration

In January, 1913, the Ekiti Kingdoms were constituted into a separate District. In doing so, the British Administrative Officers were apparently influenced by the prevailing spirit of solidarity which made people in these kingdoms regard the Ekiti District as the best expression of the Ekiti parapo of the 19th century.⁵⁸ In fact, some of the British Political Officers like Mr. O.V. Lee usually equated 'Ekitiparapo' with the 'Ekiti District',⁵⁹ in all his references during his tenure of office. Consequently, the British Administrative officers were of the opinion that the administrative problems of the seventeen Ekiti kingdoms could be solved under the umbrella of the single district with the

57. See Church Missionary Intelligencer, New series, Vol. XXI, pp. 106-108.

58. S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. 230.

59. See O.V. Lee, Intelligence Report on Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, (1942), pp. 1-145.

headquarters at Ado-Ekiti.⁶⁰

The choice of Ado-Ekiti as the headquarters was dictated by two factors. Firstly, it occupied a central location in Ekitiland and secondly, it was the largest town in the whole of Ekitiland.⁶¹ What is more, by 1896, the town had become the headquarters of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) stations in Ekitiland. The Emmanuel Church and School had been built by the C.M.S. in the town between 1895 and 1896. The only town which could have contested the location of the headquarters with Ado was Otun. As earlier stated, owing to the role which the Oore played in the Kiriji war, Major Reeve-Tucker had regarded the Oore as the leader of the Ekiti Oba.⁶²

60. Ibid.

61. See Church Missionary Intelligencer, A monthly Journal of Christian Information, Vol. XXII, New series, pp.106-108, (N.A.I.), Phillips 1/1/Phillips to Baylis, 28 February, 1895 and S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.222.

62. See Captain W.G. Ambrose North-eastern Travelling Commissioner's Diary, op. cit., Entry for 20 Nov. 1901 gives the title 'Oore of Otun' head of the Ekiti Confederacy.

However, Otun could not favourably compete with Ado in the location of a headquarter. The town (Otun) was situated at the extreme Northern corner of Ekitiland.⁶³ In fact, before 1913, it had been transferred to the Northern Nigeria hence it could no longer vie with Ado for the location of the headquarters of the Ekiti District. Mr. G.E.H. Humphrey was appointed the first District Officer of the District at its inception. Before his appointment, he had served as the Commissioner for the North-eastern District between June and December, 1910. In the 1913 political arrangement, Ijesaland was merged with Ila and Ife to form a District with the headquarters at Ile-Ife.⁶⁴ The events leading to the emergence of Ondo Province is the subject of our next discussion.

63. S. A. Akintoye op. cit., p.222.

64. Ibid.

The Emergence of Ondo Province

On 1st January, 1914, the Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria by Lord Frederick Lugard.⁶⁵ This political development was followed by a complete reshuffle of the existing provincial arrangements in Southern Nigeria. In this connection, Government Notice No. 11 of 1915 contained in Gazette No. 4, Volume 2 of 21 January, 1915 provided for the division of the Southern Provinces (estimated area of 78,600 square miles) into seven provinces namely Abeokuta, Benin, Calabar, Ibadan, Ijebu, Owerri and Warri. By this notice, Ekiti and Ondo Divisions were included in Ijebu Province.⁶⁶

However, by the Government Notice No. 99 published in Gazette No. 67, Volume 2 of 23rd December, 1915, the Ijebu and Ibadan Provinces were abolished and renamed Ondo and Oyo Provinces. The Ijebu Division of the former Ijebu Province was merged with the Abeokuta Province.

65. See L. C Gwam, op. cit., p. 5 .

66. Ibid.

Ekiti and Ondo Divisions were merged together to form the Ondo Province.⁶⁷ Akure, which was transferred to Ekiti in January, 1915, was made the headquarters of the Province.⁶⁸

In 1917, indirect Administration was introduced into Ekitiland.⁶⁹ The seventeen Ekiti kingdoms were

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67. Ondo Division then included Okitipupa which later became a Division of its own following agitation for separation from the Ondo Division on 9th February, 1928. See L.C. Gwan, Ibid., pp.6 and 8.
68. Ibid., p.2. See also (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para.26. S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.227 and Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.121.
69. See Oba Arojojoye II, Oba of Ijebu-Jesa, Itan Kukuru fun Ijebu-Jesa, (Oshogbo, 1959), pp.6-8, S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.231 and (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/6/3 N.A.C. Weir, The Broad Outlines of the past and present Organisation in Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, (1934), pp.62-5 and 153-60, A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, op. cit., p.83 and S. A. Akintoye, 'Obas of the Ekiti confederacy: their changing status under colonial rule and independence' in O. Ikime and M. Crowder (eds), West African Chiefs, op. cit., pp.258-260.

accordingly recognised by the colonial authorities who constituted their Oba into Native Authorities.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the British at this stage did not make any attempt to establish an overall authority over the Division. The District Officer stationed at Ado-Ekiti merely acted as a connecting link between the people and the British.⁷¹ The situation was to change in 1920 when the British decided to give the seventeen Districts a corporate existence.⁷² In this regard, the Ekitiparapo Council was revived by the British with the objective of administering the entire Ekitiland.⁷³ Our next discussion

70. Ibid.

71. See P.C. Lloyd, Local Government in Yoruba Towns (An Analysis of the roles of the Obas, Chiefs and elected Councillors), (Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford, 1958), pp. 34-38.

72. S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, op. cit., p. 233

73. The details of this policy will be discussed in chapter Four.

will centre on how the indirect rule system originated as well as the reasons for its adoption by the British in the governance of their colonies.

The genesis of the Indirect Rule System
and reasons for its adoption

After establishing their control over Ekitiland, the British were faced with the problem of administration. In order to solve this problem, the British adopted the policy of Indirect rule.⁷⁴ Through this method, the Oba and Chiefs continued to administer their respective kingdoms, subject to the guidance and overall authority of British officials.

It is pertinent at this juncture to define the term 'indirect rule'. Apparently, it is common knowledge that precise definitions of concepts are not always easy phenomena to grapple with in academic discourse. This is, of course, due to the fact that definitions are, more often than not, a function of the ideological and other underpinning philosophical perspectives of scholars engaged in such discourse. This is very germane to the

74. The reasons for the adoption of the indirect rule system in Nigeria in general will be discussed presently.

concept of indirect rule on which scholars and Administrators have expressed divergent views.

In this regard, I would like to mention a few of such views. Donald Cameron sees indirect rule as:

"The system of Native Administration generally adopted in the protectorate of Nigeria designed to adapt for the purposes of Local Government the tribal institutions which the Native peoples have evolved for themselves, so that the latter may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and retained the traditions and sanctions which they have inherited, moulded or modified as they may be on the advice of British Officers and by the general control of those officers."⁷⁵

To Lord Lugard, the concept of 'indirect rule' entailed the formation of the African Chiefs into "an integral part of the machinery of government with well-defined powers and functions recognised

75. See D.C Cameron, Principles of Native Administration and their application, (Lagos, 1934), p. 1.

by government and law not dependent on the caprice of an Executive Officer."⁷⁶

In fact, Lugard's objective was to uphold the authority of the rulers whose domains had come under the British control provided they were ready to give their maximum support to the British cause.⁷⁷

Mr. (later Chief) Obafemi Awolowo in 1947 was of the view that "indirect administration is a mere subterfuge for the petty autocracy of British Administrative Officers."⁷⁸ He contended that the adoption of the indigenous political institutions of the people as

76. (N.A.I.), F. D. Lugard, Political Memoranda, (London, 1919), p. 296.

77. (N.A.I.), F. D. Lugard, Annual Report on Northern Nigeria 1900-1911, p. 75. Later events turned out to be the reverse. The Chiefs were not given the type of support envisaged by Lugard as they became dependent on the whims and caprices of the British Administrative Officers. Details of this will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

78. See O. Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom, (London, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1947), p. 57.

instruments of local government did not derogate from the fact that the British Government, through the Governor and his subordinate officers, directly ruled the country as a whole. While the idea of writing an exposition on the concept of indirect rule per se is outside the purview of this thesis, I would like to state that the concept as enunciated by Cameron and Lugard tallied with the objectives of the British Government for the adoption of the policy.

The genesis of the concept of indirect rule can be traced to the Roman times. It was used then as an expedient of Local Government.⁷⁹ However, within the context of West Africa, a number of British Officials had advocated and practised one form of indirect rule or the other before Lugard's arrival on the scene. For example, the contributions of the nineteenth century British officials like George Maclean, President of the Council of the Company Administration in the Gold

79. O. Omosini, 'C.S. Salmon: Pre-Lugardian Advocate of Indirect Rule in British West Africa' in ODU, No.20, Jan/July, 1980, p.49.

Coast (now Ghana) from 1830 - 1847 and those of George Taubman Goldie of the Royal Niger Company can aptly be described as the early forms of indirect rule system before the Lugardian era.⁸⁰ In fact, it has been argued that Goldie lay the basis for the theoretical and moral arguments which Lugard was later to popularise and refine in his Political Memoranda and The Dual Mandate.⁸¹ What is more, non-Administrators like Mary Kingsley and E.D. Morel, through their writings, publicised the principles of indirect rule before Lugard had the opportunity of putting it into practice in Northern Nigeria.⁸² Even contemporaries of Lugard such as William MacGregor of Lagos and Ralph Moor (High Commissioner) of Southern Nigeria as well as a number of District officers and Residents actually governed along the principles of

80. Ibid.

81. See details of this assertion in J. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria, (O.U.P., 1960), pp. 94-5, 254-6 and 258-263.

82. See B. Potter, Critics of Empire Radical Attitude to Colonialism in Africa 1894 - 1914. (Macmillan, 1968), pp. 239-290.

indirect rule without attracting as much notice as Lugard.⁸³ In fact, the courts of Equity and Governing Councils formalised and institutionalised by Ralph Moor in his enactments (Proclamations) of 1900 and 1901 was nothing more than an attempt to rule the respective peoples of the Protectorate through the Chiefs.⁸⁴

Having traced the genesis of the indirect rule system, it is of paramount importance to discuss the reasons for the adoption of this system of government. First and foremost, there was the dearth of personnel to deploy for direct British administration. After the conquest of Northern Nigeria, Lugard had with him only a handful of British officials. In fact, in May, 1900, the British Government had approved only 42 officers for the protectorate nevertheless, only 31 of the officers had actually been appointed and sent to Nigeria. This

83. For details see T.N. Tamuno, The Evolution of the Nigerian State: the Southern Phase, 1898 - 1914, (Longman, 1972), pp. 170-173, J.C. Anene, Southern Nigeria in Transition, (O.U.P. 1966), Chapter VII and R.B. Joyce, Sir William MacGregor, (O.U.P., 1971), Chapters 10 - 13.

84. (N.A.I), C.S.O.1/13, Moor to E.O. No. 139, 18 August 1898. See also O. Ikime, Niger Delta Rivalry, (Longman, 1969, 1977), p.193. Details of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

number included Doctors and non-administrative officers. What is more, some of the officers who had reported for duty were unable to perform their official duties owing to ill-health.⁸⁵ Consequently, direct administration was not feasible.

Secondly, there was the problem of shortage of funds to pay a large number of British officials if it were possible to import them in the administration of the protectorate. Thirdly, if the Protectorate were to be administered along British lines, such a novel experiment would have amounted to throwing overboard the social and political system of the people with its attendant consequences.⁸⁶ As a result of this, necessity and prudent

85. See O. Ikime, 'The Establishment of Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria', Tarikh, Vol. 3, No.3, 1970, p.8.

86. See J.A. Atanda 'Indirect Rule in Yorubaland' in Tarikh, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1970, p. 16.

judgement dictated that indirect rule which was not only cheap but could also cause minimum disruption to the people's way of life should be adopted.⁸⁷ Also, there was a strong campaign in Britain in the 1890s that indirect rule should be adopted in the administration of the newly acquired territories in Africa. It was Captain (later Lord) Lugard who had spearheaded the campaign by publishing his book titled, The Rise of Our East African Empire. Throughout the two volumes of the book, Lugard advocated the method of indirect rule in the internal administration of the territories. For instance, with regard to Uganda, Lugard wrote: " in my opinion the object to be aimed at in the administration of this country is to rule through its own executive government. The people are singular intelligent and have a wonderful appreciation of Justice and of legal procedure and our aim should be to educate and develop this sense of justice."⁸⁸ In sum ,

87. J. A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p. 86 .

88. See F.D. Lugard, The Rise of Our East African Empire, Vol. II, (London, Blackwood, 1893), p. 649.

Lugard advocated that local administration should be run through the indigenous political system, though which may be modified later in the light of the prevailing circumstances. Lugard's morale was boosted by the support which he received in Parliament from Lord Stanmore who had himself experimented with some sort of indirect rule when he was Governor of Fiji. In the same vein, the British Press popularised Lugard's idea by the extensive review which was given to his book.⁸⁹ Apart from this, Lugard received massive support from some British officials who had served in India, where Britain had practised some form of indirect rule.⁹⁰ Moreover, the local press played a significant role through its advocacy of a system of government which was tantamount to the indirect rule system. The most voiceferous of them was the "Lagos Weekly Record" which published a number of articles between 1896 and 1897 urging British officials to adopt indirect rule on the areas which they had acquired in

89. M. Perham, Lugard: The Years of Adventure 1858-1898, (London, Collins, 1960), pp. 371-2

90. J. A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p.87 .

the hinterland of the Lagos colony (i.e. Yorubaland). Some of the leading articles published by them included 'Native Institutions' (21 March 1896), 'Her Majesty's Government and 'Native Institution' (16/5/1896), 'The Aboriginal Native in British Crown Colonies' (24/10/1896), 'Her Majesty's Government' and the 'Protectorate of Native States in West Africa' (16/1/1897).⁹¹ The paper contended that the British should make use of the indigenous institutions rather than impose a foreign system on the people, a phenomenon which might be disastrous.⁹²

Furthermore, with particular reference to Yorubaland, the British adopted the indirect rule system as a way of normalising strained relations between the British Officials and a number of Yoruba Oba and Chiefs. It would be recalled that some political officers were high-handed in the way they had dealt with some Oba and Chiefs. Examples of such incidents were the Captain Bower's dealings with the Alaafin of Oyo as well as

91. Ibid., p. 88.

92. Ibid.

Major Reeve-Tucker who dealt ruthlessly with some Oba and Chiefs in Ekitiland in an attempt to subject them to the control of some Oba who he considered as paramount in the area.

In the midst of the foregoing campaigns in Britain and Lagos, Major Henry E. McCallum, who was reputed to have initiated the policy of indirect rule in Yorubaland, was appointed Governor of Lagos Colony in April, 1897 in succession to Sir G.T. Carter. ^{At} the time of this appointment, McCallum had already believed in the principle of indirect rule partly owing to his personal experience in Asia and partly due to the intense campaign going on in respect of the adoption of the indirect rule system by various pressure groups at the time.⁹³ Thus McCallum inaugurated the indirect rule system in Yorubaland during his tenure of office. McCallum did this by establishing Councils of Chiefs presided over by the Resident. The arrangement was coterminous with the conciliar system, a phenomenon that was not new at the time in Yorubaland. However, McCallum's Council of Chiefs

93. See T.N. Tamuno, The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase 1898-1914, (Longman, 1972, 1978), p. 170.

differed from the Conciliar system in that the number of Chiefs sitting in the new Council was often less than those who sat on the traditional councils.⁹⁴ It must be stressed at this juncture that by making the Resident the head of the Council, a new era in the administration of Yorubaland was unfolding. Indeed, it was a dramatic change from the status quo. However, Prof. Atanda has put forward the view that the Resident was made the President of each of the Councils out of the belief that a seat in the Council would give him the opportunity of giving effective guidance and supervision to the Chiefs in the task of administration.⁹⁵

Under this dispensation, the first council to be established was the Ibadan Council in August 1897.⁹⁶ This was followed by the the Oyo Council established in July, 1898.⁹⁷ As earlier stated, the Ekitiparapo Council

94. Ibid.

95. See J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p.90

96. (N.A.I.), Ibadan Prof. 3/6. Resident's Travelling Journal, 1897-1899, entry for 5 August, 1897. See also Lagos Annual Report 1899, p.78 op. cit., (i.e.) Ib. Prof. 3/6 entries of 28 & 29 July, 1898.

97. Ibid.

was established in 1900.⁹⁸ This was done out of the realisation that it was contrary to the 1886 treaty and owing to long distance that rules made by the Ibadan Council could not be effective in Ekitiland and Ijesa area. In this regard, Major W.R. Reeve-Tucker, the first Travelling Commissioner of North-Eastern District, was the President of the Council.⁹⁹

In theory, Major Reeve-Tucker and his Council were responsible to the Resident at Ibadan but, in practice, both were virtually independent of the Ibadan Resident.¹⁰⁰ The functions performed by all the councils enumerated above were similar; they were legislative, administrative and judicial. In the legislative aspect, the Council made rules on a wide range of subjects: administration

98. See Lagos Annual Report 1900-1901, Report on the Eastern District by W.G. Ambrose, Travelling Commissioner, pp. 12-13.

99. J. A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p. 91.

100. Ibid., pp. 91 - 92.

of justice, road making, trade, agriculture, sanitation, etc. Members of the Council were also charged with the responsibility of enforcing these rules.¹⁰¹ The historical perspective of the Native Courts system and its application to Ekitiland is the subject of our next discussion.

Native Courts System: Historical Overview
and Application to Ekitiland

Leading scholars of Nigerian history writing on the evolution of the British Administrative control of Southern Nigeria have dealt exhaustively with the origins of the Native courts system.¹⁰² The origins of these courts have been traced to the Courts of Equity, the Governing Councils and the Native Councils.¹⁰³ The Courts of Equity were established to maintain law and order among the trading communities (both Europeans and Africans) of the Oil Rivers and in the Niger Delta in the period of consular jurisdiction after 1854.

By an Order-in-Council of 1872, these courts were brought under consular control. The courts of Equity continued till the formal declaration of a Protectorate over the Oil Rivers in 1885. These Courts were succeeded

101. See details of the functions of these Councils in Lagos Annual Report 1899, Appendices C&O, pp.80-84.

102. See A.E. Afigbo, The Warrant Chiefs in Southeastern Nigeria, (Longman, 1972), Chapters 2 and 3., O. Ikime, Niger Delta Rivalry, (Longman, 1969), pp.168-219, J.C. Anene, Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906, (O.U.P., 1966), p.252, T.N. Tamuno, The Evolution of the Nigerian State, op. cit., pp.159 and 169-172, O. Adewoye, The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria 1854-1954: Law and Justice in a Dependency, (London, Longman Group Ltd 1977), pp.40-41 and P.A. Igbafe, Benin under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule on an African Kingdom, 1897-1938, (London, Longman Group Ltd, 1979), pp.181-190.

by Governing Councils established by Consul H.H Johnston.¹⁰⁴

Also, after the appointment of Claude Macdonald as Commissioner and Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1891, Native Courts and Minor Courts were inaugurated. While the former were presided over by the Consul-General himself, the latter were headed by the District Commissioners. These were later referred to as Native Courts.

Sir Ralph Moor, the British High Commissioner, promulgated the Native Courts Proclamation, 1900.¹⁰⁵ By their nature, variety and functions, Native Courts were part of the process of the consolidation of British rule whose principal ingredients were patrols, escorts and military expeditions. They were also regarded as the local executive arm of the central government.

103. P.A. Igbafe, op. cit., p. 181.

104. Ibid. and A. E. Afigbo, op. cit., p. 42.

105. P. A. Igbafe, op. cit., p. 182 .

It has been argued that Native Courts Proclamation and the subsequent one in 1901 merely legalised the existing institutions which had existed since the Europeans first began to build 'factories' on land along the Niger Delta. There arose the need to have another authority apart from the traditional political authority to settle disputes not only among the Nigerian peoples but also between them and the traders. Thus, the 'Courts of Equity' and later 'Governing Councils' were established.

By 1896, new Courts comprising Nigerian people sitting as judges were established. The courts were to administer 'native' law and customs not opposed to natural morality and humanity' and new laws or modifications of old laws sanctioned by the government. The courts had jurisdiction over such criminal and civil cases to which native law applied and in which the affected parties were natives.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the courts could try non-natives with their consent - clause XII of the 1901 Proclamation quoted below rendered illegal the judicial powers which the village councils as well as the various age-grades were accustomed to:

106. See J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p.93 and A.E. Afigbo, op. cit., p.81.

"where a Native Court is established in any district the civil and ^{criminal} jurisdiction of such court shall as respect natives be exclusive of all other native jurisdictions. Such districts, and no jurisdiction shall be exercised in such district by any other native authority whatsoever."¹⁰⁷

Also, the clause rendered illegal the executive powers of traditional institutions. In fact, this provision rendered the new system unpopular among the Nigerian peoples in general. However, in 1903, the Native Courts Amendment Proclamation (No. 17 of 1903) was made. By this Proclamation, the District Commissioner became a member of all Native Courts in his District.¹⁰⁸

Essentially, the Native Courts system was closely linked with the policy of Native Administration.¹⁰⁹

107. See Cal. Prof. 10/2 Vol. I Native Courts Proclamation 1900, Clause XII.

108. C.O. 588/1 The Native Courts Amendment Proclamation (No. 17 of 1903), Clause 3.

109. See P.A Igbafe, op. cit., p. 183 .

As argued ex post facto in February, 1940 by E.G Hawkesworth, Secretary to the Western Provinces, the object of the Native Court was "to extend to the judicial sphere that policy of self-determination which generally guides our administration always provided that the results are not contrary to British equity. It is desired to retain in the judicial system African traditional law and custom and yet to permit that the system to be changed to suit modern conditions by modification and introduction, if necessary of some Western elements".¹¹⁰

This idea of establishing tribunals for the maintenance of customary law that needed guidance and modifications along Western lines was first expounded by Sir Frederick Lugard in his memorandum of 1917 on the Native Courts, which was an exposition of the policy behind the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914.¹¹¹

110. (N. A. I.), C.S.O. 26: 36592, p. 22.

111. Ibid.

Apparently, the foregoing objective of the Native Courts system contained within it certain elements of contradiction. If African traditional law and custom were to be retained in the Native Courts, and if the elements of Western law were to be infused into these courts as the British officers thought necessary, there was the danger of the imposition of an alien judicial system on the indigenous set-up. Could the traditional law and Western law be integrated on a basis of parity? Could the two systems blend into a harmonious whole without traditional practices being thrown overboard or relegated to the background? To impose a ^{foreign} judicial system outright was considered by the British to be a revolutionary approach to the problems of the judicial administration of the indigenous society.¹¹² Hence the need to encourage the evolution of indigenous judicial organisation along the lines dictated by the changing conditions under an alien rule. In order to achieve the objective stated by Hawkesworth ,

112. Ibid.

the British resorted to a policy of blending the Native Court and the Supreme Court systems in the period before 1914.¹¹³ The Native Courts were made up of those European political officers who were ex-officio members of the courts. The Provincial Commissioner of the Province, the District Commissioner and the Assistant District Commissioners were members of the Native Courts. In addition, African members were appointed by the Governor under warrant as members of the Court.¹¹⁴ These African members of the Native Courts whose membership depended on the grant of judicial warrants became known as Warrant Chiefs in Eastern Nigeria.¹¹⁵ They were not selected on any traditional basis and many of them were those who by indigenous custom could not exercise any judicial powers. The primary determining factor in the grant of warrants was local village influence.¹¹⁶

113. Ibid.

114. E.A.B. 486/1914, Supplement to Extraordinary Gazette of 6 March, 1933, Governor Cameron's Address, p. 20.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

In their judicial functions, the Native Courts were subject to the supervision of, and instructions from, the Supreme Court. In this regard, they submitted monthly lists of cases to the Chief Justice or a Puisne Judge, which operated as appeals. In addition to this, there was always the right to formal appeal from the Native courts to the Supreme Court. Also, the Supreme Court Judges had powers to transfer cases from one Native Court to another or from a District Commissioner's Court to the Supreme Court.¹¹⁷

The Native Courts were charged with the following responsibilities. They were entrusted with some administrative and executive powers covering a wide range of subjects. They could make rules for good order, peace and welfare of the inhabitants within their areas of jurisdiction; provide for better sanitation of towns and villages.¹¹⁸ The Courts made rules on such subjects

117. E.A., 486/1914 Memorandum of the Native Courts by H.O. Wright dated 14 March, 1914.

118. Ibid.

as **village** tax, road cleaning, forest royalties, the tapping of forest products like rubber, and the felling of oil palm trees. Most of these rules originated in various courts but were adopted by others, possibly through the influence of Administrative officers, who invariably signed them. However, these rules were made subject to the approval of the High Commissioner or the Governor-in-council.¹¹⁹ In exercising their legislative functions, the Native Courts passed bye-laws and made rules for the government of the areas of their jurisdiction. In their administrative capacity, they provided the local centres of contact between the British political officers and the citizenry. The European officers presided at Native Courts meetings and whenever they were absent, the vice-presidents of the courts, who were appointed in rotation and for limited periods, presided.¹²⁰

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid.

The Courts kept a fairly elaborate written records hence Clerks were appointed to be in charge of these records. The Clerks not only served as a link between the British Administrative officers and the African members of the Court but also between the British officers and the inhabitants of villages in the Native Courts areas on the other. The duties of the Clerks were to receive complaints from members of the public seeking redress from courts over certain grievances; sending out messengers on official duties and issuance of summons.¹²¹ Consequently, they assumed greater influence in the society which enabled them to undermine the influence of the Court members. What is more, the fact that the court Clerks were literate vis-a-vis the court members who were mostly illiterate, propped up their prestige even before them (court members). The court clerks abused their position by engaging in malpractices.¹²²

121. Interview Pa J.A Arokodare, 82, a retired Court Clerk, at Ijero-Ekiti, on 22nd January, 1988.

122. Interview, Pa J.A. Arokodare.

The British control of the Native Courts was exercised through the presidency of European officers and their supervision of Native Courts. Statutorily, the Native Courts Proclamation made the District Commissioner the ex-officio President of all Native Courts in his District.¹²³ In this connection, the Presidency of the European Officers was a serious defect of the Native Courts system. This was the situation up to 1914. There was no doubt that the presidency of the European officers was bound to render nugatory the independence of opinion of the Native Courts members. Although technically, the sentences passed in the courts were those of the Native Courts, in practice, the judgements were those of the District officers.¹²⁴ Sir Frederick Lugard referred to this as the "greatest of all defects in any system

123. P.A. Igbafe, op. cit., p.108 B.M (Benin Museum), Accounts and Papers (II) 1902, (XV, p.529) .

124. (N.A.I.) CSO 26/09/493 F.D. Lugard's Memorandum in Native Courts, June 1917, p. 3 .

judicial or executive".¹²⁵ In some instances, District Officers were known to have compelled court members to acquiesce in their views on specific cases by the threat of adjournment until the members were prepared to give in. In other cases, some District Officers passed judgement without consultation with the other court members.¹²⁶ In fact, the District Officer was the court.

Under the Native Courts Ordinance, 1914, Sir Frederick Lugard provided for the constitution of Native Courts that could possess some responsibility which the presence of European officers denied them under the system operating before 1914.¹²⁷ One of the most important features of the courts under the 1914 Ordinance was, from Lugard's point of view, the provision that removed the D.O or the District Commissioner from the Presidency of the Native

125. Supreme Court Bill, 12th March, 1914. Speech by H.E. the Governor-General, p.5.

126. See F.D. Lugard, Political Memoranda, 1913 - 1918, (London, 1919), p. 266.

127. P. A. Igbafe. op. cit., p. 199.

Courts.¹²⁸ The Warrant Chiefs or Judges sat without a European President. The D.O. could also transfer cases from Native Courts before, during and after trial to the Provincial Courts if he suspected any injustice. Though appeals in the ordinary sense did not formally lie to the Resident in the Provincial Courts, anyone was free to appeal to the D.O. in his administrative capacity. In this role, the D.O or Commissioner could modify Native Courts' decisions, order the rehearing of any case or transfer cases to the Provincial Courts. Some Courts with more experienced and mature members, like the Oba's judicial council, were made courts of appeal for other less important courts. Thus, under the Native Courts system after 1914, the supervision and control of the Native courts previously exercised by the Supreme Court passed over to the administrative staff.

128. E.A., B. 486/1974, H.O. 'Wright Memo on Native Courts dated 14th March, 1914; F.D. Lugard, Memo on Native Courts in Southern Nigerian Provinces, 25 Feb. 1914, p. 1 .

District Officers attended the Courts to check court returns and make sure that the courts did not exceed their powers as provided in their constituting warrants. The **death** penalty was withdrawn from Native Courts, though there was provision for the conferment of this power on any Native Court that proved its mettle. In this regard, courts were classified as possessing 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' grade powers.

Courts of 'A' grade powers had jurisdiction to inflict the death penalty in criminal cases while their civil jurisdiction was unlimited.¹²⁹ Courts of 'B' grade power could impose a prison sentence of two years or a fine of £50 or twenty-four lashes in criminal jurisdiction and deal with civil cases where the claim was not in excess of £50. Courts with 'C' grade had powers of six months imprisonment, £10 fine or twenty-four lashes in criminal jurisdiction and civil jurisdiction in cases where the claims did not exceed £25. Courts with 'D'

129. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/09493 Lugard's Memo on Native Courts, 16 June, 1917, p. 18.

grade powers could imprison criminals for only three months, administer twelve lashes or a fine of £5 and deal with civil claims not above £15.

The Ordinance set up two types of courts - the Native Courts and Judicial Councils.¹³⁰ While Native Courts were purely tribunals presided over either by a single judge aided by his colleagues who were assessors or by a panel of judges who presided in turn, a judicial council apart from its judicial duties was a deliberative assembly of the most important Chiefs in its area of jurisdiction. It served as an appeal court for the Native Courts and it tried all criminal cases with the exception of murder cases.¹³¹ Judicial Councils were often given executive powers by the Governor-General.¹³²

130. Native Courts Ordinance, 1914, Section 4 .

131. (N.A.I.), Ben Prof. 7/6, 1,p. B.2.

132. Ben Prof. 8/1, 2 Meeting of the Council on 13th October, 1916. The Benin Judicial Council was given Executive Powers in 1916.

The Native Courts Ordinance of 1914 was generally applied to Ekitiland in June 1915.¹³³ However, a 'C' grade court had been opened on 15th May, 1915 at Ado-Ekiti for the Districts of Ado, Ikere, Ise and Emure.¹³⁴ In this regard, four town Chiefs, one Ilawe Chief, one Are Chief and one Igbara-Odo Chief were appointed as members. Shortly after, an Assize Court¹³⁵ was opened in Ikere for the people of Ise, Ikere and Emure. In March, 1917 when the Ado Court was raised to the status of a 'B' grade, the Ikere Court was granted a separate Warrant as a 'C' grade Court.¹³⁵ The Ewi of Ado-Ekiti raised a spontaneous objection to this arrangement and offered a passive resistance to the Native Court system. It was decided by the colonial

133. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29734 Intelligence Report on Ado District, para. 81. See also A.C.C. Swayne, Intelligence Report on Oye District, op. cit., para. 40.

134. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, op. cit., para. 130.

135. Ibid., para. 131. See also N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., para. 81.

authorities that the Odofin of Odo-Ado should sit as President of the Native Court. The Ewi of Ado-Ekiti also objected to the British proposal in November, 1917 to hold sessional courts at Aisegba and Igbara-Odo.¹³⁶

Also, the British established a 'C' grade court at Efon which served Efon, Okemesi and Ogotun District.¹³⁷ Two chiefs were appointed to represent Ogotun in the Court three months later. They were Oboyelekikan, the Ologotun and Ogundipe, the Obayinmua.¹³⁸ The same grade of court was also established at Oye to serve the districts of Oye, Isan and Aiyede on 6th May, 1916.¹³⁹

136. N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado-Ekiti, Ibid.

137. See (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper, Intelligence Report on Efon District, op. cit., para. 47, R.A. Vosper, Intelligence Report on Okemesi District.

138. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ogotun District, op. cit.,

139. (N.A.I.), A.C.C. Swayne, Intelligence Report on Oye District, op. cit., para. 105.

The sittings of the court were held on rotational basis among Oye, Isan and Aiyede. At Ido-Ekiti, a Native Court of 'C' grade was not established until 31st March, 1916.¹⁴⁰ At that time, the District was administered directly by the District officer owing to the disaffection among the people of the area.¹⁴¹ The composition of the court included the Olojudo and five Chiefs from Ido town namely the Saloro, the Asha, the Eleyinmi, the Oisape, the Olowosape and the two traditional rulers from the neighbouring villages namely the Olusi of Usi and the Owalogbo of Ilogbo.¹⁴²

At the inception of the Native Court, Itaji was placed in the Ikole Native Court area but in 1916 it joined the Oye Native Court area. It was not until 1927 that the Itaji Court became a separate 'C' grade court under the presidency of the Onitaji.¹⁴³ Like in

140. (N.A.I.), R.A. Vosper and A.C.C. Swayne, Intelligence Report on Ido-Ekiti, op. cit., para 65.

141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. Interview, Pa. J.A. Arokodare on 22nd January, 1988.

other towns in Ekitiland, a Native Court of 'C' grade was established at Akure in June, 1915. It was raised to the status of a 'B' grade court in 1918.¹⁴⁴

In the operation of the Native Courts System in Ekitiland, the court clerks often wielded unusual influence. They assumed immense powers in their respective Native Court areas much to the chagrin of the court members. In some cases, Clerks influenced court members to decide cases according to their whims and caprices.¹⁴⁵ Whenever the court members disagreed, it was not uncommon for Court Clerks to threaten them with reports to the District Officers as to their incompetence in administering the British law in accordance to its laid down procedure. Thus, the Clerks used the advantage of education, knowledge of court routine and the keeping of records to intimidate members,

144. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para.26.

145. Interview, Pa J.A. Arokodare on 22nd January, 1988.

which they usually bent to their will. Consequently, the Native Courts system afforded the courts Clerks an opportunity to perpetrate fraud, manipulation and other malpractices.¹⁴⁶ Some of them were openly accused of seducing other people's wives. As a way of checking these malpractices and gross abuse of office, Court Clerks were transferred after a period of not more than three years in a duty station.¹⁴⁷

Membership of a Native Court was limited to the town and quarter heads with the Oba as President. The Court heard both criminal and civil cases. At every court sitting, Native Administration Police was always in attendance to maintain law and order. Although the Oba were made the Presidents of Native Courts, the operation of such courts reduced the pre-eminent role which Ekiti Oba played in the pre-colonial era. Apart

146. Interview, Chief J. A. Arokodare on 22nd January, 1988.

147. Interview, Chief J. A. Arokodare on 22nd January, 1988.

from the fact that appeals were made to the District Officer based in Ado-Ekiti, the District Officer sometimes referred court decisions to the Provincial court at Akure for further adjudication.¹⁴⁸ This logically raises the question as to whether, or not, the Native Courts were actually 'native' in the real sense of the word. Indeed, it can be argued that the courts were only 'native' with regard to the personnel and not the judicial processes.

Infact, the operation of the Native Courts in Ekitiland justified the assertion of Prof. Adewoye that the establishment of such courts was part and parcel of the process of subjugation of Southern Nigeria by the British.¹⁴⁹ Native Courts were not mere judicial institutions but an instrument for bringing under effective administrative control of the area which the British had gained a foothold.¹⁵⁰ Through the Native

148. Interview, Chief J. A. Arokodare on 22nd January, 1988.

149. See O. Adewoye, op. cit., p. 41.

150. Ibid.

Courts system, British laws were introduced in Ekitiland. It cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised that the introduction of the British legal system in Ekitiland eroded the judicial powers hitherto enjoyed by the Oba before the advent of British Administration.

Besides, the establishment of Native Courts deprived many Ekiti Oba the opportunity of getting hearing fees which were paid by warring parties to the Palace Court before colonial rule. Consequently, in order to recoup for the loss of revenue from this source, a few Oba resorted to taking bribes in their capacity as Presidents of Native Courts.¹⁵¹ However, as soon as such cases were detected, appropriate punishments were meted out to them by the British Officials. For example, Oba Owoyomi, the Oloye of Oye, was suspended in 1923 as President of Native Court for taking bribe.¹⁵²

151. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/31318, Intelligence Report on Oye District, 1936, p. 12.

152. Ibid.

In terms of the reaction of Ekiti people, it would appear that they preferred the Oba's court which they were used to in the pre-colonial era to the Native Courts since the former was cheaper and cases brought to the court were disposed of more expeditiously.¹⁵³ The last subject of discussion in this chapter is the introduction of direct taxation in Ekitiland.

Introduction of Direct Taxation

In order to facilitate our understanding of the circumstances which led to the introduction of direct taxation into Ekitiland by the British, it is highly expedient to discuss the genesis of direct taxation in Nigeria first. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria provided Sir Frederick Lugard, then Governor-General of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, with a golden opportunity of extending the system of direct taxation prevalent in Northern

153. Information collected from Chief J. A. Arokodare, on 22nd January, 1988.

Provinces into the Southern Provinces.¹⁵⁴

Lugard also wanted to establish in the Southern Provinces 'a system of administration through the Native Chiefs somewhat on the model of the Northern Provinces and to bring the Political Officers into greater touch with the people.'¹⁵⁵ In this connection, he was of the view that direct taxation had the effect of generating self-rule and inculcating the feeling of responsibility by stimulating the interest in Local development on the part of the Native Administration.¹⁵⁶ This was because direct taxation was invariably accompanied by the establishment of Native Treasuries which helped to strengthen, consolidate and develop native administration. As Lugard succinctly put it in The Dual Mandate, "without a tax there can be no treasury and without treasury no real eventual measure of self-rule".¹⁵⁷

154. (N.A.I.), C.S.O 1/34,3 Lugard to Harcourt, Conf. of 10 August, 1914.

155. Ibid.

156. (N.A.I.), CSO 26/2 File 17720, ii, p. 192.

157. F.D. Lugard The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, (London, 1965), p.219.

Before the first world war, a greater proportion of the revenue of the central Government of Nigeria was derived from custom duties, particularly on spirits and railway freight. There was no compelling need then to expend sources of the revenue of the central government. However, the outbreak of the war gravely threatened the government's finances which made the imposition of direct taxation imperative to augment government revenue.¹⁵⁸ Consequent upon the war, there was a slump in the market for palm kernels and palm produce, which were the stable export crop of the Southern provinces due to a drastic fall in the purchasing power of the firms then operating generally in West Africa. As a result, Lugard rightly anticipated "a very serious shortage of imports and exports for sometime to come which will decrease the revenue both from customs and railway freights."¹⁵⁹ He, therefore, saw the war

158. Lugard to Harcourt, conf. of 10 August, 1914, op. cit.

159. Ibid.

as making it imperative for him to reinforce revenue by a considerable switch in favour of direct taxes in the Southern Provinces. In fact, parts of Yorubaland and Benin provided him the opportunity to carry out this idea since there existed some centralised indigenous rule under powerful chiefs through whom taxation could be enforced.¹⁶⁰

In this regard, Lord Lugard directed the Administrative Officers to carry out detailed investigation as a preliminary for introducing direct taxation. The terms of reference of the panel included proofs of the existence, or otherwise, of any tribute of the Oba and Chiefs, consideration of the salutary effects of direct taxes, the prospect of minimal indigenous opposition to the scheme and the approval of Chiefs and guarantees for the preparedness to implement the scheme. The panel submitted that the introduction of direct taxation would be met with stout resistance by

160. See P. A. Igbafe, op. cit., p. 259 .

the people.¹⁶¹ Despite this, Lugard would have gone ahead but for the Colonial Office which stopped the scheme.¹⁶²

The Colonial Office predicted its decision to shelve the scheme on the following grounds: First, it was not considered necessary to adopt such a policy during a war as it could generate further unrest and tension among the indigenous peoples. Secondly, the milieu under which the policy was to be implemented in Southern Nigeria was a direct antithesis of the Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria where the scheme had earlier been introduced by Lord Lugard. Lastly, the experience of the Colonial Office on the scheme of direct taxation in Sierra Leone was not considered encouraging.¹⁶³ Consequently, Lugard was disallowed from embarking on such an experiment. Nevertheless, Lugard still felt that direct taxation would strengthen

161. (NAI), C.S.O. 26/01498, ii, p. 12.

162. (NAI), Lugard to Harcourt, op. cit.

163. Ibid.

Native Administration being largely an adaptation of customary practices since it would replace the old tribute and other forms of extortion including forced labour.¹⁶⁴ The establishment of Provincial Courts as well as the reform of Native Courts under the 1914 ordinances were considered to have depleted the Chief's sources of income which could be made good by revenue from direct taxation. Regarding the establishment of Native Treasuries as the direct corollary of direct taxation, Lugard felt that the scheme formed the "basis upon which the whole structure of Native Administration must be based."¹⁶⁵ Thus, Lugard made a proposal in 1915 to introduce direct taxation into the centralised government of the Yoruba and Bini who were not only adjudged familiar with the idea of tax but also had the machinery for its collection or enforcement.¹⁶⁶

Although the Colonial Office was sympathetic towards Lugard's view-points, however, the scheme was shelved for the following reasons: Firstly, it was

164. (N.A.I.), Lugard to Harcourt secret of 13 March 1915 and minutes, op. cit.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

the opinion of the Colonial Office that the scheme would evoke social unrest. Secondly, there were reservations as to the time the scheme was to be introduced (inter-war years). Thirdly, the Cameroon campaign had tied up almost all the British forces in Nigeria and since the scheme was being used by Lugard to promote the higher political development of the people, it was considered prudent to "shelve it until the return of the troops whose bayonets would then be available to support British philanthropy".¹⁶⁷ However, towards the end of 1916, the financial position of the government gravely deteriorated. The war in Europe was telling much on the Colonial and Overseas possessions of Britain. It was under this circumstance that Lugard was granted permission, though reluctantly by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to introduce direct taxation to Egba, most parts of Yorubaland and Benin.¹⁶⁸ In granting the permission,

167. Ibid.

168. See F.D. Lugard, Report on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration 1912-1919, (H.M.S.O. 1920), para. 28.

Lugard was warned that the scheme should only be introduced if the Chiefs and the people willingly gave their consent to it. The tax was not to represent any additional increase on the old customary tribute. Maybe, the Secretary of State wanted to avert incidents like the Iseyin disturbances of 1916.¹⁶⁹

Prof. Atanda argued that the Iseyin rising of 1916 supported by that of Oke-Iho near Oyo, was not an anti-tax riot since it occurred before the introduction of direct taxation into the Oyo Province in 1918. Rather, the Iseyin-Oke-Iho rising is seen as a socio-political conflict generated by the people's dissatisfaction with several aspects of British rule including the rigid centralisation of the Native Administration and the introduction of the Native Court system.¹⁷⁰ The disturbances were serious enough however to compel the Colonial Office to impress on

169. (N.A.I.), Lugard to Harcourt, op. cit.

170. J.A Atanda, 'The Iseyin-OkeIho rising of 1916, an example of socio-political conflict in colonial Nigeria. J.H.S.N., iv, 4, 1969, pp. 497-505.

Lugard that he must proceed cautiously on the issue of direct taxation. Besides, Lugard was to bear the full responsibility for the new scheme.

After some protracted discussions between the Colonial Office and the Administrative Officers in Nigeria, direct taxation was introduced under the Native Revenue Ordinance No. 1 of 1917,¹⁷¹ into parts of Yorubaland and Benin between 1918 and 1920. Initially, the ordinance applied to the Northern Provinces only and direct taxation was introduced into the Southern Provinces by the piecemeal extension of the provisions of this Ordinance, as amended by the Native Revenue Ordinance No. 29 of 1918, by Orders-in-Council to specified areas.¹⁷²

The Native Revenue (Southern Provinces) Ordinance, 1918 was enacted on 20 December, 1918 by the Acting Governor, A.G. Boyle, in order to extend the provisions

171. Laws of Nigeria, (1922 edition), chapt. 74, p.807

172. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/16524, ii, p.211, 16524/S.6, p.42 Minutes by the Attorney-General, H.C. Cox to H.C.S. 18 Jan. 1938.

of the Native Revenue Ordinance 1917 to Southern Provinces. This gave legal sanction to the collection of tributes and taxes which had already begun in certain parts of the Southern Provinces such as Benin, Egba Division of Abeokuta Province, Oyo and Ijebu-Ode. The extension of the Order came into force on 1st January, 1919.¹⁷³ Three reasons can be adduced for the introduction of direct taxation into the Southern Provinces. First, it was hoped that the tax collected would assist in setting up Native Administrations on the same lines with those in the Northern Provinces. In this regard, the money collected was to be spent on local services such as payment of the salaries of Chiefs as well as the officials of Native Administration, construction of bridges, culverts, hospitals as well as the execution of various public works. Secondly, the proceeds from direct tax were to be used for the

173. See P. A. Igbafe, op. cit., p. 264.

maintenance of a number of public services like the Native Administration Police, Prisons, Sanitary and Forestry Departments. Thirdly, it was also hoped that the introduction of direct taxation would result in the abolition of communal forced labour for public works.¹⁷⁴

Ekitiland had evolved a socio-political system that facilitated the introduction of direct taxation. There was the payment of tributes by the inhabitants to their Oba and Baale. These tributes were in form of yams, kolanut, palmwine, palm-oil, etc. The Oba and Chiefs often sent their palace messengers to various subordinate towns and villages to collect the tributes. This traditional form of taxation provided the ground for the introduction of direct taxation into Ekitiland.¹⁷⁵

174. See Lord F. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, op. cit. p.23, and Father A. Oguntuyi, History of Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., p. 107.

175. Information received from Oba Adetula Adeleye, the Elekole of Ikole-Ekiti, and Mr. Adeola Ogunmola at Ilawe-Ekiti on 5th February, 1988.

The collection of tax did not start the same way and time in the whole of Ekitiland. At Ode-Ekiti, collection of tax started before 1914 as "Ose Ogoloba" (Collection or dues of Governor Glover). The name given to this type of tax stemmed from the people's perception of the white man as having almost the same status with the gods.¹⁷⁶ In Ode-Ekiti "Ose" was usually collected for the gods and the people were already used to it. The tax began with three shillings but was gradually increased to six shillings.¹⁷⁷ In Otun-Ekiti, taxation also began as "Ose". In 1914, when the Otun people refused to pay the tax, the British resorted to the use of coercion to enforce payment.¹⁷⁸ Consequently, the youths in Otun-Ekiti revolted in 1915 by setting

176. Hence the term "Oyinbo Ekeji Orisa" (a white man is next to the gods). See A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p. 125.

177. Ibid.

178. The late Msgr. A.O.Oguntuyi confirmed this in an interview held on 1st September, 1986 shortly before his death.

fire to virtually all the houses in the town thus destroying all properties as well as killing most of the Chiefs who were regarded as being responsible for the introduction of the tax.¹⁷⁹ However, payment of the foregoing tax was not applicable to other parts of Ekitiland.

As a prelude to the introduction of direct taxation into Ekitiland, an enumeration and assessment exercise was conducted in 1919.¹⁸⁰ During the exercise, the British political officers, assisted by the local people, went round from house to house to count the adult male. However, it was not uncommon for particular names to be recorded twice with the result that when direct taxation was introduced, the affected people were asked to pay tax twice.¹⁸¹

179. Ibid.

180. Ibid. See also Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p. 125 and N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado-Ekiti, op. cit., para. 84.

181. Ibid.

On 1st January, 1920, taxation was introduced in Ekitiland with the formation of the Ekiti Native Administration.¹⁸² A flat rate of six shillings (60s) was paid per adult male. This continued throughout the whole of Ekitiland until the 1929/30 financial year when income tax was introduced.¹⁸³ Thus a sum of £3,276 was collected from Ado District in 1920. In Ikere District, a sum of £1,016 was collected while a sum of £2,300 was collected from the Akure District.¹⁸⁴ The method of tax collection was generally the same in all parts of Ekitiland. Initially, tax officials who were local people appointed on temporary basis by the District Officer stayed in the

182. Ibid. See also G.O. Orewa, Taxation in Western Nigeria, (Ibadan, Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 5.

183. Ibid.

184. See (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado-Ekiti District, op. cit., para.92; N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ikere District, op. cit., para. 55 and N.A.C., Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para. 28 .

market places while the tax payers came quarter by quarter to pay their taxes.¹⁸⁵ It was, however, not long before the inconveniences of appearing quarter by quarter to pay tax were discovered hence the system was jettisoned. A new system was, therefore, introduced. At the beginning of every fiscal year, the compound head in every village or town was notified by means of a slip called Bale ticket of the amount due from their respective compounds. These notices were written in the presence of the Town or Village heads (Quarter Chiefs in large towns) who assented to the amounts assessed. Thereafter, the individual tax payers in the compound were informed of their assessments and were required to pay the amounts directly to their Town or Village Quarter

185. Information received from Chief T.O. Jegede, 80, at Ise-Ekiti on 4th March, 1988.

186. See N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 92 .

heads in the presence of the Town or Village Council as well as a representative of his family. After payment, he received a tax receipt duly stamped by the village head. The Town or Village head remitted the tax collected to the District head in instalments who later paid the tax into the Ekiti Native Treasury.¹⁸⁷ The District head was also issued a receipt by the Assessment scribes employed to write out the Bale receipt and individual receipts. The Assessment scribes kept tax registers and assessment forms but were not allowed to handle cash. All accounts on tax collected were subsequently reconciled at Ado-Ekiti.¹⁸⁸

A number of reasons have been adduced to explain why the Ekiti people initially did not put up stout resistance to the payment of direct taxation. First, it has been argued that there was the feeling of fear of the military prowess of the British.¹⁸⁹ It is

187. Ibid.

188. Ibid. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 1st September, 1986.

189. See Canon J.A. Ajayi, "Pioneers of Christianity in Ekiti", The Light, Magazine of Ekiti Diocese, Vol. II, No. 1, October, 1967, p.5.

argued that the people of Ekitiland wanted to avert a situation whereby the British would launch an attack on them to enforce compliance.¹⁹⁰ This school of thought predicates its contention on the ground that the Danasungbo war¹⁹¹ was still fresh in the memory of the Ekiti people hence they dared not risk any military confrontation with the British.¹⁹² Secondly, there was also the ruthlessness with which tax collectors dealt with tax evaders. It has been argued that this engendered fear in the minds of would-be tax evaders.¹⁹³ Tax collectors were often

190. Ibid.

191. This was the Anglo-Ijebu war of 1892. See details of the war in Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, op. cit., pp.618 - 625 and Sir. W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria Under British Rule, op. cit., pp. 50 - 52 .

192. Information collected from Mr. Samuel Ogunsuyi, 75, at Orun Ekiti on 9th January, 1989.

193. Ibid. See also G. O. Orewa, Taxation in Western Nigeria, op. cit., p. 4 .

accompanied by the Imoro (police escort) who inflicted severe **punishments** on tax defaulters. While some were made to collect stones together and lie on them, others were brutally beaten and maimed in the process.¹⁹⁴ Those taken to court by the tax collectors were jailed. In fact, the fear of being sent to jail was enough to compel the Ekiti people to pay tax as imprisonment was (and is still) perceived as a form of degradation in the society. In some cases, tax defaulters who escaped into the bush would have their wives and children apprehended and tortured until either they or their relations paid the tax on behalf of the fugitives. At times, tax defaulters caught were made to open their eyes to the direct rays of the sun with their feet put in the stocks.¹⁹⁵

Thirdly, it has been postulated that the initial attitude of the Ekiti people to the payment of direct taxation was due to the fact that the British had

194. Ibid.

195. Ibid.

already brain-washed the Oba in Yorubaland in general that refusal of any of their subjects to pay tax was tantamount to a disobedience to the authority of the Oba concerned.¹⁹⁶ And having regard to the fact that the Oba were greatly revered in the past, it was, therefore, a matter of grave concern to them to discover any breach of their order in form of tax evasion. In fact, a situation whereby a subordinate town or village refused to pay tax was regarded by the Oba of the central town as an insult to his authority.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, it was common place for Oba in Ekitiland to send Opa (staff of office) to any town or village under their suzerainty where there were reported cases of tax evasion. As soon as the Opa was brought into such a town or village, the taxable adults there would immediately run helter skelter to raise money in order to pay the tax. Failure to pay the tax on time often resulted in indiscriminate destruction of properties, food, crops, domestic animals, etc. of the affected subordinate town or village. Also, the people of the affected village or town were responsible for the feeding of the Oba's messengers until the amount was paid.¹⁹⁸

196. F. Lugard, op. cit., p.135.

197. Ibid.

198. Interview, Mr. Samuel Ogunsuyi at Orun-Ekiti on 9th January, 1989.

Besides, the way taxation was rationalised generally in Nigeria did not give room for protest ab. initio. According to Lord Lugard, direct taxation was a "way of freeing the salaried Native Judges from the temptation of bribe and unjust fine".¹⁹⁹ It was also rationalised as a way of "promoting the recognition of individual responsibility",²⁰⁰ in view of the fact that tax payment would enable everyone contribute his or her quota to the Government funds meant for developmental purposes. In other words, money realised from direct taxation would be used for the provision of social services in various towns and villages in Ekitiland.²⁰¹

Although direct taxation yielded revenue for the payment of salaries of paramount Oba designated "Native Authorities" as well as for the provision of social services in Ekitiland, the scheme later generated a lot of protest among the Ekiti people. The full involvement of Native Authorities in the collection of tax, the attendant problems of collection as well as the reaction of the Ekiti people to the introduction of direct taxation will be examined later in the thesis.²⁰²

199. See Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, op. cit., pp.219-220.

200. Ibid.

201. Interview, Pa. J.A. Arokodare at Ijero-Ekiti on 22nd January, 1988.

202. Please see chapters four and five.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION:
CREATION OF A CENTRALISED POLITICAL
AUTHORITY IN EKITILAND, 1920 - 1936

In this chapter, attention would be focused on the effort made by the British to consolidate their administration through the creation of a centralised political authority in Ekitiland between 1920 and 1936. This attempt was made in two directions. Firstly, the British made spirited efforts to make the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti the Sole Authority for the whole of Ekitiland. Secondly, the Ekiti Confederation Council (Pelupelu) was formed in 1920 with the objective of facilitating the administration of Ekitiland. Efforts were made to use Ekiti Oba as political instruments of British Administration. I shall discuss the foregoing issues in turn.

The attempt to make the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti the Sole Authority for the Whole of Ekitiland

In pursuance of their policy of establishing a central administration for Ekitiland, the British created a single Native Authority for the area.¹ Against the background of the fact that Ekitiland was hitherto a decentralised area, the new dispensation was designed towards ensuring that the District Officer (D.O.) had a body which could serve as an agent of Colonial Administration in Ekiti Division.² Also, the British considered it desirable to make the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti Oba Adewumi Agunsoye (1910-1937) the Sole Authority for the whole of Ekitiland. In formulating this policy, the British were encouraged by the success of the

1. See S. A. Akintoye, 'Obas of Ekiti Confederacy since the Advent of the British' in M. Crowder and O. Ikime (eds.), West African Chiefs: Their changing status under Colonial Rule and Independence, (Ile-Ife, University of Ife Press, Nigeria, 1970), p.262.

2. Ibid.

political experiment carried out in Ijebu and Egbaland where the Awujale and the Alake were recognised as Paramount Oba for their respective domains.³

The colonial Administration took the following steps to enhance the status of the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti. Firstly, the British Political Officers made deliberate efforts to ensure that the Ewi was obeyed by the Baale of the neighbouring towns and villages. The Oba such as the Olode of Ode and the Onimesi of Imesi-Lasigidi who proved recalcitrant were deported from their respective domains.⁴ Secondly, the Ewi was the only Oba in Ekitiland who was invited to Osogbo in 1908 to the official opening of the rail road.⁵ Thirdly, by 1902, major institutions like a central hall and a hospital

3. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p. 127.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

had been established in Ado-Ekiti. Moreover, Ado-Ekiti was chosen by the British as the venue for the meeting of the Ekiti Oba in March 1920, after the first meeting held at Oke-Imo.⁶

The British did not succeed in their endeavour to make the Ewi the Sole Authority in Ekitiland. This British experiment of creating a centralised political authority would have brought the whole of Ekitiland under a central authority, if it had succeeded.⁷ The policy did not take into cognisance the fact that Ekitiland was a highly segmentary society where each Oba ruled autonomous and independent kingdom before colonial rule. None of the Oba had any paramountcy over the other. For instance, the Elekole of Ikole was independent of the Oore of Otun; the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti had no political allegiance to the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, the

6. Ibid.

7. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi at Ado-Ekiti on 22nd August, 1986.

Arinjale of Ise was not subordinate to the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti while the Alaaye of Efon and the Alara of Aramoko were independent of the Ajero of Ijero. Similarly, the Ajero of Ijero and the Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti, in spite of the close proximity of their two domains, were independent of each other during the pre-colonial era.⁸

Having said this, the Ekiti kingdoms did not exist as islands or watertight compartments as there were social, economic and diplomatic relations among them before British Administration.

However, the issue of paramountcy among Ekiti Oba was a strange phenomenon in Ekitiland.⁹

Unlike the situation that existed in Oyo, Egba and Ijebuland, no Ekiti Oba could be regarded as a paramount ruler over the entire Ekitiland.

8. Information received from Oba Adelegan Adesida III, the Deji of Akureland, on 1st May, 1990.

9. Interview, Oba O. Olayisade, 90, the Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti, on 11th February, 1989.

Rather, the Ekiti Oba loathed the idea of having one of them as a suzerain over the entire area as enunciated in the British policy of rigid political centralisation.¹⁰ The Ekiti Oba did not want to lose their age-long sovereignty and autonomy hence the idea of rigid form of centralisation of political authority was very unpalatable and unacceptable to them. Consequently, the political experiment failed abysmally in Ekitiland.

The Establishment of the Ekiti Confederation Council (Pelupelu) in 1920

Although the British failed in their bid to create a Sole Authority in Ekitiland, they, however, succeeded in the formation of the Ekiti Confederation Council. As earlier stated, the Ekiti and Ijesa Oba were constituted into a Council which was inaugurated at Oke-Imo by Major Reeve-Tucker

10. Interview, Oba O. Olayisade on 11th February, 1989.

on 21st June, 1900.¹¹ To the British, the Ijesa and Ekiti people who constituted the Ekitiparapo could best be administered under one political umbrella with the headquarters at Ilesa. However, following the dissolution of the North-eastern District on 31st December, 1912, the British decided to constitute the Ekiti Oba who were formerly part of the Ijesa-Ekiti council into the Ekiti Confederation Council.¹² The Council was inaugurated on 1st March, 1920 amidst great pomp and pageantry.

The following Oba, in order of precedence, attended the meeting which was later christened "pelupelu" (meeting):

1. The Elekole of Ikole
2. The Ewi of Ado-Ekiti

11. Supra, pp. 198-9.

12. See Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit. p. 127.

3. The Ajero of Ijero
4. The Alara of Aramoko
5. The Deji of Akure
6. The Alaaye of Efon
7. The Arinjale of Ise
8. The Olojudo of Ido
9. The Oloye of Oye
10. The Ologotun of Ogotun
11. The Ogoga of Ikere
12. The Oloja of Okemesi
13. The Onitaji of Itaji
14. The Onisan of Isan
15. The Ata of Aiyede
16. The Elemure of Emure¹³

At this meeting, the Oba agreed to introduce Owo ile (poll tax). The District Officer instructed

13. (N.A.I.), CSO 26/2/11874/Vol.VIII, Annual Reports on Ondo Province, 1929 and 1930, para. 36.

them to ensure that palm trees and other economic trees like Iroko, Agao and Apepe were not destroyed in their domains.¹⁴ The Elekole was made the President of the new Council with an additional salary of £36,¹⁵ a phenomenon which resulted in a concealed resentment among the other Oba who were of the view that such a practice was alien to the socio-political setting in Ekitiland prior to colonial rule where all the Oba regarded themselves as brothers and equals.¹⁶ In fact, these concealed resentments were manifested in subsequent agitations for separate Treasuries and Estimates as each Oba felt his position was being threatened in the 1930s.¹⁷ This notwithstanding,

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14. Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, op. cit.
 15. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, The broad Outlines of the past and present organisation in the Ekiti Division of Ondo Province op. cit., p. 39.
 16. (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div./1/613, O.V. Lee, Intelligence Report on Ekiti Division of Ondo Province, 1942, Appendix.
 17. Ibid. Details of these agitations will be discussed in Chapter Five.

the Pelupelu later became a forum where government policy was made public. It also became a court for the adjudication of criminal cases but its ruling was subject to review by the District Officer. Indeed, the Ekiti Confederation Council became the Ekiti Judicial Council in October 1923 after its approval by the Lt. Governor.¹⁸ The court also afforded opportunities for the Ekiti Oba to discuss matters other than those connected with the cases actually being heard by them.¹⁹ Indeed, it was the view of the British that it would be impossible to administer Ekitiland without such a council.²⁰ Issues that were considered to be beyond the scope of any Native court were dealt with by the Judicial Council. Such issues included charges against the Baale (Village heads), land disputes between one village and another

18. (N.A.I), CSO 26/2/11874/Vol.III, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1926, para. 70.

19. Ibid.

20. (N.A.I), CSO 26/2/11874/Vol.1 Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1923, para. 32.

etc.²¹ The Ekiti Judicial Council meetings were largely marked with an atmosphere of goodwill and willingness to work as a corporate body.²² The council, however, had no legal status until 1948.²³ In spite of the apparent advantages of the Council as will be seen later in the chapter, it created an opportunity for the British to erode gradually the age-long authority of Ekiti Oba.²⁴

Ekiti Oba as Political Instruments of British Administration

In furtherance of the objective of consolidating their administration in Ekitiland, the British made use of Ekiti Oba as political instruments of their administration. To begin with, the Oba were constituted into Native Authorities. This policy was informed mainly by two factors. First, there was the erroneous impression of some British

21. Ibid., para. 33.

22. (N.A.I), Annual Reports on Ondo Province 1929 and 1930, op. cit., para. 11.

23. Details of how the Council was invested with a legal status as Superior Native Authority for the whole of Ekitiland will be discussed in Chapter Five.

24. See A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p. 128.

Political Officers that the Ekiti Oba were autocrats and that their subjects would readily accept whatever policies they introduced. Secondly, there was the need to facilitate the work of the District Officer who had to administer 17 Districts.²⁵ Thus, the British selected some Oba whom they labelled as Native Authorities.²⁶ Consequently, in the implementation of the Native Administration Ordinance of 1916, each of the Ekiti Kingdoms was gazetted as a District with the Oba as the Sole Native Authority. These Native Authorities were the Elekole of Ikole, the Ewi of Ado, the Ajero of Ijero, the Alara of Aramoko, the Deji of Akure, the Alaaye of Efon, the Arinjale of Ise, the Olojudo of Ido, the Oloye of Oye, the Ologotun of Ogotun, the Ogoga of Ikere, the Oloja of Okemesi, the Onitaji of Itaji, the Onisan of

25. See S. A. Akintoye, 'Obas of Ekiti Confederacy', op. cit., p. 258.

26. Information collected from Msgr. A. O. Oguntuyi on 2nd August, 1986.

Isan and the Ata of Aiyede.²⁷ It should be noted that at that time, Otun was in the Northern Nigeria and was not returned to Ekitiland until 1936. Similarly, Emure was grouped under Ise until 1924. Consequently, at the inauguration of the Native Authorities in 1916, there were 15 Districts in Ekitiland.²⁸ The number increased to 16 and 17 when Emure and Otun were constituted into Districts in 1924²⁹ and 1936³⁰ respectively.

The Oba, who had jurisdiction over these Districts, performed a number of functions in the administration of Ekitiland during colonial rule. In the discharge of their functions, they were used as instruments of political change by the British in Ekitiland. First and foremost, the Oba were responsible for the collection of taxes. The objectives behind

27. Interview, Msgr. A. O. Oguntuyi on 22nd August, 1986. See also Gazette No. 32 of June 1924 where they were gazetted as Native Authorities.

28. Ibid.

29. See Gazette No. 53 of 3rd October, 1929. In fact, it was then that the Elemure was gazetted as a Native Authority.

30. Ibid. See also S. A. Akintoye op. cit., p. 258. As it will be seen in Chapter Five, the secession of Akure in 1946 reduced the number to 16 again.

the introduction of direct taxation in Ekitiland have been discussed.³¹ In the same vein, the method of collection of tax has also been dealt with.³² Following the introduction of direct taxation, each Oba began to receive a salary based on Twenty percent (20%) of all the taxes collected in his district. Apart from the Oba, a few Baale and Chiefs who served on councils were paid paltry fees for their services.³³ But this was a far cry from the British overall policy of making each Oba to impose, collect and spend the tax.³⁴ This decision was predicated on the British overall policy of making the dependencies to contribute towards the maintenance of their Administrators. Nevertheless, it was a matter of regret that the Yoruba Oba in general were not aware of this provision in the indirect rule memorandum

31. Supra, pp. 262-3.

32. See pg. 266-8 above

33. S. A. Akintoye, op. cit., p.259.

34. See R. Wraith, 'Indirect Rule in Retrospect' in E. A. Tugbiyele, Report of a course on Local Government in Transition, (September, 1958), p.6.

hence they were satisfied with the grant of the Twenty percent (20%) of the taxes collected.³⁵

Generally, the objectives of poll tax were poorly explained to the vastly illiterate communities in Ekitiland who were hitherto used to giving tributes and other traditional gifts to their Oba before colonial rule. Indeed, the payment of this form of tax called Owo Ori was strange to them. Besides, the mode of assessment, method of collection as well as the brutal punishments often meted out to tax defaulters enraged the people of Ekitiland.³⁶ What is more, the British system of taxation destroyed the age-long tradition of tribute payment which was considered by them (the British) to be a barbaric form of taxation. Hence, all the series of arbitrary, irregular and uncertain tributes paid

35. Ibid.

36. Information received from Mr. Elijah Ajisafe, (81), at Ilawe-Ekiti on 2nd March, 1988.

to the Oba were consolidated into a regular, definite, single and fair system of direct taxation out of which the salary of the Oba could be paid.³⁷ This strengthened the hands of the British Political agents in administering the Ekiti people through their Oba. In their perception, a favour had been done to the Oba who in turn had to reciprocate by accepting and obeying British laws. This notwithstanding, the Oba were obliged to convince their subjects about the advantages they would derive from the payment of tax. Consequently, the Oba in Ekiti-land became the mouth-piece of the British Colonial authorities by informing their respective subjects that once they (Oba) started to receive salaries, forced labour and all forms of exactions from the people would end. Paradoxically, later events were to show that by serving as the mouth-piece of the

37. See G.O. Orewa, Taxation in Western Nigeria: The problem of an emergent State, (Ibadan, Oxford University Press, 1961), p.1.

British, some of the Oba made themselves susceptible to charges of extortions levelled against them by their subjects.³⁸

A number of reasons were adduced in Chapter Three to explain why the Ekiti people initially did not put up a stout resistance to the payment of tax.³⁹ However, as the years rolled by, resentment against taxation began to gather momentum. Ekitiland started to witness a high degree of tax evasion. The situation was accentuated by the introduction of income tax in the 1929/30 financial year.⁴⁰ Under the flat rate system, the British realised that the income of individual farmers varied from one person to the other hence it was decided that tax payment should be in accordance with the policy of "each according to his ability".⁴¹

38. See Father A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, op. cit., p. 107 and Lord F. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, op. cit., p. 231.

39. Supra , pp.268 - 272.

40. See (NAI), Annual Report on Ondo Province for 1929 and 1930, op. cit., para. 51.

41. Ibid.

Before the new tax came into force, the British colonial authorities sent Mr. B. H. Carkeek, the District Officer for Ekiti, to undertake a tour of the area to explain the raison detre for the new taxation as well as to enlighten the people on the advantages that would accrue to them from the new system. On receiving this instruction, Mr. Carkeek proceeded to Ido-Ekiti, his first port of call. He assembled the people together at the Ido Rest House where he announced the introduction of the new income tax under which a male adult was to pay seven shillings (7s).⁴² This represented an increase of one shilling (1s) over the existing tax rate. The reaction of the Ido people to this development was spontaneous. They protested vehemently to Mr. Carkeek who retorted by stressing

42. Interview Mr. S. O. Fabusuyi, 78, at Ido-Ekiti on 7th January, 1989.

that payment of more taxes would ensure better improvement of the towns and villages in Ekitiland.⁴³ In spite of his explanation, the people of Ido were not satisfied. This was manifested in the manner which they frowned at Mr. Carkeek's repeated appeasements.⁴⁴

Generally, the reactions gathered by Mr. Carkeek in all the other towns visited during the tour were similar to that of Ido-Ekiti. Ekiti people received the news of the introduction of income tax with vehement resentment. Consequently, the British decided not to introduce income tax arbitrarily in Ekitiland. A decision was, therefore, taken to embark on a re-assessment exercise similar to the one conducted in 1919.⁴⁵ When the re-assessment exercise began in 1929,⁴⁶ farmers were asked a

43. Interview, Oba O. Olayisade, (90), the Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti, on 11th February, 1989.

44. Interview, Oba O. Olayisade on 11th February, 1989.

45. See (NAI), H. Bridel, EKITI DIV.1/1/220A, Intelligence Report on the Aiyede District of Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, paras. 89-90.

46. Ibid.

number of questions ranging from the number of farmlands they possessed, the number of heaps cultivated yearly to the profits accruing to them from the sale of their farm produce.⁴⁷ It was on the basis of the assessment that each tax-payer knew how much he had to pay. It is instructive to note that the tax assessment of 1929 was not as successful as the one carried out in 1919. Unlike the 1919 exercise, the farmers were unwilling to give accurate data to the Assessors to avoid paying high taxes.⁴⁸ Consequently, tax assessors only made rough estimates of the income of the farmers. As a result, the income tax imposed on every taxable adult ranged from 6s to 15s.⁴⁹

Generally, the people of Ekitiland were not prepared to adapt to the new form of taxation. As a

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47. Ibid.
48. Interview, Msgr. A. O. Oguntuyi on 2nd August, 1986.
49. Ibid.

result of this, the new rates were paid only for two years before open resentments and riots broke out. At Ido-Ekiti in 1931, the tax-payers assembled in the market shouting and cursing the Olojudo of Ido because the people believed that he colluded with the colonial authorities to accept the tax increase. It was, therefore, their view that the Olojudo should suffer the consequences for betraying his subjects.⁵⁰

The agitation escalated as women joined their male counterparts. Markets were boycotted and people prevented from going to their farms.⁵¹ The atmosphere was so charged that neither the Olojudo nor his Chiefs dared confront the angry mob. In the circumstance, therefore, the Olojudo sent an emissary to the District Officer at Ado-Ekiti to

50. Interview, Oba O. Olayisade, on 11th February, 1989. See also Father A. Oguntuyi, History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, op. cit., p. 101.

51. See Father A. Oguntuyi, History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, op. cit., p. 101.

come to his rescue.⁵² In a spontaneous reaction to this distress call, the District Officer dispatched some local policemen together with a handful of Hausa force to Ido-Ekiti to put down the uprising. And within the twinkling of an eye, the riot was suppressed while a number of people were arrested. Those arrested were taken to Ado-Ekiti where they were either fined or jailed.⁵³ The culprits fined were requested to pay the outstanding tax arrears while those who could not afford the fines were jailed accordingly.⁵⁴ The most agonising aspect of the situation was that those jailed were made to pay the arrears of tax owed after serving their various jail terms.⁵⁵ In spite of the brutal measures taken against the tax agitators at Ido, tax agitation spread to other parts of Ekitiland

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

unabated. In fact, it would appear as if the Ido incident was a catalyst that fuelled the wave of tax agitation in Ekitiland.⁵⁶

In 1931, there was a tax riot at Ijero-Ekiti. The riot was sparked off by the news of an increase in tax broken to the Ijero people by Chief Oso-Ibon, the Obanla of the town.⁵⁷ The Obanla had represented the Ajero at a meeting convened by the District Officer of the Ekiti Division to educate the people of the circumstances leading to the increase in tax.⁵⁸ The Obanla was thus accused of complicity by the Ijero people for the increase in tax. Consequently, the majority of tax-payers in the town gathered in front of his house and started singing dirges aimed at mourning the expected demise of the Chief.⁵⁹ The people resorted to mourning the Obanla while

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56. Interview, Msgr. A. O. Oguntuyi on 2nd August, 1986.
57. Information collected from Chief J. A. Arokodare, (82), a retired Native court clerk, at Ijero-Ekiti on 5th June, 1988.
58. Interview, Chief J. A. Arokodare on 5th June, 1988.
59. Interview, Chief J. A. Arokodare.

alive because there was no other alternative of showing their grievances.⁶⁰ In the pre-colonial setting, such a situation could have resulted in asking the Obanla to commit suicide or an outright murder by the irate mob. But since the British Government had outlawed any act of murder, the people could only show their displeasure by mourning the Obanla while alive. This line of action had a positive result as the Obanla eventually died before the end of that year.⁶¹ It would appear that the open resentment of the Ijero people against the Obanla which led to his being ostracised by his people must have had a psychological effect on him.

After the death of the Obanla, the people cooled down their nerves and settled down to work

60. Interview, Chief J. A. Arokodare.

61. Interview, Chief J. O. Adeosun, the Sajuku of Ijero, on 6th June, 1988. It was corroborated by Chief J. A. Arokodare in an interview on 11th April, 1989.

hard so as to procure enough money to pay their tax. Compared with the Ido riot, the Ijero disturbances present a marked difference. While the law enforcement agents were called in to quell the riot in the former, the riotous situation in the latter fizzled out naturally with the anticipated death of the Obanla. Thus, the British did not intervene in the Ijero disturbances.

Apart from Ido and Ijero, Akure experienced an anti-tax riot which took place in 1931 in protest against an increase in tax from six shillings (6s) in 1928/29 to fifteen shillings (15s) in the 1929/30 financial year.⁶² Prior to the tax riot, the people of Akure appealed to Mr. G. G. Harris, the then District Officer at Ado-Ekiti, for a reduction in their tax. When this appeal fell on deaf ears, the people of Akure led by Mr. Abere Adedipe held an

62. (N.A.I.), N.A.C., Weir, CSO 25/4/30014, Intelligence Reports on Akure District, op. cit., para. 26.

assembly where they resolved to revolt. At that meeting, Mr. Adedipe spurred the people into action by alleging that all the tax they had been paying was converted into the private purse of the Deji of Akure, Oba Afunbiowo Adesida I.⁶³ He then asked the Akure people present at the occasion to pin-point what the Oba had done for them from the proceeds of the tax collected. This speech undoubtedly galvanised the people of Akure into action. They summoned all the taxable adults in the neighbouring towns and villages to a meeting in Akure over their plan to stop the payment of tax.⁶⁴ A meeting was held at Imogun⁶⁵ the following day. Thereafter, the meeting soon became a daily event. Mindful of the disastrous consequences of holding meetings at Imogun

63. See J. O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati Agbegbe re, op. cit., p. 279.

64. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III, the Deji of Akure (79), on 15th January, 1989.

65. It was (and still is) an abomination in Akure for a meeting to be held at Imogun except during the demise of the Deji. Thus, the idea of holding a meeting at Imogun Street portended bad omens for the Oba. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III on 15th January, 1989.

Street, Oba Afunbiowo Adesida I sent emissaries to important personalities in Akure to dissuade the people from holding such meetings. He even promised to pay half of the tax due for each adult male in the town but all his entreaties were ignored. The Akure people were resolved to revolt against the payment of tax at all costs. All appeals made to them by Chief Gabriel Amudipe, the Lisa of Akure, fell on deaf ears.⁶⁶

When the Deji became apprehensive of the situation, he sent for Mr. G. G. Harris, the District Officer at Ado-Ekiti, who also made fruitless appeal to the people to keep the peace.⁶⁷ At a meeting held by the District Officer with the people of Akure, Mr. Adedipe, their spokesman, challenged the District Officer and the Deji to enumerate what

66. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III on 15th January, 1989.

67. See J. O. Atandare, loc. cit., pp. 195 and 279.

had been done with the proceeds of the tax collected. He boasted that the people would not pay tax unless it was reduced to three shillings (3s) per adult male.⁶⁸ In response, Mr. Harris educated the people on the objectives of taxation. He clarified that the proceeds of taxation accrued to the government rather than the Deji.⁶⁹

However, the people were not deterred in holding their daily meetings at the Imogun street, much to the consternation of the Deji who sent a message to the District Officer to come to Akure again and pacify the situation.⁷⁰ In response, the District Officer intimated the Deji with his plan to come to Akure on 27th July, 1931 at 8.00 a.m. to start enforcing the collection of tax personally. Mr. Harris requested for police reinforcement

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid. This was also confirmed by Oba Adelegan Adesida III in an interview on 15th January, 1989.

70. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III on 15th January, 1989.

from Lagos to enforce compliance of the Akure people to the payment of tax. Despite the fact that the Deji's messengers had informed the people of the proposed plan of the District Officer to oversee the collection of tax as from 27th July, 1931, the people remained unruffled, unperturbed and adamant. They only changed the venue of their meeting to Idiagba street that day.⁷¹ In fact, the news that the District Officer was coming to Akure to oversee the collection of tax personally aggravated the situation. It enraged the people as well as strengthened their resolve to defy the constituted authorities.⁷² They, therefore, armed themselves with protective charms of different kinds in readiness for any eventual military confrontation with the authorities. In order to

71. J. O. Atandare, op. cit., p.284.

72. Ibid.

swell their ranks, the people of Akure despatched emissaries to the neighbouring towns and villages like Ilara, Ijare, Igbara-Oke, Ero, Oda, Isarun etc. to come to Akure for the proposed massive protest.⁷³

On the appointed day, the people of Akure assembled at Idiagba Street together with people from the neighbouring towns and villages. Meanwhile, the District Officer had arrived at Akure with some Ekiti Native Authority Police and Tax officials. In company of the Deji, they assembled at the Akure Native Court No. 1 Hall near the Erekesan market. Although the District Officer sent a message to the people of Akure at Idi-agba that he had reduced the tax from 6s to 5s 6d, the people mandated their spokesman, Mr. Akomolede, to meet him and reiterate their refusal to pay tax.⁷⁴ When Mr. Akomolede

73. Ibid.

74. Interview, Oba Adelegan Adesida III, on 15th January, 1989.

arrived at the Court Hall, the Deji urged him to prevail on the people to keep the peace pledging that each adult male would pay only 3s in reality as he (the Deji) would personally augment this by 2s 6d. But instead of yielding ground, Mr. Akomolede accused the Deji of trying to enslave the Akure people indirectly through his proposed augmentation of the amount payable by each tax-payer by 2s 6d. He also accused the Deji of embezzling the proceeds of the tax earlier paid by the Akure people adding that they were no longer prepared to pay tax again.⁷⁵

At this juncture, one of the Ekiti Native Authority Police who was apparently infuriated by Mr. Akomolede's unguarded utterances asked him to sit down. Hardly had he said this than news spread to the Akure people at Idi-agba that their spokesman was being molested. In a swift reaction, the

75. See J. O. Atandare, loc. cit., p. 285.

people rushed to the venue of the meeting and started throwing stones at the people inside the hall. The intensity of this was so great that the District Officer and his entourage sustained injuries. Also, the Deji was attacked and chased out of the court hall with stones.⁷⁶ Oba Adesida I was rescued by the British Resident and driven to Owo for safety.⁷⁷ This incident known as "Ogun Okuta"⁷⁸ dealt a great blow to the status and prestige of the Deji who prior to the introduction of direct taxation had been held in a high esteem by his subjects.⁷⁹

In the heat of the riot, the officials who fled the court hall inadvertently left behind the proceeds

76. Ibid. See also T. S. Adeloje, The origin and development of the monarchy in Akure from the earliest times to 1897, op. cit., p. 126.

77. Ibid.

78. This literally means the "war of stones". It is so named because stones were the main weapons used during the riot. See T.S. Adeloje, Ibid., p. 126.

79. Ibid.

of the tax collected as well as the receipt books. It was one Mr. James Itapere Omeje who carried the money and documents to his house for safe custody.⁸⁰ He, however, handed over these intact to the District Officer on demand the following day.⁸¹ In appreciation of his transparent honesty, the District Officer directed that Mr. Omeje be exempted from the payment of tax for the rest of his life. A tax exemption certificate was issued to him thereafter.⁸³

Meanwhile, the Deji who had been driven to Owo to avoid molestation by the angry mob returned to Akure on 29th July, 1931.⁸⁴ He was provided with a heavy police security in his palace.⁸⁵ However, when

80. 1931 Diary of Pa. J. A. Faloye, (105), a retired civil servant. See also J. O. Atandare, op. cit., p.286.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Diary of Pa. J. A. Faloye for the year 1931, op. cit.

85. Ibid.

the atmosphere was still tense, the District Officer employed a trick to arrest the ringleaders of the riot by providing a vehicle to convey the aggrieved people to Oke-Eda.⁸⁶ purportedly to settle the matter. In the circumstance, therefore, many unsuspecting Akure people who entered the vehicle were later locked up, tried and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.⁸⁷ It is very germane at this juncture to remark that some Akure people who did not participate in the riot but ignorantly entered the vehicle out of the sheer desire to witness the purported settlement of the anti-tax riot were among those imprisoned.⁸⁸ Altogether, 14 Akure people found guilty of

86. This was a Government Reservation Area housing the Office and quarters of the Resident of the Ondo Province. In fact, this place houses the Ondo State Judicial Service Commission today.

87. Diary of Pa. J. A. Faloye, op. cit.

88. Information collected from Pa. J. A. Faloye, (105), on 21st March, 1988.

organising the riot were jailed. The following first twelve of the culprits were convicted on 10th August, 1931 to varying terms of imprisonment: Dukudu (2 yrs.), Aina (5 yrs.), Omirin (2 yrs.), Afere (2 yrs.), Alarapon (3 yrs.), Odogun (2 yrs.), Peter Fatoyinbo (2 yrs.), Samuel Aga (2 yrs.), AbereOje (2 yrs), Mogudu (2 yrs.), Ajana (2 yrs.), and Ogunsuyi (2 yrs.).⁸⁹ Mr. Akomolede, who had earlier escaped to Ile-Ife but was later arrested on a tip-off by the Ekiti Native Authority Police, was sentenced to a jail term of three years and three months on 17th October, 1931.⁹⁰ The last culprit to be apprehended was Mr. Joseph Ojogbede who was tried and sentenced to one year imprisonment at the Ekitiparapo Council meeting (Pelupelu) held in Ado-Ekiti on 13th November, 1931. It was indeed an

89. Diary of Pa. J. A. Faloye, op. cit. This was confirmed by Oba Adelegan Adesida III in an interview on 15th January, 1989.

90. Diary of Pa. J. A. Faloye, loc. cit.

93. Ibid. This was also confirmed by Oba Adelegan Adesida III, in an interview on 15th January, 1989. Like Pa. J.A. Faloye, Oba Adesida III was an eye-witness of the riot.

irony of fate for Mr. Ojogbede that Oba Afunbiowo Adesida I was one of the Oba in attendance at the trial.⁹¹

Meanwhile, as normalcy returned to Akure, the police who had been stationed there since 27th July, 1931 in the wake of the disturbances were evacuated on 11th August, 1931.⁹² It is, of course, pertinent to note that although some of the people convicted over the riot died in prison, the salutary effect of the stern measures taken by the British to deal with the ringleaders of the riot was that the Akure people were forced to surrender and resume the payment of tax immediately.⁹³ The British authorities demonstrated at this instance that they could not be intimidated into abandoning their policy of direct taxation. But in the process,

91. Ibid.

92. See J. O. Atandare, op. cit., p. 292.

93. Ibid. This was also confirmed by Oba Adelegan Adesida III in an interview on 15th January, 1989. Like Pa. J.A. Faloye, Oba Adesida III was an eye-witness of the riot.

the Deji of Akure lost the respect and goodwill of his subjects.⁹⁴

In Ado-Ekiti, there was also resentment against the payment of direct taxation. The Ado people, like their counterparts in Akure, expressed resentment against Oba Adewumi Agunsoye for allowing tax to be collected in his domain. Consequently, the zeal with which the people paid tax in 1920 waned as from 1921.⁹⁵ The people of Ado-Ekiti were of the view that if the Ewi had resisted the introduction of taxation by the British, their (Ado people) burden would have been alleviated.⁹⁶ Like in other parts of Ekitiland, the British officials punished tax defaulters some of whom were made to open their eyes to the rays of the sun while the feet of some others were put

94. See J. O. Atandare, op. cit., p. 278 and T. S. Adeloye, op. cit.

95. See A. O. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p. 126. See also Father A. O. Oguntuyi, A Short History of Ado-Ekiti Part II, op. cit., p. 83.

96. Ibid.

in stocks.⁹⁷ This went a long way in enforcing tax collection in Ado-Ekiti. Nevertheless, the Ado people still composed a song implying that they were being made to pay tax under duress:

"Owo ile me su me san"

(It is not my intention not to pay poll-tax).⁹⁸

Although the people resented payment of tax in Ado-Ekiti, there was no organised massive protest against the payment of direct taxation in the town.

At Otun-Ekiti, there was an anti-tax riot in 1941 but it was quickly put down by the colonial authorities.⁹⁹ In fact, the magnitude of this riot was not as great as that of 1915 when the youths of that town burnt down a large number of houses and caused a lot of disturbances over the payment of "Ose" (tax).¹⁰⁰

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid., pp. 128-9.

99. (N.A.I), CS026/11874/Vol.Xvii, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1942, para. 21.

100. Details of the 1915 riot at Otun-Ekiti have been discussed in Supra, pp. 264-5.

0161 Apart from direct taxation, Ekiti Oba were used as political instruments of British Administration with regard to the operation of the Native Courts system.¹⁰¹ The Oba were the pivot around which the Native Courts system revolved. They served as Presidents of Native Courts. For instance, the Oore of Otun served as the President of the 'D' Court (Limited) comprising 18 members among whom were the Baale from the neighbouring villages.¹⁰² At Ikole-Ekiti, the court comprised the Elekole and five other members. The Elekole received a fixed salary of £48.¹⁰³ Similarly, at Ido-Ekiti the membership of the Native Court comprised the Olojudo and five other members (i.e. Town Chiefs and three Baale). However, in 1935 when the

101. Details of the operation of the Native courts system have been discussed vide Supra, pp. 231-253.

102. See A. F. Abell, Intelligence Report on Otun District, para. 30.

103. (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV 1/1/File 306, covering letter to the Intelligence Report on Ise District, para. 3.

Olojudo was indisposed, one of the town Chiefs from Ido presided while the vice-president was selected from among the other members.¹⁰⁴ By 1939, the Native Courts in Ekitiland under the leadership of the Oba were able to try a large number of criminal cases which included robbery, stealing, burglary, assault, adultery, witchcraft, etc. They imposed punishments ranging from whipping, fines of £5 and below to imprisonment of between one month and a year on culprits.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the Oba served as effective instruments for the mobilisation of people for public works.¹⁰⁶ This went a long way in facilitating the work of the District Officer. Also, the Oba were empowered to grant timber concessions. In performing their new role, the Ekiti Oba served as

104. Ibid.

105. (N.A.I), CSO 26/11874, Vol. XVI, Appendix I.

106. Details of this will be discussed in Infra, p. 381.

effective instruments for legitimising the British policy of obtaining permits for timber felling.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the Oba received and dealt with all official correspondence for their respective districts.¹⁰⁸ In this way, the British made use of them as agents for the implementation of government policies.

Evidently, it is crystal clear that the British colonial authorities made use of the Oba in Ekiti-land to facilitate their Administration in the area. Apparently, in a Division where the Divisional Officer had to administer 17 Districts, it was expedient that he should use one Oba in each District for administrative convenience rather than a whole array of Baale and Chiefs. Thus, the powers of these Native Authorities increased vis-a-vis those of the Oba and Baale of the subordinate

107. Interview, Oba Adegboye Akaiyejo, the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti, on 11th February, 1989. See also S. A. Akintoye, 'Obas of the Ekiti confederacy', op. cit., p. 258.

108. Ibid., the British resorted to the use of the

towns and villages. In the performance of their multifarious functions during the period from 1920 to 1951, the status and prestige of the Oba changed in relation to the nature of the duties which they performed. While their status and prestige were enhanced in discharging certain duties, it can be argued that under the new political dispensation some of the responsibilities assigned to the Oba in Ekitiland eroded their traditional power, authority, status and prestige.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the British made a tremendous effort to consolidate their administration in Ekitiland through the creation of a centralised political authority and the use of Ekiti Oba as political instruments of governance. The political experiment of making the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti as the Sole Authority for the whole of Ekitiland failed abysmally. This was because the policy did not take into account the hitherto decentralised polity of the area and the autonomy enjoyed by each Oba in his domain in the pre-colonial era. Consequently, the British resorted to the use of the

Ekitiparapo Council to bolster up their administration of Ekitiland. The attendant problems of Central Administration and the British re-organisation policy in the area as from 1946 are discussed in the next chapter.

As shall now examine the attendant problems of Central Administration put in place by the Colonial government in Ekitiland. The process bordered on agitation for secession, autonomy as well as other political reforms by some communities in Ekitiland between 1933 and 1946. The efforts made by the British to re-organise their administration in the area as from 1946 will also be discussed.

Agitation for secession, autonomy and other political reforms by some communities in Ekitiland, 1933-1946.

As stated, the British policy of political centralisation which would have brought the whole of Ekitiland under a central authority failed. It was also noted that the scheme did not take into cognizance the fact that Ekitiland was a highly segmentary society where each of the Oba ruled autonomous and independent

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CHAPTER FIVE

ATTENDANT PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
AND BRITISH RE-ORGANISATION POLICY IN EKITILAND,
1938-1951

We shall now examine the attendant problems of Central Administration put in place by the Colonial government in Ekitiland. The problems bordered on agitations for secession, autonomy as well as other political reforms by some communities in Ekitiland between 1938 and 1946. The efforts made by the British to re-organise their administration in the area as from 1946 will also be discussed.

Agitations for secession, autonomy and other
Political Reforms by some communities in
Ekitiland, 1938-1946.

As earlier stated, the British policy of political centralisation which would have brought the whole of Ekitiland under a central authority failed. It was also noted that the scheme did not take into cognizance the fact that Ekitiland was a highly segmentary society where each of the Oba ruled autonomous and independent

kingdom in the pre-colonial era. In fact, the idea of making one of them namely the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti a paramount ruler was strange to Ekitiland. Consequently, no Oba was willing to surrender his sovereignty and be subservient to the Ewi.¹

In the same vein, the use of the Ekitiparapo Council by the British as a body not only to administer Ekitiland but also to forge political cohesion in the area also had its own attendant problems. The scheme was bedevilled by vehement agitations for secession, autonomy and other political reforms by some components of the Ekitiparapo. The agitations, which began to gather momentum as from the 1920's, reached a peak in the 1940's.² Some communities started agitating for outright secession, autonomy and other political reforms, a clear manifestation of a crack in the edifice of the Ekitiparapo as a corporate, indivisible political entity. The communities affected can be

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1. See Supra, pp. 276-7.
 2. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, CS026/29734, Intelligence Report on Ado District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1933, para.17.

categorised into two: The first category, which could be regarded essentially as irredentist movements, comprises towns and villages which were fighting for self-determination from their traditional overlords. The second group was made up of hitherto independent towns each of which was obsessed with a desire to have autonomous Native Administration and Treasury.

Those which come under the first category are Osi, Igbara-Odo, Ilawe, Imesi-Lasigidi (now Imesi-Ekiti), Ido-Ajinare (formerly Ido-Irapa up till 1964), Egbe, Ode, Iyapa (now Ayetoro), Ilogbo and Emure. By 1924, Osi, Ode, Igbara-Odo, Imesi-Lasigidi, Egbe and Ilawe had asserted their independence from the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti. In the same breath, Iyapa (now Ayetoro-Ekiti) declared its sovereignty from the Ajero of Ijero, Ire from the Oloye of Oye, Ilogbo from the Olojudo of Ido, Igbara-Oke from the Deji of Akure, Ido-Irapa from the Alaye of Efon, Itapa and Igbira-Odo from the Elekole of Ikole as well as Emure from the Arinjale of Ise.³

3. Ibid., paras 17, 18 and 20.

Let us examine the background to the clamour for self-determination by these communities. The claim of Osi to independence could be traced to 1900 when Odunlebiojo, the 17th Olosi of Osi-Ekiti, asserted that he was an Oba during the tour of the North-Eastern District by Major Reeve-Tucker. The Olosi was fined a sum of £5 for refusing to prostrate himself before the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti. Nevertheless, this did not dampen the enthusiasm of the Olosi in his persistent claim to independence from the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti.⁴ The Olode of Ode claimed to be an Oba with a beaded crown from Ile-Ife and denied over being a subject of the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti.⁵ In 1911, he was deported to Oyo for refusing to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Ewi and was not allowed to return until 1915.⁶ In spite of this, the Olode refused bluntly to acknowledge the paramountcy of the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti. He also continued to ignore the Ado Native Court.⁷

4. Ibid., para.27.

5. Ibid., para.36.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

Igbara-Odo had long claimed to be an independent town. It is claimed that the Olowa of Igbara-Odo came from Ile-Ife.⁸ The Olowa had also resisted attempts by the Ogoga of Ikere to impose his suzerainty on the town. In the same breath, the Igbara-Odo people had consistently frowned at the early attempts made at different times to place them under the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti and the Deji of Akure. However, when Major Reeve-Tucker visited Igbara-Odo on 1st February, 1900 he recorded in his Diary that the town

"was now placed under Ado to fall into their old place and to ensure better Government and Order"

Initially, the Olowa of Igbara-Odo did not raise any objection.⁹ Thereafter, the people started to assert their independence from the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti.¹⁰

With regard to Ilawe, the relations between the Ewi and the Alawe had for long been characterised by enmity. In November, 1924, the Alawe openly defied the

8. Ibid., para.69.

9. Ibid., para.25.

10. Interview, Mr. Elijah Abidakun, 68, at Igbara-Odo on 7th June, 1987.

Ewi by refusing to call upon his subjects to assist in the re-building of the Ewi's palace.¹¹ Consequently, Afinbiokin, the Alawe, was deported to Abeokuta on the order of the Colonial Administration in June 1925. In addition, he was fined a sum of £20. Nine of his Chiefs were also fined a total sum of £90 by the Ekiti Judicial Council for refusing to recognise the authority of the Ewi.¹² In April 1927, 15 prominent Ilawe Chiefs were sentenced to two months imprisonment with hard labour each in default of payment of £20 fines. The Alawe, who was deported in 1925, eventually died in exile in May 1929.¹³

In August 1929, Adefolalu was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour for assuming the position of Baale without the permission of the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti.¹⁴ Also, five Ilawe palace messengers were given six months imprisonment with hard labour for conspiring against the Ewi. Similarly, four indigenes of the town were punished by the British Colonial Administration for inciting people to cause a breach of the peace. What is more, Adefolalu was

11. Ibid., para.56.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

detained at Ado-Ekiti in February 1930 on the order of the Ekiti Judicial Council until he acknowledged the Ewi as his suzerain. He was not allowed to return to his domain until September 1932.¹⁵

This notwithstanding, the above-named communities did not relent in their age-long struggle for self-determination from their traditional overlords. This struggle became more and more militant as from the 1940's.¹⁶

The second category comprised Akure and Ado-Ekiti which agitated for secession from the Ekiti confederation. Each of the communities wanted autonomous Native Administration and Treasury. I intend to discuss the separatist movements by those two communities since their agitations had far-reaching effects on the existence of Ekitiland as a corporate political entity.

The genesis of the demand of the people of Akure district for a complete financial independence and

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., para.17.

20. Ibid.

separation from Ekiti can be traced to 1923.¹⁷ At that time, the colonial Administration dismissed the agitation with a wave of the hand. Nevertheless, the issue was re-opened during the visit of Captain N.A.C. Weir, the Assistant District Officer of Ekiti Division, to Akure in 1934.¹⁸ This was followed by a spate of petitions of the Deji and some representatives of the Akure District in 1935, 1936 and 1937.¹⁹ In fact, the Deji of Akure, Oba Afunbiowo Adesida I, seized the opportunity of the visit of His Honour, the Chief Commissioner for the Southern Provinces to Akure on 18th February, 1938 to articulate the demand of his people.²⁰

Generally, the agitation of the people of Akure for separation from Ekiti as well as for a complete autonomy was predicated on the following grounds:

17. See para.3 of the Memorandum presented by the Deji and the entire community of Akure District requesting for complete Independence and Separation from the Ekiti Native Administration: Private Papers of Pa. J.A. Faloye.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., para.8.

22. Ibid., para.13.

First, it is claimed that Akure which had been founded in the 12th century and later ruled by Asodeboyede, an Ife Prince, was an independent and separate community from Ekiti towns. It is also argued that the only common bond between Akure and Ekiti was the formation of the Ekitiparapo in the late 19th century by the Ijesa, the Ekiti, the Akoko, the Igbomina and Akure to ward off the military aggression of Ibadan forces. It is also claimed that the establishment of the Ekitiparapo council by Major Reeve-Tucker at Oke-Imo in 1920 solidified the relations between Akure and Ekiti towns.²¹

Second, objection was raised against the practice whereby all appointments into the Ekiti Native Administration establishments were made solely by the Administrative Officer. The grouse which the people of Akure had over this was lack of fair representation in the number of people employed.²² Third, the Akure people objected to the manner which all public works in the Ekiti Division were solely handled by the Administrative Officer. It was argued that by concentrating all functions in his hands, the Administrative

21. Ibid., para.8.

22. Ibid., para.13.

Officer was denying the people of the District the much-needed "Administrative training and educational value" that should normally accrue from Native Administration.²³

Moreover, it was observed that the action of the District Officer gravitated towards rigid centralisation rather than the true confederacy which the Akure people desired. The Akure people contended that if the political entity was broken into units it would afford them greater and better opportunity for the "administrative training" required for a genuine confederation.²⁴

Also, it was alleged that the impact of the Deji of Akure on the confederation could not be felt. The people observed that going by his age, experience and ability, the Deji could be an invaluable asset to the confederation, however, they regretted that the influence of the Oba could not be seen in the confederation owing to the fact that the Administrative Officer had rendered the body redundant. Against this background, the people were of the view that an autonomous Native Administration would enhance the status

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

of the Deji.²⁵

Furthermore, it was argued that since Akure had remained in the confederation for about 25 years without meaningful development, it would be better for the town to seek its fortune elsewhere.²⁶ Another cause of discontent among the people of Akure was the fact that the financial benefits being enjoyed by the town were low vis-a-vis other parts of Ekiti-land. They observed with chagrin that in spite of the fact that the Akure District was contributing more than Twenty percent (20%) of the total revenue paid into the Central Fund at Ado-Ekiti, the benefits accruing to the District were not commensurate with the tax efforts of the people.²⁷ The people of Akure pointed out that their resources were being used to develop other areas of the confederation at their own expense.²⁸ It was, therefore, their expectation

25. Ibid., para.17.

26. See Sam. Alade, The Awakening of Akure, (Osogbo, Titilayo Press, 1950), p.5.

27. Memorandum submitted by the Deji and the entire community of Akure and District, Private Papers of Pa. J.A. Faloye, op. cit., para.22.

28. Ibid.

that if autonomy was achieved, more funds would be available for developmental purposes in the District.²⁹

Closely related to this was the disenchantment arising from the fact that the Sub-Treasury established in Akure in 1935 was "a more shadow of itself"³⁰ as it could not keep custody of more than £200 at a time. Such funds were merely used as Imprest. The people of Akure detested a situation whereby most of the revenue collected from taxes were taken to the Central Fund (Treasury) at Ado-Ekiti for custody. They, therefore, expressed the hope that an autonomous Native Administration as well as a full-fledged Treasury would remove the subordinate status of the town.³¹

Besides, there was the discontent arising from the fact that the transport fare of the officials taking the revenue collected to Ado-Ekiti had to be borne by the Akure District.³² What is more, any shortages which occurred during transit, feeding and accommodation expenses of the officials were also borne

29. Ibid., para.23.

30. Ibid., para.20.

31. Information collected from Oba Adelegan Adesida III, the Deji of Akureland on 1st May, 1990. It was corroborated by Chief Kole Oluwatuyi, the Lisa of Akure, in an interview on 2nd July, 1990.

32. Memorandum submitted by the Deji, op. cit., para.25 (5).

by the District. Furthermore, the people detested the unnecessary delay which sometimes occurred at Ado-Ekiti before the officials were attended to with the attendant increase in the feeding and lodging expenses to be paid by the Akure District.³³

In spite of the arguments adduced by the people of Akure for a separate Native Administration and Treasury, the colonial Administration treated their request with levity. Five reasons can be ascribed for the initial lukewarm attitude of the British to their demand. First, there was the argument that the Akure District was too small to be constituted into an autonomous Native Administration. Second, the British felt that granting the request of the Akure community would open a floodgate to similar requests from other Ekiti towns, a phenomenon which they considered could lead to the disintegration of the Ekiti confederation. Third, the British contended that the Akure District was not economically viable to have a separate Native Administration and Treasury. Also,

33. Ibid., para.25 (7).

34. Interview, Mr. Sam Alade (78), on 15th November, 1988. See also the memorandum submitted by the Deji and the entire community of Akure and District, Op. Cit., para. 9.

35. The town was re-named Oka-ija in 1975.

the British were of the view that the request for separation and independence was made by the Deji of Akure for self-glorification and that it did not enjoy the support of the neighbouring towns and villages in the District. Lastly, there was the contention that socio-economic development would reach out to all parts of Ekiti Native Administration if it continued to exist as a corporate political entity rather than being broken into smaller Units.³⁴

However, the people of Akure remained resolute and undaunted in their quest for separation from the Ekiti Native Administration. In a memorandum addressed to His Excellency, Sir Authur Richards, the Governor of Nigeria, on 22nd November, 1945, the Deji of Akure, his High Chiefs, the Oso of Isolo and the Oralepo of Isinkan renewed their call for the establishment of an autonomous Native Administration and Treasury in the town. The memorandum was also signed by the Oba and Baale of the following towns and villages in Akure District: Igbara-Oke, Ilara, Ijare, Iju, Itaogbolu, Oba,³⁵ Isarun, Ipogun, Oda, Irese, Ikota, Igoba and

34. Interview, Mr. Sam. Alade (75), on 15th November, 1986. See also the memorandum submitted by the Deji and the entire community of Akure and District, op. cit., para.4.

35. The town was re-named Oba-Ile in 1975.

Aiyede-Ogbese.³⁶ While reiterating the reasons for their earlier request, two new issues were introduced. First, the people observed with consternation that despite its status as a provincial headquarters since 1915, Akure lacked modern amenities like Town Hall, library, Prisons, Public Recreation Ground, Pipe-borne water, electricity etc. They attributed the under-development of the town to the failure of the colonial Administration to accede to their request for a separate Native Administration which they regarded as sine qua non for development.³⁷ Second, the people complained of lack of direct access to the Resident of Ondo Province who was paradoxically based in Akure. They noted with regret that whenever they had any grievances to vent, they had to go through the District Officer at Ado-Ekiti. What was more disturbing to them was the fact that whenever the District Officer paid an official visit to Akure, he was often "exhausted, nervous, restive and irritable"³⁸

36. Memorandum submitted by the Deji and the entire community of Akure District on 22nd November, 1945, Private Papers of Pa. J.A. Faloye.

37. Ibid., para.8.

38. Ibid., para.12.

with the result that there was very few problems that could be tabled before him under such circumstance.³⁹

The most agonising aspect of the situation was that whenever the interest of Akure was at variance with that of any town in Ekiti Division, the District Officer was sometimes in a dilemma. Such ambivalent position often resulted in a situation whereby the District Officer proffered unworkable solutions to keep the solidarity of the Division intact at the expense of the Akure District.⁴⁰ It was, therefore, felt that such an undesirable situation could only be redressed by granting Akure an autonomy from the Ekiti Division.⁴¹

As a result of mounting agitation by the people of Akure District, the Colonial Administration decided to reconsider its earlier decision to dismiss their request with a wave of the hand. However, instead of constituting Akure District into a separate Division, it was excised

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. para.14.

41. Some of the people at the forefront of the agitation included Messrs Ladapo Adegbola, J.A. Faloye, J.B. Arifalo Adedipe and Sam. Alade. Interview, Pa. J.A. Faloye on 11th September, 1990.

from the Ekiti Division and merged with the Ondo Division with effect from 1st April, 1946.⁴² The decision was, nevertheless, welcomed with joy and admiration by the people. The whole town was agog. That day was a red letter day in the history of Akure. Of course, the dawn of 1st April, 1946 was heralded with the sound of bugles and daneguns.⁴³ Apart from the people of Akure, representatives of the neighbouring towns and villages also took part in the celebration.⁴⁴

It would appear that the people must have misconstrued the decision of the central Government as granting Akure a Divisional status. Indeed, this was manifested in the address delivered by the Deji of Akure, Oba Afunbiowo Adesida I at the occasion when Mr. E.V.S. Thomas, Resident of the Ondo Province, made the formal announcement. The Oba expressed gratitude to the Colonial Administration for granting the request for the

42. See Sam. Alade, The Awakening of Akure, op. cit., p.6.

43. Ibid., p.7. See also articles written by Sam. Alade in West African Pilot and Daily comet of 1st April, 1946.

44. Ibid.

establishment of the Akure Native Administration.⁴⁵

It was in later years that the people of Akure realised that their quest for autonomy was still a mirage!

Under the new dispensation, Mr. O.V. Lee, an Assistant District Officer, was posted to Akure and made responsible to Mr. C.E. Iles, the District Officer at Ondo.

In essence, Akure had moved from one subservient position to the other. It merely changed its position of subservience from Ado-Ekiti to Ondo, a development that was unpalatable to the people.⁴⁶ The old order still persisted; Akure had no direct access to the Resident, Mr. E.V.S. Thomas, except through the District Officer at Ondo.⁴⁷ Indeed, the educated elite in later years denounced in unmitigated terms the action by the Central Government on 1st April, 1946 as "inappropriate and unprogressive".⁴⁸ Little wonder that the quest for a Divisional status

45. See Address presented by the Deji of Akure on behalf of the people of Akure District to Mr. E.V.S. Thomas, Resident of Ondo Province on the occasion of Akure Native Administration separation from Ekiti Native Administration on 1st April, 1946. (Akure, Aduralere Printing Works, 1946).

46. Interview, Sam Alade and Pa. J.A. Faloye on 15th November, 1986 and 11th September, 1990 respectively.

47. See Sam. Alade, The Awakening of Akure, op. cit., p.4.

48. Ibid.

for Akure continued unabated until 1967.⁴⁹

It is of paramount importance to note that the separation of Akure from Ekiti in 1946 dealt a great blow to the solidarity of the Ekiti confederation. Apart from dismembering this political agglomeration, the phenomenon acted as a catalyst to a number of separatist movements clamouring for autonomous Native Administration and Treasury in Ekitiland. Such communities included Ilawe, Osi, Imesi-Lasigidi, to mention but a few. I would now discuss the separatist movement for autonomy by the Ado District.

In retrospect, the agitation for a separate Native Administration and Treasury for the Ado District dated back to 1942.⁵⁰ In a letter dated 14th September, 1942 and addressed to His excellency, the Governor of Nigeria, the people of Ado District adduced the following arguments in support of their demand for a complete separation from the Ekiti confederation. First, they contended

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49. See Western State of Nigeria, An introduction to the New Local Government Council system in the Western State of Nigeria, (Ibadan, Government Printer, n.d.), p.25.
50. (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/470/77, Ado District Tax-Payers' Association to His Excellency, the Governor, 14 September, 1942.

that the Ado District was financially viable to manage its own affairs without being grouped with any other town in Ekiti confederation.⁵¹ Second, it was argued that the District was larger than most of the Districts like Idanre and Owo which had been granted Native Administration status.⁵² Third, they contended that despite the fact that some important Chiefs in Ado-Ekiti could hardly attend to their domestic affairs owing to their involvement in administrative duties yet they were not remunerated for the services rendered. While lamenting a situation whereby clerks, police and other employees of the central Administration were receiving their regular salaries, the Chiefs were paid paltry court fees which were considered not commensurate with their effort.⁵³ Lastly, they argued that the Ado Tax payers were no longer in favour of the Ekiti confederacy which they claimed was dragging them behind other Divisions in the Western Provinces. They, therefore, urged the colonial Administration to approve the establishment of the "Ado Native Administration" where

51. Ibid., para.1.

52. Ibid., para.2.

53. Ibid., para.6.

they felt the hopes and aspirations of Ado-Ekiti and the villages in the District could be realised.⁵⁴

This was followed by a petition written by the Chiefs and Baale of Ado District to the Governor of Nigeria on 7th January, 1943.⁵⁵

However, in a letter to Mr. E.V.S. Thomas, the Resident of Ondo Province, on 26th November, 1945,⁵⁶ the Acting Divisional Officer of Ekiti Division, Mr. O.V. Lee recommended that the request put forward by the Ado District be rejected on the following grounds: First, he contended that the whole agitation was a handiwork of the people of Ado-Ekiti town alone adding that the villages of Ilawe, Osi, Igbara-Odo, Igbemo, Imesi-Lasigidi etc in the District were not associated with the petition.⁵⁷ Second, he disclosed that the villages of Osi, Igbara-Odo, Imesi-Lasigidi and Ilawe which should have been part of the protest had intensified their agitation for autonomy from the Ado District.⁵⁸

54. Ibid., para.8.

55. See (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/470/777, op. cit.,

56. (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/470/777, Correspondence Ref. No.777/18 of 26th November, 1945 from the D.O., Ekiti Division to the Resident, Ondo Province.

57. Ibid., para.2.

58. Ibid.

Third, he submitted that the majority of the people of Ado-Ekiti were indifferent to the call for separation but only blindly followed to demonstrate their loyalty to the Ewi and his Chiefs. Moreover, the Acting Divisional Officer further stated that the District was not financially viable to be granted a Native Administration.⁵⁹ He argued that since the Ado District was still struggling hard to balance its budget and maintain existing social services, all hands should be on deck to improve the deteriorating economic condition of the District.⁶⁰

Lastly, he lamented that the agitation was not only misguided but also a misplaced priority. He argued that the task on hand should be to appease the "dissent" villages of Ilawe, Osi, Igbara-Odo, Ode and Imesi-Lasigidi to renounce their agitation for separation from the District adding that if the matter was not nipped in the bud, other villages such as Igbemo, Aisegba, Igede and Iyin might before long agitate for separation from the Ado District. He warned that such a development would

59. Ibid., para.5

60. Ibid., para.6.

have grave economic and political consequences on the District.⁶¹

In spite of the lukewarm attitude of the colonial Administration to their demand, the Ewi, his Chiefs and Ado-Ekiti Tax-Payers' Union did not relent in their efforts for separation from the Ekiti confederation. Realising their intransigence, the colonial Administration threatened to take the following drastic measures against Ado-Ekiti. First, it was decided that the villages of Ilawe, Igbara-Odo, Ode etc which had been struggling for self-determination for a long time be separated from the Ado District.⁶² Second, the colonial Administration threatened to remove the Divisional headquarters from Ado-Ekiti. Third, there was a threat that all the social amenities earmarked for Ado-Ekiti would be cancelled.⁶³

Initially, the people of Ado-Ekiti regarded the foregoing measures being contemplated by the colonial Administration as a mere verbal threat designed to cow them into submission. Consequently, they remained unruffled, unperturbed and undeterred in their quest for separation

61. Ibid.

62. See (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/470/777, op. cit.

63. Ibid.

from the Ekiti confederation.⁶⁴ However, the last straw that broke the camel's back was the premission granted Alawe of Ilawe, the Arajaka of Igbara-Odo and the Olosi of Osi by the British to attend the meeting of the Ekiti Superior Native Authority held at Ido-Ekiti from 29th to 30th October, 1945 without informing the Ewi and the Ado District Council.⁶⁵

In a swift reaction, Fifty (50) indigenes of Ado-Ekiti including the Chiefs and Taxpayers on 3rd November, 1945 wrote a petition to His Excellency, the Governor of Nigeria through the Resident of Ondo Province, Mr. R.L.V. Wilkes, complaining bitterly about the autonomy granted the Alawe, Arajaka and the Olosi to attend such a meeting despite the fact that their domains were traditionally and politically under the Ado District.⁶⁶ They, therefore, perceived such a development as a "prelude to serious confusion and unrest in Ekitiland".⁶⁷ In addition, the petitioners pleaded

64. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi, on 17th June, 1986.

65. (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/470/77, op. cit.,

66. Ibid., p.13.

67. Ibid., para.10.

passionately with the Government not to shift the headquarters of the Division from Ado-Ekiti.

At about the same time, the Ekiti Progressive Union sent a delegation to appeal to the Ewi, Chiefs and the Ado-Ekiti Tax-payers' Association to abandon the agitation for separation from the confederation so as not to destroy the "common legacy of the Ekiti".⁶⁸ The Union also sent some of its officers to the "dissident" villages of Ilawe, Ode, Igbara-Odo and Lasigidi to dissuade them from breaking away from the Ado District.⁶⁹

Also, some educated indigenes of Ado-Ekiti resident in Lagos, who had earlier lent support for the demand for separation from the Ekiti confederation, decided to backpedal after realising the adverse consequences of the sanctions to be taken by the colonial Administration against Ado-Ekiti. They were particularly disturbed over the threat to remove the headquarters of the Ekiti Division from Ado-Ekiti. In the light of this, some

68. See The Daily Service, 12 June, 1944, p.1.

69. Information collected from Mr. J.A. Ajibade, (82), at Ado-Ekiti, on 27th September, 1989.

71. See (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV. 1/3/470/77, pp. 51E.

of them came home to appeal to the Ewi, Chiefs and Taxpayers' Association to withdraw their demand.⁷⁰

Consequently, on 28th January, 1946, the Ewi and Council, in a letter addressed through the Resident of Ondo Province to His Excellency, Sir Arthur Richards, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria, formally withdrew all the petitions earlier written by the Ado District for financial and political separation from the Ekiti confederation.⁷¹

From the foregoing, it is obvious that a number of separatist movements for political autonomy emerged in Ekitiland as from the 1920's. The situation, which reached a head in the 1940's, threatened the political integration of Ekitiland. The objectives of these separatist movements were not the same. While most of the affected communities asserted their independence from their "traditional overlords", Akure and Ado-Ekiti wanted actual secession from the Ekiti confederation.

The separation of Akure from Ekiti in 1946 was a landmark in the history of the Ekiti confederacy. It

70. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 17th June, 1986.

71. See (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/470/77, op. cit.

had far-reaching consequences on this political agglomeration. First, there was a reduction in the size of the Ekiti Division. Second, the Ekiti Division lost the revenue from taxation which hitherto accrued to it from Akure to the Ondo Division. This reduced the economic viability of the Ekiti Division. Third, the success of Akure served as a catalyst for other separatist movements to intensify their agitations. For example, it provided an impetus for Ilawe, Osi, Igbara-Odo and Imesi-Lasigidi to redouble their efforts in their age-long struggle for political autonomy from Ado-Ekiti. Also, the phenomenon dealt a great blow to the political integration of Ekitiland. In fact, it undermined the solidarity of the Ekiti Confederation which the British wanted to use as basis of a central Administration for Ekitiland.

With regard to the impact of the separatist movements on Ado-Ekiti, it is needless to say that the phenomenon weakened the traditional and political authority of the Ewi over Ilawe, Osi, Igbara-Odo, Imesi-Lasigidi etc. The situation was compounded by the open support given by the colonial Administration to those communities for self-determination as a counterpoise

to Ado's agitation for separation from the Ekiti Confederation. The issue eroded the cohesion of the Ado District. Indeed, the last straw that broke the camel's back was the approval given by the Colonial Authorities for the admission of Ilawe, Osi, Igbara-Odo and Ido-Irapa into the Ekiti Superior Native Authority Council in 1948 as "Separate village councils".⁷² Thus, the affected communities achieved success in their protracted struggle for autonomy from Ado-Ekiti. I would now discuss the efforts made by the British to re-organise their administration in Ekitiland as from 1946.

Re-Organisation policy under British Administration, 1946-1951

Having realised the magnitude of the attendant problems of Central Administration in Ekitiland, the British decided to embark on re-organisation policy of their administration in the area as from 1946. A new political dispensation was evolved whereby the principal Oba in the area were constituted into a Superior Native Authority for Ekitiland. The body was designed to be a

72. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1952, para.9.

loose centralised Administration while its meetings rotated among the towns in Ekitiland. The Authority had no permanent headquarters and its presidency rotated among the principal Oba in Ekiti. Thus, Ekitiland was administered in a way that no paramount Oba was subordinate to the other. Consequently, none of the Oba lost his sovereignty under the political arrangement.

In order to facilitate our understanding of the re-organisation efforts made by the British, I consider it pertinent to discuss the genesis of the Superior Native Authority for Ekiti. The history of the formation of the Superior Native Authority for Ekitiland can be traced to May 1939 when the Ekitiparapo Oba held a meeting under the auspices of the Ekiti Native Authority Administration Council at Aramoko.⁷³ At the meeting, the Oba were advised by the Colonial Authority to constitute themselves into a Superior Native Authority to act in a purely advisory capacity to the British colonial Administration.⁷⁴ The new organisation was to

73. See (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/1/370/163, Minutes of Ekiti Council meeting, 12-13 August, 1942.

74. Ibid.

comprise representatives of all the Baale (village heads), chiefs and some educated elite.⁷⁵

This suggestion was received with mixed feelings by the Ekitiparapo Oba. While appreciating that the new scheme could lead to greater efficiency in the administration of Ekitiland, some of them were sceptical that they might lose their independence under the new dispensation.⁷⁶ In fact, those who protested vehemently against the formation of such a body expressed dissatisfaction with the idea of making one of the Ekiti Oba a permanent President.⁷⁷ This was construed to mean the establishment of a paramount ruler in Ekitiland. Their fears were strengthened by the fact that the idea of establishing a Superior Native Authority for Ekiti was mooted after the return of the Oore of Otun from the Northern Nigeria to Ekiti in 1936.⁷⁸ In the light of

75. Interview, Chief J.A. Arokodare at Ijero-Ekiti on 5th June, 1988.

76. Minutes of Ekiti Council Meeting, op. cit.,

77. Ibid.

78. The return of the Oore of Otun from Northern Nigeria to Ekiti was effected on 15th January, 1936. See Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.140. See also (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/1/470/777, Minutes of Ekiti Central Council Meeting 14th June, 1946 and D. Atolagbe, Itan Oore, Otun ati Moba, op. cit., p.113.

the foregoing, the suggestion was rejected. Nevertheless, the Alara of Aramoko was elected the President of the Ekiti Native Authority Administration Council. The position of the 'President' of this council was to be only 'first among equals' to the other Ekiti Oba.⁷⁹

The movement for the formation of a Superior Native Authority for Ekitiland gathered momentum in 1945 and 15 out of the 17 Districts agreed to federate.⁸⁰ By then, the remaining two Districts namely Akure and Ado-Ekiti were involved in Separatist agitations. Ado-Ekiti, which had earlier agreed with the other 15 Districts to form a Superior Native Authority, started agitating for separation as well as for an autonomous Native Treasury when she sensed that Akure's agitation for separation⁸¹ might soon receive the blessing of the colonial authorities. But later in the year when Ado-Ekiti realised that its satellite villages of Ilawe,

79. (N.A.I.), Minutes of Ekiti central Council meeting, Ibid.

80. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1945, para.10.

81. Details of Akure's separation from Ekitiland have been exhaustively discussed earlier in this chapter.

Igbara-Odo, Imesi-Lasigidi and Osi had been strongly committed to the formation of the Superior Native Authority and were not prepared to join her (Ado-Ekiti) in a separatist movement, she decided to back-pedal and rejoin the other Districts in their endeavour.⁸²

Meanwhile, the Olojudo of Ido was chosen by the Oba as the President of the Ekiti Council. He remained in Office until August 1946.⁸³ The choice of the Olojudo was apparently informed by the fact that he was an educated Oba. During his tenure as President of the council, he demonstrated keen interest in the running of the Native Administration Council Treasury as well as the Central Office located at Ado-Ekiti where he paid monthly inspection visits.⁸⁴

In 1946, the Ekitiparapo Oba held a meeting at Ado-Ekiti where they agreed that the Superior Native Authority be formed. At that meeting, the fears of the Oba were allayed when the idea of making one of them a

82. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1945, para.10.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., para.14.

permanent President was dropped. The Presidency of the Council was to be held on a rotational basis yearly.⁸⁵ The Ekiti confederation Council at subsequent meetings held at Otun and Ikere in 1947 "exhibited a growing willingness to reject parochialism, to close ranks against recalcitrants and to assume the wider responsibilities devolving on it in the course of local government"⁸⁶. The loyalty of this Council to the colonial administration was so great that one of its members, the Oore of Otun, was presented with a certificate of honour by His Honour, the Acting Chief Commissioner, Commander J.G. Pyke-Nott, at a meeting of the Ekitiparapo Oba held at Otun on 5th September, 1947 for his (Oore) "sound commonsense and loyalty."⁸⁷

It would appear that the status of the Ekiti Oba was enhanced by the concession granted them by the colonial authorities at the meeting to transfer the key of the Native Authority Treasury strongroom from the District Officer to the President of the Council who

85. (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/1/470/777, Minutes of Ekiti Central Council Meeting, 14th January, 1946.

86. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1947, para.16.

87. Ibid. para.17.

was from September, 1947 the Oqoga of Ikere-Ekiti.⁸⁸

It was also agreed that the President should henceforth sign cheques in conjunction with the Native Administration Treasurer for all the financial transactions of the Ekiti Division.⁸⁹

It was not until 1948 that the Superior Native Authority was formally inaugurated and invested with legal status.⁹⁰ The post of the President of the Authority was to be held in rotation on a yearly basis.⁹¹ The Council met twice in May and November in 1948 with the Resident of the Ondo Province as well as the District Officer in attendance as Ex-Officio members.⁹² Generally, the meetings of the Superior Native Authority afforded the Resident and the District Officer the opportunity of intimating the Oba with new government

88. Ibid., para.20. The Oqoga of Ikere succeeded the Oore of Otun as President of the Council.

89. Ibid., para.20.

90. See Western State of Nigeria, An Introduction to the new Local Government Council System in the Western State of Nigeria, op. cit., p.2.

91. (N.A.I.), Minutes of Ekiti Central Council Meeting, op. cit.,

92. Ibid.

policies and regulations for dissemination among their subjects.⁹³ Other functions of the Authority included settling of chieftaincy disputes, participating in Provincial conferences for review of Nigeria constitution as well as initiating developmental projects in Ekitiland.⁹⁴

To facilitate its work, the following committees were established by the Ekiti Superior Native Authority: Executive Committee, Finance and Discipline Committee and Education Committee. The Executive Committee comprised seven members namely the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, the Arinjale of Ise, the Asao of Aramoko, the Oore of Otun, Mr. J. Omotoso of Ikole-Ekiti as well as the President of the Superior Native Authority Council.⁹⁶ The first meeting of this committee was held on 6th May, 1949. The committee, which met five times in a year, handled chieftaincy disputes, prepared agenda

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para.9 and CS026/11874/Vol. XIX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951, para.14.

96. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949, para.10. Only six members are mentioned in the report.

for the parent Council meetings as well as passed resolutions on matters referred to it by the Ekiti Superior Native Authority.⁹⁷ The composition of the Finance and Discipline committee was twenty drawn from all parts of Ekitiland. The District Officer for Ekiti as well as his deputy, the Assistant District Officer (A.D.O) were ex-officio members. The committee, which held its meeting five times in a year, was inaugurated on 4th February, 1949.⁹⁸ In its financial capacity, the committee prepared Annual Estimates as well as audited the accounts of the Ekiti Superior Native Authority Council. It also obtained permission from the central Government for the collection of voluntary contributions when the need arose. For instance, it did so in 1949 when voluntary subscription was required towards the building of the proposed Ekitiparapo Secondary School, though the institution did not take off until 1955.⁹⁹

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

As a disciplinary Committee, it dealt with cases of discipline, appointment, transfer and dismissal of all Native Authority Staff.¹⁰⁰

Thus, it can be argued that as from 1948, the Ekiti Superior Native Authority had absolute control over the management of its finances and staff. In fact, this was in accordance with the provision of Part IIIA of the Ordinance issued by the Provincial Resident at Akure.¹⁰¹ Also, the Ekiti Divisional Education Committee, set up in 1948, was charged with the responsibility of promoting a high standard of education, encouraging sports, offering advice on the opening of schools, integrating small rural schools into large one, providing grants-in-aid for schools. Other functions of this committee included giving money for school meals as well as conducting refresher courses for untrained teachers.¹⁰² In fact,

100. Interview, Chief J.A. Arokodare on 5th June, 1988.

101. Interview, Chief J.A. Arokodare on 5th June, 1988.

102. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1948, para.21.

this committee, in collaboration with the Ekiti Progressive Union, worked relentlessly towards the establishment of the Ekitiparapo College, Ido-Ekiti in 1955.¹⁰³

The administration of Ekitiland under the Superior Native Authority resulted in the better functioning of Quarter, Town and Village Councils as members were drawn from all parts of the area. The membership of the Authority increased from 16 to 100 with the incorporation of the Baale, Chiefs and some educated elite.¹⁰⁴ The inclusion of the educated elite in the Ekiti Superior Native Authority elicited animated and judicious deliberations at Council meetings. Apart from serving as a beacon of light to some illiterate Oba, the educated elite, through its well-reasoned contributions, facilitated council decisions on almost intractable problems especially disputes among various Native Authorities brought to the council for adjudication.¹⁰⁵

103. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 2nd August, 1986.

104. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 2nd August, 1986

105. Interview, with Chief J.A. Arokodare on 5th June, 1988.

106. (N.A.I.), CSO26/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1959, para.31.

At a meeting of the Authority held at Isan-Ekiti on 21st June, 1950, the golden jubilee of the first Ekiti-Ijesa Confederation Council which took place at Oke-Imo, Ilesa on 21st June, 1900 was celebrated. At this meeting, the District Officer for the Ekiti Division was commissioned to write an account of the first meeting at Oke-Imo, Ilesa and arrange for its publication in "Iwe Irohin".¹⁰⁶

In spite of the workability of the Superior Native Authority in the administration of Ekitiland, the need for further administrative reforms in the system had been felt as far back as 1949. Mr. W. Simpson, who served as District Officer of the Ekiti Division from 4th October to 31st December 1949, expressed satisfaction at the level of co-operation between the intelligentsia and the Ekiti Oba but he cautioned that "the Native Authority System will have to be watched carefully and modified where necessary, to integrate the best in all walks of life.

Some Ekiti District Native Authorities will not be able to bear the strain of Local administration in a few years time, and 1950 may be the

106. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para.11.

Baale year to examine their structure and see where they are weak."¹⁰⁷

As rightly predicted, the British colonial authorities took a hard look at the indirect rule system in Nigeria in general. Consequently, the Macpherson constitution was adopted in 1951 and this resulted, inter alia, in the emergence of Local Councils (responsible local governments) in Yorubaland including Ekitiland.¹⁰⁸

Another significant advantage of the Ekiti Superior Native Authority was that it provided an avenue for some Baale to lay claim to beaded crowns as well as for their villages to be designated "Districts." For instance, when four Baale petitioned, His Honour the Acting Chief Commissioner, Commander J.G. Pkye-Nott, in July, 1951 over the right to wear beaded crown, he referred their petition to the Ekiti Superior Native Authority which rejected it entirely. The affected

107. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949, para.13.

108. See Western State of Nigeria, An Introduction to the New Local Government Council System in the Western State of Nigeria, loc. cit., p.1.

Baale had no alternative other than to abide by the decision of the Authority.¹⁰⁹ And when one of the Baale who arrogated to himself the right to wear a beaded crown defiantly attended the meeting of the Authority held at Ijero in July 1951, he was ejected from the meeting. The Baale later complained to the District Officer that the burgler of one of the Oba who attended the meeting had "burgled at him insultingly."¹¹⁰ However at the meeting, the Oloja-Oke of Okemesi was elected President "to take office from 1st September, 1951".¹¹¹ A similar meeting was held in August 1951 at Ijero during which some Oba were elected to represent Ekitiland in the newly constituted Western Nigeria House of Chiefs.¹¹² The meeting also recommended the admission of four "independent villages" of Ilawe, Imesi-Lasigidi, Osi and Igbara-Odo into the Council. With this, the membership of Ekiti Superior

109. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XIX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951, para.13. These Baale were the Olojudo of Ido Irapa, the Arajaka of Igbara-Odo, the Olosi of Osi and the Alawe of Ilawe.

110. Ibid.

111. Ibid., para.14.

112. Ibid.

Native Authority Council rose from 140 to 147.¹¹³

However, another dimension was introduced into the meeting of the Superior Native Authority Council held at Okemesi in December 1951 when the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti moved a motion for the admission of members of the Western Nigeria House of Assembly who were indigenes of Ekitiland into the Superior Native Authority Council.¹¹⁴ This motion was slightly amended by the Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti to the effect that the members of the House of Assembly should only be admitted as "extra-ordinary members without votes."¹¹⁵

The issue generated a lot of controversy among the Oba at the meeting. While some saw the wisdom in including the members of the House of Assembly into the Council, others expressed the view that the move was aimed at thrusting alien ideas upon the Oba's council as well as politicising it. After an exhaustive deliberation, the idea was rejected.¹¹⁶ Two plausible

113. Ibid. In addition to the four villages, Ido-Irapa (since 1946 known as Ido-Ajinare) was later admitted. All the four village councils were converted into District Councils. See (N.A.I), CS026/11874/Vol.XX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1952, para.11 for details.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

reasons could be adduced for the decision of the Oba's Council. Firstly, it might be that the decision arose because of the emerging conflict between the traditional and the new elite. Secondly, it is probable that Ekiti Oba foresaw danger in incorporating politicians into the Superior Native Authority Council. However, whether their fears were justified, or not, it was the events of the post - 1951 era that could comprehensively provide an answer to this question.

Having said this, the Ekiti Superior Native Authority was used as a forum for the selection of the representatives of the Ekiti Oba on the Ondo Provincial Conference of Native Authorities.¹¹⁷ The Conference, which was inaugurated in 1947, had the following representatives from Ekitiland: the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, the Olojudo of Ido, the Obanla of Ijero and Mr. S.A. Okeya, a School master of the Methodist School, Ifaki-Ekiti.¹¹⁸ The

117. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1947, para.11.

118. Apart from four representatives from Ekitiland, the conference comprised one nominated member each from Ondo, Idanre and Akure Native Authorities in the Ondo Division, one member each from Owo, Akoko, Oka in Owo Native Authorities, One member nominated by the Ikale Native Authority and two members nominated by and representing the Native Authorities served by the Okitipupa Divisional Treasury i.e. Ilaje Native Authority, Apoi-Ijaw and Bini Confederation. See (N.A.I.), Ibid., para.12.

aim of the British in inaugurating this conference¹¹⁹ was to provide a "useful link from the tax-payer through the Native Authorities to Western House of Assembly and then the Legislative Council."¹²⁰ Bills coming before the House of Assembly especially draft Regional Estimates were normally previously debated by the Provincial Conference.¹²¹ At its inception, the Conference was headed by "Mr. L. Adegbola, a commoner from Akure".¹²² The Chairmanship of the conference was held on a yearly basis. Like the Ekiti Superior Native Authority, the Provincial Conference was peripatetic at the initial stage with the members of the House of Assembly from the Ondo Province visiting individual Native Councils to appraise its performance.¹²³ Thus the Ekitiparapo Oba, through the participation of their representatives in the Provincial Conference, were able to contribute their quota to the political development of the Ondo Province.

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid.

121. (N.A.I.), CS026/11874/Vol.XIX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951, Ibid., para.12.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that in the wake of the problems which beset central Administration in Ekitiland, the British decided as from 1946 to embark on some administrative reforms geared toward re-invigorating their machinery of governance. Consequently, the Ekitiparapo Oba were put in a good stead to make positive contributions to the political development of not only Ekitiland but also the entire Ondo province. Moreover, some Ekiti Oba were elected into the Western Nigeria House of Chiefs in 1951. This afforded them the opportunity of sitting side by side and rubbing minds with their colleagues from other parts of the defunct Western Nigeria on the issues of the day. Little wonder that the Ekitiparapo Council continued to function and make fundamental contributions towards the political development of Ekitiland in particular and Western Nigeria in general until the passage of the Local Government Law of 1952.¹²⁴ In the light of this, one can submit that the Ekitiparapo council as a loose form of Centralised Administration in Ekitiland up till the end of our period in 1951 succeeded to a very large extent.

124. See Western State of Nigeria, An Introduction to the New Local Government Council System in the Western State, loc. cit., p.2.

CHAPTER SIXTHE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION
IN EKITILAND, 1915 - 1951

The Economic issue is an important aspect of British Administration. The Administration was set up to facilitate the economic exploitation of Ekitiland.¹ It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the framework as well as the process by which Ekitiland was exploited economically under British Administration.

Having established the machinery of colonial administration, the British proceeded largely to put in place some infrastructures to facilitate the economic exploitation of the area. There was also the need to generate funds for the sustenance of the Administration. In fact, it was all part of the device for the full

1. This was not peculiar to Ekitiland. It was a general policy pursued by the British in all her colonies. For details of how African surplus was expatriated into the Metropole (i.e. the Mother Country) See A.G. Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa, (Longman, 1973), pp.135-164; M. Crowder, West Africa under Colonial Rule, (London, Hutchinson and Company Limited, 1968), pp.273-4; W. Rodney, How Europe Under-developed Africa, (Washington, Havard University Press, 1972), Revised Edition, 1981, pp.149-173; and O.O. Omosini, "Alfred Moloney and his strategies for Economic Development in Lagos Colony and Hinterland, 1886-1891", J.H.S.N., Vol.VII, No.4, 1975, pp. 657-672.

consolidation of the Administration. This chapter examines how the exploitation of the economic resources by the British led largely to the benefit of the Metropole (Mother country) rather than the development of Ekitiland. Whatever benefits derived by the people from the infrastructures are secondary and tangential to the British policy. I shall discuss the issue under the following sub-themes: Introduction of a monetary Economy, Development of Communication, Architectural change, Emergence of Wage Labour; Introduction of Cash Crops and Abolition of the Land Tenure system. I would begin our discussion with the Introduction of a monetary economy.

Introduction of a Monetary Economy

Before British Administration, the cowry shells (cypraea moneta)² constituted the predominant medium of

2. T. Adams, Remarks on the Country Extending from Cape Palmers to the River Congo 1823), p.240.

exchange in Yorubaland.³ Cowry shells were originally found in the Indian Ocean and initially collectors only prized them because of their beauty.⁴ Cowries became acceptable legal tender in the ancient empires of Mali and Songhai.⁵ There is no consensus of opinion as to when cowries were re-introduced into West Africa after the fall of these empires. Prof. A.C.F. Ryder is of the view that cowrie shells were imported into Benin Kingdom by the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century.⁶ This view is corroborated by Chief Jacob Egharevba.⁷ Another school of

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3. Trade by Barter thrived very well in some parts of Yorubaland especially in the villages. Interview, Mr. Elijah Adekanmbi, 102, farmer, on 4th April, 1986. See R.O. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria, 1860-1960, (New York, Africana Publishing Company, 1973, p. 187.
 4. See Chamber's Encyclopaedia, Vol.9, p.486.
 5. K. Yeboa Daaku, "Pre-European currencies of West Africa and Western Sudan, Ghana Notes and Queries, No.2, May - August, 1961, p. 13.
 6. A.C.F. Ryder, "An Early Portuguese Trading Voyage to the Forcados River, J.H.S.N., Vol.1, No.4, December, 1959, pp. 294-321.
 7. See J.U. Egharevba, A Short History of Benin, (Ibadan 1960), pp. 30-31.

thought is of the opinion that they were imported into West Africa from the Maldive Islands. With the development of European trade with both India and West Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries, cowries were shipped from India to Europe and thereafter to the coast of West Africa.⁸ While agreeing that cowries were brought from India to West Africa by the Europeans who initially used them as ballasts in the ships, Prof. K.O. Dike affirmed that this development occurred only "early in the nineteenth Century"⁹. Further still, Marion Johnson differs fundamentally from this view-point by positing that cowry had a long history of antiquity. He asserts that the cowry was in use as a medium of exchange long before the imposition of colonial rule.¹⁰ A. Dazel is of the view that the cowry was probably introduced into both the Nupe and Yoruba country from Dahomey in the

8. See G.I. Jones, 'Native and Trade Currencies in Southern Nigeria during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' Africa, Vol.28, No. 1, January 1958, p.48 and A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "The Major Currencies in Nigerian History," J.H.S.N., Vol.2, No. 1, Dec., 1960, pp.136-7.

9. K.O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1855, (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1956), p.107.

10. See M. Johnson, "The Cowrie Currencies of West Africa part 1," J.A.H., Vol. XI, No. 1, 1970, pp.17-49.

"eighteenth century or probably much earlier."¹¹

Regardless of the period when the cowry was re-introduced into West Africa, all the views expressed show that it was an acceptable medium of exchange before the imposition of Colonial Rule. Among the Ekiti people, like their counterparts in Yorubaland, the cowry was used in commercial transactions. Apart from its shape and size which made it easy to handle, convenient to count and impossible to counter-feit, the cowry's durability made it preservable by the Ekiti people for many years.¹²

In spite of the above-mentioned merits of the cowry as a medium of exchange, the British saw it as being capable of retarding the growth of a market economy. To them, it was a too inefficient and weak medium of exchange which could constitute a hinderance to the development of

11. A. Dazel, History of Dahomey, (London, 1783), p. 135.

12. Information received from Mr. Elijah Adekanmbi, 102, on 4th April, 1986. See also Rev. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, (Lagos, C.M.S. Nigeria, 1921), pp.118-119 and A.G. Hopkins, "The Currency Revolution in South-West Nigeria in the late nineteenth Century", J.H.S.N., Vol.3, No.3, December, 1966, p.472.

large scale commerce that they had contemplated. First, the cowries value was not uniformly fixed over the vast region in which they were used.¹³

Second, the British perceived the cowry as an alien currency; its sources and the amount in circulation being beyond the power of the Colonial Administration to control. In fact, the massive supply of the cowries often resulted in high inflation.¹⁴

Third, cowries lacked a wholly convenient unit of high denomination, a phenomenon that was a great disadvantage in transaction involving large sums of money for one bag of cowries weighed about a hundred weight (cwt). Consequently, to exchange and transport a sizeable volume of the currency was a major difficulty.¹⁵

Moreover, the growth of legitimate trade with Nigeria following the abolition of the slave trade further necessitated the need to have a new medium of exchange.

13. Rev. S. Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.

14. See A.G. Hopkins, op. cit., p.473.

15. Ibid., p. 472.

Thus, the initial attempt was made in this regard by McGregor Laird in 1858 when he introduced small copper coins each of the value of one-eighth of a penny (1d) for use in Anglo-phone West Africa. By 1908, a new local coinage was introduced consisting a penny (d) and a tenth of a penny, all having holes in the centre. Most people strung the coins together in the same fashion as the cowries. This was the first major success by the British in introducing the coinage system. The coins were minted in the Royal Mint in England.¹⁶

By 1894¹⁷, the British had introduced silver coins in Ibadan and some parts of Yorubaland. And by 1917,¹⁸ copper coins were introduced in Ekitiland as a medium of exchange. Initially, the introduction of the new medium of exchange generated a lot of mixed feelings among the Ekiti people like their counterparts in other parts of Yorubaland. Firstly, most Ekiti people saw

16. R. O. Ekundare, op. cit., p.188.

17. Ibid.

18. See Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti from the Beginning to 1939, (Ibadan, Bisi Books and Co. Ltd., 1979), p. 106.

the coin as too flat and of a low quality. Thus, it was common place for people when given the coins as a medium of exchange to exclaim thus,

"Ki mo ti a se ye e?"¹⁹
(what will I do with this type of thing?)

Secondly, there were complaints that the coins, unlike the cowries, did not have enough small denominations to facilitate the exchange of retail goods like pepper, vegetables, fruits and some other food items.²⁰ Consequently, most Ekiti traders rejected the new currency and stuck tenaciously to the use of the cowries as a medium of exchange. Thirdly, most traders expressed great displeasure over what they regarded as the unusually high exchange rate of the new coins vis_a_vis the cowries.²¹ The situation was not peculiar to Ekitiland. In other parts of Yorubaland, cowries were still being

19. Oral information from Mr. Ezekiel Apata, 100, at Efon-Alaaye on 2nd Feb., 1990. He was one of the people who personally used the first set of coins introduced as a medium of exchange into Ekitiland.

20. See details of the complaints in The Lagos Weekly Record, General News Column in the issue of 26 May, 1894.

21. Ibid. B. Akinyele, Iwe Iyan Ibadan, (England, 1950), Third Edition, p.124.

used in nearly all retail transactions.²² Indeed, some European firms clung to the cowry because they considered exchange of this basis as more profitable and less competitive than commercial transaction with the use of coins.²³

In spite of the foregoing deficiencies, the new currency became a legal tender among the Ekiti people owing to the following factors: Firstly, the fluctuations²⁴ in the exchange rate of the cowries vis-a-vis the new currency rendered the former unsuitable as legal tender for example,

Egbaa (2,000 cowries) or Egbejo (1,600 cowries) = 1s
Egberun (1,000 cowries) or Egberin (800 cowries) = 6d
Edegbeta (500 cowries) or Irinwo (400 cowries) = 3d²⁵

These fluctuations made the use of the British currency very popular among Ekiti people. Secondly, the British took a decision to standardise the new currency vis-a-vis the cowries as follows:

22. Ibid.

23. See A.G. Hopkins, op. cit., p.483.

24. Ibid., p.472.

25. See I.B. Akinyele, Iwe Itan Ibadan, (England, 1950), Third Edition, p.124.

Egbaa (2,000 cowries) = 6d Egberun (1,000 cowries) = 3d
Egbewa (20,000 cowries) = 5s Ogoji (40 cowries) = $\frac{1}{25}$ of 3d²⁶

Following the standardisation, English coins became acceptable and recognised as legal tender by 1899 though there were some areas where the cowries were still more popular than the coins.²⁷ However, the spirited efforts made by British political officers like Captain R.L. Bower, first Resident and Travelling Commissioner of the North-Eastern District and his successor, Captain F.C. Fuller resulted in further popularisation of the British silver coins as a medium of exchange by the 1920's.²⁸

Also, there was a growing awareness that coins were more portable than the cowries especially when the latter was in a large denomination. Furthermore, with the

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26. For these rates see Lagos Annual Report, 1899, p.85 and Rev. S. Johnson, History of the Yorubas, op. cit., pp.118-119. Other denominations are:
Ogbonwo (30 cowries) = 1/10d;
Adojo (150 cowries) = $\frac{1}{2}$ d
27. Lagos Annual Report, 1899, p.85.
28. See A.G. Hopkins, op. cit., p.483.

development of large trading activities generally in Yorubaland, the cowries soon lost acceptability completely. This development was aggravated by the legislation passed by the British making the sterling the only legal tender. Thus by 1934, the cowry was out of circulation as a currency not only in Ekitiland but also throughout the entire Yorubaland. They were, however, used as adornments in Sekere drum (a type of calabash drum) as well as divination and decoration coins for the Ifa oracle and gods like Esu respectively.²⁹

The introduction of the coin had far-reaching salutary effects on the people of Ekitiland. Firstly, they perceived the introduction of the new medium of exchange as a precursor to an era of prosperity in Ekitiland. Consequently, the Ekiti people nick-named the new coin "Ayelujara"³⁰ (literally meaning the veil over the world is removed). Between 1917 and 1918, other coins

29. J.A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire, op. cit., p.233.

30. It was also called "kobo" see A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.122.

like three pence, six pence and one shilling were introduced into Ekitiland.³¹ The West African Currency Board, established in November 1912 with its headquarters in London, had issued and put into circulation currency notes in the denominations of £5, £1, 10s and 1s by 1916.³² Consequently, by 1919 currency notes were already in circulation in Ekitiland though only a few individuals were in a financial position to possess them.³³

Secondly, the popular acceptance of the coin and currency notes stimulated economic activities in Ekitiland. In fact, the demand for various goods resulted in trade between the Ekiti people and other people within and outside Yorubaland. Export produce was taken initially to trade depots at Agbabu and Ejinrin and later to Osogbo³⁴ by the Ekiti people where they purchased

31. Ibid.

32. See R.O. Ekundare, op. cit., p.191.

33. A.Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.123.

34. (N.A.I.), CO 147/56, 17th June, 1886, Captain A. Moloney to the Earl of Ganville, K.G. Secretary of State for the Colonies.

imported materials such as corrugated iron sheets, sewing machines, bicycles, etc.³⁵

This notwithstanding, the introduction of the British currency had some adverse effects on Ekiti people. Firstly, the introduction of coin and paper currency resulted in inflation in Ekitiland as prices of foodstuffs rose astronomically. Many traders in a desperate bid to procure the new coin and paper currency escalated the prices of their goods. Consequently, customers were made to pay higher prices for goods so that the traders could have enough supply of the currency.³⁶ Secondly, some Ekiti people due to the fact that they were unlettered were cheated while trying to exchange the new coins with their (coins) equivalent in pound sterling when the latter was introduced in 1919. This atrocity was mostly perpetrated by some Court Clerks at the Ado District Office who cashed in on the illiteracy of many people to

35. See J.O. Atandare, Iwe Itan Akure ati Agbegbe re, op. cit., p.78.

36. Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.123.

exchange eighteen shillings instead of 20 shillings for One pound (£1) which the affected people joyfully but ignorantly accepted.³⁷ Thirdly, sometimes a few Ekiti people who anxiously changed their coins to currency notes often found it difficult to convert the latter into coins again whenever they wanted to carry out commercial transactions with other people.³⁸

Also, there arose in later years the problem of illegal counterfeiting of coins, a phenomenon that was unknown when the use of the cowry was in vogue in Ekitiland. Unlike the cowry, the newly introduced metal coins could be counterfeited. In fact, some counterfeit coins in circulation referred to as "ijebu" found their way into Ekitiland and this eroded the confidence which the people had in the new British coins. A situation therefore arose whereby people scrutinised any coins given to

37. Ibid.

38. Interview, Chief T.O. Jegede, 80, at Ise-Ekiti on 10th September, 1988.

40. See A.G. Hopkins, op. cit., p.483.

41. Ibid. See also J.S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California, 1971), pp.66-67.

them during transactions to ensure that they were genuine, and not counterfeit.³⁹

By and large, the introduction of a modern currency system has been seen as a great revolution in the entire South-West of Nigeria.⁴⁰ It led to increased demand for European goods, greater impetus to pursue the profit maximisation motive on the part of traders with attendant shift from a subsistence economy to a predominantly money economy. In fact, the shift resulted, in later years, in the growth of modern banking system as well as large-scale enterprises.⁴¹ In other words, the people of Ekitiland derived immense benefits from the transformation of their subsistence economy into a money economy through the introduction of the coin and paper currency notes as media of exchange during the colonial rule. I would now discuss the development of communication under British Administration.

39. Information collected from Chief T.O. Jegede at Ise-Ekiti on 10th September, 1988.

40. See A.G. Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p.483.

41. *Ibid.* See also J.S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California, 1971), pp.66-67.

Development of Communication

The British Colonial Administration realised that the construction of good roads was sine qua non to the full exploitation of the economic resources of Ekitiland. In fact, British traders were in need of more goods for export and in order to guarantee steady supply of such commodities, tap the economic resources of Ekitiland at reduced cost as well as facilitate the evacuation of agricultural products, the colonial Administration embarked upon the construction of roads.

At that material time, the transport situation in Ekitiland was very pathetic. There were no motorable roads; the Ekiti people had to trek to and fro their farms daily. Travelling from one town to the other was very hectic and laborious as it was done through bush paths⁴² which were mostly narrow, winding, rough and rugged. For example, whenever any Assistant District

42. Although the bush paths were periodically cleared through communal effort nevertheless they were occasionally rendered almost impassable by overgrowth in between periods of clearing. Interview, Mr. Ibikunle Ojo, 98, farmer, at Aiyetoro-Ekiti on 14th March, 1989.

Officer (A.D.O.) stationed at Ado-Ekiti was travelling from one town to the other on an official assignment, he would be carried in an hammock. The swinging of the hammock from one side to the other like the pendulum of a clock often made such journeys very cumbersome and uninteresting. In fact, such journeys were tiresome, time-consuming and unpleasant. And owing to the rugged topography of the area, horses could not be used as an alternative to hammock due to the short life-span of these beasts of burden.⁴³ In the circumstance, therefore, in order to facilitate the movement of the British political Officers to all parts of Ekitiland to ensure effective administration, it was felt that the construction of motorable roads was highly imperative.⁴⁴ Besides, the Colonial Administration also saw the need for the construction of roads to link some important Ekiti towns with other parts of Yorubaland not only to promote intra-trade relations but also to ensure a greater co-ordination of the

43. See A.O. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., pp. 111.

44. During an interview on 15th October, 1986, the late Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi related to me how he personally watched an Assistant District Officer being carried in an hammock from Ado-Ekiti to Ifaki-Ekiti during an official tour in 1920.

administrative machinery of British rule.

To this end, the Public Works Department,⁴⁵ established in 1896, was saddled with the task of constructing motorable roads in Ekitiland. The first attempt to be made in this regard was in 1904 when the construction of the road from Akure to Ondo started.⁴⁶ In 1912, a road was built across Ekitiland from Igbara-Oke to Otun.⁴⁷ The Ikere-Ado-Ekiti road, started in 1917, was completed at a cost of £525⁴⁸ in June 1921. It was extended to Iworoko-Ekiti in 1922.⁴⁹ The Igbara-Odo-Ilawe road spanning a distance of 8 miles, which was commenced in 1925, was completed in 1927.⁵⁰ Also, Igbara-Odo-Ogotun

45. It was charged mainly with the responsibility of construction and maintenance of roads and telegraphs. Among the roads constructed by the Department were the Lagos-Ibadan road which was completed in 1906 and the Ibadan-Oyo road opened to traffick in 1907. See (NAI), Annual Report for the Colony of Southern Nigeria, 1907, p. 85.

46. (NAI), ONDO DIV.8/1, 1903-1912, Aug. 1904, Notes.

47. A.O. Oguntuyi, op. cit., p.111.

48. See (NAI), CSO.26/29734, /^{N.A.C} Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, 1933, Appendix C, para. 7.

49. (NAI), CSO 26/29734 Intelligence Report on Ado District, Ibid., para. 83.

50. (NAI), CSO 26/29762, Intelligence Report on Ogotun District, para. 44.

road was opened in 1927.⁵¹ The Igbara-Oke-Igbara-Odo-Ado-Ekiti-Ido-Ekiti-Ilorin road, which was begun in 1920, was completed in June 1921.⁵² In 1927, the construction of a road running from Ado-Ekiti through Iyin-Ekiti to Igede-Ekiti was embarked upon by the Colonial Administration.

In 1930, a survey of the Ado-Ekiti-Imesi Lasigidi⁵³ covering a distance of 23 miles was undertaken by Mr. W.G. Wormal, the then Assistant District Officer for Ekiti. The exercise was designed to provide a motorable road to tap the economic resources of the Eastern part of Ekitiland.⁵⁴ Thus in 1934, the construction of a road stretching from Ado-Ekiti passing through Ijan, Aisegba, Agbado, Imesi-Lasigidi and linking the Ikare-Ogbagi-Irun road had started.⁵⁵ The Colonial Administration also

51. Ibid., para. 24.

52. (NAI), CSO 26/29799, Intelligence Report on Ikere District of Ekiti Division, 1934, para.25, C.S.O. 26/29734, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 34.

53. This town is now called Imesi-Ekiti.

54. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 90 and Appendix C, para. 7.

55. Ibid., para. 35.

constructed a road from Ifaki-Ekiti through Egosi,⁵⁶ Itaji, Ayede to Isan-Ekiti.⁵⁷ The Iworoko-Afao road was embarked upon in 1933.⁵⁸ By 1950, a total of 32 miles of motorable roads had been completed in Ekitiland while 81 miles of feeder roads were under construction in various parts of Ekitiland.⁵⁹

It is gratifying to note that the Colonial Administration also linked Ekitiland through roads with some parts of Nigeria. For example, the Ibadan - Benin road passed through Igbara-Oke, Isarun, Ero, Ilara and Akure.⁶⁰ By 1950, a sum of £13,696 had been expended on the road. Also, Akure was linked by road with Ondo and Agbabu.⁶¹ The Ikere-Ado-Ekiti-Iworoko-Ido Road led to

56. It is now called Ilupeju-Ekiti.

57. (N.A.I.), EKITI DIV.1/1/223, Intelligence Report on Itaji District, para. 14.

58. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 90 and Appendix C, para. 7.

59. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/1/874 Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para. 120.

60. Ibid., para. 112.

61. (N.A.I.), N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Akure District, op. cit., para. 16.

Ilorin through the northern part of Ekitiland.⁶²

The British Administration largely employed the use of corvee (forced or conscript labour) in the construction of infrastructures like roads and telegraphic lines in Ekitiland. Whenever a road was to be constructed, the Assistant District Officer with the assistance of Engineers and Surveyors would decide its course as well as number of labourers needed for its construction. A request was then made to the Oba and Chiefs whose domains the road would traverse to supply the labourers required for the exercise. Able-bodied men in such towns and villages were then conscripted for the job.⁶³

The construction of roads opened up Ekitiland to economic intercourse with other parts of Nigeria. It also went a long way to speed up the tempo of commercial activities among Ekiti towns.⁶⁴ Good road network also facilitated the movement of people within and outside

62. Ibid. See also N.A.C. Weir, Intelligence Report on Ado District, op. cit., para. 34.

63. Interview, Chief Ojo Ogunsuyi, 100, at Aramoko-Ekiti on 4th April, 1990.

64. Interview, Chief O. Ogunsuyi on 4th April, 1990.

Ekitiland. What is more, it also facilitated the full exploitation of the economic resources of Ekitiland by the Colonial Administration as British traders and firms found it easier to transport goods especially cash crops purchased from Ekiti farmers to the coast for export.⁶⁵ Thus, by 1922, cars had begun to ply Ekiti roads. In the same year, the Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti, Oba Adejuwon, became the first Oba to own a motor car.⁶⁶ And by 1929, most roads in Ekitiland had become motorable thereby facilitating the use of motorcycles and cars.⁶⁷

The Colonial Administration also opened a telegraphic and telephone service at Ado-Ekiti on 1st April, 1949.⁶⁸ The Trunk Telephone Line from Akure to Ondo was also commissioned in 1950.⁶⁹ All these facilitated communication between Ekitiland with Lagos and Ibadan. The British Political Officers now found it easier to

65. Interview, Chief J.O. Ogunsuyi on 4th April, 1990.

66. See A.O. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.148.

67. Ibid., p. 102.

68. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874/Vol.III, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949, para.69.

69. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874 Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para. 71.

communicate with the Secretary of State for the Colonies based in Lagos.⁷⁰ Architectural innovation is the subject of our next discussion.

Architectural Innovation

Before British Administration, the houses in Ekitiland were built with mud and thatched roofs. However, with the advent of British rule building materials such as corrugated iron sheets were imported into Ekitiland by commercial firms.

Consequently, corrugated iron sheets began to replace thatched roofs. With this development, there was a drastic reduction in the incidence of conflagration which was normally associated with thatched buildings.⁷¹ And by 1920 when cement was introduced into Ekitiland, the rich ones among the people started to plaster their buildings with cement.⁷² The emergence of wage labour under British Administration is the subject of our next discussion.

70. Information collected from Mr. J.A. Faloye at Akure on 27th April, 1989.

71. Interview, Mr. J.A. Faloye on 27th April, 1989.

72. See Msgr. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.111.

Emergence of Wage Labour

The labour needed for public works was supplied communally in Ekitiland before British Administration. Also, any individual who needed assistance in his farm got this through Owe (Obligatory labour) or Aaro (reciprocal labour) system. Those who participated in either the Owe or Aaro were entertained with good meal; there was no financial remuneration. This situation underwent drastic change under British Administration.

A number of factors led to the emergence of wage labour in Ekitiland. Firstly, the introduction of cash economy into Ekitiland by the Colonial Administration and the resultant propensity of the people to acquire money made many able-bodied Ekiti men to participate in public works such as road construction, erection of telegraph lines, construction of public buildings such as Post office, Native Court buildings, Government Rest Houses, etc. People involved in the exercise were paid for the services rendered. This afforded them the opportunity to get money to pay tax.⁷³

73. Information collected from Mr. Julius Ogunleye, 105, at Efon-Alaaye on 2nd February, 1989.

Secondly, the establishment of cocoa and cotton farms on commercial basis⁷⁴ necessitated the use of additional hands on the farms. In the circumstance, therefore, a group of hired labourers called Alagbaro emerged who worked on these farms and received wages for their services.⁷⁵ Thus, the development of cash crop economy put an end to the age-long Owe and Aaro system among the Ekiti people.

Thirdly, another opportunity for Ekiti people to engage in wage employment was provided by the Colonial Administration which employed some people as court clerks, carriers, mail runners, etc. In addition, some British firms engaged some Ekiti indigenes as salesmen, clerks, carriers, etc.⁷⁶

Moreover, the desire for European goods also impelled some Ekiti people to go into wage employment. Furthermore, with the introduction of taxation⁷⁷ into Ekiti-land in 1920, some taxable Adults went into wage

74. Details of this will be discussed later in this Chapter.

75. Interview, Mr. Julius Ogunleye, on 2nd April, 1989.

76. Information from Mr. J.A. Faloye on 11th April, 1989.

77. Interview, Mr. J.A. Faloye.

employment in order to obtain money to pay their taxes.⁷⁸ Also, with the monetary wealth becoming a yardstick to high social status in the emerging social structure in Ekitiland, many youths decided to boost their status.⁷⁹ Moreover, the introduction of a new currency served as an impetus for many young people to engage in wage employment. A situation arose whereby dowry had to be paid in the new currency rather than in labour on the farms, cowries, yams, etc.⁸⁰ Thus, the only opportunity opened for the affected youths were to take up wage employment so as to be able to pay the dowry of their suitors.⁸¹ Finally, the general acceptability of the new standard coin and currency as legal tender in preference to the cowry naturally necessitated a shift to wage employment in Ekitiland.⁸²

Apart from engaging in various types of wage employment, many youths became migrant labourers in the

78. This issue has been discussed exhaustively vide Supra pp. 266-272.

79. Information collected from Chief T.O. Jegede at Ise-Ekiti on 10th September, 1988.

80. Interview, Chief T. O. Jegede.

81. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 15th October, 1986.

82. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi.

plantations established in Ondo, Ikale and Ijebu.⁸³ Thus hundreds of young men left their homes for wage employment on the railway in Ibadan, Osogbo, etc.⁸⁴ For example, there were labourers of Ifaki and Usi origin in Ijebu.⁸⁵

Scholars do not agree on when labour migration actually started in Yorubaland in general. While Dr. S.O. Osoba⁸⁶ argues that the phenomenon commenced in the 1930s; Dr. G.O.I. Olomola⁸⁷ is of the view that it began in the early part of the Twentieth Century. However, there is a consensus of opinion among scholars that the phenomenon of labour migration had far-reaching changes on the demographic pattern of Nigeria as a whole and Yorubaland in particular.

83. See G.I.O. Olomola, Pre-Colonial patterns of Inter-State Relations in Eastern Yorubaland, Ph.D. Thesis, Ife, 1977, p. 346.

84. Ibid.

85. See 50th Annual Report of the Lagos District (West Africa) of the Methodist Mission Society, 1927, p.8 and A. Oquntuvi, History of the Catholic Church in Ondo Diocese, op. cit., p.163, p. 346.

86. S.O. Osoba, "The phenomenon of labour migration in the era of British Colonial Rule: A neglected aspect of Nigeria's Social History, "J.H.S.N., Vol.4, No.4, June 1969, pp.517-538.

87. See G.O.I. Olomola, op. cit., p.346.

In spite of the tremendous propensity on the part of Ekiti indigenes to engage in wage employment, the wages paid to Ekiti labourers were very low.⁸⁸ This situation was not peculiar to Ekitiland. In fact, throughout colonial Africa, employers of labour paid extremely low wage - a wage that was insufficient to keep body and soul together. Hence, many workers had to resort to subsistence farming to survive.⁸⁹ The magnitude of the plight of the African worker would be appreciated if it is realised that the level of wages payable to their European and North American counterparts in comparable employment at the time was by far higher than theirs. Thus, it can be argued that there was an unbridled exploitation of the African worker under colonialism.⁹⁰

88. Information collected from Mr. J. A. Faloye, who was in wage employment during colonial rule, on 11th April, 1989. This was also corroborated by Chief T.O. Jegede in an interview at Ise-Ekiti on 10th Sept., 1988.

89. See W. Rodney, How Europe underdeveloped Africa, op. cit., p.149.

90. Ibid.

Walter Rodney advanced a number of reasons for the exploitation of African workers under colonial rule. First, the Colonial overlord had a monopoly of political power after crushing all oppositions by superior military might. Second, the African working class was small, very dispersed and unstable due to migratory practices. Third, the primary objective of capitalism was always to exploit workers world-wide. Also, discriminatory wage policy pursued by the Colonial Masters towards the African workers was rationalised on the basis of an unrealistic racial theory that the black man was inferior to his white counterpart hence the former had to receive lower wages.⁹¹

The shift towards wage employment in Ekitiland had some adverse effects. In the first place, owing to the fact that most various jobs in which wage-earners were engaged were based in the urban centres like Ado-Ekiti and Akure, a situation arose whereby there was an intense migration from the rural areas to the urban centres. The disequilibrium created by this rural-urban

91. Ibid., p.150.

migration constituted a burden on the few social services in the urban centres.⁹²

Secondly, the age-grades in various towns and villages in Ekitiland started to lose grip over their members, many of whom seldom came home owing to the demands of their new jobs. Consequently, many age-grades lost membership a great deal as well as became incapable of fully performing their traditional functions within the various Ekiti societies.⁹³ Thirdly, traditional crafts were neglected owing to the migration of many able-bodied Ekiti men to the urban centres in search of wage employment.⁹⁴ Also, some seasonal and migrant labourers who later returned to their various towns and villages had acquired new ideas, tastes and habits many of which were diametrically opposed to the social norms in vogue in their traditional societies.⁹⁵

92. Interview, Mr. J.A. Faloye on 11th April, 1989.

93. Interviews, Messrs J.A. Faloye, Elijah Adekanmbi and Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 11th April, 1989, 11th April, 1986 and 15th October, 1986 respectively.

94. Interviews, Messrs Faloye and Adekanmbi as well as Msgr. Oguntuyi.

95. See J.S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, op. cit., p.71.

Moreover, full-time salaried employees in the urban centres were subjected to strong individualising influences.⁹⁶ Many of them became individualistic to the extent of isolating themselves completely from their traditional milieu. Others were obsessed with the dilemma of either keeping aloof from their respective families or sacrificing their comfort and happiness in order to fulfil family and communal obligations. In the circumstance, therefore, a few of them decided to sever relationship with their respective extended families and live in isolation in the urban centres.⁹⁷

Finally, owing to the prevailing low level of wages vis-a-vis the cost of living, many wage earners incurred a lot of debt in a desperate attempt to keep body and soul together. Of course, the consequences of this were very disastrous for the Ekiti society.⁹⁸ The subject of our next discussion is the introduction of cash crops in Ekitiland.

96. Ibid.

97. J. S. Coleman, Ibid.

98. Interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 15th October, 1986.

Introduction of Cash Crops

The British encouraged the production of agricultural products for European markets. As earlier stated, it was their primary objective to exploit the forest wealth of Ekitiland, like that of other parts of Yorubaland, through the cultivation of cash crops. Before British Administration, the agricultural economy of Ekitiland was subsistent. Thus, the introduction of cash crops in this area had far-reaching consequences. A lot of agricultural changes followed the introduction of new crops (i.e. palm produce, cocoa, rubber and cotton). I shall discuss these changes in turn starting with those that followed the introduction of palm produce.

Palm Produce

This was an indigenous agricultural product in Ekitiland before the imposition of colonial rule. Palm trees grew wild in the forest and were found in abundance in all parts of Ekiti. Most of the Palm oil and kernels produced was used for home consumption. While palm oil was used for cooking, the oil extracted by women from palm kernel known as adin was used for plaiting hair, soap

making and other purposes as well as for making ose dudu (indigenous soap).⁹⁹ However, trade in palm produce attracted British commercial interests in Ekitiland as well as other parts of Southern Nigeria during the period under consideration. Trade in palm produce by the British with Nigeria dates back to 1588 when one Captain Welsh from England came to Benin and exported a small quantity of palm oil. In 1600, he returned to Benin and exported 32 barrels of palm oil in addition to other commodities.¹⁰⁰ The expansion of iron and coal industries for railway transportation and the demand for oil for light, soap and lubricants for machines also facilitated the need for the commodity.¹⁰¹ Although there were supplies

99. Information collected from Madam Wemimo Isijola, 107, at Isarun on 11th July, 1988.

100. See R.E. Dennet, "Agricultural progress in Nigeria," Journal of Royal African Society, (later published as African Affairs, Vol.18, 1918-1919, p.273.

101. C.N. Newbury, "Prices and profitability in Early Nineteenth Century West African Trade" in C. Meillassoux (ed.), The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa, (O.U.P., 1971), pp.91-92 and W.K. Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, Vol.II, Problems of Economic Policy 1918-1939, part 2 (London, Macmillan and Company Limited, 1963), p.159.

of oil from animals, fish and fats nevertheless these could not meet the increasing demand for oil. Moreover, oil was required for the manufacture of candles and magarine.¹⁰²

Trade in palm kernels began very late in the nineteenth century. As earlier stated, oil was used initially in the manufacture of soap. However, by the 1870s it was discovered that through the process of refining, palm kernels were better than palm oil in the manufacture of soap and magarine.¹⁰³ Apart from the anxiety of British merchants to tap the abundant local potentialities in palm oil and kernels they saw the development of such a market as an alternative to the slave trade.¹⁰⁴

The exact date when the Yoruba started exporting palm oil and kernel is not known. C. W. Newbury traces this to the 1840s arguing that it was the increase in

102. C. Wilson, The History of Unilever (2 Volumes) Volume I, (London, Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1954), p.77.

103. See F.J. Fedler, Economic Geography of West Africa, (London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1955), p.77.

104. S. A. Agboola "Agricultural Changes in Western Nigeria, 1850-1910" in I.A. Akinjogbin and S.O. Osoba (eds), Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History, (Ile-Ife, University of Ife, Press, 1980), p.134.

the world price of palm products which provided impetus for the development of 'legitimate trade.'¹⁰⁵ Thus by the 1840s, palm oil had been exported from Badagry by some European traders.¹⁰⁶ The demand for palm oil by European traders was met through the Yoruba traders who served as middlemen between the Yoruba farmers¹⁰⁷ in the hinterland and the European traders on the coast. Obviously, the role played by these Yoruba traders went a long way in boosting the palm oil trade in Yorubaland. In return, the middlemen sold European cloths, gun and gun-powder to the Yoruba people.¹⁰⁸

What is more, some European firms had started playing active part in the exportation of palm produce by

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105. See C.W. Newbury, The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers, (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 42 and 60.
106. C.W. Newbury, British Policy Towards West Africa Select Documents 1786-1872, (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1965), p.20.
107. Among these were the "Lagos Ekiti Parapo Society" and "Men of the Ijesa Company". See S.A. Akintoye, "The Ondo Road Eastwards of Lagos C.1870-1895," J.A.H., Vol.X, No.4, 1969, p.589.
108. The Ekiti people benefited immensely from the supply of European cloths, gun and gun powder by the Lagos Ekitiparapo Society." Interview, Oba Samuel Adelabu, Ewi of Ado-Ekiti (now deceased), on 2nd February, 1987.

the turn of the Twentieth century, however, the supply of palm produce fell short of the demand of European industrialists. Consequently, the need to introduce new method of production came into focus. It was thought that the indigenous method of cracking the palm kernels (i.e. the two-stone method) was slow, tedious and uneconomical.¹⁰⁹ Also, "soap boilers" in Britain were of the view that it would be better to control the sources of supply of palm oil and kernel. As a result, the Lever Brothers requested for palm belt concession in order to experiment with plantation production as well as machinery to obtain better yields of palm oil. But the request was turned down by the Lagos Government owing to a spate of protests by land owners who regarded the British firm's demand as "the wolf of economic servitude."¹¹⁰ However, the Lever Brothers put up a gigantic kernel crushing mill in Lagos in 1910.¹¹¹

109. (N.A.I.), Annual Report, Colony of Lagos, 1904 published as supplement to Government Gazette Colony of Lagos, 1905.

110. See The Lagos Standard, May 17, 1911 and (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/31071, Vol.1, "The Plantation System in Nigeria: General Policy."

111. See The Nigerian Chronicle, July 14, 1911.

In Ekitiland, the Colonial Administration embarked on the distribution of oil palm seedlings. In 1949, a decision was taken to establish a germinator of 25,000 nut capacity in Akure to meet the increasing demand of palm planters in Ondo Province.¹¹² By 1952, many tray seedlings had been sent to Native Administration Nurseries for distribution to farmers while the rest were consumed by the Germinator established in Akure.¹¹³ The demand for oil was so high that prices rose steadily from year to year.¹¹⁴ In fact, with the development of trade in palm produce, farmers evolved a system of 'palm culture' which gave them the maximum output with minimum labour cost.¹¹⁵ By 1905, palm oil exports generally had reached 9,219 tons¹¹⁶ and between 1906 and 1910, palm produce represented the greatest percentage of all the exports from Yorubaland. Details

112. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874, Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949, para.82.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid., para. 80.

115. See R. O. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria, op. cit., p. 162.

116. S. A. Agboola, op. cit., p. 134.

of palm produce exports in relation to other exports during the period are as follows:

TABLE I

Palm Produce Export 1906-1910 (Western Provinces) Lagos

Year	PALM OIL		PALM KERNELS		Combined value as percentage (%) of Total Export
	Tons	Value (£)	Tons	Value (£)	
1906	10,271	198,676	48,341	529,282	71.0
1907	12,829	285,751	57,505	729,138	74.6
1908	12,446	221,247	52,899	503,284	74.0
1909	17,004	305,646	67,817	775,252	75.4
1910	18,420	442,086	79,157	1,176,186	78.5 ¹¹⁷

In spite of the tremendous increase in the volume of export of palm oil and kernels, the farmers in Ekitiland did not get enough financial returns on their products that were commensurate with their efforts. The firms of Messrs John Holt and Company and the Miller Brothers

117. (N.A.I.), Southern Nigeria Annual Report, 1910.

which handled the bulk of the exportation of the products appointed Buying Agents who largely cheated Ekiti farmers.¹¹⁸ Ekiti farmers were paid very low prices for their products. Although the bulk of the profit accruing from the trade got to Messrs John Holt and Company and the Miller Brothers, nevertheless, the Buying Agents, more often than not, colluded with the Produce Inspectors to cheat the firms.¹¹⁹ The introduction of cocoa is the subject of our next discussion.

Cocoa

Cocoa was another economic crop introduced in Ekiti-land during the period of British Administration. The introduction of cocoa into Nigeria has been dated back to about 1874 when one Chief Ibanigo brought the crop from the Fernando Po Islands and established a farm in Bonny.¹²⁰ The planting of the crop was later spread into

118. Information collected from Mr. Caleb Ibitayo, 107, at Igbara-Odo on 11th July, 1987, Mr. Joshua Ibikunle, 102, at Osi-Ekiti on 5th December, 1987 and Mr. Gabriel Ogungbite, 97, at Kajola-Igbatoro Village near Akure on 5th December, 1988. They all recounted harrowing experiences with these Buying Agents.

119. Interviews, Messrs Ogungbite, Ibitayo and Ibikunle.

120. See J.A. Ayorinde, "Historical Notes on the Introduction and Development of Cocoa Industry in Nigeria," The Nigerian Agricultural Journal, Vol.3, April, 1966, pp. 18-23.

other parts of the Eastern Provinces by the Royal Niger Company and some other European Trading Firms between 1887 and 1889.¹²¹

However, the crop was not introduced into the Yoruba country from the Eastern Provinces. Rather, it was introduced into Yorubaland by some Lagos traders who had had some contact with cocoa plantation in the Fernando Po Islands.¹²² These traders established cocoa plantation at Ijan village near Agege "where cocoa and the African Church went profitably hand-in-hand"¹²³ From there, the planting of the commodity spread to other parts of Yorubaland primarily through the effort of some Christian Missionaries.¹²⁴

The farmers in Ekitiland initially showed some apathy to the introduction of cocoa. Two reasons can be

121. F.M. Howes, "The Early Introduction of Cocoa to West Africa." African Affairs, Vol.45, July, 1946, pp.152-153.

122. See J.B. Webster, 'Agege Plantations and the African Church 1901-1920,' NISER Conference Proceedings, (March 1962), pp.124-130 and J.A. Ayorinde, op. cit.

123. J.B. Webster, op. cit., p.129

124. See S.S. Berry, 'Christianity and the Rise of Cocoa Growing in Ibadan and Ondo, J.H.S.N., Vol.IV, December 1968, pp.439-451.

adduced for their lukewarm attitude. First, most farmers expressed scepticism as to the profitability of the cocoa trade in comparison with that of palm produce which they had been accustomed to. Their indifference stemmed from the fact that they had to wait patiently for five or more years before cocoa could be ripe for harvesting, a situation that was difficult to tolerate.¹²⁵ Secondly, the realisation that cocoa cultivation had to be done in a thick forest, a phenomenon which involved a lot of manual labour, tended to make the cultivation of the commodity a less attractive venture.¹²⁶

In the light of the above, the Colonial Administration took a number of measures to encourage the cultivation of cocoa in Ekitiland. First, an Agricultural Officer was posted to Akure in 1946 to oversee

125. Interview, Mr. Gabriel Ogungbite, 97, a cocoa farmer at Kajola-Igbatoro near Akure, on 5th December, 1988.

126. Interview, Mr. Gabriel Ogungbite, on 5th December, 1988.

130. *Ibid.*

the production of cocoa as well as the maintenance of cocoa farms throughout the entire Ondo Province. The objective of this was to ensure a remarkable improvement in the quality of cocoa produce.¹²⁷ Second, Mr. Thorold, a Plant Pathologist, was commissioned to study the problem of black pod disease which devastated cocoa farms on a large scale in 1949.¹²⁸ Although based in Owena, Mr. Thorold established three cocoa observation Plots in Ekitiland.¹²⁹ The solutions proffered by Mr. Thorold went a long way in redeeming the cocoa trade which had suffered a set-back following the devastating effects of the black pod disease.¹³⁰ Third, Co-operative Societies were encouraged to employ Cocoa Survey and Agricultural Development Staff and Demonstrators who mounted inten-

127. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874 Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1946, para.99.

128. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/11874 Vol.VII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949, para.81.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

sive cocoa quality Campaign, a drive which kindled the enthusiasm of farmers to produce high quality yield.¹³¹ Consequently, 99% of the cocoa graded in the entire Ondo Province in November 1949 was of Grade I and II quality.¹³² Also, the Colonial Administration established three acres of multiplication plots on the new Government Farm at Akure where 4,500 seedlings were planted.¹³³

Moreover, the British Administration introduced the "Amazon" varieties of cocoa into the entire Ondo Province in 1950.¹³⁴ Thus, a forum was organised whereby farmers were educated on how to produce the new variety. On 1st August, 1950, two cocoa propagandists were employed by the Colonial Administration with the objective of holding regular meetings with farmers in various towns and villages producing cocoa.¹³⁵ The propagandists

131. Ibid.

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid. There was no available separate data for Ekiti-land.

134. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/11874 Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para. 91.

135. Ibid., para. 92.

were to advise farmers and Produce-buyers on the modalities for harvesting, fermentation, drying and storage of cocoa.¹³⁶ As a result of the foregoing efforts, the percentage of Grade I cocoa produced in the entire Ondo Province had reached 90% by the end of 1950.¹³⁷ By this date also, there had been a tremendous improvement in the standard of processing and handling of the commodity by producers.¹³⁸

It is highly expedient to discuss how cocoa was marketed in Ekitiland under colonial rule. Essentially, the Cocoa Marketing Board, established in 1947, handled the exercise not only in Ekitiland but also in the entire Yorubaland. The body also handled the exportation of the commodity abroad. A brief historical survey of the establishment of the Board is very germane to this exercise. The impact of the body on cocoa farmers in Ekitiland will also be examined.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid., para.98.

The genesis of the Cocoa Marketing Board can be traced to the 1937 Cocoa Agreement entered into by a number of prominent European exporting firms in Nigeria. The primary objective of the firms was to eliminate competition among themselves. Under the dispensation, the European merchants formed a series of monopolistic combines and pursued a common buying policy geared towards maximising their profits. The cocoa farmers were made to sell their cocoa at prices which were completely repulsive and unpalatable to them.¹³⁹ In the circumstance, they were helpless!

However, the cocoa farmers woke up from their slumber and organised themselves into a "selling monopoly" to counter the "buyers monopoly" of the European firms in the celebrated cocoa crisis of 1937-38. The farmers threatened in 1937 to destroy their cocoa unless the 'pool' was broken and cocoa market thrown open to free competition. The crisis was not limited to Nigeria; it

139. See (N.A.I.), PR/12 "Statement of Policy proposed for the future Marketing of Nigerian Oils, oil seeds and Cotton", Sessional Paper, No.18, 1948.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid.

extended to the Gold Coast (now Ghana).¹⁴⁰ Following a joint meeting of farmers from the two countries held on 18th January, 1938 in Accra, the Nigerian Produce Traders' Union began a big cocoa hold up in concert with their counterparts in the Gold Coast in order to protect the economic interest of the producers from the exploitation of capitalists who by combination of interests were determined to monopolise the produce market of the two countries (i.e. Nigeria and the Gold Coast).¹⁴¹ Specifically, the Nigerian Cocoa producers in Egbaland, Ife, Ondo and Ibadan unanimously threatened to burn their cocoa unless the 'pool' was disbanded and the cocoa market thrown open to free competition.¹⁴²

In order to resolve the impasse created by the 'cocoa crisis', the British Colonial Office appointed the Nowell Commission in early 1938 to visit West Africa, examine and report on the condition of Cocoa Marketing with special reference to the stalemate which occurred as a

140. A. Olorunfemi, "Background to the establishment of the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board 1947-48", ODU, No. 19, Jan./July, 1979, p. 61.

141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

result of the buying agreement. Another term of reference of the Commission was to ascertain whether, or not, the fall in the price of cocoa had been caused or accentuated by the buying agreement. Among the recommendations of the Commission was the elimination of the 'Cocoa Pool' of 1937.¹⁴³

The report of the Nowell's Commission was received with mixed feelings by the various parties concerned with the cocoa trade. As regards the reaction of the Producers, there was a feeling of relief and gratification over the elimination of the 'Pool',¹⁴⁴ However, most farmers felt disgruntled and disappointed that the Commission did not fix a minimum local price for cocoa. In fact, farmers had generally expected a rise in the price of cocoa as an evidence that the firms had actually abandoned the 'pool' system.¹⁴⁵ The middlemen resented the Commission's criticism of their mode of operation. They also frowned at the idea that middlemen should be

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid., p.62.

145. Ibid.

licensed to prevent future increase in their number.¹⁴⁶ Although the European firms, the third party in the crisis, were naturally not happy with the elimination of the 'pool' system, they, nevertheless, rejoiced over the Commission's recommendation that there should be a rapid development of Co-operative Marketing Societies among producers. It was their hope that a rapid expansion of Co-operative buying Societies sponsored by government could eventually pave the way once again for their monopoly of the cocoa trade.¹⁴⁷

In the circumstance, therefore, it was clear by March 1939 that there was no likelihood of a general acceptance of the Nowell's Commission Report.¹⁴⁸

Besides, there ^{were} no positive proposals from either the Nigerian Produce Traders' Union or the European firms that were acceptable to all the parties concerned. Consequently, the Colonial Administration decided to

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid.

148. Ibid.

appoint its own commission headed by Captain Kelly, Resident of Oyo Province, to consider and make appropriate recommendations to be taken to "give effect to such of the Commission's (Nowells') proposals as appear to be practicable and advisable in the interest of the cocoa trade".¹⁴⁹

The Kelly Commission, like its predecessor (i.e. Nowell's), did not fix a minimum price for cocoa. It, however, recommended that African exporters should be allowed free and unfettered access to direct export from Europe.¹⁵⁰ The Commission opposed vehemently the creation of an Export Agency on the ground that such a body would always involve an element of price speculation and give rise to discontent among cocoa producers, a phenomenon that was capable of shaking their confidence in the Co-operative movements.¹⁵¹

149. Ibid. p.63. See also (N.A.I.), Cmd,6654, Report on Cocoa Control in West Africa 1939-13, (London, His Majesty's Stationery's Office, 1944), Part I, para.34.

150. See A. Olorunfemi, op. cit., p.64.

151. Ibid.

Unfortunately, the cocoa crisis had not been resolved when the second world war broke out in September 1939. The seeming loss of markets in many of the consuming countries of the world as a result of the war gave the Colonial Government a free hand in the creation of a government sponsored purchasers monopoly called West African Produce Control Board which came into operation during the 1940-41 season. The Board paid prices that were below world prices to farmers. In fact, the situation ^{was} more pathetic than what farmers of the experienced during the 1937-38 'Cocoa Pool'. The recommendation of the Nowell's Commission was suspended while under 'war-time emergency power', strict control measures were imposed on the marketing of major export crops in order to deprive 'the enemy'¹⁵³ of all supplies of raw materials from West Africa, and thus ensure adequate supplies of the requirements of the British Government.¹⁵⁴ The Ministry of Food in London was

152. Ibid.

153. i.e. Germany which was then at war with the Allied powers of which Great Britain was one.

154. A. Olorunfemi, op. cit., p. 64.

157. (N.A.F.) Cmd. 5845, Nowell's Commission, 1938, paras. 10-18.

charged with the responsibility of handling the purchase of the whole crop under the control scheme. The Chairman of the Cocoa Board within the Ministry of Food was John Cadbury, a Director of Cadbury Brothers, who took part in the buying 'Pool' of the 1937-38 cocoa season.¹⁵⁵

Although one aspect of war-time controls was the promise that cocoa would be purchased at prices which would protect that standard of living of the 'colonial people', nevertheless, the operation of the control scheme in practice was no more than a mere transfer of the wealth of Nigeria to Britain at the Official government level.¹⁵⁶ There was excessive fluctuation in cocoa price from one year to the other during the war period. All these factors disillusioned cocoa farmers who now realised that the objective of control was not to protect their interest.¹⁵⁷

The aftermath of these grievances was an intense agitation by cocoa farmers for an increase as well as stability in the price of the commodity. The Nigerian

155. Ibid., pp.64-65.

156. Ibid.

157. (N.A.I.), Cmd.5845, Nowell's Commission, 1938, paras. 10-18.

Produce Traders Union, Middlemen and cocoa farmers soon enlisted the sympathy of the nationalists following an intense mass media campaign, who nominated Dr. Akinola Maja, a member of the Nigerian Youth Movement, to lead a delegation to London to negotiate with the Secretary of State for the Colonies in September 1945 for an increase in the price of cocoa to £50 per ton as well as the implementation of the Nowell Commission Report.¹⁵⁸ However, when the delegation was rebuffed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the ground that it did not represent the interest of cocoa farmers, it ordered a hold-up of all cocoa until it (delegation) was granted an audience by the Secretary of State or whenever there was a substantial increase in producer prices.¹⁵⁹ There was a spontaneous reaction to this call

158. See Daily Service, September 29, 1945, Nigerian farmers' Delegation to London, Memo submitted to the Secretary of State, London, 27th September, 1945.

159. West African Pilot, October 9, 1945.

by cocoa farmers as over 90 markets in Ibadan, Ile-Ife and Ondo Districts had no cocoa sales because farmers refused to bring their products to the markets.¹⁶⁰

Although the delegation did not meet the Secretary of State nevertheless its presence in London convinced the British Government that cocoa farmers and dealers were no longer interested in a return to pre-war control conditions on cocoa. Consequently, in a White Paper issued on 25th January, 1946, the Colonial Administration proposed the establishment of a new cocoa marketing organisation to be set up in Nigeria, not in London as previously envisaged, to provide a machinery for "insulating producer prices for cocoa from the day-to-day fluctuations in the world market values ..."¹⁶¹ Thus, the Cocoa Marketing Board was established in Nigeria in the 1947-48 cocoa season.¹⁶² Indeed, this was a

160. See Daily Service, 15th October, 1945.

161. (N.A.I.), Cmd 6950, Statement on Future Marketing of West African Cocoa, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, November, 1946.

162. See Government Gazette, No. 37 of June 1947.

165. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/11874, Vol. XVIII, Annual Report of Ondo Province, 1950, para. 174.

milestone in the history of cocoa trade in Nigeria. Other functions of this Government-sponsored Buyers' Monopoly were to create a surplus to finance research into cocoa, fixing producer prices, the evolution of a new system of licensed buying agents as well as maintaining legally prescribed grades and standard of the commodity.¹⁶³

The establishment of the Marketing Board was greeted with ecstasy by cocoa farmers since they were assured that it was set up in order that the 'whole profit'¹⁶⁴ accruing from the cocoa trade might go to the producers. In 1950, the cocoa Marketing Board allocated a sum of £44,500 for the construction and maintenance of roads leading to cocoa farms throughout the Ondo Province.¹⁶⁵

163. Ibid. See also R.O. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria, op. cit., p.286 and H.M.A. Onitiri and D. Olatubosun (eds), The Marketing Board System: Proceedings of an International Conference held at the University of Ibadan from 29th March, to 3rd April, 1971, (Ibadan, University Press, 1974), p.28.

164. A. Olorunfemi, The export trade of South-Western Nigeria, 1900-1950: a study in the economic development of the Yoruba Country, M. Phil. Thesis, Ife, November 1972, p.197.

165. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874, Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para.124.

Cooperative Societies helped to complement the efforts of the Cocoa Marketing Board in the marketing of the commodity. In 1946, there were 10 Co-operative Societies in Ekitiland with a membership of 987.¹⁶⁶ They organised themselves into 'Ekiti Group' like their counterparts in other co-operative unions in Ondo Province namely "Ondo-Idanre-Akure" and "Owo-Akoko."¹⁶⁷ Most of these societies owned their own stores, weighing machines, safe and other equipment. They handled the marketing of cocoa on behalf of the Association of Nigerian Co-operative Exporters, a buying agent with headquarters in Ibadan which worked in collaboration with the Nigerian Cocoa Board.¹⁶⁸

The quality of cocoa produced by co-operative farmers was very high. Thus, a total of 2,689 tons of cocoa were marketed by the Co-operative societies in the

166. See (N.A.I.), CSO 26/11874/Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1946, para.35.

167. (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874 Vol.VII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949, para.87.

168. Ibid.

1948-49 cocoa season while a net profit of £5,061 was made.¹⁶⁹ However, this figure declined to 2,356 tons by March 1950 owing to a fall in the total cocoa produced in the whole of Onḁ Province as a result of devastating effect of black pod disease.¹⁷⁰ By December, 1951, the number of Co-operative Societies in Ekitiland had risen to 25.¹⁷¹ Out of this number, 22 were cocoa Co-operative Societies located in Okemesi, Erijiyan, Emure, Efon-Alaaye, Afao and Ipoti.¹⁷²

In addition to marketing of cocoa, Co-operative Societies established the Co-operative Group Farming and Plantation Schemes in 1951 with the responsibility for spreading propaganda among farmers on the merits of Group farming. In this regard, land was acquired at Aḁo-Ekiti, Egosi (Ilupeju-Ekiti) and Ikere-Ekiti for the

169. Ibid.

170. See (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874 Vol.XVIII, Annual Report on Onḁ Province, 1950, op. cit., para.102.

171. Those in respect of Onḁ and Owo Divisions were 25 and 27 respectively thus bringing the total number to 77 in Onḁ Province. See (NAI), C.S.O.26/11874/ Vol.XIX, Annual Report on Onḁ Province, 1951, para.89.

172. Others were Thrift and Loans Societies - one (1) and Thrift and Credit Societies - Two (2). See (N.A.I.), C.S.O.26/11874/Vol.XIX, Annual Report on Onḁ Province, 1951, Ibid.

enterprise.¹⁷³ Farmers were thoroughly educated on co-operative methods of farming and land development. By the end of the year, cocoa propagandists had visited 602 villages and held meetings with 11,987 farmers throughout the entire Ondo Province.¹⁷⁴ As a way of enhancing their performance, a training course for co-operative Secretaries was held in June 1951 at Akure with 51 trainees attending.¹⁷⁵ All the foregoing efforts of co-operative societies went a long way in enhancing the cultivation and marketing of high quality cocoa in Ekitiland.

The efforts made by the Cocoa Marketing Board and the Co-operative Societies in marketing cocoa produced in Ekitiland had some adverse effects on cocoa farmers. First, the hope of cocoa farmers in Ekitiland that the whole profit accruing from the cocoa trade would go to them was dashed.¹⁷⁶ As events unfolded themselves,

173. See (N.A.I.), CSO 26/11874/Vol. XIX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951, op. cit., para. 89.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

176. Interview, Mr. John Ojo, 90, farmer, at Igbara-Odo, on 11th July, 1988.

177. Interviews, Messrs John Ojo and Gabriel Ogungbite on 11th July and 5th December 1988 respectively.

farmers became disillusioned for the greater proportion of the profit was reserved by the Marketing Board ostensibly to stabilise the producer price in case of a slump in the world market as well as provide economic and social welfare services for the people of Ekitiland.¹⁷⁷ Secondly, farmers realised, to their chagrin, that the avowed economic and social welfare services were merely a paper tiger. In fact, none of these programmes took off the ground during our period.¹⁷⁸ Thirdly, an indefensible dichotomy existed between world producer prices of cocoa and the market prices actually paid to cocoa farmers in Ekitiland.¹⁷⁹ This phenomenon soon became a potent source of vehement agitation among Ekiti Cocoa Farmers after the period under review for they saw the market price of cocoa as not being commensurate with the effort put in by them

177. Interview, Mr. John Ojo, Ibid. See also A. Olorunfemi, op. cit., p.197 and R.O. Ekundare, op. cit., p.287.

178. Interviews, Messrs John Ojo and Gabriel Ogungbite on 11th July, 1988 and 5th December, 1988 respectively.

179. Interviews, Messrs John Ojo and Gabriel Ogungbite on 11th July and 5th December 1988 respectively.

for its production.¹⁸⁰ Again, there were instances when some functionaries of various co-operative societies (i.e. Managers, Secretaries, Inspectors, etc.) colluded with the Licensed Buying Agents to cheat the largely unlettered Ekiti farmers especially during the grading of produce.¹⁸¹ As a result of the foregoing shortcomings, the Colonial Administration took far-reaching steps after 1954 aimed at reforming the Cocoa Marketing Board.¹⁸² However, an appraisal of these post - 1954 Reforms is outside the purview of this thesis. The introduction of rubber is the next issue to be examined.

Rubber

Before British Administration, rubber, like palm trees, grew wildly in Ekiti forest as in other parts of Yorubaland but since it was not consumed domestically, it did not enter into the local trade of the people of

180. Information collected from Messrs John Ojo and Gabriel Ogungbite.

181. Messrs John Ojo and Gabriel Ogungbite recounted their personal experiences with these officials and licensed Buying Agents in separate interviews on 11th July, 1988 and 5th December, 1988 respectively.

182. See details of these Reforms in R.O. Ekundare, op. cit., pp.287-288.

Ekitiland.¹⁸³ However, by the 1890s, rubber had become a valuable product not only in Ekitiland but also in West Africa.¹⁸⁴

This was due to a demand for the commodity in Europe which assumed a new dimension with the invention of the vulcanisation process in 1840. Rubber, which had been used predominantly for the manufacture of footwear, toys and floor mats, was now increasingly required for conveyor belting, medical and surgical appliances as well as insulators for electric cables and wires.¹⁸⁵ Also, the invention of pneumatic tyre by John Boyd Dunlop in Scotland radically boosted the demand for rubber in Europe.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, the need to meet the increasing demand for bicycle and motor tyres

183. Information collected from Pa. J.A. Falaye, 105, on 12th June, 1989.

184. See (N.A.I.), Lagos Annual Report, 1895.

185. See O. Omosini, "The Rubber Export Trade in Ibadan: 1893-1904: Colonial Innovation or Robber Economy?" in Seminar Papers 1978-79. Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, pp. 188-189.

186. Ibid.

made it imperative for industrialists to expand their search for rubber later to all the Tropical Regions in the world.¹⁸⁷ As^a/corellary, the growth in the rubber industry in Europe necessitated the need for more markets overseas for the sale of the products as the existing markets in Angola, Brazil, Mozambique, Congo and Madagascar (now Malagazy) could no longer absorb all the products of European industrialists.¹⁸⁸

Thus, a new market for the commodity was sought in West Africa in the 1870s.¹⁸⁹ Sir Alfred Moloney, Governor of Lagos (1886-1891), who had started rubber collection in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1882, drew the attention of the people of Lagos to the need to establish a similar industry in the Lagos Colony. In fact, he formulated a number of strategies geared

187. Ibid.

188. See details of the development of the Rubber industry in Europe in W. Woodruff, The Rise of the British Rubber Industry during the Nineteenth Century, (Liverpool, 1958), P. Schidrowitz and T. R. Dawson (eds.), History of the Rubber Industry, (Cambridge, 1952) and T.K. Derry and R.I. Williams, A Short History of Technology, (Oxford, 1960).

189. Initially Sierra Leone and later the Gold Coast (Ghana).

1894 in order to boost the revenue of the Government.¹⁹⁰ In spite of his efforts, no conscious attempt was made by the Colonial Administration to encourage rubber production until 1894.¹⁹¹ In that year, Sir Gilbert Carter, then Governor of Lagos, embarked on the policy on the advice of some rubber experts from the Gold Coast.¹⁹² The Experts had reported that certain districts within the Yoruba country namely Ijebu, Ondo, Ibadan and Ilesa were rich in rubber yielding plants and trees especially the landolphia vines and the tree locally called Ire (*funtumia elastica*).¹⁹³ Following the directive of the Colonial Administration, Captain R.L. Bower, the British Resident at Ibadan, embarked on a campaign for the rubber trade in Ibadan in

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190. See O. Omosini, 'Alfred Moloney and His strategies for Economic Development of Lagos Colony and Hinterland, 1886-1891', J.H.S.N., Vol.VII, No.4, 1975, pp.657-672.
191. J.R. Jackson, "The Vegetable Resources of West Africa", Journal of African History, No.111, April, 1902, p.292.
192. Ibid.
193. See J.R. Jackson, op. cit., O. Omosini, "The Rubber Expert Trade in Ibadan 1893-1904: Colonial Innovation or Robber Economy?" op. cit., p.200, Government Gazette 1893-4, and Lagos Weekly Record, article on "The Possibilities of the Yoruba Country," 2nd June, 1894.

1894 in order to boost the revenue of the Lagos Government.¹⁹⁴ And by 1895, the exportation of rubber from Lagos had begun. In that year, a total of 21,131 lbs of rubber valued at £1,214 was exported and this increased to 948,000lbs valued at £51,488: 9s : 2d by 1896.¹⁹⁵ The 'rubber rush' which followed was encouraged by Yoruba traders from Lagos who enjoined the people of the hinterland to step up the tapping of rubber. Another impetus for the growth of the rubber trade was provided by an increase in the world price of the commodity which rose from 2/8d per lb in 1894 to 4s per lb in 1905.¹⁹⁶

Consequently, there was a tremendous increase in the volume of rubber export from the Western Provinces between

194. See details of the propaganda and policy decisions of the Colonial Administration in T. Falola, The Political Economy of a Pre-Colonial State: Ibadan, 1830-1900, (Ile-Ife, University of Ife Press Ltd., 1984), p.170.

195. J.R. Jackson, op. cit., see also the details of Rubber Export from Lagos between 1893 and 1900 in Lagos Blue Books, 1893-1900 and W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria under British Rule, (London, Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1965), p.56.

196. (N.A.I.), Lagos Blue Books, 1905.

200. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/11874/Val.XIX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951, op. cit., para.37.

1900 and 1907.¹⁹⁷ In fact, after the 1890s, most of the rubber exported from Lagos came from Ilesa, Ondo and Ekitiland.¹⁹⁸

In Ekitiland, the Department of Agriculture ensured that the funtumia elastica was tapped under the supervision of the staff of the Department. The latex was boiled and the resultant coagulant was rolled into thin 'biscuits' on a table by wooden rollers. The sheets were then washed with very hot water before smoking in a long dry shed.¹⁹⁹ Although no specific data on rubber production in Ekitiland in any given year during our period are available, nevertheless, the total production of the commodity in the Ondo Province increased from 39,200 Ibs in 1950 to 336,229 Ibs in 1951.²⁰⁰ While there

197. See details of the quantity (in Ib) and the value (in £) of the Export of ^{rubber} from this area in (N.A. (N.A.I.), Annual Trade Report, Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, 1907.

198. See O. Omesini, "The Rubber Export Trade in Ibadan: 1893-1904, Colonial Innovation or Robber Economy", op. cit., p.198.

199. (N.A.I.), Report on Blue Book, Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, 1910.

200. (N.A.I.), C.S.O. 26/11874/Vol.XIX, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951, op. cit., para.87.

was a large concentration of rubber production in Agbabu and Ondo, the trade flourished to a lesser extent in Ekitiland.²⁰¹ Apart from the conscious effort made by the British Administration to encourage the production of rubber in the Forest Reserves²⁰² at Aramoko, Ise-Ekiti and Ikere-Ekiti, only a few farmers engaged in the production of rubber on an appreciable scale.²⁰³

Three major problems limited the scope of the rubber trade in Ekitiland. First, there was apathy on the part of most Ekiti farmers to engage in rubber production for they saw the trade as less profitable than the cocoa or palm produce enterprise.²⁰⁴ Second, Ekitiland was then in the grip of the protracted Kiriji War (1878 - 1893),²⁰⁵ a fratricidal war between the Ekitiparapo and

201. Interview, Mr. Gabriel Ajayi, 92⁺, at Aramoko-Ekiti on 15th September, 1990.

202. The Forest Reserves were created between 19th June, 1930 and 9th February, 1933. See A.O. Oguntuyi, History of Ekiti, op. cit., p.127.

203. Interview, Mr. Gabriel Ajayi 92⁺, on 15th Sept., 1990.

204. Oral Interview, Mr. Gabriel Ajayi, 92⁺.

205. This war has been exhaustively discussed vide supra, pp. 164-9.

Ibadan forces. This internecine war diverted the attention of the combatants from such a productive economic pursuit in Ekitiland. Third, some Ekiti people felt that the labour exerted on the tapping process was not commensurate with the market price of rubber per lb offered by the British firms like Messrs John Holt and Company which were engaged in the rubber trade. In this connection, such a category of farmers naturally diverted their productive energies to the cultivation of subsistence crops like yams, maize, cassava, etc.²⁰⁶ Despite this apathy, the rubber trade brought some wealth to those who engaged in the trade in Ekitiland.²⁰⁷

On comparative analysis, one can submit that the rubber trade in Ekitiland did not flourish in the same degree as obtained in Ibadan, Agbabu and Ijebuland. Similarly, it can be argued that the rubber enterprise

206. Oral interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi (now deceased) on 15th October, 1986.

207. Oral interview, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 15th October, 1986.

in Ekitiland was not as successful as the cocoa, palm produce or cotton trade. I shall now discuss the introduction of cotton.

Cotton

With regard to the trade in cotton, the commodity was by far secondary in importance to the palm produce and cocoa trade in Ekitiland. Indigenous cotton had been cultivated since time immemorial in Ekitiland. In fact, the cotton produced in Ekiti had entered into the internal trade of the Yoruba country before the nineteenth century.²⁰⁸

The genesis of the exportation of cotton can be traced to the efforts of the early missionaries who inspired the trade in Abeokuta in 1852.²⁰⁹ At that material time, the price of cotton in America was rising and the Lancashire cotton industry was unable to procure

208. Interview, Chief Samuel Ajibewa, 90+, farmer, at Ilawe-Ekiti on 2nd April, 1988.

209. See S.O. Biobaku, The Egba and Their Neighbours, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 57-60 and J.B. Webster, "The Bible and the Plough", J.H.S.N., Vol.II, No.4, December 1963, pp.418-442.

enough supplies for its production. This shortage of supplies led to increasing demand for raw cotton from Yorubaland.²¹⁰ There was also the need to secure regular and adequate sources of supply in order to have a permanent solution to the periodic shortage of cotton supply to the Lancashire Industry.²¹¹

Thus, in 1902, representatives of 15 cotton firms decided, at a meeting held in Manchester, to form the British Cotton Growing Association (B.C.G.A.) which would prospect for cotton in some of the British Tropical Africa dependencies namely Egypt, India, West Indies and West Africa.²¹² The B.C.G.A. was to "assist in freeing us (British Merchants), to a very large

210. S.A. Agboola, "Agricultural Changes in Western Nigeria 1850-1910" in I.A. Akinjogbin and S.O. Osoba (eds.), Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History, (University of Ife Press, Ile-Ife, 1980), p.142; Lagos Annual Reports 1868-1870 and Chambers' Encyclopaedia, Vol.IV, p.174.

211. Cmd 2543, "Report on the Royal Commission of Supply of Food and Raw Materials in the Time of War" in W.H.B. Court, British Economic History 1870-1914: Commentary and Documents, (Cambridge, University Press, 1965), pp.188-9.

212. See A.O. Anjerin, The British Occupation and the Development of Northern Nigeria 1897-1914, Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1965, p.181 and E.D. Morel, Affairs of West Africa, (London, 1902), pp.188.

extent from a position of dependence on America"²¹³ and with particular reference to West Africa, the Association was to ensure that" we have some other staple trade to depend upon other than those of palm oil and rubber."²¹⁴ The B.C.G.A. was also charged with the responsibility of acquiring land for the establishment of experimental farms, free distribution of seeds among indigenous people for cultivation on their farms, establishment of buying stations as well as the purchase of the by-products of cotton.²¹⁵

When the B.C.G.A. was formed in 1902, its capital was only £50,000 but this was raised to £500,000 when the Association was granted a royal charter in 1904.²¹⁶ Initially, the B.C.G.A. concentrated efforts at Ilugun

213. E.D. Morel, Ibid., p.195.

214. See J. R. Jackson, op. cit., pp.298.

215. Ibid.

216. Allan McPhee, The Economic Revolution in British West Africa, (London, 1926), p. 46 and A.O. Anjorin, "Cotton Industry in Northern Nigeria during the Colonial Period" in A.I. Akinjogbin and S.O. Oseba (eds), op. cit., p. 122 (footnote).

Ishan, both near Abeokuta however a few years later, it had spread its tentacles to Ibadan, Eruwa, Iwo and Oke-Iho.²¹⁷ Thereafter, the Association started operation in Akoko and Ekitiland.²¹⁸ Good soil and suitable climatic conditions facilitated the cultivation of cotton in Yorubaland in general and Ekitiland in particular. The extensive cultivation and use of cotton all over Yorubaland further brightened the hope of the B.C.G.A. that their experiment would be a success in Yorubaland. In fact, Yoruba farmers had always grown cotton on a large scale for domestic use.²¹⁹ Before the 19th Century, locally produced clothes were exported in large quantities from Yorubaland to Brazil.²²⁰

The officials of the B.C.G.A. settled down at Omue-Oke and looked forward to a profitable trade in

217. See S.A. Agboola, op. cit., p. 134.

218. (N.A.I.), OX/A5, Report on Cotton Growing in West Africa, 1902-1905 (General Information).

219. See Annual Report on the North-Eastern District of Lagos 1904 published in Government Gazette, Colony of Lagos, 1906.

220. S.A. Agboola, op. cit., p.133.

Ekitiland.²²¹ The strategies employed by the Association to achieve its objective were as follows: First, cotton seeds mostly of Ishan type were distributed to farmers in all parts of Ekitiland for cultivation in their farms. Second, the B.C.G.A. also made relentless efforts to divert the supply of cotton from the indigenous looms being operated in various parts of Ekitiland to meet the demands of the power looms in Lancashire.²²² Thus, in 1911, 2,400 Ibs of cotton were ginned in the first six months of the year at Omuo-Oke.²²³ Initially, the overall exportation of cotton in Yorubaland increased between 1903 and 1907. This was a result of the initial enthusiasm by cotton farmers. However, the cotton trade was to witness a sharp decline thereafter. The details of the Export of cotton from 1903-1907 are shown below:²²⁴

221. Oral Interview, Mr. S.O. Ojo, farmer, 92, at Omuo-Ekiti on 15th May, 1988.

222. Interview, Mr. S.O. Ojo at Omuo-Ekiti on 15th May, 1988.

223. See C.O. Akomolafe, Akoko Under British Rule, 1900-1935, M.Phil. Thesis, Ife, 1976, p.213.

224. (N.A.I.), Annual Trade Report Lagos, 1907.

TABLE II

Export Cotton (Lagos) 1903-1907

	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907
Unginned Tons	204	636	497	1,453	4,441
Ginned Tons	-	170	287	1,086	1,679
Seed Cotton Tons	25	490	1,288	2,007	4,017
TOTAL	268	1,296	2,072	5,546	10,137

In spite of the frantic efforts made by the Field Agents of the B.C.G.A., the Association was unable to realise its dream of an extensive cultivation of cotton in Ekitiland owing to the following factors.²²⁵ Firstly, the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918) led to a phenomenal rise in the price of imported goods particularly textile materials with the result that the Ekiti people were unable to afford the cost of buying British made cloths and thereby reverting to their

225. Information collected from Mr. James Akinola, 102, farmer, at Oye-Ekiti on 11th May, 1988.

locally made products. The after-effect was an increase in the use of cotton for domestic consumption rather than for exportation.²²⁶ Secondly, the low price offered by the buying Agents of the B.C.G.A. discouraged most farmers in Ekitiland from selling their raw cotton to the firm. While a pound of cotton sold at one shilling, six pence (1/6d) in Great Britain at the time, the Association offered only two pence (2d) to the farmers in Ekiti and Akoko areas.²²⁷ The unfair treatment meted out to cotton farmers was not peculiar to Ekitiland. In Osogbo, cotton farmers by 1920 had complained about the sum of three pence (3d) being offered by the B.C.G.A. for a pound of cotton. What is more, the price offered by the Buying Agents of the B.C.G.A. was much lower than that of the indigenous cotton merchants with the result that many cotton farmers were discouraged and therefore preferred to sell their products to the latter.²²⁸ Thirdly, the

226. Interview, Mr. James Akinola on 11th May, 1988.

227. See C.O. Akomolafe, op. cit., p. 216.

228. (N.A.I.), Ondo Prof.4/1, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1920-21, paras 3-6.

Ekiti farmers were not too enthusiastic about stepping up the production of cotton to the degree envisaged by the B.C.G.A. Being largely subsistence farmers, the attention of Ekiti farmers was focussed on the production of foodstuffs such as yams, maize and cassava for the maintenance of the family. Consequently, the cultivation of cotton was regarded as of secondary importance.

Also, at the time the B.C.G.A. was laying emphasis on the expansion of cotton production, farmers in Ekiti-land had paid so much attention to the production of palm produce and cocoa that not much labour could therefore be spared for cotton production.²²⁹ In fact, since the trade was now competing with the cocoa trade, most farmers had to abandon the former as less profitable.²³⁰

As a result of the foregoing, the volume of cotton purchased by the B.C.G.A. decreased considerably. For instance, the total number of pounds which was available

229. See (N.A.I.), OX/5, Sir Ralph Moor to Elder Dempster and Co. of Liverpool, February 12, 1903.

230. Ibid.

for the Association to purchase at Omuo-Oke decreased from 4,500 Ibs in 1913 to 1,785 in 1917.²³¹ Most Ekiti cotton farmers preferred to take their products to the Ado-Ekiti Community Weaving Centre as well as the Rural Industries Centre at Oye-Ekiti for sale.²³² The Ado-Ekiti Community Weaving Centre had developed to a stage whereby it had a staff strength of 22 with four 'standard' and five 'plain' looms for the production of 'native designs.'²³³ By 1950, a total of 2,287 yards of cloth were produced from this Centre out of which 2,083 yards were sold.²³⁴ Similarly, the Rural Industries Centre, Oye-Ekiti utilised more and more locally made cotton for its weaving production.²³⁵ Locally made products such as ikeji, iketa, ikerin cloths produced at Ado-Ekiti and Oye-Ekiti were marketed within and beyond Ekitiland.²³⁶ The impact

231. C.O. Akomolafe, op. cit., p. 216.

232. See (N.A.I.), CSO 26/11874, Vol.XVII, Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950, para.51.

233. Ibid.

234. Ibid.

235. Ibid.

236. Interview, Mr. J. Akinola at Oye-Ekiti on 11th May, 1988.

of British Administration on the land tenure system in Ekitiland is the subject of our next discussion.

Abolition of the Land Tenure System

The impact of British Administration on the land tenure system in Ekitiland was very devastating. Land in pre-colonial Ekiti, like other parts of Yorubaland, was corporately owned. Since it was commonly owned, nobody could alienate it (land) for whatever reasons. This land tenure system served as a cohesive force which united all the inhabitants of each town or village.²³⁷

However, the advent of colonialism dealt a great blow to this corporate ownership of land. The desire by individuals in Ekitiland, like other parts of Yorubaland,²³⁸ to obtain maximum profit from cash crops like cocoa and also to build separate houses of their own led to the urge to own land on individual basis.²³⁹ Since

237. Details of the land tenure system in the pre-colonial Ekitiland have been exhaustively discussed vide Supra, pp. 98-104.

238. For the impact of British Administration on the land tenure system in Yorubaland generally see J.A. Atanda, An Introduction to Yoruba History, (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1980), p. 62.

239. Information collected from Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi on 11th May, 1986 shortly before his death.

cash crops such as cocoa involved a long-term investment on land, an individual who had invested a lot of money and labour on pieces of land became unwilling to part with it. This action started to erode the land tenure system. And what is more, there developed a tendency for individual to lay claim to land for as long as their cocoa trees were there. This later crystallised in a situation whereby such individuals in Ekitiland laid permanent ownership on land at the expense of others within the community, a phenomenon that was non-existent in the pre-colonial period.

As land started to acquire more and more economic value, there arose the issue of land speculation. Some individuals began to acquire pieces of land mostly free of charge which were later sold out in later years.²⁴⁰ This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. It was not long when individuals and communities started making claims and counter-claims to land

240. Oral interviews, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi and Mr. J. Akinola on 11th May, 1986 and 11th May, 1988 respectively.

247. *Ibid.*

possession. The situation soon degenerated into charges of trespass, boundary dispute, protracted litigations and inter-community strife, a phenomenon that was virtually unknown in Ekiti communities before colonial rule.²⁴¹

Consequently, land and boundary disputes became a common feature of the relations among communities in Ekitiland since the second decade of the 20th Century. Among such cases were Ado and Ikole,²⁴² Ido and Ijero,²⁴³ Ado and Ilawe,²⁴⁴ Ogotun and Igbara-Odo,²⁴⁵ Ise and Emure,²⁴⁶ and Ise and Orun²⁴⁷ land disputes. In essence, British Administration not only destroyed the age-long land tenure system in Ekitiland but also led to the emergence and, in some cases, accentuation of inter-community strifes.

241. Oral interviews, Msgr. A.O. Oguntuyi and Mr. J.A. Akinola.

242. (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/2, 364, Ikoyi (Ikole) and Igbimbo (Ado) Land Dispute.

243. (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/2/309, Vol.I, Ilogbo (Ido) and Ijurin (Ijero) Boundary Dispute.

244. (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/12/1215, Ogotun-Igbara-Odo Land Disputes, 1928-1950, p.38.

245. Ibid., pp.47 and 142.

246. (N.A.I.), Ekiti Div.1/1/312, Vols.I&II, Ise, Emure and Orun.

247. Ibid.

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that British Administration was a mixed blessing in the economic sphere in Ekitiland. While it was beneficial in some respects, British Administration was largely an unmitigated disaster in other spheres. Although the development of communication especially the construction of roads to link some towns and villages facilitated greater mobility, opened up Ekitiland to economic intercourse as well as laid the foundation of the economic development of the area, nevertheless, the objective of the British Administration for undertaking such a venture in Ekitiland was geared towards tapping the economic resources of the area. Consequently, the substantial gains from the cocoa, palm produce, rubber and cotton trade went to the Metropole (mother country) rather than the indigenous people of Ekitiland. Against this background, it is apparent that the argument of some Colonial Apologists like Hla Myint, William Geary,

Allan McPhee, G.K. Helleiner, L.H. Gann and P. Duignan,²⁴⁸ that Colonial Administration was the 'prime mover' and instrument which galvanised the indigenous African communities into action in all processes of economic change is highly contestable. This conventional school of thought also contends that it was the European trading firms which transformed the "essentially static" and "backward economies" of colonial Africa into a vibrant state. With reference to Ekitiland, it is observed that the messianic garb which these Colonial Apologists have donned the British Colonial Authorities does not take into cognizance the contributions of the local farmers, middlemen and traders towards the promotion of the British economic enterprise in the area. This category of people demonstrated a considerable degree of market responsiveness and economic initiatives in

248. See Hla Myint, 'The "Classical Theory" of International Trade and the Underdeveloped Countries', Economic Journal, 68, June, 1958, pp.317-337, W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria Under British Rule, (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965), Allan McPhee, The Economic Revolution in British West Africa, (London, 1926), p.7 G.K. Helleiner, Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria, (Homewood, Illinois, 1966), p.12 and L.H. Gann and P. Duignan, The Burden of Empire, (New York, Praeger, 1967).

both the production and organisation of the trade in primary products. In other words, the whole credit cannot go only to the Colonial Authorities and the trading firms.

While other innovations such as the introduction of corrugated iron sheets to replace thatched roofs in Ekitiland as well as the advent of a monetary economy were important landmarks in the economic development of the area, British Administration disrupted some aspects of the indigenous economy. For example, the creation of Forest Reserves ostensibly "to preserve the natural wealth of the country for the coming generation"²⁴⁹ dealt a fatal blow to the land tenure system as forest lands belonging to individual families and communities were appropriated by the Colonial Administration. Ekiti people were later disillusioned as these Forest Reserves turned out to be a cloak employed by the British to tap the valuable timber resources of the area

249. (N.A.I.), Proceedings of the Second meeting of the Nigerian Council, December, 1915, p.11.

for export to Great Britain. To this extent, British Administration was exploitative. Again, the multiplier effect of the abolition of the land tenure system was the emergence of individualistic way of life on the part of many people in Ekitiland.

My findings on the impact of British Administration in the economic sphere in Ekitiland during our period do not support the view of the Radical School of thought on colonialism comprising Walter Rodney, Claude Ake, Frantz Fanon, Segun Osoba, Toyin Falola, etc.,²⁵⁰ which contends that colonialism was totally an

250. See W. Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, op. cit., pp.205, 206 and 210; C. Ake, "The Congruence of Political Economies and ideologies in Africa" in Gutkind and Wallerstein (eds), The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa, (Berkerley Hills Sage Publications, 1976), pp.118-211, Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, (New York, Grove Press, 1963), S.O. Osoba, "The Phenomenon of Labour Migration in the era of British Colonial Rule", op. cit., pp.522, 529 and 537 and T. Falola, The Political Economy of Pre-Colonial African State: Ibadan, 1830-1900, op. cit., pp.179-182.

unmitigated disaster as it did not lead to the economic development of African societies. Although British Administration was largely exploitative and disruptive to the indigenous economy of the people, one cannot gainsay the fact that some benefits accrued to the Ekiti society in the economic sphere. Hence the Ekiti people reacted positively to the aspects that were beneficial to them while they were either suspect of or displayed an outright negative reaction to those ones which they considered to have unfavourable effects. Little wonder that in spite of the pervading influence of British Administration in the economic sphere, the traditional economic system of the people of Ekitiland was not entirely swept away. In fact, a few aspects of the system still endure till the present day.

On balance, one can conclude that British Administration in the economic sphere during the period under review was largely exploitative and resulted in a disruption to the internal dynamics of the indigenous economy of the people of Ekitiland.

The Administration was in its embryo between 1915 and 1929. During the period, the British were only able to establish the machinery of colonial administration. Thus, the Native Courts system and direct taxation were introduced. The Oba of the several Ekiti Kingdoms were constituted into Native Authorities.

The Administration reached its apex between 1929 and 1936 when frantic efforts were made by the British to create a centralized political authority

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

From this thesis, four phases are discernible in the development of British Administration in Ekitiland from 1915 to 1951. These include period of establishment of the administration; era of consolidation and creation of a centralised political authority; the period when central administration was beset with some problems as well as the phase of re-organisation.

The Administration was in its embryo between 1915 and 1920. During the period, the British were only able to establish the machinery of colonial administration. Thus, the Native courts system and direct taxation were introduced. The Oba of the seventeen Ekiti kingdoms were constituted into Native Authorities.

The Administration reached its apogee between 1920 and 1936 when frantic efforts were made by the British to create a centralised political authority

in Ekitiland. This policy was taken in two directions. First, an attempt was made to make the Ewi of Ade-Ekiti the Sole Authority for the whole of Ekitiland. In embarking on the policy, the British were encouraged by the success of an earlier attempt made in Ijebu and Egbaland where the Awujale of Ijebu-Ode and the Alake of Abeokuta were recognised as paramount Oba for their respective domains.

However, the British attempt to make the Ewi the Sole Authority in Ekitiland was distasteful to the other Ekiti Oba. In fact, the policy did not take cognizance of the segmentary nature of the Ekiti society before colonial rule. Ekitiland was a highly decentralised area where all the Oba were independent of one another in the pre-colonial era. None of the Oba had any paramountcy over the other. Consequently, the attempt to make the Ewi the Sole Authority for the whole of Ekitiland was unpalatable and unacceptable to the other Ekiti Oba since none of them was ready to surrender his age-long sovereignty. Following the the abysmal failure of this policy, the British resorted to the second approach by constituting Ekitiparapo Council into an instrument of central Administration.

Between 1938 and 1946, the British policy of central Administration in Ekitiland was beset ^{with} some problems. The attendant problems of Central Administration included political agitations for secession, autonomy and other political reforms by some communities such as Ado-Ekiti, Akure, Igbara-Odo, Ilawe, Osi, Imesi-Lasigidi etc. To some extent, the vehement agitations impaired and dismembered the political agglomeration called the Ekitiparapo. Hitherto, it had existed as a corporate and indivisible entity.

After realising that the political integration of Ekitiland was at the verge of collapse, the British decided to embark on some re-organisation efforts as from 1946 aimed at redeeming the political cohesion among the Ekitiparapo as well as savaging their (British) tottery administration in the area. The new policy thrust was a fundamental departure from a rigid form of centralisation of political authority that was unpalatable and unacceptable to the Ekiti Oba to that of a loose form of centralised Administration which allowed them (the Oba) to retain their sovereignty. Also, under the new political arrangement, the Presidency of the Ekitiparapo Council became rotational among

Ekiti Oba while the venue of its meetings rotated among Ekiti towns. Hence the new political dispensation succeeded to a very large extent up till the end of our period in 1951.

As shown in the preceding chapters, British Administration was a mixed blessing to the people of Ekitiland. The reaction of the Ekiti people to the various policy decisions and changes which took place under colonial Administration depended on the people's (Ekiti) perception of the impact of a particular innovation or policy decision on their society. While accepting and adapting to innovations or policy decisions considered beneficial to them, the Ekiti people resisted or rejected outright the ones regarded as being detrimental to their well-being. For instance, the anti-tax agitations and riots which occurred in some towns in the 1930's could be construed as people's reaction and resentment to the introduction of direct taxation by the British. The inference which could be drawn from this is that the Ekiti people did not swallow all British policies hook, line and sinker. Apparently, the implications of any policy decision were, more often than not, critically analysed before a decision

on its acceptability, or otherwise, was taken. Moreover, the Ekiti people's position in the scheme of things under British Administration was periodically appraised and their feelings articulated where need be. This is manifested in the agitations for secession, autonomy and other political reforms by some communities in Ekitiland between 1938 and 1946. Against this background, it is understandable that in spite of the pervading influence of British Administration, the political and economic system of the people of Ekitiland was not entirely swept away. Some aspects of their political and economic system were resilient to the corroding influence of colonial rule. Indeed, a few aspects of the system still endure till the present day. In appraising the impact of Colonial Administration, one can submit that though a few benefits accrued to the Ekiti society, nevertheless, British Administration was essentially exploitative and disruptive to the pre-colonial political and economic structure of the people of Ekitiland during our period.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that in the development of British Administration in Ekitiland during our period of study, the pith of the thesis is

that the British political experiment of rigid centralisation which would have brought Ekiti kingdoms under one central Authority failed abysmally. The spirited effort made by the British in this direction was stalled by the fact that the policy did not take into account that Ekitiland was a highly segmentary society where the Oba were autonomous of one another in the pre-colonial era. Consequently, none of the Ekiti Oba was ready to surrender his sovereignty by accepting the Ewi of Ade-Ekiti as Sole Authority for Ekitiland. Little wonder that the British political experiment of rigid centralisation failed in the area.

This thesis has contributed to the existing knowledge of the study of British Administration in Nigeria. However, its uniqueness lies in the fact that it has demonstrated vividly that while the British policy of rigid centralisation of political authority succeeded in some other parts of Nigeria such as Ijebu, Egbaland and Oyo, it failed in Ekitiland during our study period.

16. Itajl-Ekiti

17. Ogotun-Ekiti

18. Aiyode-Ekiti

19. Isan-Ekiti

APPENDIX I

LIST OF IMPORTANT TOWNS IN EKITILAND

1. Otun-Ekiti
2. Ijero-Ekiti
3. Ikole-Ekiti
4. Ado-Ekiti
5. Aramoko-Ekiti
6. Ido-Ekiti
7. Akure*
8. Okemesi-Ekiti
9. Ikere-Ekiti
10. Efon-Alaaye
11. Ise-Ekiti
12. Oye-Ekiti
13. Ire-Ekiti
14. Omuo-Ekiti
15. Emure-Ekiti
16. Itaji-Ekiti
17. Ogotun-Ekiti
18. Aiyede-Ekiti
19. Isan-Ekiti

20. Osi-Ekiti
21. Ode-Ekiti
22. Ilawe-Ekiti
23. Igbara-Odo
24. Ijan-Ekiti
25. Agbado-Ekiti
26. Aisegba-Ekiti
27. Ilu-Omoba
28. Ilupeju-Ekiti
29. Isinbode
30. Ifaki
31. Igbole Ekiti
32. Igede Ekiti
33. Iyin Ekiti
34. Erijiyan
35. Ikogosi
36. Ijesa-Isu
37. Aiyetoro-Ekiti
38. Aiyedun-Ekiti
39. Ipoti-Ekiti
40. Iworoko-Ekiti
41. Awo-Ekiti
42. Usi-Ekiti

43. Igogo-Ekiti
44. Iropora-Ekiti
45. Ilogbo
46. Iloro-Ekiti
47. Aaye-Ekiti
48. Afao-Ekiti
49. Ijurin-Ekiti
50. Orin-Ekiti
51. Aiyegbaju-Ekiti
52. Orun-Ekiti
53. Erio
54. Araromi-Ekiti
55. Egbe-Ekiti
56. Epe-Ekiti
57. Ewu-Ekiti
58. Ifisin
59. Osan-Ekiti
60. Osun-Ekiti
61. Itapa-Ekiti
62. Ara-Ekiti
63. Osin-Ekiti
64. Ilasa-Ekiti

87. Osure-Ekiti.

65. Ikoro-Ekiti
66. Aiyebode-Ekiti
67. Ikun-Ekiti
68. Ipao-Ekiti
69. Iye-Ekiti
70. Iludun-Ekiti
71. Erinmope-Ekiti
72. Iroko-Ekiti
73. Eda Oniyo
74. Oke-Ako
75. Ora-Ekiti
76. Ipere-Ekiti
77. Ilukuno
78. Odo Owa-Ekiti
79. Temidire
80. Aiyegunle-Ekiti
81. Idao-Ekiti
82. Iyemero-Ekiti
83. Irele-Ekiti
84. Itapaji-Ekiti
85. Are-Ekiti
86. Eyio-Ekiti
87. Esure-Ekiti .

*Up to 1st April, 1946.

APPENDIX III

DISTRICT OFFICERS WHO SERVED IN EKITI
DIVISION OF ONDO PROVINCE BETWEEN 1915

AND 1951

1915	A.R.W. Livingstone
1915/16	W.E. Hunt
1916/17	A.R.W. Livingstone
1917/18	R.D. MacGregor
1918	B.M. Carkeek
1918/20	G.H. Findlay
1920	G.H. Findlay
1920	J.H. Dodds
1920/21	G.H. Findlay
1922	H.G. la Mothe
	J. Jackson
	G.H. Findlay
	H. de B. Bewlwey
	Capt. A.P. Pullen
1923	H. de B. Bewley
	Capt. A.P. Pullen
	G. H. Findlay
	A. P. Pullen

1924

A.P. Pullen

1933

E.C. Clegg

W.J.W. Norcott

1925

A.P. Pullen

E. Burgess

1926

E. Burgess

1933

L.H. Boileau

1934

B.J.A. Matthews

A.P. Pullen

1927

Capt. A.P. Pullen

1934

B.J.A. Matthews

T.E. Purchase

1928

Capt. A.P. Pullen

B. M. Carkeek

1929

Capt. A.A. Pullen

W.G. Wormal

T.B. Bowell-Jones (Akure P.O)

K.E.S. Morgan (Akure, P.O)

1936

B.J.A. Matthews

1930

Capt. A.P. Pullen

W.G. Wormal

B.J.A. Matthews

G.G. Harris

J.E. Jull

1930 R.H. Gretton
1931 G.G. Harris
H.F.M. White
1932 H.F.M. White
B.J.A. Matthews
A.C.C. Swayne
1933 A.C.C. Swayne
1934 - do -
1941 E.H.F. Gorge
1935 A.C.C. Swayne
1936 - do -
1942 Capt. R.A. Vosper
G.G. Harris,
1943 T.B. Bovell-Jones
1937 T.B. Bovell-Jones
1944 R. Rankine
A.F. Abell
A.R.A. de Garton
1938 A.R.A. de Garton
R. Rankine
A.F. Abell
1946 D.M. Elliot
R.G. Watson

1939

A.R.A. de Garston

R. Rankine

R.B. Kerr

D.M. Elliot

E.G. Watson

J.M. Cruddas

1940

R.B. Kerr

B.J.A. Matthews

1941

B.J.A. Matthews

R. A. Vosper

J.H. Blair

1942

J.H. Blair

D.A. Murphy

1943

D.A. Murphy

T.B. Bovell-Jones

1944

T.B. Bovell-Jones

D.A. Murphy

J.H. Ellis

1945

J.H. Ellis

R.L.V. Wilkes

R.E. Brown

1946

R.E. Brown

A.F. Abell

R.E. Brown

1947

R.E. Brown

W.M. Milliken

W. Simpson

C.E. Iles

H.K. Robinson

1949

H.K. Robinson

W. Simpson

C.E.B.B. Simpson

J.O. Udoji

E.P. Lanning

1950

W. Simpson

J.R.V.A. Bronage

J.O. Udoji

J.R. Northeast

D.C. Igwe

1951

J.R.V.A. Bronage

W. St. P.M. Hancock

D.C. Igwe

J.R. Northeast

B.E. Thompson 1

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1. See (N.A.I.), L.C. Gwam, A Preliminary inventory of the Administrative Records assembled from Ondo Province. (1963), Appendix.

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SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The source-material for this thesis can be categorised into Primary and Secondary sources. Primary sources comprise Oral evidence, Archival materials, Private papers and other related documents. Secondary sources are Books, Articles, unpublished materials such as theses, conference and seminar papers.

I intend to discuss the above-named categories of sources in turn as well as the methodology which I adopted in the utilisation of these source-material for historical reconstruction.

PRIMARY SOURCES

(a)

Oral Evidence

In the writing of this thesis, I made copious use of oral evidence. This is usually defined as verbal

testimony mostly transmitted from one generation to the other. It is constantly being used as source-material for the reconstruction of the history of preliterate societies. In fact, this is manifested in the efforts made by many Nigerian Scholars such as S. O. Biobaku, K. O. Dike, I. A. Akinjogbin, S. A. Akintoye, G.O. I. Olomola, E. J. Alagoa etc for the reconstruction of the pre-colonial history of Nigeria. Also, a number of books has been written on the value and techniques of using oral evidence for historical reconstruction.¹

Oral sources have also served as the basis for many written sources. In fact, the Intelligence

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1. See J. Vansina, Oral tradition: A study in Historical Methodology, (London, 1965), I. A. Akinjogbin, 'Enactment ceremonies as a source of unwritten history' in NISER Conference Proceedings, Dec., 1958, pp.168-179, P.D.Curtin, 'Field Techniques for collecting and processing Oral Data' in J.A.H., IX, No.3, 1968, pp.367-385, D. Henige, The Chronology of Oral Traditions: Quest for a Chimera, (Oxford, 1974, _____), Oral Historiography, (London, Longman, 1982), S. O. Biobaku, Sources of Yoruba History, (Oxford, 1973), _____, 'The problem of Traditional History with reference to Yoruba Traditions' J.H.S.N., No.1, 1956, pp. 43-47 and W. Abimbola (ed.), Yoruba Oral Tradition: Poetry in Music, Dance and Drama, (Ile-Ife, 1975).

Reports written by the British Administrative Officers are a case in point. Be that as it may, some of the Intelligence Reports were sometimes intermingled with the bias and prejudice of the British Political Officers.

Having said all these, oral evidence as a source of historical reconstruction is subject to the following shortcomings. First, due to loss of memory, the informant may forget part of the details of the event. Second, oral evidence may be subject to tendentious distortion especially if the issue affects either the clan or town of the informant e.g. a land dispute between one town and another. Third, there could be a contradiction in the testimony supplied by an informant. Also, the field worker who goes to collect oral evidence may be faced with so many variants of the same story and this often leads to confusion if the researcher is not well-versed in historical methodology. Moreover, the informant may engage in telescoping especially if he has to recount unpleasant memories about

his ancestor, clan or town. In this wise, he may remove certain parts of the tradition which may bring such people to disrepute or degradation.

Furthermore, there is the problem of dating especially when dealing with the history of a pre-literate society. Also, the informant may, owing to loss of memory, throw chronology over board thus posing a great problem to the field worker who will now be saddled with problem of re-arranging the events in a chronological order. Moreover, there is the problem of prejudice. This may arise out of the desire of the informant to alter the story to fit into the cultural values of contemporary society. At times this happens when a researcher carries out a Group Interview. Some articulate members of the group may reconstruct the history to suit their prejudice especially on issues affecting their village or town and the neighbouring one. Also, information collected through oral evidence often centres unduly on the role of leaders and elite of society at the expense of the common man.

Information was supplemented with findings from other

In order to overcome some of the foregoing limitations which beset me during my field work to collect oral data for this thesis, I took the following measures: First, I endeavoured to collect as many versions of the same story as possible. Thereafter, I compared them and made my deductions. This helped me in establishing their degree of reliability. It also enabled me to know the most probable of the versions collected. The comparative method enabled me to detect distortions. Sometimes, the method assisted me in supplementing one source with the other in order to put the historical event in its proper perspective.

Second, I subjected the oral evidence collected to the searchlight of historical criticism i.e. analysis, synthesis and interpretation. Third, effort was made to evaluate oral data by cross-checking them with documentary material where possible. Also, I employed a multi-disciplinary approach in my analysis and interpretation where applicable. In this connection, historical information was supplemented with findings from other

auxiliary disciplines of Archaeology, Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics etc.

Lastly, I related oral evidence collected on the history of an area in Ekitiland with other areas especially on issues which cut across the whole of Ekitiland. This went a long way in eliminating distortions which arose from the testimonies of some of my informants.

Categories of people interviewed

(i) Actual eye-witnesses of some of the events of this study e.g. old traders, farmers, craftsmen as well as descendants of families who specialised in one kind of economic activity or the other. This category of informants provided information on the economic changes brought about by the British colonial rule.

(ii) Present holders of important positions and titles - Oba and Chiefs.

(iii) Other selected informants with second-hand knowledge of colonial rule in Ekitiland during the period under consideration.

(iv) Traditional historians who have written books on various aspects of the history of Ekiti such as Msgr. A. O. Oguntuyi, Chief T. O. Jegede and Mr. Sam. Alade who were themselves eye-witnesses to some of the events described. Hence their accounts were first-hand information.

(v) Some individuals who served in the colonial bureaucracy as court clerk, messenger or in other capacity. Such people included Chief J.A. Arokodare and Mr. J. A. Faloye. Their illuminating accounts of the changes which occurred in the Ekiti Native Administration during the period of our study are of a tremendous value.

Methods of Interview

I undertook a field work in Ekitiland between 1986 and 1993 for the purpose of collecting data for this thesis. Essentially, the field trips were concentrated in the period between 1986 and 1989. In view of the fact that the field work was intermittently carried out, I was able to traverse almost the entire Ekitiland. In this regard, the number of

kilometres covered during the period is difficult to estimate.

In the conduct of my interviews with informants, I used two methods namely the use of the tape-recorder and on the spot note-taking.

(i) The use of the tape-recorder

Some of my interviews with informants were conducted in the Yoruba language using a portable battery-powered cassette recorder. I normally began with a preliminary interview during which I explained to my prospective informant the purpose of the study and why it was necessary for the testimony to be recorded. I often made broad statements on colonial rule in Ekitiland between 1915 and 1951.

Thereafter, both of us would fix a date for the main interview which often came up within two days afterwards. During the main interview, I asked open-ended questions from my informant to enable him talk at length without being unnecessarily interrupted or led to say what must conform with my pre-conceived ideas. In the process, I would tape-record the

information supplied. After the interview, I normally played back the tape to assure the informant that I had recorded exactly what he said during the interview. Recordings were transcribed into a written form thereafter. An informant was often interviewed twice. on the first occasion, a 'text' of the particular event in which the informant was knowledgeable was collected. Later on, I would read the text and go back the second time to ask specific questions, test the informant's memory, cross-check his or her statements with those of others I had interviewed and clarify other issues, if any, arising from my previous discussion with him or her.

The tape-recorder has a number of advantages. First, it gives the exact wording of the testimony. Second, it is faster in recording oral evidence than note-taking by hand. Third, it allows the informant to speak at the speed and in the rhythm natural to him with little interruptions since the field worker hardly asks questions during the recording.

However, the use of the tape-recorder has the following short-comings: First, some informants are too old for their voices to be clearly audible on tape. If a field worker records the testimony of such an old person on tape, his or her (old person) voice may be muffled and thereby creating problems for the data collector when transcribing the testimony into a written form. Second, the use of the tape recorder wastes time since the process of transcribing a testimony from the tape into a written form involves playing it back as many times as possible to ensure correctness. This makes the task extremely tedious and time-consuming. Third, the use of the tape-recorder may interfere with the naturalness of the behaviour of the informant. An informant may deliberately embellish a story knowing fully well that his or her testimony is being recorded for posterity. Also, except the field worker has a personal car of his own, it is extremely burdensome and at times embarrassing to carry a tape-recorder from one place to the other in an urban centre.

I wish to state that the use of the tape-recorder was not imposed on any of my informants. While the majority of them willingly allowed me to record their testimonies and expressed delight in listening to the play back, a few others objected to the use of the tape-recorder during my interviews with them. The latter group of informants would rather prefer their evidence being taken down in my field note-book.

(ii) On the spot note-taking

I used on the spot note-taking method in conducting interview for most of my informants. Generally, I employed this method under the following circumstances:

First, whenever my informant raised an objection to the use of a tape-recorder in recording his or her testimony. Second, on occasions when the batteries of my tape-recorder ran down in some remote villages without electricity and a new set of batteries could not be readily procured. In such

circumstances, I would take down the oral evidence in my field note-book. Thereafter, I would read over what was recorded to my informants to ensure the accuracy of the information supplied.

The advantages of this method of interview are as follows: In the first place, it is more economical since it saves money which would have been expended on the purchase of a tape-recorder, batteries and cassettes. Second, the use of field note-book and pencil for recording oral evidence often allays the fears of a suspecting informant or community about the objective of the interview especially if it borders on chieftaincy matters. In this regard, some informants are rest assured to talk at length without inhibitions when they are sure that their testimonies are not going to be tape-recorded.

Third, field note-book and pencil are more handy for a field worker than a tape-recorder.

Be that as it may, on the spot note-taking method of interview has a number of limitations.

first, the process is time-consuming especially if

impromptu interviews with the latter. Generally, I

the field worker often wants to record the testimony verbatim. Second, the process may become too tire-some for the informant who will have to wait until the data collector finishes writing what he or she has earlier said before going on with the testimony. Third, in case of a 'fixed text' e.g. songs, cognomen etc, the researcher may lose its rhythm.

In the use of the above-named methods of collecting data during my field work, I conducted pre-arranged and impromptu interviews for my informants. Pre-arranged interviews gave the informants ample opportunity to prepare for the interviews. It also enabled them to supply coherent evidence. However, some of the informants often failed to keep their appointments. This wasted a lot of time as I had to re-schedule such interviews.

On occasions where I got assistance from certain individuals mostly educated elite who directed me to some informants in some towns, I sometimes conducted impromptu interviews with the latter. Generally, I

noticed that the success of such endeavours was predicated on a number of factors which included the disposition of such informants at the time of my arrival; the degree of patience of the individuals concerned, as well as their pre-occupation at the time. The informants who I met in a very relaxed or joyful mood responded favourably to my request for interview. On the other hand, the impatient ones or informants who I met during their busy periods tended to resent my encroachment on their time and therefore readily despatched me quickly. In comparative analysis, my experience during the field work showed that pre-arranged interviews were more reliable and coherent than impromptu interviews.

It is pertinent to state that in every interview conducted during the field work, I normally recorded the name of the informant, his or her age, occupation, sex, status (where applicable), place and date of interview.

On the whole, 81 informants were interviewed during the field work. Below is the list and particulars of the informants:

Informant	Place of interview	Date(s) of interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Abidakun, Elijah	Igbara-Odo	7th June, 1987	Aged 68. He is the <u>Baba Egbe</u> (Father of the Association) of an age grade in Igbara-Odo
Mr. Adebayo, A.D.	Ibule	11th March, 1988	An herbalist, Mr. Adebayo is 78 years old
Chief Adebayo, Ezekiel	Ero	1st November, 1986	Aged 76, Chief Adebayo is a farmer.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Oba Adebusuyi, John	Ikere- Ekiti	5th March, 1988	Aged 80, he was the <u>Olukere</u> of Ikere until his death on 21st June, 1995.
Oba Adelabu, Samuel	Ado- Ekiti	2nd February, 1987	Aged 55, Oba Adelabu was the late <u>Ewi</u> of Ado-Ekiti. He died on 23rd October, 1988.
Mr. Adekanmbi, Elijah	Akure	4th April, 1986	Aged 102, farmer, Mr Adekanmbi personally witnessed the change brought about by the introduction of christianity into Akure. He died on 12th September, 1986.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Oba Ade- leye II, A.	Ikole- Ekiti	1st May, 1988	Aged 59, he is the Elekole of Ikole-Ekiti.
Madam Ade- lusi, F.	Akure	22nd May, 1987	Aged 75, she is a member of Apate women group in Akure.
Chief Ade- niran, S. F.	Akure	2nd October, 1989	Aged 60, Chief Adeniran is a retired Secondary School Principal.
Chief Ade- osun, J. O.	Ijero- Ekiti	6th June, 1988	Aged 75, he is the <u>Sajuku</u> of Ijero- Ekiti.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Oba Adesida III, Gabriel Adelegan	Akure	2nd March, 1987; 7th May, 1987; 11th Jan., 1988; 11th Aug., 1988, 15th Jan., 1989; 21st Jan., 1989; 22nd Feb., 1989; 2nd July, 1989 and 1st May, 1990	Aged 80, Oba Adesida III was the late <u>Deji</u> of Akureland. He was interviewed on various issues affecting Akure during colonial rule. He died on 5th June, 1991.

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Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Madam Adesida, Mary	Akure	11th May, January, 1988	Aged 89, she was the <u>Eye-Owa</u> of the Deji's Palace until her death in 1990.
Rev. Adesua, Emmanuel	Ogotun-Ekiti	12th May, 1989	Aged 75, Rev. Adesua is a retired Anglican Church Vicar.
Madam Adetinu, A.	Akure	11th June, 1987	Aged 65, she is a trader.
Mr. Agboola, D.T.,	Otun-Ekiti	25th May, 1989	Aged 82, Mr. Agboola is a retired teacher.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Agidi-gbi, O.	Akure	22nd May, 1988	A leading blacksmith in Akure, Mr. Agidigbi is 68 years old.
Mr. Ajayi, Gabriel	Aramoko-Ekiti	15th Sept., 1990	Aged 92+, Mr. Ajayi is engaged in rubber cultivation
Mrs Ajayi, Iyabo	Ado-Ekiti	10th July, 1989	Aged 69+, she is a trader.
Mr. Ajayi, O.	Ilawe-Ekiti	6th January, 1988	A farmer, Mr. Ajayi is 82 years old.
Chief Ajibewa, Samuel	Ilawe-Ekiti	2nd April, 1988	Aged 90+, Chief Ajibewa is engaged in cotton cultivation.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Ajibade, J.A.	Ado-Ekiti	27th Sept, 1989	Aged 82, Mr. Ajibade was a member of the <u>Ekiti Progressive Union</u> .
Mr. Ajisafe, Elijah	Ilawe-Ekiti	2nd March, 1988	Aged 81, Mr. Ajisafe personally witnessed tax collection in Ilawe during colonial rule.
Oba Akaiyejo, Adegboye	Ikere-Ekiti	8th June, 1988; 4th Sept., 1988; 11th Feb., 1989	Aged 55, Oba Akaiyejo is the <u>Oqoqa</u> of Ikere-Ekiti.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Akinola, James	Oye-Ekiti	11th May, 1988	Aged 102, Mr. Akinola, farmer, is engaged in cotton cultivation.
Mr. Alade, Samuel	Akure	15th November, 1986	Aged 75, Mr. Alade, a retired teacher, took an active part in the struggle for the separation of Akure from Ekiti Native Administration. An author of a book on Akure, Mr. Alade died on 4th August, 1990.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Oba Alade- gbami, Agbaje	Ifaki- Ekiti	5th January, 1988	Aged 62, he is the <u>Olufaki</u> of Ifaki- Ekiti.
Chief Alade- rotoun, Jacob	Oba-Ile	1st Decem- ber, 1986	Chief Aladerotoun, aged 77, was the <u>Adaja</u> of Oba-Ile until his death in 1989.
Mr. Akomo- lafe, James	Iyin-Ekiti	4th March, 1987	Aged 80, Mr. Akomolafe is a farmer.
Oba Akosile, Bamidele	Oda	26th Nove- mber, 1986	Aged 57, Oba Akosile is the Olojoda of Oda.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Apata, Ezekiel	Efon- Alaaye	2nd February, 1990	Aged 100, he was one of the people who used the first set of coins introduced as a medium of exchange in Ekitiland.
Mr. Apata, Matthew	Efon- Alaaye	18th April, 1987	Aged 58, he is a trader.
Chief Arokodare, J.A.	Ijero- Ekiti	22nd Jan., 1988; 5th June, 1988, 11th April, 1989 and 13th July, 1989	Aged 82, Chief Arokodare is a retired Native Court Clerk. He served in the Ekiti Native Administration during British Administration.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Bada, James	Ipogun	5th July, 1987	Aged c.71, Mr. Bada is a popular hunter in the town.
Mr. Bodunde, Emmanuel	Ikole- Ekiti	3rd Octob- er, 1987	Aged 75, Mr. Bodunde is a retired Dispenser.
Mr. Dada, Michael	Ikogosi- Ekiti	15th Sept- ember, 1989	Aged 90, farmer, Mr. Dada participated in in Adult Literacy classes organised by the Baptist Mission in Ikogosi-Ekiti.
Mr. Fabunmi, Titilayo	Ikole- Ekiti	11th March, 1989	Aged c.69, he is a farmer.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Fabusuyi, S.O.	Ido-Ekiti	7th Jan., 1989	Aged, 78, Mr. Fabusuyi is a farmer.
Mr. Fagbemi, James	Odo-Aiyedun-Ekiti	5th September, 1987	Aged c.80, he is a farmer.
Mr. Falade, James	Aramoko-Ekiti	11th January, 1988	Aged 82, farmer, he was one of the early christian converts in the town.
Mr. Falodun, E. O.	Orin-Ekiti	27th Jan., 1988	Aged 83, Mr. Falodun is a farmer.

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Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Faloye, Josiah	Akure	11th July, 1988; 21st March, 1988; 11th August, 1988; 11th April, 1989; 27th Ap- ril, 1989; 12th June, 1989 and 11th Sept- ember, 1990.	Aged 105, Mr. Faloye was in wage employment during colonial rule. He also played a significant role in the struggle of Akure people for separation from Ekiti Native Adminis- tration.
Mr. Fapohunda, Daniel	Igbara- Odo	25th March, 1988	Aged 109, he was one of the early christian converts in the town.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Fayemi, A.O.	Ifaki- Ekiti	15th Feb., 1989	Mr. Fayemi, a farmer, is 99 years old .
Chief Filani, J.O.	Ikole- Ekiti	2nd April, 1986	Aged 82, he is the <u>Rewa</u> of Ikole-Ekiti.
Mr. Ibikunle, Joshua	Osi-Ekiti	5th Febru- ary, 1987	Aged 102, Mr. Ibikunle engaged in cocoa cul- tivation during colo- nial rule.
Mr. Ibitayo, Caleb	Igbara- Odo	11th July, 1987	Aged 107, he engaged in cocoa cultivation during the period of colonial rule.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Chief Idowu, J.O.	Ijan-Ekiti	8th August, 1990	Aged 60+, Chief Idowu is a retired teacher. He gave information on the origin of the <u>Equn-gun</u> masquerade.
Madam Isijola, Wemimo	Isarun	11th July, 1988	Aged 107, she was formerly a trader.
Chief Jegede, T.O.	Ise-Ekiti	9th Feb., 1988; 4th March, 1988; 10th Sept., 1988; 11th March, 1989 and 5th May, 1989.	Aged 80, Chief Jegede is a retired teacher and traditional historian. He is the author of a book on the history of Ise-Ekiti.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Kumapayi, E.B.	Ikole-Ekiti	3rd September, 1987; 3rd October, 1987.	Aged 80, he is a retired Civil Servant.
Mr. Morakinyo, C.A.	Ijan-Ekiti	8th August, 1990	Aged 70, Mr. Morakinyo, a retired Civil Servant, gave information on how <u>Equngun</u> masquerade originated at Ijan and was later introduced to other parts of Ekiti.
Mr. Odelusi, Joshua	Aramoko-Ekiti	16th February, 1988.	Aged 90, Mr. Odelusi, farmer, witnessed the establishment of the first set of schools in Aramoko.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Oba Ogidi II, Aderibigbe Agbede	Igbara-Oke	11th January, 1987	Aged 89, he is the <u>Olowa</u> of Igbara-Oke.
Mr. Ogungbite, Gabriel	Kajola-Igbatoro	5th December, 1988.	Aged 97, Mr. Ogungbite engaged in cocoa cultivation during colonial rule.
Mr. Ogunleye, Julius	Efon-Alaaye	2nd February, 1989; 2nd April, 1989.	Mr. Ogunleye, farmer, is 105 years old.
Mr. Ogunleye, Oyinade	Ise-Ekiti	8th December, 1987.	Aged 75+, he is a craftsman.
Mr. Ogunmola, Adeola	Ilawe, Ekiti	5th February, 1988	Aged c.83, Mr. Ogunmola is a farmer.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Chief Ogun- suyi, Ojo	Aramoko- Ekiti	4th April, 1990	Aged 100, he is a farmer.
Mr. Ogun- suyi, Samuel	Orun- Ekiti	9th Janua- ry, 1989	Aged 75, he was one of the earliest tax-payers in the town.
Msgr. Ogun- tuyi, Anthony O.	Ado-Ekiti	11th May, 1986; 17th June, 1986; 4th July, 1986; 2nd Aug., 1986, 7th Aug., 1986; 11th Aug., 1986 1st Sept., 1986 and 15th October, 1986.	Aged 65, he was a tradi- tional historian who was the author of many books on Ekiti history. Msgr. Oguntuyi personally witnessed some of the changes ushered in by co- lonial rule in Ekitiland. He died on 5th December, 1986.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Ojo, Adebayo	Efon- Alaaye	4th March, 1987	Aged 75, Mr. Ojo is a farmer.
Chief Ojo, Baisemo	Ode-Ekiti	15th May, 1989	Aged 87, he is a farmer.
Mr. Ojo, Ibikunle	Aiyetoro- Ekiti	14th March, 1989	Aged 98, farmer, he claimed to have seen an A.D.O. being carried in an hammock along the then rugged and sometimes unkempt bush paths in Ekitiland during an official tour.
Mr. Ojo, John	Igbara-Odo	11th July, 1988	A farmer, Mr. Ojo is aged 90.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Mr. Ojo, Olusanya	Aaye- Ekiti	7th April, 1987	Aged 70, he is a farmer.
Mr. Ojo, S.O.	Omuo-Ekiti	15th May, 1988	Aged 92, farmer, he engaged in cotton cultivation during colonial rule.
Mr. Oke, Jonah	Igbara- Odo	13th January, 1988	Aged 90, farmer, Mr. Oke was one of the early christian converts.
Mr. Oladapo, A.	Emure- Ekiti	2nd Jan., 1986	A farmer, Mr. Oladapo is 60 years of age.
Mrs Olatunji, Adenike	Aramoko- Ekiti	4th July, 1993	Aged 68+, she is a trader.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Oba Olayisade, O.	Ido-Ekiti	11th February, 1989	Aged 90, Oba Olayisade is the <u>Olojudo</u> of Ido-Ekiti. He was an eye-witness of most of the changes which occurred in Ekiti-land during British Administration.
Mr. Olofin-sao Ezekiel	Akure	22nd April, 1986	Aged c.60, he is a trader.
Mr. Olomofe, Omolayo	Okemesi-Ekiti	10th June, 1987	Aged 75, Mr. Olomofe is a farmer.
Mr. Olorunsola Gabriel	Ise-Ekiti	12th April, 1987	Aged 80, he was formerly a farmer.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
Chief Olubi, Adebayo	Akure	11th December, 1987	Aged 100, he was the <u>Osukute</u> of Akure before his death in 1988.
High Chief Olufon, O.	Ijan-Ekiti	8th August, 1990	Aged 80, he gave a detailed account of how the <u>Egunqun</u> masquerade originated in Ijan-Ekiti and spread to other parts of Ekiti-land.
Mr. Oluwadare, Joshua	Oda	11th November, 1986	Aged 75, his is a farmer.

Informant	Place of Interview	Date(s) of Interview	Particulars of Informant
High Chief Oluwatuyi, Kole	Akure	5th June, 1987; 2nd July, 1990	Aged 72, High Chief Oluwatuyi was the <u>Lisa</u> of Akure before his death on 27th September, 1991.
Chief Omotoso, Michael	Ogotun- Ekiti	14th March, 1986	A farmer, Chief Omotoso is aged 82.
Mr. Onilearo,	Osi-Ekiti	14th June, 1988	Aged 100, he is a farmer.
Mr. Oyewole, John	Ijero- Ekiti	11th July, 1989	Aged 110, Mr. Oyewole was one of the early christian converts in the town.

(b) Archival Materials

Archival materials are Intelligence Reports, Provincial and Divisional Papers, British Parliamentary Papers, Colonial Office Papers, Missionary Papers, Government Publications and Newspapers.

The attempt made by the British in the 1930's to write brief and at times comprehensive history of various Nigerian communities resulted in the emergence of Intelligence Reports, Provincial and Divisional Papers. These are accounts on clans and village groups as well as the indigenous organisation in the pre-colonial era. The accounts sometimes cover the early periods of British colonial rule. The British Administrative Officers employed the use of oral traditions of various communities under their jurisdiction in compiling the Reports. These have become sources of primary documentary material on the political history and culture of Ekitiland.

Intelligence Reports are classified under C.S.O. series (i.e. The Chief Secretary's Office) at the National Archives, Ibadan. The relevant ones to this study are classified under C.S.O. 26. Before British and Native Administration were established in the interior of Lagos, the Colonial Secretary (Later the Chief Secretary to the Government), Lagos directly handled the affairs in that area. And even after the establishment of Native Administration, the Chief Secretary's Office remained the final arbiter on matters arising in any locality in Nigeria. Consequently, matters on Native Administration abound among the records kept by this Office.

The Provincial and Divisional Papers contain records kept by the Administrative Officers who served in Ondo Province. These papers are also available at the National Archives, Ibadan where they are classified as 'Ondo Prof.' and 'Ekiti Div.' respectively. Apart from highlighting the activities of the British Colonial Officials in the establishment of Native Administration in Ekitiland, the files also deal with tax assessment and re-assessment as well as

correspondence between traditional rulers, Chiefs, opinion leaders and the British Administrative Officers.

Other Archival materials consulted are British Parliamentary Papers, Colonial Office Papers, Missionary Papers, Government Publications and Newspapers. Archival sources are of immense value in historical reconstruction. Since Archival materials and secondary sources such as Books, Articles, unpublished materials, conference and seminar papers are categorised as Documentary sources, I intend to discuss the merits and demerits of the two sources of history together as well as the approach employed by me in handling such sources of history.

The merits of documentary sources of history are as follows: In the first place, they can provide a background knowledge of the theme of a research work thus giving shape and direction to the study. Second, some of these sources can serve as a guide to a researcher to other sources of information on the

intellectual development of the people at that time.

subject of writing. Third, they do provide a direct evidence e.g. Intelligence and Annual Reports.

Also, they do provide direct dates thus facilitating the task of a researcher in putting the events under study in a chronological order. Moreover, documentary sources can serve as a pointer to an aspect of a research work which requires further study. For example, an author of a book may consciously suggest the need for further research on the issue under discussion.

Furthermore, documents such as Private Papers can provide a detailed insight into the social and political events of the age of the writer. Private Papers like a Diary also provide a personal and authentic picture of people's reactions to certain Government's policies as opposed to the official viewpoint. Moreover, newspapers can serve as a medium for assessing the reaction of the people of a country to their rulers during a particular period. They can also provide an insight into the cultural and intellectual development of the people at that time.

However, documentary sources have the following limitations: First, there can be a wrong interpretation of evidence by the author of a document especially if he/she has to interpret it in the light of his/her prejudice. Second, there can be an outright element of subjectivity in compiling a document. For instance, the bias and prejudice of the compiler may be manifested in his/her usage of words e.g. 'the natives'. In the same vein, accounts of European missionaries, traders as well as the records of British Administrators are sometimes full of bias and prejudice. Some of these accounts over-emphasise the areas of interest to the British at the expense of the indigenous African Societies. For example, of the European accounts largely play down on the domestic economy of the Yoruba, while over-concentrating on British trade in cash crops with Lagos and its hinterland. Third, some documentary sources such as Intelligence Reports and Provincial Papers are

ethnographic accounts which set out to describe a static society. In other words, such accounts do not take cognizance of the social and historical development of the affected societies.

Also, the use of certain terminologies or abbreviations as well as the problem of illegible handwriting may sometimes render some Private Papers unintelligible to the researcher especially while consulting a Diary kept by a deceased person. Apart from the intelligibility of some documents being restricted to the writer, absence of details of the events described may pose a problem to objective appraisal by the researcher. Closely related to this is the problem of ascertaining the authenticity of the claims made in some Private Papers like Diaries. Since every individual has a motive of keeping records, this could affect the manner in which information is recorded. For instance, a letter or Diary may set out to boost the writer's ego, make bogus claim or

assertion that may be indisputable for ever. It may also be designed to entrench the author's position in society. In the circumstance, therefore, the task of ascertaining the authenticity of such claims may be highly problematic for the researcher.

Moreover, before reaching a researcher, a document may have passed through many 'dishonest' hands who may have doctored them to suit their selfish purposes. Also, there are cases of outright fraud. Documents which do not exist are known to have been cleverly 'created' by forgery to achieve social, economic or political objectives. There is also a problem of mutilation. An earlier researcher may have destroyed or torn off certain aspects of a document that is against his/her interest or that of his/her ethnic group or clan. For instance, a researcher was caught red-handed at the premises of the National Archives, Ibadan in April 1986 while attempting to escape with some documents on land dispute

in Oyo State. If he had escaped with the documents, any future researcher making use of the file on the issue would definitely have an incomplete and disjointed information. Closely related to this is the problem of weather which occasionally does a lot of damage to documents. Insects like termites, moths and white ants may also destroy vital pages of files if not properly kept in a safe place.

Furthermore, some events may be recorded after a long time has elapsed. In such a situation, it is possible for the author of the document not to be able to record the details of the events due to loss of memory. There is the problem of getting access to some vital documents e.g. "classified documents" which are not released to researchers by government departments. Such researchers may, therefore, have a lop-sided view of the issues they are writing upon. Closely related to this is the problem of official restriction whereby some vital documents are

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not released to the public by the National Archives until after a period of 35 years or so. Sometimes, there can be an indefinite ban on documents for political or security reasons.

Having regard to the foregoing shortcomings of documentary sources, I took the following steps in my use of documents relating to the theme of this **thesis**; First, I subjected the documents to the searchlight of historical criticism to enable my research work have a wide intellectual horizon. I normally endeavour to survey the motivation of the author of any document which I came across in order to ascertain whether, or not, he/she had any bias or prejudice e.g. Private Papers. In some cases, I tried to probe into the personality of the author of a book, his/her degree of involvement in or proximity to the events being described before making use of such documents. Examples of these are books written by local historians such as Msgr. A. O. Oguntuyi, Messrs J.O. Atandare, D. Atolagbe, T. O. Jegede etc on different aspects of Ekiti history.

Second, I often examined the sources of information (e.g. footnotes) of a writer of a book or article in order to assess its reliability and objectivity. In this connection, I consulted the original documents cited by an author whenever I had doubts about the author's interpretation of the issues under discussion. Third, I occasionally consulted other printed material on the same issue to ascertain the authenticity, or otherwise, of the information contained in a document. This comparative method enabled me to have a clearer picture of the issues at hand.

Also, in my appraisal and interpretation of events contained in documents, I endeavoured to develop a "trained or stalled doubt" about the veracity of claims made therein. As much as possible, I avoided placing too much reliance on claims made in written sources in view of the possibility of subjectivity on the part of the writers. On a few occasions, I drew a distinction between "certainty" and "probability" in my analysis and interpretation of historical events.

Moreover, I related, where applicable, documentary sources to other sources of history since all sources are complementary to one another. For instance, I often cross-checked documentary materials such as Intelligence Reports with Oral sources with a view to ascertaining the degree of objectivity of the British Administrative Officers who wrote the Reports. This approach was very rewarding since it put me in a vantage position to critically re-assess and re-interpret documentary materials in the light of the oral evidence collected through my field work.

Lastly, I took cognizance of the fact that a proper understanding of the historical development of the Ekiti people, their actions, reactions to external stimuli, the dynamics of change in the society as seen from the perspective of the indigenes should form a broad framework within which any document(s) on their history should be interpreted in order to ensure a balanced and objective historical reconstruction.

In my appraisal of the events which occurred during the period covered by this study, I occasionally employed an inter-disciplinary approach. In this connection, I related my source materials, where applicable, to the techniques and findings of the Archaeologist, Linguist, Economist, Sociologist, Ethnographer, Anthropologist e.t.c. Indeed, the approach was very illuminating, fascinating and rewarding as it provided an in-depth analysis of and probable solutions to some hitherto knotty historical problems.

The details of the Documentary sources (Primary and Secondary) consulted during the preparation of the thesis are as follows:

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(National Archives, Ibadan)

These are records kept by the National Archives, Ibadan. Duplicates of microfilms of some of the materials could also be found in the Libraries of the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

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Ido District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province.

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_____, (CSO 26/4/30014), Intelligence Report on Akure District, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province, 1934.

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ONDO PROF.1/1/831, Intelligence Report on Isan District,
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ONDO PROF.1/1/818, Intelligence Report on Ido District,
Ekiti Division, 1936-52.

ONDO PROF.1/1/906/Vol.ii, Intelligence Report on Ijero -
Ekiti, 1936-55.

ONDO PROF.1/1/915, Intelligence Report on Ikole-Ekiti,
1936 -52.

ONDO PROF.1/1/930, Intelligence Report on Emure
District, 1936-52.

ONDO PROF.1/1/392, Intelligence Report on Ogotun-
Ekiti, Ekiti Division, 1933/36.

ONDO PROF.1/1/625, Intelligence Report on Aiyede
District, Ekiti Division, 1934/52.

ONDO PROF.1/1/633, Intelligence Report on Ara
District, Ekiti Division, 1934/46.

(ii) Other Reports.

BEN. DISTRICT.3/1/1, Akure Chiefs to Political
Officer (Captain Roupell) of
Benin, 26th April, 1897, Benin
Political Papers, 1897.

CSO 26/09493, Lugard's Memo on Native Courts, 1917,

EKITI DIV.1/1/215, Ogotun-Igbara-Odo Land Dispute,
1928-1950.

EKITI DIV.1.1.495, Vol.1, Erinmope - Aye Land Dispute,
n.d.

EKITI DIV.1/1/572, Okemesi - Ila Land Dispute.

EKITI DIV.1/1/309, Vol.ii, Iloqbo (Ido) and Ijurin
(Ijero) Boundary dispute.

- EKITI DIV.1/1/320, Boundaries of Northern and Southern Provinces.
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- EKITI DIV.312, Vol.1, Orun - Ise Land Disputes, 1943-1956.
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- EKITI DIV.1/1/864, Ado - Ilawe Land Dispute.
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- EKITI DIV.1/1/470/777, Ado District Tax-payers' Association to His Excellency, the Governor, 14 Sept., 1942.
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IBA. PROF.3/6, Resident's Travel Journal, 1897-1899.
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OYO PROF.1/1372, Yoruba crowns: Rights and Privi-
leges to wear by certain Chiefs.

OYO PROF.2/3/1372, Yoruba crowns: Rights and Privi-
leges to wear by certain chiefs.

OX/A5, Report on cotton Growing in West Africa
1902 - 1905 (General Information).

Weir, N.A.C., (Ekiti Div.1/1/613), The broad outlines
of the past and present organisation in
the Ekiti Division of Ondo Province,
1934.

(iii) British Parliamentary
and Colonial Office Papers.

(N.A.I., U.I.L. and O.A.U.L.)

British Parliamentary Papers.

Those consulted include

British Parliamentary Papers Vol. 63
(Cmd. 4957 and Vol.64 (Cmd. 5144) containing materials
on Eastern Yorubaland as from the 1880's.

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Between Native Tribes in the Interior of Lagos
Cmd. 4957, 1887.

_____ Cmd. 5957 British Parliamentary Papers
Vol.63, Nigeris, Despatches from Sir Gilbert T. Carter
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Expedition, C. 7227, 1893.

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West Africa, 1939 - 43' (HMSO, 1944).

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_____ Cmd. 468 Report on the Amalgamation of the
Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration,
1912 - 1919 by Sir F. D. Lugard.

_____ Cmd. 6950, Statement on Future Marketing
of West African Cocoa (HMRO, 1946).

Sessional Paper No. 18, 1948.

_____ Colonial Office Papers

_____ CO 879/45 No.509 "Correspondence Respecting
Native Affairs", November, 1895 to January 1898.

CO 879/62, 'Two Journeys in Lagos Protectorate 1900'

CSO 1/1 - 1/12 for despatches of the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos 1861 - 1906.

CSO 1/19 - 1/25 for Despatches of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, 1906-1914.

CSO 5/1xxii and 5/2/xi, Treaties with Ijesa, Idanre and Ekiti rulers.

CO 147/60, Colonial Office Records, 1887.

CO 147/195, Colonial Office Records, 1894.

CO 147/98 Vol.I, Report on the Lagos Constabulary for the half year ending 31st December, 1894.

(iv) Missionary Papers.

(N.A.I., U.I.L. and O.A.U.L.)

These are a very important source materials for the understanding of the impact of the missionaries in bringing about a social change in Ekitiland. The missionary papers consulted in writing this thesis are

mainly the Church Missionary Society's Papers. The document falls into two categories namely C.M.S. 'Y' and C.M.S. Yoruba Mission Records.

The second category is subdivided into C.A.2 and C.3 A 2 series. The C.A. 2 series are records up to 1880 while those after 1880 are labelled G.3 A 2. The papers were sent to the missionary headquarters in London by the missionaries in the field in Nigeria. Up to 1880, the documents were numbered according to source each missionary having a file. After 1880, they were (documents) numbered in a chronological order. However, the ones dealing with the post - 1880 period are the most relevant to this thesis.

While the C.M.S. 'Y' Papers were read by me at the National Archives, Ibadan, the latter records (C.A2 and G.3 A2), kept in microfilms, were consulted at the university of Ibadan Library.

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_____ Ogunbiyi, T.A.J. 'Pioneer work at Akure', Niger and Yoruba Notes, Vol.V, No.54, Dec.1898.

_____, 'Seven weeks Itineration Round the Ekiti Towns', Niger and Yoruba Notes, Vol. VII, No.LXXVII, Nov. 1890.

_____ C.M.S. Intelligencer, 1852 - 1855.

_____ Phillips, Bishop C., 'Two Tours in the Ekiti country', Church missionary Intelligencer, No.47, Feb. 1896.

_____ The Church Missionary Intelligencer: A monthly Journal of Missionary Information, Vols. XX, XXI and XII, New Series.

1st Annual Report of Lagos District (West Africa) of the Methodist Mission Society, 1918.

50TH Annual Report of the Lagos District (West Africa) of the Methodist Mission Society, 1927.

West Equatorial Africa Church magazine representing the Diocese of Lagos and the Niger (1921 - 1932).

The Magazine contains the progress of the Church Missionary Society of the Eastern Yorubaland from the 1890's to the 1930's. In this report, the role of the ex-slave converts in the spread of christianity and the cash crop economy is exhaustively discussed.

(V) Government Publications.

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Lagos, Annual Report, Colony of Lagos, 1904.

Lagos, Annual Reports of the Colony of Southern Nigeria, 1906.

Lagos, Annual Report for the Colony of Southern Nigeria, 1907.

Lagos, Southern Nigeria Annual Report, 1910.

Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1921.

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Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1949.

Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1950.

Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1951.

Annual Trade Report Colony and Protectorate of
Southern Nigeria, 1907.

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and Blue Books, (N.A.I.)

Government Gazette for the Colony of Lagos, 1886-1906.

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Government Gazette Colony of Lagos, 1906.

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29th January, 1914).

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February, 1914.

Gazette No.17 of 5th March 1914.

Gazette No.32 of June 1924.

Gazette No.53 of 3rd October, 1929.

Supplement to Extra-Ordinary Gazette of 6 March, 1933.

Government Gazette No.37 of June 1947.

Lagos Blue Books, 1893 - 1900.

Lagos, Protectorate of Southern Nigeria Blue Books
1904 - 5.

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Blue Books, 1906 - 13.

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1910.

Ordinances, (N.A.I.)

Native Courts Proclamation, 1900.

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Nigeria Ordinances, 1916.

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The document contains a list of officials who served in the colonial Government of Nigeria as well as a brief record of their service.

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Western Nigeria, An Introduction to the New Local Government Council system in Western Nigeria, (Ibadan, Government Printer, n.d.)

Ondo State on the move, (Published by the Ministry of Local Government and Information, Akure, 1977).

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Col. Ahmed Usman Military Administrator, Ondo State: 365 Days of Dynamism, Simplicity and Firmness,

(Published by the Ministry of Information, Youth, Sports and Culture, Akure, 1995).

(VI)

Newspapers.

(N.A.I., U.I.L. and O.A.U.L.)

The African Times, 1876 - 1877.

The Nigerian Chronicle, July 14, 1911.

Daily Comet, April 1, 1946.

The Eagle and Lagos Critique, 1884.

The Lagos Daily News, 1925 - 31.

The Lagos Observer, 1883 - 88.

The Nigerian Pioneer, 1917 - 36.

The Daily Service, 1938 - 46.

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The Lagos Standard, May 17, 1911 and April 2, 1919.

The Daily Times, 1941.

The Lagos Weekly Record, 1894, 1910.

Owena News, April 26 - May 2, 1992.

West African Pilot, October 9, 1945.

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(C)

Private Papers.

Private Papers relate to the personal activities, actions and interpretations of contemporary events by their owners. They are less formal and sometimes attempt to justify the actions of their owners.

Examples of Private Papers are Diaries and personal manuscripts. Apart from individuals, some organisations like commercial Houses do keep Private Papers.

Private Papers, therefore, constituted very useful materials for understanding some aspects of the impact of the British Administration in Ekitiland. In this regard, I consulted the following Private Papers during the period of my research:

Private Papers of Oba R.W. Adedayo, a former Olusi of Usi-Ekiti on the activities of the Ekiti Progressive Union. The documents are being kept at the palace of the Olusi of Usi-Ekiti.

Private Papers of Pa J.A. Arokodare at his residence in Ijero-Ekiti.

Diaries and manuscripts of Pa J. A. Faloye at his residence in Akure.

Papers of Rev. Bishop Charles Phillips deposited at the National Archives, Ibadan.

(D) Other Documents

Log-book of Emmanuel School, Ado-Ekiti.

Log-book of St. James's (Ang.) School, Aramoko-Ekiti

Log-book of St. James's (Ang.) School, Igbara-Odo.

Log-book of St. David's (Ang.) School, Akure.

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