

Colonialism and the Sayawa (Zaar) in Transition Up to 1960

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Abstract

Colonialism is the imposition of foreign rule on a territory such that the area under occupation and control loses its sovereignty independence and freedom. This development characterized the Eruo-African relation after the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) which partitioned Africa among the European imperialists' powers. Consequently, by the beginning of the 20th century vast parts of the Nigerian area including the defunct Sokoto Caliphate and indeed Bauchi emirate and its communities had been acquired by the British as its colony. The colonial period was therefore a significant epoch and indeed the turning point in the history of various communities in the Nigerian area including the Sayawa of Bauchi emirate in Northern Nigeria. This paper is colonialism and the Sayawa in transition up to the 1960. The discussion shows some of the most significant historical experience of the Sayawa from the beginning of the colonial period in 1900 to 1960. The paper examines the British conquest and occupation of Bauchi emirate and the integration of the Sayawa Community into the British political economy. Using both primary and secondary data it can be gleaned that the colonial period ushered the Sayawa Community in new developments such as entrenchment of Christian Missionary Activities and evolution of western education, among others.

Introduction

Nigeria as modern state came into formal existence in 1914, as a consequence of European Imperialism and Colonialism, (Azgaku, 2006). Demographically, with about two hundred million population and over 370 ethnic nationalities, Nigeria is said to be the most populous and multi-lingual black nation in the world. This cultural diversity coupled with its enormous economic potential had made Nigeria an object of colonial interest in world. Invariably, by the beginning of 20th century, colonial adventures saw British patrol in Southern Bauchi area and its vicinity. Ethnographical materials obtained from colonial records and fieldwork showed enclaves of numerous social groups. According to colonial report, the Sayawa are one of the significant minority groups who have founded their political and religious homeland in Bogoro several years before the jihad period. Although, the Sayawa lived under the hegemony of Bauchi Emirate, however, they were relatively isolated by the mountainous terrain until the British imperial occupation of the whole area and integration of Southern Bauchi into the British colonial economy and ruled over it up to 1960. The beginning of the 20th century could therefore be described as a landmark in the history of

Nigeria, Northern Nigerian and its communities, (Ogurenin & Fabuyi, 1986). Indeed history of Sayawa have never been the same with the advent of colonialism. Thus, the wave of colonialism which swept Northern Nigeria, dramatically shaped the history of various communities in Southern Bauchi including the Sayawa (Abubakar, 1974). As the colonial era marks an interesting phase in history, this study focuses on colonialism and the Sayawa (zaar) in transition up to 1960. It examines some of the major developments that took place among the Sayawa during the colonial era. The study opens with early European contact with some parts of the Northern Nigeria including the Bauchi area before the colonial era. The significance of this is to provide an important background for understanding the major historical antecedent in the study area before the colonial era.

Methodology

A systematic historical research broadly requires two important categories of data, what came to be known traditionally as sources of history, viz; primary and secondary data. The methodology adopted in conducting this research is simultaneous collection and collation of data from both the latter and former. The latter consists of conducting field

work and survey of places and community under study. Here, oral information will be sourced and analyzed, from informants through interviews with eye witnesses and participants who were directly involved in shaping the history of southern Bauchi, or may have received such information from past generation. After all “a sense of history and tradition has always been part of the African way of life”, and this history has been transmitted from generation to generation mainly through tradition (Agbodike, 2004).

Besides, the former methodology for this research comprises written documents especially with general concept held by those educated in European tradition, that no serious study or writing of African history could be achieved except it is based upon evidence of written records. In the light of this, various secondary sources of data would be selected, carefully studied and interpreted. The written documents includes both published and unpublished documents such as Journals, Research papers, Thesis, Textbooks, Maps, Biographies and Autobiographies. In most of the contemporary researches, aspects on European colonization of African Communities may require the utilization of archival sources (documents) particularly Provincial Annual Reports and Ethnographical Notes on tribal groups.

Early European Contact with Some Parts of Bauchi Area before Colonial Rule

European contact with Africa is a dominant theme in Africa's economic history. Dated back to the period of Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the phenomenon was climaxed by the industrial revolution in 19 century that produced wave which swept various parts of Northern Nigeria and ultimately set the stage for imposition of colonial rule in the region. Towards the last quarter of the eighteenth century the quest for Niger was the British immediate obsession. (Backwell, 1927). The adventure was motivated by the desire to open up northern Nigeria to the British commercial enterprise through its major drainage system. This was aided by the scientific revolution in the march to material progress, which was also facilitated by the use of fast vessels powered by steam engine. (Crowder, 1978). It is said that Barth considered the possibility of improving the Niger as a future means of transport.

The course of Niger River from Bussa saw the arrival of exploratory voyages. Mungo Park and John Landers arrived between 1805 and 1830 respectively. Baikie also moved up to the Benue River and reached Yola, while Hornemann was believed to have visited Katsina in the early part of the nineteenth century (Ubah, 1998). As the Europeans continued their adventure, attention was directed to other parts of Hausaland. Clapperton was received by the Emir of Kano Muhammad Dabo, and in Sokoto by Caliph Muhammad Bello. Clapperton popularized the British mission which was geared towards drawing northern Nigerian communities into commercial relation and also to abolish slave trade in the region. This was contained in a correspondence letter to the Caliph by the British government which was presented by Clapperton. Between 1851 and 1885 Henrich Barth visited Katsina, Kano, Borno, Adamawa, Sokoto and Gwandu (Backwell, 1927).

Similar contact was established between the British and Borno when Oudney represented the British government as a diplomat in Borno (Ubah, 1998). The Niger quest marked a significant episode in the history of northern Nigeria and indeed the early British contact with vast parts of northern Nigerian communities. The European explorers were path-finders who paved way for the establishment of legitimate trade British influence. Consequently, the contact set the tone of colonization in the preceding decades, which affected the course of events among the various communities in northern Nigeria.

Contacts with the Bauchi Area

Early European contact with the Bauchi area before colonial era was recorded as far back as 1821. The Bauchi tradition suggests the visit of a white-skin person known as *Maigiwa*. Although his name remained unknown to scholars, the visitor was believed to be European on exploratory mission. By 1855 record also indicate the coming of Vogel from his Kukawa expedition (Musa, 2012). Another European traveler, Rohlfs arrived Bauchi in the 19 century. The arrival of the European officials coincided with second phase of the jihad in the Bauchi Emirate and Ningi rebellion against the authority of the Caliphate that took place for successive seven years, during the reign of Emir Ibrahim which spanned between 1845 and 1877 (Abubakar, 1974). Rohlfs

buttressed the development that occasioned the Emirate when he revealed that;

For ten years, 1856-66, the king enjoyed reasonable peace, then broke out a new and more serious rebellions about a year before my arrival... the centre of the rebels was again the mountains Brahima moved out with reinforcement from all parts of the Sokoto Empire (Abubakar, 1974).

This attests to the pedigree of the early European contact in Bauchi area. It offered necessary and first-hand information which aided the British conquest and imposition of colonial rule in Bauchi including the Sayawa communities. Colonial rule therefore continued to determine the course of future events in the conquered communities.

Sayawa and Colonial Conquest

Before the colonial era, the Bauchi area including the Sayawa community was under the hegemony of the Sokoto Caliphate, which rose to its zenith and sustained its political might for almost a century (Adeleye, 1971). During this period, the rulers of the Caliphate had put in place elaborate bureaucratic system, economic interdependence and effective means of social integration process among the numerous communities it ruled. Relation between the caliphate and Sayawa community was based upon *Dhimi* status or *amana* (Adeleye, 1971). However, the beginning of the twentieth century marked a watershed in the history of the Sayawa when the British occupied Bauchi in 1902. At this period, the vast parts of the northern Nigeria had fallen under the rule of the British government, consequent upon conquest (Orr, 1965). The British operation in Bauchi was led by Colonel Morlan, the Commanding Officer in charge of the West African Frontier Forces, Northern Nigerian Regiment accompanied by William Wallace as political adviser who represented Lord Lugard.

The expeditionary force stationed at Ibi, was armed with 17 officers, 500 rank and file, with 3 maxims and 2,75mm guns, from Dull, a few kilometers away from the capital of Bauchi, the British sent a letter to the Emir, Umar, requesting him to submit voluntarily (Ubah, 1998). Consequently, the Emir abdicated. Without any arm confrontation the capital of

Bauchi was overrun and integrated into the indirect rule system.

The submission of Umar and his exit from the capital marked the extension of the British power, authority and control over the non-Emirate and non-Muslim territories (Ikime, 1974) such as Ningi, Dass and Sayawa in southern Bauchi. The British control over the central administration therefore implies control over the entire Emirate. This was followed by the British patrol in Sayawa community (Tambo, 2010) as far as Bogoro, Dazara, and Lere. While the British encountered mild and stiff resistance in some northern Nigerian communities, no such resistance was recorded in the Sayawa community.

Imposition and Impact of Colonial Rule on the Sayawa Community

With steady growth of European industries and over-production of manufactured goods, there arose the need to possess colonies where surplus goods could be sold and to obtain raw materials to sustain production. The acquisition of colonies also necessitated political control so as to prevent competition by other European nations. In keeping with this, by 1903, the British had integrated the whole Muslims and non-Muslim (Ikime, 1974) communities of southern Bauchi including Sayawa villages into the Bauchi province. By 1906 it had also concluded collection of wide range of historical, ethnographic and linguistic materials in order to provide the basis for administrative decisions about selection of local traditional officials and to also determine political and geographical boundaries (Tambo, 2010). In the words of Lugard:

... The pegans of both north and south as tribes in the lowest stage of primitive savagery, without any central organization. The first step is to..... find a man of influence as chief and to group under him many villages and districts as possible, to teach him delegate powers and to take an interest in his native treasury: to support his authority (Gofwen, 2007).

Under this arrangement, the British designed its economic policies to favour cash crops production and effective tax collection system among the Sayawa villages, thereby sustaining the development of the British trading economy in the area.

To achieve this goal, the British introduced the indirect rule system which empowered the Native Authority (N.A.) system to supervise the various administrative units by collecting taxes and mobilization of labour for the colonial government. It is in this regard that the British embarked upon the reinforcement of institution of *Hakimai* which came to be known as the district administrative system and creation of village areas in both Sayawa communities and its neighbourhood. The village area comprised of group of clans and given the name of the most prominent clan while the district constitute group of villages, also given the name of a dominant village. The system which operated under the indirect rule recognized the appointment and posting of local officials from the emirate headquarters to supervise the local administrative units. It is in this regard that Lere district was created in 1926. The colonial government also created Bogoro village area in a predominant Sayawa environment (Musa, 2012).

As an important impact of colonialism the creation of Bogoro village area, and Lere district redrawn the political economy of the Sayawa community in favour of the British exploitation. It also meant that the whole Sayawa community remained under Bauchi Emirate and Lere district administration which has its headquarters at Tafawa Balewa. The district had been supervised by Ajiya house since the jihad period and throughout the colonial period (Tango & Sambo).

It is in this way that the colonial government transformed the Emirate system such that the formally control *Dhimi* communities were brought under the Hausa-Fulani. This phenomenon shaped the course of future events among the Sayawa community in Bauchi Emirate. Appendix (B) is a genealogy of Bauchi Emirate.

The colonial era opened a new chapter in the history of the Sayawa community. The British labour policy compelled mass production of agricultural commodities through imposition of tax. This situation led to a system of intensive agricultural economy among the Sayawa community which exploited pockets of lands including poorer soils in order to service the British export economy. Many others channeled their energies in form of wage labour at the tin mines of the plateau (NAK, SNP 17/18870). Such labour was mobilized by the

local officials. The rate of tax collected on behalf of the British by local officials such as districts heads and their representatives was fixed at 10% and 5% of the total value of an income for agricultural and industrial products respectively (NAK, SNP 17/18870). According to the British, the fixed rate above, was intended to remove constraints to the division of tax among heads of various household. The amount paid however, depended on variations in local wealth of the Sayawa villages. The Sayawa of Bogoro and Lere have remained more productive.

Account on exploitation of natural resources and a financial benefit on Sayawa community was shown by the prevailing financial condition of the British trade in Lere which reinforced exploitation especially during the years of the great depression. The decline in the British trade especially on agricultural products in Lere district from €2,589.9 in 1932 to €709.19 in 1933, equivalent to 21.4% was caused by the general lack of production among the Sayawa community (NAK, SNP 17/18870).

The Role of Western Education and Christian Missionary in the Development of Sayawa Community

The introduction of western education in Nigeria dated back to 1840s when Christian missionaries established contacts with the Nigerian coastal communities in the south (Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 1980). At this period it had occurred to the British that colonial interest such as man power will be served sufficiently through the provision of western model of education. By 1901 therefore, the British emphasized her determination to introduce western education in northern Nigeria, and in 1913 it was followed by a memorandum that declared her plan to establish a central non-Muslim school in the region. This idea was however ignored in favour of separate schools in various parts of northern Nigeria (Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 1980).

The Sayawa villages and its neighbourhood witnessed a rush in the establishment of schools. In 1938, Bogoro elementary school was commissioned at the heartland of Sayawa community (NAK 1225/1937). The commissioning of this school in the Sayawa environment marked the turning point of western education among the group. The school turned out graduates which led to the

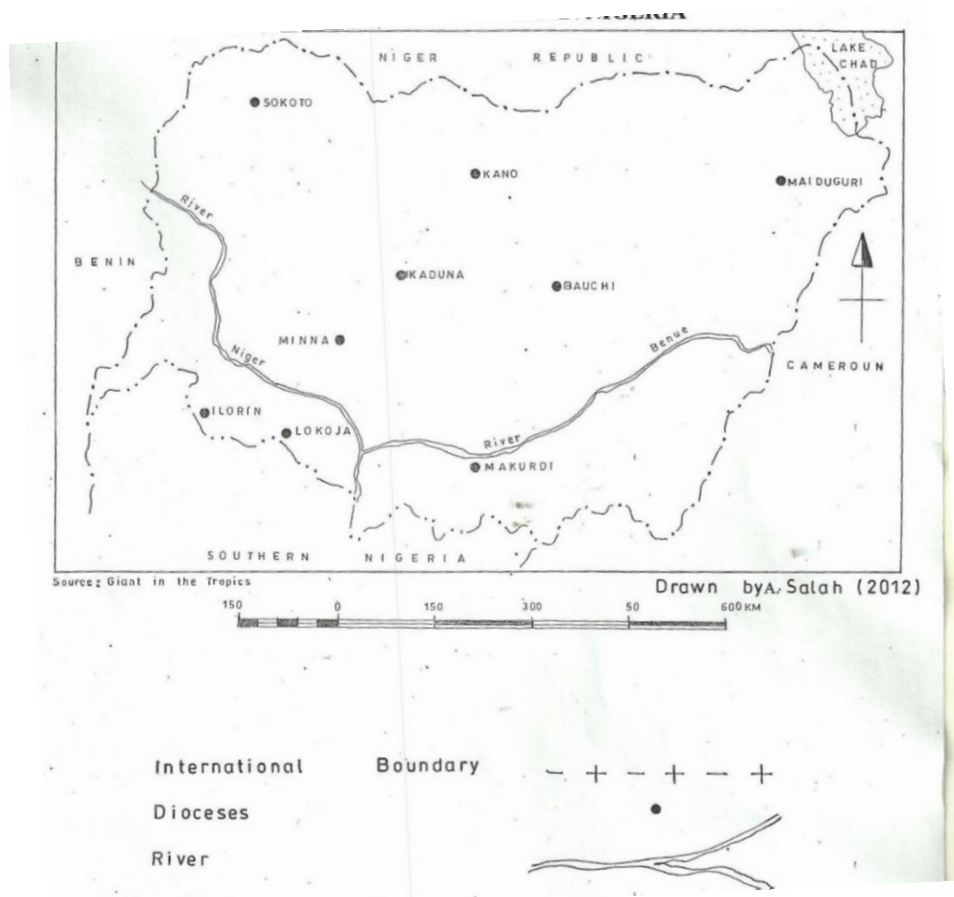
rise of moderate literate class in the later years. The literate class served as an instrument which advances the Sayawa course. Among the early graduates was Peter Gonto who emerged as a leading member among the Sayawa elders. The development of western education also facilitated the spread of Christian gospel among Sayawa through the role of the literate who interpreted the message of the gospel.

The introduction of the western education went hand in hand with Christian evangelism. Effort to evangelize northern Nigeria by Christian Missions came to the fore in the second half of the 19th century. Led by Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and in the later years William Balfour Baikie, during the Niger expeditions, Christian missionaries met with an array of obstacles due to pervasive influence of Islam in many parts of northern Nigeria, particularly, the Hausaland (Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 1980). According to Bunza, mission acquired attraction to northern Nigeria because of Islamic civilization had been put in place by the Caliphate (Bunza, 2006). However, in 1906 a group of Christian Mission known as

Cambridge University Missionary Party reached an agreement with the Church Mission Society (C.M.S.) to preach the gospel in Bauchi area (Wambudta, 1982). Similarly, Bishop Waller of the Catholic mission had hope for sitting the Catholic Mission in the Bauchi area in 1911 (Oconnor, 2009) and by the 1930s missionaries' activities have penetrated the Sayawa community.

Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) led by Pastor Wiljot (Malam Gotiri) and Sudan United Mission (S.U.M.) pioneered missionary activities and the spread of Christian faith among the Sayawa communities, especially in Mwari where the missions established a parish centre and preached the gospel (Fuller, 1995). Before the independent period, the missions have acquired considerable followership. Among the early Sayawa Christian converts were Peter Gonto and Ilya Sunni. Local evangelists who helped spread the gospel were Musa Bauta and Haruna Samari. Figure 1 below is a map of Diocese of Northern Nigeria. It shows Bauchi as one of the areas where Christian Missions has penetrated.

Figure 1: Map of Diocese of Northern Nigeria



Today, the Roman Catholic (R.C.) and Evangelical Church of West African (E.C.W.A.) churches are common to the various Sayawa villages. The Christian Missions involved in provision of access to formal education by organizing adult literacy classes. Beside the provision of support to the Bogoro elementary school in terms of educational infrastructures such as classrooms, they also provided free access to healthcare delivery in form of dispensary services.

The Missions were believed to have introduced new ideas to the Sayaya community. Agricultural technologies such as the use of improved seeds and chemical fertilizers were introduced. It is important to understand that Christian Missions did not encounter resistance among the Sayawa because the missions maintained cordial relationship with the Sayawa and tolerated their traditions and cultural practices. What made Christianity more attractive was the frosty relationship between the Sayawa and Hausa-Fulani in Bauchi Emirate that before independence the Sayawa identified with Middle Belt. Today, the Sayawa remained largely Christians and educated. These entire phenomenons set tone of the events among the group in future years especially from the eve of independence to date.

Sayawa on the Eve of Independence

At the end of the Second World War, Nigeria was granted a new constitution which came to be known as the Richard constitution of 1946 (Elem, 2006). The constitution created three regions in the country viz: Northern, Western and Eastern. Each of these regions had a constituted Regional Assembly that was vested with power to administer its regional affairs. Demographically, the regions were also made up of three dominant ethno-linguistic groups: The Hausa-Fulani were prominent in the North, Yoruba in the West and Igbo in the East. However, by 1951 the Richard's constitution was replaced by the Macpherson constitution (Nwabueze, 1982).

The new constitution spurred political party activities throughout the country. While the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) dominated the North, the Action Group (A.G.) was popular in the West and National Council for Nigerian Citizen in the East. Thus, the foundation for regional and tribal politics was laid (Ige, 1995). The 1950s was therefore a

turning point in the political history of Nigeria as Nigerians prepare to wrestle power from the colonial government. The period was the climax of self-determination in the country which also coincided with search for regional identity among minority groups, especially in the Middle Belt area from the 1953 (Musa, 2012). Consequently, by 1957 Willink's Commission was inaugurated. It was saddled with the responsibility of looking into the minority question in the three regions of the country.

At this period the activities of United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.) was geared towards pursuing the course of non-Muslims and minority ethnic groups in the Middle Belt area (Ashafa, 2005). Meanwhile, with the prospect for self-government for northern Nigeria, efforts were geared towards reforms in the local government affairs. The establishment of Districts and Town Councils based on elected majority emerged as major issue. Native Authority also prepared to widen its membership. In Bauchi, the development recorded was the creation of chieftaincy and allocation of a seat for the Tangale Waja ethnic group in northern Regional House of Assembly, between 1956 and 1958 (NNPARKG, 1957). The Tangale Waja are minority one of the ethnic groups in the former Bauchi Province but presently found in Gombe State.

At this period, the Sayawa community had cultivated sentiment against Hausa-Fulani hegemony in southern Bauchi. They are said to have earlier opposed the imposition of tax on them by the Hausa-Fulani N.A. Thus, by 1959 the Sayawa from Bogoro village areas staged an uprising in Tafawa Balewa area (Musa, 2012). They also opposed the N.P.C. campaign in the area. Invariably, Peter Gonto, a leading Sayawa elite joined the A.G. which had formed a loose form of alliance with the U.M.B.C. It should be noted that the Sayawa uprising and the opposition to N.P.C. was caused by Hausa-Fulani hegemony in Lere district and struggle for identity among minorities which took its root from the Middle Belt area. Little wonder, Ashafa stressed that the U.M.B.C. was a transformation of cultural union which sought for protection of the interest of minority ethnic groups who were also influenced by the Missions to participate in politics (Ashafa, 2005). Minority politics and ethnic identity

therefore determined the Sayawa anti-Hausa-Fulani position. It is however not certain whether the Sayawa uprising or protest was also influenced by the development associated with the Tangale Waja minority group. But obviously, it became an important future reference among the Sayawa especially in the recent struggle for Chieftdom.

Conclusion

History of the Sayawa community during the colonial period was dominated by inter-related events. The colonial period led to some social and political experience (Hobgen & Greene, 1966) that influenced the course of events among the Sayawa community in the Bauchi area. The chapter has attempted to discuss important themes associated with the Sayawa community during the colonial period. It has captured early European contacts with some parts of northern Nigeria and Bauchi area before colonial rule. This was considered as necessary prelude to the British conquest and establishment of colonial rule in the study area. While the conquest of some communities in northern Nigeria was marked by the use of instrument of coercion, the Sayawa community in Bauchi was integrated into the British indirect rule system without the use of arms. It has been understood that the reason for the imposition of the British rule on the Sayawa community was economic exploitation rather than humanitarian consideration in spite of the significant impact of western education and Christian Missions among the Sayawa. The paper has also discussed the Sayawa on the eve of independence where minority politics contributed to the Sayawa anti Hausa-Fulani position. These entire phenomena were to determine the subsequent transformation of the Sayawa community from 1960 to 2009.

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