
Colonialism In Nigeria

Nigeria became a protectorate in 1901 and colonization lasted until 1960 when it gained its independence through an independence movement. The main aim of colonialism was to exploit resources and serve the interest of. And for to achieve their objective, they opted for domination which distorted the indigenous political developments of the local people there by destabilizing the political culture of the people. Colonialism left the country with both economic and political unity but they did more in unifying the state economically than politically. The little political unity that later developed stemmed much more from Nigerians' assimilation of alien ideas and their common desire to oust alien rulers than from any design of the colonialists.

They institutionalized their power and the aim was to stabilize the polity to source for raw materials, cheap labor and a huge market for their products which in turn determined the way they administered the people. The colonialists also used its divide and rule technique to administer the people, thereby making each group see itself as unique and independent from the others. Further, the establishment of areas and sectors in the country were selectively executed to the disadvantage of the people which in turn brought about the dichotomy between the cities and the villages where the colonized inhabited. As a result of the politics of the colonialism, the Nigerian economy became short of linkages and thus being an orchard with beautiful ripe fruits ready to be harvested by the colonial government.

Obafemi Awolowo, in analyzing the effects of the indirect rule upon his people, the Yoruba wrote that;

There is no doubt that in its original treatment of paramount Chiefs Government mistook a part for the whole. It invested the part with powers, the exercise of which properly belonged to the whole...The dictatorial powers which some Yoruba chiefs are welding today are the making of Government who at the beginning misconceived the true nature of Yoruba monarchy. (Obafemi.A, 1947:47,73)

`The doctrine of indirect rule, which enjoined colonial administrators to rule native populations at minimum cost to the imperial government by using permissible indigenous institutional arrangements was the cord tying social anthropologists and administrators in colonized Africa' (Fields & Karen, 1985:33). `During the colonial period, the administrators allowed the emergence and aggravation of an 'us' versus 'them' syndrome, where Muslims were pitted against Christians, Northerners against the Southerners, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo against each other, and so on' (Adefemi 2003:14; Okpanachi 2010). The resulting tension therefore distorted the politics of Nigeria and made national integration even harder

Therefore, one of the effects of indirect rule is that it led to the delayed introduction of democracy at the grassroots where the populace could best understand politics. The seed sown during colonialism explains the urban-rural division, the dictatorial power held by the Yoruba group and failure for the nation to integrate to date.

Further, left their imprints upon all of Nigeria's citizens for example, the positioning in parliament of government and opposition benches directly opposite, appearance of the police,

lawyers' wigs, driving of cars on the left-hand side, curriculum of studies and the English language used in the Country. Therefore, colonialism played a big role in shaping the political culture of present-day independent Nigeria.