

History of Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the History Of Amalgamation Of Northern And Southern Protectorates. This research work will be divided into various parts. Firstly, we shall start with preliminary definition of terms. According to Chambers Everyday Dictionary, Legal means "pertaining to", according to law, "lawful". Regime means administration amalgamation means "the blending of different things a close union".¹ According to Price, "colonies are territories which has been acquired by the Crown either by settlement, by cession, by purchase or by conquest, and were thus Crown property in which British authority was unassailable in domestic and international law. Nwabueze contends: that the effect of annexation of territory is to divest the sovereign of the territory so annexed of his sovereignty and to transfer it to the British Crown who then becomes the new sovereign of the colony with unlimited powers of Government and a complete dominion over its territory, the inhabitants of which becomes the Crown subjects. A protectorate on the other hand implies primarily jurisdiction over the external affairs of the protected territory.

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INTRODUCTION

A protectorate is a country which is not within the British dominion but as regards its foreign relations is under the exclusive control of the king so that its Government cannot hold direct communication with any foreign power nor a foreign power with that Government. Inhabitants of a protectorate unlike those of a colony are not British subjects. Indeed, not only are they not British subjects but they are also not British nationals at all. For in the contemplation of the English Common Law non-British subjects ... Not being British subjects, the inhabitants of a British protectorate do not like those of colony owe any duty of allegiance to the Crown. From Nigerian historical perspective, the burden of amalgamating the Northern and Southern Protectorate fell on Lugard. First, let us consider the reasons for the amalgamation. According to Osuntokun Lugard was asked to amalgamate the two territories because the British Government felt that the maintenance of two separate but contiguous administration was economically wasteful administratively unwise. Furthermore, the British wanted to save themselves the trouble of aiding the Northern administration through an annual grant-in-aid of about £100,000 sterling while the Southern administration usually had more than a million pounds sterling surplus accruing to it from customs Receipts. In support of Osuntokun, Udoma had the following to say: The amalgamation of Southern arid Northern Nigeria in 1913 was brought about by several considerations. One of the most important being financial, whereas the protectorate of Southern Nigeria from its inception had been self-supporting or if you like self-reliant to the extent of showing regular surpluses yearly which in 1904 alone amounted to £145,000 and making yearly contribution of approximately £70,000 towards the

maintenance of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria, the latter (despite its innumerable feudal taxes depended to a large extent on imperial grants. It was therefore felt by Lugard and sections of the colonial office that if duplication of institutions and unnecessary overlapping were to be avoided and material prosperity which would enable the two protectorates to be self-supporting achieved union, was not only desirable but inevitable.

However, it has been contended by Abba quoting Morel: That the widespread fabrication that the protectorate of Northern Nigeria was merged with the colony and protectorates of southern Nigeria because the budget of the former was in deficit as it was poorer and therefore had lower revenue and had to be bailed out by the richer Southern colony and protectorate. He pointed out that this situation of budget deficit had an obvious cause. The southern colony and protectorate extended to the coast and its administration collected all the customs dues on the sea-borne export and import trade of the two protectorates.

He submitted that various academic studies have shown the economic and the fiscal policies of the British before 1914 and after were driven by the knowledge that the two protectorates formed a largely compact entity which could not be profitably ruled and exploited in British's strategic interest if they were not brought together. The imperatives of economic and political geography which led to the amalgamation of 1893 which created the Niger Coast Protectorate followed by that in 1900 which created the protectorate of Southern Nigeria, followed by that of 1906 which created the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria was what also led to the amalgamation of 1914 which created the colony and protectorate of Nigeria" This view point makes a lot of sense and demands serious consideration.

The point must be made that after the conquest of Northern Nigeria, Fredrick Lugard, the first Governor was confronted with the problem of governing such a vast territory without the requisite manpower and funds and wary of inflaming Islamic passions. Islam being the religion of the Muslim emirate which was the basis of Government and the conduct of daily life opted for a policy of indirect rule.

According to renowned histories Osuntokun, the British who had not enough administrators available to rule the country directly because of their involvement in the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902 and because of the prohibitive expense employment of thousands of British administrators would have entailed opted out for indirect rule."

The essential features of the system that distinguish it from other systems of indirect rule practiced in the British Empire were:

- a) Direct taxation through native chiefs in their name and then the division of the taxes between the chiefs and the protectorate Government i.e. as a sort of tribute Recognizing the protectorates Government sovereignty in the case of Kano or Sokoto, 70 percent of total taxes was held by chiefs and 30 percent by the protectorate Government.
- b) The disbursement of the taxes retained by the chiefs as the basis of a budget and through a Native Treasury or "Beit et mal". Muslim rulers became salaried officials as did all their subordinates and tribute or taxes had to be disbursed for approved projects etc. The policy of indirect rule called for governing the protectorate through the rulers who had been defeated, if the emirs accepted British authority and abandoned the slave trade and cooperated with British officials in modernizing their administrations, the colonial power was willing to confirm them in office.' It must be emphasized that the above system operated with relatively little difficulty in the emirates of the dismembered Sokoto caliphate and Borno where there was a sophisticated administration under a strong central authority with long standing tradition of taxation. It worked less well in chieftaincies like Bussan were the chiefs never had the centralized power of Fulani emirs and a tradition of taxation. It

c) third important feature of indirect rule as it operated in Northern Nigeria was the requirement that those in charge of the districts of an emirate or the capital.' could hardly operate at all among and a cephalous people like the Tiv.' In the Southern Protectorate, there were great varieties in the system of local Government operating throughout the protectorate reflecting the piecemeal way in which it had been acquired by the British.' Lagos Island and its immediate neighborhood constituted the colony of Lagos. It was administration typical Crown colony with Legislative and Executive Council.⁶ The Egba Kingdom maintained some form of quasi—independence. The other Yoruba states operated a loose form of indirect rule. The Benin Kingdom in the absence of an Oba was under some form of direct administration. Heads of small city states functioned as agents of the British Government was inaugurated, a kind of indirect rule. In Igbo and Ibibio areas, the court rule system was in practice. This system which was much abused by the so-called "warrant chiefs" who were handpicked by the British and given warrant to rule over essentially chief less society had become necessary because of what was considered the intractable problem of how to administer a seemingly uncontrollable people who did not have the external manifestation of ordered society found in the Oba and emirs among the Yoruba, Benin and Hausa-Fulani people.

In the south, two things stood out clearly in contrast to the situation in the north. The first was that none of these Southern societies was there, a tradition of taxation. The second was that in none of them was there to be found a ruler approximating in personal authority to that of a Fulani emir.

According to Kalu Ezera, when Sir Lugard Fredrick (later Lord Lugard) became the first Governor of a united Nigeria after amalgamation in 1914, he did not think a legislative council with such small representation was a fair and adequate body to legislate for the whole country. Accordingly, in order to secure expressions of public opinion from every part of the newly united country, he set up a larger advisory body known as the Nigerian Council.

Nwabueze, collaborating the above said that there was established an advisory and deliberative council called Nigerian Council with the object of enabling local opinion and officers of the ripest experience and ability to be consult upon the subjects of legislation. In Udoma views, it was "an institution unique in its status". It was to serve the whole of Nigeria.² The Nigerian Council comprised 24 official and 12 unofficial members were Europeans representing commerce, shipping, mining and banking. The 6 African unofficial members were chiefs namely. The Sultan of Sokoto, the Alafin of Oyo, the Emir of Kano, Chief Douglas Numa and one each educated Nigerian representing each of Lagos and Calabar. It had neither executive nor legislative functions. It functioned purely as a deliberate and advisory body which was like attending a jamboree or a mutual admiration club.

According to Nwabueze: Any member of the Nigerian Council might propose for debate any question relating to the affairs of Nigeria and the question should be so debated if it had been seconded by any other member and provided the Governor had been notified thereof at least 10 days previously. The Governor might disallow a question if in his opinion a discussion of it racial prejudice or otherwise detrimental to the well being of Nigeria.²⁴ By Article 17 no resolution passed by the Council shall have any legislative or executive authority and the Governor shall not be required to give effect there to. It is the view of a renowned historian that although the Nigerian Council did no harm. It was a waste of time and the leading chiefs who could not speak English attended it only once or twice before its end. Another writer opined that the Council was promoted as a device for allowing the expression of opinions that could instruct the Governor. In practice, Lugard used the annual sessions to inform the traditional leaders of British policy leaving them with no functions at the Council meeting except to listen and to assent. Ezera had this to say about the Council: The attendance especially of the Nigerian unofficial members at this Council was very poor. It had been supposed that the chiefs when form of the majority the Nigerian

nominated unofficial members of the Council would best represent the views of the masses of the people. But this they failed to do because they rarely attended the Council Meetings. Besides, the Council did not arouse It was also reported that most traditional rulers could not participate effectively because of their inability to communicate in English.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the point must be made that having defined the terms necessary for understanding, the subject matter, we looked at real reasons behind the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates and the system of administration adopted. It was clear that while indirect rule worked well in Northern protectorate and not too well in Southern protectorate considering the fact that it consisted of Western and Eastern provinces later. And a Lagos colony which was under "Colony administration until 1922. The creation of Nigerian council was examined and its functions scrutinized.

Judging by the facts is on ground, if the journey for the independence of Nigeria was the objective colonial administration at this stage, it was clear that it had hardly begun because Nigerians at this dispensation were bystanders. The sovereign' power was clearly in the hands of the British government. Gradual release will come piecemeal in the future.

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