

From Hinterland Trade to International Commerce: Historicizing Nigeria's Contributions to World Economy from 1914

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Abstract

On 1st January, 2014, Nigeria marked one hundred years since the Southern and Northern parts of the country were brought together to form a single entity. However, various explanations have been given as to why it became necessary for the Amalgamation; the most popular being that it was both to bring the people closer to civilization and for administrative convenience. This paper argues that on the contrary the amalgamation became necessary so that the colonialist could tap the resources of the people more easily as well as tie them into the capitalist economic web. The paper using historical document is of the view that, that period marked the beginning of another phase of colonial exploitation in the history of the people through trade and commerce. It concludes that from that period, Nigeria has continued to be a major contributor to the development of the Western economy, to the detriment of the local economy and people.

1.0 Introduction

Geographically, Nigeria is located in the western corner of Africa, bounded on the north by Niger, on the east by Chad and Cameroon, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by Benin. Recent statistics show that it is the most populous country in Africa with a land mass area of 923,768 sq km (356,669 sq ml). Its name is derived from that of its major river, the Niger. It has Abuja as its capital and Lagos is its largest city.

2.0 Nigeria's Place in Human Growth and Development

Although, it has been often denied by European scholars that Africa (Nigeria inclusive) was until her discovery part of the world and contributed to its development, there are scholars who argue that

different peoples at different time have engaged in meaningful interaction which sustained them up till the period of colonial conquests. For example, Rodney (1973:8-10) describe it thus;

Every continent independently participated in the early epochs of the extension of man's control over his environment – which means in effect that every continent can point to a period of economic development. Africa, being the original home of man, was a major participant in the processes in which human groups displayed an ever increasing capacity to extract a living from the natural environment. Indeed, in the early period, Africa was the focus of the physical development of man as such, as distinct from other living beings.

He continued thus;

Development was universal because the conditions leading each economic expansion were universal. Everywhere, man was faced with the task of survival by meeting fundamental material needs; and better tools were a consequence of the interplay between human beings and nature as part of the struggle for survival. Of course, human history is not a record of advances and nothing else. There were periods in every part of the world when there were temporary setbacks and actual reduction of the capacity to produce basic necessities and other services for the population. But the overall tendency was towards increased production, and at given points of time the increase in the quantity of goods was associated with a change in the quality or character of society.

It is in line with the above, that this paper argues that, Nigeria at various times had engaged in meaningful interaction with her neighbours, so much so that at various times various Kingdoms and civilizations evolved and developed. This is reflected in the country's long and rich tradition of arts and literature, as depicted in the Terracotta sculptures by Nok artists of northern Nigeria as early as 500 BC, Ife terracottas and Benin bronze work, first made about AD 1200, as well as the Igbo-Ukwu yield which produced the radio carbon date of 9th Century A.D (Shaw T. 1969: 43-44, Northrup D; 1972:228). These works of arts show a highly developed technical abilities in the various civilizations they evolved from. Invariably depicting the existence of established societies, which were gradually developing themselves into political entities.

3.0 Amalgamation of 1914: Civilization Mission or Economic Interest?

Although it has often been argued that the basic reason for the British Amalgamation of the region in 1914 was to save the savage people from darkness and bring them to the light of civilization (Davison, B, 1992:1-21). However, academic studies have shown that the interest in trade and maximization of profits formed the driving force behind it. This was clearly expressed by Frederick Lugard, when he admitted thus;

Let it be admitted at the outset that European brains, capital and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; that Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes, and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane; that the benefit can be made reciprocal, and that it is the aim and desire of civilized administration to fulfil this dual mandate (Lugard F.D, 1922:617)

In an attempt to bring out clearly the economic motive of the Amalgamation, Abba and Usman (2005:17) wrote thus;

... as 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 interests, 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.

4.0 Particularities of The Nigerian Experience in Trade, Commerce and World Economy Up to 1914

In his work published by the Federal Ministry of Information, Dike (1956) clearly stated that British power in Nigeria rested in her trade with the colony, for it was this trade that brought the British men to Nigeria and in general it was commerce that bound Europe to Africa. The British came in 1854 because of their interest in palm oil and later trade in slaves. On their arrival, both its government and diehard merchants began to look increasingly to the hinterland rather than the coast for gains for its

empire building. This moved the British government to enter into contract with Macgregor Laird to maintain the Steamer on the River Niger (Dike, K.O, 1956.).

Military might was used to gain trade routes and materials. Ikime O (1981:32-3) argued that during the 1870s and 1880s, the National African Company (NAC), carried out series of naval bombardments in Aboh, Patani, Akassa, Asaba and Idah. Unfortunately, the economic interest led to competition among the European “scavengers” of Africa's natural endowments thus;

The period was characterized by increased competition between the many European firms which operated in the Lower Niger. Increased competition not only led to decline in profit but also weakened the bargaining position of the European firms vis-à-vis Nigerian traders. It was in order to arrest this situation that Toubman Goldie arrived the Lower Niger and the Niger Delta in 1870 and amalgamated the various British firms by 1897 (Ikime, 1981, 32-3).

Thus, the competition to have trade monopoly over the region produced intergroup warfare particularly from the first half of the nineteenth century. It was this situation that forced Governor Tsanomi to impose trade embargo among the Itsekiri people with Europeans. The lucrative nature of the trade and the expected loss from this, led to the British Consul stepping in and using the threat of gun boats to force the Itsekiri to reopen trade. As a result Tsanomi lost his office as a consequence of his effort to protect the interest of his fellow Itsekiris. Also in 1886, the Great Nana Olomu, then Governor also ordered the stoppage of trade. But he too had to yield to Consular pressure backed as it was by the threat of force (Ikime, O, 2006:269). The lucrative nature of the trade as well as the determination to secure the wealth of the area at all cost accounted for the massive investment in prosecuting wars in most of these areas.

In the case of the Northern part of Nigeria, Abba and Usman (2005:16) cited the testimony of a colonial officer and traveller who documented that out of a total annual expenditure of £305,000 by the colonial administration in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in the years 1906-1909, the sum of £260,000, that is 85% of the annual expenditure was on military expeditions.

For a meaningful understanding of the role of the region in trade, commerce and contributions to the international market since 1914, there is the need to reflect back on the period before 1914, as the instrument which were used in the execution of trade and commerce in 1914 were laid in the period before 1914. Immediately after the conquest of the Nigerian region, various British Companies began to fall over each other in order to secure a place in the rich commercial territory. This is evidenced in the fact that European trading firms and companies began to penetrate up the Lower Niger from the coastal region of Nigeria, establishing trade stations on the rivers side settlements of Lokoja, Onitsha, Aboh and Egga Illushi, jostling over anything that they saw as articles of trade and commerce. The struggle was such that by 1907 eighteen colonial companies (among which were U.A.C, Messrs Miller Brothers, John Holt, McNeill Scott and Company, J.G.M. Cranstoum, Thompson, Blois and Co (later Nigeria Mahogany Trading Co.), W.B. McIver and Co, Alexander Miller and Co, Bey and Zimmer, African Association, Pinnock Stores Ltd, Anglo – Nigeria Trading Co, J. Bash of Hamburg, I.T. Palmer and Co, The British West Africa Timber Company) (Igbafe, 1979, 351-3) had taken control over timber production and trade in the Esan division. By this period, the eighteen companies and individuals had concessions in the division, and in 1919, out of the twenty timber companies operating in Southern Nigeria, fifteen had concession leases in the division (Adeyoju, 1969:100–101 (N.A.I. CSO 26/2, File 16062,)).

5.0 Nigeria and International Economy and Diplomacy During the Interwar Period

Historical documents reveal that the year 1914, which coincidentally marked the beginning of the First World War, made much demand from the Nigerian region to support the world. Thus Nigeria became very relevant in the provision of men to aid in the war (as a way of securing the sphere of influence) and production both for the European market and the war. The effect of the above was that while Britain and her allies made war demands from the people by encouraging the production of food and other necessary materials needed to execute the war, with full knowledge of the fact that the loss of the territory meant automatic loss to her natural wealth, the imperial power demanded recruits from the

people to participate in the First World War. It was on this ground that during the War over 100,000 Nigerians were recruited into the West African Frontier Force for military service against the Italian, German and Japanese armies in East Africa, North Africa and in the jungles of Burma. Thus within six years about 200,000 Nigerians largely from among the peasantry were brought together in a highly concentrated and direct fashion, face-to-face with the white man (most soldiers are taken into the army by force, with no formal recruiting system) (Nzela, 1977, Usman, 1988:4). Many lost their lives in 1917, while they engaged in what was described as war for their liberation and world democracy (Nzela, 1977).

The fear of being recruited into the war led to the deserting of most areas by the able-bodied men, while those that remained were either forced into the war or massive cash crop production. This indeed affected adversely the production of food crop and by extension the nutritional health of the people. Available statistics as provided by economic analysts and historians show that the period was a tough one for the local economy. This was because apart from the production for the war, the people had to contend with the harsh environment/ climatic condition of the period. In their analysis, Watt (1983:50), Shenton (1983), Lennihan, (1984) and Adamu (2005) argued that the situation was such that the area recorded deaths.

This year (1914) the effect of food shortage showed itself in all its ghastliness. The grunt ghost of famine stalked abroad through Kano and every other part...Mothers could not feed their babies at their breasts, the pasture had dried up and the cattle were just skin and bones. The great city of Kano drew the starving thousands from the country in the faint hope of scouring in the streets and markets to pick up what they might or beg the charity of the town's folks. Not only the Nigerians but the thousands from French country drifted down across our borders, passing through villages enroute all bare of food to offer them. They died like flies on every roads.

The situation was not so different from the neighbouring cities around Kano. For example it was observed that in Katsina area, during the same period several persons fell exhausted on the road unable to pick themselves up. The report also shows that in the fields/farms, children were seen eating herbs and the soil to stay alive (Watt, 1983; Shenton, 1983; Lennihan, 1984 and Adamu, 2005). The situation was so severe that

the locals had to generate name to describe the severity. In the area around the Chad area, the situation was nicknamed Kangale Kori (short stalks) or Kuna Kura (big famine). It was called Gyallare in Kano, Malali in Katsina and Suda-mu-gaisa in Sokoto. The situation created so much havocs that the colonial residents reported that people died while trying to unearth roots, while looking for the tubers of water lilies (Watt,1983; Shenton, 1983; Lennihan, 1984 and Adamu, 2005). It has also been noted that the situation was not limited to crop producers, but the nomads as well. This was well reflected in the decline in population around the area. For instance, the Wodaabe Fulani of western Borno whose population in 1913 was 10,000 had reduced to 5,500 by 1914 and their herd of 88,000 heads of cattle had been decimated to 26,000 as a consequence of the famine. On the whole, the Colonial authorities estimated that the famine in 1914 took the lives of 14,205 people in Kano and Kazaure; 6000 in Katsina; 10,930 in Katagum; 6,747 in Daura; and 7,769 in Hadejia ((Watt,1983, Shenton, 1983, Lennihan, 1984 and Adamu, 2005). Despite the human and economic disaster caused by a natural phenomenon, which made the people to suffer from lack of food and malnutrition, the imperial power forced them to contribute to the imperial trade up to the end of the First World War. This argument is based on the fact that an analysis of the figures captured in Lugard's area, population and trade of British Tropics, shows that by 1919, Nigeria had the highest trade relations with Britain. This is summarized in the Table below.

5.1 Table I: Area, Population and Trade of British Tropics

Western Group	Area (in sq mile)	Population in 1919	Density per sq mile	Import (Trade)	Export (Trade)	Total £
Nigeria	336,481	17,587,000	52.2	10,766,580	14,675,790	25,442,370
British Cameroun	31,150	650,000	20.8	-----	-----	-----
Gold Coast	79,506	1,501,793	19.8	7,111,919	10,779,444	17,981,363
British Togoland	12,500	344,000	27.5	-----	-----	-----
Sierra Leone	24,908	1,500,000	60.2	2,047,577	2,047,577	4,082,447
The Gambia	4,132	240,000	53	1,229,924	1,229,924	2,403,916

Source: Lugard, F.D, 1922:45

While Table I gives a summary of the trade as it relates to contributions from other regions in Africa, Table II specifically looks at the contribution of the Northern Part of Nigeria during this period. This is of importance because of the fact that the region suffered serious drought as at the time of the Amalgamation and yet was able to make significant contributions to the foreign trade.

5.2 Table II; Production from Northern Nigeria by 1914

s/no	Commodity	Quantity	Value £
1	Sheanuts (lb)	14189696	48,520
2	Sheabutter (lb)	254555	4,323
3	Skins (Nos)	1418858	98,286
4	Hide (Nos)	1344599	407,500
5	Groundnut (tons)	16,997	197,220
6	Cotton lint (cwt)	50,444	150,970
7	Beniseed (lbs)	3337772	11811

Source: SNP 9/1 No. 1147/1914 "Northern Nigeria Annual Report"

The impact of the above was that the people in that Nigerian region continued to experience rise in the cost of food crop and other household necessities despite their socio-economic experiences.

Available records also show that some of the able bodied men that were not recruited into the force to fight on the side of the British and her allies during the Great War were forced into the tin mine field, which was another major source of wealth for the colonial power. Particularly, when the Second World War broke out, the British mobilized Nigerians for large scale forced labour on the Jos Plateau tin mines. In 1942-44 about 120,000 Nigerian were forced to work on the Jos Tin mine (making it the largest concentration of industrial workers in any one place in the country (Ahmed, 1988:14-16; Usman, 1988:10). The table below is a reflection of the operations of the mining companies on the eve of the amalgamation.

5.2 Table II; Production from Northern Nigeria by 1914

s/no	Name of Company	Tin Production	Share of Capital £	% of share capital realised
1	Naraguta (Nig)	1,972	175,000	122,8
2	Rayfield (Nig)	1,146	400,000	31.2
3	Northern Nigeria (Bauchi)	1,030	225,000	49.9

4	Bisichi Tin Co	895	200,000	48.7
5	Naraguta Extended	622	175,000	38.7
6	Jos Tin area (Nig)	615	110,000	60.1
7	Ropp Tin	469	30,000	170.0
8	Forum River (Nig)	416	75,000	60.5
9	Kaduna Syndicate	394	10,000	429.4
10	Joga Tin and Power (Nig)	330	300,000	12.0

Source; RH: *Mss Afr. S. 100 "Niger Company's Mining Interest"*.

5.4 Table IV: Production Output and Approximated Value up to 1918

s/no	Year	Tin output (Tons)	Approximated Value £	Jan 1 st £	April £	July £	Oct 1 st £
1	1914	6,143	657,915	168:10	172:18:9	40:10	132:15
2	1915	6,910	773,700	151:5	168:10	171:5	149:7:6
3	1916	8,187	1,022,975	171:5	197:10	172:10	175:2/-6
4	1917	8,314	1,273,115	171:5	215:10	243:10	243:15
5	1918	8,434	1,032,033	316:	331:	337:	269:

Source: *The Nigeria Handbook, Government Printer, Lagos, 1925.*

An analysis of the table clearly indicates that there was a steady rise in the total annual output of tin, while the unit price per ton and the approximate total value kept on fluctuating.

The profit repatriated to the colonial homeland from this activity (as well as in other sectors of the economy) could only be well understood when seen in the fact that the percentage of royalty which the colonial government was entitled to, from the total output of tin each year was based on the unit price per ton in the London market (Calvert, 1912:28). Under this situation, if the price of the product at the market at that particular time was between £ 160 and £180 per ton, the calculation is that three per cent of that went to the colonial government as royalty. Even the remaining half of the revenue accruing to the colonial State as royalty from the tin industry was not channelled to the provision of infrastructure and other basic social services to the people and area from which the tin was mined, but for maintaining peace and stability, which meant the repression and imprisonment of the local people who were bold enough to demand that they be given their rights (Gann and Duignan, 1969: 21-2).

6.0 British Economic Interests' and the enslavement of Nigeria

The sufferings of Nigerians at that time because of its natural giftedness and British interest in them for their socio-economic good were heightened through monetization, taxation and disarticulation of the Nigerian economy. The Colonialists introduced a new method of taxation in Nigeria. In fact one of the main essences of imposition of colonial taxation was to force peasants to produce expectable cash crops to meet their tax obligation (Bernstein H, 1974:63). Thus, by 1916, the colonial State had introduced lump-sum tax in cash on village basis in some parts of Nigeria. In the case of the southern part of the country, assessment on individual basis was fixed at two shillings per adult male and female and one shilling per a male youth of sixteen years and above. This did not go down well with the people who protested the system especially as it affected the female folks, and the result was that females' paying of taxes was abolished in 1927 (Igbafe, 1979).

To be able to meet up with the tax demand, Nigerians were forced into massive production of British dictated cash crops, as a way of earning British colonial cash currency (the legal tender), which could only be obtained through producing and selling of cash products and/or working for the colonial State and colonial Companies. This led to the massive development and expansion of colonial agricultural raw material commodity production and trade in the various areas in Nigeria and even beyond.

To make sure that the people complied with the alien taxation policy, the British government emphasized that taxation was a mark of individual responsibility to the State for the security of life and property provided. In this way, the colonial administration insisted that its share of tax should only be paid in cash and therefore instructed the Native Administration on payment in British currency alone. This was part of the process of "fostering" the habit of cash transactions among the peasantry. The impression was that it was one of the basic pre-requisite for the establishment of an efficient commercial transaction which would enable sales to merchants for exports ((Lugard F.D, 1918:206). To encourage the use of cash in even petty transactions, the colonial government went to the extent of introducing one penny and one-tenth penny coins, where previously the lowest amount had been the three penny piece (Igbafe, 1979:258).

To be double sure that the people did not in any way escape the payment of taxes imposed, the imperial government devised means for what it referred to as easy collection. One of the most prominent ways was that each town was counted out of which a representative number like ten or twenty were selected for actual measurement and counting of heaps. According to Igbafe, (1979) the duty of these representatives was to help in calculating what the people who had no access to the new currency could pay in terms of their farm produce. Igbafe 1979, described the process thus;

... A rough allowance of two yam tubers per heap was made in order to determine the number of yams in each farm. The rough price of twenty yams for sterling was used to determine the values of yams in each farm. This amount was multiplied by the total number of yam farms in a District as estimated. The tax on maize thus was calculated based on the number of maize bundles in each maize farmland measured to get a rough yield per acre. The value was estimated by calculating with local price of maize. In the case of livestock, it was based on the assumption by the British authority that the average goat produced twice a year, and assuming a uniform productive rate, and making no allowance for barren stock, it was estimated that a kid of six months is sold for 2s 6d and at 12 months, for 7s 6d. The yearly profit per goat was thus worked out at 10s. For sheep it was estimated that the average productivity was three in two years estimated at 5s each and 15s in two years or 7s 6d per annum. Only the female were counted and the total value of sheep in the village, and hence in the division could roughly be worked out. Cows were assumed to produce once a year and the value of a three year old cow was taken as £5 which worked out at 30s per annum. The average hen was taken as producing six chickens per annum which at 6d each gave 3s per annum. It was thus possible to calculate the approximate value of all the livestock in a village and in the division.

By the above method, the divisional officer made an approximate estimate of the total wealth of each village in the division. It is also important to note that taxes were levied directly on incomes. For instance on income not less than £50, but less than £100, a tax was levied. On income not less than £200, it was £1. On income not less than £200 but less than £300, £2 was levied (NAI, BP, 143/1920, Igbafe, 1979:408). The table below represents taxes levied on males over the age of 16 years engaged in trades and business.

6.1 Table V: Taxation: Levies and Payment

s/no	Profession	Amount
1	Artisans	10s
2	Bicycles	10s
3	Butchers	15s
4	Carpenters	10s
5	Dealers in wine, beer and spirit	£1
6	Goldsmiths	15s
7	Letter writers	1£
8	Lorry and car drivers	10s
9	Shoe makers	10s
10	Mechanics	10s
11	Shopkeepers	10s
12	Tailors	10s

Source: (NAI,BP,143/1920, Igbafe, 1979:408

To make sure these taxes were collected, traditional chiefs (and in some cases Warrant Chiefs) were appointed to collect such from the people under the strict supervision of European officers. As a measure to make sure the people do not give excuse for not paying, the tax collection usually commenced from July to October at a period when the major cash crops were not ripe for harvest. In this way, the peasants would have to sell their crops to pay the tax. The argument for early commencement of tax was for the traditional rulers to be able to collect all taxes and submit to the Treasury. The Collectors were given the power to threaten, intimidate or even imprison those who were unable to pay, until a wife or relations paid on their behalf. There were cases where neighbours of defaulters were forced to pay for them or give them loan to pay (E.A, M.O,1918). Sometimes the sheep, goats or chicken of the tax defaulters or that of his wife were seized in lieu of the tax he was unable to pay. Generally colonial tax collection was brutal and unsympathetic.

7.0 Nigeria since 1960: Independence or In-Dependent?

From the discourse so far, it is clear that the country has from time immemorial been part of the international system, although dictated by the capitalist world with a large chunk of the profit repatriated to Britain and her allies. The question therefore is why the country has not been able to

develop massive agricultural economic policy since independence? This is more worrisome when viewed in the light of the Second National Development Plan of 1970 (cited in Abba, 1985:17-8), which revealed the country's agricultural prowess thus;

Nigeria has a wealth of agricultural resources. There is a vast area of arable land on which almost all tropical crops could be grown on account of the varied climatic conditions. Statistics shows that out of the country's total land area of 231 million acres, just 79.1 million or roughly a third constitute arable land and land under permanent crops. Forestry and permanent pastures covers about 56 percent of the land area. Since only about 19 percent comes under forest reserves, and allowing about 15 percent for permanent pastures, it follows that about 31 percent of the land constitute agricultural land. With the 9 percent of the area presently not used for any specific purpose, the percentage of land that can be available for agricultural purpose goes up to 40 percent - that is about 92.5 million acres... The savanna lands of Nigeria and the millions of native cattle, goats and sheep present an attractive potential for improved livestock production. The country also has great potentiality for fishing.

From the above, it is clear that the nation has what it takes to produce all that is needed agriculturally. However, immediately after independence with specific reference to the 1970's and 80's, there was a large-scale confiscation of lands from the peasantry and its allocation to foreign transnational and local Nigerian retired and serving public officers. A tradition that has continued to date. For example in July 1990, the Lagos State government evicted the residents of Maroko, a low income area that attracted a lot of migrants since it was in close proximity to economically robust areas. According to the government, the area was below the sea level and needed to be filled in with sand. This led to the mass movement of about 300,000 people representing one of the largest forced evictions in Nigerian history (Megbolu, 2009). While the Lagos State Government gave a very nebulous excuse for the demolition, that the location was unsafe for habitation and therefore needed to be taken over by the state, the area has since been re-developed and parcelled out to the rich and influential in the society, including retired military officers, civil servants, businessmen and politicians (Oputa Panel Report,:136).

In line with the above, scholars have identified two methods that have been employed over time (especially as the Nigeria situation is concerned) by

those in authority to rub the people of the land. The first has been a process whereby acquisitions are made by the State itself, that is, Local, State and Federal Governments for various projects and programmes such as the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), and infrastructural construction (Alkali, 1986:13-14). The second type of land confiscation from the peasantry has been a process whereby lands belonging to individual peasant families and communities are expropriated from them in favour of a large-scale private farmer or a company ((Megbolu, 2009). The traditional rulers and their agents play an active role in this process. At the end of the day, the property is shared among those in government and their cronies. This has been the case especially in the Federal Capital Territory in which whoever is the minister of the Federal Capital Territory often embarks on the adventurous journeys of appeasement and patronage through generous allocation of choice landed assets to wives of political office holders beginning with the wife of the President down to children of ministers and chairmen of various government bodies. An example is the case of land situated at Central Area close to ThisDay Dome which was initially issued and allocated to a supposed NGO, Women and Youth Empowerment Foundation (WAYEF) on 19th February 2010 belonging to one of the former First Lady of the country. With the change of leadership, another document which was dated August 11, 2008 emerged from the FCT government indicating that the same plot of land has been indeed allocated earlier to the African First Ladies Peace Centre (ureport, 2012). In both processes, the authorities and their allies argued that these lands are needed for economic reasons and developmental project and that the Nigerian peasants had failed to produce enough food and raw materials for local consumption and for the industries. They have also often given the excuse that the peasants have failed to evolve new techniques of modern production in such a manner as to integrate agriculture with industry and thus provide jobs to an ever expanding army of reserve labourers (Alkali, 1986, Andre and Beckman, 1985).

The above therefore gives a clear picture why the same peasants, their children and grandchildren, who worked and built the colonial reserve through agriculture, have not been able to contribute meaningfully to the development of the economy since independence. It is therefore safe to argue at this point that the State in neo-colonial countries in general, and Nigeria in particular, plays a crucial role in the process of agricultural underdevelopment by promoting policies that entrench distortions within

the system of land ownership and production process. Alkali (1986) amply summarised the situation and the operation of State actors and their allies in the underdevelopment of the economy thus;

...one of the salient features of the post-colonial state was its unflinching commitment to the creation of a local capitalist's class. Precisely arising from this and in response to monopoly capitalist pressures this class relies on a combination of primitive and 'modern' forms of accumulation in their struggle to establish roots in the economy. Historically speaking therefore, in the early 1960s the state was more active in defence of the comprador class; the import-export magnets; commission agents; Licensed Buying Agents (LBAs) and other intermediaries who were constantly in alliance with and depended on foreign multinational corporations... In the period since 1973, the state through a number of programmes and policies provided bases and conditions for the emergence of a small but powerful agrarian bourgeoisie. These included the establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative bank in 1973; the launching of the Operation Feed the nation (OFN) in 1976 and the subsequent enactment of the Land Use Decree in 1977. In 1978, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACVGSF) was created under the Central bank. This was immediately followed in 1979 with the preparations for launching the Green Revolution Programme. All these served to open up the agricultural economy for eventually take-over by capital, both foreign Agribusiness and local comrade -in-arm farmers.

As pointed out in the above quotation, all the various economic programs by the various government would have been able to move the country forward, but for the agent/principal relationship which still exists between those in power and their ex-colonial master – Britain, whose idea for the people is to remain a trading post of the ex-colonial government.

8.0 Conclusion

This paper has in contextualizing itself laid emphasis on agriculture, because it is a latent economic force that the nation is taking for granted. After the centenary celebration therefore, it is good that Nigeria takes up programmes to learn from the Israelis how they came to be a major food exporter, especially of fruits, to Europe. The point is that the nation's future economic fortunes is in agriculture, hence the British exploited it for their economic fortunes during the period under review. It is in line with this, that the paper argues that, the nation's future depends largely on the revival of

her land resources (agricultural sector) for socio-economic development. Almost one hundred years after the amalgamation, a situation which the imperial power saw as necessary based on both human and natural resources, the country continue to import virtually everything needed by the people, including food items. The government has continually paid lip service to the development of agriculture, including the recent promise to create 3.5 million jobs through agriculture in 2015 (NAN, 2013). This, to analysts, is an impossible task as presently a larger numbers of Nigerian peasants are systematically being deprived of land, which would, undoubtedly, result in great land hunger in view of the rapidly expanding population in the country. The process has further aggravated the already acute inequalities in the distribution of land and property relations. Thus through direct state policies the bourgeois regimes in Nigeria, (especially since independence) have made possible the rapid transfer of wealth and resources from the poor to the rich, thereby exacerbating the underdevelopment of the vast majority of the people. A process whose social implications are grave and which pose serious threats to political and social stability and progress within the context of regimes that uphold the capitalist system. The immediately resultant effects are already manifesting in the country and could ultimately only lead to great agricultural underdevelopment, urban-rural drift, poverty, hunger and terrorism.

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