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NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- Papers, which should be about 6,000 words, should be typed double-spaced on one side of the page with adequate margins. 1. Three copies are preferred and postage should be enclosed if return of paper is requested.
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AGITATION AND PROTEST AGAINST THE BRITISH COLONIAL POLICIES IN ILORIN 1823-1936

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Introduction

Discontents, protests, and agitations were not peculiar to Ilorin Community during the colonial period. Rather, they were rampant among various communities in Nigeria as it was the case in the other colonized nations. The Aba Women's Riot of 1929 over the fear that women were going to be taxed is an example. There were several types of violent resistance. Some were carried out by individuals like King Kosoko of Lagos, or Nana of Ebrohioni, while others were by organizations, such as the Ekumeku of Asaba and the Ezza of the Ibo. Further still, other forms of resistance were mixtures of violence and diplomacy. The Aro of Arockhukwu offered the impression that they were friendly and that they would embrace colonial administration if the colonizers would hold talks on the subject with them. By this method, the Aros contained the British for more than five years between 1896 and 1901 (Aghenta, 1978:60-63).

Other types of resistance or protest were spontaneous as a result of certain measures by the British that were totally unacceptable to those concerned such as the Aba Women's Riot, the Okeho Iseyin uprising of 1916, and the Ilorin revolts. Equally, some resistance may be non-violent. The famous in this category was the case of King Jaja of Opobo in 1887 (Ikime, 1977: 41-43).

On the theory of "protest", Ali A Mazrui categorized it into four: protests of conservation, restoration, transformation and correction, (Mazrui, 1970:185-196). These were the methods by which people

reacted against, and rejected, the imposed foreign politica!, social and economic rule.

The people of Ilorin therefore, having noticed the gradual disintegration of their much cherished traditional values and authorities, took measures, not only to react but also to protest (Alhaji Ubadanwaki, 1999). This work is therefore aimed at examining the peoples' reactions against imposition of colonial taxes and other administrative changes. Though the revolts were brutally crushed and major participants were punished, most of what they reacted against were equally removed by the colonial authorities.

The Pre-Colonial Administration System in Ilorin

The way Ilorin came into existence and how it later came under the Sokoto Caliphate were well documented. There are people of Kannike, Gobir, Igbomina, Hausa, and Bariba origin in Ilorin (Jimoh, 1994:28-64). However, the administrative system of the emirate needs to be examined since it was through such political arrangement 'hat tributes were paid by the people to the Emir. Prior to the imposition of the colonial rule, there were the Emir's Council, the Council of Ulamah, the Baloguns' Council, and Daudus,'_Council (Baashir, 1999). The Emir was at the apex in the hierarchical order of the council, which included the Baloguns, the Magaji-Geri and Chief Imam. This was the apex legislative and executive organ of the Emirate. It was in the Emir's Council that matters affecting the Emirate as a whole were deliberated and decided upon. It was also this council that ensured the implementation of whatever decisions taken. This was possible because the Baloguns and Chief Imam who were prominent members of this council equally served as Chairmen in their wards. For example, the Chief Imam presided over the meeting of the Council of Ulamah whose membership comprised the Imams, Imale, Gambari, Ajanasi and selected Islamic luminaries (Jimba, 1913).

The council of *Ulamah* was a consultative forum for deliberations, especially on religious matters which have political implications (Hermon, 1929:122-140). It should be stressed that the *Image* and other

members of this council had access to the people at the grassroots. There were, for example, more than thirty mosques in the *Gambari* quarter with *Imams* and followership of not less than fifty adherents in each mosque at the turn of the twentieth century (Danmole, 1984:89-92). The *Imam Gambari* therefore only represented and promoted the views of the *Imams* in *Gambari* quarter at the Emir's council. He therefore reported back to the *Imams* whatever was discussed, and the various *Imams* also disseminated the same to their people during sermon sessions in their mosques. Other *Imams* did a similar thing in their quarters (Danmole, 1990).

Equally, the first Emir Abdul-Salami (1816-1842), created the office of the war lords (Baloguns), to the military challenges of the time, and to select representatives into the governing council from the major linguistic groups present in the town (Adeleye, 1977). Four of such offices created were those of Alanamu, Ajikobi, Gambari and Fulani. The Emir had a ward under him administered on his behalf by Magaji_Gari. The allegiance of the people in the different wards to their Balogun was indeed primordial. Apart from having effective jurisdiction over areas under them at the Emirate headquarters in Ilorin, the Baloguns also had villages under them at the district level. It was incumbent on the Emir to allocate conquered territories as chiefs to the Balogun (Saad, 1986:21-35). As both the spiritual and political leader, however, the Emir had complete control over the chiefs and could appoint a Balogun to lead the Emirate contingent in war. As the political heads of districts with many towns and villages directly under them, the Baloguns too enjoyed enormous power because they could influence the appointment of Daudus (lesser chiefs) in the districts under them. The Daudus managed the affairs of the districts on their behalf. Daudus did not usually reside in their fiefs, and this made them to be absentee landlords. In essence, they had to leave their land to their chosen representatives (Bale or Ajele). Those who had been the head of the aborigines were relegated to the position of village heads. In cases where the size of the village was considerably small, the head retained the titled of *Bale* (Danmole, 1990).

In the political arrangements of Ilorin, the tradition was that the most senior among the Baloguns assume the title of *Balogun Agba* (seniority depended on the dates of their appointments only). He was to lead the remaining *Baloguns*, and also chair the council meetings, in the absence of the Emir. Thus, the *Balogun-Agba* influenced succession to the throne of the Emir in case of vacancy, and he automatically became second in command to the Emir.

Some times, a *Balogun Agba* could be intoxicated with power to the extent of usurping the powers of the Emir. For example, *Balogun Karara* attacked and sacked Offa, despite the opposition mounted by Emir Aliyu and the representative of Governor Reverend C. Philips, as well as the plea of the emissaries of the Emir of Gwandu (Jimoh, 1994:5-120). Also, *Balogun Inakoju Ali* who took over from *Karara* as the *Balogun Agba* exhibited considerable influence over Emir Abdul-Salam II (Momoloso). Initially, the mysterious death of *Balogun Karara* came as a respite for *Momoloso* who intensified his romance with not only the *Oyos* but also the British administration in Lagos (Gegele, 1982:3).

The development did not go down well with the *Baloguns* and other war-chiefs in the town. The War-chiefs led by *Inakoju* Ali revolted against the Emir. When the Emir could no longer bear the revolt, he committed suicide in 1895. From then, therefore, the Emir could not claim to have dominance over the war-lords and their territories. Also, since the arrangement gave the *Baloguns* some level of independence of the Emir and one another, based on the fact that they had control over towns and villages that made up their districts, the control the Emir had on them was further weakened (Gavin, 1988:23).

The imposition and collection of taxes before the incursion of the British therefore followed the lines before it got to the Emir. Dues were paid to Ilorin through the fief—holders. The dues were in form of agricultural produce and livestock collected through the village head:

Bale to the *Babakeke* and then to the fief holder *Daudu* or *Balogun*, and finally to the Emir. Tax payment was thus regarded as an obligation and contribution due to the rulers, a form of mutual

satisfaction and respect between the rulers and the ruled (Danmole, 1984:92).

Colonial Policies

The imposition of colonial authority in 1897 after the British bombardment brought significant departure from the traditional system both in administration and tax policies. The indirect rule as spelt out by Eugard recognized the authority of the Emir as the personality to be consulted and relied upon on all matters (Kirk-Green, 1965:43-44). But at the time colonization became fully entrenched, the power of the Emir had been weakened as contained in the 1900 report of the High Commissioner.

The cause of the unsatisfactory state of the town and district is not hard to find. It is due to the poverty and sickness of the Emir and the enormous power possessed by the Balogun and Chiefs especially Balogun Alanamu who has been virtually king of the country for the past six years to my own personal knowledge (NAK 15/11).

The colonial administration thus resorted to giving Emir Sulayman full backing against the ambitious chiefs in Ilorin as a compensation for the support he gave the British in the wake of the establishment of colonial administration (NAK Ilorprof, 1900). The appointment of Emir Sulayman after the demise of Emir Abdul-Salam II otherwise called *Momolosho* or *Mama* had earlier been at the discretion of *Balogun Alanamu Inakoju* Ali who was the *Balogun Agba*. He nominated Sulayman, who he thought could be controlled and also expected to serve the interest of the *Baloguns* (Adeleye, 1977:185). Though the Emir joined forces with the *Baloguns* in 1897 when Ilorin was finally attacked, the Emir quickly surrendered, perhaps to shift the balance of power in his favour from the *Baloguns*.

The colonial authority then decided to strengthen the Emir's power by dealing with those opposed to colonization as revealed in the Dr. P. Dwyer report:I determine that the best and the safest way to cope with state of affairs was to back up the Emir in every way deemed ... (Adeleye, 1977:192).

The alliance between the Emir and Dwyer was also intended to punish errant chiefs. Lord Lugard not only supported Dwyer but made further suggestions thus:

...The question of the Baloguns' power, one I have often considered, and the solution which has appeared to me the best is the one you named first... viz: after finding out for certain which of the <u>Baloguns</u> is the most ill-disposed, arrest and probably deport him. The effect on the others would be very great indeed and I do not suppose they would give any further trouble. I should be glad if you would accumulate a case against Alanamu (or whoever is the worst) without letting it be known that you are so doing; collect, I mean, sufficient evidence of his hostility or anti-government (NAK Ilorprof 1900).

Though the *Baloguns* and other Chiefs were not aware of the plans of the colonial authority, they kept their peace and avoided confrontation with the colonialists but maintained their disapproval of colonial authority. When the colonialists realized that Balogun Inakoju Ali would not bow to the Emir as he maintained his continuous opposition to colonial authority, he was deposed in 1902 and exiled to Jebba. When his followers were trooping to him, he was moved to Lokoja which is a more distant place from Ilorin (NAK, SNP). Also, in 1903, to show the supremacy of the Emir over the chiefs and efforts to concentrate power on him, Emir Sulayman was presented a staff of office. It was through these major reforms to the administrative set up of Ilorin, that the colonial government established her rule over Ilorin Emirate through the indirect system. Later also, the native administration was re-organized. Fiefs were merged to become districts. The district heads, though appointed by the Emir, would report to the Resident Officer directly. This arrangement led to the

existence of two levels of authority which made up the Emirate. First, was the traditional level, which consisted of the village heads who were directly supervised by the Emir. The second was the colonial level of authority which consisted of the District Officers (D.O.'s) who supervised the districts and were directly accountable to the Resident who had overall authority over the province (Danmole, 1984:32-36).

With the administrative and military supremacy of the colonial authority combined to back the rulership of the Emir in the discharge of his responsibility as colonial chief agent, the *Baloguns* became the subjects of intimidations from the Emir. For instance, *Balogun Gambari* was fined five pounds (\$5) when he exercised his authority by sending one of his followers to a village as his representative. Under the old norms and before colonial imposition, the Emir could not have challenged the *Balogun* for this action because, as fief holder, he had power to post representatives out (Adeleye 1977).

The Riot of 1907

As indicated above, the deposition and eventual exile of *Balogun* Inakoju Ali did not go down well with the people. When he was first moved to Jebba, there were mass movements in solidarity with him and perhaps to plan the next line of action to be taken. The colonial administration acted quickly by moving him from there to Lokoja within the same year. Lokoja was considered a more distant place from Ilorin as said earlier. Thus, the colonial administration succeeded to cut him totally off from his people. The above incident lingered in the minds of the people of the town and acted as a remote cause of their resentment to the tax policy of the Lugardian administration in Ilorin.

Contrary to the former method whereby taxes were paid as at when convenient for individuals and paid with agricultural produce, the colonial policy vested the resident with the responsibility for the assessment of the tributes out of which a quarter must be paid into the purse of the colonial administration. Also the policy required that various categories of people in the town, such as hawkers, brewers, sellers of native liquor and hunters were to be given licence to practise

(Danmole, 1984:95). Hunters were the first to start the revolt because they also engaged in other businesses. Therefore, they had to pay 2 pounds on three or four difference licenses. Fees depended on the number of businesses they engaged in. Therefore, Mallams were specially trained in the ways of registering those to be affected by the new license policy and keeping of documents of payment. Tax campaigns were planned to sensitise and convince adults to pay their taxes in the rural areas (Ikime 1975:673-692). The emissaries sent to pacify them further angered the demonstrators. They marched to the city of Ilorin and over twenty men and women including a pregnant woman lost their lives at the end of the rampage (Alhaji Magaji, 1999).

The demonstration was well received in other parts of the Emirate. For example, hunters in Megida and Babaloke also staged demonstrations in their villages in support of their colleagues in Ilorin the following day from Afon and Ejidongari, the heads of the hunters went to Ilorin to receive first hand information about the situation in the city (Alhaji Kososi, 1998). This was done perhaps in sympathy with those captured or suspected of being the ringleaders.

The Riot of 1913

After the crushing of 1907 riot, the Emir and others who had become agents that served the colonial mercenaries were made to dangle more powers. For example, in the area of justice, little-fathers (Babakekere) who were associates of the Emir became extremely powerful, simply because they were close and had the backing of the Emir (Daudu, 1998). Justice in Ilorin could not be attained easily because the little fathers would take money. People therefore became frustrated and disillusioned in the whole judicial process, to the extent that many petitions were lodged against the little fathers with the colonial authority (Alhaji Amasa, 1986). Though the little fathers were supposed to be messengers of the Emir, their engagement in various nefarious activities and extortion of money from the public, especially in the courts, became worrisome (Alhaji Oriookoh, 1986).

In the same manner, the Emir appointees into the native authority were his family members or trustees. This attitude by the Emir became detestable to other political office holders, especially the Yoruba communities in the town (Said, 1988:34). It was in the midst of these mistrusts against the Emir in 1913 that the annual assessment was reviewed upward to N2 (\$1) - "taki" rent-per acre, and general tax of N1 (10s) per compound. The amounts were considered outrageous. Therefore, virtually nothing was realized, especially from the Yoruba communities under Magaji Are and Baba Isale (Alhaji Amasa, 1986). To warn the Emir and his colonial collaborators, a letter was deposited in the central mosque, together with a chicken feather, one bag of sand, two bundles of unequal twigs and a torch. These were interpreted to have meant warning to the Emir to choose between the collective opinion of the people and the individual will of the colonial Resident. If he failed, the palace would have been burnt completely (Magaji Are, 1984). As indicated above, majority of people in the Yoruba areas of the town refused to pay the tax as stipulated.

Fifteen Mallams from Oke-Imale quarters went to the Assistant District Officer, Mr. Lethem, under the leadership of Imam Lawani to reject the tax assessment formally. When attempt was made to forcefully collect the assessment from the people, there was mass demonstration in the town led by the Mallams. The town Resident Officer, Dr. Dwyer, urged the demonstrators to present their case through the Native Administration which was headed by the Emir. The Emir's invitation was used to stage yet another demonstration to the residences of indigenes serving the native authority (NAK 1913). Imam Awani was arrested and taken to the Government station. Leaders of the Yoruba communities later released him after another protest (Said, 1988:36-43). The protest ended on January, 29th 1913, after the re-arrest of the prisoners set free by the irate protesters. The Emir appealed to the leaders of Yoruba quarters to cooperate with him in his attempt to re-establish law and order in the society. Emir Sulayman also visited the Magaji Are to apologize for the lapses noticed in the styles of administration (Said, 1988:36-42).

Aftermath of the Riots

The 1907 rioters were severely dealt with. To curtail the activities of the hunters and the rising powers of some chiefs in the Emirate, suspects were rounded up. A special panel was instituted to try "offenders". For example, *Balogun Ajibobi* Biala Amodu, *Magajin-Gari* was deported to Yola, *Balogun Ajibobi* and Ajayi Ogidiolu were exiled to Lokoja. Many of the hunters were equally tried for murder and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment (Wahab, 1986:27-35).

Contrarily, however, the 1913 riot was not meted with the types of punishment unleashed on the demonstrators after the 1907 disturbances. Palmer who was the Acting Resident thought that to punish the protesters could boomerang. Instead, serious administrative reforms were effected. The Emir's Council was enlarged to include the two suspected ringleaders: *Magaji Are* and *Baba Isale*.

This was undertaken perhaps to satisfy the Yoruba lineage who felt marginalized (Hermon, 1929:70-74).

Equally, the tax rate was reduced considerably to demonstrate government responsiveness to the complaint of the people. The public treasury *Bayt al-Mal* which also came under attack during the uprising was removed from the Emir's palace and placed under an officer appointed for the purpose (the Emir was alleged to have been using the treasury for his personal purposes). Another effect noticed since the 1913 disturbances was the non-compliance to the law of succession. Before, 1913, the stool had been rotated between the first two sons of Mallam Al-Salih-Alimi (Abdul-Salami and Shitta).

Emir Sulayman who was from Shitta ruling house under whom the two disturbances occurred was succeeded by Shuaib in 1915, according to the laid down rule. But when Shuaib died in 1919, he was again succeeded by his son, Abdul-Kadir in 1919 instead of either one of Sulayman's children (Muhammed Woru, Bello Aremoye, Usman Olokoafa) or another prince from Shitta-ruling house. This appeared to be resentment against Emir Sulayman who was from Shitta ruling house.

Conclusion

After the death of Mallam Salih (Alimi) in 1816, Abdul-Salami, his first son became the Emir of Ilorin and started to fashion administrative machinery that revolved around him and other Emirs after him. The situation however changed as state officers wielded power above that of the Emir. When colonial government was imposed, it became imperative to effect changes, if the Lugardian Indirect Rule Policy was to be fully implemented. To do this, series of measures had to be instituted which included granting the Emir greater power, and the introduction of taxation.

As revealed in this paper, the colonial policies did not go down well with the people. Hunters in Ilorin acted bravely and swiftly by igniting riot from Ologungangan to the Emir's palace and colonial offices. Though the leaders of the rioters were dealt with in 1907, the colonial administrators were quick to have learnt that stiff punishment could not silence Ilorin people. Thus, instead of the leaders of the demonstration of 1913 to be punished as done after the 1907 disturbances, colonial administrators entered into discussions with them, engaged some of them into the Native Authority, and withdrew some of the policies they had kicked against.

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