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The British Subjugation And The Imposition Of Colonial Rule In Akwa Ibom: 1900-1929

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Abstract

The year 2014 marked the centenary of the amalgamation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The 1914 amalgamation exercise undertaken by Lord Fredrick Lugard on behalf of the British Government was the culmination of the British imperialistic agenda which began since the preceding century. By that act, the British brought the diverse people that are now known as Nigerians into a single political unit. The British colonial maneuvering assumed fierce dimension in Akwa Ibom area and cost the indigenous people much lives and property. Contrary to the Eurocentric position that the conquest was executed without resistance, evidence abounds to disprove this position. Research has revealed that this stance was popularized by the colonialists because they did not want the world to know that the indigenous people possessed the military capacity to resist the unwarranted wave of colonialism. Indeed, the subjugation agenda was not a one fell swoop, rather, it lasted for many years. The paper assesses the process of conquest from 1885, when the British declared a Protectorate over the "Oil Rivers", which the present day Akwa Ibom was a part, up to 1929, when the "Women's War", a major nationalistic outburst spearheaded by some Eastern Nigerian women who felt threatened by some adverse colonial policies, occurred. The aftermath of the "Women's War" led to the reformation of some colonial policies. For instance, the Warrant Chief system was abolished; the whole paraphernalia of indirect rule reformed and Nigeria began an irreversible march for self-government.

Introduction

To many Nigerian writers, the colonial period in Nigeria would appear to have started for all the groups in the country in 1900, when Britain assumed direct control over the country. Available evidence does not support this general assertion. Lagos for instance, could be said to have come under British rule in 1851, when after the conquest of 1850, administration was placed under British-appointed Governor, Henry Stanhope Freeman. 10 Years later, the Colony was annexed to the British Crown.

Similarly, the colonial period in Akwa Ibom State could be said to have commenced in 1885 when Britain proclaimed a Protectorate over the Niger District and placed it under Consular jurisdiction of the Foreign Office in London. With the declaration of the Oil Rivers Protectorate over the Niger District in 1885, the whole of the Eastern Province of Nigeria had in law become part of the British Empire. Thus, the year 1885 marked the beginning of the colonial period in Akwa Ibom.²

Having set the stage with the official declaration, British nationals, such as traders, Christian missionaries, political agents and military personnel collaborated to bring the area under pax-Britannica through the imposition of British economic, religious, political and military systems.

Prelude to 1900 Direct British Administration

From 1849 to 1900, southern Nigeria was under the Consular jurisdiction of the Foreign Office in London. During the most of those years, the coastal region of Nigeria was governed by Consuls.³ The appointment of John Beecroft, a trader with many years of experience in the parts to which he was appointed, was a major step in the process which was to end with the imposition of British rule in what became known as the Niger Coast Protectorate. Beecroft was determined to further the course of his fellow traders and was a firm believer in the use of force for the furtherance of British interest.⁴

The official instructions given to him were to regulate trade between the British and the African traders, to protect the British nationals and their property and to end slave trade and introduce legitimate trade.⁵ By 1856, Beecroft in an attempt to control and eradicate commercial friction between the European traders and African middlemen had established the Court of Equity which had prominent European traders and some "African coastal aristocrats" as members. This formed the nucleus of administration in Calabar and Ikot Abasi, places which played host to the legal-administrative arrangement in south-eastern Nigeria.⁶

The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was in many ways a turning point in the history of British relations with the Niger Districts. Hitherto, a vague and undefined form of British Consular authority was exercised in the affairs of the indigenous inhabitants. The Berlin Conference secured for Britain, international recognition and her paramount interest in the District.⁷

Following the 1885 development, Edward Hyde Hewett was appointed the Consul; he was assisted by Harry Johnston, described by

G. N. Uzoigwe as "the peripatetic rascal of British imperialism".⁸ At the end of 1886, Johnston became the Acting Consul. His first pre-occupation was the organization of the organs of administration to take over the existing city states. He attempted to create local government administration based on what he called "Governing Councils" at Calabar and Ikot Abasi. However, this administrative arrangement was short-lived as the scheme failed to impress the British Foreign Office.⁹

It was in 1891 that the British could establish concrete administration in the Oil Rivers Protectorate. In that year, Sir Claude Macdonald was appointed the Commissioner and Consul-General of the Oil Rivers Protectorate with headquarters in Calabar.¹⁰ It was out of the arrangement that the Old Calabar Province emerged, extending from West to East, that is from Benin River on the North-West to Akassa, and extending to the Cross River. The area consisted of two provinces, which for the purpose of administration was divided into three Districts, each under the supervision of a Divisional Consular Officer.

The Districts were: The Eastern District – consisted of the area embracing the Cross River and Qua Iboe (Akwa Ibom River), The Central District – comprised (the former Opobo now Ikot Abasi) and the Bonny River, The Western District – was made up of Benin and Warri Rivers. The area which came to be known as the Calabar Province under the British Provincial administration consisted of the whole of the Eastern District and part of the Central District, embracing the area covered by Ikot Abasi (formerly Opobo) River which was excised from the Central District.¹¹

On the 13th of May, 1893 the British government, acting through the Foreign Office, since the Oil Rivers Protectorate was in law a foreign country, changed the name of the territory to the Niger Coast Protectorate. For the purpose of administration, the British Foreign Office retained the three units identified with the Oil Rivers Protectorate, but re-designated them. The Eastern Division included the capital, Calabar. The territory extended from the Cross River at the boundary between the British government and the German government to Kwa Iboe (Akwa Ibom River).¹²

In 1896, Claude Macdonald was succeeded by Raph Moor and his policy of gradualism in the imposition of colonial rule was replaced by Moor's policy of aggressive imperialism. Moor's notion of effective administration was one in which military force would be the ultimate arbiter. During Moor's period as High Commissioner and Consul-General of the Niger Protectorate, military and punitive expeditions were the most popular instruments for subjugating the indigenous regimes to British rule.¹³

According to Ina, at the time of Moor's assumption of office, there had developed in Britain, a general "cry for new markets". Government officials, especially Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies were determined to ensure that Britain was not squeezed out of Nigeria, where much of the palm oil needed in Britain was produced.¹⁴ Thus, even though Chamberlain advised that "trade routes ought not to be enforced by common Balls", he was nevertheless, convinced that no successful commercial transaction could be carried out without security and that security was often unattainable without the employment of force. This explains why the Niger Coast force under Raph Moor embarked on a series of military expeditions in Akwa Ibom, almost continuously from 1896 to 1900.¹⁵

The exploration of Akwa Ibom hinterland was also undertaken by consular officials like Roger Casement, who in 1894 traversed parts of the mainland region first from Itu and Ibiono Ibom from where he explored Esene in Opobo, Efa and Awa in Southern Iman. He encountered considerable opposition from the people on the way. The following year, Alfred Ashmall Whitehouse, the newly appointed Pro-Consul for Qua Iboe (Eket) District ascended the Qua Iboe from Eket to Inen in Annang where he was forced by the people to return.¹⁶

With the opposition to British penetration and authority, and Britain's own imperial designs, the Protectorate government under Sir Raph Moor resolved to subdue the people by force as a prelude to effective colonial administration. The opportunity came in 1896 when the people of Mkpok in Eket District, sacrificed a youth.¹⁷ The sacrifice had been done by the people of Mkpok as an attempt to propitiate their deity since they considered the visit of Horace Bedwell, the Acting Consul, resident in Calabar, who visited Eket for the purpose of presiding over the installation of a Native Political Agent as pollution. Bedwell and his officials decided to investigate the matter by holding a meeting with the chiefs and rulers of Mkpok. During the meeting, the Europeans were attacked by the villagers and a fierce fight ensued.¹⁸

In consequence, a punitive expedition made up of 180 troops, 400 carriers and six white officers commanded by Major Leonard started off from Opobo to Eket and Mkpok village was shelled. Chief Ofon fled but was eventually captured and sentenced to seven years imprisonment at Calabar¹⁹ where he later died. The troops then invaded Ubium and all the Ubium towns within the radius of five miles were burnt down and a proclamation was issued forbidding any re-settlement until two chiefs from each of the rebellious villages had been surrendered to the Consul.²⁰

From Ubium, the expedition traversed Iman and Nsit and other parts of Ibibioland. A punitive expedition sent from Calabar in 1898 against the "very truculent" Ibibio as a whole overran Afaha Eket after considerable fighting. Subsequently, it took "seven separate expeditions" to subjugate the warlike Eket who had "a wonderful knack of bobbing up again and giving trouble after being beaten". The military tactics used by the Eket was the traditional African guerilla warfare since they were familiar with the terrain, rivers and creeks unknown to the early Europeans. No one can deny that they had put up a great resistance for the preservation of their sovereignty and their traditional institutions.²¹ By the end of the decade, the British had signed treaties with Ikot Akpatek, Ikot Ubo, Ekpene Ukim, Mbiokporo and Afaha Offiong.²²

In September 1897, Oron District experienced its first expedition. According to one account, in that year, the son of one Chief Atanang of Udung Uko murdered one of the women of his father's household suspected of being a witch, the un-born baby was removed from the womb and beheaded. This act was viewed as a threat to law and order by the colonial government. A. A. Whitehouse, the Pro-Consul for Eket authorized the execution of the murderer after he was tried in Calabar. Chief Atanang, stunned by the event swore to avenge the death of his son even at the risk of being killed.²³

Meanwhile a court session was to be held at Udung Uko to sort out some matters, one Etetim Okon Ene, a court messenger, stationed at Ukpata, had been sent to inform the parties concerned. Chief Atanang who had begrudged the government and consequently the Consul for the execution of his son arranged and murdered the court messenger. Whitehouse ordered a punitive expedition to be mounted against Udung Uko.²⁴ The chief was arrested and tried. Eight of his men were found guilty. To further ensure peace and order, Chief Daniel Henshaw was stationed at Oron as the Native Political Agent, charged with the responsibility of appealing to the villages in Oron to accept the new dispensation.

The year 1900 saw a major administrative re-organization of the Protectorate largely in consequence of the extra territory which the abrogation of the Charter of the Royal Niger Company added to it. By the end of 1899, the organization ceased to exist as a chartered company possessing administrative rights. Territories belonging to the company together with the territories of the Niger Coast Protectorate were re-organized as the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with headquarters in Calabar and Sir Raph Moor as High Commissioner. Akwa Ibom became part of the new Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

The activities of the expeditionary force became merged at the turn of the century, with British plans to subdue Aro-Igbo people. Thus, the missionaries and colonial officials believed that the Aro had considerable pernicious influence over the Ibibio, Ijaw and Ekoi neighbours as resident or itinerant traders and custodians of the notorious *Ibin Ukpabi* (Long Juju) oracle which the neighbours occasionally consulted. The British blamed the oracle and Aro influence for the slave trade, warfare and social instability in the region and for the people's opposition to British penetration. The British hoped that by destroying the oracle and Aro influence she would facilitate the imposition of British rule, the spread of Christianity and the opening up of the country. Accordingly, a four columned expedition invaded Arochukwu in December, 1901, destroying its oracle. By January 1902, the territory west of the Cross River was traversed by the troops. On the whole, government confiscated a total of 25,000 guns which the people had accumulated.²⁵

The British Colonial Subjugation Agenda in Akwa Ibom 1900-1914

It is thus clear that by 1900, the agents of British imperialism were not only eyeing but also pointing their tentacles towards the hinterland of Nigeria, including Ibibio country. They were ready without dissenting voice for grand invasion which was to begin that year. The British colonial troops undertook a general "pacification" of the surrounding country.²⁶

As far as the Old Calabar Province was concerned, the so-called "Ibibio-Column" under Captain Morrison marched through Itu, Ediene and Nkwot to Ikot Ekpene where a camp was pitched in 1904 and an administrative headquarters established with Mr. Partridge as District Commissioner. Troops were stationed continuously at Ikot Ekpene from 1904 to 1912. Towards the end of 1904, the troops were used to suppress some "truculent" Annang groups, south-west of Ikot Ekpene. From Ikot Ekpene, the expedition under Major Trenchard struck north-west towards Iyere River and then swung westwards through the present Uyo District where it established a station at Ukpum -Annang with Robert Brooks as District Commissioner.²⁷

The detachment of the troops reached Aka in 1905 with the instruction for Mr. Brooks to start a new District to be known as "Aka". The Aka people went into hiding, but as Brooks decided to go back to Abak, he was ambushed. In the skirmishes, two carriers were killed and several soldiers wounded. The Offot people lost at least a dozen men, the chief was caught and beheaded. A fine of 7,000 Manilas was paid. But the

majority of the people continued to remain in hiding. Brooks then resorted to the tactics of burning houses and seizing livestock. In addition, he attempted to establish his headquarters at Aka market but since there was no satisfactory source of water supply, the headquarters was moved to Uyo. A few days later, 25 villages came in and Brooks went in search of a site for the new Station.²⁸

The people of Afaha Ibesikpo on hearing that the colonial army will pass through their area, sent spies to Aka to determine the strength of the British army. Upon their return, the spies informed the chiefs of the destructiveness of the British army at Aka and therefore advised them to surrender to the British authority. Afaha people dismissed the informants and rather got prepared to resist the army. Consequently, as the troops reached Afaha Ibesikpo, a white officer was killed by the village fighters who were laying ambush against the intruders. The army opened fire indiscriminately and some village soldiers were killed and some wounded. Seeing that the maxim guns of the British had proved superior to their dane guns, the Afaha people surrendered and entered into a treaty of friendship with the colonialists.²⁹

However, some villages were issued with the Union Jack which they were instructed to hoist conspicuously as a mark of their friendliness and as an insurance against attack. The army at Uyo issued friendly villages with drums which they were instructed to beat on the approach of the British army which could amount to an acceptance of British authority, the alternative of which was war; these precautionary measures saved some villages from destruction.³⁰

In Edeobom Nsit, the colonial invaders encountered a warlike Chief Ekpo Nwa. Upon arrival in the village, Ekpo Nwa was ordered to tell his people to surrender at a time when the people had fled with their guns. When a thorough search was done in Ekpo Nwa's house, some human skulls were discovered and when the chief was requested to explain the presence of the skulls, he ordered the officers to leave his compound or face the repercussion. The troops seized him with the intention of taking him to Eket, however, after boarding a canoe at Ikot Iwud, he jumped into the river and drowned himself rather than face colonial humiliation.³¹ When Robert Brooks, the pioneer British District officer for Uyo, invaded Uruan clan, severe fight took place between his troops and the people of Ekpene Ukim. During the encounter, some Ekpene Ukim people were killed and some colonial soldiers were also killed.³²

The expedition of Eastern Obolo was triggered by a Christian pioneer known as David Uwa Ogbodoingbim, who in 1904 reported an incident involving the disappearance of two Opobo men in the vicinity of

the Andoni River. Ogbodoingbim believed that the men had been sacrificed to *Yak-Obolo*, the national deity of the Obolo, accordingly, he informed the chiefs of Bonny and Opobo of what had happened and asked them to pass the information to the colonial administration.³³

The information was duly passed on to Sir Walter Egerton, the High Commissioner in Calabar who decided to adopt positive expedition as an interim solution to this problem. He had already sent several of such expeditions into the neighbouring areas such as Oron and Ibeno. Late in 1904, taking as his legal warrant, the Ordeal and Witchcraft Ordinance with its general provisions against religious practices repugnant to British law, he ordered another of such expedition against the *Yak-Obolo shrine*.³⁴

Sir Egerton assigned the responsibility to A.A. Whitehouse, Travelling Commissioner for southern Nigeria, a man who had extensive experience in the Niger Delta. On September 1, 1904, Whitehouse and his men arrived Obolo with "gun boat" supported by Opobo and Bonny war canoes and ordered his men to demolish the *Yak-Obolo shrine*". During the return trip, Whitehouse and his men systematically removed some striking items of the shrine before setting fire to the shrine. Among the items, according to tradition was the image of *Yok-Obolo*, in the form of a seated figure cast in bronze. As usual, in those days, this and other items found their way to Britain and eventually joined the vast collection of African culture and aesthetic objects found in the museum of that country.³⁵

The Colonial Administrative Structure

Long before Britain decided to establish an effective administration in the Oil Rivers (later Niger Coast) Protectorate, there had already been established powerful tradition of seeking to associate rulers of each local community with the management of its own local affairs under the new regime. Under Sir Claude Macdonald this tradition led to the establishment of the system of local administration which later came to be popularly known as the Warrant Chief system.³⁶ This Indirect Rule System of administration was strengthened by "warrant" or "certificate of recognition" by the government which made the local chief concerned a member of the Native Court. Even when the Warrant Chief functioned as the executive authority in his remote village, he did so as a member of the Native Court which was really the local authority.³⁷

By 1900, Native Courts had been established in Eket, Ibeno, Ikot Offiong, Itu and Opobo Island. In that year, the colonial administration rationalized the courts as "Native Councils" or "Minor Courts". The

former were courts at District headquarters, presided over by the District Commissioner and possessed wider jurisdiction. The Minor Courts, located elsewhere in the District and presided over by "authority" or a local chief, possessed less jurisdiction. The District Commissioner, however, had the overall supervision over all Native Courts including the transfer and review of any case. Following Britain's occupation of the province's hinterland, more Native Courts were set up throughout the area.³⁸

It should be noted that up to 1906, there were three Divisions in eastern Nigeria. These were the Eastern, Cross River, Central and the Western and Akwa Ibom State. The area of our study was part of the Eastern Division³⁹. With minor occasional changes in detail, this remained the basic structure of local government in the eastern provinces during the period up to 1912. When Sir Fredrick Lugard came back in 1912 as the Governor-General of Nigeria which he was mandated to amalgamate, he made efforts to re-mould it along the lines of the system he had established in Northern Nigeria.⁴⁰

At the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914, the already existing Provinces were broken into smaller ones. Due to the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918), the reforms introduced by Sir Lugard were not fully implemented. In 1919, Sir Hugh Clifford took over from Lord Lugard as Governor of Nigeria. The new Governor ordered the Secretary for Native Affairs, S. M. Grier to tour Eastern Provinces and report on the situation there. It should be noted that the bulk of Grier's report was critical to the existing colonial system. Therefore, he advised that a concerted effort be made to discover the natural rulers of the people and place them in positions of authority instead of the government created Warrant Chiefs.⁴¹

After going through the report and the related correspondence, Governor Hugh Clifford and Lieutenant Governor of Southern Provinces, Colonel Moorhouse, agreed that the Native Courts were not fully traditional. It was also realized that many of the chiefs were not the traditional heads of the units they represented. With the exception of a few dissident voices, these officers pronounced Lugard's reforms a grave mistake which was bound to lead to unqualified failure.⁴² Questions were raised on how to make the system truly "indirect" through the harmonization of indigenous and practices of eastern Nigerian peoples. It was noted that the Native Court should be reorganized on a clan basis with a view to ensuring that no clan was split, as was then the case between two or more court areas. Secondly, it was recommended that there should be a scrutiny of the traditional credentials of all existing

warrant holders with a view to gradually displacing upstarts and replacing them with hereditary chiefs. Thirdly, it was advised that there should be a recognition of all the traditional heads of villages and quarters with a view to achieving a more equitable representation of all communities in the courts and finally, that the parent town of each clan be discovered with a view to making its head a paramount chief.⁴³ Before the reforms had reached any satisfactory stage, the government decided to introduce direct taxation into the Eastern Provinces as part of the processes of reforms. According to Afigbo, this article of faith was in consonance with the dictum "without a tax there can be no treasury and without a treasury no real eventual measure of self rule". The attempt to apply this measure as a means of the desired administrative goal was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Consequently, the Warrant Chief System collapsed following the 1929 Women's War.⁴⁴

Colonial Taxation Policy

Among the people of Akwa Ibom and its environs, the issue of direct taxation which the colonial government began to implement was strange to them. Before the colonial interlude, the idea was not in existence. Instead of direct taxation, what were obtainable were occasional levies which were imposed whenever the need arises, such levies were not regularly done and the spending of the money collected was determined by the people. In the periodic communal levies, women were not levied for communal projects. But as it turned out, the British imposed taxation was to be a regular affair and women too were to be taxed.⁴⁵

Even though taxes were to be levied on the people as part of the colonial demand, the timing for its introduction was particularly faulty and proved to be a major administrative blunder. This was the period of the great depression, which witnessed the collapse of export prices and rising inflation occasioned by the cost of imported goods. The prices of African produce during the period of the great depression had substantially fallen and attracted peanuts, thus, discouraging savings from which taxes could be paid.⁴⁶

To worsen the matter, the European merchants fixed whatever prices they cared for the African products. Conversely, while the prices of export goods were falling, those of imported goods were rising. In addition to this economic crisis, the colonial administration did not give detailed explanation and the rationale behind the policy of taxation. The colonial taxation involved careful assessment of the income levels by the warrant chiefs⁴⁷.

The census on which taxation was to be based was bedeviled by a number of problems. The most prominent was that whenever a census officer appeared, a good proportion of the taxable males disappeared and would not emerge until the enumerators had retired. After sometimes, the chiefs were called upon to furnish nominal rolls of taxable males in their areas. These chiefs then fabricated information along the lines requested and submitted these to the court clerks and this became the list which was used in April 1928 when direct taxation was to commence.⁴⁸

In 1928, taxes were collected for the first time throughout the Eastern Provinces, with the aid of warrant chiefs and the presence of an enlarged Police Force and some difficulties were recorded. By the end of the fiscal year on 31st March, 1919, about £85,000.00 was collected in Calabar Province. Opobo-Ibekwe District was rated to have paid the highest tax-rate of 8 pence per head, partly as a punitive measure for their earlier resistance and partly because it was considered as the most prosperous area at the time on account of its palm produce trade.⁴⁹

Most of the people were not aware that the tax collection was not a once-and-for-all levy, "or a kind of collective fine, on a large scale. When it was realized in 1929 that the tax collection would be a regular annual event and an additional financial burden and the administration attempted to carry out closer assessment in order to improve on its figures and tax women as well, there was an eruption of violent protest.

The 1929 Women's War & Its Impact of the Colonial Structure

According to Sir Udo Udoma, the first violent outburst against British obnoxious policy in Ibibioland was recorded in Ukam in Opobo Division, where an overzealous young officer, Mr. R. K. Floyer, attempted to re-assess the area for the purpose of improving tax revenue. He and his newly employed African assistant started measuring farms and counting the yam heaps on them, and recording the number of domestic animals in the yards and on the field. Other items counted included, women's cooking pots and utensils, the number of fire places in each compound and the number of doors in a man's house. Even the number of women's belongings and pieces of apparel (cloths) were recorded. Apart from the question of the taxation of women, the local people were afraid that the counting and measuring of their farms would lead the government to take their land and palm forests⁵⁰

The women reacted angrily to the development. This was dramatized in the violent protest which disrupted the region. Immediate symbols of colonial rule like Native Court buildings, telegraph wire and poles were destroyed. The violence spread to Esene, Abak, Utu Etim

Ekpo, Ikot Ekpene Uyo and Itu. Giving the intensity and the organizational ability of the women, the whole colonial establishment in Nigeria was shaken. Fear became palpable and contagious to the extent that telegram exchanges occurred throughout Nigeria to alert all colonial administrators. Contingents of colonial forces were moved from Calabar and Uyo to Utu Etim Ekpo. All these were in readiness for the protracted violent protest by women who did not spare any government property available to them.⁵¹

In order to quell the demonstrations which had spread to Opobo (Ikot Abasi) the District Officer, Mr. A. R. Whitman resorted to the use of dialogue with the women. He summoned the women to meet him at the District Office on the 16th of December, 1929. Before the meeting took place, a contingent of soldiers of the Nigerian Regiment under the command of Lieutenant J. N. Hill had taken position by the District Office. In consequence of the persistent protest of the women against the imposition of tax on women, the District Officer invited six of the prominent women leaders.

Despite the assurances of the District Officer that the women would not be taxed, the women insisted that the assurances on all the points agreed should be committed into writing signed by the District Officer. Because of the insistence by the women that the document containing what had been agreed should be signed, the District Officer grew angry. Just at that time, there arrived more women from Ogoni and Andoni areas (now in Rivers State) which at that time were part of Opobo Division (now Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State). As these women joined the crowd of the other women, some of them unaware of what was going on in front of them began to beat the fence of the District Office. Lieutenant Hill reacted by ordering the troops to open fire on the women. This resulted in the gunning down of about 29 women by the colonial army.⁵²

The aftermath of the massacre of the unarmed Nigerian women led to the introduction of reforms into the colonial infrastructure. To start with, some colonial officers who were indicted by the panel of Inquiry for misrepresenting their Majesty's government were recalled. These included the District Officer for Opobo, A. R. Whitman, the Resident of Calabar Province, E. M. Falk and the Governor of Nigeria, Sir G. Thompson.⁵³

Conclusion

Primarily due to the "Women's War", the Warrant Chief System was immediately abolished and replaced with the Native Authority system. The new system required the village elders to take over the duties of the warrant chiefs. Indeed, the whole paraphernalia of indirect rule was reformed. These included the Native Courts and Native Treasuries. Following the introduction of some elements of democratic reforms in Nigeria, clans were created thus making clans and village councils to become the units of government.

In addition, the British also criticized the existing tax regime administered by colonial officials in Nigeria. The British Secretary of State, Lord Passfield, was of the opinion that it was patently wrong for the officials to have started with high tax rate in an environment that never knew such measures at all. Anthropological research was commissioned in the Nigerian social system with a view to studying the social, cultural, political and economic institutions of clans in Nigeria. The results of the findings came in form of Intelligence Reports, which were compiled from 1931 in southern provinces. Trained anthropologists were made administrative officers in the services of colonial government.

From this period the people of Akwa Ibom, like other Nigerians, did not relent in opposing aspects of colonial administration which they considered to be at variance with their collective interest. The elites from the area joined hands with other Nigerians to struggle for the independence of the country. Eventually, the yoke of colonialism was broken with the declaration of independence on the 1st of October, 1960.

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