Colonial Capitalism and the Structure of the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board, 1947-1960

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Abstract
Colonial capitalism had far-reaching consequences on the income and earnings of Nigerian cocoa farmers and the environment in the first five decades of the twentieth century. Although literature exists on the history and contributions of cocoa to capital formation and economic development in Nigeria, very little or nothing is known of the challenges and bottlenecks encountered by the cocoa producers in the production and exports of their cocoa throughout the period of colonial capitalism in Nigeria. This paper examines the genesis, structure and impact of what became popular as the largest statutory commodity export monopolies in the British Colonial Empire - the Cocoa Marketing Board - which was inaugurated in 1947. Through a careful diagnosis of the factors that aided the establishment of the Commodity Marketing Board, the paper argues that the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board was used to serve various interests and purposes, which hardly benefited the producers. Rather, the board was a tool of oppression and further exploitation of farmers through rapacious taxes, price regulations and unfavourable grading policies. Indeed, the colonial government found the cocoa board a ready-made instrument for taxing farmers, enriching colonial treasury, and financing anti-decolonization activities.

Keywords: *Cocoa Production, Cocoa Marketing, Exploitation, Colonial Capitalism, Rural Livelihood and Development.*

Introduction

By the end of the Second World War, the colonial government had begun to exert a strong influence over the commodity produce sector (Berry, 1985). Marketing Boards in most countries evolved from cooperative associations created to provide ample opportunities for commodity producers (Kwaku-Ofosu, 2011). Prior to this time, the Nigerian cocoa export trade was dominated and controlled by European trading firms (Berry, 1985). In other words, before 1947, cocoa produce passed through several inspection and grading systems regulated by the colonial government. In this case, the prohibition of export of cocoa below the stipulated standard was firmed (NAI, Ondo Prof 2/3 'File No 217). In 1937, for instance, a revised system, which provided for compulsory grading into four categories, viz. Grades I, II, III, and "sub-Grade", was introduced.

This grading system was used to classify Nigerian cocoa beans according to the standards required in the United States and the United Kingdom. The colonial government supposedly introduced the system for purposes of quality assurance and regulation of prices for each grades accordingly. This consequently encouraged producers to improve the quality of their commodities and strengthened the reputation of Nigerian cocoa in the international market (Kalada, 1964). However, owing to the challenges faced by cocoa producers through the exploitative activities of European and African merchants during the period of the Great Depression in 1937, Nigeria and the Gold Coast (later Ghana) staged a hold-up of their cocoa to end the domineering pricing policies of European firms. In response to these boycotts, the British government through the recommendations of the Nowell Commission took over the responsibility of marketing of cocoa directly. The essence was to regulate producers' prices and prevent a reoccurrence of the 'cocoa hold-up' that hindered the flow of the produce to the metropolitan countries during the period of the Great Depression (Berry, 1980). This was the precursor to the establishment of what became the largest statutory commodity board in the British Empire.

Interestingly, the growing body of literature on agrarian studies in Nigeria has overlooked the genesis, structure and impact of the Cocoa Commodity Board within the context of the tensions, contradictions and reactions it generated under colonial capitalism. Foundational works beginning with Sara Berry, the foremost scholar on cocoa cultivation, (Williams, 1987; Olorunfemi, 1980; Olukoju, 2002; Adesina, 1997a; 2004b; Olorunfemi & Adesina, 2003) and up to Moujama, (2007a, 2013b & 2018), the most recent authority on cocoa history in Nigeria have engaged the contributions of the cash crop to colonial economy and development of capitalism and entrepreneurship in Nigeria, but ignored the history and rationale for establishment of the Cocoa Marketing Board. For example, (Berry, 1970, 1974, 1975b, 1985, 1980a) examines the spread of cocoa production as a process of capital formation involving the creation of a novel rural export sector through migration, risk and investment in land. She notes that Yoruba farmers were able to accumulate capital and were encouraged to take the risk in engaging in cocoa farming. With a keen interest in Ife and Iree cocoa producing villages comparatively, Berry asserts, authoritatively, that the uses of agricultural surplus and their economic and social implications for community development were shaped by both the conditions of production; for instance, governments' monopoly over the relations of production in Western Nigeria and farmer's vulnerability to these conditions. Under colonial regime, the former facilitated upward mobility and accumulation while exploitation was ushered in by the post-independence agricultural policies. On the other hand, Williams, (1987), Olorunfemi, (1980), Olukoju, (2002), and Adesina, (1997a; 2004b) examine the intersection between the African agricultural commodity produce trade, national capital formation and global capitalism, Muojama deals with cocoa and the international economy during the period of the Great Depression.

However, too little is known about the reasons for the establishment, structure and impact of the Cocoa Marketing Board on the cocoa producers. Even less is known about commercial networks as well as the quality assurance mechanisms adopted in the purchasing of cocoa from producers, before exportation to the metropolitan countries. Existing studies are also silent on the roles played by merchants, or dealers, who bought cocoa directly from farmers as regards exploitation and socioeconomic development. Historians working on the development of agriculture and colonial capitalism have rarely looked at the ways in which the colonial government utilised the surplus revenue accumulated by the board in relation to the socio-economic changes in the cocoa producing communities as enshrined in the organisational framework of the Board. A major reason for focusing on the decade and a half (1947 to 1960) is a curious gap in the historiography of Cocoa Marketing, in the post-World War II period. Much has been written about the production and export of cocoa, but the changing socio-economic realities of the cocoa farmers between 1947 and 1960 has been overlooked. To understand the dynamics of agricultural commodity exports in post-Second World War in Nigeria, it is imperative to investigate the evolution, structure, function and policies of the Cocoa Marketing Board in relation to livelihood sustainability of the cocoa producers. Therefore, in the current study, I examine the origin, function and impact of the Cocoa Marketing Board in Nigeria between 1947 and 1960.

Formative History and Policies of the Cocoa Marketing Board

The history of statutory commodity Marketing Boards in the British West African colonies started during the period of the First and Second World Wars (NAI, File 11874/922). In Nigeria, agricultural marketing boards especially the one set up for cocoa, rubber, and oil-palm products were the aftermaths of the Great Depression and World War II when colonial governments found their principal sources of revenue severely reduced due to the autonomy with which the European and American firms operated (Williams, 1987). During the Second World War, agricultural export crops were monopolised by some greedy European and American merchants (NAI, Ondo Prof---File No. 632). The United Africa Company (U.A.C.) with a handful of African trading firms, for example the Anglo-Nigerian Trading Corporation, Flionnis Brothers, Odutola Brothers, and the Nigeria Produce Trader’s Union had purchased nearly half of West Africa's overseas trade in 1938. In 1939, the British government decided to buy the entire cocoa output of British West Africa (Williams, 1987). The private buying agents were considered disorganised, exploitative and inefficient (Kwaku-Ofosu, 2011).

In this way, the Cocoa Marketing Board became a British colonial creation in Nigeria (Olorunfemi, 1980). The colonial government also saw the need to improve producer’s earnings for inclusive development (*Daily Times*, June 1 1946). It was instituted partly to raise farmer’s prices, increase farm incomes, and export proceeds and revenue for the government (NAI, Appendix 443/14/88). From the aftermath of the World War II, it is clear that the main reasons for creating the statutory Cocoa Marketing Board was to: (a) ensure that producer prices were maintained or increased, (b) limit the fluctuations in prices and incomes, and (c) create equal opportunities and returns among producers (Kwaku-Ofosu, 2011).

Consequently, the Cocoa Board was established after the Nowell Commission of Enquiry recommended to the British colonial government to come to the aid of the cocoa farmers. Realizing that accumulation was difficult for the cocoa farmers and traders due to the monopoly power of European trading firms and colonial marketing stricture, the Nowell Commission suggested the idea of establishing the Board (Berry, 1985). The commodity board's cardinal function among other things was to procure cocoa from the farmers at reasonable prices, ship and sell the crop in the European market (NAI, CSO 234/12). The benefits accrued from the sales of the crop by the board were to be invested on the productive base of farmers to expand the Nigerian cocoa industry (Onyemelukwe, 1985). The modality of the board as enshrined in the 1946 White Paper of Nowell Commission was to: (a) fix the seasonal prices payable to producers; (b) determine purchasing arrangements and issue licenses to buyers; and (c) set up and maintain the necessary executive machinery for purchasing, shipping and selling all cocoa purchased (Williams, 1987).

Hence, in 1947, the Nigerian Ordinance established the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board with an Advisory Committee constituted from all concerned ministries. A Bill was proposed to the Legislative Council in August 1947 and was passed into law as the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board Ordinance (No 33 of 1947) by Government Notice No 1257 of 1947, which was endorsed on 6th day of September 1947. This Ordinance empowered the board to buy all cocoa at fixed prices in Nigeria (British Archive---Annual Report, 1947/48). In effect, the British authorities approved the formation of a "shadow" Nigeria Cocoa Marketing Board" and "shadow" Advisory Committee headed by members of the statutory organisations. The shadow Nigeria Cocoa Marketing Board met periodically to fix prices for cocoa produce. At inception, the original members of the Board included Mr. F. E.V. Smith, C.M.G. (Commissioner on Special Duty), The Honourable Director of Agriculture, The Director of Commerce and Industries, Oba

Alaiyeluwa, The Honourable Aderemi II, C.M.G., The Ooni of Ife, and Mr. E.A. Sanda (British Archive - Annual Report, 1947/48).

In July 1948, it became necessary that another Nigerian experienced in the trade be appointed to the Board, as a result, the honourable Akinpelu Obiesan was appointed a member of the Board on August 8, 1948. Other members of the Advisory Committee included representatives of the cocoa farmers, Nigerian buying agents, shipping interests, middlemen from Cocoa Cooperative Association and the Lagos Department of Commerce. In addition, Mr. R.A. Crafts, the Assistant Director of Commerce and Industries was appointed as Secretary to the Board. In March, 1948, Mr. J. Young, Acting Assistant Director of Commerce and Industries, had with his Excellency's approval, acted as Secretary to the Board (British Archive - Annual Report, 1947/48). This initiative combined the duties of the Board with that of the Department of Commerce and Industries. Furthermore, the Board appointed the Bank of British West Africa Limited and Barclays Bank (D.C & O) as its Bankers and opened several accounts with both their London and Lagos offices. The purpose was for the easy making of payments under the Board's Marketing Scheme in the U.K. and Nigeria. This development was further sustained by the creation of an auditing unit. This was in accordance with Section 28 of the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board Ordinance (British Archive - Annual Report, 1947/48).

Structure of the Cocoa Marketing Board in Nigeria, 1947-1960

Realizing the difficulties encountered by the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board in exports of the crops, the board introduced control measures in the cultivation, storing and shipment of cocoa. First, the sales were shouldered on the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company Limited, incorporated in the United Kingdom under the company Act 434 on September 30, 1947. This company had an authorized share capital of £250,000. Out of these, 100,000 shares issued, 99,998 were kept by the Cocoa Marketing Board. A number of selling policies were outlined in the 1947/1948 cocoa season when the Board emerged. It was considered that for the Board to function efficiently, the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company Ltd, required wide discretion in the sales of cocoa on the World Market (N.A.I CSO, 20, File No 234/19). Thus, the company functioned on the basis that:

(a) All unnecessary risks were to be avoided, meaning that sales contracts were to be made as at when supplies became available.
(b) There was to be no discrimination in favour of any consuming countries or any individual buyer. This meant that all sales must be made at the "current World Market Price" and be governed by normal commercial considerations.
(c) Cocoa at the domestic market must be distributed to the World's Consuming Markets in line with stipulated specifications by the International Emergency Food Council.
(d) To discourage the purchase of cocoa on credit by the indigenous produce merchants.

A critical look at the performances of the 1947/48 season operations of the Board shows that the quantity of cocoa purchased by the board for shipment was very low. This suggests that a larger proportion of cocoa at the point was caught in the circle of Grade I and II, against the colossal output of Grade III and IV. By this period, Nigerian Cocoa had gained favourable markets in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Holland, Norway, Belgium, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Austria (British Archive---Annual Report, 1947/48). During this 1947/48 season, Nigerian main crop was sold at an average (f.o.b.) price of £198 per ton, whilst the corresponding figure for Nigerian Light Crop Cocoa was £148 per ton. One fundamental factor in the buying and selling of cocoa with this operation of the Board in 1947/48 season was the rigidity in the process of grading and inspection of cocoa before shipment, compared to the previous systems (British Archive---Annual Report, 1947/48).

This was driven by the recognition of the need to reduce the corruption that had characterised the produce trade as well as improving the general quality of Nigerian Cocoa. For example, during the 1946/47 season, it was recorded that only twenty-three per cent of the total cocoa bought was of Grade I quality. The Cocoa Marketing Board maintained a rigid term on the justification that it was in the long – term benefit of Nigerian cocoa and its reputation on the World Cocoa Market to ensure that Nigerian cocoa met the international quality standards. Given this, the Board secured the support of the Department of Agriculture and insisted that two new grades should be introduced in the 1947/48 season (British Archive---Annual Report, 1947/48). This recommendation was adopted by the Agricultural Department with a firm produce inspection and regulations.

The essence was to impose new Grade II and III stages between Grade I and Grade IV which was of the same quality with Grade II in the previous order. For example, under the pre- 1947 classification, Grade I and Grade II cocoa allowed for unfermented or poorly fermented beans within five per cent and seven per cent quality, the new classification – Grade I, Grade II, Grade III and Grade IV did not permit unfermented or badly fermented beans to have between 10% and 40% score. In other words, under the old system of grading, the producers who refused to package their cocoa up to Grade I standards were offered prices below the real value of their commodity, while farmers that adhered to the new specifications to improve the quality of their cocoa obtained favourable prices (British Archives - Statistical Blue Books, 1948).

Stigmatized by reactions of cocoa farmers across the Western Region of Nigeria, the Board embarked on an intensive campaign in the cocoa growing areas of Western Nigeria to encourage farmers to adapt to the new grading system for the 1947/48 season. Traditional chiefs, especially the Oni of Ife, were employed in persuading cocoa growers to upgrade their cocoa to the board's standards. This was further buoyed by a concentrated drive by the Agricultural Department to show cocoa farmers how to look after their trees and preserve their cocoa to enhance maximum production of high grade cocoa (British Archive---Annual Report, 1947/48). The Board also decided to adopt a steeply price differential between the various grades in order to encourage the production of well fermented cocoa. This brought some improvement in the quality of cocoa in the 1947/48 season. Table 1.0. highlights the system of grading introduced in 1947 season.

Table 1.0: Tonnage Purchasers

Standard Weight	Light Weight		Total	Percentage	
Grade	(Main Crop)	(Light Crop)	Area	Purchases	By grade
I	32,551	1,869	789	35,209	47.0%
II	14,997	2,001	1,564	18,562	24.7%
III	13,987	1,796	238	16,021	21.3%
IV	4,641	571	9	5,221	7.0%
TOTAL	66,176	6,237	2,600	75,013	100.0%

Source: Annual Report of the Cocoa Marketing Board, British Archives, London

It is germane to note that forty-seven per cent of the total cocoa bought by the Board was in Grade I as compared to only 23% in the 1946/47 season. To sustain the tempo of the new grades, the Cocoa Marketing Board publicized its plan to cease dealing in Grade IV cocoa at the earliest opportunity. Owing to the favourable result of the 1947/48 season, the Cocoa Board announced new prices for the 1948/1949 season in August 1948. The critical point was that cocoa beans below the stipulated standard (Grade III) would not be purchased after the end of the 1948/1949 season. However, the question of the prices to be paid in Nigeria for all grades of cocoa in the 1947/48 constitutes a bottleneck between the Board, its Advisory Committee, and the commodity producers. The Board, after several consultations, adopted a conservative price policy for the 1847/48 season. To implement it, the following were brought under debate:

(i) The prices paid for Nigerian Cocoa during the 1946/47 season (£50 (for Grade I and £47.10s.0d for Grade II cocoa which was relatively remunerative to the producers;

(ii) The need to increase the stabilization fund to an adequate level;

(iii) The necessity to correlate cocoa prices with those paid for other commodities and with the general price level. The prices fixed for the 1947/48 season.

Table 1.1.: Standard Weight

(Main Crop)	ξ	s. d	
Grade I	- - 62	- - 10 0	Per ton ____ ex-scale port of shipment
Grade II	- - 60	- - 0 0	Ditto
Grade III	- - 57	- - 0 0	Ditto
Grade IV	- - 47	- - 10 0	Ditto

Light Weight

(Light Crop)	ξ	s. d	
Grade I	- - - - 59	0 0	Ditto
Grade II	- - - - 57	0 0	Ditto
Grade III	- - - - 54	0 0	Ditto
Grade IV	- - - - 45	0 0	Ditto

Source: Annual Report of the Cocoa Marketing Board, British Archives, London

One point of interest, arising from the Board's policy for the 1947/48 seasons was that it allowed the purchase of cocoa throughout the season. However, all cocoa purchased from October to April was designated 'Main Crop' while all purchases made from April to September were regarded as Light Crop. Another was the restriction in the business of cocoa to licensed buying Agents. In this case, 'Cocoa' was limited to those firms and persons who had been exporter of cocoa during the year 1937-39 (NAI--- CSO, File No 234/19, 1948).

The board also screened applicants that applied for license as buying agents. The criteria were based on the applicants' capacity to purchase and handle up to 150 tons of cocoa. This tonnage in actual sense represented 25% (1/400th) of a normal crop of 100,000 tons. This condition also depended on applicants' bagging and storage facilities. The big licensed firms and buyers, however, worked hand-in-hand with local cocoa merchants in the hinterland in the purchase of the crop. In most cases, they were permitted to operate with the license of the big firms. Table 1.2 indicates that both the European firms and the Nigerian licensed buyers had their respective offices and agents in the different cocoa producing communities (NAI, CSO-File No 90, 1950).

Table 1.2: List of approved cocoa buying agents that operated in 1947/48

S/N	Company	Address/ P.O. Box
1.	N. Abrekhem	P.O. Box 306 Ibadan
2.	Association of Nigerian co-operative exporters	C/o registrar of Co-operative Society Ibadan
3.	Compagnie Francaise de I' Afrique Occidentale	Marina Lagos
4.	Cooperative Wholesale Society, Limited	Marina Lagos
5.	Flionis Brother	P.O. Box 18 Ondo
6.	John Holt & co (Liverpool) Limited	Broad Street Lagos
7.	Ibadan Trader Association, Limited	Dugbe, P.O. Box 153 Ibadan
8.	Kajola Kaviousi Limited	Ife
9.	A.G Leventis &co Limited	43/2 Marina Lagos
10.	London African and Overseas Limited	51/55 Broad Street Lagos
11	Mandlas & Karahetis	56/60 Marina Street, Lagos
12	Chestin & Mandrider	P.O. Box 20 Benin city
13.	Odutola Brothers	204 Folagbade Street Ijebu- ode
14	B. Clifford Ltd	7/9 Marina Lagos

15	Peterson Zochonis & Co Ltd	Marina Lagos
16	Societe commercial de I' Quest Africain	Broad street Lagos
17	S. Thomopules & Co Ltd	6 Davies Street Lagos
18	Union Trading Company	P.O. Box 241 Ibadan
19	United African Company	Niger House Manna Lagos
20.	United Development Trading CO	P.O. Box 243.Ibadan
21	Wit & Busch	6/7 Broad Street , P.O. Box 17 Lagos
22	G. Zard & Company	P.O. Box 818 Lagos
23	Rowntree fry Cadbury (Nigeria) ltd	P.O. Box 547 Lagos

Source: Annual Report of the Cocoa Marketing Board, British Archives, London 1948

The essence of this arrangement was to determine the port price of cocoa and the minimum price payable to the farmers excluding transport cost from buying stations to the port (NAI, Ondo Prof File No C232/8, 1939). To facilitate easy clearing of the cocoa at the port, the board decided to compensate suppliers with transport subsidies. In several areas, additional costs incurred in the process of transporting cocoa to the port as well as other logistics such as harbour dues, lighter age and export duties were subsidized. Also, the quota purchase system was established under the previous control schemes whereby buying agents were given a target and were penalized when they failed to meet up to their quota. This was to remove unwholesome competition among buying agents (British Archive---Annual Report, 1947/48).

To actualise this, licensed buying agents were given a fixed allowance of 1/2 pounds per ton. Out of this purchasing allowance, twenty-five per cent was to offset the costs of bagging and grading of the produce. In instances where these functions were performed by middlemen, purchasing agents were obliged to give them the prescribed amount. Under this policy, licensed buying agents were expected to make detailed weekly returns to the Department of Commerce and Industries to show their purchase and stock status. It was on presentation of receipt of shipping right from the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company Ltd that the Department of Commerce and Industries issued shipping allocation which gave buying agents precise guideline regarding the quantity and quality they were to load on a particular ship (Standard Chartered Group Archives, 1950).

The Department of Commerce and Industries assisted the board to ensure that all buying agents obtained their fair share of shipping opportunities, since buying agents were not paid until they had shipped their cocoa. A new method of payment in the same light was introduced by the board (NAI, File 118//922, 1950). The most striking achievements of the board in the 1947/48 season were the changes and improvement in quality and quantity of cocoa produced. A comparison of the total output in the 1947/48 season with the corresponding figures for the previous season would show that those of the 1946 season was larger than those of the 1947/48 season. This new quality assurance system greatly affected the cocoa producers of Western Nigeria in 1947/48 season (NAI, File 118//922, 1950). Table 1.3 shows the volume of cocoa purchased in the Western Cocoa belt during the 1947/48 season with the corresponding figures of the previous season.

Table 1.3: Cocoa Sales in 1947/148 season

Western Area	1946/46 (tons)	1947/48 (Tons)
a) Main Crop	100,724	66,376
b) Light Crop	8,209	6,237
Cameroons/Calabar Area	1,961	2,500
Totals	110,894	75,013

Source: PRO Appendix 111, No1 Review of the season's operation

To make up for the poor income of the farmers and also facilitate social development in the cocoa producing areas, the Cocoa Marketing Board summoned the Advisory Committee to suggest and work out modalities for the provision of scholarships for children of cocoa farmers at Ibadan University College as well as primary and secondary schools . The committee recommended that at least two of the five existing scholarships offered every year be restricted to children of cocoa farmers in each community. On February 1, 1949, the Board decided to sponsor a number of children of cocoa farmers at the University College, Ibadan with an Endowment Fund of £200,000 (NAI, Appendix 443-14/82, 1949). As a result, two eligible children of cocoa farmers who had taken courses in agriculture and agricultural sciences were given scholarships to study at the Ibadan University College, following the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

As regards primary and secondary education in the cocoa-producing towns, the recommendation was repudiated by the Board and the Director for education. In a memo addressed to the Advisory Committee, the Board reacted that:

> I doubt very much whether it would be intra vires for the Board to provide direct financial assistance for primary and secondary education. Apart from the fact that primary education is by its nature a joint responsibility of the locality concerned and the State, it would be impossible to confine the benefit to cocoa farming communities. The Board would be stepping into the field of social services and departing from its principal purpose of promoting economic well-being among the farming community (NAI-CSO 20, File No 14, 1951).

Realizing the progress made in the scholarship scheme at the University College, Ibadan, the Chairman of the Board and Director of the Marketing and Exports in the 1950s consulted with the Colonial Office to provide facilities for the training of cocoa farmers' children in commerce and accountancy abroad (CSO 20, File No 14, 1951). The resolution was adopted and referred to as the Cocoa Marketing Board Ordinance (No.33 of 1947). Eligible candidates received wages as apprentice and a supplementary allowance of about £28 per week for the first two years (NAI, File 83/17/49). The sum of £35 outfit allowance, £10 for books and instruments and £5 per week were received by the children of the cocoa farmers. The total cost per annum for each candidate was £115 (including the £35 outfit allowance), and for the next three years, £40 per annum (British Archives, Annual Report, 1947) (NAI, File 83/17/49).

Unfortunately, the scheme ended in the mid-1950s when directives on its unsustainability were given to Mr. H. Young, the Director of Welfare Department during his visit to London. Mr Young on his return to Nigeria cancelled the scheme and reiterated that funding the scheme through the Board's financial resources was not in tandem with the regulation from the Colonial Office. Thus a communiqué was made to the Welfare Department and the colonial officials in the respective provinces to inform them of the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board's intention to discontinue with the apprenticeship programme on the lines set out in the memorandum (NAI, Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board, 1950).

The expectation of cocoa farmers was that the boards would also use its surplus funds to provide palliative measures against price shortfalls and fluctuations in the world market price (Williams, 1985). However, many farmers considered the board's grading and price control measures very exploitative (see FAO, 1964, Williams, 1976). In effect, the Board had little impact on the lives of the cocoa farmers. The Marketing Board made no significant effort to fulfil its promises to the farmers. Consequently, the Board was widely condemned as an instrument of colonial capitalism in Nigeria.

The structure and policies of the commodity marketing board affected the productive base of farmers and impoverished many cocoa producers between 1947 and 1960 (Olatunbosun, 1985). It could therefore be argued that the board only came to replace the European firms at the apex of the market system to enrich the indigenous ruling elites and the colonial government (Williams, 1975).

Conclusion

We have analysed the nature of the British colonial capitalism and the impact which the establishment of commodity produce boards had on Nigerian cocoa farmers during the last two decades of colonial rule in Nigeria. We showed that the establishment of agricultural commodity boards in Nigeria, during the 1940s, were not driven by the need to improve the quality of Nigerian agricultural produce. Rather, the establishment of the commodity boards were to generate more revenue for the colonial authorities and establishments, as well as enriching the greedy indigenous capitalist class.

Although, the colonial authorities clamoured that the new grading systems and extraneous policies imposed were to upgrade the reputation of Nigerian cocoa in the global market and improve the welfare of the farmers, the Cocoa Marketing Board made no significant effort to fulfil its promises to the farmers. It is not out of place, therefore, to submit that the Board was a new 'weapon of economic exploitation of the Nigeria farmers by the colonialist'. Cocoa farmers were not only demoralised by the bottlenecks and diverse forms of exploitation they suffered through several government-controlled agencies, many poor farmers forfeited farms to their creditors and lost their livelihoods due to the greed of foreign and wealthy indigenous cocoa merchants who purchased their produce at ridiculous prices without remitting the fund. Therefore, the creation of the Cocoa Marketing Board in 1947 led to deagrarianisation in many cocoa producing communities in Nigeria, a situation which continued until the status quo was changed in 1960. The system itself was finally abolished in 1986, thereby ending decades of colonial exploitation of cocoa farmers and the rural environments in Nigeria.

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