

British Colonial Economic Policy in Nigeria, the Example of Benin Province 1914 - 1954

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ABSTRACT The establishment of British colonial administration brought the introduction of cash crops economy to Nigeria- as elsewhere in Africa. In line with the British colonial policy of providing raw materials for the industries of the metropolitan power, Nigeria witnessed the downplay of the importance of the indigenous economic system which made each family self-sufficient in food and other socio-economic needs. Through a deliberate policy of discouraging food crop cultivation, most clans and communities were gradually rid of food supplies and thus introduced into acute hunger in favour of the cultivation of cash crops needed by British industries. Local governments were used as agents of this destruction of the indigenous food crop economy and the vigorous pursuance of the new economic policy. This work focuses on this role of the local government authorities, with the local government in Benin Province as a case study.