

# COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

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# Indirect Rule

- It was a method of administration using local African rulers e.g. chiefs but under the supervision of the white colonial administrators.
- It was Advanced by a British colonial agent Frederick Lugard
- It was First applied in India, then Uganda, Nigeria and Kenya

# Reasons why the British applied Indirect Rule

1. Inadequate personnel — very few British personnel were willing to serve in the tropics.
2. Inadequate funds
3. Fear of resistance from the local people.
4. This policy had been applied successfully in India and Uganda.
5. The British did not want to destroy existing administrative systems
6. The British ruled vast areas with high population and with poor infrastructure.

# The British in Kenya

## Implementation of Indirect Rule

- ❖ They made use of African chiefs as agents of the local administration where possible
- ❖ This policy was used in all African reserves
- ❖ In Western Kenya, the Wanga already had an elaborate government. Chief Mumia was given recognition and made a paramount chief where the institution of chiefs did not exist.

- The British appointed prominent people to the chiefs office e.g.

- ☐ Kinyanjui wa Gathirimu in Kiambu

- ☐ Karuri wa Gakure in Murang'a

- ☐ Wang'ombe wa Ihura in Nyeri

- ☐ Kivoi of the Akamba

- ☐ In Gusii land and Luo land the British identified collaborators and cooperative African leaders to become chiefs.

# Responsibilities of Colonial Chiefs

- 1) Solving petty cases
- 2) Maintaining law and order
- 3) Recruiting labour
- 4) Collecting taxes
- 5) Controlling the brewing of illegal liquor
- 6) Controlling the cultivation of poisonous plants  
e.g. bhang
- 7) Restricting the carrying of weapons
- 8) Mobilizing African labour for public works

- 9) Clearing of roads and foot paths. Indirect rule became more defined when Kenya was subdivided into provinces.
- 10) Provinces — under Provincial Commissioners  
P.C s (British)
- 11) District — under District Commissioners - D.C s  
(British)
- 12) Division — under District Officers - D.O. s  
(British)
- 13) Locations — Under chiefs (African)
- 14) Sub locations — Under headmen (African).



# Effects of Indirect Rule in Kenya

- 1) Division of African communities as appointed chiefs supported the colonialists
- 2) Appointed chiefs facilitated the implementation of colonial laws
- 3) Boosted the British policy of divide and rule through the creation of isolated tribal reserves to serve British interests
- 4) Africans were ruled using unpopular colonial rules

# The British in Nigeria

## Application of Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria

Northern Nigeria was divided into:

- ❖ Provinces — headed by a Resident or Provincial Commissioner (British)
- ❖ Districts — under District Officers (British)

Under these were :

- ❖ The Emirs — district heads and
- ❖ Under the Emirs were village heads.

# Duties of Emirs

- 1) Headed local government in their respective areas of jurisdiction but were responsible to local British Residents and District officers
- 2) Collected taxes — half of the taxes collected was spent locally by Emirs and the other half was sent to the central government
- 3) Responsible for the supervision and improvement of roads, markets and agriculture
- 4) Recruited labour for public works
- 5) Presided over local law courts and continued to apply customary law

- 6) Maintained law and order
- 7) Appointed lesser officials (village heads) responsible to them.
- 8) Note:
- 9) People of Northern Nigeria continued to use Muslim law (Sharia)
- 10) Koran schools were not interfered with
- 11) Christian missionaries were not allowed to enter except in non-Muslim areas
- 12) The indigenous culture, was preserved.

# Reasons for application of Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria

1. Existence of a well-established and centralized system of administration e.g. Sokoto caliphate
2. To guard against resistance by local people by using existing local institutions, hence making British rule more acceptable
3. Problem of administering vast territories with high populations and vast distances to be covered. This was further compounded by the poor transport and communication links
4. Lack of adequate finances
5. Lack of sufficient trained European administrative personnel
6. Indirect rule had worked successfully in India and Uganda
7. The use of Sharia which provided a base to be used to administer the territory.

# Southern Nigeria

**It was unsuccessful due to:**

1. There were many ethnic groups, each with its own culture and socio-political system. it was difficult to bring such people together under one rule
2. Lack of a common religion in the south to unify the people as Islam had done in the north
3. Lack of a centralized government in the South e.g. among the Igbos to implement the rule
4. It was opposed by African traditional rulers because it undermined and eroded their traditional authority

6. Use of unpopular African rulers e.g. the OI among the Yoruba who were given excessive powers
7. The appointed warrant chiefs misused their powers and hence became unpopular
8. The educated elite were ignored. This alienated them and later on they activated nationalism
9. Lack of a common language. in the North, Hau was the language of communication while in the South, the Elite used English and the rest of t people used their local languages
10. The southerners were opposed to direct taxation and forced labour. This led to riots in 1918 and 1929.

# Shortcomings of Indirect Rule in Nigeria

- 1) It was only suited to regions with well-established indigenous administrative structures
- 2) Language barrier between colonial officials and local African rulers
- 3) Chiefs took more interest in matters they understood than their new and unfamiliar duties such as collection of taxes and recruitment of labour
- 4) Lord Lugard's idea of education for chiefs and councilors needed long, patient and skillful effort. Many British officials were not prepared to undertake the above
- 5) It led to the isolation of northern Nigeria which lagged behind in development therefore it was a barrier to modernization



- 6) It interfered with African customs and practices e.g. among the Asante
- 7) In southern Nigeria, it was resented by the educated elite. They hated to be ruled by uneducated traditional chiefs.
- 8) Traditional rulers became unpopular due to the new unpleasant duties they had to perform e.g. tax collection
- 9) Local rulers lost their independence to the British

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# Effects of Indirect Rule

1. African traditional leaders acquired new roles such as collecting taxes and recruiting labour, which made them unpopular
2. Erosion of power and authority of traditional rulers
3. Retarded the socio-economic development of northern Nigeria e.g. western education and technology. This increased the differences between the North and the South
4. It frustrated the educated elite who later on spearheaded the nationalist movements
5. Lack of skilled manpower in the north led to migration of southerners to work as civil servants

6. It weakened the Sokoto caliphate due to subdivision
7. African chiefs amassed wealth at the expense of their people
8. It led to suspicion and mistrust between the educated elite and traditional rulers in southern Nigeria
9. The Emirs acquired more power over their people than before

10. It led to the development and modernization of Nigeria
11. Helped to preserve African culture
12. It led to the modernization of the indigenous system of administration and justice
13. Led to the widespread use of modern currency.

# Direct Rule

## Definition

A method of rule whereby the colonial government ruled directly through its own personnel. The colonial officials were given a lot of power.

# The British in Zimbabwe

## Reasons for use of Direct Rule in Zimbabwe

- 1) The BSACO. had enough personnel to administer
- 2) To acquire full control of the economy and exploit the resources
- 3) The British wanted to subdue the people of Zimbabwe totally
- 4) The traditional system of administration using Indunas had been dismantled during the British conquest
- 5) Presence of many settlers who could not have been ruled by the African Chiefs
- 6) Zimbabweans had been involved in armed resistance (Chimurenga uprising 1896-1897) and this had eroded European confidence in traditional African leadership.

# Characteristics of Direct Rule in Zimbabwe

1. Presence of a large number of European settlers
2. The settlers regarded Zimbabwe as a white settler colony
3. A Legco created by 1898 which was settler dominated
4. African land was alienated
5. Practice of racial segregation e.g. use of the parallel development policy
6. Application of direct British administration
7. Africans did not participate in their governance



8. Recruitment of forced African labour
9. Imposition of taxes
10. Widespread suffering and oppression  
Africans in the hands of the settler regime
11. Impoverishment of Africans
12. Restrictive voting qualifications for Africans
13. Neglect of African education
14. Use of pass laws.

# Effects of Direct Rule in Zimbabwe

- 1) Displacement of Africans from their ancestral land to create room for white settlement
- 2) Creation of reserves which served as African homesteads
- 3) Subjection of Africans to forced labour
- 4) Undermining of African culture through the introduction of Christianity and western education
- 5) Undermining of the power and authority of African traditional chiefs

- 6) Imposition of heavy taxation on Africans
- 7) Freedom of Africans was curtailed. They were confined to the reserves
- 8) Destruction of the African traditional economy
- 9) Racial segregation
- 10) Oppression of Africans by British administrators
- 11) Development of transport, trade and industry in the region
- 12) Rise of African nationalism

# Assimilation

## Definition

- ❖ 'Assimilation' is derived from a French word 'assimlie' which means to cause to resemble' (to become the same as)
- ❖ Used by the colonial masters to integrate Africans into their lifestyles
- ❖ The French assumed that their civilization and culture were of superior standards and they wanted to impose these standards on other nations who had inferior civilizations
- ❖ Africans were to be transformed into Frenchmen, speaking, living, behaving and thinking like French men

# The French in West Africa

The French had 8 colonies in West Africa, known as the French West Africa federation.

These were

1. Senegal
2. Ivory Coast
3. Mauritania
4. Upper Volta
5. Guinea
6. Dahomey
7. Niger
8. Mali

# The French Hierarchy of Administration

## **Paris (French) Minister for colonies**

Role:

- answerable to the French National Assembly for all matters pertaining to the administration of colonies.

## **Dakar (French) Governor General**

Roles:

- Responsible for the administration of the whole federation
  - Settled disputes between colonies
  - Supervised appointment of civil servants
  - Shared out expenses of the federal government between colonies.

# The Colonies

- a) Lieutenant Governor (French) In charge of each colony
- b) Commandant de Cercle (French) In charge of a Province
- c) Chefs de sub-division (French) In charge districts
- d) Chefs de Canton (African Chiefs) In charge of locations.

## Roles:

- Collecting taxes Recruiting forced labour for public works
- Acted as spies for the French colonial government
- Enforced cultivation of crops
- Assisted the government in conscripting Africans in the army.

e) Chefs de village (African village heads) In charge of sub-locations.

## **Roles:**

- ✓ Tax collection
- ✓ Road maintenance
- ✓ Maintenance of law and order.



# Characteristics of Assimilation

- 1) Federalism — colonies were regarded as over-seas communes/departments of France
- 2) Colonized people were to adapt the French culture
- 3) Colonies elected representatives to the French chamber of deputies (lower house of French parliament)
- 4) There were common legal practices in French colonies with those of France (laws applicable in France equally applied in colonies)

- 5) Use of French as the official language of communication
- 6) Introduction of the French system of education
- 7) Integration of the economies of overseas territories with those of the metropolis
- 8) Attempts were made to transform the people/natives (especially in Senegal) into Frenchmen in black skins.

## **Application of assimilation**

- ❑ The French in Senegal
- ❑ The French policy of assimilation was best applied in the four coastal communes of Senegal i.e.
  1. Dakar
  2. St Louis
  3. Goree
  4. Rufisque

## ***Factors that facilitated the application of the French policy of assimilation in the 4 communes of Senegal***

- 1) Presence of a high number of ‘mulattoes’ (people of mixed parentage between Europeans and Africans). They readily accepted and identified with the French culture
- 2) The coastal parts of Senegal had had contacts with France for a long time to be able to assimilate the French culture
- 3) The people in the communes had been conveyed to Christianity and thus found it easy to accept Christianity
- 4) They had interacted for a long period of time with European missionaries, colonial administrators and traders
- 5) Africans in the four communes spoke French and believed themselves to be black Europeans.

## Benefits enjoyed by assimilated Africans in the four communes of Senegal

Note:

Fully assimilated Africans were known as **evolves**

- i. Were granted French citizenship
- ii. Treated as African Frenchmen
- iii. Exercised the same civil and political rights as European Frenchmen
- iv. Enjoyed educational opportunities like the Frenchmen
- v. Could send representatives to represent them in the French chamber of deputies
- vi. Enjoyed the same voting rights as Frenchmen. They could vote and be voted for

- vii. Were employed in the French civil service
- viii. Exempted from forced labour, taxation, arbitrary arrest and other forms of discrimination
- ix. Enjoyed similar trading rights to European Frenchmen
- x. Protection of their rights under the French judicial system
- xi. Their local authority structures were designed like those of the Frenchmen.
- xii. In the rest of Senegal and West Africa, Africans
- xiii. were regarded as subjects.

# Characteristics of Subjects

- a) Could be arbitrarily arrested
- b) Were forced to stay in the army for longer periods
- c) Were left to be polygamous
- d) Subjected to forced labour on public works for little pay
- e) Unable to enjoy the French civil and criminal law
- f) Unable to be culturally assimilated to France
- g) Could be tried by their administrative officers
- h) Were regarded as second-class citizens
- i) Subject to punishment at any time by the French administrators.

# Qualifications for French citizenship

1. Ability to read and write (literacy)
2. Have mastery of the French language
3. Being loyal to the French government
4. Working for a number of years in the civil service
5. Practice monogamy
6. Acquire a set standard of education
7. To have completed the military service as required by French law and attained a distinguished record
8. Africans had to surrender their rights under native law.



# Reasons why assimilation failed

- 1) It was an expensive policy to implement and sustain
- 2) The policy was confined to the four communes of Senegal. The Senegalese interior remained unaffected
- 3) Cultural disparity between the French and the Africans e.g. Africans were polygamous whereas the French practiced monogamy
- 4) Racial discrimination whereby the French resented the idea of equality with Africans. They feared a fusion with the backward inferior race

- 5) Fear of economic rivalry with Africans. The French traders were not enthusiastic to promote the policy because they feared unnecessary competition with the evolve (assimilated Africans)
- 6) Fear by the French that assimilation would make it impossible to exploit raw materials from Africans, who had attained the same status as the French
- 7) The African chiefs were hostile to the policy because their power and authority were undermined
- 8) Increased dissatisfaction from the African elite who were elected to the French parliament in Paris. They were discriminated by their French counterparts

- 9) Africans rejected the policy on religious grounds. They were mainly muslims and resisted attempts by the French to convert them to Christianity
- 10) Differences between the French legal system and African customary laws e.g. inheritance, land cases, divorce, marriage
- 11) The French warned to control the number of Africans being elected to the French chamber of deputies for fear of being out numbered. This would have meant the coloniser being ruled by the colonised

- 12) The policy was unworkable due to the high standards and difficult conditions expected for one to be assimilated e.g. the education system, which was full of bottlenecks and thus very few Africans made it. Other conditions included mastery of the French language and recruitment to the military service
- 13) Rise of nationalism and negritude which condemned the policy.
- 14) Nationalism opposed the idea of cultural inferiority of Africans as propagated by the French.
- 15) Negritude stood for total cultural and political values of African civilization and of black Africa as a whole. It set out to prove that black Africa had something to contribute to world civilization.

# Effects of Assimilation in Senegal

- 1) It undermined African culture
- 2) Undermined the authority of African traditional rulers
- 3) Creation of divisions among Africans in Senegal between the evokes and the subjects
- 4) Formation of a native elite which spearheaded nationalism in Senegal
- 5) African participation in the political matters of France through election to the French chamber of deputies (e.g. Blaise Diagne, a Senegalese)
- 6) It undermined the spread of Islam by the forceful conversion of many Africans to Christianity

- 7) Development of French education in the coastal communes of Senegal
- 8) Creation of a class of privileged Africans regarded as equals to the French
- 9) Senegal was incorporated into the French republic. It was regarded as an overseas provincial department of France.
- 10) Withdrawal of the policy of assimilation 1945 and its replacement with the doctrine association that allowed Africans to develop independently and gave respect to the cultural of the colonies.

# Successes of the Policy of Assimilation in Senegal

1. Senegal was administered in the same way a French province in France Africans in the four communes were accorded the rights due to a full French citizen
2. Assimilated Africans attained equality with white Frenchmen
3. Stamping out of slave trade by the French Christians
4. Introduction of a new system of education in Senegal, modeled on the French system
5. Use of the French language which assisted in building a common consciousness among the people of Senegal.

# Comparison between the British and French Systems of Administration

## Differences

Basic theory

- ❖ British

- ❖ French

## Administration methods

The British used the Indirect/direct rule while the French used the Assimilation/association method.

## Central government

Colonies were administered — separately by a governor accountable to Britain While French Colonies were governed as federations



## **Power of traditional rulers**

Traditional rulers retained their authority under the supervision of British colonial administrators while in French colonies their power Powers were eroded and African chieftaincies were Undermined

## **Law**

- a) Laws in Britain colonies were passed by colonial legco. While Laws applied in French colonies were made in France
- b) The British allowed the use of indigenous customary law While the French had Little regard to customary law

## **Language**

The British allowed use of local native language alongside the English language while the French Emphasized on use of French language.

## **Culture & Education**

- a. The British Preserved African culture while the French undermined the African culture.
- a. The British Emphasized quantity while the French Emphasized quality and total adoption of assimilation.
- a. The British gave missionaries control of African education while the French discouraged missionary participation

## **Attitude to Africans**

The British were patronizing the French were fraternal in relationship on condition that the Africans changed their ways

## **Local government**

The British Emphasized on preservation of existing African institutions while the French applied assimilation of Africans and destruction of their traditional norms

## **Administrators**

The British used a mixture of professionals and amateurs while the French used military officers

## **Citizenship**

Africans regarded as subjects in British colonies while assimilated Africans acquired full French citizenship

## **Similarities in both were:**

- 1) Excessive economic exploitation of Africans
- 2) Use of oppressive colonial laws
- 3) Use of European administrators in senior positions in government
- 4) Creation of the positions of chiefs where none
- 5) Abolition of slavery.

The End 