BRITISH COLONIAL PUNISHMENTS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF NATIVE AUTHORITY PRISON AND CRIME CONTROL IN IDAH DISTRICT, 1929-1945

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines British colonial punishments in northern Nigeria, with a specific focus on the Native Authority Prison in Idah district. Prior to the advent of British administration, Idah was renowned for its indigenous methods of punishments that were rooted in its customs and traditions. These indigenous punishments never alienated offenders from their community, and the idea of incarceration without timely prosecution and integration of offenders was unheard of in the area. However, pre-colonial punishment in Idah was not only predicated on peace-building, but it also had the potential to transform offenders after the process of justice administration and dispensation. While, this was peculiar to those who committed minor offenses, perpetrators of serious crimes such as murder, homicide, and arson were immediately made to face the consequences of their actions, which were mostly total banishment from both the immediate community and adjoining settlements. The study argues that, beyond the fact that the Native Authority Prison was built to sustain colonial labour, which was a common phenomenon at that time, the Native Authority Prison created a new form of asymmetrical power relations in Idah district, a society which had previously been paternalistic in nature. The paper employs the qualitative research methods alongside the exploration of historical primary sources such as oral interviews and archival data as well as secondary sources which include both published and unpublished literature such as books, journal articles and processed internet materials.

Introduction

Idah is an ancient town situated in Igalaland, northern Nigeria and it serves as the traditional headquarters of the Igala people. It holds the distinction of being the seat of the Attah of Igala and also the largest town in Igalaland positioned on the Eastern bank of River Niger, approximately 104 kilometres south of Lokoja.[155] During the colonial era, Idah was one of the major districts created under the Igala Division of Kabba Province, and it also doubled as the administrative seat of Igala Division. Presently, it operates as the headquarters of Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria.

Crimes are a universal phenomenon throughout human society with an age-old history; and every society has its means of controlling them. Conceptually speaking, crimes refer to acts that break the law and are punishable by the law.[156] In most pre-colonial Nigerian societies, those behaviours that were considered a crime traditionally were generally regarded as abominations. Typically, what people considered abominations varied from culture to culture but generally, behaviours or acts such as murder, theft, adultery, and rape, among others were considered serious crimes. Offenders in these categories of crime were held responsible according to community sanctions.[157]

In pre-colonial Igala society, particularly Idah, certain laws were made by the Attah, about crimes and punishments which were meted out accordingly. For example, murderers were faced with capital punishment while thieves were sold into slavery,[158] and so on. Hence, members of the families given such underlining, monitored closely the activities of one another to ensure good conduct so not to drag the name of the family to shame with such criminal activity.

Unlike in pre-colonial period, the colonial administration introduced its criminal justice system in Nigeria which involved the use of police, courts, and prisons for effective crime management. For instance, "the 1916 Native Authority Ordinance gave the Native Authorities power to establish police force to check offences and arrest culprit, court to try them and prison to detain them".[159] Meanwhile, Afeadie suggests that colonial powers in Africa functioned as coercive organs which the colonial authority achieved through certain instruments such as police forces and judicial institutions like prisons.[160] Prisons are often referred to as correctional and reformative centres. They are places/facilities where offenders are either kept for punishment or until their trial at the court of law. [161] Imprisonment entails putting someone in prison or curtailing certain rights they would normally have by confining or restraining them within a particular place. [162] It is therefore expected that recidivism and crime rates will decrease if the objectives of imprisonment are achieved.

Absolute separation or imprisonment of offenders was unusual in most societies in Africa including Idah before the arrival of colonialism. In other words, diverse cultures across Nigeria did not consider imprisonment an acceptable form of punishing offenders. Perhaps only a few number of communities practiced it; however, separation of offenders from the community was occasionally employed as crucial to secure community safety, and there was never incarceration of offenders for an extended period of time.[163]

The central argument of this paper has been consolidated by Bernault's view which traced the origin of prison to three main sources: firstly, the

[155] Daniel A. Akubo, "The Historical Development of Idah Town to 1960". Unpublished M.A Dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, 1983, 9.

[156] Abdulrahman B. Dambazau, *Criminology and Criminal Justice* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2007), 8.

[157] Vivian Saleh. & C. Ume, "An Evaluation of the Penal System: Criminal Justice in Nigeria". In Vivian Salleh (ed) *Colonial System of Control: Criminal Justice in Nigeria*. (Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 2008), 55.

[158] Daniel A. Akubo 'The Historical Development of Idah Town to 1960, 9.

[159] Loveday H. Omu, *Basic Principles of Penology in Nigeria*. (Port Harcourt: School of Nursing, Anyifovy Complex. 2007).

[160] Philip Afeadie, Brokering Colonial Rule: Political Agents in Northern Nigeria, 1886-1914 (Saabracken, Germany: Verlag Press, 2008), 9.

[161] Taslim O. Elias, *The Prison System in Nigeria.* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1968), 5.

[162] Henry C. Amadi, *Essential Correctional Service Techniques* (Oweri: Delight Concept Publisher. 2019), 14.

[163] Vivian Saleh & C. Ume, "An Evaluation of the Penal System: Criminal Justice in Nigeria," 2008, 57.

gaols set up in costal forts and garrisons established at about 16th century; secondly, the devices used for physical confinement during the slave trade; and finally the military lock-ups deployed during imperial conquests in the 1880s.[164] According to him, only after the 1910s did colonial authorities begin to build a permanent network of specialised facilities throughout colonies. Yet, the new prisons did not entirely disconnect from earlier models because the British administrators were not ready to reform it. Thus, colonial prisons emerged as places of captivity rather than custody reviving far from Europe-specific breed of penal archaism.

Several works have been done on the colonial Prison system in Northern Nigeria but no one has explained how it led to social dislocation in the society. Fortunately, prison institutions are a colonial social legacy. Hence, there is need to interrogate its social perspective. Thus, this study is an attempt to examine the historiography of Idah prison and the role played in the control and prevention of crimes between 1929 and 1945. The period under review was noted for high rate of crime in Igalaland including Idah due to the effect of the world economic depression and the Second World War on the area and Nigeria in general. The thrust of this paper hinges on the fact that colonial prison in Idah district created social distancing and further polarized the society, which as well did not reduce criminality.

Crime and Social Control in Pre-colonial Idah District

The nature of crimes which were prevalent in pre-colonial Idah like other parts of Igalaland include theft which involved mostly stealing of domestic animals like goat, chicken, sheep as well as farm produce. There were also cases of highway robberies in the land. Most of the victims of this were long distance traders and farmers who were sometimes robbed of their properties. Other notable crimes which the criminal elements engaged in include rape, adultery, murder, arson, kidnapping among others although these were occasionally recorded in the pre-colonial Idah society owing to the fact that people hardly commit such capital crimes since they knew the implication which was usually total banishment of the offender from the community.[165] While some people engaged in crime out of necessity (that is, lack of basic necessities), some others took to crime out of greed.

Long before colonialism in Idah and Igalaland generally, the people had several ways of dispensing justice which was in relation to maintenance of law and order. Akubo, in his study furnished us with a detailed analogy of certain laws that were put in place by the Attah in relation to crime control. For instance, Murder was punishable by death as anyone who was found guilty to have killed another person was instructed by the Attah to be killed while thieves were to be sold to slavery; men who committed adultery with an Attah's wife was either killed, castrated or thrown alive into the River Niger; If a man committed arson he would be sold as a slave while those who were accused of witchcraft had to drink sasswood.[166] These and several other punishments were the order of the day in Idah district.

The foregoing measures were strictly in accordance with the societal moral values and members of family watch over the activities of one another to ensure good behaviours and prevent dragging the family's name to shame. In addition to the family role in commanding good behaviours among members, the servants and the eunuchs of the Attah and some of the senior chiefs helped in the protection of their persons and property. They were also on the watch out for any slightest public disturbance or unrest. In situation of such occurrence, they would be dispatched to restore and maintain peace instantly.

Masquerade was an important agent of crime control in Idah and the entire Igalaland. Masquerades are people who wear unique mask and clothe as costume. The concept of Masquerade in Igala Kingdom is the same as *Ibegwu* (ancestral spirit or reincarnation) who are believed to possess supernatural powers. The *Ibegwu* is believed to be the spirits of the dead relatives who had lived a good life. As a matter of tradition which commands high respect for Masquerades among the Igala, it is a taboo to reveal the face behind the mask or to say that masquerades are human beings. Only the male elders and the initiated members of the

[164] See Florence Bernault, The Shadow of Rule: Colonial Power and Modern Punishment in Africa, accessed, 19/11/2023, https://wwwresearchgate.net/publication/338265547.

[165] Patricia Abah, "A History of Crime Prevention in Igala Division, 1900-1960," Unpublished M.A Dissertation, Kogi State University, Anyigba, 2021, 43-44.

[166] Daneil A. Akubo "The Historical Development of Idah Town to 1960". Unpublished M.A. Dissertation., Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, 1983, 39-40.

masquerade institution have the real knowledge of the face behind the mask.[167] The high level of secrecy attached to masquerade gave it the power it exercised on the people regarding the maintenance of law and order.

There existed different types of masquerade with their distinct functions. There was the royal, the ancestral, the ritual performing, the religious, and the social masquerades. These various types of masquerades performed different roles ranging from spiritual and political to social matters, including maintenance of peace and security in their domain. But with regards to crime prevention, the masquerade called the *Egwu Ajamalede*, could detect anti-social behaviours among people without any information. For instance, if these masquerades appear in a place where stolen properties are kept they could detect and alert the public. Offenders such as thieves, murderers, and fornicators among others who are capable of tarnishing the image of the community were mercilessly dealt with by the *Ajamalede* masquerade.[168] The actions of the masquerades were to deter people from unacceptable behaviours in society.

In a related development, shrine and deity (Ebo) was another important agent of crime control in Idah. Ordinarily, in Africa before the advent of Islam and Christianity, the worship of God and ancestors through shrines was a popular practice under the African Traditional Religion. There were family and clan idols or shrines in all parts of Igalaland which were believed among the people to possess the power of life and death, fortunes and misfortunes, or good and evil. As a matter of tradition, the shrines were offered all kinds of sacrifices from time to time to be active in the discharge of their duties. The sacrifices or veneration is usually performed during the annual *Ibegwu* (Ancestor) festival.[169] The shrines and deities provided the medium through which the living appeased the ancestors, which is the spirit of the dead, and sought their intervention in averting sudden death, ill luck, and ill health among other calamities that could befall the living persons.

Shrines and deities aided in punishing offenders through diverse ways which were mostly dangerous. Shrines and deities were kept in both farms and homes by the Igala people to watch over their properties against thieves and burglars. Individual(s) who stole such items placed under the watch of the shrines and deities were meant to face several consequences. The spirits from the shrines had the power to kill and inflict instant calamities such as madness, accident especially falling mysteriously in the bathroom and from the palm tree.[170] Moreover, the shrine performed judicial functions. It served as courts where the innocence of individuals accused of criminal acts were tested and verified. Such accused individuals were meant to publicly swear before the shrine or deity. Those found guilty were either to die or face any other punishment within a stipulated time.[171] The prompt and unforgiving action of the shrines was greatly feared by people and therefore served as a vehicle for the maintenance of law and order among people. Hence, despite the lack of a standing modern police force and other law enforcement agents, crimes were greatly frowned upon and discouraged among the Igala people of Idah like in other parts of the area.

The Anecdotes of Native Authority Prison in Idah District

Prisons and Imprisonment are designed and used for various purposes. These include, to punish, to correct and rehabilitate, and to incapacitate. The objectives sought after include deterrence, restitution, reformation and social defence.[172] From the previous analysis of the pre-colonial crime control mechanism, there was no evidence of the existence of any prison or a particular place where offenders in the area were locked up as punishment for their offenses or crimes in Idah before 1901. The emergence of Idah prison was a total brainchild of the British colonial authority. As observed by Elder Ocholi Atabo, prisons were first established in Nigeria by the

[167] Tom A. Miachi, *The Incarnate Being Phenomenon in African Culture; An Anthropological perspective on the Igala in North Central Nigeria*. (Ibadan; Kraft Books Limited, 2012), 81-83.

[168] Tom A. Miachi, *The Incarnate Being Phenomenon in African Culture; An Anthropological perspective on the Igala in North Central Nigeria*, (Ibadan; Kraft Books Limited, 2012), 82-87.

[169] Interview, Ejeh Adukwu, 84 years, retired Civil Servant and Farmer, Idah on 12/01/2021.

[170] Tom A. Miachi, *The Incarnate Being Phenomenon in African Culture; An Anthropological perspective on the Igala in North Central Nigeria*, 86.

[171] Tom A. Miachi, 112.

[172] Etannibi Alemika, Trends and Conditions of Imprisonment in Nigeria, *International Journal of Offenders, Therapy and Comparative Criminology,* Vol. 37, No. 2, 1995, 147-162.

British in areas where serious resistance was offered against colonial rule. For instance, the establishment of Kano Central Prison in 1903 following the British conquest that year after serious resistance from the People of Kano. Idah being the seat of Attah (king) of the Igala kingdom was another area that revolted vehemently against the British incursion. The reason for this resistance was that, if the British were allowed to conquer and rule this area, the position of the Attah would be undermined as it soon became the case after the British recorded victory over Idah in 1896. However, despite the military conquest of Idah in 1896, the people ensured that the Attah stool was fortified against any colonial interference, hence this has made the people continue to offer resistance and sabotage colonial policies.[173] Following the official British proclamation of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria in January 1900, the British implemented their policy of effective occupation which prioritized colonial rule and the spread of English institutions which eventually brought about what Abdulkadir describes as 'coercive infrastructure' such as police, prisons, native courts and several others, to enforce and promote colonial policies.[174]

It was in light of the above that Idah prison was built in 1901 with a capacity to house 102 inmates. Offenders especially those who disregarded colonial policies from the entire Igala Division were kept in prison upon their arrest and prosecution by the Native Authority police.[175] Such offenders included those who were unable to pay their taxes, those who sabotaged colonial policies through deliberate refusal to obey instructions and destruction of colonial infrastructures, as well as those who were involved in murder and other criminal offenses.[176]

Idah prison was headed by a Chief Warder (Keeper) who reported to the Head of the prisons in Lokoja. While the Head of Prisons in Lokoja reported to the Director of Prisons in Enugu and subsequently in Lagos. It was not until 1968 when all Native Authority Prisons were unified and taken over by the Nigerian Government when the prison started having Superintendent as its head.[177] The prison staff were mainly ex-soldiers of exemplary conduct and long service ensuring discipline and effective administration.[178]

Table 1: Showing the Officers (Ex-Soldiers) in Charge of Idah Native Authority Prison in the 1920s

S/N	Name	Registration/Unit Number	Position/Status
1	Cpt. Bargain Dabai	No. 873. 1st Bn "19534"	Chief Warder
2	Cpt. Momodu Zaria	No.891. 1st Bn	Warder
3	Pte. Momo Sokoto	Ist Bn	Warder
4	Pte. Bako Yola	No. 19553 1st Bn	Warder
5	Pte. Amasha Aiyangba	No. 6892 2nd Bn	Government Messenger

Source**:** NAK/LOKOPROF/104 "Annual Report on Igala Division, 1929"

The table above presents a comprehensive list of ex-soldiers other than reservists who were staff of the Idah N.A. Prison in the 1920s. Cpt. B. Dabai served as the Pioneering Chief Warder of the Prison and three other ex-servicemen worked with him as Warders and one other as government messenger for the entire Idah District. The officers were all indigenous Nigerians who were to demonstrate their military experience in the prison to maintain discipline and good conduct

[173] Interview with Ocholi Atabo, Idah, on 05/05/2020.
[174] Mohammed S. Abdulkadir, "An Economic History of Igalaland, 1896-1936" Unpublished PhD Thesis. Department of History, Bayero University, Kano. 1990, 370.
[175] Interview with Ocheni Zekeri, Anyigba, on 02/05/2020.
[176] NAK/LOKOPROF/1555. "Annual Report on Igala Division for 1940-41,"11.
[177] Interview with Yakubu Ashiakaa, Idah Custodial Centre. Idah, Kogi State. On 13/01/2021.
[178] NAK/LOKOPROF/ 104. "Annual Report of Igala Division for1929.

among prisoners.[179] The Native Authority Prison in Idah district played an important role in enforcing the collection of taxes and forced labour which allowed colonial powers to hijacked and put under their control significant portion of the local economy. This is of course being why imprisonment and other punishment were introduced in order to punish Native Africans who refused to comply with the European law. Hence, beyond conviction of the offenders, colonial administration were primarily after bureaucratic efficiency, anticipated economic gains and the needs to enforce native collaboration and ensured total submission by natives to colonial powers.[180]

Native Authority Prison as Colonial Control in Idah District: An Appraisal, 1929-1945

The period between 1912 and 1930 witnessed the most significant change in the history of what is now known as Nigeria. The amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 was a turning point. The amalgamation culminated in the 1916 Prison Ordinance and regulations. The prison ordinance empowered the governors to declare any building, a prison.[181] Prisons in Nigeria were categorized based on the type of prisoners they accommodated; convict prisons for those whose sentence were more than two years, provincial prisons for those serving short terms up to six months, and the native authority prisons such as the one under study at Idah district could be regarded as maximum prison. At the central level were government prisons for holding mainly offenders convicted under the British pattern of supreme and provincial courts.[182]

Crime is a ubiquitous phenomenon across all human societies and every society has its means of controlling them, hence, this is not to say that one control measure is inferior or superior to another. Crimes are anti-social behaviours and acts that violate the law, which is punishable by the law. They are illegal actions that every society frowns upon.[183] In the colonial Idah District like other parts of Nigeria, behaviours such as murder, rape, theft (or having stolen goods), and disobedience to colonial policies among others were classified as crimes because they went antithetical to the societal norms and colonial authority interests in particular.

No doubt, various degrees of anti-social behaviours (crimes) existed in pre-colonial Igala society, which became more prevalent in an organized manner under colonial rule. Several factors contributed to the transformation of crimes in Idah like other British territories in Africa. As noted the colonial incursion into the land which took the form of military conquest with the use of advanced weapons by the British forces like the West African Frontier Force played a key role.[184] This was made possible as many of the weapons used against the indigenous people later ended up in the hands of civilians who used them to further perpetrate criminalities in their environment.[185] Additionally, the efforts of the local Blacksmiths who fabricated or manufactured surplus weapons like Dane guns used to resist the British invaders further complicated the spate of crime in Igalaland.

More so, the colonial economic policies that undermined the economic vibrancy of the natives also compounded the situations of crime in the Igala Division. The imposition of high taxation on the indigenous people compelled many of them to turn to crime such as theft or robbery just to meet up with payment of their taxes and be set free from punishment. For instance, 48 out of 86 persons sentenced in 1933, and 43 out of 79 sentenced in 1935 in Idah prison were charged with theft and high-way robbery.[186] The decade following colonialism was reported for its high rate of crimes in Igalaland.[187]

[179] NAK/LOKOPROF/ 104. "Annual Report of Igala Division for1929.

[180] See Florence Bernault, The Shadow of Rule: Colonial Power and Modern Punishment in Africa, accessed, 19/11/2023, https://wwwresearchgate.net/publication/338265547. 60.

[181] Noe Otu, Colonialism and the Criminal Justice in Nigeria, *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice,* 302, accessed 20/11/2023, https//www.tandofline.com/loi.

[182] Noe Otu, Colonialism and the Criminal Justice in Nigeria, 2011, 302.

[183] Abdulrahman B. Dambazau., *Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2007, 8.

[184] Patricia Abah, "A History of Crime Prevention in Igala Division, 1900-1960, 69.

[185] Patrcia Abah, 69.

[186] NAK/LOKOPROF/24. "Prison Statistics, Igala Division.

[187] Danladi Abah, "Cotton Production and Trade in Igala land of Central Nigeria, 1900-1986". Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2019, 222-228.

Unlike the pre-colonial period, the colonial administration introduced its criminal justice system in the area which involved the use of police, court, and prison for effective management of crimes. For instance, "the 1916 Native Authority Ordinance gave the Native Authorities power to establish a police force to check offenses and arrest culprit, court to try them and detain them."[188] However, the establishment of these institutions in the Idah District was meant to enforce and implement Native rule since the people had been known for their resistance. Despite the popularity of this view among scholars, it can be argued that the institution of prison, was to some extent helpful in the fight against crimes.[189]

The Native Courts which came into existence in Igalaland in 1919 were responsible for the trial of cases charged by the Native Administration Police. The court was also saddled with the responsibility of sentencing individuals who were guilty of crimes brought before it accordingly. Its collaboration with other arms such as the police and prison helped in the reduction of criminal cases in Igalaland. For instance, in 1929, a session of the Idaho Division of the Native Court was held with eight cases before it. Three cases were related to robbery with violence on the part of soldiers on leave. The cases were later transferred to the High Court at Idah which led to the sentencing of the soldiers to five years imprisonment each with hard labour.[190]

Prisons in every society are established to keep away people who commit crimes thereby enhancing the security of the general society.[191] Idah prison which was built in 1901 was one of the earliest prisons built by the British colonial government in Northern Nigeria. [192] In 1943, about 53 prisoners were transferred from Ankpa prison to Idah prison while 26 prisoners were transferred from Dekina prison to Idah prison to serve longer terms of imprisonment.[193]

Table 2: Idah Prison Statistics between 1929 and 1945

Year	Awaiting Trial	Sentenced	Admitted	Total No. Of Prisoners	Sentence expired	Discharged by order	Transferred out of the prisoner	Execution
1929	10	69	298	377	153	122	-	-
1930	12	73	307	392	142	34	-	-
1932	8	74	210	292	159	21	-	-
1933	3	86	273	362	201	47	-	-
1935	-	79	302	381	168	23	-	-
1938	15	72	207	294	118	19	-	-
1939	-	25	182	207	108	40	-	-
1940	-	59	219	278	166	52	-	-
1941	-	60	280	340	223	68	2	-

[188] Mohammed S. Abdulkadir, "An Economic History of Igalaland, 1896-1939" Unpublished PhD Thesis. Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, 001990, 370.

[189] Tekena Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861-1965: Origin, Development and Role* (Ibadan: University Press, 1970).

[190] NAK/LOKOPROF/2076

[191] Patrcia Abah, "A History of Crime Prevention in Igala Division, 1900-1960," 101-102.

[192] NAK/LOKOPROF/24, Prison Statistics, Igala Division.

[193] NAK/LOKPROF/71. Native Administration Prison Regulations.

1942	-	46	247	293	205	25	2	-
1943	-	62	267	329	269	13	2	-
1944	-	47	194	241	195	11	1	-
1945	2	31	379	412	270	13	38	-

Source: NAK/LOKOPROF/24, "Prison Statistics, Igala Division".

The table above displays the statistics of Idah N.A Prison from 1929 to 1945. Regrettably, the statistics for the years 1931, 1934, 1936, and 1937 are missing as all efforts to retrieve the files by the researchers proved abortive. Such items considered in the table above include the number of prisoners awaiting trial, sentenced prisoners, the total number of prisoners admitted for each year, the number of prisoners whose sentences expired, those discharged by order, prisoners transferred out of Idah prison to higher prisons, and those to be executed.[194] With regards to awaiting trial, the number of prisoners in the prison was minimal, in most cases less than 10 with some years recording 0 except for the years 1929, 1930, 1938, and 1946 with 10, 12, 15, and 16 awaiting trial inmates respectively. This indicates that due process was followed to a great extent in hearing cases against accused persons by the courts before sentencing those found guilty to imprisonment.[195]

By 1929, 153 prisoners had completed their jail term while a total of 122 prisoners were discharged by order of the government through the Director of prisons. In 1930, a total of 142 prisoners were discharged from the prison following the expiration of their sentence, while 34 were discharged by order. In 1932, 159 prisoners had their sentences expired and 21 were discharged by order. In 1933, the number of prisoners who had their sentence expired was put at 201 with a total of 47 discharged by order. In 1935, 168 prisoners were discharged on the expiration of the sentence while 23 were released by order.[196]

In 1938, a total of 118 prisoners had their sentences expired, while 19 prisoners were discharged by order.[197] In 1939, 108 prisoners were discharged on the expiration of their sentence, and 40 others were discharged by order. In 1940, 166 prisoners had their sentences expire while 52 others were discharged by order. In 1941, 223 prisoners were discharged following the expiration of their sentence, while 68 were discharged by order. In 1942, a total of 205 prisoners had their sentence expired and 25 others were discharged by order. In 1943, 269 prisoners were discharged on the expiration of their sentence and 13 others were discharged by order. In 1944, a total of 195 prisoners had their sentences expired, while 11 prisoners were pardoned and discharged by order. In 1945, a total of 270 prisoners were discharged following the expiration of their sentence, and 13 others were discharged by order.[198]

As required by prison regulations, prisoners with major charges were transferred out of Idah prison to higher prison especially the maximum prison at Lokoja. For instance, in 1941, 2 prisoners were transferred from prison, in 1942, 2 were also transferred from prison, in 1943, 2 were transferred also, in 1944 only 1 was transferred and in 1945, 38 were transferred out of the prison to the Lokoja government (maximum) prison. When one studies the cases of transfer of prisoners among the three prisons within Igala Division, one would agree that the number of prisoners transferred out of Idah prison was low compared to cases of transfer from both Ankpa and Dekina prisons.

This confirms the report that Idah prison was the central prison in the entire Igala Division. One of the reasons for the high number of total prisoners housed in Idah prison was the transfer of prisoners from both the Ankpa and Dekina prisons to Idah. For instance, while only 2 prisoners were transferred from Idah to Lokoja prison in 1942, 22 and 12 prisoners were transferred from Ankpa and

[194] NAK/LOKPROF/713." Native Administration Prison Regulations.
[195] NAK/LOKPROF/713." Native Administration Prison Regulations.
[196] NAK/LOKOPROF/24. "Prison Statistics, Igala Division.
[197] NAK/LOKPROF/713." Native Administration Prison Regulations.
[198] NAK/LOKPROF/713.Native Administration Prison Regulations.

Dekina prisons respectively to Idah Prison.[199] It is interesting to note that no single prisoner was executed at Idah prison. This is because the British banned capital punishment throughout the country. The prison answered specific needs, the length of custodial sentences differed from that of the ones in the metropolis. Between 1910 and 1950 arbitrary detentions of adult male population were common. This has confirmed the claim that colonial authority invented imprisonment to perfect their socio-economic and political exploitation of their colonies.

Conclusion

This article establishes that the colonial government succeeded in polarizing Idah district by utilizing imprisonment as a weapon of social dislocation. This was borne out of the fact that the Native Administrators poorly implemented prison policy, hence, the local people misconstrued what the colonial Prison stood for. Furthermore, certain factors such as the reintegration and reformation of ex-prisoners that could have helped them to go back to the society and start a new life at the expiration of their jail term was not taken into consideration. This is contrary to the pre-colonial criminal justice system whose tenet was tailored towards peace-building and integration rather than separation of offenders from their community. Idah Native Authority Prison generally served the British administration by providing a serene atmosphere for colonial policies to thrive. In this paper, we have demonstrated the roles of Native Authority Prisons in the control and prevention of crimes such as stealing, murder, rape, homicide, forgery among other criminal acts in Idah District. Therefore, it is worth noting that, Native Authority Prison created new asymmetrical power relations among the people and further dislocated their social structure in Idah district.

[199] NAK/LOKOPRO/24. "Prison Statistics with Annual Report; Igala Division."