

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Indigenous Resistance To British Incursion In Ibibio Land, 1856-1960

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Abstract

From the earliest European contact during the era of the Atlantic slave trade, to the early days of the trade in palm produce, the activities of the Europeans had revolved around the coast and trading with the hinterland was through some African middlemen. Ibibio hinterland did not suffer any incursion during this time. As the trading activities in palm produce drew an increasing number of British merchants to the coast, the new entrants found the need to circumvent the middlemen, and explore beyond the coast in order to have direct access to the source of the Palm oil and Kernel. This quest led to incursion into Ibibio hinterland by the British expeditionary forces. Using primary sources such as oral interviews, archival evidence and secondary sources, this paper adopts historical narrative and found out that the Ibibio people, faced with this scenario, adopted different forms of resistance, including flights from the invading forces, active resistance by engaging in direct fights with the British troops and passive resistance by refusing to carry out their orders.

This study concludes that though the Ibibio people detested the incursion and put up spirited resistance against same, the British eventually gained upper hand, through the use of superior guns, scrupulous disarming of the people, scorched earth strategy of burning houses, farms and other property of the resisters and treaty making.

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the Europeans to the coast of Africa, particularly to Ibibio territory in the middle of the seventeenth century, altered the traditional Ibibio way of life. The Europeans came to Ibibio land in different forms over a long period of time, first as explorers, later as traders, missionaries and ultimately as administrators (colonizers). They traded first in slaves, and after its abolition in 1807, came the palm oil trade, before they finally took over the territories as the overlords. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the relationship between the

Europeans and Ibibio people took a different turn. First, there was the intrusion of the Europeans into rulership in the hinterland. Second, there was a threat to overthrow the traditional rulership practices and judicial system.

Before 1854, Britain as the foremost industrial nation had realised that slave trade and industrialization were incompatible. Industrialization called for political stability, raw materials and markets for finished products, none of which could be guaranteed as long as the slave trade persisted.

Trade in palm oil required much regulation and political stability unlike the slave trade which thrived best in disorderliness and chaos. For instance, in the era of the palm oil trade, the

indigenous African rulers conducted their trading with the Europeans through the traditional councils and under the direction of the rulers in such a manner that the British Consul found it necessary to request permission from the chiefs whenever they wished to pass through the creeks. No trader could trade in the rivers without permission given either orally or in form of a written treaty with the ruler of the area. The palm oil or the legitimate trade inaugurated a pattern of change in the relationship between the Africans and the Europeans.

The arrival of Christian missionaries in Calabar in 1846 marked a new chapter in the history of the Lower Cross River region including Ibibio land. Christian missionaries not only interfered in the internal affairs of African states themselves, but also often called on their home government for protection. In signing the 1842 treaty abolishing slave trade, Efik Chiefs not only required 'legitimate trade' but also requested for the introduction of Christianity in Calabar. In 1846, members of the United Free Church of Scotland led by Rev. Hope Waddell, arrived Calabar and started missionary work. The missionaries later explored the Cross River and Calabar rivers as well as and their basins. They opened stations in Ikoneto in 1855, Adiabo and Ikot Offiong in Ibibio land in 1858.

The period between 1849 and 1899 witnessed the advent of British colonial rule in Ibibio land, when the area came under British Consular administration. In addition to converting the indigenous people to Christian faith, they also spread Western education. Noah emphasized that Christian missionaries were, by and large, agents through whom consular authority was felt in the inland regions, beyond the coast. The informal alliance between the consular authorities and Christian missionaries was of mutual benefit to the groups.

The general opinion of researchers on this subject such as Noah, is that the European missionaries, who arrived after the traders and established closer relations with the Africans were effectively used by the merchants who wanted bypassing the coastal middlemen to penetrate the interior in search of raw materials.

These supercargoes began to conduct the oil palm trade on the basis of the Trust System'. This involved the Europeans giving the middlemen more goods than they could

immediately redeem, trusting that the middlemen would supply the supercargoes with palm oil to the value of the goods delivered to them in trust. It is worthy of note that the value of the goods given to the indigenous middlemen was determined by the supercargoes.

Consequently, the lucrative nature of the "legitimate trade" drew an increasing number of Europeans to the coast of lower Cross River. The new men soon discovered that they could undercut the older supercargoes and deal directly with the hinterland chiefs. This mechanism of trade drew the British government against its will into more direct intervention in the affairs of the native communities. Noah asserts that the actions of these new men were potentially capable of causing trade problems that warranted consular intervention. As noted earlier, before the incursion of the British into Ibibio hinterland, there existed a long history of European interaction with the people of the coastal region of the Lower Cross River, whose geography includes Ibibio land.

British Interaction and Incursion into Ibibio Area

As Noah has shown, before the arrival of the Europeans in the Lower Cross River region, there existed very strong economic ties and bond among the people that inhabited the area. Their main items of trade were agricultural produce such as yams, palm oil and vegetables, which were exchanged for products from the sea, including shrimps, fish and salt distilled from sea water, and locally produced crafts of various description including woven goods made out of raffia and from tree barks. Carvings and pottery formed parts of the merchandise. This means that the localization of certain raw materials was the basis of specialization. As such, for people who lived in the areas with abundance of clay, pottery became their specialization. Others were weavers and carvers depending on the raw materials available in the area. A missionary source states that evidence exist that some section of Ibibio made tools and implements out of iron.

The slave trade formed the backbone of British incursion into Ibibio territory before the middle of the nineteenth century and slave markets sprang up in Ibibio towns and river banks in Okut, Opobo, Essene, Eket and Itu. But it must be noted that at this time, European trading activities was confined to the coast and the coastal chiefs played the role of middlemen. These coastal chiefs were the agents through whom slaves from the hinterland markets reached the Europeans at the coast and through whom the European merchandise brought for exchange with slaves reached the inland people.

The signing of the treaty abolishing slave trade in 1842, and the subsequent introduction of the 'legitimate trade' ushered in a new era of interaction between the Europeans and the people of the hinterland, including the Ibibio people. The 'legitimate trade' centered around palm oil and its kernel. Akpan has succinctly put forward the benefits of the trade in palm produce to the Ibibio people. He posits that 'the Ibibio and her kindred in their quest for fortune discovered the usefulness of palm oil and palm kernel as trade commodities and medium of exchange in the system of trade by barter and later as a real source of wealth in doing business with the Europeans'.

The legitimate trade' followed the same route that was laid down during the slave trade era and the ports that handled slave traffic also handled trade in palm produce. The ports, in Calabar and Opobo majorly handled the shipment to Europe before the incursion of the Europeans into Ibibio hinterland and the opening of the ports in Itu, Ikot Offiong, Essene, Eket and Nwaniba in Ibibio land. Gailey notes that there was not a long delay between the decline in slave trading activities and the discovery and cultivation of alternative products. The presence in the immediate hinterland of the oil palm and the growing demand for all types of oil in Europe meant that the period between 1807 and 1850, the Niger Delta towns such as Opobo and Old Calabar could maintain their prosperity with minor changes in the trading structure. Liverpool in Britain provided the bulk of capital and men to exploit the oil trade. They established a near monopoly by Britain over the coastal trade, but they were prevented from penetrating the region's interior just as the slave traders. The European supercargoes were constrained to live in the coastal towns and barter for oil with the hinterland middlemen, who controlled the rich trade as effectively as they had previously dominated the slave trade.

The legitimate trade' drew an increasing number of Europeans to the coast. In 1852, the British government subsidized MacGregor Lairde to operate a small fleet of steamships on a 'mail run' to West Africa. Many men who could not previously afford the capital needed to undertake such activity came to the delta through this means. The new men soon discovered that they could undercut the older Liverpool merchants and use their steamships to transport their oil. This produced conflicts in the trading community and in the indigenous towns. The mechanism of trade, according to Gailey, and the large number of Europeans involved in it drew the British

government against its will into more direct intervention in the affairs of the native community.

The arrival of European missionaries paved the way for the penetration of the interior of the Cross River region. Merchant who wished to bypass the African coastal middlemen by penetrating the interior, found powerful allies in the Christian missionaries. The missionaries were imbued not only with the desire to convert the Africans to Christianity and educate them in western ways, as well as open new trade routes. In Ibibio land, they aimed first at abolishing such practices as human sacrifices, the killing of twins and reducing the powers of secret societies. What was not considered at the time was that the acceptance of Christianity by a large number of indigenous people would weaken the fabric of the indigenous society. In other words, Christianity weakened the balance between politics, religion and economics.

It was the British economic, political and military actions that weakened the sovereignty and traditional authority of the people of the Lower Cross River region. This was significantly aided by the activities of the Christian missionaries. For one, the Presbyterian mission established in Calabar in 1846 harboured fugitive and runaway slaves. Missionaries denounced these practices as barbaric aspects of Efik government and just like Ekpe laws, trial by ordeal and judicial punishment. Buoyed by these successes from the coastal towns of Calabar, Eket and Opobo, the British advanced inland, initially to explore trade. From the 1870s, the worldwide depression of trade and increasing rivalry among Europeans for markets and sources of raw materials led Europeans to penetrate the interior of African hinterlands and signed commercial treaties with the chiefs. The scramble and partition of Africa followed as the European competition increased. At the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, convened primarily to regulate the scramble, Britain successfully established claims and sphere of influence over the Oil Rivers on the basis of earlier treaties with the chiefs of the area. Subsequently, with a view to establishing effective occupation, Britain proclaimed a Protectorate over the Oil Rivers in 1885.

Between 1871 and 1881, A. A. Robertson and George Watts, both British merchants, explored the Qua Iboe estuary and commenced trade on the river. More undermining of the indigenous cultural and political system occurred among the Ibeno and Oron people after the establishment by the missionaries of the Qua Iboe and Methodist Missions among

them in 1887 and 1894 respectively. In the 1880s also, Consuls E. E. Hewet and Harry H. Johnston explored the Qua Iboe estuary and the adjoining coasts. The first British officer to have penetrated the interior of Ibibioland was the Irishman, Roger Casement, who in 1893 made several journeys in the ship, *Evangelis* to the 'Calabar District'. He made determined attempt to penetrate the interior, but the difficulty was so great that he recommended that it would be comparatively an easy matter to force a way through with the assistance of troops and maxim guns. Casement made several successful journeys from Opobo (now Ikot Abasi), to Qua Iboe river, Eket and as far as Ibeno and reported that the tribes were most friendly and welcomed him along the journey. In 1894, Roger Casement penetrated the Itu-Ibiono, Essene and Southern Iman areas encountering considerable opposition from the people on the way.

In 1895, Opobo and Eket had British Consuls stationed there. Also in 1895, A. A. Whitehouse, a newly appointed Pro-Consul for Qua Iboe (Eket) District, ascended the Qua Ibo river from Eket to Enen in Annang where the people forced him to return.

Ibibio people resisted the incursion into their territory and buoyed by the British imperial design, the Protectorate Government under Commissioner Ralph Moore (1896 - 1903) resolved to subdue the people by force. The opportunity came in 1896 when the people of Mkpok in Eket District sacrificed a youth. When the Qua Iboe missionaries stationed at Okat and the Acting Commissioner visited Mkpok to inquire, they were severely assaulted by the people, but managed to escape. A punitive expedition was sent from Calabar in 1898 against the 'very truculate' Ibibi as a whole. The expedition overran Afaha Eket after considerable fighting. It subsequently took seven separate expeditions to subjugate the warlike Eket who had a 'wonderful knack for bobbing up again and giving trouble after being beaten'.

From Eket, the British expedition proceeded to Mkpok, most of whose houses were destroyed. Mkpok Chief was taken prisoner to Calabar where he later died. The troops then invaded Ubium, subduing Afaha people after a fierce fight. From Ubium, the expedition traversed Iman and Nsit areas leaving behind a trail, burnt villages, confiscated guns and 'treaties' thereby, forcing

the people to accepted British rule. Perham, in *Native Administration in Nigeria*, claims that indigenous 'tribes' in Eastern Nigeria revolted against early European visitors and administrators such that they had to be forcefully compelled to

share in modern civilization in the form of British colonial rule'. By 1903, Ikot Ekpene, Itu and Uyo in Ibibi mainland were opened up as The colonial stations and consuls were stationed there for the first time.

Indigenous Resistance to British Penetration of Ibibi Territory

With the British growing involvement beyond the coast of the Niger Delta, the area was renamed Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893. The British Consul, MacDonald set about the task of breaking the coastal chiefs monopoly and opening up the hinterland to British trade. The British established Governing Councils that combined executive, judicial and legislative functions. Native Councils were also established that exercised powers on judicial matters. These minor Courts usurped the functions of the secret societies and weakened the indigenous machinery of government. By 1896, Ralph Moore was appointed to replace MacDonald. He introduced a system of aggressive imperialism. Moore's notion of effective administration was anchored on military force as the ultimate arbiter. As such, he commissioned punitive expeditions into the hinterland as a means of subjugating the indigenous people.

Noah clarifies that for the protectorate arrangements, most of the hinterlands of the Lower Cross River remained basically the same, safe for inland communities in Ibibi land, including Uyo and Abak, which adjusted to the new demands of the oil palm trade. Trade visits by the British, such as the case of Whitehouse's visit to Ndiya and Etinan of the same year, did not change the position of these communities.

In consequence, an expedition of 180 troops, 400 carriers and six white officers, commanded by Major Leonard, started off from Opobo to Eket. The calculation was that with such display of superior force, Ibibi people will surrender without a fight. But no sooner had the advance party entered the first Ibibi village, they were surrounded by village soldiers. The commander, seeing that they were outnumbered, tried to conciliate to buy time for the main body of soldiers to arrive.

Two hours later, the main column of soldiers arrived, and were ordered to open fire. Mkpok was shelled and Chief Ofon was captured after a futile attempt to flee. He was tried and sentenced to seven years imprisonment at Calabar.

The troops then marched to Ubium. Chief Ekponwa had earlier sent a bundle of 4 poisoned arrows to the Consul, daring him to attack his town. In the encounter, Ubium people, who

showed stiff courage and remarkable resistance, soon yielded to the superior weapons of the invading force. All Ubium villages were razed and a Proclamation was issued forbidding resettlement until two chiefs of the rebellious villages surrendered to the Consul. By the end of that decade, Ikot Akpatek, Ikot Ubo, Ekpene Ukim, Mbiokporo and Afaha Offiong signed treaties with the British.

The expedition that started from Opobo in 1896 was supplemented by another expedition into Oron District in 1897. According to an account of the incidence, Chief Osung Atanang's son had murdered a pregnant woman suspected of being a witch. Whitehouse, the Pro-Consul for Eket ordered the execution of the murderer. Meanwhile, a court session was to hold at Udung Uko to sort out the matter in connection with the murder, and Etetim Okon Ene, a court messenger was 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 then ordered an expedition against Udung Uko.

Starting from Eyo Abasi, Udung Uko was overwhelmed and therefore surrendered and Chief Daniel Henshaw was stationed at Oron as the political agent. Thereafter, the march proceeded to Oyubia, where a court was established in the compound of Chief Enyenihi. The political agent at Oron and the Outpost at Oyubia served as agents for extension of British authority in the Oron District. Noah notes that elsewhere in the Lower Cross region in Uyo, Abak and Ikot Ekpene, no serious encounter occurred between the British troops and the indigenous people. But the people of the areas adopted a different approach to respond to the advancing British patrols. In Mkpok, a meeting was summoned, but the consul's party was attacked. This incidence as reported by Bedwell, is quoted in Noah;

I do not know what happened, but suddenly we were attacked from all sides. We defended ourselves as best as we could, and a fierce fight ensued. We were of course greatly outnumbered, and we were having a bad time of it, when suddenly a friendly chief appeared and with difficulty rescued us.

One of the first acts of resistance by the Ibibio people was armed resistance to fight off the invaders. This is evidenced by the action of Chief Ekponwa of Edebom. As reported by Noah, Chief Ekponwa sent a bundle of 4 poisoned arrows to the Consul daring him to attack his town. In the encounter,

Ubium people showed a stiff courage and remarkable resistance, but soon yielded to the superior weapons of the invading force. In most of the armed resistance, the Ibibio people used both traditional and modern arms and methods of warfare including bows and arrows, spears, machetes, dane guns, spying and ambushes. According to Abasiattai, in many instances, actual fighting was preceded by some parleying and diplomacy between the chiefs and British officials, intended from their respective points of view to turn back the British or to induce the people to surrender.

It was the policy of the British to disarm any community it overran as a means of good behaviour. If the village failed to surrender guns to the satisfaction of the British officer, such villages were either burnt down or the troops would live off it until the demand was met. This policy led to passive resistance by Ibibio people. It heightened recalcitrance and increased distrust of the government. For instance, the Ubium people of Eket Division were forced to surrender their guns, and for this the people resolved to have nothing to do with government until their guns were returned to them. The political officer made strenuous but futile effort to bring them to a peace parley. The Ubium people responded that their guns must be returned to them first and that they would not even accept compensation for the guns since they have a law of harvest that which states that only those who have guns can harvest palm fruits.

Also, one of the resisting acts of some Ibibio communities was to flee. As noted by Noah, when the British troops penetrated the Ibibio hinterland, the villagers often fled on their approach and even after the military patrols, the sight of a white man always caused pandemonium. This was borne out of the fact that many villages in Ibibio land were unwilling and determined not to accede to the demands to hand over their traditional leaders. Such leaders were not only generally wise and an asset to the communities, but religiously and ritually indispensable. And it was believed that to 'sacrifice' them to the unknown 'white creatures' was likely to provoke the anger of the gods and of the ancestors whose interest they were believed to represent among the living.

Abasiattai hints that after the destruction of the Long Juju shrine in Arochukwu in 1901, the British troops were used for general pacification of the surrounding country. As far as Old Calabar Province was concerned, the Ibibio Column under Captain Morrison marched through Ediene and Nkwot to Ikot Ekpene where a camp was pitched in 1904 and an

administrative headquarters established with Mr. C. Partridge as District Commissioner.

Towards the end of 1904 however, resistance against the British persisted in many communities in Old Calabar Province. Hence between 1905 and 1914, the combined expeditionary and Ibibio Column troops undertook many punitive 'patrols' to impose colonial government authority. The troops were used to suppress some 'truculent Annang groups' south and west of Ikot Ekpene. From Ikot Ekpene under Major Trenchard, the expedition struck north west towards Itu as far as Iyere river and then swung westward through Uyo District where it established a station at Ukpum Annang with R. B. Brooks as District Commissioner. Brooks attempted to move the Station from Ukpum to Aka in Offot territory, but the Offot rebuffed his overtures and ambushed his party as they returned to Ukpum.

Another form of resistance was the use of 'supernatural weapons' such as magic medicines (ibok) and poisons. Such weapons according to oral sources also included lightening, and thunder bolt which were said to be manipulated by traditional medicine men with the intention to destroy the British troops, officials and Stations, and charms placed on paths, property or food of those officials to injure them. A traditional medicine practitioner in Oku, Daniel Udobio claims that these supernatural weapons existed and were efficacious, but the veracity or otherwise of this claim cannot be ascertained.

Consequences of the Resistance by Ibibio People

The major consequence for Ibibio people resisting British incursion into their territory was the enthronement of institutions that entrenched the subjugation of the people and established colonial rule in the area. In assessing ways by which the British came to establish their rule in Ibibio land, gunboats and the armed forces were used. The armed forces were always on errand whenever African middlemen were found to act against the wishes of the British; but it was the replacement of the traditional judicial mechanisms of the Ibibio people by the British court system that affected them most. The courts did the most permanent job of translating and enforcing overall British desires. According to Noah, since the proclamation of the Protectorate over the Oil River, of which Ibibio land was a part, British legal experts were always on hand to provide legal terms and consequences to every action not approved by government. Most times, the laws came as Ordinances and at other times they were in the form

of Proclamation, but as he pointed out, every aspects of British wish was accommodated legally. The courts had to enforce the observance of these Ordinances and Proclamations, which for all practical purpose, embodied British desires. Noah also states that the enforcement of the Ordinances and Proclamations helped in no small measure to establish British rule and that the location of the courts in any area had a restraining effect on Africans living there. The Consular Court, like its predecessor, the Court of Equity, was limited to the major coastal ports of the Niger Delta such as Calabar and Bonny. The British courts were never intended to supersede the indigenous system of arbitration and adjudication. To this extent, the consular courts were said to have very little impact on the Ibibio. But as the British expanded their orbit of influence beyond the coast, they introduced the court system to these new areas, since they came to the realization that indigenous system of ensuring stability was inadequate.

The British, ignorant of the Ibibio indigenous system of governance, had concluded that any system of political organization which was not centralized under an Emir or Oba as obtained in other parts of Nigeria, was not a government worthy of its name. For this reason and from the standpoint of the British, there was no system of government among the Ibibio. In 1891, Sir Claude MacDonald was advised not to attempt a radical reform of the indigenous system but to supervise its working in order to ensure the administration of justice. To Noah, by reason of the frugality of the British Treasury, the inadequacy of manpower to manage these new establishments and the spirit of the Court of Equity, which sought to have indigenes involved in such matters that affected their areas, it became imperative that more Ibibio people were called to discharge judicial duties in the courts, hence the appointment of Warrant Chiefs.

Noah says that between 1895 and 1910, courts of various descriptions were established in Uyo, Awa, Eket, Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Ikpa, Itu, Opobo and Ikot Ubo, and people from the localities whom the British thought had sufficient local standing and political weight were appointed Warrant Chiefs. As time passed, the narrow legalistic concept of the Protectorate had to be abandoned for a loose concept that enabled the British to intervene more actively in the domestic government of the African states and people; with a view to securing needed reforms, while still working through the indigenous people and institutions. This led to a system of indirect rule.

It should be pointed out that the strategic way to subdue the indigenous tribes by the British was the military conquest. But even in areas that the British had convincingly demonstrated military prowess, they lacked the troops to occupy the areas permanently, as such, intergroup conflicts often erupted not long after British military subjugation, and Noah reports that there were occasional ambushes of British troops that were sent on patrols, and other law enforcement officers were molested even in areas that the pacification were deemed complete. As such, the warrant chiefs and their courts, according to Anene, were 'set up as a sequel to military subjugation and were expected to give stability and permanence to what was considered pacification'.

In Ibibio land, the reaction of the locals became very evident in the events leading to the appointment and actions of some Warrant Chiefs. In appointing men to the bench of the various courts that the British had established, the British had thought that their appointed Warrant Chiefs ought to have sufficient local standing and political weight. But the local reaction to British incursion and subsequent selection of the Warrant Chiefs did not always align with the British dictates. Noah gives evidence of this reactions when he cites the example of Chief Odukpo of Ikot Anung in Asutan Ekpe Clan; who was suspended from the bench in 1927 for refusing to cooperate with government in the process of preparing nominal roll for taxation, planned for the following year. Also, Chief Udoemah of Etinan lost his warrant, on grounds of not willing to carry out government orders.

In appointing the Warrant Chiefs, Afigbo notes that when the British penetrated the Ibibio hinterland, they needed guides, and sometime the men who acted in that capacity were rewarded by being appointed as Warrant Chiefs by the political officer. Villagers often fled on the approach of the British army, excepting the young men who were prepared to see what the white men was up to; and in some cases, these young men were given warrants. As noted, British patrols more often met with frustration particularly desertion of villages. As the village Chiefs went into hiding, those who remained behind refused to mention the names of the Chiefs; not knowing what the white man would do to them, if the names were given. In the event of this, the frustrated officer sometimes looked around and chose a 'likely looking chum, hung a chain of office around his neck and made him a Warrant Chief, a representative of government in that area'. Rhode Stevens quoted by Noah, recounts incidents to buttress the response of the local people

to the establishment of British courts in Ibibio area. He narrated that as the British patrol team pushed their way from Opobo to Abak, they appointed Warrant chiefs and promptly demanded as their first service to government, food for the patrol. If the demand was not met immediately, the newly appointed Warrant Chief was laid on the ground and given a dozen strokes of cane. As words of this strange behavior spread faster than the patrol, the next village forewarned, put up the village idiot, who duly got the chain of office. However, since the poor man did not have any local standing and could therefore not get the support of his people to deliver on this demand by the British army, he was similarly logged.

Conclusion

In view of the determined resistance by the Ibibio communities, which included, active and passive resistance and in some cases flight from the invading forces, the colonial troops owed their victory mainly to their superior weapons such as the maxim guns, their scrupulous disarming of the people following subjugation and their scorched earth strategy of burning houses, farms and other property of the resisters. The resisting communities failed to pool their resources and effort together. This may have been due to the segmentary social and political structure and fear of reprisal by the colonial troops.

It is to be observed too that the arrival of Christian missionaries, led by the United Presbyterian Mission, the Qua Iboe and Methodist Missions and the subsequent converting of indigenous population to the Christian faith, may have played a part in weakening indigenous resistance in Ibibio land. The informal alliance between the missionaries and the political agents mutually benefitted both groups. In the missionary incursion into the hinterland, they had a duty to identify the trouble spots in the hinterland, which had the potential of disrupting British trade and consular authority would do the needful to subdue such people. For the missionaries, the incursion into the Ibibio hinterland did not arouse much suspicion among the indigenous people as did the one by British agents and traders. The highhanded procedures of the colonial troops in the days of military conquest and subjugation as exemplified by records of burning of villages and seizure of traditional leaders created a state of panic among the people.

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