MIGRATIONS DURING TIMES OF DROUGHT AND FAMINE IN EARLY COLONIAL NORTHERN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Migrations due to war or famine are not new, colonial or post-colonial phenomena in West Africa.[1] It is reasonable to assume that the scale of the migrations, both in time and space, have changed during the 20th century, although this assumption rests upon weak sources for pre-colonial migrations. Since data for previous severe famines, especially during the 18th century are more than weak, a reliable comparison is out of question.[2]

Ecological ruptures and political disturbances left their mark on West Africa during the first period of colonial rule, c. 1900–14. The peak of this period was reached in 1913 when West Africa witnessed one of the most devastating droughts in this century. In the Nigerian context, however, it can be argued that the number of famine refugees in 1914 was probably on a scale not previously experienced. The traditional coping and survival strategies of the local population were put under hard pressure. Migration was often the only way out of the crisis. Men, but also women and children, fled to near and far in hope of getting help and assistance.

1 There is now a vast bulk of literature on this topic, especially for post-colonial famines. Rahmato (1991: 156–161) identifies the flight in times of famines as the final stage, when the resources of a community are exhausted and people start to flee their home areas. See further Alamgir 1980; Den Hartog 1981: 156–158; Arnold 1988: 91–95 and Hugo 1991 on a general discussion on population mobility as a coping strategy in times of a famine. Devereux' monograph on theories of famine summarises and discusses various approaches to famine, including the relationship between famine and migration (Devereux 1993).

2 Brooks suggests for pre-colonial West Africa that human misery and social dislocation, which resulted from periods of ecological and political stress, may have contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Atlantic and Saharan slave trade during the 17th and 18th centuries (Brooks 1986: 56).

There is now a relatively large literature on the history of late pre-colonial and early migration, especially to wage work or slaves and plantations. Colonial rule brought about the establishment of fixed borders and the erosion of former political and economic entities. Various colonial reforms, most significantly the introduction of policies aimed at ending domestic slavery and the slave trade, as well as the tax and monetary reforms, led to the gradual change of pre-colonial society. To serve their own aims, the various colonial administrations – British, French and German – extended or planned to extend the cultivation of cash crops and reoriented trading networks. These changes in the political, social and economic spheres of former entities led to a considerable level of population movement during the first decade of colonial rule (c. 1903–13) in the Sudan and Sahel zone of West Africa (see Wirz 1972; Amin 1974; Lovejoy 1983; Watts 1983; Freund 1984; Austen 1987; Phillips 1989; Manning 1990; Iliffe 1995).

Migrations can have an unintended negative effect. Studies of the consequences of mass migrations during famines in the 20th century support this view. Caldwell's study of the demographic implications of drought and famine in the Sahel zone in the early 1970s is one of the first in this genre (Caldwell 1975). After De Waal's study of the famine in Darfur during 1984–85, the research emphasis has shifted towards regarding famine as a health crisis, where mass migration plays a crucial role (De Waal 1989). De Waal, and others before him, stressed that the mass migration and concentration of people (refugees) on a few sites where hygiene and sanitary conditions are usually rather poor or non-existent, creates conditions for the spread of epidemics. An increased scale of human and animal contact in times of stress triggers an outbreak of epidemic and epizootic diseases. There is often a recognisable shift between endemic disease and the fatal outbreak of epidemics in times of a crisis when weak and undernourished people and animals are the first to succumb. "Hunger does not kill, it is sickness that kills," a saying from Central Africa, is a view shared by outsiders, researchers and affected communities (De Waal 1989: 185–194; Meier 1995: 127). The crucial point is that such health crises occur in the areas of arrival, not departure, of the migrants and may often spread to other communities, who would otherwise not have been affected.[3]

The focus of this article is the Central Sudan, the Sahel and Sudan zone of Niger and Northern Nigeria as well as the Guinea zone of Northern Nigeria and

3 Interesting case studies concerning the late pre-colonial and early colonial situation in Sub-Saharan Africa are among others on Northern Chad by Meier (1995), Northern Cameroun by Beauvilain (1989), the Senegal Valley by Clark (1995), Ethiopia by Pankhurst and Johnson (1988), Angola by Dias (1981) and Miller (1983), Tanganyika by Koponen (1988), Southern Rhodesia by Iliffe 1990 and Southern Africa by Eldredge (1987). For a general introduction to this theme, see Bang 1981.

Northern Cameroon. Here the drought and famine refugees in 1914 were of an unforeseen number and the migrations took the newly established colonial and indigenous administrations by surprise. To search for food and to take refuge during famine was not an unknown strategy for local people, but the scale and the extent of the migrations in 1914 was unique. It will be argued in this paper that, at least in the context of the history of the Central Sudan, such a mass migration was indeed a new phenomenon, becoming possible after the erosion of pre-colonial frontiers of separation due to the new colonial situation. Another new phenomenon that one can link to the effect of the mass migration of 1914 is the unintended spread of the famine by the refugees. It will be argued that the breakdown of coping strategies in Hausaland and partially in Borno (both in Northern Nigeria) was primary due to two kinds of migration that occurred: first, the removal of grain by merchants and by men in search of food after the harvest of 1913; and second, the arrival of refugees on a large scale in the dry season of 1913/14. Only secondarily one can "blame" the colonial situation for the famine in British Hausaland, as opposed to the situation in Niger. Thus, the famine of 1914 can be labelled as the first "modern" famine in the central Sudan and also in other parts of West Africa. Its "modernity" was in an attribute that has been part of every famine since then – refugees.[4]

MASS MIGRATIONS DURING FAMINES – A NEW OR AN OLD PHENOMENON IN THE SUDAN ZONE?

There is a surprising silence about movement of people, or even about refugees, in times of famines in the Sudan zone before the colonial era.[5] For Hausaland, data is somewhat better for the 19th century and records are available for the famine known as *Banga-Banga* (c. 1855). Migrants seemed to have taken refuge in the Western part of Kano Emirate, coming from the Eastern part of the emirate, which since 1852 had been a theatre of the war between the armies of the Sokoto Caliphate and the rebellious Emir Bukhari of Hadejia. Warfare (1852–55) and

4 I have expressed this as a working hypothesis in a previous paper (Weiss 1995b) and further elaborated this in my dissertation monograph (Weiss 1997).

5 There is some data about pre-19th-century famine movements in West Africa. Lovejoy (1986) has noted population movements due to the ecological and political upheavals in Borno during the 18th-century, whereas Webb (1995) noted similar movements in the Senegambia region during the same period. Brooks (1986: 56–57) connects the westward movement of the Fula herders and the era of Fula ascendancy in Western Africa with ecological and political stress between the 18th and the late 19th century.

drought (in 1855) had forced people to take refuge within the same emirate (Weiss 1995a: 150).[6]

However, it can be argued that mass migrations in times of famines are a rather old phenomenon in the Sudan zone. Hausa as well as Soninke oral traditions mention the dispersion of people during droughts. The "Song of Bagauda" (*Wakar Bagauda*) attributes the rise of Kano to a "killing famine" (*babban yunwa*),[7] whereas the "Epic of Wagadu" connects the dispersion of Wagadu or ancient Ghana to a severe drought and a "seven-year" famine.[8] Recent studies by Brooks (1993) and Webb (1995) have focused on the interaction between environmental and socio-political history and further pointed to the negative as well as the positive aspects of the consequences of environmentally induced migration in West Africa, especially in the Sahel and Sudan savannah.[9]

The silence of our sources with regards to migration during famines must be challenged for the simple reason that it contradicts our knowledge about how humans adapt in times of stress and crises. Various investigations have shown that livestock herders in times of cattle epizootics were prone to move (Stenning 1959; Waller 1988; Koponen 1988). If only they had the chance, they tried to escape infected regions with their cattle. Such movements sometimes took them far away from their original grazing areas as is known to have happened during the epizootic of bovine pleuro-pneumonia of the late 1860s and during the epizootic of rinderpest of the early 1890s in the Sudan savannah. However, this kind of migration, or escape, was not a mass phenomenon and it did not have any

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6 Lovejoy in several studies has suggested that the 18th century witnessed several periods of prolonged drought and political insecurity that did lead to massive population movements in the Sahel and Sudan zone. His sources for this claim are rather weak (Lovejoy 1983; Lovejoy 1986; also already in Lovejoy and Baier 1975: 573–574). Possibly the immigration of Agadeswa and Agalawa merchants from the Air to Kano and Katsina took place in the latter half and the end of the 18th century and is most probably connected with a prolonged drought in the Air (Lovejoy 1980). Lovejoy's view has been challenged by Dan Asabe (1989–94: 102–103).

7 Hiskett 1965: 114–115. According to the internal chronology of the *Wakar Bagauda*, the famine would have occurred during the reign of Bagauda, the first ruler of Kano, sometimes during the 11th century AD. According to Smith's interpretation, the famine drove many strangers into Bagauda's community and the community expanded (Smith 1997: 112). However, it can be argued that the story about the famine is an insert as the song also connects the coming of Tuaregs from Aïr and the establishment of Bugaje (Tuareg serfs and slaves) settlements in the Kano region with this particular *babban yunwa*. The immigration of Tuareg and the establishment of the Bugaje settlements is, however, dated to the 18th century.

8 *The Epic of Wagadu*, pp. 6–7. See further the discussion of Conrad and Fisher (1983) as well as of Brooks (1985).

9 Among the positive aspects one would include the spread of know-how, like farming techniques as well as plants, commercial networks and the movements of blacksmiths. The negative aspect was the spread of political conflict zones and the loss of human freedom.

crucial impact on the sedentary, farming population (Weiss 1995a; 1998b). An extreme case would be the killing of one's livestock to save oneself from starvation. Such cases seem to be rare, but did occur. For example, about 1835 Borno was hit by a severe famine, which caused a large-scale migration of Koyam within Borno. This famine was called *Dalo damawa* and according to oral tradition most cattle was killed by the people in Borno to save themselves from starvation. It seems as if the migration of the Koyam, who were known as pastoral people, followed after the cattle killing.[10]

There are also some scattered notes about the behaviour of the sedentary population during times of stress.[11] A general way of reacting to the threat of an approaching army or slave raiding party was to escape and to take refuge in the bush, out of reach of the enemy. However, people did not hide for a long time; when the enemy had departed, one could return to one's homestead. It was not a mass phenomenon. Generally, it was more a local and very seldom a regional phenomenon (Weiss 1995a).

A very well known way to survive a famine in many parts of Africa was to sell members of a community into slavery or pawnship and voluntary slavery (Miller 1982: 29; Lovejoy 1983: 69–70, 149, 235; critical remarks are presented by Meillasoux 1989: 34–37). However, to sell someone into slavery or pawn oneself seems to have been more of an extreme case and only very seldom can it be defined as a mass phenomenon. For instance, the only kind of a mass migration in times of stress in the central Sudan is found in combination with famine among starving non-Muslim communities in the Guinea savannah.[12] Oral traditions of the Angass (Ngas), who live in the southern part of the Jos Plateau in Nigeria, tell us that considerably more than half of the population went "voluntarily" into slavery in Bauchi Emirate sometime during the middle of the 19th century (Isichei 1983: 41). Other non-Muslim communities, such as the Batta, Bashama and Tangale, were said to have sold their children in times of hardship, or to have been accused by their Muslim neighbours of doing so (Temple 1922: 54, 349).

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Not all migrations or movements were connected with force, and not all can be blamed on the colonial system or the transformation of the West African political, economic and social setting by the European powers. Both pastoral and arable

10 NNAK Maiprof 2/1 264/1919: 5.

11 Oral literature is of extreme importance. For Northern Nigeria, I have found bits of pieces of information in published praise-songs but also in 19th-century European travel accounts.

12 The Muslims condemned very strongly this habit (Mischlich 1911: 141).

agriculture involves migration. As most of West Africa's agriculture is rain-fed, the seasonal variations of rainfall puts its limit on the farming cycle. Another basic factor is the general scarcity of labour, especially during the farming season, which is often solved by intra- as well as inter-village labour mobility. These small-scale movements of labour were an essential and integral part of numerous farming systems, dating back to the pre-colonial era. A special case is the dry-season movement of people. Short- and long-distance trading, migrant workers at workshops producing textiles, leather goods, iron as well as dry-season irrigation systems, which are very labour intensive are examples of mobility (Swindell 1981).[13] Due to the environmental and climatic setting of the region, the pastoral sector in West Africa had to be based on the movement of the herds from dry-season to wet-season pastures. In some cases, especially for the desert-based economies of the Tuaregs and the Arabs, the movement from wet- to dry-season pastures was (and still is) combined with long-distance trade, especially in salt, grain and textiles (Lovejoy & Baier 1975; Baier 1977; Hamani 1979; Spittler 1984; Weiss 1997: 101–103). However, only a few groups, such as the WoDaaBe (Cattle/Bush Fulani) in Niger, rely on animals and do not cultivate the soil at all, thus having a relatively high rate of mobility. Most of the livestock sector is engaged in agro-pastoralism, combining livestock-herding and agriculture. Therefore the mixed farmers are less mobile and practice transhumance rather than real pastoral nomadism (Bovin 1990: 30; see also Fricke 1979). The migrations of the Tuareg are of a different kind. Men move with the large beasts (camels and also cattle in the Sahel savannah) from their wet season pastures in the Sahel to dry-season pastures in the Sudan savannah. Women herd the small animals (goats, sheep) and do not travel over long distances (Spittler 1989a).

EARLY COLONIAL MIGRATIONS

Several reasons for migrating during the early colonial period can be identified. One was to escape colonial rule. This was most profound immediately after the colonial conquest, the best known examples being the exoduses of the Amīr al-mu'minīn Ahmadu Chekou from Segu to the Sokoto Caliphate (c. 1896–97), and the Hajj of the Amīr al-mu'minīn Attahiru in 1903 from Sokoto to Burmi. These

13 Migration within Northern Nigeria, especially the dry-season migration called *cin rani* in Hausa has interested researchers for a long time. See among others Prothero 1957; Grove 1957; Goddard, Mortimore & Norman 1975; Lennihan 1983 and Swindell 1984. The general understanding is that the 1930s seems to be a clear watershed, when movements into commercial farming areas expanded and taxation as well as the (final) decline of domestic slavery began to play a larger and more significant role. On the relationship between migration and the spread of diseases, see Prothero 1965.

emigrations were motivated by religion insofar as Muslim communities tried to prevent rule by infidels. In both cases, several thousand people followed the call to emigrate (Weiss 1997: 324; see also Adeleye 1968; 1971).[14] Another type of migration occurred during the first years of colonial rule: The "mass exodus" of slaves affected several, if not all, societies whose economy was based upon a system of domestic slavery. Although scale of this "exodus" is still hotly debated (Mason 1973; Swindell 1981; Lovejoy & Hogendorn 1993), the extent of a large scale exodus is not the concern of this article. However, it can be concluded that in several places in the Central Sudan the colonial administration noted an extensive emigration, whereas in other places there was a recognisable immigration of population (Mason 1969; Spittler 1977; Brunk 1994).

There are several other reasons, apart from the abolition of slavery and the religious factor that can be identified as push and pull factors. One was the political stabilisation brought about by colonial rule in ending slave raids and endemic warfare. Another was the darker side of the same coin: Punitive expeditions against rebelling groups or societies, harsh and often arbitrary and autocratic rule by the new indigenous rulers as well as (heavy) taxation. Migration, therefore, was not an entirely new phenomenon for the colonial administration. On the contrary, British, French as well as German local Residents and (military and civil) administrative personnel bitterly remarked every year in their annual reports that out-migration from a district meant the loss of tax-payers. At the same time, they took every possible step to promote immigration through tax exemption and land allocation. What they in fact were witnessing was a period of increasing urban-rural, as well as rural-rural migration, fuelled by the abolition of domestic slavery, the erosion of old frontiers of separation and dislike of the new colonial practices (Weiss 1997: 324–229). However, this type of migration might have blinded colonial officials at the end of their first decade in 1913, when an entirely new phenomenon turned up, that of the mass migration of starving people due to a severe drought. Mass migration of those in search of food differed in three ways from the earlier types of migration. Firstly, they were victims of drought and

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14 Migration as a protest was not a new phenomenon. Within an Islamic interpretation of the state of a society, emigrations or calls for emigrations were often used by Muslim literatis in their critique of, what they interpreted as, syncretistic or non-Muslim rulers. Emigration was therefore always a combined political-religious phenomenon. It could be used as a protest towards a tax increase or a ruler's new policy, such as in the case of the rebellion of Malam Hamza in 1848 in Kano emirate (see further Smith 1997: 253–255). Especially during the 19th century, this phenomenon was often connected with Mahdism: either to emigrate to the East (from West Africa), where the Mahdi was believed to reveal himself or to establish a new community in wait for the Mahdi (Weiss 1995a: 154–162, 272–274; see also Biobaku & al-Hajj 1966; al-Hajj 1967; Lavers 1967; Last 1970; Adeleye 1971; al-Naqar 1972; Hodgkin 1977; Lovejoy & Hogendorn 1990). On a discussion about the impact of 19th-century (e)migrations within the Sudan zone, see Weiss 1997: 94–95.

famine; secondly, their migration was not intended to be permanent; and thirdly, it was a mass phenomenon never seen before. The question is, whether migration for food was a general phenomenon or one restricted to the Central Sudan. Furthermore, the question is also whether the 1913–14 famine is of a new "modern" type, involving large-scale movements?

THE FAMINE OF 1913/14 IN THE CENTRAL SUDAN AS A CASE STUDY

One of the most devastating famines of the 20th century occurred in 1914 in the Sudan zone, stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia. Harvests had in many places been meagre if not bad due to increased dryness during the first decade of the century, especially after 1910. This dry period culminated in the extremely dry year of 1913, which caused a general crop failure and resulted in poor pasture throughout the region (Grove 1973; Nicholson 1976).

However, drought alone was not the root cause of the famine. The structural and economic changes, which the establishment of colonial rule and imposition of both colonial policies had created, are generally blamed for having left people more vulnerable than they were in pre-colonial times (Watts 1983; Shenton 1986). This was certainly true in some cases, as in Senegal, where the French had been effectively present and, since the late 19th century, changed local agricultural and trade patterns. However, the French did not take into account, and even down-played, the environmental decline of the region. The French administration imposed a heavy burden of livestock and head taxes all over the Sudan and Sahel zone. In many places, especially outside the cash-crop producing areas, the first decade of the 20th century was one of economic depression (Fuglestad 1983; Gado 1993a; Clark 1995; Meier 1995).

Old trade routes were abandoned, first due to military penetration by the French and thereafter by their desire to control and regulate trade. In some areas, for example the upper Senegal valley, the presence of the French had an initial positive effect on agricultural production and trade but in 1905 the region lost all its importance and economic decline started after the reorganisation of the French colonial administration (Clark 1995: 206–207). Other regions, such as Niger or Chad, which were among the latest to be incorporated into the French sphere, faced different problems. As it became evident to the French that, due to logistical and environmental constraints, Niger and Chad could not become cash crop producing and self-financing territories, little was done to develop these colonial estates. However, since these colonies had some strategic value a relatively larger number of military personnel were stationed there. The local population had to pay for their upkeep. In 1911 taxes were increased and all taxes had to be paid in

French coins. To obtain money to pay tax, people had to engage in cash earning opportunities outside their villages since there were usually few, if any, opportunities to earn hard currency in their villages (Painter 1988: 130–131). After 1911, labour migration from the hinterland, or labour pool, regions of French West Africa to the labour-intensive, cash crop-producing areas of Senegal, Gambia, the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria became a regular feature of the dry season. In other regions, people responded by intensifying their output for local and regional markets (Fuglestad 1983: 87–88; for a general discussion on West Africa, see Hopkins 1973: 222–224).

The negative effect of labour migration was a shortage of labour in the home areas of the migrants. This would have had a negative impact on the production of food, especially when the migrants did not return during the farming season. Thus, on the eve of the drought of 1913, people were more vulnerable to a severe drought and famine than they had been for decades.

The picture is somewhat different in Northern Nigeria. Although it is often noted that the early colonial administration by 1913 had not been entirely successful in its mission, the general conclusion is that the first decade of British colonial rule in Northern Nigeria was a period of sometimes chaotic transition (see especially Hogendorn 1978; Tukur 1979; van Apeldoorn 1981; Watts 1983; Shenton 1986).[15] In fact, many of the early colonial reforms, especially the various tax reforms, were either non-effective or had not been implemented. This was also the pre 1913 case of the supposed dislocation of agricultural routines through the groundnut boom. Although there was a boom in 1912–13, resulting from a rapid increase in the quantity of groundnuts exports from Northern Nigeria this seems to have been restricted to Kano Province and especially the Kano Emirate.[16] The real boom happened in 1916, when, after the 1913 drought and the outbreak of the First World War in West Africa, the export of groundnuts had almost ceased but then rose suddenly to 50,000 tons! In fact, by 1912, it is very difficult to identify any possible agricultural crisis. There were few if any signs of diminishing grain cultivation or of a shift from food to cash crop production before 1913 (Weiss 1997: 329–338).

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15 The following section summarises the argument put forward in my thesis, see Weiss 1997.

16 Exports jumped from a few thousand tons to almost twenty thousand tons of groundnuts in that year (Hogendorn 1978; Weiss 1997).

BREAKPOINT: THE EROSION OF OLD FRONTIERS OF SEPARATION

The question of whether mass migration was a new phenomenon in 1914 can be tested by taking a close look at the two famines prior to 1914 in the Central Sudan. In 1904, famines were reported from Northern Nigeria as well as from its Northern (French Niger) and Eastern (German Northern Cameroun) neighbours. Ecological (drought, locusts, insect blight) combined with political and military stress (warfare, slave raids, punitive actions, requisitions) have been identified as being the structural causes and triggers of a prolonged period of famine, starting in 1899 and continuing in some parts until 1906. At least in some areas and among some societies, a breakdown or erosion of the coping strategies could be witnessed in the Sahel zone of Niger, in Borno and especially among non-Muslim communities in the Sudan and Guinea savannah. Also affected were communities where slaves formed an essential part of the work force (Weiss 1997). Unclear British policies about whether the abolition of slavery actually included domestic slaves led to an erosion of the slave-estates during the first years of British rule, from 1897 to about 1903, in the southern parts of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (Lovejoy & Hogendorn 1993). According to Lovejoy and Hogendorn, slaves left their former masters en masse, which lead to a breakdown of the agricultural estates and caused famine conditions among the former slave owners. Equally under stress were the slaves who had left their former masters and were treated either as runaways or vagrants by the British. Although the question of the escaped slaves during the first years of colonial rule still needs some further clarification about their number and destination, some tentative conclusions about those migrating during the famine(s) of 1904 can be reached. First, drought, locusts and the insect blight were indeed a fact in the Sahel and Guinea zone, but they seemed not to have been a major problem in the Sudan zone at the turn of the century. Second, although the conquest of the region is a historical fact, its effects were only local and marginal – at least in the Sudan zone. Thus, British Hausaland, the politically, economically and demographically most important part of the region, was not or only marginally affected by the crisis.[17] Famine caused stress in other parts of the region, in French Hausaland, British and German Borno, the Middle Belt as well as British and German Adamawa. A major mass

17 According to Smith (1997: 407), Kano Emirate indeed witnessed famine conditions during 1904. However, the triggers as well as the intense of the famine are not clear, as British reports only mention "famine due to blight" in their reports. Smith does not mention this but referred to the consequences of the conquest and the flight of the Caliph Attahiru through Kano Emirate.

movement of starving people across the various borders, in search of food or pasture, did not occur. People moved on a local scale, and in some areas regionally, but there was *no large scale immigration of refugees* into British Hausaland (Weiss 1997).

Indeed, one can identify at least two kinds of population movements during the 1904 famine. In the South, there was a search for food and work, as I will show below. In the North, there was a substantial emigration from French Niger to Northern Nigeria, beginning with the French occupation of the Central Sudan in 1901.[18] Both French and British officials realised that migration was caused by the degradation of the land (arable and pasture), the "restless spirit" of some groups, the despotic rule of the new rulers installed by the French and the heavy burden of the French occupation,[19] or the abuse of the local population by French conscripts.[20] Almost every Annual Report from the Northern Provinces, up until the drought of 1913, pointed especially to the fact that taxation was viewed as being heavier and harsher on the French side. However, we do not know how many people actually emigrated from French to British territory, whether it was only "a few" or even "many" thousand emigrants who eventually settled in Northern Nigeria.[21] By 1903 the whole political (and later economic) setting of the region had changed since colonial borders had replaced old frontiers of separation (Thom 1970: 137–140; 1975: 30; Miles 1994: 78–79). This, in my view, was crucial for the new type of migration that developed, from the gradual emigration of people, many away from French rule, to the mass migration of 1913–14.

Frontiers of separation were both political and religious. In the case of the Sokoto Caliphate, the frontiers overlapped, since the Sokoto Caliphate was a federation of some thirty emirates and sub-emirates under the ideological and spiritual rule of the Caliph in Sokoto. Apart from the kingdom of Borno, the Caliphate defined its neighbours, both within and outside the Caliphate, as un-

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18 NNAK Sokprof 2/2 86/1904, para 6, 11–13, 16; NNAK Sokprof 3/27 S.2909, Sokoto Province Annual Report 1904, para 5; NNAK SNP 17 K275, para 13.

19 PRO CO 446/30, Conf. (4424).

20 NNAK SNP 7/9 383/1908, para 60.

21 Evidence and data are rather scanty and weak. In most cases the British Residents did only note "large numbers" in their reports. A conservative calculation of the numbers given in the British reports from 1902 to 1906 would give as a minimum some 13,000 people plus an unknown number that migrated from French territory (Tessawa, Maradi, Adar, Munio and Damagaram) to British territory (Kano and Borno Provinces and Argungu District). One should also not forget that this movement was not only a "problem" of the French-British border, but also was recognised along the German-British-border in Borno and Northern Adamawa. However, both British and German Residents held the view that "their" area received more immigrants than they had lost. This question has so far been more or less neglected, is poorly known and does require a study of its own (Weiss 1997: 238, table 9; Midel 1990).

believers. As "the others" were not, per definition, a Muslim or of a Muslim state, the Muslims of the Caliphate had the right and even the duty to wage war against them, either to defend the livelihood of the Muslim community or to spread Islam or to get a work force made up of slaves. During the 19th century, therefore, it seemed as if movement of goods and people within and between the emirates was rather common, but not in or out of the territory of the Caliphate. The only exception was long-distance trade and the forceful movement of people through the slave trade. What is striking is that there was a rather limited interaction between the Caliphate and its neighbours, this being mostly trade connections, but not any significant movement of people during periods of famine. Only during extreme situations, such as the famine among the Angass or the aftermath of the conquest of Borno by Rabeh in 1893/94, did non-members of the Muslim community of the Caliphate cross borders. This seems to refer to the next neighbour, but not to the remote one, as Tuaregs and Cattle Fulani quite freely crossed the various frontiers of separation. The Tuareg aristocracy had strong ties to farming communities in the Sudan savannah, either by owning estates by their own and still being regarded as overlords of settled former slaves, or by having kin settled there. The Cattle Fulani were not tied to any one. On the other hand, the Tuareg aristocracy as well as Tuareg *Muslim literati* were regarded as Muslims, whereas the Cattle Fulani as kin. This was not the case for the sedentary population in the Hausa states of the Sahel savannah, nor for the various non-Muslim communities within and outside the Caliphate in the Sudan and Guinea zone. Members of these communities or states were regarded as both (non-Muslim) foreigners and enemies. In both cases they did not belong to the Muslim community, had no rights and faced the danger of being enslaved at any time. Most of all, members of non-Muslim communities or states could not receive any help from the Muslim rulers or the Muslim community in times of famine since the Muslims' first and only obligation was towards other Muslims.[22] Thus, a mass migration in times of famine from the neighbouring areas towards the Caliphate was ruled out. It was not part of the coping strategies, only an extreme case of the failure of these strategies.

The erosion of the former frontiers of separation began with the coming of the colonial powers, the establishment of colonial borders, rule and administration began (Thom 1970). The prohibition of slave raids, slave trade and slave markets, although not as effective in practice as it was thought to have been in theory, had a positive effect on migration. The dissolution of the Caliphate and Islamic theocratic rule removed the religious obstacles that had hindered migration. These were the pull-factors that made it possible for former enemies and (non-)Muslim

22 I have underlined this point in another paper, see Weiss 1998c.

foreigners to migrate. Another pull-factor was the availability of uninhabited bush and land. Although this factor played a secondary role in times of famine, it had a primary role at other times. The crucial potential push-factors were colonial rule and taxation and ecological, including the local scarcity of arable land, land degradation, and, as in 1913/14, drought.

Push- and pull-factors of migration in times of famine are of interest for the Southern parts of the newly established Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. One factor was the at least partial and local dissolution of the slave estates of the Fulani upper class due to the early British anti-slavery policy (Lovejoy & Hogendorn 1993). Although we do not know the extent of the mass exodus of slaves between 1897 to 1903, the flight of the slaves had negative implications, at least on a local level, for both the Fulani upper-class who lost workers and faced a steep drop in agricultural output and runaway slaves who had no rights and no one whom to turn in times of stress. However, in the southeastern part of the Muri, Gombe and Yola Emirates (later provinces), former frontiers of separation were eroded. The core areas of the famine of 1904 were in this region, affecting German Adamawa as well. Here, the non-Muslim communities had had little if any contact with the Muslim Emirates, as these communities were in most cases both enemies and slave-hunting grounds of the Muslim community. To search for food in times of a famine must therefore have been a risky coping strategy for the non-Muslim communities who might either get relief or be enslaved or killed.[23] If a crisis escalated and other coping strategies were becoming ineffective, an extreme strategy was to sell or pawn one's children or one's kin as slaves,[24] a feature which the British were very quick to register in 1904 and 1905,[25] but

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23 This was also a problem of intra non-Muslim connections during famines. There are several reports in 1905 of famine victims being enslaved or even killed by their non-Muslim neighbours when starving people had turned to their neighbours with the pledge to help (Weiss 1997: 234).

24 In fact, the pawning or selling of one's children during times of distress seemed to have been a common way of coping with local food shortages. As late as 1916, the District Officer in Numan in Yola Province, Mr. Mair, uncovered some 60 children in the town of Zang, who recently had been pawned or pledged by their relatives for some food or money in times when food was scarce (Extract from Yola Province Report No. 96 for the Quarter ending 30th September 1916, enclosed in NNAK SNP 17/1 12577 Vol. 1).

25 The poor state of enslaved children and adults who had been freed by British officials was reported in several accounts of the Freed Slaves Homes. During July 1905 a group of 29 freed slaves arrived from Muri Province at the Freed Slaves Home in Zungeru, all of them were in a bad condition and four of them were reported to be in a state of starvation. In September 1905, it was reported by the officer in charge of the FSH in Zungeru that "the sickness and deaths of last year [i.e. 1904] were entirely caused by the starved condition in which the poor children were received" and as late as in March 1906, it was reported that "nearly all children sent from Yola and the Binue are thin and emaciated." (Quotations from Freed Slaves Home, Zungeru, July 1905, September 1905 and letter of Ormsby to Zungeru SNP 1.3.1906, all in NNAK SNP 7/7 97/1906.)

seldom prohibited.[26] For instance, the British Resident of Benue Province, Cargill, noted in a letter dated on 26 August 1907 to High Commissioner Girouard that

> ... the majority of the slaves in the [Freed Slaves] home [in Zungeru] came I believe from the Muri and Yola Provinces and are pagan slaves. It must be remembered however that many of the freed slaves liberated in Muri came from neighbouring pagan tribes and have been sold by their own parents and I fancy that throughout Muri kidnapping of children is common.[27]

The same phenomenon was also noted in the North, among others in Bornu Province,[28] and very directly in the Western part of French Niger, where the famine of 1900–03 was called *Ize Neere*, "the sale of the children", as well as among several non-Muslim communities in Northern Cameroon (Beauvilain 1989: 119–120; Gado 1993a: 80; Weiss 1997: 230–233). It is therefore not surprising that an upsurge in the slave trade was noted during times of harshness. This, however, was more of an old way of coping. What was new after 1904 was that starving people went on the road and were employed in the Fulani estates in Yola, Muri and Adamawa. Since these estates had faced a chronic loss of workers after the British and German conquest, due to the anti-slave trade policy of the colonial administrations, the employment of starving people relieved the need of work force at the Fulani estates. As one Resident in Yola commented: "The

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26 Intra-Protectorate slave traffic and trade did not cease despite slave trade had been made illegal by the British administration already in 1900. In fact, the hidden trade in slaves, especially in young children, continued despite British efforts to prohibit and curb the trade. Although some British officials had hoped that the sale of children would have seized after the 1904 famine, their hopes proved wrong. The illegal slave trade continued, as was among others noted by the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Nigeria Constabulary in a dispatch, dated on 5 February 1908: "There is no doubt that there is a large and, I regret to say, increasing traffic in child slavery by way of the Benue and at present there is no real effort being made to deal with it ..." (NNAK SNP 7/9 446/1908).

In addition to the intra-Protectorate illegal slave trade, British officials complained several times about the illegal trade in slaves from German Northern Cameroun to Northern Nigeria and demanded actions to be taken by the German officials to curb this trade. However, despite continuous British protests, the German administration declined to put an end to the illegal slave trade – in fact, according to German official statements, there existed no illegal slave trade in the German colonies. See further Weiss 2000.

27 NNAK SNP 7/8 2823/1907. In fact, in his commentary the Resident of Muri Province, Ruxton, supported Cargill's claim that the kidnapping of children would have been common in Muri Province at that time.

28 The superintendent of the Freed Slaves Home in Maiduguri, Dr. Parsons, noted in his 1904 report the wretched conditions of many of the freed slaves, which usually were women and children (NNAK SNP 15/1 Acc 90A). Most of the freed inmates, most of them being children, had been purchased by slave traders in German Adamawa (NNAK SNP 15/1 Acc 90B). Although Adamawa had been one of the major slave supplying region is the pre-colonial era, the trade in children might be a reflection of the state of distress among several societies in Adamawa and the willingness of people to sell their children as slaves.

famine by forcing the starving pagans to go and work on Fulani farms for which they receive food and shelter as payment ... has also the effect of forcing upon the Fulani the recognition of free labour."[29] Other Residents, British as well as German, could have replied in the same way (Weiss 1997). We do not know whether the employment of starving people was a mass phenomenon. Migration in the north was permanent; in the south it was temporary. In both cases, old frontiers of separation were crossed, thus creating the opportunity for new kinds of coping strategies in times of famine.

1908: "ROBBERS" ON THE MOVE?

During the next famine of 1908, which most severely affected British Hausaland, the Residents noted the movement of people during the dry-season in two cases.[30] After the famine, Resident Festing in Kano wrote that the gates of most towns in the famine districts were shut against starving people who searched for food and relief.[31] There are also some other data available on various movements during this period. It is not clear in every case, however, whether the movement can be directly linked to the drought and famine of 1907–08. People are known to have migrated from Kano to the southwest (to Zaria), to the west (to Katsina) and to the southeast (to Bauchi) and from Katagum to Borno during these years. In most cases, the Residents regarded the migrants as robbers and thieves and the causes of the migrations to have been "tribal and border disputes" and tax avoidance. However, in the case of the Kano-Bauchi-migration as well as the Katagum-Borno-migration, the migrants were identified as famine refugees, seeking "fields fresh and pastures new."[32] It is unclear whether people coming from Damagaram (French Niger) to Kano Province in 1907 were famine refugees or had fled due to the political insecurity in Zinder after the disposal of the Emir by the French in 1906. Festing called the migrants "undesirables" who were "unable to decide on which side their bread is buttered."[33] Apart from Kano Province, the influx of people from the French territory was also noted in Sokoto Province. According to Resident Stanley, the reason for the immigration was that the region of Adar in

29 NNAK SNP 15/1 Acc 116.

30 This famine has been noted by Hill (1977: 31), Watts (1983: 277–278; 1987: 76) and Weiss (1997: 304–312). At least in the Kano Emirate, one can identify structural (colonial tax reforms) as well as conjunctural (drought) causes, the situation in the other Emirates is more unclear. The supposed negative impact of early colonial rule and reforms, however, is a big question.

31 NNAK SNP 7/9 5490/1908, para 3.

32 NNAK SNP 7/10 472/1909, para 45–51; AH 1/12/185 15243.

33 NNAK SNP 7/10 472/1909, para 48.

the French territory had been hit by an invasion of locusts "early in the year [1908]".[34] However, as in Kano Province, the Resident soon reported about an increase in crime in some of the districts: "This is no doubt due to an influx of criminals from Katsena and French country."[35]

Both old and new patterns can be identified from an analysis of the migrations in 1907–08. The British Resident in Kano noted the rise of the slave trade. It was understood to be an inevitable result of the famine. With the slave owners being unable to support their slaves, "and the slaves hungry and anxious to be transferred, such transactions are kept exceedingly quiet in the interest of all parties."[36] Another feature was that able-bodied men "deserted" the countryside to seek work as carriers and permanent labourers in Kano town and "elsewhere" in Kano Emirate. A quarter of the "deserters" was believed not to have returned by the end of 1908.[37] Other permanent migrations were also noted, especially the emigration from Western Kano Emirate: "as regards Kano there is a very prevalent opinion that in many places the soil has been used up – hence bare of crops – the nearest tract which has had a long rest is the Galladima's country (in Katsina emirate)."[38] It is not clear, whether there was a mass migration of *talakawa* (free commoners).[39] The British in any case were not alarmed as they found out that "these migrations ... need not as a rule by any means point to unrest nor to anything wrong in the administration of the country." It was pointed out that, due to the erosion of the former frontiers of separation, people were returning to the land occupied by former generations but deserted as a result of raids and warfare.[40]

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34 NNAK Sokprof 985/1908, para 52.

35 NNAK Sokprof 576/1909, para 67.

36 RH Mss. Afr. s. 230, Kano Province, Annual Report 1909, para 226.

37 NNAK SNP 7/9 5490/1908.

38 NNAK Katprof 2/1 1388. In a previous report, the Resident had attributed the influx of migrants from Kano and Zaria province into Katsina Division due to political and economic reasons – people tried to escape the burden of taxation in Zaria emirate whereas former refugees from Katsina, who had fled to Kano emirate due to pre-colonial raids of Maradi into Katsina, were returning to their former lands (NNAK Katprof 1263). In fact, the Resident of Kano, Major Festing, attributed the 1907 shortage of grain partly to a drought that hit the region, partly to local over-taxation which led to out-migration from these districts, and partly to lack of agricultural labour as people had been called by the colonial administration for building and transport tasks (Report by Resident Festing to Zungeru, 4 October 1907, enclosed in NNAK KadMinAgric 14429).

39 This is a discussion taken up by Lovejoy and Hogendorn (1993) and will not be dealt with further in this study.

40 NNAK SNP 7/9 5490/1908.

A closer look on the question of "thieves, robbers and undesirables" during the famine of 1907–08 reveals that these elements were nothing more than sometimes desperate famine victims in search of food. Their migration, however, was not permanent but temporary and did not seem to have been a mass phenomenon. In some cases, such as in northern parts of Daura and Katsina emirates, famine refugees from the French territory, among others Maradi and Damagaram, had been allowed to cultivate plots of lands and to establish new settlements.[41] The establishment of new settlements occurred also in the northern parts of Sokoto Province, among others

> ... practically all of the towns and villages in Central, North and East Godabawa [district] are of quite recent origin. They largely date from about 8 years ago [i.e. around 1908 as the report was written in 1916, HW] and were settled mostly by Adarawa, Buzai and Gobirawa from French territory.[42]

By the end of the year 1908, the British Residents did not mention the "thieves, robbers and undesirables" as a problem any longer, since most of the refugees had returned to their home countries (Damagaram, Katagum or Borno). On the other hand, those suffering in Kano were termed by Major Festing as "useless vagabonds that compose the standing population of Kano town". [43]

By 1908, the pattern of migration seemed to be clear for British officials. Migrations, as such, were an annual phenomenon. In some areas it was of a permanent nature, both within the emirates and provinces of Northern Nigeria, as well as on a much smaller scale from other territories (in our case French Niger and German Northern Kamerun) to Northern Nigeria. Occasionally camels and Tuaregs turned up in the Sudan zone, and this was soon understood as belonging to the yearly pattern of transhumance. In times of famine people did move, but very seldom over vast areas and never in masses. Most of all, migrations in times of famine did not seem to have spread the problem elsewhere. This judgement turned out to be false in 1913/14.

A NEW PROBLEM: FAMINE REFUGEES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA IN 1914

Pastoralists and the grain traders were the first to move in 1913. It is difficult to distinguish between "real" grain traders and the sedentary as well as pastoral

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41 Report by Resident Festing to Zungeru, 4 October 1907, enclosed in NNAK KadMinAgric 14429.

42 NNAK SNP 17 K 275, para 10.

43 Report by Resident Festing to Zungeru, 10 September 1907, enclosed in NNAK KadMinAgric 14429.

farmers who searched for grain from north to south. The Kel Dinnik Tuareg in Katsina (Gado 1993b: 269) and "grain traders" from the French Territory (presumably Damagaram) in Borno Province (Mshelia 1975) who were affected by the prolonged drought in the Sahel zone had already started, in 1912, to look for grain in Northern Nigeria. The British Residents in the Sudan zone encouraged the sale of grain, both to grain traders from the north (French Niger) as well as from the south (the Jos tin mines). From their own experience, both the British and the Native Administration could not anticipate any possible future problems (Weiss 1997: 314–316, 337–338). On the other side of the border, in French Niger, the situation was reversed. During 1913, the British knew that the North was facing a deep crisis. A "complete failure of crops" in the French Territory was reported from several northern British Residents.[44]

By the end of 1912, the British Resident in Borno reported a growing tendency to migrate from French into British territory but he did not connect migration to the drought in the north or identify the immigrants as "drought victims."[45] During the following year, several British colonial officers reported on a large influx of Tuaregs and their camels who destroyed shade trees and caused other damage. Initially, the influx was not linked to the drought and the famine in the north. By the end of 1913, however, the tone of the reports changed. It was reported that large numbers of people from across the border were travelling south to seek some means of obtaining food.[46] It seems as if the granaries had been emptied in French Niger by the early months of 1914 and prices for grain and food rocketed sky-high, beyond the reach of the starving and more than catastrophic for the livestock herders. The terms of trade (cattle-grain/salt-grain) were so adverse that it made no sense to sell any product. People started to move in a mass to the South where the terms of trade as well as resources were thought to be more advantageous (Baier 1980: 98; Fuglestad 1983: 91; Gado 1993a: 95; Spittler 1989a: 51–52).

The colonial and native authorities also realised that the harvest in Northern Nigeria had poor bad or even catastrophic in several regions, worst affected being the northern and northeastern parts of Kano and Borno Provinces. Reports, at the end of 1913, showed people on the move from the northern parts of Sokoto Province who travelled to the south, searching for food. During the first quarter of 1914, migrations occurred from Katsina (towards Zamfara) and Borno (to the South and across the German border). In the case of Borno, colonial officials encouraged migration from the north to the south and to the East (Lake Chad). In

44 NNAK SNP 10/1 732p/1913, para 54; NNAK SNP 10/2 98p/1914, para 82.

45 NNAK SNP 10/1 182p/1913, para 3.

46 NNAK SNP 10/2 98p/1914, para 82; NNAK SNP 10/2 69p/1914, para 2.

both cases it seems as if the migrants were farmers as well as livestock keepers (Weiss 1997: 360–364).

The peak of the migration within the Northern Provinces was during the summer of 1914, now including movement from the eastern and northern part of Kano Province (especially Katagum, Hadejia, Misau). Destinations were the large cities of Kano, Katsina, Sokoto or Zaria, as well as the countryside in the south.[47] Cattle Fulani or Bororo in search of pasture took their herds as far as Nassarawa Province during 1914.[48] Alongside these internal migrations, the immigration of refugees from French Niger continued but it is not possible to say how many were on the road. My own conservative calculation, which is based on French and British assumptions, is that at least some 50,000 refugees entered Kano Province from French Territory (Tuareg and people from the regions of Zinder and Maradi) together with some 60,000 refugees from the eastern emirates in Kano Province (Katagum, Hadejia). From Borno some 80,000 people were on the move, of which about 25,000 mainly pastoralists were said to have fled to German Territory. No figures were available from Sokoto Province (Weiss 1997: 388–392).[49]

Matters improved after a good rainy season and an excellent harvest in Northern Nigeria. By 1915 the refugee problem was history and, by 1916, the groundnut boom had reached the whole Sudan zone.[50] Society had changed, but a study of this process will need a paper of its own.[51] In French Niger, the improve-

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47 One destination was Zamfara, where the harvest of 1913 was a "normal" one, but starving people also travelled to the Middle Belt – Muslim as well as non-Muslim regions.

48 NNAK SNP 10/3 146p/1915, para 95.

49 According to British officials, about 50 per cent of the population of Katagum and some 40 per cent of the population of Hadejia were believed to have fled in 1914 (NNAK SNP 10/2 494p/1914, para 37; NNAK SNP 10/2 594p/1914, para 31). In 1918, the population in Katagum and Hadejia was estimated at about 400,000, which means that a conservative assumption of the amount of refugees would be 60,000. French reports state that about ten per cent of the population or 32,000 persons of the *cercle* of Zinder had fled to the South (Baier 1980: 267, fn. 8; Fuglestad 1983: 91) and I assume that about the same amount of refugees could have been on the move from other districts in Niger. Spittler (1989: 51) mentions that the salt caravan from Air to Bilma and back to British Hausaland in 1913 was one of the largest for many decades. The caravan comprised about 25,000 camels and maybe 5,000–10,000 men and boys. Our data on Borno is based on the assumption of the British Resident (NNAK SNP 10/3 169p/1915, para 6) as well as information in Mshelia's investigation (Mshelia 1975: 32).

50 For example, Hadeija emirate had been hard hit by the drought and the famine and a heavy mortality as well as a large "exodus" of local people was reported during the 1914 famine. By 1916 nearly all famine refugees had returned (NNAK SNP 10/5 181p/1917, para 22).

51 The harvest failure of 1913 had forced a substantial amount of *talakawa*, commoners, to borrow grain from wealthier farmers and grain merchants. As Watts (1983) and Shenton (1986) have underlined, the debt burden of the *talakawa* was to have severe socio-economic consequences in Hausaland. Equally hard hit were the livestock keepers as many of them had disposed their cattle at devaluated famine prices during the drought. Only few of them were able to rebuild their cattle herds immediately after the drought. Instead, many livestock

ment of the situation was to take several years. Many of the famine refugees of 1914 had not returned to Niger by 1918; some of them permanently settled down in Northern Nigeria forever.

ANALYSING THE FAMINE OF 1914

What happened during the dry season of 1913–14 was the emergence of a refugee problem never before seen in the Sudan zone. One can identify several steps through which the situation deteriorated. First, the people came from "the other side of the border", buying up millet and sorghum, in the same way which they had done during previous famines and centuries. Although there was a proposal, both in Sokoto as well as in Borno Provinces, for prohibiting the sale of grain to foreign grain traders, this was never implemented. The argument of the Sultan of Sokoto, as quoted by Resident Arnett, was that

> ... in the whole Emirate [of Sokoto] there was sufficient grain to spare and that many of the Bugaje are merely traders and transport men who perform every year a valuable service by fetching grain from Districts where it is plentiful and selling it wherever there is a demand.[52]

Arnett pointed out that the Sultan's opinion was that it would be impossible in practice to distinguish between purchases for export and purchases for sale in the [Sokoto] Division. Ultimately, the grain trade was not regulated in the French and German colonial official manner.

The next step was the collapse of coping strategies in the Sahel zone of the French Territory. During the early months of famine, both men *as well as* women, children and elderly people, pastoral *as well as* sedentary people started to cross the border into Northern Nigeria. The peak of this movement was during the latter part of the May–July dry season of 1914 coinciding with the growing number of internal migrants in Northern Nigeria. Although the Resident of Borno Province argued that "migration being itself a mode of distribution [and therefore] cannot be discouraged in the absence of any better machinery for distributing corn over the Province,"[53] the situation became problematic especially in Kano Province, were officials also had to deal with "foreign" migrants.

The erosion of the old frontiers of separation was a fact by 1914. Refugees crossed the French-British border in tens of thousands; Muslims moved into non-

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keepers had started to invest in smaller animals (NNAK SNP 10/5 389p/1917, para 33). However, the strategy to invest in smaller animals was in the long run a possibility to return to cattle herding.

52 NNAK SNP 10/3 102p/1915, para 19.

53 NNAK SNP 10/2 290p/1914, para 34.

Muslim areas. A good example was the arrival of the first camels at the Kaduna River in June 1914:

> This is the first time camels have been so far south ... The result of the arrival of the first string of camels in Kagoro district, Larrymore tells me, was that the whole tribe cleared out to the tops of their granite mountain fortress, while a number of village chiefs with their district headmen came in the 11 miles to Jemaa at a run as if all the powers of darkness were chasing them, and asked Larrymore what such a horrible visitation of terrifying beasts should be permitted to descend on them. It was all Larrymore could do to persuade them to go back, and that a camel was not as awful as it looked, but in the end they reassured and in turn reassured the tribe so that a considerable trade resulted much to the advantage of the Kagoro who now have lots more of cash and less potential beer.[54]

Some, but not most, refugees had former client- and kin-relations to fall back upon in the areas towards which they were destined. Most, however, had to rely on what was obtainable by lawful or unlawful means – digging in anthills, begging for food, but also stealing.[55] The "foreign" refugees, whether from French territory, or the neighbouring British provinces, were always mentioned first when highway robbery and theft was reported (Weiss 1997: 393–395). In some places, Native and Colonial administrations organised famine relief during the height of the famine (July–August 1914). The most well-known relief schemes were the private and official efforts in Kano. Free rations of food provided by wealthier inhabitants as well as the colonial administration, food-for-work-programmes, a camp for mothers and children. Refugees were the main beneficiaries of such minimal relief schemes (Weiss 1996; 1998a; Smith 1997: 432).

The migrations of people and animals in 1914 resulted in a health crisis. Outbreaks of dysentery, small pox and pneumonia were common during and immediately after the peak of the famine. In some areas, epidemics were noted, although my data is scanty.[56] Livestock was also affected. One can probably connect the outbreak and spread of rinderpest during 1914 and 1915, in the Sudan and Sahel zone, to the concentration and movements of animals. This was especially the case with regard to an "unknown" cattle disease that ravaged in Kano, Borno and Bauchi provinces during the summer of 1914, spreading from the north to the south. It is not known how many animals succumbed in 1914 due to the drought

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54 RH Mss. Afr. s. 783 Mathews Box 1/4, Letter 7.6.1914.

55 There are numerous cases and reports of violence connected to food thefts in the judicial files of the Emir's court in Kano, not to mention about accusations of food thefts. An outline is presented by Alan Christelow (1987; 1991).

56 For example, in Tsakkar Gida District of Kano Emirate, an decrease of the population was noted to have occurred between 1910 and 1918, but the British Official in charge noted that "... famine and migration have probably contributed to the actual reduction, and it is impossible to say how much is due to disease" (NNAK SNP 10/6 332p/1918, para 102).

and the epizootics. A tentative calculation would suggest that about one million cattle, sheep and goats probably died (Weiss 1997: 337, 369–372).[57] As with the spread of famine conditions, the spread and outbreaks of diseases were an unintended outcome of people's last coping strategy, that of migration.

CONCLUSION

Migrations are both signs and consequences of an emerging famine. One can distinguish between early and late migrations. Early migration takes place after a harvest failure or problems of getting enough food in a place, thus being the first visible sign that other coping strategies are becoming less effective. As it takes time for a stress-situation to develop into a crisis, migrations of people in search of food were initially often very difficult to distinguish from the ordinary trade movements of short- and long-distance grain traders. Frequently, early migrations included only men and beasts and in most cases were extended food acquisition operations. Instead of travel to the closest grain and food markets, travel was longer during periods of a regional food shortage and thus seen as preventive action. There was an also a gender aspect of early coping strategies. While men travelled to buy food, women searched for famine foods within a much more restricted area (Spittler 1989b: 160–178; Meier 1995: 123–125).

It was also difficult for an outsider to distinguish between normal movements and new migrations of pastoralists with their animals during increased times of drought or political insecurity. The livestock herders themselves, especially the Cattle Fulani, did make a distinction between a shift from *bartol* (transhumance) to *perol* (long-distance migration, but also flight). Other strategies taken as a response to a prolonged drought included the splitting up of large into smaller families, thereby spreading herds and increasing the probability of finding pasture and water, and the circulation of animals within the clan and lineage groups as a means to save relatives from starvation and death (Bovin 1990: 42).[58] Coping

57 The data concerning the loss of human beings is as unreliable. One interesting note is that the majority of those who died in Kano Province during the famine were refugees from French Territory (Weiss 1997: 410).

58 According to Stenning's investigations about the various notions of the meaning of "to migrate" among the Cattle Fulani, one can find a distinguishable difference. The word *eggol* was used to describe what Stenning called the migratory drift of the Fulani, whereas the word *kodal* is equivalent to transhumance. The difference is that *eggol* was a sign of ecological stress – pasturage becoming scarce. In Stenning's usage, *perol* meant flight or emigration in times of unbearable conditions, where the lives of the Cattle Fulanis in one place were made difficult if not impossible due to political, economic or ideological reasons (Stenning 1957: 58–59; 1959: 207). This idea is especially interesting when studying pre-colonial migrations of Cattle Fulani, as it becomes questionable, whether ecological instead of

strategies of the Tuareg involved long-distance migration of men with their larger animals towards the south and survival in situ by those who could not travel (Spittler 1989a: 16–23).

Stress developed into a crisis depending on the extremity, the geographical extent and the duration of the period of war or drought. When sedentary people started to move in larger groups and/or women and children started to migrate were signs of a crisis. Migrating people might, unwillingly, have spread a crisis to other regions, where conditions may have been as harsh, but where coping strategies still existed. Early migrations, such as long-distance travel in search of food or pastures, did not extend the crisis. However, if a concentration of migrants built up within a more restricted area, both migrants and indigenous suffered. For example, until 1913, long-distance travel from Niger to northern Nigeria was rather limited and did not cause any direct problems but as the crisis worsened in Niger during 1913, migrations became more extensive at the same time as the farming sector in northern Nigeria was under stress due to a major harvest failure. The result was that the coping strategies were "coped out" first in Niger and soon after in northern Nigeria too.

This study has dealt with the question of mass migration as a new phenomenon in the central Sudan. One might point out that mass migration during times of famine might be identified as a phenomenon that concerned ecologically, politically, and economically marginal zones of Air, Wadai, Darfur, Sahel, the Middle Belt of Nigeria, as well as the peripheral regions within the Sudan zone of northern Nigeria: Hadejia, Katagum, Borno. I have in my research argued that mass migration up until 1914 was not much of a factor in British Hausaland, a region that was neither ecologically, politically nor economically marginal. On the contrary, before 1903, mass migrations were never really an option due to the fact that various frontiers of separation acted as effective barriers between people.

There are also some other aspects that one is able to detect in connection with the famine of 1914. The most affected regions of the famine were not the groundnut and cotton producing Kano and Zaria Emirates, but regions where the cultivation of cash crops started only after 1914, such as the Hadejia and Katagum Emirates, Borno and French Niger. It was from these regions that starving people resorted to the road to search for food in Kano, Zaria and Zamfara. Food migration as such was nothing new; it belonged to the traditional coping strategies of the indigenous people in the region. What was an exceptional if not an entirely new phenomenon in 1914 was the large number of famine refugees who were on the move. My argument has been that the refugee problem was a result of the

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political, economic or ideological stress can be seen as the main trigger. See Weiss 1995a: 155–158 for a discussion about 19th-century migrations in the Sudan zone.

colonial situation. New borders had been established, but old frontiers of separation, especially between the Hausa states in the Sahel and the Sokoto caliphate, had been weakened if not abolished. The famine refugees spread the effects of the drought of 1913 to regions that probably would not have been affected in the same way. Due to the incapability of the colonial administration, the lack of experience of the new native administrations and the unexpectedness of the whole situation, little was done to solve the problem.[59]

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59 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Africa Days organised by the Nordic Africa Institute in the working group "Ethnicity and Inequality", Uppsala 19–21 September 1997. Thereafter, I was able to consult the archive of the Nigerian Hinterland Project at York University, Toronto and the personal archive of Bob Shenton. I am grateful for the critical remarks from Bob Shenton, Mette Bovin, Paul E. Lovejoy as well as from the late Mike Cowen.

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