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Published online: 13 Jun 2008.

To cite this article: C. N. Ubah (1993) The colonial administration in Northern Nigeria and the problem of freed slave children, Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies, 14:3, 208-233, DOI: 10.1080/01440399308575107

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01440399308575107
The Colonial Administration in Northern Nigeria and the Problem of Freed Slave Children

C. N. UBAH

There is an important and growing body of literature on the subject of slavery and related matters in Africa under colonial rule. For the most part this literature is focused on the situations which weakened and ultimately stamped out both the slave trade and slavery in Africa. These include colonial conquest, a series of anti-slavery legislations, consolidation of European rule and rise of wage labour. By the early 1900s large numbers of enslaved Africans had in one way or the other regained their freedom under colonial rule. The colonial powers had anticipated that the freeing of slaves recently acquired would create some social problems (vagrancy, crime, etc.), and at the Brussels Conference in 1890 it was agreed that each of the participating governments should as far as possible see to the repatriation of the ex-slaves or otherwise prepare them for earning a living. At present it cannot be said with confidence how seriously the various colonial regimes dealt with the problem. In particular, there is inadequate knowledge of what became of the children they rescued from slave traders in the course of their efforts to suppress the traffic. Roberts and Miers have shown what emancipation meant to various categories of people who gained freedom from slavery under colonial rule (for instance, closer integration in the kinship system of the owners, desertion of former masters and redefinition of the conditions of dependency, etc.), but they ignored an important and very vulnerable group, slave children, who did not know what freedom meant and what to do with it. One relevant question is this: how did the colonial powers in the various territories react to this problem? And, following from this, how did any specific form of reaction contribute to the solution of the problem? Needless to say, the answers to these and related questions will vary from one colonial territory to another, and they will enable us to get a clear picture of the lot of this category of freed slave children in colonial Africa.

This article addresses the problem in the context of Northern Nigeria in the period 1900–1909. In the former year, Sir Frederick Lugard, in his

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PUBLISHED BY FRANK CASS, LONDON
capacity as High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria, proclaimed a British protectorate over the territory, and subsequently he embarked on a number of measures, including military conquest, which in their cumulative impact weakened the slave trade and resulted in the liberation of a large number of slaves, among them hundreds of children. From 1903 the High Commissioner inaugurated a policy of establishing orphanages which he euphemistically called 'Homes' with the aim of catering for the welfare of the freed slave children. The year 1909 was significant as the time when the colonial regime in Northern Nigeria completely divested itself of the responsibility for administering any institution connected with freed slaves. The study fills some gap in the work already carried out by Hogendorn and Lovejoy who have discussed Lugard's policies towards slavery in Northern Nigeria. The authors' contribution was focused on the High Commissioner's measures which sought to avoid the disruption of the social and economic conditions in the emirates by accommodating both slavery and the right to assert freedom. The policies examined were thus in respect of those already under servitude by the time the colonial regime was set up (and those born after 31 March 1901) and did not deal with the policies which affected those who were enslaved during the period covered by the authors. The present work is concerned with a wider range of issues than that discussed by Olusanya as far back as 1966 when he called attention to the existence of Freed Slaves' Homes in Northern Nigeria. The limited amount of data he used did not adequately illuminate the rationale for the Homes, the problems of freed slave children, their life in the Homes, the responsibilities of the Homes towards the children, the obligations of guardians, and so on. And, as will become clear later, the present writer is not entirely concerned with the Homes, for there were more problem freed slaves outside the Homes than those inside them, and colonial policy took them into account.

The freed slave population of Northern Nigeria during this period can be divided into four categories depending on the means by which freedom was obtained. The first seized their freedom by the simple process of deserting their owners in the first few years of colonial rule after news had spread far and wide that the new administration had outlawed slavery. Under the second category were those slaves who neither deserted their masters nor obtained their freedom through any legal processes. Their emancipation was not recorded because it was not brought to the attention of the colonial authorities as it was the result of understanding between individual slaves and their owners. The third category was made up of those ex-slaves whose freedom was granted by the courts. The last category comprised slaves rescued by patrols set up to stamp out the slave trade. Our interest is specifically in the last category which included freed slave
children mostly those rescued by patrols, whether they passed through the Homes or not. If we go by the available records, 3,256 of the 37,998 slaves freed by 1914 obtained their freedom under the proclamation of 1901 which outlawed the slave trade.\footnote{Available freed slave registers show that among this number were many children whose actual numerical strength cannot be established but who would appear to constitute the majority. It will be shown that contrary to its pledges the colonial government never really meant to take full responsibility for preparing the freed slave children to earn a living. A couple of Homes were set up for them but only as a temporary measure. These orphanages were entirely different from the villages de liberté which the French established in West Africa for the purpose of exploiting the labour of the inhabitants.} Conditions of Freed Slaves and Circumstances Leading to the Establishment of Homes

The establishment of Freed Slaves’ Homes was a direct response to the critical problem of the continuation of slave trafficking in Northern Nigeria in spite of the colonial regime which had declared such transactions illegal. As already observed by a number of writers, a special characteristic of the slave trade of this period is that children were the main victims. In his first year as High Commissioner, Lugard was quite aware of the heavy trafficking in children, and as he worked out his policies on slavery he also thought of what to do about children who had been rescued from slavery by military and police patrols. To turn them out to the world of freedom was not helpful at all. If there was nobody to take adequate care of them they stood the risk of starvation and death. At best they would be re-enslaved: in which case they might well have been left with their former owners. Of all those seized from or abandoned by slavers and subsequently taken over by the administration, the children needed assistance most urgently and most desperately. Lugard’s solution was that such children would become ‘children of the state’, and he planned to put the younger ones among them in a Freed Slaves’ Home.\footnote{Other known examples of orphanages in Africa were established not by colonial regimes but by Christian missionaries.} Lugard’s administration set up a temporary Freed Slaves’ Home under a Cantonment Magistrate at Lokoja.\footnote{There were 46 children in that Home on 31 December 1901, and it was not until October 1903 that 75 children then in residence were transferred to a permanent site at Zungeru. The Zungeru Home was directly administered by a European Lady Superintendent assisted by some African staff. The rationale behind the establishment of the Home and its long-term objectives were authoritatively stated in the few years that followed.}
In his letter asking for the assistance of the Trustees of Miss Rebecca Hussey Fund, Lugard stated that the colonial regime had to take charge of the children because it was impossible to restore them to their homes. One reason for this was that the children did not know or could not explain where they came from; another was the fear on the part of the administration that they would be sold again if restored. Lugard was clearly aware that the idea of a Home which would help in the suppression of the slave trade would appeal to philanthropic organizations and the anti-slavery lobbies in Britain, and he missed no opportunity to exploit their sentiments. According to the Cantonment Magistrate at Zungeru, the official under whom the Freed Slaves’ Home there was administered, the purpose of the Home was to shelter the children ‘and provide them with occupation until such time as they can be launched out in life with some likelihood of being able to earn an honest living and become useful members of the community’. This agrees substantially with what the Management of the Zungeru Home gave as the aim of the establishment, namely ‘the training of slaves who have been liberated but are without parents or homes to become self-supporting and useful members of society’. All these were lofty ideas, but evidence will be brought to show that the British did not live up to them.

After the opening of the temporary Home at Lokoja, many of the children freed from slavers were sent to that station. All Residents made local arrangements for keeping and sustaining the children while awaiting directives as to what disposal actions to take. Sometimes the children were under their care for surprisingly long periods of time. In December 1904 Resident Webster of Nassarawa complained to the High Commissioner that the slaves he freed the previous year were still with him and that he was awaiting directives as to what to do. The Resident of Bauchi kept the children freed in his province under a man in charge of the local children, an arrangement which he said was unsatisfactory. He asked for permission to start a freed slaves’ home. Lugard granted him permission to do so on condition that the Home would be a temporary one only, and he warned that he could not start a third Freed Slaves’ Home. The Resident protested that with a temporary house it would not be possible to teach the children any work or to hire a matron to look after them. In the circumstance it was better to leave things as they were.

For many years after the British occupation the eastern emirates were the major centres for the acquisition and distribution of slaves. Most of the children for the Zungeru Home were sent down from Muri, Yola and Bauchi, the three provinces which, outside Borno, had the largest number of people freed under the Slavery Proclamation up to 1914. Some of the
slaves were in poor health before they were rescued from slavery. This was said to be due to both the long journeys they had made under their captors and inadequate food. The Residents were held responsible for the safe transportation of the freed slaves to Lokoja. The journeys from the provinces to Lokoja and thence to Zungeru involved an enormous amount of suffering on the part of the children. Many died in transit and some of those who survived the rigours and hardships of the journeys were badly clothed and reached Zungeru very sick, emaciated or dying.\textsuperscript{22} A medical officer who examined a group of 17 children on their arrival from Lokoja reported on 12 September 1905 that ‘their condition, apart from anaemia of no recent origin, indicate that they had not been receiving a proper allowance of food during the journey from Lokoja’.\textsuperscript{23} It would thus appear that for some of the children rescue from the slaves had done them no good after all. The terrible conditions of the children on arrival sometimes led to speculation that some foul play may have been practised in the course of the journeys.\textsuperscript{24}

The unsatisfactory state of the children worried Zungeru, which felt that ‘much preventable loss of life’ had taken place. A number of questions were raised. For instance, before the journey from Lokoja to Zungeru, were the children certified by the medical officer as fit to travel? Thompstone, the principal medical officer at Zungeru, quoted his deputy at Lokoja as saying that the children were examined for fitness. However, a directive was later issued that a comprehensive list of all the children in every group leaving a province for Zungeru should be given to the person in charge of the group. There should also be a certificate issued by the medical officer at Lokoja or any other station through which the group passed — to the effect that the children were fit to travel at the time of departure. On their arrival at Zungeru, the children would be examined by the superintendent and the medical officer against the list submitted to them.\textsuperscript{25}

Prior to these changes, children from Borno province were exposed to more hardship and suffering than those from elsewhere because of the enormous distance — about 1,000 miles — which they had to cover before reaching Lokoja. As far back as 1902 Lugard had been discussing with the Resident of Borno the possibility of using a Home less distant than the one at Lokoja for children freed in the province. He promised that if the Resident put up proposals for a Home in Borno he would support him with funds.\textsuperscript{26} By May 1903 the establishment of a Borno Home had come as a directive because many of the freed slave children whom the Resident himself had taken to Lokoja had died on the way.\textsuperscript{27} The Home was ultimately set up at Maifone in February 1904 with 142 inmates.\textsuperscript{28} The institution was placed under the medical officer of Borno province
assisted by a small African staff. It was supposed to take care of the children liberated in Borno province only. The administration did not subsequently encourage the establishment of more Homes.

In 1905 the Resident of Borno on his own responsibility set up at Maiduguri what was known as the 'Liberty Farm' or the 'Liberty Village' for the settlement of slaves who were freed in the anti-slave trade operations and who could not be offered admission to the Home at Maifone because they were adults.29 The settlement began with 78 ex-slaves who were joined by 80 of the 289 slaves liberated in 1906. As was the case with the Home at Maifone, the Village did not receive freed slaves from other provinces. However, admission there was not reserved exclusively for adults. For instance, all the 31 slaves aged between seven and fifty years (five males and 26 females) liberated between 18 and 26 August 1905 were without exception sent to the village.30 The truth is that sometimes women were liberated along with their babies or young children, and in such circumstances those children were in their own interest admitted along with their parents to the Liberty Village.

The Liberty Village resembles the villages de liberté in French West Africa only in name and had nothing of the exploitative motive associated with the latter. The attraction in setting it up was that the village was expected to be a self-supporting, revenue-generating unit. Within a short time this expectation was met and in 1912 it became a tax-paying entity with its own headman. It was judged a great success and by 1913 its population reached a total of 540.31 While things had been going on well in the village, in the Homes the story was different.

Life in the Homes

It has been noted that the vast majority of the children in the Homes were ex-slaves liberated by the patrols which operated in the eastern emirates. Between 1904 when the Home at Zungeru was formally opened and 1909 when it was closed, the Homes contained hundreds of freed slave children at any given time each year. Available evidence shows that in the six years between 1 January 1900 and 31 December 1905 the Homes received a total of 1,215 children, 1,046 of whom were sent to Lokoja and Zungeru and the rest to Maifone.32 These children had very diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. There were few Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri among them and therefore the number of Muslims was small in relation to the total population of the Homes. The children were taken mainly from the mountainous regions of German Adamawa and French Cameroons which were ethnically heterogeneous. Nobody knew their religion, but out of the convenience for the British they were simply regarded
as 'pagans'. Initially Lugard objected to the children being taught elements of Christianity, arguing that this would anger the Muslim rulers and create problems for his administration. But this view was unwarranted as far as the vast majority of the children were concerned. Diversity of ethnic origins created problems in the Homes. Invariably some of the new arrivals spoke languages not intelligible to anyone else in the Homes. Some of the children could not even say what their names were, or where they came from. Out of convenience they were given Muslim names with which the British were most familiar in Northern Nigeria. Dr Blair, the medical superintendent of the Borno Home, referred to what he called 'the confusion of tongues' as one of the great difficulties in running the Home. The older inmates learnt Kanuri, the language of the major ethnic group in the province. The Cantonment Magistrate at Zungeru also complained that the languages spoken by some of the newcomers were not intelligible to any of the interpreters. It would appear that Hausa was the official language of the Zungeru Home.

The managements of the Homes claimed that they were quite careful about the feeding of the inmates and special attention was said to have been paid to those whose health was particularly bad. Some medical aid was available to deal with not only the poor conditions of the children on arrival but also other health problems. The medical department of both Homes had isolation sections where fresh intakes were confined and examined before they were formally admitted into the Homes. A report on the Borno Home states that in many cases 'the children had become so run down and emaciated by starvation and hardship that they had lost all their recuperative powers and died from exhaustion'. According to the report, at first there was a great amount of sickness, and 30 per cent of the inmates suffered from opthalmia.

In the first years death rates were very high in both Homes and this suggests that medical attention available to the children was grossly inadequate. In 1902 as many as 60 out of 219 children lost their lives at Lokoja. The number of deaths at Maifone in the first year was stunning — 51 out of 173. The superintendent of the Borno Home estimated in 1906 that about five per cent of all new arrivals at any given time died within one month of their stay. But with better medical attention the death rates declined.

The managements of the Homes provided instructors for the kinds of training they considered necessary. Drills were introduced for all the boys. Improving their physical fitness rather than preparing them for military service was the objective. Many of the inmates were engaged in agricultural work in order to provide for most of their needs in grain. Farming did not feature as prominently at Zungeru, but the Home had a bakery, laundry, and carpentry, cooking and sewing classes. As early as
1904 the children had begun to produce all their items of clothing, and later the bakery section began to make profits. Education in its literary sense was a very weak point in both establishments, although rudimentary reading and writing were taught. The administration could claim that it lacked the resources for doing so, but the truth is that it had not the will to provide a meaningful system of education such as would enable the children to go into the world 'with some likelihood of being able to earn an honest living and become useful members of the community'. Life in the Homes may not have been as comfortable as all this might suggest. Desertions from the Homes were not uncommon. For instance, in March 1904 the Cantonment Magistrate at Zungeru complained of many desertions, and some of the reports from the Home at Maifone give high figures of desertion, making the High Commissioner ask on one occasion whether the Home was unpopular. The Cantonment Magistrate in early 1904 said that some of the female inmates had formed the habit of leaving their dormitory at night making for the camp, and the superintendent also complained to Lugard that some of the children ran away to town. There appears to be no doubt that these Homes were unpopular among those children who thought that a better life was possible elsewhere or who hated confinement.

The impression had been that these ‘children of the state’ would be kept in the Homes and prepared for independent life. But what really happened was that attempts were made to launch them into the world before they had acquired the necessary skills, experience and physical attributes for survival outside the Homes. The Homes came to be seen as no more than temporary abodes for the care and maintenance of the children until opportunities became available for them to go into the world. For the girls, marriage was one such opportunity. It was as if the responsibility for the care of the children had been imposed on the administration which now tried to make the best out of its bad lot. Therefore the sooner a girl was given away in marriage after attaining what was claimed to be the marriageable age the better. Any girl of such age would ordinarily be given away to a husband at the time of liberation if one was immediately available and the measure would save the regime the trouble of taking her to a Home. Some British officials recommended their house boys as husbands for freed slave girls. However, marriages at the time of liberation do not appear to have occurred on a large scale; in 1904 only about twelve took place. Once in the Homes, opportunities to dispose of the women were not lost on the payment of appropriate amounts of bridewealth by the suitors. However, the policy of marrying off mature girls as quickly as possible was not in all cases dictated by the need to save trouble and the cost of keeping them. It must be admitted
that in some cases there was genuine concern about the future of the older girls. The government was right in saying the ‘At fifteen practically every native woman in Northern Nigeria seeks to marry’.45

As far as the evidence goes, the efforts at arranging marriages were generally unsuccessful. In 1902, 38 of the girls were married, and that was when freed slaves were still in a temporary Home in Lokoja. In 1903 only ten girls got married and until 1909 not more than two girls found husbands each year. The situation in the Borno Home was no more heartening: the highest number of girls that married in any single year was seven; usually not more than two girls did so. The administration was aware of its lack of success in finding husbands for the girls. The explanation was that the girls brought up in the Home at Zungeru had acquired ‘European household notions, and a veneer of English and Christianity’, implying that these attributes ruled out the possibility of Northern Nigerians taking them as wives. According to the High Commissioner, most of the only Christians in the area to whom the girls would have appealed, that is, the coastal people serving the administration, were already married.46

The Borno Home was closed in October 1907. A year earlier, the Acting High Commissioner, William Wallace, had sounded a warning that he might abolish it. The argument, which is far from convincing, was that as the Home was very distant from headquarters it did not admit of as close a control and supervision as Zungeru.47 Lugard had been more forthright: his administration depended on grants-in-aid and was ‘not justified in undertaking philanthropic work, however valuable’.48 It was decided that the Home should be closed as soon as the Liberty Village proved a success, and the children would become available for adoption by the adult members of the village. Perhaps by 1907 the Village was not yet the kind of success that was anticipated or possibly the policy had changed. Whatever the case, one hundred children were transferred to Zungeru while the adults were moved to the Liberty Village.49 The Home at Zungeru lasted for only two more years.

But even while the Homes were still operational there was the problem of the future of the children. A few of them could be helped to re-enter the community, for instance those girls for whom husbands could be found. In the case of boys, a number of apprenticeships were negotiated at Lokoja and Zungeru for some of the bigger ones. There were 30 such cases in 1903 and that was by far the highest number on record in any single year. Apprenticeship arrangements were also occasionally effected at Maifone. On the completion of their apprenticeship the affected boys were deemed to be capable of looking after themselves and their names were struck off the nominal rolls of the Homes. But the girls who got
married and the boys who were apprenticed represented a tiny portion of the total strength of the Homes. So, Lugard's parsimonious regime had to work out a way of spending as little as possible on running the Homes. What was arrived at was the expedient of offering the children as 'wards' to 'guardians', ideally until the children could stand on their own.

The Search for Guardians

The policy of finding guardians for the children was probably older than that of keeping them in the Homes. It was certainly pursued after the establishment of the Homes and was continued for long after their closure. It would appear that at first Lugard's policy was to give away freed slave children as wards in trust to 'respectable families'. The trust reposed in the families was said to have been abused and the children were apparently treated as slaves. Lugard described the system as 'pernicious'. 'Mohammedans can see no difference', he said, 'nor can I, between this destination and their intended disposal, except that the recipients get them without payment'. However, the policy was not abandoned. Not surprisingly, the administration did not consider that the two lines of action, giving away children after liberation to guardians and sending them to the Homes, were in any way inconsistent. There was the overriding imperative that costs had to be saved. The official reasoning might have been something like this. Those children in the Homes were ultimately destined for private homes anyway, so why take them to the Homes first if this can be avoided?

But the British in Northern Nigeria were not unanimous on the question of Homes versus guardianship. In May 1904, the Acting Commandant of the Northern Nigerian Regiment, West African Frontier Force, expressed the view that the lot of the children would be improved if they were 'farmed out to responsible people'. Later in the year Resident Webster of Nassarawa Province asked the High Commissioner whether he should send the slaves he had liberated some time before, but he added that he could 'get them good homes locally' if there was no objection to his doing so. Webster seemed to prefer guardianship and merely sought authorization for the measure. The High Commissioner's reply was far from firm: Webster was told to act as he thought best. He could send the children to the Roman Catholic Mission in Bassa province or he could stay with them. That is, the Resident could settle the children locally or hand them over to a mission. Lugard handled the problem of Bauchi differently. As we have seen, the Resident of that province asked for authority to set up a Home to settle the children under his custody and he was given permission to establish a temporary Home only. Early in 1907, when the Resident drew the attention of Sir Percy Girouard, who had replaced
Lugard as the chief executive of the protectorate, to the temporary Home at Buachi, he was asked whether he could not hand the children over to 'respectable house holders'.\textsuperscript{54} The reason given for preferring the local arrangement for guardianship was that the children suffered a great deal on the journey to Zungeru. The Governor also directed the new Resident of Nassarawa that all freed slave children should be given out to 'respectable households'.\textsuperscript{55} What emerges from all this is that by 1907 there was no longer any doubt as to what the policy was. From that time onward Residents were directed to hand over the freed slave children in their care to private individuals and avoid sending them to Zungeru. The sources suggest that the colonial regime was anxious to cut down on the cost of running the Homes.

Available evidence makes it possible to say with confidence that all freed slave children received official attention after liberation. Some were handed over sooner or later to individuals; some were taken over by missionaries and others were sent to Homes specially meant for them. Many of those who went to the Homes were later given over to individuals as wards. Most of these relationships involved exploitation of labour. The children were a cheap source of labour in the domestic sector and many of the better placed members of the colonial society did not hesitate to exploit them. But it is not being suggested that among some of the beneficiaries there was no genuine desire to assist the helpless children. This was particularly so in the case of Christian missions.

Presumably, by 'respectable families' of the first one or two years of the protectorate, non-northerners or at any rate elements outside the emirates were meant. But later, members of the Native Administrations became involved. Cases for which evidence is available concerned Dan Rimi, the most powerful slave of the emir of Kano, and the emir of Bauchi. Dan Rimi was given the custody of a full-grown woman of 26 who was recently bought but liberated in September 1905.\textsuperscript{56} The emir of Bauchi received a boy and a girl in the same year.\textsuperscript{57} Among other recipients of wards were the Ma'ajin Dadi of Sokoto, emir of Gwandu and Sarkin Fada, Iya, of Gwandu.\textsuperscript{58} In this way the emirs and their officials were given a stake in what the British were doing. As is very well known, the British always endeavoured to seek the co-operation of the emirs on policy matters, believing that such co-operation was a necessary condition for success.

Nowhere are the responsibilities of these beneficiaries explicitly and fully spelt out. But it is reasonable to assume, in the light of other cases we know (see below), that these would include looking after the health of the children and providing them with food, clothing, moral instruction and some pocket money. The guardians were required to produce the
children twice a year for inspection by Residents. This requirement was dictated by previous experience referred to earlier.

Christian missionaries in Colonial Africa showed keen interest in freed slaves. In the case of Northern Nigeria there were very strong reasons why the missionaries were interested in freed slave children. In the early 1900s Christian missions in this territory were in a difficult situation: the colonial regime barred them from operating in the emirates out of respect for Muslim sensibilities, and they were told to confine their activities to non-Muslim areas. The assumption that the missions would be welcome in the latter territories was groundless: the people here were no less determined than the Muslims to preserve their own religious culture. To individual missionaries who needed domestic staff and missionary institutions on evangelizing activities the possibility of obtaining freed slave children offered some relief. Dr Walter Miller of the Church Missionary Society alone had six wards in 1906, and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Missionary Society at Pategi asked for two boys for the mission and two girls for their four female members, a request that was promptly granted. Even some mission establishments at Onitsha in Igboland applied for the supply of the children. The colonial administration encouraged missionary interest in the children. Sometimes liberated children were taken to the nearest missionary station for safety. From the very beginning the administration wanted the missionaries to play an ever increasing role in the management of the children. It did not doubt that the children would be safe in their hands and would be well looked after.

The Roman Catholic Mission at Dekina in Bassa province was one of the chief beneficiaries among the missions: in the nine months between August 1904 and May 1905 the mission received 18 children. When the Sudan United Mission planned to set up an industrial mission at Ibi, William Wallace, Acting High Commissioner, directed the Residents of Muri and Yola to send there 12 freed slave children for a start. And when St. Joseph’s Convent, R.C.M., Onitsha, asked to be provided with six girls, the Cantonment Magistrate observed that ‘it will be a good start in life for the six girls’. The Church Missionary Society, Onitsha, was understood to have made a similar request. In conceding the request of the Convent, the administration informed the institution that more children were available in case of need.

Finally, either direct from the provinces (at the time the children were liberated or shortly afterwards) or from the Homes practically all political officers and many other British officials in other services – medical, police, military, etc. – obtained children for the asking. And they specified the ages and sexes of the children they wanted. Residents who disposed of freed children by giving them as servants to approved persons gave
indication to this effect in their register of freed slaves.\(^6^6\) Records were also kept of the children taken from the Homes and given out as wards to those in need of them.\(^6^7\) Also, well-placed African employees of the colonial regime obtained freed slave children if their applications for them were supported by the Residents of the provinces in which they were based. But there was a rule that freed female slaves could only be given to African guardians who were married and of approved standing.\(^6^8\) Both white and black officials could in addition to their own beeds obtain female wards for their wives. When news of the availability of child labour in Northern Nigeria reached the Gold Coast, applications for guardianship also came from that territory, from officials and non-officials, irrespective of race. What individuals gained from exploiting children's labour can be gauged from the fact that applicants from the Gold Coast undertook to pay the cost of transportation of the children if their requests were met. In respect of such applications, the administration made enquiries from the colonial regime in the Gold Coast to ascertain whether the applicants were the type of people who might be given custody of the children. The colonial regime in the Gold Coast dutifully investigated each case and made recommendations. As a result a number of children were sent from Zungeru to the successful applicants.\(^6^9\) In each case the administration urged the regime in the Gold Coast to ensure that the children were not ill-treated or given away. In an offensive to secure guardians for some of the females at Zungeru, the administration wrote to the government of Southern Nigeria advertising the inmates and asking whether there were officials who might wish to undertake guardianship in return for their services.\(^7^0\) There were many positive responses, almost entirely from white officials, but before any further action could be taken a new policy took effect as regards guardianship. It was laid down, for reasons that are not yet clear, that no more girls would be given out as wards except to European ladies and European religious institutions.\(^7^1\) Because of this, of the many applications from Southern Nigeria, only that of the United Freed Church Mission based in Calabar was finally approved. The mission wanted seventeen girls, who were eventually provided.\(^7^2\)

**Service with the Guardians**

An important feature of the conditions under which some of the children from the Home were engaged to guardians was Lugard's insistence that the children should be paid wages. The principle of payment of wages was of considerable significance in early colonial Northern Nigeria, for wages became a symbol of the new, progressive era clearly distinguishable from the past characterized by dependence on slave labour. The absence of
wage labour in Northern Nigeria was one reason which Lugard advanced for the retention of slavery, for in his opinion it made no sense abolishing the only form of labour contract known to the people when there was nothing immediately available to replace it.\textsuperscript{73}

But evidence shows that at first wages were not insisted upon in all cases. The Cantonment Magistrate felt that wages might be waived in the case of very small boys, especially if they were apprenticed to a trade and were well fed and clothed. 'To pay at such an early age', he argued, 'would tend to spoil the labour market and the teaching of a trade might be considered as [wage] in lieu.'\textsuperscript{74} He stated that in the cases he investigated those guardians who were not paying wages treated their wards 'exceptionally well'. The Cantonment Magistrate believed that 'the question of wage if unduly pressed might deter guardians from coming forward'. But he agreed that the wards 'should have occasional pocket money given them according to the circumstances of the guardians and the age of the child in order that neither side should forget that the wards are no longer slaves'.\textsuperscript{75} Lugard was not convinced. His view was that 'some outward visible difference \textit{must} [italics his] be made between the free child and the purchased slave child'. He pointed out that the slave child was also generally well fed and clothed. The pay could be small but, in Lugard's opinion, it did serve a useful purpose. In all the available inspection reports on wards with guardians it is seen that Lugard always looked for information on wages, and where these were not shown he raised queries. In the case of the comment on the report of the inspection carried out in January 1906 the Cantonment Magistrate replied that in the earlier cases no wages were promised 'but all issues of wards in recent years have had wages recorded and on inspection of earlier cases enquiries are always made as to the wages paid'.\textsuperscript{77} Those children who were given specific duties in the Zungeru Home were paid.\textsuperscript{78} Ironically, the wages were not paid to the children but into the revenue of the Home.

The wages paid to the children were not fixed or uniform. It seems that each guardian was expected to pay something reasonable. Thus one W. G. Hesse claimed that he was paying the sum of four shillings monthly to the girl given to him in 1904.\textsuperscript{79} The same year the superintendent of the Home, Miss Emily Jardine, undertook to pay five shillings to an eight-year-old boy who was assigned to her.\textsuperscript{80} But the letter to Southern Nigeria in 1907 asking whether the officials were interested in undertaking the guardianship of the children stated that each guardian would be required to pay three or four shillings a month to the child.\textsuperscript{81} The inspection carried out in January 1906 shows considerable variations in the wages allegedly paid to the wards. These ranged from 'occasional dash' to 12/- a month.\textsuperscript{82} It must be stated that these figures represent claims: as far as...
is known at present there is nothing to show that the administration ever asked for evidence of payments. Apart from wages there were other conditions for wardship. Guardians were required to treat their wards well and were under no circumstances to part with them. They were expected to provide them with food and clothing and were responsible for their moral development. Sometimes it was clearly put to guardians that the wards should be instructed in elements of Christianity. Successful applicants for wards were given copies of the relevant section of the Government Standing Orders and were required to sign an undertaking that they would comply. Applicants had to state to what use the children would be put and what they could do (sometimes they also stated what they could not do) for them while in their service. Thus, Willoughby Osborne, Attorney-General of the Gold Coast, wanted two girls whom his wife could train as domestic servants. He made it clear that he would not be able to send them daily to school but they would receive practical training in household work generally. Lionel Hart and Co., a firm of legal practitioners, promised that should a boy be given to him he would educate and train him in every possible way. The United Freed Church Mission said it would be responsible for the maintenance, upkeep and education of the seventeen girls they asked for.

Wards who were not well treated by their guardians were allowed back to the Home. After a tour of inspection of wards in 1904 the Cantonment Magistrate reported that all but three of them were well fed. He withdrew the three whose conditions were unsatisfactory, assigning one to another guardian and taking two for Cantonment labour under his own guardianship. Allegations of ill-treatment of wards or of improper conduct by guardians were investigated. Guardians against whom allegations of ill treatment were established were not to be subsequently granted custody of children from the Home, but those who lost their wards through no fault of theirs could ask for replacements. The period of guardianship was not specified in the application form, but a guardian could at any time return to the Home a ward he no longer needed. But the officials of the Home would like to see that the wards came back in a good condition. Usually, on reaching the age of 12, a freed slave child was thought to have reached the limit for staying in the Home, and if he was with a guardian he might be granted a ‘freedom ticket’ which terminated his wardship and connections with the Home. A ward who was not satisfied with his position could desert the guardian. Cases of desertion were not infrequent, especially among some grown-up girls who were often tempted by real or pretended offers of marriage. A girl of that description who created problems for the guardian and the Home might have her name struck off the list of freed slaves as being old enough to look after herself.
One of the allegations made against the management of the Zungeru Home in 1905 was that 'of the girls who had passed through the Home and were now known of, only 10 per cent were apparently undamaged'. This evoked a bitter reaction from the Cantonment Magistrate. A more furious reaction followed when his accuser tried to illustrate the problem. The controversy ended when Lugard assured the Cantonment Magistrate that he did not attach weight to the report. There were cases of the police mediating in quarrels between guardians and wards, but sometimes they decided not to intervene. The police used their discretion to determine what action to take in each case brought to their attention.

There were several cases of children dying while in the service of guardians. For instance, in 1904 Miss Emily Jardine, the superintendent of the Zungeru Home, obtained permission to take to England a boy, Usman, placed under her charge, but the boy in question later died in that country. And in 1905 a marine engineer, a Mr Pratt, lost by accidental drowning the freed slave boy, Jatau, who had been placed under his guardianship the previous year.

The wards were such an indispensable source of cheap labour that guardians wishing to travel abroad asked for permission to take them along. Thus, Miss Emily Jardine, after losing a boy in England, asked to be allowed to take another ward, this time a girl named Alima, to Britain 'with a view to training her as a maid to a lady'. William Wallace granted the request provided 'the girl clearly understands the situation and is quite willing to go'. The Cantonment Magistrate wanted assurance from Miss Jardine that she had explained to the girl what was involved and that she was prepared to accompany her to England, an assurance which Miss Jardine did not hesitate to give. The authorities usually insisted that wards taken out of Northern Nigeria should be returned to the territory at the end of service. Mr Osborne was disappointed with one of the girls, Asama, sent to him, saying she was deficient in intellect. He wanted her repatriated, but he left her temporarily with the Roman Catholic Mission at Elmina and proceeded to the United Kingdom with the other girl, a nine-year-old called Faliki. While in England Osborne was appointed Chief Justice of Southern Nigeria and he wrote to say that he was giving up the guardianship of both girls. The Colonial Secretary intimated that he had no objection if both girls were allowed to stay in the Gold Coast since the girls, apart from coming from the Freed Slaves' Home, 'have no known connections in Northern Nigeria'. The Roman Catholic Convent at Elmina expressed a wish to take over the guardianship of Asama and this was granted by the government of Northern Nigeria. Faliki was eventually returned to the Home. However, there is evidence that some of the children taken
outside the country defied all the attempts made by the government to bring them back.\textsuperscript{103}

In 1909 a new policy regarding the future of the children came into operation and it entailed the closure of the Zungeru Home.

\textbf{Abolition of the Zungeru Home}

By June 1909 arrangements had almost been completed to close the Home at Zungeru. Lugard had said that his grants-in-aid were not meant for philanthropic enterprises, and his immediate successor, Sir Percy Girouard, held no conviction to the contrary. If anything, he held a more reactionary view on the role of the colonial regime in the welfare of the children. While Lugard insisted that he would not open a third Home at Bauchi, Girouard closed one of the two in existence in 1907. He now went further and presided over the dissolution of the only Home that had survived. In 1907, the Governor set up a committee headed by E.C. Watson, his Acting Chief Justice, to advise on the future of the Home. In fact, he had given a hint that the Zungeru Home would be closed ‘as soon as expedient’.\textsuperscript{104}

Olusanya has dealt with the work of this committee and it can only be referred to briefly here. The committee’s terms of reference were to enquire: whether the Freed Slaves Home were fulfilling in the best, most economical and most efficient manner the purpose for which they were set up, namely the training of liberated slave children who were without parents or homes, to become self-supporting and useful members of society; how the children were being trained and educated and how this could equip them for life when they left the Homes; how the Homes were regarded by the native population and the inmates themselves; and whether there was any alternative system of dealing with liberated slave children.\textsuperscript{105} The committee submitted that life in the existing Homes was not likely to result in the inmates becoming ‘self supporting and useful members of society’, that the inmates were not equipped ‘for life when the time comes for them to leave the Homes’, that the general tendency was for the population to regard the inmates of the Homes ‘as slaves taken over by the Government for its own ends’; as for the inmates, they were content with their lots. As regards the last term of reference, the committee recommended that ‘liberated slaves may, with the greatest benefit to themselves, be adopted into the families of respected natives, as a general rule, in their own provinces’. In other words, the Homes were virtually useless and should be abolished. The committee also recommended that the administration should approach the mission and persuade it to take charge of the existing inmates on terms to be mutually agreed upon.\textsuperscript{106} Nothing
was said about those already with guardians. Presumably the guardians held fast to what they had, unless the wards deserted. No reasons were advanced for this feeling of optimism on the future of the children.

All the Residents whose views are known reacted positively to the recommendations of the Committee. The unanimity of the political officers in accepting the recommendation that the Zungeru Home be disbanded is quite amazing. There was nothing in the previous years which gave any indication that the policy of keeping the Homes as well as that of guardianship was in any way unpopular among the Residents. Now with one voice they all felt that that policy had been mistaken. Dr Cargill of Benue province advised that the families into which the children would be adopted should be very carefully selected.107 Resident Barclay of Yola saw the recommendation of the committee as 'the only logical solution' to the problem of what to do with freed slave children, adding that 'had this course been followed at the outset, much expense would have been saved'.108 It is clear that what the Resident of Yola, like all others, had in mind was not the welfare of the children but the savings to the administration. The opinion of Major Adler Burdon, Resident of Bassa province, reflected his usual position of urging for measures which gave the ruling classes a stake in policy. According to him:

Adoption into respectable families gives such, especially when children, a better chance in life: it keeps them amongst their own race and class; it is far preferred by those who are old enough to choose; it proves to the people that we do not keep slaves in order to keep them ourselves; and it is gladly undertaken by natives of standing, who welcome the addition to the size of their households.109

The impression which this harmony of views creates is that the Residents supported the new policy because it was better than the old one. However, the reality would seem to be quite different. It must not be forgotten that the Residents had been presented with a fait accompli. There is no evidence of previous consultations. And were they even minded they had not the freedom to express independent opinions at that stage. The advantage to the government of the new policy was quite obvious: it was cost effective – it was remarkable for being the way out of financial responsibilities. And this was at the time when the revenue of Northern Nigeria had risen beyond the most optimistic expectations of those who laid the foundations of colonial rule in the territory.110

Olusanya was quite right in saying that members of the committee were hostile to the Home and that they were guided in their recommendations by considerations of revenue.111 However, he overlooked the fact that the main finding of the Committee was that the Home at Zungeru
was not achieving its objectives. This statement is incontrovertible. Granted that this was so, the answer to the problem was not closure of the Home. What the Home needed was radical reform aimed at making it face its task squarely. The institution of guardianship was simply an attempt by the administration to shift responsibility elsewhere. And it was not a difficult task for the regime to improve the image of the Home among the general populace. The committee gave as the reason why the inmates of the Home were regarded as slaves kept by the administration for its own benefits that ‘the boys who are sent out to perform daily work, such as punkah-pulling, receive no pay themselves; the whole of the wages they earn being paid into the revenue of the Freed Slaves’ Home’. The population thus had every justification for its perception of the position of the children. Exploitation of labour by government reduces to mere propaganda, in this particular context at least, all of Lugard’s ideas on slave and wage labour. Morally the administration was on very weak ground to insist that guardians should pay wages.

However, reform of the Home was not an issue before the administration, which found the recommendations of the Committee quite convenient. All the Residents were directed to stop sending freed slaves to Zungeru. The committee was of the opinion that the measure they had recommended should not be applied to the inmates at Zungeru. But the Acting Governor, William Wallace, thought otherwise. He considered that ‘Arrangements should be made at once with the nearer Residents to take small drafts of the children at once and place them with respectable householders.’ However, this view did not prevail. Instead, the recommendation of the committee, advising the administration to negotiate with missionary societies the terms under which they could take over the children, was followed. In August 1909 the children were taken in by the Sudan United Mission which had established the Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves’ Home.

On the question of the children who would be subsequently liberated, Governor Girouard suggested that if adopted they should be made wards of Alkalai’s courts and should be produced if necessary for the Residents to inspect at stated intervals. Resident Barclay of Yola province agreed entirely, saying that the interests of the children would be best served in this way. Burdon believed that if established the system would produce excellent results. It was also agreed that Judicial Councils of the emirs could also act as wards, especially in the main centres of the slave trade — Borno, Muri and Yola emirates. The directive to the Residents to the effect that no more freed slave children should be sent to Zungeru also advised that such children be made wards of court. From 1908 the courts in the provinces were supposed to take charge of the children freed from slavery
and then hand them over to the families considered good enough for their adoption, to be sure the families of the ruling classes. However, the new policy is beyond the scope of this article. It suffices to say that compared with the one it superseded it gave much less guarantee of security and comfort to the children.

Conclusion

The data presented and analysed here lead unmistakably to the conclusion that, much as the British colonial administration appreciated the problem of the freed slave children, it did not respond adequately to that problem. In fact one can go further and say that its handling of the problem was characterized by systematic retreats from the problem itself. Thus there was the decision to establish Freed Slaves’ Homes, a reluctance to set up more Homes even in the light of mounting need, and the phasing out of the existing Homes within a period of two years. It is contended that these actions were inconsistent with the regime’s protestations of commitment to the cause of the children.

It is not just that the administration disbanded the very institutions to which it owed part of its credibility as a major sector in the campaign against the slave trade and slavery. What was worse, the performance of the regime in the self-imposed assignment of helping the children to become ‘self-supporting and useful members of society’ was far from satisfactory. From the point of view of this writer the importance of the report of the Watson Committee did not lie in the fact that it recommended the closure of the Zungeru Home, although this was the aspect the regime considered significant. The administration was already moving in that direction, and what members of the committee did was to identify themselves with what it had been planning to do, and would have done, anyway. The actual significance of the work of the committee lay in the fact that it did not mince words in telling the administration that it had failed to achieve its objective of bringing up the children to the stage from which they could face the challenges of life.

The failure resulted not so much from faulty execution of plans for the realization of the end as from flawed perception of the means to that end. Owing to unwillingness on the part of the colonial regime to assume the necessary financial responsibility, the Homes were not seen as training institutions designed to impart to the children the skills they needed for survival in the harsh world outside. Rather they were perceived as temporary rehabilitation centres into which the children were brought initially following recapture from slavers pending availability of guardians to take them as mere servants and maids. But these guardians were in the vast
majority more interested in exploiting the children’s labour than in preparing them for adult life. It is not surprising that in the eyes of many Africans the children were the slaves of the administration which had farmed them out to its employees of all races as well as to Native Administration officials.

But to say all this is not to fail to recognize the importance of the work undertaken by the colonial regime in Northern Nigeria. Colonial government’s initiative in finding Homes for freed slave children appears to be peculiar to Northern Nigeria, and this was a great credit to the administration. In spite of the problems in the Homes, and notwithstanding the exploitation to which the children were subjected by their guardians and the eventual closure of the Homes, there was no doubt some element of humanity in the administration’s approach to the problem of freed slave children. It is legitimate to argue that the administration could have performed better, but at the same time it is important to bear in mind that as far as is known at present it handled the problem of those children much more seriously than any other colonial regime did or cared.

NOTES

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to David Robinson, Paul Lovejoy and John Miller, who commented on an earlier draft of this article and made useful suggestions which guided the production of the current version. But I do not, by this acknowledgement, disown full personal responsibility for all the shortcomings of the paper.

4. Lugard's first acquaintance with Northern Nigeria was made in 1894 as an official of a chartered commercial concern, the Royal Niger Company, whose constabulary he commanded. In 1897 he was authorized by the British government to raise an army, the West African Frontier Force, which was considered necessary to deal with the French hostility in Borgu. At the end of 1899 the British government revoked the charter of the Company and took over the responsibility for the administration of the territory under its authority, raising Lugard to the position of High Commissioner.
7. Hogendorn and Lovejoy guess that a hundred thousand or more slaves may have acquired their freedom in this way during this time. But, as they admit, the data for any dependable estimates are not available. See 'The Reform of Slavery in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria', in Miers and Roberts, *End of Slavery*, pp.395–6.
8. For the activities of these patrols see Ubah, 'Suppression of the Slave Trade'.
9. See the third column of SPN 10/1 No. 459P/1914. All 'SPN' (Secretariat, Northern Provinces) materials refer to the holdings of the Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna.
13. The existence of this Home was ignored by Olusanya who claims that the first Home was built at Zungeru. Lokoja was evidently regarded as a temporary site while permanent structures were planned and erected at Zungeru.
14. SPN 15/1 Acc 90A, Lugard to Wigan, 5 July 1905. A member of the Board of Trustees had wanted to know whether the Rebecca Hussey Fund which had been withdrawn from Lagos on grounds of mismanagement could be usefully diverted to Northern Nigeria.
15. SPN 6/3 No. 45/1907, Cantonment Magistrate, Zungeru, to the Lady Superintendent, Freed Slaves' Home, Zungeru, 2 April 1907.
16. SPN 7/8 No 2823/1907, 'Freed Slaves Home Zungeru, reported by committee appointed to investigate matters connected with'.
17. SPN 7/5 No 3466/1904, Nassarawa Province Report for Dec. 1904.
18. SPN 15/1 Acc 121, Resident of Bauchi to Political Assistant, 29 Jan. 1906.
19. Ibid. Lugard's minute of 2 March 1906. Before then a second Freed Slaves' Home had been opened at Maiophone, Borno province.
20. Ubah, 'Suppression of the Slave Trade', *passim*.
22. SPN 15/1 Acc 121. See a report dated March 1906.
23. SPN 7/7 No 46/190, 'Report on provinces from which emaciated children have been sent to the F.S. Home'. The medical officer reported that this was also the case with the group he examined on 29 August and said that on both occasions there was 'long standing emaciation and anaemia'.
24. There were sometimes suspicions that some of the healthy children may have been exchanged for sickly ones by agents of the regime who accompanied the children while in transit.
25. SPN 7/7 No 42/1906. See Thompstone's proposals, Lugard's endorsement of them, and the version amending the GSO.
26. SPN 15/1 Acc No 19, Report No 3, Borno Province, 31 July 1902.
27. SPN 15/1 Acc No 48A, Borno Province Reports, 1903, Report No 5, 31 May 1903.
28. Made up of 112 children below the age of 11 years, 19 girls aged 12 to 20 years, and 11 adult women. See Lugard, *Annual Reports*, p.289.
29. SPN 7/8 No 1756/1907, Annual Report, Borno Province, 1906.
30. SPN 15/1 Acc. 90B Borno province, Freed Slaves' Register, 1905.
31. This number was made up 187 males, 220 females and 133 children (76 males and 57 females).
34. SPN 15/1 Acc 90B, Report on the Borno Home for July 1906.
35. SPN 6/1 No 27/1904, Cantonment Magistrate to Secretary to the Government, 6 March 1904.
38. SPN 15/1 Acc. 121, ‘Borno Freed Slaves' Home’ Report for April 1906.
39. In fact only very few of the boys got enlisted in the Northern Nigerian Regiment of the West African Frontier Force.
40. In 1906 the Home cleared 100 acres of bush in which millet, guinea corn, beans, groundnuts and other crops were planted.
41. It would appear that this was nothing extraordinary in such institutions. The missionary orphanages at Old Kasongo in the eastern Belgian Congo recorded large-scale desertions, ‘the inmates considering themselves slaves and wishing a more complete freedom’. See Northrup, ‘The Ending of Slavery’, p.469.
42. SPN 6/1 27/1904, Cantonment Magistrate to Secretary to the Government, 6 March 1904.
43. SPN 15/1 Acc 90B. The report for the Bornu Freed Slaves' Home for 1905 shows that 23 women and girls ran away from the Home in course of the year.
44. For instance, the Resident of Ilorin province recommended that a freed slave girl named Larida be approved as wife for his headboy, Madiku. See SPN 15/1 Acc No 121, Resident of Ilorin to Political Assistant, 6 Dec. 1906.
46. Ibid.
47. SPN 15/1 Acc 121, Political Assistant to all Residents, 26 Nov. 1906, forwarding extracts from Wallace’s despatch of 9 Oct. 1906 to the Secretary of State.
49. Ibid., p. 609. *The Annual Reports* gives the number of freed slave a children transferred to Zunger as 101, but Borno sources give same as 100.
51. SPN 6/1 No 27/1904, Commandant to the High Commissioner, 12 May 1904. Ordinarily the Commandant would not have been involved in this kind of discussion, but it was his men who taught the children drill.
52. SPN 7/5 No 346/1904, Report on Nassarawa province for Dec. 1904. The Resident stated that all the children had been taught to, and could, spin.
54. SPN 15/1 Acc 121, Political Assistant to Resident of Bauchi, 26 Nov. 1906. See also SPN 7/8 No 1522/1907, comment on the report, Bauchi province 31 Jan. 1907.
55. SPN 7/8 No 1644/1907, Nassarawa province report for Mar. 1907. See the Governor’s minute of 22 May 1907.
56. SPN 15/1 Acc 90B, freed slaves’ register, Kano province, 1905.
57. Ibid., freed slaves’ register, Bauchi province, 1905.
58. SPN 15/1 No 90A and 121, Freed Slaves register for Sokoto province, 1905–6.
60. For Miller’s report on his wards see SPN 7/7 No 597/1906.
61. See SPN 7/8 No 3195/1907 for the application dated 5 Aug. 1907 and the various minutes on it.
62. SPN 15/1 Acc 121, ‘extracts from register of freed slaves sent to Dekina from July 1904–July 1905’. All the children were male, aged between four and 17 years. Most of the children were handed over by the Resident of Bassa, while the rest were delivered by the cantonment Magistrate, Lokoja.

63. Ibid., Wallace to Dr H. Karl W. Kumn, 22 Nov. 1906.

64. SPN 7/8 No 2183/1907, the mission's application dated 30 May 1907, the Superintendent's endorsement to the Cantonment Magistrate dated 7 June 1907 and the latter's recommendation dated 11 June 1907.

65. Ibid., Acting Secretary to St. Joseph's Convent, 21 Aug. 1908.

66. Thus, in the Buchai register of freed slaves for 1906 (vide SPN 15/1 Acc. 121), the seven-year-old freed slave Gejere was shown as having been taken over as ward by the Resident of Bauchi himself who also placed the ten-year-old Makingare under the guardianship of Dr Jones, the medical officer in charge of the province.

67. Thus in the Borno report for May 1904 the Resident stated that eight of the inmates at Maifone were working as ‘boys’ for Residents and officers. See SPN 15/1 Acc No 89.

68. SPN 15/1 Acc. No 121, Political Assistant to Resident of Muri, 14 August 1906.

69. Among these were those of Lionel Hart and Co. of Irwell Chambers, Cape Coast, who wanted a boy as an apprentice; and Willoughby Osborne, Attorney-General of the Gold Coast, who wanted two girls for his wife as domestic servants. In both cases the administration felt that good opportunities had opened for the children.

70. SPN 7/8 No 2314/1907, Secretary to the Administration to Colonial Secretary, Southern Nigeria, 19 June, 1907. The Secretary stressed that 'many of the older girls and women have been taught laundry work and all of the women have been taught sewing'.

71. Ibid., same to same, 6 Nov. 1907.

72. SPN 7/8 No 2314/1907, Acting Provincial Secretary, Southern Provinces, to Secretary, Zungeru, 7. Feb. 1908 conveying the request of the Mission; also Provincial Secretary, Eastern Province, to the Secretary to the Administration of Northern Nigeria, 12 Oct. 1908, informing him of the arrival of the 17 girls.


74. SPN 7/7 No 597/1906, Cantonment Magistrate to the Secretary to the Administration, 8 July 1904.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., comment of 25 July 1904 on the Cantonment Magistrate's submission.

77. Ibid., reply dated 2 April 1906 in reply to Lugard's observation of 8 March 1906 on the inspection report.

78. Lugard, *Annual Reports*, p. 288, Report for 1904. However, no indication was given at the actual amount due to the children.

79. SPN 7/5 No 1298/1904, secretary's reply to Lugard's minute of 5 June 1904.

80. SPN 7/4 No 2314/1907, see the application form completed by Miss Jardine in respect of the boy.

81. SPN 7/8 No 2314/1907, Secretary to Colonial Secretary Southern Nigeria, 19 June 1907.

82. SPN 7/7 No 597/1906, see the Cantonment Magistrate's report dated 29 Jan. 1906.

83. SPN 6/3 No 45/1907, The Lady Superintendent of the Zungeru Home to Wood (n.d.). Miss Jardine, the superintendent, said that this was a new addition to the regulations.

84. The undertaking read as follows: 'I undertake to be responsible for this Freed Slave child above named and to notify the Provincial Court and the Matron of the Home at the end of each calendar year the condition of the child or entry in the Register; I understand that the child is under my guardianship and may not be transferred to another without the prior concurrence of the High Commissioner'.

85. SPN 7/7 No 3263/1906, Osborne to Secretary, 9 Sept. 1906.

86. SPN 7/8 No 2720/1907, Lionel Hart and Co to Cantonment Magistrate, 24 June 1907.

87. SPN 7/8 No 2314/1907, Provincial Secretary, Eastern province, to the Secretary, Zungeru, 7 Feb. 1908.
88. Lugard, *Annual Reports*, p.288, actually stated that unless the conditions of the children were found to be satisfactory on inspection they would be taken back to the Zungeru Home.

89. SPN 7/7 No 597/1906, Cantonment Magistrate to Secretary, 8 July 1904.

90. In one case, Rex V. Pratt, tried by the Cantonment Magistrate, Zungeru, on 17 Jan. 1906, the charge against Mr Pratt was: 'As guardian of the female freed slave ward Waka so treating her by neglect or otherwise as to cause her desertion while in Lokoja in his charge'. The accused pleaded 'not guilty'. It is not clear how the case ended as the records available do not go beyond the first day of the trial.

91. The application form, as designed by 1904, required the following information only: name of child, when received in the Home, age, sex, name of applicant, nature of employment proposed, wages proposed.

92. One E. S. Johnson, a marine clerk, received a 'severe reprimand' for neglect for returning in 'an extremely emaciated condition' an 11-year-old boy named Mallam who had been in his service for a year. See SPN 6/4 No 124/1908, Resident, Lokoja province, to Secretary to the Administration, 29 Sept. 1908.

93. For instance, in 1906 Dr Blair of the Borno Home complained that there were seven boys over 12 years of age who ought to have been discharged. The High Commissioner told him to send them to the Freed Slaves' Village. See the Annual Report on the Home for 1906 and Lugard's comment on it, SPN 15/1 Acc No 121.

94. In May 1907 the Cantonment Magistrate applied for permission to grant 'freedom tickets' to Jano Musa (aged about 15) who was with Miss Jardine, the Superintendent. The application was approved by William Wallace and the freedom papers were signed and issued.

95. According to the Resident of Bauchi (reference as above), the wards were made aware that 'they are free to leave their guardians at will'.

96. SPN 6/4 No 124/1908, Wilson Jones to High Commissioner, 28 March 1906. It would appear that Jones was the police officer in charge of Lokoja. He wrote this letter to correct the impression that what he said in 1905 was that of the female wards with guardians only 10 per cent were undamaged.

97. SPN 7/7 No 3263/1906, Osborne to Secretary, Zungeru, 5 Nov. 1908.

98. Ibid., Earl of Crewe to Governor, 16 Nov. 1908.

99. Ibid., Governor to Earl of Crewe, 13 March 1909.

100. There was, for instance, the case of two girls, Hawa and Giali who followed their guardian, a Mrs Davies, to Sierra Leone on leave in 1907. Mr Davies gave up his service with Northern Nigeria, making it unnecessary for his wife to retain custody of the children. Pressurized by the government of Northern Nigeria, the government in Freetown initiated measures to repatriate the girls. However, Hawa and Giali deserted the Davies' into the unknown.

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105. Ibid., Earl of Crewe to Governor, 16 Nov. 1908.

106. Ibid., Governor to Earl of Crewe, 13 March 1909.
as maids, nurses, etc. should be negotiated for those children already over the age of fourteen.

107. Ibid., Resident, Benue province to the Governor, 26 Aug. 1907.
108. Ibid., Resident of Yola province to Secretary to the government, 20 Sept. 1907.
109. Ibid., Resident Burdon to High Commissioner, 24 Aug. 1907.
110. In 1901 the total revenue of the protectorate was £135,730. In 1908–9 it stood at £538,444. In the same year the total expenditure on the Home at Zungeru was a mere £1,672. See Lugard, Annual Reports, pp. 43, 660 and 688 respectively.
112. SPN 7/8 No 2823/1907, Telegram from the Secretary to all Residents, 8 Aug. 1908.
113. Ibid., Comment on the report of the Committee, 18 Feb. 1908.
115. SPN 7/8 No 2823/1907, Girouard’s minute of 26 Aug. 1907.
116. Ibid., Resident of Yola to Secretary to the government, 20 Sept. 1907.
117. Ibid., Burdon’s comment, 26 Aug. 1907.