

## Expulsion of Nigerian Immigrant Community from Ghana in 1969: Causes and Impact

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### Abstract

This paper examines the remote and immediate factors that propelled the expulsion of Nigerian migrants from Ghana in November 1969. While the paper observes that jealousy and xenophobia played important roles in instigating the expulsion order, it notes that the key consideration that informed the Ghanaian action was the economic depression experienced in the country notable in the high rate of youth unemployment within the country. The study further notes that the action brought positive and negative impacts on the Nigerian nation but spelled doom for the cocoa and retail business sectors of the Ghanaian economy in the immediate post-expulsion period. The paper concludes that though Ghana had an inalienable right to expel aliens from her territory, the haste involved in the order and the in-human disposition of Ghanaian law enforcement agents to the deportees left much to be desired. Nigerian migrant stocks are also enjoined to seek necessary clarifications regarding entry and stay permits in their various countries of domicile to avoid similar losses and embarrassment in foreign countries in the future.

### Background Information

As far back as the early twentieth century, Nigerians had been well-established in Ghana and had contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of Ghana before and after independence. According to Cardinall, Nigerians constituted the largest single group of immigrants resident in Ghana as at 1931<sup>1</sup>. Adepoju argues that Ghana's relative affluence at that time had made her the "gold coast" for thousands of immigrants from West Africa, particularly Nigeria, Togo and Burkina Faso.<sup>2</sup> The successful exploits of Nigerian migrants as traders, cocoa farmers, farm labourers and farm contractors, factory workers as well as menial workers in construction sites ensured a further influx of more Nigerians into Ghana between 1931 and 1960. Hence, the population of Nigerians in Ghana increased geometrically from 57,400 in 1931 to 191,802 in 1960<sup>3</sup>.

It is not surprising therefore that beginning from the mid-1960's, the overwhelming migrant stock of Ghana's population became a matter of concern for the indigenous Ghanaian population who subsequently mounted enormous pressures on government for increased participation of native peoples in the economic life of their country<sup>4</sup>. The net result of this indigenization clamours by Ghanaians came to the fore towards the end of 1969 when the migrants became first-count scapegoats for the economic misfortune of large-scale unemployment that had befallen Ghana. These aliens, mostly Nigerians, were quickly accused of posing a threat to the economic survival of the country<sup>5</sup>.

In order to deal with the problem of Ghana's economic malaise, attributed largely to the presence and dominance of the migrant stock in Ghana's economy, government decided to introduce a number of intervention policies aimed essentially at controlling the number of immigrant population and restricting the exercise of certain activities by non-nationals. One of such policies was the "Aliens Compliance Order" of 18 November, 1969<sup>6</sup>. Though the Order affected some migrants from other West African Countries such as Togo, Burkina Faso, and Ivory-Coast, a majority of the victims were Yoruba's from South-Western Nigeria numbering about 140,000<sup>7</sup>, out of an estimated 191,000<sup>8</sup> Nigerian immigrant stock in Ghana then. Ghanaians hailed the expulsion order which they regarded as "a patriotic move to garner jobs for Ghanaians and rid the country of crimes"<sup>9</sup>.

It should be observed however that agitation for deportation of "aliens" or "strangers", as the foreign migrants were referred to by Ghanaian natives, started around the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1932, during the cocoa hold-up crisis, the Nigerian cocoa farmers in Akyem Abuakwa opposed the local cocoa hold-up led by the king of the town against the European firms<sup>10</sup>. This instigated a far-reaching resolution of the town at a meeting of Okyeman in 1935. Then, the traditional council urged the colonial government to ensure that "troublemakers" (referring to the migrants) were kept out of Akyem Abuakwa. The resolution reads as follows:

Okyeman consider that it is now time that people from Nigeria and other places should be made amenable to the customary laws of the various states in which they reside and that any act of insubordination on the part of any such strangers should, with the sanction of Government, be punished by deportation<sup>11</sup>.

As a follow-up to the above resolution, local business people in the town formed the National Crusade for the Protection of Ghanaian Enterprise which opposed the foreign entrepreneurs<sup>12</sup>.

Apart from these economically-instigated agitations for the expulsion of aliens from Ghana, championed by the citizens, there were also cases of officially-inspired deportation of individual Nigerians from Ghana between 1957 and 1961 for political reason. Under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, pressures for the expulsion of aliens from the country were initially repulsed by the Ghanaian government, until on the 23 August, 1957 when the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) government passed the Deportation Act which made it legal for the government to expel all foreigners who were deemed "a threat to the nation"<sup>13</sup>. The axe of the Deportation Act fell on some wealthy Nigerians like Alufa Osman Lardan and Ahmadu Baba who were members of the opposition Muslim Association Party<sup>14</sup>. The Ghanaian government deported them to Kano on 23 August, 1957<sup>15</sup>. Other Nigerians expelled under the Act up to 1961 included Messrs Samuel Faleye, Buliaminu Oni and Alhaji Raji Bakare<sup>16</sup>. This period did mark the onset of expulsion of Nigerians from Ghana. But while these expulsions were targeted at particular individuals, the 1969 expulsion of aliens from Ghana marked the beginning of mass expulsion from the country. The expulsion order affected close to 200,000 aliens from Togo, Mali, Burkina-Faso and Nigeria. Before further analysis of the 1969 expulsion from Ghana, it is essential to examine the main content of the Compliance Order.

On 19 November, 1969, the government of Ghana made an announcement that it would enforce the Aliens Compliance Order by which all aliens without valid residence permit were ordered to quit the country within fourteen days, that is, latest by 2 December, 1969. The Quit Order which was promulgated by the Kofi Busia's government earlier on Tuesday, 18 November, 1969 stated that:

It has come to the notice of the Government that several aliens, both Africans and non-Africans in Ghana, do not possess the requisite residence permits in conformity with the laws of Ghana. There are others, too, who are engaging in business of all kinds contrary to the term of their visiting permits. The Government has accordingly directed that all aliens in the first category, that is those without residence permits, should leave Ghana within fourteen days that is not later than December 2, 1969. Those in the second category should obey strictly the term of their entry permits, and if these have expired they should leave Ghana forthwith. The Ministry of Interior has been directed to comb the country thoroughly for defaulting aliens and aliens arrested for contravening these orders will be dealt with according to the law<sup>17</sup>.

Though the Ghanaian government embarked on the expulsion of aliens to purge the number of "undesirable elements" in the country, the expulsion order was not without exemption. Hence, the order added that:

Special cases of persons who though Aliens were born in Ghana and have lived in the country all their lives and lost contact with their countries of origin as well as persons who though not born but have lived in Ghana many years will be considered each on its merits provided they are of good behaviour and are gainfully employed<sup>18</sup>.

Meanwhile, official explanations for the expulsion as offered by the Government of Ghana included the following:

- i. that there were about 600,000 registered unemployed in Ghana, which would be relieved by the expulsion of the aliens;
- ii. that the continuing balance of payment deficit was worsened by immigrant workers and traders who remitted home some of their earnings; and
- iii. that the aliens engaged in smuggling, especially of diamonds<sup>19</sup>.

Judging from the above, T.C. McCaskie has observed that the Expulsion Order, which mostly affected Nigerians, was ostensibly designed to achieve three main objectives namely to;

- i. restore the economy to Ghanaians;
- ii. "purify" the country; and
- iii. curb lawlessness and crime"<sup>20</sup>.

A cursory look at the above submissions reveals that the expulsion order was promulgated to achieve about four key objectives. These were to:

- i. generate more employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed Ghanaian nationals;
- ii. arrest the worsening balance of payment deficit; due to remittances sent home by immigrant workers and traders from their earnings;

- iii. curb the economic sabotage of smuggling by aliens, especially diamond, and;
- iv. rid the country of lawlessness and crime perpetrated largely by aliens.

A brief discussion of each of these goals is considered essential for a better understanding of the rationale for the expulsion order.

One of the most important reasons for the 1969 expulsion of Nigerians from Ghana in 1969 was to provide employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed Ghanaian nationals. It was the opinion of government then that by relieving aliens of their jobs through expulsion, many Ghanaians would be gainfully employed. This was expected to lead to a reduction of level of poverty as well as an improved standard of living for average Ghanaians. Considering the numbers and powers wielded by aliens, especially Nigerians, in the economic life of Ghana, this particular reason provides a solid justification for the expulsion of aliens in 1969. Though no accurate statistics exists, the 1960 Ghana Census figures put the number of foreigners living in Ghana at over 830,000<sup>21</sup>. Adomako-Sarfoh submits that most of these were Africans, mostly Nigerians, who for over half a century had come to play vital roles in the economic development of Ghana<sup>22</sup>. Samir Amin reports that this migrant population supplied around 40% of the workforce in Ghana<sup>23</sup> while the *West Africa* substantiates that it was the aliens who collected refuse, swept streets, worked on the mines or laboured on the cocoa farms<sup>24</sup>. In the retail trade, the aliens exercised complete control and were responsible for the distribution of commodities to the remote areas of Ghana<sup>25</sup>. Adu Boahen also reports that the Ghanaian economy was under complete control of expatriate firms and companies as “over 90% of the country’s import trade was in the hands of overseas firms; 96% of the timber concessions were held by expatriate timber companies; all the seven gold mines and half of the diamond concessions in the country were owned by foreign companies”<sup>26</sup>. Indeed, at the time of the Order, aliens had infiltrated into all sectors of the economy and were to be found in all major occupations<sup>27</sup>.

While the alien population occupied important positions in Ghana’s economy, it was ironical that over 600,000 Ghanaian citizens were reported to be on the list of unemployed citizens in their own country<sup>28</sup>. Since all the previous administrations could not alter this seemingly lopsided pattern of economic growth, the new government of Dr. Kofi A. Busia was determined to ensure that the “citizens of Ghana play a far bigger role in the commercial and industrial life of the country than they do at present”<sup>29</sup>.

From the above discussion, there is no doubt that economic considerations largely propelled the enforcement of the Quit Order on aliens in 1969. Relieving the large number of aliens of their jobs was thus regarded as a way of fixing the unemployed Ghanaian youths in gainful employment. However, whether this particular goal was achieved or not is a matter of discussion in some other sections of this paper.

Another major factor that informed the expulsion of aliens from Ghana in 1969 was to rid Ghana of lawlessness and crime. In his address to the third African Regional Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Accra, Kofi Busia, in an apparent attempt to justify the expulsion order declared that 90 percent of Ghana’s prison population and known criminals were aliens<sup>30</sup>. As Busia further explained, the expulsion order was not contemplated as an attack on Ghana’s alien community but was rather aimed at reducing the number of “undesirable elements” in Ghana<sup>31</sup>. The process of expulsion appeared to have lent credence to Busia’s explanation because Nigerians who were employed in the Ghanaian civil service and those teaching in the various Teacher Training Colleges were exempted from deportation, except that those who had no requisite papers were asked to regularize them<sup>32</sup>.

It is important to stress that Kofi Busia gave no statistical account of the Ghana prison inmates as at the time of the expulsion to indicate their countries of origin. A salient question one may want to ask is that were there no Ghanaians in Ghana’s prisons before and after the expulsion of the alien folk? Definitely, the Ghanaian authorities would never be able to convince any reasonable person that only foreigners perpetrated evils and crimes in Ghana before the expulsion. In as much as one is not trying to exonerate some aliens (including Nigerians) from the high waves of crime in Ghana prior to the expulsion, it is apt to state that placing the total blame for criminality at the door step of Nigerian migrants in Ghana or of any other alien for that matter, is too simplistic and may amount to wrong generalization. As a matter of fact, research indicates that more than any other group of migrant aliens in Ghana, Nigerians contributed immensely to the socio-economic and political developments of Ghana<sup>33</sup>. Hence, rather than criminalize Nigerian aliens they deserved to be commended.

Perhaps, equally of great importance to the expulsion of aliens from Ghana in 1969 was the growing acrimony of Ghanaians against the rising commercial profile and economic buoyancy of Nigerian migrants. Nigerian traders of Yoruba descent were in control of Ghana markets in both rural and urban centers where they prospered tremendously. This prosperity led to the swelling size of Yoruba population from around 57,400 in 1931 to over 191,802 in 1960<sup>34</sup>. Olaniyi Rasheed observes that the rising commercial profile of the Yoruba migrants attracted competition and indignation from Ghanaians who developed a feeling of displacement from their established socio-economic position<sup>35</sup>.

It is also important to stress that the profligacy of Yoruba merchants and their pseudo-capitalist tendencies also intensified the process of xenophobia. It was alleged by Ghanaians that Yoruba flaunted their wealth by wearing shoes decorated with Ghanaian currency while rich traders often had “excessive gold

decorations and abused the power of money”<sup>36</sup>. Though there might have been some exaggerations in these descriptions of Nigerian’s display of wealth to the consternation of Ghanaians, it is true that most Yoruba traders owned most of the beautiful houses in Ghana and lived a life of affluence during their good days in Ghana<sup>37</sup>. As was expected, many Ghanaians felt degraded by the extravagant tendencies of the migrants. This was the beginning of xenophobic reaction against Nigerian migrants in Ghana.

Most of the returnees could recollect how Ghanaians became curious and restless regarding the commercial acumen of Nigerian traders and farmers and their eventual wealth in no small a time after their arrival<sup>38</sup>. This led to insinuations by Ghanaian natives that Yoruba’s were magicians and “could make money from anything including the air”<sup>39</sup>. With time, Ghanaians labeled Nigerian (Yoruba) migrants variously as “clannish, callous, arrogant and thrifty” among others<sup>40</sup>. With such feelings of deprivation and subordination to the Yoruba very rife among Ghanaians, it was very easy to transform the Yoruba identity from traders to criminals who deserved nothing but expulsion. Yoruba migrants were treated with disgust by their Ghanaian hosts. This prompted the emergence of xenophobic slogans against the Yoruba. One of such slogans as captured by Olaniyi Rasheed in one of his interviews was “*Mubaka*” meaning “you are going”<sup>41</sup>. It is informative to state that such an atmosphere of insecurity and xenophobia in which Nigerian migrants found themselves in Ghana was not a unique experience to the Yorubas. H. Blumer<sup>42</sup>, S. Lieberman<sup>43</sup>, L.Quillan<sup>44</sup> and Sniderman et al<sup>45</sup> also report that groups tend to reject other groups when the latter pose a perceived threat to their relative position in society. Similarly, H.D. Forbes<sup>46</sup>, S. Olzak<sup>47</sup> and L.Quillan<sup>48</sup> also report that economic competition among rival groups produce hostile attitudes and comprise of large informal trading sectors in which migrants can easily participate and do so often successfully. This participation, according to them, may pose a threat to the livelihoods of indigenous merchants engaging in petty trade because immigrants directly compete with them. Apart from that, marginalized indigenous minorities are likely to perceive immigrant groups as salient threat to their already tenuous positions in society. In congruence with existing literature on economic competition and inter-group rivalry, the actors might face an incentive to exclude immigrants from their economic playing field. It is further observed that at the aggregate level, threatened groups in the host society may press for legal restrictions on alien economic activity and may even press for more drastic measures such as expulsions.

Without any doubt, the expulsion of Nigerian migrants from Ghana in 1969 falls within the above scenario. Hence, the expulsion order of 18 November, 1969 could be perceived as the outcome of the pressures put on President Kofi Busia for the restriction of aliens’ participation in Ghana’s economic life which was spearheaded by the Kowu ethnic group of Ghana.

Another important reason for the expulsion order of 1969 was the economic misfortunes that befell Ghana. From the late 1960’s through the early 1970’s, Ghana experienced severe economic decline. It should be recalled that the Ghanaian economy was cocoa dependent; providing over 70% of foreign exchange earnings for the country. However, since the late 1950 up till 1970, the world cocoa price witnessed a continuous decline, falling by over 75% as at 1969<sup>49</sup>. This engendered an increase in the cost of living and import shortages. This was sequel to the fact that when a drop in the price of cocoa precipitated a financial crisis in 1971, Busia’s government raised prices of goods and increased the interest rates. He also went ahead to devalue the currency, but all these led to massive inflation. The action also precipitated a high foreign indebtedness which got to a record high of 600 million dollars in 1968<sup>50</sup>. Apart from this, a recurrent balance of trade deficit also led to a balance of payment deficit which compounded the economic challenges of the nation. The decision to abandon over 8% of the country’s state farms not only pushed up prices of food items but also succeeded in increasing the unemployment rate to 9000 representing a 4% increase of unemployed Ghanaians.<sup>51</sup>

As expected, all these economic difficulties, coupled with high level of corruption and mismanagement in government, caused discontentment and widespread disillusionment with the government of Busia<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, faced with economic crisis and the pressure of indigenization from Ghanaians, the Busia government decided to introduce a number of policy measures. First, it banned non-Ghanaians from petty trading<sup>53</sup> and on 19 November 1969, he announced the Expulsion of Aliens Order. These two legislations were no doubt aimed at arresting the worsening balance of payment deficit and reduce capital flight through remittances sent home by immigrant workers and traders from their earnings<sup>54</sup>. With Ghana’s continued economic misfortunes, the Government and popular press really had no difficulty turning to aliens as scapegoats for their malaise. Aliens were blamed not only for specifically economic ills of holding jobs which Ghanaians could do and thus contributing to increasing rates of unemployment and milking the country of cash through sending out of remittances, but also were seen as having an adverse moral influence on the native. In particular, they were held responsible for the high urban incidence of crime and prostitution<sup>55</sup>.

The expulsion order may also be seen as an attempt by Kofi Busia to win the confidence of the masses and restore the legitimacy of his government. Since government was losing its grip on the economic survival of the country, Busia and his cabinet members were left with little or no choice than to seek solace in sending away non-nationals as a way of appeasing the anger of the masses. Unfortunately however, the expulsions gave no lasting political benefits to Dr. Busia’s government as his government was eventually toppled in a coup d’etat

led by Lt. Col. (later General) I.K. Acheampong on 13 January, 1974 citing the economic malaise of Busia's administration as the major reason for the coup.<sup>56</sup>

It is a common fact of history today that Ghana eventually ejected aliens, mostly Nigerians, from its territory between November and early December, 1969. And though the event took place some forty-three years ago, the memory of its course and impact lingers on. It is in-view of this that we now turn to an overview of the impact of the expulsion order on Ghana and Nigeria.

### **Effects of the 1969 Expulsion of Aliens from Ghana**

As indicated above, the 1969 expulsion of aliens from Ghana has left an indelible mark on both the host state (Ghana) and the sending states (Nigeria as our focus in the paper). We now start with an examination of the effect of the expulsion of aliens from Ghana in 1969 on Ghana.

Though the 1969 expulsion of Aliens from Ghana may have had some mild ameliorative effect on the temper of Ghanaians against Busia's government<sup>57</sup>, it is highly debatable whether any meaningful economic gain was made. As a matter of fact, it is rather apt to interpret the impact of the aliens' expulsion from Ghana in adverse terms for a number of reasons.

In the first instance, Ghanaian masses commended government's action as a patriotic move to garner jobs for Ghanaians and to rid the country of crime. Such commendations were however not without hope of some benefits. One of such benefits was noticed in the emergence of local merchants among Ghanaians. Unfortunately, when the aliens left, they took with them capital and in addition; a large part of the Ghanaian trading nexus was destroyed. The emergent Ghanaian traders thus lacked both the skills and the connections to adequately carry on the trade. A great vacuum was thus created in the retail trade network and this probably accounted for the scarcity of household goods in the remote parts of Ghana after the exit of Nigerian traders in particular<sup>58</sup>, who hitherto specialized in the distribution of goods to these areas.

Another area of the economy where the adverse effect of the expulsion was strongly felt in the immediate post-expulsion period was the cocoa industry. Cocoa as an export crop is often referred to as the "life-blood" of Ghana's economy<sup>59</sup> being the major foreign exchange earner for the country. Until the late 1950's, Ghana produced over 50% of the world's cocoa output. But since the early part of the 1960's, Ghana started to lose the lead<sup>60</sup>. For instance, during the 1964/65 crop year, Ghana's cocoa output formed only 38% of the world's total<sup>61</sup>. But by January 1970, Ghana's production formed only 27% of the total world production<sup>62</sup>. This already battered situation of downward slope in cocoa production became further worsened after the expulsion of aliens. Since cocoa farmers depended largely on labour supplied by alien farm labourers, the labour shortages that followed the expulsion of aliens in 1969 adversely affected Ghana's cocoa industry. The net effect was that production declined, producer prices plummeted and farm owners ran into losses<sup>63</sup>. A replica of the ill-fate that befell cocoa production took place in the mining industry too. With the expulsion of alien workers, the mining industry experienced low production and reduction in their annual income.

At this juncture, there is the need to discuss how the 1969 expulsion order impacted on Nigeria.

### **Effect of the 1969 Expulsion of Aliens on Nigeria**

One of the major effects of the deportation of Nigerians from Ghana was demographic in nature. Since the expulsion order of 1969 affected all aliens without residence permits, a majority of Nigerian migrants estimated to be around 140,000 in number were affected by the order and were forced to leave Ghana abruptly between December 1969 and early 1970<sup>64</sup>. This necessitated an influx of thousands of people into Nigeria. That the influx came at the most unexpected and trying period of Nigeria's history caused more challenges for the Nigerian government and the various host communities especially in South-Western Nigeria. Towns like Inisa, Oyan, Ilorin, Offa, Ejigbo, Ogbomoso, Oke-Imesi and Ogotun played host to numerous indigenes of their towns who were in diaspora for some year's past<sup>65</sup>.

A multiplier effect of this forced, sudden exit of Nigerians from Ghana was that it led to family disorganization and family separation. Many Nigerians who were already married to Ghanaians could not come with their wives or husbands and had to live a dejected life ever since then. Re-uniting such separated families has been less successful even after the dust of the expulsion saga had settled down<sup>66</sup>.

Expelled Nigerians from Ghana also suffered economic losses in the form of loss of property and economic power. With respect to loss of property, many of those expelled to Nigeria would never be able to calculate their losses. This was because on the average, deportees were able to estimate their individual losses at around eight thousand naira (₦8,000). It was indeed a traumatic experience for most of the wealthy Nigerians. For the cocoa farmland owners, their investments of capital, labour and time was lost to the native land- owners who confiscated their cocoa farms<sup>67</sup>. The story of the cocoa farm owners is indeed very pathetic. For instance, a majority of them who had spent quality time (up to about 4 or 5 years) to tend their crops had to lose all their investments in a twinkle of an eye<sup>68</sup>. For some, their farms have been yielding paltry produce for some initial years, and were waiting for the bountiful harvest in the peak year when they were expelled<sup>69</sup>. But more

disturbing was the timing of the expulsion itself. The order came during the peak of the harvesting period of cocoa seeds. While the cocoa farmers were relishing in the joy of a good harvest for the season, after much hard labour and huge monetary expenses, the order to leave within fourteen days came. To many of these farmers, it was as if their world was crashing. But, they could not change the situation as most of them had no relevant papers<sup>70</sup>.

Apart from this, Nigerians expelled from Ghana also had their property looted by Ghanaian natives. In the process of enforcing the expulsion order, properties of Nigerians were thrown recklessly outside by both the security agents and natives. Some of such valuable items like radio sets were stolen by Ghanaian miscreants, amounting to losses for Nigerians<sup>71</sup>. Related to this was that Nigerian traders not only had a large proportion of their goods in stock looted, but also lost their kiosks and market stalls to the Ghanaian authorities<sup>72</sup>. Such markets stalls and kiosks were taken over by the Government and were later allocated to prospective Ghanaian traders.

But another huge loss came the way of Nigerians who had erected houses in Ghana. It should be recollected that the affluence of Nigerian traders who had succeeded in building personal houses was a major source of the xenophobic feelings against Nigerian migrants in the build-up towards the final expulsion of aliens from Ghana. As expected therefore, such Nigerians were in a dilemma regarding their houses when the expulsion order came. It is disheartening to note that some of these proud house-owners spent all their fortunes in making life comfortable for themselves and their households<sup>73</sup>. While some had no plan of a return journey back home, at least not in the near future, and thereby planning to live a life of comfort and convenience in their old age in Ghana; some had hoped to sell their houses when they finally decided to return to Nigeria. Unfortunately, both categories of house-owners had their hopes dashed. Both of them had to leave their houses behind and forfeited them to government or sell them at ridiculously cheap prices to prospective buyers.<sup>74</sup>

Apart from loss of property, a majority of Nigerians deported from Ghana in 1969 also suffered losses of economic power. Since majorities were traders, farmers and labourers, their hard-earned incomes were usually kept in the banks for safety reasons. The same applies to special contributions (*ajo*) organized by Nigerian migrants as an economic lever, which were kept in the banks for security reasons. When the expulsion order came, however, Nigerian depositors were shocked to the marrow when most of them rushed to the bank to withdraw their savings/deposits only to be denied access to their money. This was because government had directed all banks not to honour any withdraw in the excess of two thousand pounds (£2000)<sup>75</sup>. The net effect of this regulation was that a majority of Nigerians had to lose their cash apart from their houses, goods in stock, market stalls, kiosks and farm-lands to government. It indeed amounted to a colossal loss for most of the migrants<sup>76</sup>. This was even made worse where such migrants had spent a good number of years laboring to acquire wealth in the foreign land. Some of these migrants had to return home empty handed. Some could not fathom out the reason for their continued existence in view of their losses. This was why some had to set fire on their properties (houses, farms and household utensils) while some attempted to commit suicide before they were rescued by their colleagues. Others were however unlucky as they actually committed suicide<sup>77</sup>.

The expulsion of Nigerians from Ghana also resulted in physical devastation and loss of lives. It all started with the problem of transportation back home. Since the Ghanaian government did not make any arrangement for the transportation of those expelled, each of the migrants had to cater for him/herself. Hence, the first challenge that confronted the migrants was the skyrocketing transport fare even in the face of scarcity of vehicles<sup>78</sup>. Because a majority could not afford the cost of transportation, they resorted to trekking across the border on foot. As a result of this strenuous experience, many of the migrants, including the aged, pregnant women, and children became physically exhausted, resulting in death in some cases<sup>79</sup>. Even at the refugee camps along the border, migrants passed through hell. Some of their nasty experiences included lack of food, lack of sufficient cash and exposure to environmental hazards<sup>80</sup>. When some of them got home eventually, they were almost worn out by the long strenuous journey and had to rely on their kith and kin for sustenance<sup>81</sup>.

The expulsion of aliens from Ghana in 1969 equally had some socio-psychological impacts on Nigerians. One of such problems was that of re-integration and adjustment. Since some of these returnees had left home for about a decade or more without any return journey in the interval, they have totally lost contact with their hometowns and family members. Elders could recollect that some of the returnees had to spend close to two weeks before they could be re-united with their family members. This was because they have lost the memory of their compounds and therefore had to stay in refugee camps in their towns, in most cases, the king's palaces in the respective towns<sup>82</sup>.

But while some were languishing in the trauma of unplanned return journey and were stranded in the king's palaces, it is rather paradoxical that some parents and family members were happy to be re-united with their children, grand-children and other loved ones after a very long period of separation<sup>83</sup>. Such people were full of gratitude to God and the Ghanaian government for the expulsion order without which their loved ones would have been "lost forever". Like it happened in the time of the proverbial prodigal son in the Bible, many such families celebrated the return of their kinsmen in grand-style<sup>84</sup>.

Olaniyi Rasheed<sup>85</sup> also reports that the expulsion order also led to widespread child fostering. According to him, returnee parents migrated to secure means of livelihood while children were kept in the traditional setting of the old family houses, usually with grandparents. The education of most of these affected children became truncated in the process as some parents lacked the capacity to send them to school. Many children lost some years before they could return to school, while some others had to learn trading and artisanship skills. The Western State Ministry of Education should however be commended for making special arrangement for the school registration of the deported children<sup>86</sup>.

As for Nigerians who were not affected by the expulsion order, hard times awaited them in the post-expulsion era in Ghana, going by the various legislations that were introduced by the government of Ghana. The two most relevant laws in this direction were the Residence Permits Compliance Order of 1970 (RPCO) and The Ghanaian Business Promotion Act (GBPA) No 334 of 1970<sup>87</sup>. While the RPCO stipulates that all aliens in Ghana must obtain a permit to be able to reside in the country and even required all aliens to carry their permits on their persons wherever they went; the GBPA on its own provides more guides and control on the role of immigrants in the economic life of Ghana. Apart from the fact that the Act reserved certain sectors of the economy for its nationals, it also stipulates which categories of enterprise are categorically reserved for nationals. For example, Article II of the Act states that “no person other than a Ghanaian shall own or be part-owner of any enterprise concerned with retail or wholesale trade where the annual sales do not exceed 500,000 cedis (or equivalent)”. The Act also itemizes about thirty-seven economic activities exclusively reserved for nationals, including commercial transport by land, bakery, printing, beauty culture, manufacture of cement bricks and advertising and publicity<sup>88</sup>. Furthermore, the Act prohibits aliens from trading in any market or to engage in petty trading, hawking or selling from a kiosk. Any alien who is operating a business enterprise is also under legal obligation to institute training schemes for Ghanaians.<sup>89</sup>

From the provisions of these two laws above, it is not an overstatement to stress that Nigerian entrepreneurs in Ghana who escaped the expulsion order experienced commercial depression and hostility of different forms. This affected their traditional business of commodity distribution in two ways. The first challenge was how to raise the huge capital required for business while the second one was the stiff competition they would face with state-owned trading corporations.

### **Concluding Remarks**

From the foregoing discussions, it is clear that the 1969 Ghanaian expulsion of Nigerians and other West-African nationals was largely motivated by the search for economic survival for the nation in an era of turbulent economic challenges that confronted the nation in the period preceding the expulsion. This led to mounting pressure for increased participation in national affairs and opportunities for citizens at the expense of the alien population from Nigeria who dominated the various sectors of the Ghanaian economy. Though the expulsion had some xenophobic tendencies inherent in its formulation and execution, the order was hailed by Ghanaian of all shades because of its nationalist and welfarist connotations. It was indeed a bold attempt towards the economic survival of the country.

Apart from that, the expulsion order also asserted the right to define citizenship and to specify rights, privileges and duties of non-citizens as well as those of citizens. It further defines the terms upon which “strangers” would be permitted to reside in Ghana.<sup>90</sup>

The implementation of the 1969 Compliance Order in Ghana also signaled, for Ghana, the impact of independence on the erstwhile free movement of persons across African countries. This is evident in the various immigration laws and other relevant legislations guiding the entry, residence and employment of non-nationals. This view was well articulated by the Economic Commission of Africa in 1981 when it observed that:

The coming of independence changed the pattern of migration by reducing free international movements by the elaborate development of visa and passport regulations, or customs and controls of the need for foreign workers to obtain work permits, or restrictions on the repatriation of savings.<sup>91</sup>

Without any contradictions, the Ghanaian government had an inalienable right to legislate within its territory, without external intervention as a sovereign nation. However, the expulsion order was not promulgated, and neither was it implemented with a human face. In the first instance, the expulsion order was too sudden and without any prior notice. For an alien population that had lived in a country for close to thirty years, one would have expected the Government of Ghana to sensitize them on the impending expulsion and the conditions guiding it. This was however not done by the Busia’s administration. Rather the Expulsion Order was promulgated on 18 November, 1969 and took effect the following day, 19 November, 1969. Worse still, all the affected aliens were given just fourteen days (till 2 December, 1969) to pack their loads and go. From all indications, the decision was callous and devoid of any humanitarian instinct.

Related to this is that the aliens were denied access to their monies in the bank. Even those in paid employment were not given the opportunity to collect their pay for the month of November 1969. These two actions of the Ghanaian government amounted to exploitation. The various banks where those monies were kept should also have found a way of paying back their depositors after all these years. It was indeed an immoral act which should be dissuaded in the future.

Similarly, Ghanaian security agents should have learnt to be humane in carrying out the expulsion order. Reported acts of beating, harassment and intimidation of Nigerian aliens in the hey-days of the expulsion were uncalled for. That the aliens were expelled at so short a notice with its attendant deprivation clauses were enough shockers to the aliens. Hence brutalizing and humiliating the deportees in the process of carrying out government orders and regulations were out of order.

But apart from the various moral issues raised against the process of the expulsion, it is essential to state that the expulsion order had a negative impact on Ghana's led crusade for regional cooperation and integration in Africa. Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah had championed the cause of creating a borderless Africa and a common government for Africa. Between 1957 and 1966, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana fought vigorously for the creation of a Union of African States with a common African Government. His optimism for the unity and cohesion of Africa as a lever for continental development was indeed unparalleled. It is interesting to note that Nkrumah vehemently criticized the artificial divisions and territorial boundaries created by the colonial powers which he regarded as a deliberate attempt to obstruct the political unity of African peoples<sup>92</sup>. His mission was to, among others, erase the artificial boundaries that divided African states and thereby have a single Africa, politically administered as one. To now understand that the same Nkrumah's Ghana went ahead to promulgate the Expulsion Order of 1969 and enforced the visa requirement against Africans not only symbolized the border of the mind that African leaders still kept, but will always slow down the progress toward globalizing the African continent.

For the Nigerian migrants to Ghana who suffered greatly due to their expulsion in 1969 in the most brazen and shoddy manner, the lesson had been learnt, though in a hard way. The lesson is: there is no place like home, just like a common Yoruba lyric says: ko sibi to dabi ile leye nke.... (the birds sing: there is no place like home). Nigerians in the diaspora should therefore internalize the lesson and take the issue of remittances very seriously. They must learn to plan for the future and make hay while the sun shines.<sup>93</sup>

For the Nigerian government, it is time to restructure the economy of the nation and position it for growth. To this end, there is the need to create more jobs through the establishment of industries. Similarly, government should take the issue of infrastructural development seriously to reduce the cost of production. The security challenges facing the country should also be properly addressed to make Nigeria safe for investment and human habitation. By so doing, large scale emigration of Nigerians would be drastically reduced and Nigeria would be able to retain its most valuable human resources for national development.

Lastly, it need be stated that perhaps the greatest impact of the 1969 expulsion of Nigerians by Ghana in the heat of Nigerian Civil war was interpreted as a tacit way of destabilizing Nigeria and weaken its cohesion, especially when the Igbo elements in Ghana were classified as "special refugees" and were thus exempted from the expulsion order. This was why the 1969 episode has been a major source of rancor between Nigeria and Ghana. It really succeeded in soiling Nigeria-Ghana diplomatic relations for a very long time.

## Notes and References

1. W.A. Cardinall, *The Gold Coast*, (Accra, 1931), cited in T. Antwi-Bosiakoh, "Understanding Migration Motivations in West Africa: The Case of Nigerians in Ghana", *Legon Journal of Sociology*, Vol.3, No2, December 2006 – June 2009, p.6. See also A. Adepoju, "Patterns of Migration in West Africa" in T. Manuh (ed), *At Home in the World?: International Migration and Development in Contemporary Ghana and West Africa*. (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2005), p.32.
2. A. Adepoju, "Patterns of Migration in West Africa", p.32.
3. R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus: Memory and Reminiscences of Yoruba Migrants", SEPHIS Postdoctoral Research Grant 'Rethinking Migration and Diaspora Identity in West Africa: A Comparative Study of Yoruba in Northern Nigeria and Ghana, 1900-1970.' Project No. 2849, DCO0013857/sephis/res/142/07. p.9. See also M. Hundsalz, "The Migration of the Yoruba to Ghana and their Return to Nigeria", *Erkunde*, Bd.26, H.3, September 1972, p.218.
4. See W.T.S. Gould, "International Migration in Tropical Africa", *International Migration Review*, Vol.8, No 3, 1974, p.356.
5. J.A. Adomako-Sarfoh, "The Effects of the Expulsion of Migrant Workers on Ghana's Economy, with particular Reference to the Cocoa Industry", in S.Amin (ed.), *Modern Migrations in Western Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.138.



6. Another one was the Ghana Business Promotion Act, No. 334 of August 1970. For details see K. Ahooja-Patel, "Regulations governing the employment of non-nationals in West Africa" in S. Amin (ed.), *Modern Migrations in Western Africa*, pp.175-176.
7. W.T.S. Gould, "International Migration in Tropical Africa", p.356.
8. M. Hundsalz, "The Migration of the Yoruba to Ghana and their Return to Nigeria", p.218.
9. See L. Brydon, "Ghanaian Responses to the Nigerian Expulsions of 1983" *African Affairs*, vol.84, No 337, 1985, p.56.
10. See also R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus", p.13.
11. R. Rathbone, "Defining Akyemfo: The Construction of Citizenship in Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana, 1700-1939", *Africa: Journal of International African Institutes*, Vol.66, No.4, 1996, pp.506-525.
12. R. Olaniyi, "The 1969, Ghana Exodus", p.13.
13. See T.C McCaskie, "Recent History of Ghana", in Europa Publications Ltd, *Africa South of the Sahara, 1984-85*, (1984), p.414. see also R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus", p.14 and M. Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana, 1982-1992: Rawlings, Revolution and the Populist Democracy* (Accra: Tornado Publications, 2004), p.81.
14. According to Niara Sudarkasa, Yoruba leaders were founding and active members of the Muslim Association Party (MAP) in Ghana. See details in N. Sudarkasa, "From Strangers to Aliens: The Socio-Political History of the Yoruba in Ghana, 1900-1970", in W.A. Shack and E.P. Skinner (eds), *Strangers in African Societies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p.19.
15. M. Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana, 1982-1992*, p.81.
16. R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus" pp.16-17.
17. *Ibid*, p.12.
18. See *The Nigerian Tribune*, 4 December 1969, p.94 under the caption, "Nigerians in Ghana are Racing Back".
19. J.A. Adomako-Sarfoh, "The Effects of the Expulsion of Migrant Workers on Ghana's Economy, with particular Reference to the Cocoa Industry", in S.Amin (ed.), *Modern Migration in Western Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.138.
20. T.C. McCaskie, "Recent History of Ghana", p.410.
21. S.Amin (ed.), *Modern Migrations in Western Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.76.
22. J. Adomako-Sarfoh, "The Effects of the Expulsion of Migrant Workers on Ghana's Economy...", p.139.
23. S.Amin (ed.) *Modern Migrations in Western Africa*, p.76
24. See *West Africa*, 20 December, 1969, pp.1533-1535
25. Yoruba traders were reported to have dominated the retail business in Ghana.
26. See A. Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975), p.196.
27. *United Nations Economic Bulletin for Africa*, Vol. vi, No. 2, July 1966, p.95.
28. J. Adomako-Sarfoh, "The Effects of the Expulsion of Migrant Workers in Ghana's Economy...", p.139.
29. See A. Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change*, p.197.
30. R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus", p.18.
31. "Why Aliens were Expelled – Busia", *Daily Times*, 11 December, 1969, p.1.
32. Interview with Mr. Saliu Ehinafe, from Ogbomoso, at Ogotun Ekiti on 4 June, 2010.
33. Most of the Nigerian migrants in Ghana were traders and farmers. They however participated actively in Ghanaian politics. For example, Samuel Oduntan from Ogbomoso was Kwame Nkrumah's Security aide, and S.O. Akinwumi became Ghana's Chief Justice during Nkrumah's rule: Nigerians were also prominent members of the Muslim Association Party (MAP) in Kumasi even as at 1968. Some of the party's principal officers included Alhaji Alufa Lardan, (Yoruba) who was the Chairman and Ahmadu Baba, a Hausa man, who was the president. For details, See Calus Von Brazi, "The Nigerian Re-invasion of Ghana" & N. Sudarkasa, "From Stranger to Alien: The Socio-Political History of the Nigerian Yoruba in Ghana, 1900-1970".
34. See R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus", p.9.
35. *Ibid*. The Kowu ethnic group of the Accra Region was even mentioned specifically by some of the deportees as spearheading the campaign of calumny against Nigerian migrants.
36. See R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus", p.10. This was corroborated by information obtained through oral interview with Messrs Alidu Sarafa and Adeoti Yisa on 11 April, 2011 at Lagos.
37. Obtained through oral interview with some Nigerians and Ghanaians living in Delta State Nigeria on 14 August, 2012. They however pleaded for anonymity.
38. *Ibid*.
39. R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus", p.10.
40. M. Peil, "Ghana's Aliens", *International Migration Review*, Vol.8, No.3, p.376 records some allegations made against Nigerian traders in Ghana as follows:

They (Nigerians) are target workers; immediately they get a few cedis they go into retail trade and they prosper too. They don't part with their money easily; they are unfriendly and do not help friends when they are in financial difficulty. They are impatient with buyers, arrogant and difficult to come to terms with. They are thrifty and clannish. They don't seem to trust Ghanaians and confide in them.

It should be noted that these claims were never true. Yoruba's in Ghana interacted well with their Ghanaian hosts and even got married to the natives.

41. See R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus...", p.10. This has also been affirmed by some of my informants such as Orilele Rasaq and Tiamiyu Akanmu interviewed on 23-5-2011 at Ilesa, Osun State.
42. Herbert, Blumer, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position." *Pacific Sociological Review* 1(1), 1958.
43. Stanley, Lieberson, *A Piece of the Pie* ( Berkeley: University of California Press,1980).
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45. P.M. Sniderman, Pierangelo Peri, Rui de Figuerido, and Thomas Piazza, *The Outsider: Prejudice and Politics in Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
46. H.D. Forbes, *Ethnic Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
47. S. Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*(Stanford:Stanford University Press, 1992).
48. L. Quillian, "Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat", *Population*, Vol.39, 1995.
49. T.C. McCaskie, "Recent History of Ghana", p.409.
50. See Microsoft Encarta Library (CD), Archive: Ghana, 2009.
51. T.C. Mc Caskie, "Recent History of Ghana", p.410.
52. *Ibid.*
53. R. Olaniyi, "The 1969 Ghana Exodus...", p.12.
54. J. Adomako-Sarfoh, "The Effects of the Expulsion of Migrant Workers on Ghana's Economy...", p.139.
55. **L.Brydon**, "Ghanaian Responses to the Nigerian Expulsions of 1983", *African Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 337 (Oct., 1985) p.564.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Kofi A. Busia's government was toppled in a military coup on 13 January, 1972.
58. L. Brydon, "Ghanaian Responses to the Nigerian Expulsion of 1983", p.564.
59. J. Adomako-Sarfoh, "The Effects of the Expulsion of Migrant Workers on Ghana's Economy...", p.140.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. A. Adepoju, "Patterns of Migration in West Africa", p.32
64. See T. Antwi-Bosiakoh, "Understanding Migration Motivations in West African", p.6
65. Interview with Mr. Sanya Alake (Oyan), Oni Iyanda (Inisa), Ayeni Salawu (Offa) and Mrs. Eunice Babayemi (Ogotun-Ekiti).
66. Stories abound of a good number of people who had been away from home for about 20-30years without any return journey. Such people could not locate their family houses any longer. However, they fall into two categories. One group could still recollect their compound names but have lost the direction of such compounds. The second group was oblivion of their family compounds and as such had to make the kings palaces as their abode for some time.
67. Interview with Messrs Elijah Olayode, Sunday Agbetoye and Jimoh Omoyegbe at Ogotun Ekiti on 16 October, 2011.
68. Interview with Jacob Agbetoye and Ojo Saaloda at Ogotun Ekiti on 10 July, 2011.
69. Information obtained from Mr. Saliu Adeusi at Oyan on 22 May, 2011.
70. Most of my informants declared that they had no relevant papers largely due to ignorance of the existence of any enabling law in Ghana.
71. Mr. Aminu Sarafa from Offa claimed he was a victim of such incidence as he lost valuable property to miscreants in Ghana. He was interviewed on 5 February, 2009.
72. Messrs M.O. Ojo, Ajetunmobi, Atunbi, Omotaajo and Mrs. Osewa were all traders in Ghana affected by the expulsion order. They lost almost all their goods in stock apart from losing the kiosks and market stalls. They were engaged in group discussion at Ogotun on 10 July, 2011.
73. This observation was made by Mr. Agbetola Segun at Oke-Mesi Ekiti on 16 July, 2011.
74. Such houses were offered for sale at ridiculous prices ranging from N200.00 to N300.00
75. This was corroborated by Fl.Lt. Jerry Rawlings at Accra on 14 June, 2012.
76. See Lanrewaju Adepoju, *Ladepo Omo Adanwo* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press and Book Industries (Nig) Ltd., 1975), pp.16 & 45.
77. Information obtained from Messrs Akanji Taofeek, Sulaiman Mumuni and Olayode Elijah between 2009 and 2012.

78. Only a few vehicles were available. The artificial scarcity instigated a hike in price which increased by as much as 300%
79. Various newspaper reports suggest that the number of deaths ranged from 2 to 10 which is an insignificant number relative to the number of expelled aliens.
80. This experience was common to almost all the returned migrants interviewed.
81. *Ibid.*
82. See Lanrewaju Adepoju, *Ladepo Omo Adanwo* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press and Book Industries (Nig) Ltd., 1975), p.17.
83. *Ibid.*, pp.16, 17, and 22.
84. Information obtained from Messrs Elijah Olayode, Sunday Agbetoye and Jimoh Omoyegbe at Ogotun Ekiti on 16 October, 2011.
85. Nigerian returnee migrants brought with them elements of Ghanaian culture. At Inisa, Osun State where this is very evident, the application of Ghanaian facial mark is very prominent. This is used largely as an antidote to child mortality, convulsion and teething problems.
86. See "School Registration Plan for Deported Children" in *Daily Times*, 27 December, 1969, p.1.
87. See K. Ahooja-Patel, "Regulations Governing the Employment of non-nationals in West Africa", in S.Amin (ed), *Modern Migrations in Western Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.175.
88. *Ibid*, pp.175-176.
89. *Ibid*, p.176.
90. See N.Sudarkasa, "From Stranger to Alien..."
91. See A. Adepoju, "Illegals and Expulsion in Africa: The Nigerian Experience", *International Migration Review*, Vol.18, No.3, 1984, pp.427-428.
92. C.E. Welch, *Dream of Unity* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p.16.
93. See Lanrewaju Adepoju, *Ladepo Omo Adanwo* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press and Book Industries (Nig) Ltd., 1975), pp.36-38.

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