

# The Role of Hanns Vischer (Dan Hausa) On the Development of Secular Education in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Many People, today do not know the historical perspective of how western education introduced in the provinces of northern Nigeria. Hanns Vscher, was the first European white man appointed in the provinces of northern Nigeria to introduced western secular education system. This paper “The role of Hanns Vischer, on the Development of secular education in the protectorate of northern Nigeria” explored extensively the work of Hanns Vischer on the various aspects of education. The paper, expressed that Sudan education department appeared to Vischer to be achieving genuine success. At the same vein it critically discussed how he actively started the training of local teachers in Kano. The methodology used in this study is analytical study, which identified the major works done by Hanns Vischer in the history of developing secular education in the province of northern Nigeria. The findings show the principles curriculum design and development in the protectorate of northern Nigeria. The paper recommends the further expansion of this work to covered the other aspects of technical class at Nasarawa Kano and PE class at Katsina of the post primary curriculum and it preparation of scheme of work.

**Key note:** Role, Hanns Vischer, Development, Secular, Education, Northern Nigeria.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Hanns Vischer was born at Basle on 14 September 1876, being descended on both his father’s and mother’s sides from Huguénot refugees who had reached Basle from France in the seventh century. His paternal grandfather, within Vischer, was professor of Classical Greek at the university of Basle and Curator of the University.

After graduating in modern Languages in 1899, he went to Ridley Hall for a one year course during which he, as a member of the Church of England, volunteered for missionary work with the C.M.S. Hausa party. He had already spent one long vocation in Tripoli studying Hausa, and although he was not sure what path his work in Africa should follow, he had known for some time that Africa was his sphere. Hanns Vischer was a missionary for little more than two years. He sailed with G.P. Bargery in November 1900, and they joined the Hausa mission at Lokoja in February 1901, where Vischer remained throughout his Sojourn in Nigeria as a missionary. Then Vischer received a letter of appointment as director of Education, Northern provinces, with effects from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1914. While still seconded from the political department he did, however use the title of director of education and in 1913

produced the first annual report of the department of education of Northern Nigeria. Such the whole position in the Muslim provinces was so different from any that had arisen in the educational history of other British West African Colonies, the Administrations caution is understandable. The immediate step taken in 1908 was to give Vischer Six months’ leave to study the education systems of other colonies.

## II. HANNS VISCHER AS DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION NORTHERN PROVINCES

Then Vischer received a letter of appointment as director of Education, Northern provinces, with effects from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1914. While still seconded from the political department he did, however use the title of director of education and in 1913 produced the first annual report of the department of education of Northern Nigeria. Such the whole position in the Muslim provinces was so different from any that had arisen in the educational history of other British West African Colonies, the Administrations caution is understandable. The immediate step taken in 1908 was to give Vischer Six months’ leave to study the education systems of other colonies. At Cairo he visited two Kuttabs (the name given to the elementary Vernacular schools), a primary and a secondary school, the Mansura industrial school, the Bulak Technical school and the school of Agriculture at Gizeh. The Kuttabs were boys and girls who received instructions in Arabic from Egyptians religious teachers, schools which complied with Code Regulations were eligible for grants in aid from the ministry of Education. The weekly time table included seventh lessons on the Qur’an, six each in writing and arithmetic, and five each in reading and dictation. The primary schools wider curriculum gave English and French together slightly more prominence than Arabic in the four-year course. (The secondary schools curriculum covered a further four years and the works was on European lines). The five lessons on religious instruction customary in the primary school were omitted in the secondary school, although there remained eight lessons in Arabic to nine in English and French, History in secondary school extend from Egyptian to cover the whole range from ancient Greek to modern European, and physics and chemistry were among the subjects added to the curriculum. All the instructions was in Arabic except the lessons on European languages and on drawing. Sonia f. Graham, (1966).

### III. SUDAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR THE PROTECTORATE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

The Sudan education department appeared to Vischer to be achieving genuine success because its methods had been so adapted to the requirements and the conditions of the country that education was becoming popular. At Rufa'a on the Blue Nile, despite prejudice against the education of girls, forty six were allowed by their parents to attend their own kuttub because the teacher was a revered local Sheikh of great intelligence. Yet officials of the Department regularly inspected the school.

Much of the success and cohesion of the education department depended on these latter, whom Vischer admired. He noted that they were nearly all University scholars and several were gold medalists. They liked their work and were genuinely interested in the Sudanese. One point about which Vischer remained doubtful was the inclusion of Arabic and religious instruction in the official syllabus, doubts which were shared by others. It is well to remember that the authorities at Khartoum would readily leave out both and employ the time in more profitable studies, he reported. (Report on tour: Sudan), Sonia f. Graham, (1966). So far Vischer had inspected only government schools although he mentioned his report that remarkably good work was being done in the C.M.S girls school at Khartoum in the Gold coast vischer had the opportunity of studying very different systems, for education there was mainly the hands of five different mission societies, (1) The Basel (2) The Bremen (3) Church of England (4) The Roman catholic and (5) Wesleyan. In Vischer's opinion of the system of education in Egypt is compared with his comments on that of the Gold coast, it becomes clear that he did not set out on his tour with any preconceived preferences for 'European' education in African territories, or for education based on local Vernaculars. He had no defined plans for which he was seeking justification. On the contrary, he was considering each education department in relation to its own environment, and not attempting generalization on colonial education, whether government or missionary.

The mission work in southern Nigeria Vischer did not gain so favorable an impression. Statutory recognition had first been given to mission schools in 1882, when Lagos was part of the gold coast. A year after Lagos became a crown colony, its own education ordinance had been passed on which the grants in aid were still based. Vischer reported that in the western provinces, including Lagos there were eight government schools (four being Muslim) and forty aided mission schools. Mission schools receiving grants had to restrict religious instruction to certain hours of the day. The first government inspector of schools had been appointed in 1901 for the protectorate of southern Nigeria, but there were no schoolmasters in the western province of the colony of southern Nigeria in 1909, most of the teachers being southern Nigerians. The director had great difficulty in finding

competent Mallams for the four Muslim schools, and Vischer was amazed at the low educational standard of the Muslims school in Lagos. Sonia f. Graham, (1966).

### IV. THE REALITY OF SECULAR EDUCATION IN THE PROTECTORATE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

In September 1909, prior to the opening of the first government elementary school in Kano, Vischer actively started the training of local teachers in Kano. He started the scheme in order to avoid the recruitment of coastal Negroes and western Indians as teachers. Twelve Mallams were recruited from Sokoto, Kano, and Katsina, Vischer held his class at Nassarawa, outside Kano city. The syllabus included Hausa reading and writing in Roman script, arithmetic, and the geography of northern Nigeria Africa and British empire, classes were held from 8am, to 12noon, and from 2:pm, to 4:pm. The Mallam classes rose from dozen to thirty five and to one hundred before the end of the year.

A boarding school for the sons of chiefs was opened by Vischer in 1909, with about thirty pupils. The residents in the provinces had to press many Emirs to send their sons to Kano to be educated by Vischer. Naturally many parents were reluctant to send their sons to school far away from home (even if the distance was ten miles) and for a purpose not clear known to the father or sons. Three trained Mallams assisted Vischer with the school. The syllabus was modified version of the one used at Miller's Mallams School. The boys were also taught agriculture with particular reference to the cultivation of carpentry, leather-work and smithery.

Between 1905 and 1909, before the opening of the Nassarawa School for boys, residents in other provinces had opened a few classes for the sons of chiefs. But these were small and localized. Vischer's school received financial support from the native administration treasuries of the various Emirates as well as from the central government from Lagos. The Nassarawa school were secular. No school lessons took place on Sunday or Friday and no Sunday school or daily Christian Morning Prayer was held. Pupils from the same province lived together in a compound with their attendants or retinue who had accompanied them from their home of origin. Vischer's idea was to make life as natural to the boys as possible and thus avoid the usual problem of re-entry' when the course was over. Each compound was headed by a mallam and expected regularly by the European staff and a medical officer of health. Each chief paid a fee of £5 per year, per child. Fafunwa, (2004).

Vischer wished to connect manual and class room instruction, for he believed it was wrong that boys should not be able to use their hands. Above all however, he was trying to instill the spirit of an English public school into this work, and he reported that the boys are as open to this as any boy at home. The belief was that this form of character training would enable the next generation of Native Administration officials to co-operate with the British officials more easily. The education department was growing at this time with the

development of a system of education. Vischer was promoted to second class Resident on the recommendation of Hesketh Bell, who described Vischer as superintendent of Nasarawa schools, acting as director of education. In 1910, he needed assistance and obtained the appointment of F. Urling Smith of the Egyptian education department, who was given the rank of third class Resident. Urling Smith was also referred to as superintendent of the Nassarawa Schools, later becoming senior superintendent on the appointment of junior officials. The lateness of Vischer’s actual appointment as Director confirms that to the Government Vischer’s educational projects seemed experimental until at least 1913, although the colonial annual reports refer to him from 1909, as director of education. Mathew Adam, (2013).

**V. ORGANIZING RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION: FINANCING AND BUDGETING IN THE SCHOOL OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTORATE**

The money for the initial work was provided partly from the revenues of central government and partly by the Baital-mal, the Native Treasury of Kano. Here under is the method of how Vischer divided the financial responsibility between the government and the kano bait al Mal in 1910.

**Government Grant:**

1 Salary of director of education (2 <sup>nd</sup> class Res.)	\$570,00
2 salary of suprintedent of Nassraswa schools	\$450, 00
3 Horse Allowance, for Director of education	\$ 45, 00

**Bait al-Mal Grant :**

1 Head Teacher	\$36, 00
2 Assistant Teacher	\$24, 00
3 Servant	\$ 12, 00
4 Religiose Instructor	\$ 18, 00

**Malamai School:**

1 Head teacher	\$ 36, 00
2 Ass. Teacher	\$ 48, 00
3 Black smith (Technical School)	\$ 48,00

Through these Native Treasuries the Native Administration first shouldered real responsibility. The funds administered by them during 1910, came to £200,000 and it was a triumph for the principles shared responsibility that the Emir of Kano put aside £1,000 for the Nassarawa schools. Moreover he made it an annual grant, and his example was followed by the Shehu of Borno and the Emir of Bauchi and Muri who contributed £120, £100, and £50 respectively. The monies received from the government and from the Kano Baital-mal were expended separately, the division in uses being clear from Vischer’s Estimates of Expenditure 1910-11. The European staff’s salaries and allowances were paid by the government, but the African teachers’ and instructors’ salaries came from Baital-

mal funds, as did the grants to poor mallams and the allowances for apprentices. The office servant was the government responsibility, but the two servants attached to the schools were paid for by the Native Treasury. The government grant covered the equipment of the technical school and workshops but the material used by craftsmen were paid by the Baital-mal. £110, of the latter was allotted to the upkeep and extension of the school building. Vischer wanted the Native Administrations to realize that the schools belonged to the provinces, and from 1910, responsibility for buildings rested on the Native treasuries. Mathew Adam, (2013).

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#### VII. PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROTECTORATE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

The English alphabet had been considered inadequate for all Hausa sounds, and as early as April 1910, Bishop Tugwell had proposed to Hasketh Bell that a committee composed of Miller and Bargery for the C.M.S and of Vischer H.R Palmer and perhaps E.J Arnet for the Administration, should meet to discuss problems of the Hausa Language. Tugwell reported that Hesketh Bell had agreed to delay the publication of Vischer's Hausa primers until the committee had met and agreed upon an alphabet to form a working basis. In May 1910 the Governor reported that Vischer had passed a preliminary memorandum amongst Government officials and had sent a copy of it to Miller at Zaria. All the protestant mission societies held a meeting at Lokoja in June 1910, but they were not in agreement among themselves on many translation questions, although they considered the fact that language questions always seem to excite the strongest feeling between missionaries. The conference was really seeking a standard alphabet to which additional letters might be added for Hausa, Nupe, Yoruba and the languages of the Benue districts. The Hausa alphabet had twenty nine letters, q and x being removed:-

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, n, m, o, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, y, z.

In March 1911, the C.M.S still hoped that Miller and Alvarez would both attend a Hausa language conference with Vischer. Some correspondence must have passed between the administration and the mission, for in May Temple, the acting

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governors, told Alvarez that he was not prepared to initiate further discussion by correspondence or conference. Vischer must have completed some of his books by then for in June eighteen of his Hausa readers were at the printers in London. Despite the claim the C.M.S missionaries that Vischer's final memorandum was not submitted to other scholars for criticisms, when Vischer's article, 'Rules for Hausa spelling; was published early in 1912, he cited Miller as well as six political officers as having twenty eight letters, the letters c,q,v and x being eliminated. His completed alphabet was:-

a b b ch d d e f g h I j k k l m n o p r s sh t ts u w y z.  
Sonia f. Graham. (1966).

#### VIII. RECOMMENDATION

The work of Hanns Vischer was so wide that can be covered with one single article, in this regard the paper recommend the continuation of the second part of this work, so as to be able to have a reasonable amount of information about how the western secular education introduced in the province of northern Nigeria. Next coming work includes the introduction of secondary schools opened in the autumn of 1912, to take pupils who had successfully covered the primary syllabus and those Mallam who wish to be teachers.

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