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THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR OILS AND OILSEEDS (IRHO): A MECHANISM FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF OILSEEDS IN UPPER VOLTA

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Résumé

La Haute-Volta regorge une diversité de plantes à matières grasses (le coton, l'arachide et le karité). Elles contribuèrent par leur intérêt économique à l'économie de guerre et plus tard au redressement de l'économie française. Cela fut possible grâce à la création en 1949 d'un institut de recherche appelé Institut de Recherches pour les Huiles et Oléagineux (IRHO) en Haute-Volta. Il permit à la France de mieux exploiter l'arachide, le coton et surtout le karité en Haute-Volta. En quoi la création d'un institut de recherche en Haute-Volta est une nécessité pour la France ? L'objectif de cette étude est de montrer que l'exploitation des cultures tropicales a été déterminante dans la création d'un institut de recherche dans la colonie de Haute-Volta. Dans cette étude basée essentiellement sur une recherche documentaire il s'agit d'analyser les enjeux de la création d'un institut de recherche en Haute-Volta.

Mot clés : arachide, colonie, coton, guerre, karité.

Abstract

Upper Volta abounds in a diversity of fatty plants (cotton, groundnut and shea). Through their economic interest, they contributed to the war economy and later to the recovery of the French economy. This was possible thanks to the creation in 1949 of a research institute called the Research Institute for Oils and Oilseeds (IRHO) in Upper Volta. It allowed France to better exploit groundnuts, cotton and especially shea in Upper Volta. Why is the creation of a research institute in Upper Volta a necessity for France? The objective of this study is to show that the exploitation of tropical crops was decisive in the creation of a research institute in the colony of Upper Volta. In this study based essentially on documentary research, it is a question of analyzing the challenges of the creation of a research institute in Upper Volta.

Keywords: colony, cotton, groundnut, shea, war.

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Introduction

The development of oilseed crops has been part of the colonization projects of African countries for a very long time. This is the case in African regions. Chevalier (1905) in the context of the development of cultures states:

At the turn of the 19th century, however, the French colonizer already showed an obvious interest in larger-scale production of this crop in the nearby Niger valley, where the climatic conditions seemed particularly favorable: in 1899, a cotton experiment was, in effect, undertaken on the Kati test station... (p.33).

In Upper Volta, the main player in this policy is Governor François Charles Alexis Edouard HESLING. Its action program would be based entirely on the development of oilseed crops. Schwartz (1993) explains: "French West Africa was to specialize in the production of oilseeds, timber and cotton" (p.4). Such colonial arrangements were based on the potentialities of the conquered areas. However, to achieve this, it is necessary to review the exploitation policies established in the colonies. This is how the need to create a research institute based essentially on oilseeds proved to be important in Upper Volta in view of the potential of the said colony in oilseed products (cotton, peanuts and shea) and of the surrounding French capitalism. The objective of this study is to show that the exploitation of tropical crops was decisive in

the creation of a research institute in the colony of Upper Volta. What is the role of a research institute in an exploitative colony like Upper Volta?

To better understand our work, several documents were used. These are written sources, scientific articles and books. To do this, we would first show the potential of Upper Volta in oleaginous plants. Then, we would show the objectives sought by the Research Institute for Oils and Oilseeds in Upper Volta while taking into account the role played by the colonies in the economic recovery of France. Finally, what assessment can we make of the colonial policies implemented in French West Africa (AOF), in general and in Upper Volta in particular in the field of oilseeds? What are the changes compared to precolonial practices on the one hand and on the other hand what is the level of exploitation of shea compared to other products that have interested the metropolis?

1. Oilseed Potential in the Upper Volta

West Africa in and Upper Volta in particular abounds in various fatty plants. In the Upper Volta, peanuts, shea butter and cotton, through their economic support, contributed enormously to the war economy and later to the recovery of the French economy through the colonial policies known as "development" of the colonies instead of their "enhancement". The first two

are farming crop and the third is a picking one. So the conditions were required to make the colony an oilseed production area.

1.1 Peanut description

Peanut is a legume that has several potentials. It is a leguminous plant of the legume variety, subvariety of Papilionaceae, *Arachis hypogea* Lin. It is also an annual herbaceous species. Its primary stem is always erect and most often branchy from the basis. The branches are widely layered on the ground. They bear alternated leaves with two pairs of opposite leaflets, dark green in the early varieties and lighter green in the late ones. The fruit of the peanut is a yellow pod, of cylindrical or avoidic shape. According to Pehaut (1976): "Peanut seeds always have an oil content quite close to 50% of the total weight and from one variety to another, the differences are less than four or five percent" (p. 17).

1.1.1.Uses of Peanuts

Peanuts provide important supplements to the human diet. The seed, roasted or not, is directly edible by the population. Peanut paste is also used for the preparation of the sauce.

Through these multiple uses, the peanut is therefore more than a simple oilseed but rather a food of great importance. Pastes from oil refining are used in soap making. As

for the by-products of oil extraction, the oilcake is an excellent meal for animals.

As for the additional resources provided by the plant, peanut leaves are good fodder for animals (small and large ruminants), and the shells are used as fuel in households.

1.2 Shea Description

Shea belongs to the Sapotaceae category. It is present in the savannahs of West, Central and East Africa. There is a certain relationship between shea and people. Shea is a stocky tree 9.12 to 15 m high. The diameter of the trunk, starting at 1.30 m from the ground, is 80 cm. Its 4 cm thick and cracked crocodile skin bark is traversed by laticiferous networks. Due to its slow growth, its first production does not appear until the age of 15 to 20 or even 30 years, but the tree reaches its full growth around 40 years. It has a more or less regular vegetative cycle of 3 years. The foliage consists of a set of leaves located at the end of the branches. Each of the leaves is bundled and has hard, shiny wavy edges. The fruit of the shea tree is a large berry, fleshy, spherical or elliptical depending on the direction from which one examines. Its length is 4-5 cm, and the transverse diameter is 4 cm.

1.2.1.Uses of Shea

Shea is used in various social and cultural practices by the local populations. For instance, it is used as food, for aesthetic

reasons, in the domains of health, art, energy and rite. Due to this value, the populations protect the tree. It was under colonization that shea butter was industrially processed. To satisfy most of their needs in fat, the populations have to rely on plant production according to Izard (1999): "Many plants were harvested, whether vegetable herbs or substitute foods used during the period of scarcity, the main ones being the *nééré*, the fruit which has multiple uses, and the shea nut, from which the vegetable fat used in cooking is processed." (p.403).

To show the important role of butter in cosmetics, Vuillet (1911) revealed: "... the peoples of the Ndoulea and Sara federations would even eat their millet pates or their vegetables simply boiled in water, rather than putting shea butter, if they only have the strict quantity allowing them to anoint their body and especially their hair" (p.83).

Shea wood also plays an important role in the social practices of populations. It is used as a source of energy and as a raw material in artistic production. Shea leaves are used in traditional medicine, rituals and as a sex Wrapper. It is also a food source for caterpillars. Among all these potentials, the butter alone had been subjected to particular attention with regard to the needs expressed by France during and especially after the Second World War in oilseed products.

1.3. Cotton

To satisfy most of their needs in fat, the populations of West Africa must rely on plant according to Pehaut (1976): "West Africa is the field of oilseeds, the variety of plants providing fat by their fruits is amazing. There is a climatic cause here" (p.1). And for Schwartz (1993):

If Edouard HESLING, first Governor of Upper Volta, made the area a land par excellence for agricultural production, it is not a fact of coincidence. And the first results of Governor Hesling's policy were spectacular: from around 300 tons in 1923-24, the marketed production of seed cotton in Upper Volta increased to 3,528 tons in 1924-25, 8 6,238 tons in 1925- 26. (p.6).

The reactivation of cotton farming was entrusted in 1951 to the French Company for the Development of Textile Fibers (CFDT). For Schwartz, it "aims to provide a technical framework for cotton growing overseas" (p.283). The strategy of this company in Upper Volta is, according to the CFDT (1958): "an in-depth agricultural action, essentially based on the voluntary agreement of the populations to a crop which should, above all, appear to them as a factor of progress" (p.2). France was more determined than ever to involve grassroots populations.

These different oilseeds were submitted to an intensive exploitation within the framework of the trading economy. For Coquery-Vidrovitch (1987) it is : "an economy based on the export of basic

products obtained by traditional means and the import of consumer goods” (p.384). The struggle for the independence of the colonized countries called into question this form of the economy since it symbolizes the exploitation of the country's resources by foreigners. Political independence must be granted alongside with economic independence by eliminating the trading economy. To solve this problem, the colonial authorities implemented a rural development which introduced a modernization of the techniques of production of oilseed plants, which largely represented the cash or cash crops of Upper Volta. These compulsory crops partly explain the known food crises in Upper Volta. If France decides to install a research center in the colony which provides the raw materials without scientific support, it is because there are reasons for this reversal of colonial policies. We do not hide the idea of a form of intensification of exploitation, but the results of this research on oilseeds could indirectly be beneficial for the colonized populations.

3. Research Institute for Oils and Oilseeds (IRHO)

The geographical region where Upper Volta is located can be distinguished by its wealth in oilseed plants and the possibilities of large-scale production. These factors justify France's choice to install IRHO in the

Upper Volta. The Oils and Oilseeds Research Institute was created in 1949 and aims to maximize the production of shea and peanuts in the colony of Upper Volta for the benefit of France.

3.1. Context of the creation of the IRHO in 1949

The Oils and Oilseeds Research Institute was created in the Upper Volta at the end of the Second World War. After the Second World War (1939-1944), a ten-year development plan for the AOF was thus established for the period 1947-1957: FIDES and FERDE. FIDES, investment fund for the economic and social development of overseas territories, was created in 1946. FERDES, rural equipment fund for economic and social development was created in 1949. These two funds (FERDES and FIDES) have enabled to carry out major works (railway, roads, large-scale rural development), major development operations, cotton growing.

In 1944, when the liberation of France occurred and the end of the conflict was announced, the A.O.F. seems to have more than ever vocation to supply raw materials in general and especially fats to a metropolitan population hard hit by hunger. The second World War ended in 1945, but with a disastrous economic balance sheet because the metropolitan needs in fatty substances were real. France still appeals to the A.O.F.

and projected a notable extension of oilseed production in the colonies. This colonial policy aimed at improving the yields of oilseed production was part of the framework of the “development” policies of

the colonies. It was rather a strategy for France to compensate for its deficit in oilseed products. And it would also benefit the population through the improvement of their living conditions.

Table n°1: The extent of the French oilseed deficit at the end of the Second World War: imports in tonnes in 1945 compared with those in 1938

The Crops	Years	
	1938	1945
Podded Peanuts	386, 000	128, 270
Unpodded Peanuts	359, 000	
Copra	143, 300	1, 705
Palm Kernels	98, 026	64, 882
Shea (Nuts)	14, 500	11, 350
Castor Seeds	19, 930	4, 618
Soybean Seeds	13, 590	78, 144
Linen Seeds	203, 197	26, 788
Sesames	510	232

Source: Colonial Markets, issued on November 16, 1946, p.1204 and May 4, 1948, p.417.

From the end of the war, France bet on an increase in the production of certain fatty products such as peanuts, cotton and shea in Upper Volta.

The trading economy was the first form of exploitation of oilseed products from the French African colonies. But the need to intensify production was important with regards to the stakes linked to oilseeds after the Second World War for France.

3.2 IRHO Activities

The Research Institute for Oils and Oleaginous Plants (IRHO) aims to undertake in tropical zones all studies, research, prospection and experiments on oleaginous plants in order to improve their farming or exploitation as well as the procedures of extraction, preparation and processing of their products. The activities of the IRHO, which mainly concern kernel nut, copra, peanut and secondarily other oilseeds, take the following forms the :

- undertaking of research work to improve production,

- design, control and interpretation of agricultural experiments,
- pre-vulgarization in rural areas of farming techniques developed in research units,
- pedological and climatological studies in order to delimit the zones favorable to such or such oleaginous farming,
- determination with the help of foliar diagnosis of the fertilizers to be applied,
- supplies of selected seeds,
- specializations of engineers and technicians,
- technical assistance to plantations,
- contribution to the elaboration of development plans,
- advice on the construction of oil processing facility, their operation,
- analyses, dosages, various determinations in the laboratory,

-Quality improvement of fatty substances and research into new uses...

Basing on rigorous scientific research, the IRHO follows the entire chain of operations, from the selection of the plant to the processing and use of the products. But an obstacle to the development of peanut crops in Upper Volta is damage caused by the rosettes. In order to succeed in large-scale nut cultivation, the IRHO recommends several methods, including the densification of seedlings, the use of the insecticide THIMET, etc.

A relatively effective means of protection lies in the adoption of much denser seedlings than those commonly practiced. According to the IRHO report, this is possible "by keeping ridges spaced one meter apart and sowing 15 cm on the ridge, a density of 60 to 70,000 seeds per ha will ensure much higher yields per ha. and less significant rosette attacks" (p.6).

Table n°2: Exports of secondary producers of shelled peanuts in tonnes of A.O.F. (1946-1960)

The Years	Upper-Volta	Dahomey	Guinée
1946		2, 387	
1947		1, 352	
1948		6, 552	50
1949		3, 860	
1950		9, 751	60
1951	5 149	2, 891	
1952	848	6, 750	448
1953	1,805	4, 409	1 010
1954	1,412	7, 504	1 448

1955	1, 121	10, 964	
1956	1, 107	12, 177	85
1957	3, 266	14, 306	
1958	2, 074	15, 617	
1959	479	3, 620	2 126
1960	564	15, 400	2 782

Source: Pehaut, 1976, p.763.

Upper Volta was reconstituted in 1947, but with difficulties such as the lack of transport infrastructure, the revolts of the Voltaic populations, etc., prevented France from achieving its objectives in terms of exploiting the resources of the colonies. This had an impact on the marketing of oilseed products that it necessarily needed. If the plant is farmed everywhere, the circles of the West, Bobo-Dioulasso and Dédougou, can export by the railroad whose terminus is in Bobo-Dioulasso. Its extension to Ouagadougou in 1954, allows an extension of sales in the circles of Koudougou, Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya and Fada N'Gourma which were out of the commercial circuits.

4. Impact of the Creation of Research Institutes in the Oversea Territories

The full involvement of the colonies in cash crops had a positive impact on the economy of the metropolis. However, it is the opposite in the colonies.

4.1. Place of the Colonies in the Recovery of the French Economy

The economic interest of the colonial market was not a myth, but a reality, especially during the interwar period. Period during which the colonies became the first trading partners of France. They supplied it with almost all of its imported agricultural raw materials. With the changes registered in the colonial policies of France, a remarkable evolution of the yields was reported.

Table n°3: The share of the empire in French exports (in %) from 1929 to 1958

Items	1929	1938	1949	1958
Wines	12.2	15	27.4	24.4
Peanut Oil	68.2	89.6	95.7	95
Refined Sugar	83.5	98.5	94.1	85.5
Wool Cloth	4.7	15.7	38.1	29.7
Silk Cloth	3.4	17.9	55.8	56.1
Cotton Cloth	49.9	84.6	89.2	83.6
Clothings and Lingeries	10.4	34.5	63.3	78.8

Skin and Leather Works	29.8	56.6	19.4	21.4
Papers and its Applications	21.6	21.5	42.8	41.8
Soaps	24.2	44.3	91	92.2
Cement	59.1	84.1	91	69.1
Chemical Products	8.3	12.2	30.1	37.8
Tools and Metal Works	32.3	47	67.9	56.4
Machines and Mechanics	30.7	41.2	55.5	39
Irons and Steels	11.9	17.6	24.8	22.8
Automobiles	33.4	45.5	53.9	36.8

Source: Marseilles (1984), p.54.

We are observing a high increase in the quantity of oilseed products in French exports, as the result of changes in French colonial policies. The West African nature is then an actor in the development of France.

Table n°4: The share of the Empire in French imports (in %) from 1929 to 1958

Items	1929	1938	1949	1958
All Agricultural Raw Materials	37.5	71.2	63.4	71.1
Wines	83.8	96.8	91.2	83.5
Cereales	29.4	80.5	43.1	78
Rice	80.1	93.7	50.6	95.4
Edible Fruits	13.6	48.7	72.5	72.1
Coffee	3.7	42.7	69.8	75.9
Cacao	56.1	88.4	98.9	85.5
Oilseeds and Peanuts	25	54.4	73	77.8
Sugars	16.5	77.8	23.9	94
Mining and Metal Raw Materials	8.6	5.6	21.4	11.1
Phosphates	42.6	42	80.5	97.2
Skins and Raw Pelts	17	16.6	26.2	14.6
Cotton	2.2	3.6	8.2	18
Wool	2.7	5.4	0.7	0.8
Silk and Silk Wadding	3	1.6	0	0
Timber	11.1	28	28.9	40.5
Rubber	9.3	25.1	45.1	30.9

Source : MARSEILLE (J.), 1984, op.cit, p.55.

The trade balance between France and its empire presents, in the long term, an alternate reality, because in periods of good economic conditions, the balance is positive for France, it becomes negative in periods of bad economic conditions. This confirms the role that the colonies played for the well-being of the French economy after the Second World War. The French African colonies therefore represent a reservoir in times of difficulty and an outlet in times of prosperity.

4.2. Impact of Cash Crop Intensification in Upper Volta

In the 19th century, the great powers of Europe, mainly England and France, shared Africa. According to Dao (2015): “colonization appears in a context of the expansion of capitalism. The end of the 19th century matches up with the peak of a highly internationalized economy; inter-state rivalries boil down to competition between national capitalisms causing the subjugation of peripheral regions.” (p.36). And this situation is not without consequences on the life of the colonies.

The colonial demands were the activated levers to force the populations to embrace the economy of exploitation. These colonial requirements contributed to give up the food crops, which remain the causes of significant

sources of famines and revolts in the African colonies. The obligatory cultures had consequences in the life of the populations. The weakness of food production was linked to the mediocrity of the technical means implemented and the very low level of production prices, imposed by the trading companies, hindered the development of an economic incentive for production. Self-consumption within the family and some commercial exchanges on the local markets ensured the populations, within their traditional framework, a means of survival. Compulsory crops could not develop without a limitation or regression of food crops, themselves hardly sufficient to ensure the survival of populations. In the absence of an economic incentive, the obligation of personal tax constituted an excellent means of pressure for the colonial administration in order to obtain the money necessary for the poll tax (payable for all adults, men and women). Thus, the populations were obliged to devote part of the family fields and their time to compulsory cultivation.

The constraints encountered by the African populations under the colonial regime include : the use of labor services such as portorage, various requisitions, compulsory crops constituted a detonator of revolts (refusal to produce the compulsory crops and the required yields) in Upper Volta. Necessary sanctions, in the form of a

fine, imprisonment or beatings with a "manigolo" were inflicted on the recalcitrant, those who had not wanted or been able to supply the quantities and qualities required. The slave trade placed the dominated colony in a state of total dependence on imperialist power.

The policy of economic exploitation or "development" of the colony of Upper Volta is based on an economy called "trading economy" throughout the colonial period. This policy has gone through three stages in its development. Thus, from the conquest to 1923, the economy was based on harvested products such as kapok, gohine liana and shea. Cotton took over from 1923 until the breakup of the colony of Upper Volta in 1932. For Dao (2016):

“From 1932 to 1947, we witnessed the migration of Voltaic populations to colonies of greater interest to France. These are the colonies of Côte d’Ivoire, Sudan and Niger” (p.37). Due to French colonial pressures, the people of Volta found their salvation in fleeing to neighboring colonies such as the Gold Coast according to Piche (1908): "wartime living conditions led to more abuse by the authorities , increasing departures to neighboring non-French areas (...)" (p.99).

5. Assessment of the Colonial Policy in the Field of Oilseeds in Upper Volta

What appreciation can be made of the colonial policies implemented in French Western Africa (AOF) in general and in Upper Volta in particular in the field of oilseeds, especially shea? What are the developments compared to pre-colonial practices on the one hand and on the other hand what is the level of exploitation of shea compared to other products that have interested the metropolis?

5.1 Developments Compared to Pre-colonial Practices

Before the colonial penetration in Upper Volta, the populations knew about shea to satisfy their needs in the food, health, cosmetics, artistic fields, etc. Shea butter, at the center of all these concerns, was produced in a traditional way by the populations, in this case by women, with the help of children in particular for collecting the nuts. The butter obtained had certain impurities and played an important role. The shea thus recognized for these different virtues was protected by the populations. However, these local shea protection strategies often showed their limits. The populations depended on shea for the satisfaction of their energy, artistic and therapeutic needs which required the exploitation of woody forest products. Such practices caused the destruction of several shea trees. All these practices contributed to

considerably reduce the surface area of forests in Upper Volta. Indeed, at the beginning of colonization, compared to the pre-colonial period, the authorities carried out a forest inventory in Upper Volta followed protection and exploitation policies. It is in this dynamic that the shea zone was identified even if certain details were missing such as the number of countries concerned by shea, the botanical study of shea and research on the fruit, so many questions that remained unanswered. The identification of the shea zone, formerly unknown to the populations, was possible thanks to colonial policies. The colonial authority formulated more elaborated texts in order to further strengthen the protection measures for shea. At the beginning of colonization, only latex aroused the curiosity of France. But scientific work made it possible to understand that beyond latex, shea could provide a butter used in several fields, such as painting, chocolate, confectionery, pharmaceutical preparation, cosmetics ..., later as fuel.

In addition to the formulation of shea protection texts, shea nurseries were created. Practices unknown to the populations, who proceeded through agroforestry, occult practices, sacred groves, etc. in order to protect their environment from overexploitation. All these forms of practices contributed to the preservation of

forest resources. However, some methods of the colonial period were more elaborate and effective than the traditional ones. This involved the delimitation of vast classified and protected areas, repressive measures in order to further deter in the event of non-compliance with the texts by the populations and the shea nurseries. The colonial administration had mainly focused on the exploitation of non-timber forest products such as shea kernels, even if at times we noted contrasting colonial practices through urbanization policies that caused significant deforestation. The butter now obtained with modern methods which made it possible to have more refined butter and better yields in terms of quantity. This spared the women from some of the chores in the extraction like churning by hand, and human strength was the only energy from collecting the nut to extracting the butter. With colonization, certain know-how related to shea have undergone real changes. The use of butter underwent an evolution in food, health, cosmetics, etc. But what is the level of exploitation of shea compared to other products that interested colonial curiosity.

5.2. Exploitation of Shea Versus Other Oilseed Products

The industrial revolution, through the new needs it created, was a determining factor in a new orientation of the policies of the

imperialist powers. British industrialists were concerned with the flow of ever-increasing production, looking for new markets, especially in Africa. At the same time, they needed raw materials to satisfy a growing national market. These needs were particularly felt in the field of fats, because the old sources of supply such as animal fat are insufficient and unsuited to the needs of the moment such as the lubrication of machines. Faced with these fat supply difficulties, the major industrial powers of the time such as France were in a dynamic search for outlets that could enable them to meet their fat needs. This is how they discovered that West Africa was able to supply them with oilseed products. It was an area of major oilseed products such as shea, groundnuts and palm oil. West Africa had a vocation as a supplier of fats exported mainly to Western Europe. This role was further affirmed during the colonial period. The administrative intervention of the colonial authorities, the organization and regulation of trade on behalf of French interests, had conferred specific characteristics on the oilseed economy in the colonies of French West Africa. Upper Volta was the shea zone par excellence for France, hence the establishment of certain colonial policies focused on shea. After many attempts to export products such as shea, peanuts, kapok fibers, sesame, France concentrated its efforts on cotton cultivation.

Because of its leading role in the colonial economy, France intensified cotton production with the arrival of Governor François Charles Alexis Edouard HESLING in May 1919 responsible for running the affairs of the new colony until 1928. He made cotton production one of his priorities. The tone was set so that Upper Volta would be a production zone for raw materials, especially cotton.

Three species of oily plants: peanut, shea and oil palm had by their economic interest the role of large oilseeds. Among these three oilseed products, only shea and groundnut had been the subject of scientific curiosity in Upper Volta, especially shea. This is how IRHO was installed to allow the metropolis to exploit the oilseeds of the colony because the AOF was considered the domain of oilseeds. In this context of searching for raw materials according to the needs of the moment, we see that the powers had focused their attention on oilseeds in AOF, followed by the other products that they could find on the spot. Among the major oilseed products that Upper Volta could provide despite the difficulties of exploitation, it was shea. As shea is part of the gathering economy, this required appropriate measures such as collection methods and periods, good nut processing techniques and their conservation. However, other oilseeds such as cotton, peanuts and sesame were crop

products. The peanut was a large oilseed but it had not been the subject of much scientific curiosity in the same way as the shea tree. A number of difficulties could prevent the large-scale exploitation of shea in Upper Volta.

In industrial matters, used alone in soap making, butter gives a brittle product, almost insoluble in water. In addition, for lack of communication channels, how to go about exporting shea, namely in the form of almonds or butter. And that on-site processing would have many mainly negative consequences such as the big loss of raw material linked to traditional extraction methods, the quality of the butter produced and the added value of processing the product by metropolitan factories. So many constraints that almost discouraged France, but it was necessary to deepen the reflection in order to make the most of shea. This showed how shea was a great oilseed product for France. The stakes were enormous.

It could abandon shea in favor of sesame and peanuts, whose annual yields could be easily assessed better than shea over one or more years through the work of agronomists. If France was stubborn in the field of shea, it was for noble causes. **peanut** could not replace shea at all levels. Shea was a harvested product. On the other hand, the

cultivation of peanuts required enormous means of maintaining the plants, followed by the harvest, which again mobilized the enormous local workforce. By comparing the two products, shea and peanut, there were difficulties on both sides. But, those specific to shea could be overcome better than groundnut in terms of investment and possibilities of use in Europe. After being more involved in the exploitation of shea in Sudan (now Mali) as in Upper Volta, the post-war period (2nd) was marked by attempts to expand the shea industry. It was the only species that had been subject to large-scale industrial exploitation in Upper Volta. According to Pehaut (1976): "Around 1953-1954, opinions were unanimous that real specialized factories were not adapted to the situation of shea in Upper Volta" (p.879).

Conclusion

At the end of this contribution, we can affirm that the will to exploit the oilseeds wealth of Upper Volta as it should be, was inseparable with the creation of research institutes. Indeed, for the French colonizer, the exploitation under adequate conditions of the "innumerable" richness of the Voltaic colony could not be done without undertaking all studies, research, prospecting and experiments on oleaginous plants with a view to improving their cultivation or their exploitation as well as the

processes of extraction, preparation and transformation of their products. It was then necessary for studies to confirm the wealth of oilseed products in the colony and the different potentialities available to France. Upper Volta contributed significantly to the recovery of the French economy during the interwar period and especially after the

Second World War. It once again associated its African colonies in order to break the economic impasse. To achieve this, the change in colonial policies was more than necessary, so it was necessary to create a research institute called the Research Institute for Oils and Oilseeds (IRHO) in 1949 in Upper Volta.

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