

**ENUGU COAL MINING-DECADES OF PROSPERITY: WHAT WENT
WRONG?**

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FEBRUARY, 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A)
HONOURS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY**

FEBRUARY 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Victory Amarachukwu NNAMENE** with matriculation number **ART2004106** in the Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, under my supervision.

Mr. Daniel Orobator
Project Supervisor

Dr. Frank Ikponmwosa
Head of Department

Date

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God and my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes to Jehovah for His grace, mercies, guidance and protection of my life from the beginning to the end. His love and grace have kept me so far. Thank you, God.

My gratitude also goes to my project supervisor, Mr. Daniel Orobator for his patience in putting me through this work. I appreciate your guidance and supervision as well as your words of advice. Thank you for everything.

My sincerest appreciation and gratitude goes to my parents, Mr. Ikechukwu and Mrs. Victoria Nnamene, for their ceaseless support of me both emotionally and financially throughout the entire course of my academic journey. Thank you very much and God bless you. I also extend my heart of thanks to my lovely siblings; Chidozie, Chidinma, Chiwendu and Ebere for your continual support in my life. Thank you and I love all of you.

I also want to thank my friends who made this journey fun in the ways they could; thank you, Glory Peter, Stainless Ikue, Daniela Barth Salem, and Chibuzor Isiguzoro. I appreciate you guys.

I also want to thank some of my lecturers, starting with my supervisor, Mr Daniel Orobator; my course advisor, Dr Charles Osarumwense; Dr Williams Orukpe; Dr A.O. Nwaokocha; Dr Mrs I. O Osemwengie; Prof. I. Ifidon; Dr D. Iweze; and the HOD, Dr Frank Ikponmwosa. Thank you for working tirelessly to impact my knowledge.

Lastly, I'll extend one final stretch of thanks to myself. Thanks to me for pulling through despite the challenges and difficulties. Thank you for harnessing the love and energy from your family and friends and making it to the end. Thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction:

The discovery of coal in Enugu in 1909 has left an unprecedented impact as a significant source of heat and energy in Nigeria¹. It is one of the most important primary fossil fuels, a great source of heat and energy that has been used for generations dating back to 1000 B.C². Formed from the remnants of living organisms, the formation process can be described as the subversion of dead plant matter in an environment subjected to the geological forces of heat and pressure over millennia³. National Geographic describes⁴ coal ‘as a black or brownish-black sedimentary rock that can be burned for fuel and used to generate electricity. It is composed mostly of carbon and hydrocarbons, which contain energy that can be released through combustion (burning)’. Coal replaced wood charcoal as a more efficient source of heat and energy in the 1700s⁵ and has become the largest energy source for generating electricity globally, supplying over a third globally. The International Energy Agency documented that the global demand for coal reached a record high in 2022, rising by 4% from the previous year to 8.42 billion tonnes (Bt). Nigeria also recorded a total coal supply in 2022 and made a 2172% change from 2000 to 2022. It ranked number 7 on the total supply of coal in Africa at 35,346 tonnes in 2022 and ranked the same on coal production at 35,346 tonnes as well. Nigeria produces and consumes relatively small amounts of coal but this wasn’t always the case⁶. Between 2012 and 2021, the country averaged about 51,000 short tons of coal

production, all of which was bituminous coal⁷. Coal is used presently as an energy fuel in cement production, brick factories, foundries, and laundry and bakery industries. Other factories include those that use coal as a raw material base in the manufacturing of tyres and batteries as well as a substitute for fuel wood in domestic cooking⁸. However, coal used to play a much more significant role as an energy source in Enugu, Nigeria. From the 1920s till the 1960s coal served as the sole energy source in Enugu and Nigeria at large, being a major energy source in the Nigerian Railway Corporation, the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria and the Nigerian Cement Company Nkalagu for decades but met a steady decline in the following years after the discovery oil in 1956⁹.

The coal industry in Enugu was originally a colonial setup made by Britain due to the unexpected discovery of coal and its strategic importance later in the colonial administration. The British government experienced the birth of industrialisation due to the steam engine developed by James Watt between 1763 and 1775¹⁰, which removed the limitations on using machines and provided unlimited energy sources for industrial production and transportation. Using coal with the steam engine was groundbreaking in Britain as the nation experienced rapid economic and technological advancement and catalysed future world explorations. The resulting explorations of the British government are a testament to the effect coal played in their economy as they sought other regions that had reserves of minerals, Nigeria being the subject matter of this study.

The discovery of coal in Enugu cannot be described as planned but can be described as one born of pure coincidence. The existence of foreign authorities in the

Igbo regions meant the use of force to seize indigenous lands and territories for their disposal. The Aro expeditions of November 1901 till March 1902 secured the British government 6,000 square miles of territory and aided in opening up the interior of Igbo land. This was eventually followed up by other expeditions in the region including the Ezza-Ikwo and the Niger Cross River expeditions of 1905 to 1908. This expedition provided a pathway for the West African Frontier Force to invade Ngwo through Oghe and Eke in 1908. It wasn't long after the fall of Ngwo that a team of geological exploration engineers, led by Albert Kitson and E.O. Thiele, were on a quest searching for silver when they discovered sub-bituminous and lignite coal in Udi Ridge, Ngwo, Enugu in 1909¹¹. Though not much was done to the coal reserves after its discovery, the aftermath of WW1 made it necessary and unavoidable. Hence mining activities began in Ngwo in 1915 after the completion of the eastern Nigeria railway line spurring decades of coal mining prosperity in Enugu¹². The subsequent activities orchestrated by the colonial administration laid a sustainable foundation for coal exploitation for decades as Enugu became the focal centre for producing and exporting coal. Enjoying reasonable economic success for years, Enugu's coalmines would face an impasse as a new mineral is discovered in Nigeria leading to coal being replaced as an energy source.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study focuses on highlighting the rise of coal mined from Enugu and the subsequent decline between 1916 and 1960. However, the specific objectives of the study include;

- I. A brief analysis of the British invasion of Ngwo, subsequent discovery of coal and the importance of coal in the 21st century.
- II. To x-ray the reasons for the establishment of the coal industry.
- III. To outline the factors responsible for the decline of coal mining from 1960 in Enugu
- IV. This research examines the decline of coal and the factors responsible for it, as well as the current realities of coal production in Nigeria.

Scope of The Study

The scope of the study covers an in-depth examination of the decades of prosperity of coal mining in Enugu and the decline of the industry. Examines the invasion of the British government into Ngwo and the reasons that necessitated their exploitation of coal after the discovery. It encompasses industries in which the establishment of coal mining benefitted, how it aided national development during its active years, and how the presence of coal made Enugu a significant state in Nigeria's economy. It goes on show examine the factors that were responsible for the decline of coal, illustrating the descent of the once budding industry to a desolate and abandoned place. It analyses how these factors separately contributed to the extinction of coal. The

study finally analyses the current realities of coal production in Nigeria, the effects of coal production in Nigeria, and the government's efforts and stance towards rehabilitating the industry.

Research Methodology

The study adopts historical research methods to examine issues and events related to coal mining in Enugu. The nature of the topic also necessitates that historical analysis be adopted against historical narrative to ensure a proper and objective study. The methodology incorporates both traditional research techniques and digital or online methods for enhanced data collection and analysis. The study utilises only secondary data sources to provide a holistic view of the prosperity of Enugu coal mines and the factors that caused their decline. The aim is to generate meaningful insights into the contributions and challenges faced by the coal mine in the 21st century. It ensures that the research captures the complex dynamics that shaped the coal mines.

Secondary Sources of Data

For the secondary data sources, the study will focus on journals, reports, articles, newspapers, textbooks and various online publications related to the subject matter. The sources include materials taken from archives from reports of the British colonial administration during their time of rule. These archives will be extremely useful in analysing the statistics of coal production at the time of its discovery. Other than archives, books written by learned scholars on the research topic will be highlighted to give a comparative study of the subject matter. Most of these books are written by

Nigerian scholars, who have researched the various aspects surrounding the work and will be used to analyse the project topic in-depth. Journals taken from libraries and sourced from the internet will provide different perspectives on the project, as each writer will focus on varying topics intertwining on the subject matter that will be used to elevate and ensure a comparative study of this research. Newspapers/magazines plus various internet materials will be analyzed to complete the research project.

Literature Review

This research work is done to contribute its quota to other existing scholarly writings as this is not the first research on this topic or field of study.

The topic is based on an issue that predominantly affects the people of Enugu and the effects remain visible in the state and country at large regardless of technological advancement. The project intends to fill some of the uncovered areas in this work. Some of these books will be reviewed in the analysis of this research work.

In the course of analysing the rise of coal mining in Enugu and the reasons that caused its decline, we will review some literary works that covered some areas of the work.

Ijoma, J. Okoro. *“Igbo History and the Battle for Survival”*, examined the tactics applied by the colonial administration to invade Ngwo. The British administration needed to exploit resources from the indigenous Igbo regions but were blocked by the Aro Confederacy. She explained the underhanded tactics that were applied by the administration that gave them leeway to invade the land. In this process, they laid claim

over the territory disposing of the confederacy. In the occupation of the land, coal was discovered. While Ani, Uchenna S, and Ikenna Odife. “Oil Exploitation, Neglect of Coal and the Ngwo Society, 1909 - 1987”, reviewed the effects of coal on the Ngwo society. ‘The discovery of coal in Enugu–Ngwo in 1909 which was followed by its exploitation in 1916 caused a major break in the economic history of Ngwo people. The society marked a clear departure from an agricultural production economy to a wage-earning economy. They were deprived of their land by the British Crown which, in this period was their means through which they produced food far beyond their immediate needs. Consequent to the British interest in expanding wage labour which would increase coal production, the already deprived youthful men of Ngwo were subtly persuaded to work in the mines. Mining activities, no doubt, brought wealth exposure and human capital development in Ngwo, but it was not without heavy prices which were climaxed with the rise of oil which occasioned the collapse of the coal industry. With the collapse of the industry, more than 8,000 miners and other workers from Ngwo lost their jobs. The people who had already been deprived of their land (their main source of livelihood) to set up the colliery and other facilities lost the labour they opted to offer at the coal mine as an alternative means of survival.’ This work is useful in the second chapter of the book as it outlines the negative and positive effects of coal mining on the indigenes of Enugu.

The establishment of coal was not for the benefit of Enugu as stated by Ani and Ikenna. Despite the provision of employment opportunities to the indigenes, they were

deprived of their ancestral land, which provided them with food for the agricultural purpose it served. The acquisition of lands was the final step towards the establishment of collieries in Enugu. Ahazuem, J.O. “The Nigerian Coal Industry And The Dilemma Of A Shrinking Market For Coal.” *Trans-African Journal of History*. This comprehensive journal by Ahazeum vividly captured the decades of coal mining in Enugu. He documented the reasons that prompted the British government to immediately secure the coal reserves in Enugu. The British government aimed to reduce the cost of importing coal and help export coal at a cheaper rate to their colonies in West Africa section was carefully presented from the beginning of mining till the steady decline of coal after the discovery of oil in 1956. With tables, he showed the numerical figures and statistics of the activities of the colliery in Enugu. And with this, we would be able to analyse these figures to produce a thorough research project. This journal will be included in the third and fourth chapters of this project.

E.K Faluyi. “The Importance of Mining to Nigeria's Economy in Colonial Times” *Lagos Notes and Record*, discussed mineral wealth exploited by the British government. The first part of the survey discusses the exploitation under the colonial administration while the second part examines the impact of mining on the economy. The journal recorded the number of employed persons the colliery attracted between 1940 and 1960. The mines saw a significant rise of persons from all over Nigeria who sought employment at the mines. This article will be included in the second and third chapters of this project.

In Anthony and Akachi Odoemene. "From labour settlement to cosmopolitan city: Dynamics of migration and urbanisation in Enugu's development, 1915-1990" states that the discovery of coal impacted the urbanisation and populace factor in Enugu. Saw an influx of workers seeking employment in the colliery that gradually led to Enugu's development. "Unlike most other Nigerian cities, Enugu is typically a 'colonial construction', and its history as a human community is entirely a history of migrations with diverse trends, and not unconnected with an accidental discovery in the area close to a century ago. The coal industry, together with the railway that was established to service it, laid the foundation for its eventual economic take-off and was responsible for the uncontrolled influx of migrants from different parts of the world." Enugu became an urban city due to coal mining activities and made it a prominent city in Nigeria, having immense economic value. However, they argued that this structure was colonial and ultimately served the British interests.

This point of view was further proved in Chimee, Ihediwa Nkemjika. "Coal and British Colonialism in Nigeria." *RCC Perspectives*, no. 5, The article served to showcase how the British government through indirect ruling made use of warrant chiefs to seize control of lands in Enugu. Despite the profits made from the mining of coal, the workers were degraded and abused by the British government. 'The warrant chiefs became a ready instrument with which the colonial authorities turned the local Agbaja people into servants and labourers. Using the pretext of legality, all royalties and revenues that accrued from the mines went into the colonial coffers. Coal was not a blessing to a

majority of Africans, but a curse. Rather than enriching them, it impoverished their lives and limbs, denying them the possibility of an improved standard of living.’ Chimee’s work examined one of the factors that brought about the decline of coal in Nigeria. Despite the rise and prosperity that coal brought, there was major dissatisfaction among the workers because of the heavy-handedness of the warrant chiefs and the poor working conditions. The British paid no heed to their complaints which bred further hostilities that evolved into the Iva Colliery Massacre. This article will be included in the fourth chapter on the decline of coal mining in Nigeria.

Malang, Ogonna. “Coal Mining and the Nigerian Environment: A Study of Enugu Coal Mines, 1916- 1970”. This journal examined the impact of coal mining on society but majorly focused on the reasons that led to the decline of coal mining. “Coal was discovered in Enugu; Nigeria in 1909, however, mining began in 1915. The demand for coal made the supply rose to its all-time high between 1958 and 1959. This period coincided with the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria. One could say that one of the single major causes of the decline of coal mining and usage in Nigeria was the discovery of oil and the start of its exploration. People who worked at the Enugu coal mines were subjected to various forms of exploitation. The interests of the colonial government and its agents in optimising mining profits were pursued using whatever means possible to the detriment of the indigenous Nigerian people and communities in Enugu state. It is clear that mining activities in Enugu have had and continue to have negative effects on the Enugu environment as a result of the indiscriminate use of the land for coal mining.

The net effect of such mining was that places where coal was extracted were exposed to serious environmental degradations, and the lives and livelihoods of people were impacted even though coal mining in the state had long ended. Given the deplorable situation of the environment due to coal mining and the lives of the people, both the government and perhaps some environmental Non-Governmental Organisations must wield into the situation to salvage the predicaments of the host community which continues to be deplorable. Decisive steps need to be taken to address the challenges that the people of Nigeria particularly the Enugu people continue to grapple with as a result of coal mining in their region.’

J.O Ahazeum and Ani, Uchenna and Ikenna in their works further illustrated the primary factors which were the discovery of oil and the civil war that finally collapsed the industry. Ani and Ahazeum stated the efforts made by the Nigerian Coal Corporation to prevent its downfall but all were in vain. They examined the production levels of coal and the supply levels and how they drastically went down every year. Coal was never able to return to its peak production years of 1950. Corporations in Nigeria began to switch to oil as a more efficient energy source, which caused the industry to collapse.

With the decline of coal mining in Enugu, some efforts were made in vain to rehabilitate the industry but all ended in vain. Tom Edet. “Coal Mining And Environmental Concerns”, documented a few of these efforts made, mostly the one by former President Olusegun Obasanjo but it never saw the light. Tom documented that

the BPE privatised NCC hoping to attract private investors and ended up selling the corporation off to foreign private investors. With all efforts down the drain, the article showed that mining finally stopped by 2010.

These literary works help show the origins, rise and factors that led to the decline of coal mining in Enugu. They provide a framework that aids in the analysis of the project and helps to provide insights and references to be used to further this research project.

CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter One: Background to the Study

The first chapter serves as a preamble to the entire work. It introduces the work and tries to give insight into the research. It gives a brief analysis of the British invasion of Ngwo and the importance of coal in the 21st century.

Chapter Two: The British Invasion of Ngwo and the Discovery of Coal in Enugu

This chapter examined the reasons that necessitated the British invasion of Ngwo and the factors that necessitated the exploitation after the discovery of coal in Enugu.

Chapter Three: The Importance of Coal to National Development

This chapter examines the foundations laid by the colonial administration, the rise and impact of coal on national development, and the establishment of the NCC by the colonial administration, which served as a centre of exploitation and monopoly. This chapter will delve into coal's economic impacts on Nigeria and how Enugu became 'The Coal City'.

Chapter Four: Decline of Coal and Current Realities of Coal Production in Nigeria

This chapter serves to examine the decline of coal mining in Enugu and the factors responsible for it. With the decline of coal production, the chapter also highlights the current realities of coal production in Nigeria.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the entire work and also goes further to review the entire work.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE BRITISH INVASION OF NGWO AND THE DISCOVERY OF COAL IN ENUGU

Introduction:

The Niger Expedition of 1841 and the establishment of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) was a trading company made to monopolise trade in regions of Nigeria. The British administration had granted the RNC to occupy the area currently known as Nigeria and served as the means through which the British administration could protect their mercantile interests until the company's charter was revoked in 1900¹. After 1900, the colonial government began to explore routes they could take to exploit and maximise the resources of Indigenous people².

The British interest in Nigeria had become very intense from 1885 to 1900. During this intensity, the Aro Confederacy posed a major obstacle to the British administration's invasion of the Igbo regions³. The Aro expeditions of 1902 began after the British government used the pretext that they wanted "to stop the slave trade" and to open the Igbo regions to civilisation and trade. Their real intent however was to conquer these regions so they could explore resources and exploit them. They brought weapons and used force to seize these lands and territories for their disposal, and they successfully displaced the Confederacy⁴.

The Invasion of Ngwo:

The Aro expeditions of November 1901 till March 1902 secured the British government 6,000 square miles of territory and aided in opening up the interior of Igbo land. This was eventually followed up by other expeditions in the region including the Ezza-Ikwo and the Niger Cross River expeditions of 1905 to 1908⁵. This expedition provided a pathway for the West African Frontier Force to invade Ngwo through Oghe and Eke in 1908⁶. It wasn't long after the fall of Ngwo that a team of geological exploration engineers, led by Albert Kitson and E.O. Thiele, were on a quest searching for silver when they discovered sub-bituminous and lignite coal in Udi Ridge, Ngwo, Enugu in 1909⁷. Consequently, these Igbo groups namely, the Eke Owa, Oghe, Ngwo, Nsude, and Ozalla, etc were renamed the Udi Division in 1908, named after the Udi Hills in the state of Enugu, where coal was discovered⁸.

The invasion of Ngwo in 1908 provided unexpected economic opportunities for the British government. The discovery of coal by British engineers and scientists, Albert Kitson and E.O. Thiele in 1909 created a platform for the British to harness a resource responsible for the invention that spearheaded their conquest. After the discovery, the government needed indigenous lands that would be used to establish collieries and mines in the region.

With the decision made by the colonial administration to exploit coal in Enugu, the government sought to acquire lands from the areas by persuading the owners to cede them freely and voluntarily so all lands would be required for the establishment of

stations and a colliery⁹. To achieve this, the colonial administration invoked the Public Land Acquisition Proclamation No.5 of 1903 which gave them the right to acquire any land required for public purposes by paying tokens to the owners to appropriate Ngwo farmlands¹⁰. The first deed of the acquisition was implemented on the 19th of November 1915. The colonial administration coerced eleven Ngwo Chiefs and one Chief Ahum of Ogui Nike to leave their signatories on the document. It reads; “We the undersigned Chiefs of Udi Division, Southern Province of Nigeria, in full appreciation of the benefits to be derived by us and our people by opening a government Colliery at Enugu-Ngwo in the said Udi Division, do hereby grant freely and voluntarily all such land as may be required by the said government for a station, a colliery for the working on all coal and other minerals. The building of works and house... and for all other purposes the government may think fit to use the said land for.”¹¹ The chiefs that were responsible for the implementation of this deed were Chiefs Ozo Eze, Afe, Okwuani, Nnadi, and Ogu; others were sub-Chiefs, Ngu, Oguwakwa, Ajowangu, Onovo and Ozo Eze, Ozugu with one Chief Ahum of Ogui. The acquisition was signed and sealed in attendance of Chief Onyeama of Eke, Colliery Manager, Mr Duncan, District Officer in charge of Udi, J.S Heys, and Reginald Mangrove, a commissioner¹². Every person who signed this document received seventy-three pounds, which was presumed to be a form of compensation for economic crops. Similar documents were signed in 1917 and 1921 by the Ngwo, Eke, Abor and Nsude Chiefs. The acquisition gave the colonial administration the right to confiscate parcels of land from Enugu-Ngwo and greater parts

of Etiti and Uborji formed the major part of the colonial land upon which Enugu-Ngwo was developed¹³.

The acquisition of indigenous lands laid the premise for the establishment of the coal industry in Enugu. With the establishment of collieries and mines in the region, Enugu began to experience unfounded urbanisation and coal began to have a tremendous impact on the national development and economy of Enugu and Nigeria.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPORTANCE OF COAL TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction:

The colonial administration initially did not make any move concerning the discovery until the aftermath of the First World War, which made it unavoidable and necessary¹ as Europe had been dealt a severe blow and needed rebuilding of its economy and infrastructure². Despite the poor quality of the coal discovered, it had great importance to the colonial administration for various reasons being; Nigeria was the only country in British West Africa that produced coal³, and railways were built in the West African colonies to facilitate efficient transportation of resources from production centres to the coastal regions where the resources are shipped to Europe for the benefit of the European economy. Other reasons include the aftermath of the First World War mentioned above, it is necessary to state that before the discovery of coal in Nigeria, the colonial administration imported coals into Enugu which was used to run the railways and the vessels in which raw materials were transported to Europe. The war's outcome caused significant difficulty in importing coal as the cost of coal skyrocketed because all efforts of Europe were channelled towards executing the war⁴. The local consumption of imported coal had increased to 95,884 tons worth £120,278 by 1914⁵. The possibility of exporting coal to other West African countries, especially Ivory Coast, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone at a cheaper rate was another factor the colonial administration considered⁶ and, lastly, was the threat posed to the Nigerian coal supply caused by the war. It was

recorded that at the beginning of the war in 1914, coal imports were recorded to be nearly 96,000 tons, but by the end of the war in 1918, coal imports had declined to 8,765 tons. Lord Lugard made a statement regarding the difficulty faced by the colonial administration; “Had it not been for the supply of Udi coal thus rendered available, it is not difficult to imagine the collapse which would have resulted from the lack of fuel for the western railway. Not only would the prosperity of Nigeria have been most seriously impeded, but the supply of oleaginous produce and tin so urgently required in England for war purposes would have been seriously interfered with”⁷. The price of imported coal had almost doubled throughout the war as this was caused by the immediate post-war years. The problems that were associated with the post-war reconstruction in Europe undoubtedly contributed to the high prices and small quantities of coal imported into Nigeria, between 1919 and 1923. The colonial administration had to ensure that its war efforts and the exports of mineral products were not deteriorated by the lack of coal that ran for both the railway and the fleet of vessels. Thus, this hastened the establishment of the colliery in Enugu in 1915⁸.

The Rise of Coal Mining in Enugu:

Mr W.J. Leek arrived in Nigeria by September 1914 to take charge of the mining operations. However, mining did not start until November 1915 after the acquisition was finalised when a site was selected between the Ogbete and Aria streams and driving in the coal began⁹. Mr Leek and his assistants set up their first home in temporary bush housings on the top of the Milliken Hill ridge, the Ngwo residents established mud-

house settlements for themselves, later known as “Alfred’s Camp” on a spur about 200 feet up the ridge¹⁰. Both settlements, the one of Mr Leck and his assistants and the one of the Ngwo indigenes were the very first houses to be set up in Enugu and became the heart of the present-day city¹¹. By the 31st of December, the main drift had been extended 130 yards from the mouth and the opening was designated the Udi mine¹². By late 1915, several hundreds of local indigenes had begun to migrate into the new settlement and started to work in the mine, while other hundreds were applying for jobs¹³.

With the influx into Enugu caused by the coal mining, Alfred Camp had to be expanded. Constructing bush houses on the south side of the Obwetti (Obeti) stream became necessary. The settlement initially known as “Native Location” later came to be known as the “Coal Camp”¹⁴. At this juncture, the mine was staffed mainly by the indigenes; in 1925, about 60% of the miners came from the Udi Division; in 1938 about 75%, and 1953 about 78%. A quota of the local men moved into the fast-growing settlement, some temporary some permanent, and the size of this proportion increased per decade. Due to the rapid development of coal mining, the need for the export of its products became quite obvious to the colonial government as the railway was the most reliable and convenient means for the transportation of coal¹⁵. The evaluation of the coal was necessary, and this led to the construction of 151 miles of railway from the coast to the colliery which was promptly planned to build a new harbour in Port Harcourt that was constructed to handle the shipping of coal to Lagos¹⁶.

Coal mining did not begin until the eastern Nigeria railway line was completed¹⁷ and the railway line connected to Enugu in May 1916 and 1929 was linked with the western line at Kaduna¹⁸. The railway was a stimulant for developing subsidiary transportation systems such as roads to bring migrants and products to Enugu. The business of the Eastern Railway had transcended over the years from just coal evacuation to the transportation of major agricultural and mineral exports, imported goods and passengers to other parts of Nigeria¹⁹. The completion of the eastern Nigeria railway saw the output of coal increase dramatically, from the original production of about 7,000 tons, the output increased to over 24,000 in 1916 and then to 145,000 tons by 1918. Shipments of coal began to be made to Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and the French West African colonies by 1920 and slowly over time the pace increased. By 1941, the output production had speedily increased due to an increase in export demand and Nigeria became the main supplier of coal to all other West African countries whose alternative supplies were cut off because of the Second World War.²⁰

Urbanisation of Enugu:

The increase in coal output also meant an increase in employed persons. The colliery as well as the completed railways attracted a large number of the local population and caused a massive migration of workers into the state²³. The coal industry and the railway laid the foundation for the city's eventual growth and economic take-off and together they stimulated a vibrant socio-economic life in Enugu. These changes encouraged the migration of persons from the hinterlands and other places for settlement

in the city for employment reasons. The fast-paced development and urbanisation led Enugu to attain a second-class township status in 1917 just two years after its foundation with the name “Enugu Ngwo”²¹.

By 1919, some foreign firms had begun settling in the growing town. The first European firm arrived in 1920, and there were one banking and five trading firms, all British except for one that was French²². With the continuous growth of Enugu, Ngwo was dropped in 1928 to distinguish between the township Enugu and the Village. This was done by the Order in Council, No. 19 of 1917 and by another Order in Council, No. 2 of 1924, the new town was declared²³. The opening of the Enugu–Kano railway line in 1928 accelerated the progress of migrants and settlers from the North into the town. The importance of coal cannot be understated to national development as Enugu became an administrative headquarters for the Southern Provinces of Nigeria in 1929. Before this, the only labourers in Enugu were the colliery and the railway. Therefore, the importance of the railway in Enugu transcended its original role as a means of transporting coal to the seaport at Port Harcourt. It eventually became the operational headquarters of the railway corporation in Eastern Nigeria, and the city witnessed tremendous migration towards it²⁴. As the coal mine attracted more workers, a second settlement for Indigenous workers was established on the southern side of the Ogbete stream²⁵. The transformative effects of the railway and the colliery attracted more migrants from all over Nigeria to the new town as the railway stimulated the development of other transport tributaries and feeder roads needed to bring migrants and

products to Enugu thereby linking it by road to prominent population centres in Nigeria. The combination of these two industries attracted diverse service providers to the city, aiding in national development²⁶. When Enugu became an administrative headquarters for the Southern Province in 1929, the number of government departments represented in the town increased tremendously. Between 1940 and 1945, the city experienced a war boom due to the effects of the Second World War²⁷. Between 1940 and 1944, there were 4,458 employed persons, which increased to 6,455 persons between 1949 and 1952 and lastly 6,175 between 1957 to 1960²⁸. The Second World War also increased activity in the railway and colliery, and a great increase in the military estate brought tens of thousands of new migrant settlers to Enugu, and several governmental offices emerged²⁹. In 1949, when the city was the capital of the Eastern Region of Nigeria a blast of official buildings hit the town: the Secretariat and adjoining offices were upgraded, extended and modernised and several other new government buildings were built. The new Railway Quarters, more Colliery quarters and a government trade centre were opened in 1949. A Women's Teaching Training College was opened in 1952 while the College of Arts, Science and Technology and Queens School were established in 1954. These brought new springs of students from Nigeria for the newly-established schools to move into Enugu and signified a population increase. For instance, the 1953 census figures of Enugu show that the population had increased from 35,000 to 63,000 since 1945. More private houses were built to accommodate this influx, especially at Asata, Ogui, and Uwani with the housing expanded by 1953 to over 100 houses with accommodation for

about 5,000 people³⁰. The production at the colliery doubled as more workers were employed and the railway handled more traffic, although some migrants had the desire to return to their villages, some never did. Several people spent all their lives in Enugu, adopting new family lifestyles with Children being born in the city, who represented the third generation of the migrant settlers in the city. These developments can be solely attributed to the development of coal in the state³¹. The events of the Second World War led to production reaching a peak of over 668,000 tons in 1944, falling to 610,000 tons between 1952 and 1953 but again to 905,836 tons in 1958 and 1959, being its highest output as the NCC played a role in its distribution.³²

The Role of the Nigerian Coal Corporation:

Over the years, the development of coal mining necessitated special regulations and enactments of special acts to govern the exploitation of coal, such as the Nigerian Coal Mining Act of 1950. The Nigerian coal corporation was formed from this act. The Nigerian Coal Corporation is a parastatal formed to monopolise mining processes, sell coal, lignite and coke products, and exploit coal resources. It is responsible for selling and mining coal and is based in Enugu. The opening of the Ogbete mine in 1915 initiated its creation, and it was merged with other mines to create a new corporation, The NCC³³. It is one of the oldest government parastatals in the nation and once operated at the Onyeama and Okpara deep mines in Enugu. Coal has been exploited in Okaba, Owukpa, and Enugu. Enugu was regarded as the Coal City because it was the first coal-producing state³⁴.

The NCC became the largest consumer of coal in Nigeria and served as the administrative body for coal. Before the christening of the NCC, the coal industry remained under the jurisdiction of the Nigerian Rail Corporation until 1937 when it became a separate government department³⁵. As already known before this administrative separation, the railway was still a market and the most effective means of moving bulky products to other users for the colliery. In the 1960s, when the coal corporation established its marketing facilities, the Nigerian Railway Corporation began to act as a sales agent. It fixed the price, including the amount of transport the coal delivered to customers³⁶. The NCC recorded its highest production in the 1950s, with the NRC being a top consumer due to its dependence on coal. The consumption figures for 1945 to 1950 was estimated as follows: the NRC was 326,950 tons, electrical undertakings were 63,000 tons, Uac was 58,885 tons, marine department was 56,300 tons, and other corporations³⁷.

In the late 1930s, coal consumption by the railway ranged from 155,000 to 231,000 tons annually or an average of 60 per cent of total coal output. By the 1950s consumption by the NRC averaged about 400,000 tons per annum³⁸. Other corporations that consumed coal produced by the NCC were the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) and the Nigerian Cement Company Nkalagu (Nigercem). According to the ECN, between 1950 and 1959, consumption rose from 64,000 to 156,000 tons or 11.6 to 24 per cent of total consumption. Commissioning new coal thermal stations at Orji River and the Ijora B power station in 1957 made it possible. Accordingly, between 1961 and

1966, ECN coal consumption increased to 182,000 tons per annum. The outbreak of the civil war affected both consumption and coal production and at the end of hostilities in 1970 coal consumption was about 2,000 tons. By 1977 and 1978 when the ECN became the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), the demand for coal had risen to about 64,000 tons. In the following years, 1978 and 1978, saw a sharp decline in coal consumption to 43,190 tons and it fell further to 14,000 tons by 1981, which was used mainly by the Oji River Power Station³⁹.

The Nigerian Cement Company Nkalagu (Nigercem) was commissioned in 1957 and between 1958 and 1966 its cement output rose from 112,000 to 500,000 tons. Likewise, the coal consumption by Nigercem grew from 30,600 to 150,000 tons⁴⁰. With the outbreak of the civil war, the factory was shut down in mid-1967. Due to the extensive damage it suffered during the civil war, Nigeria could not start operations soon after hostilities had ended. The Nigerian government was aware of the importance of the cement industry to the reconstruction programmes of the then East Central State, (now Anambra and Imo States), and as such the reactivation of the company was given top priority. By 1977, cement output had reached 397,784 tons with a corresponding coal consumption of 105,641 tons or 42.3 per cent of total coal output⁴¹. The proximity of Nigercem to the collieries in Enugu and the good transportation connections have combined to make coal the most readily available and the cheapest energy source for the cement industry. To the NCC itself, the importance of the Nkalagu market hardly needs to be over-emphasized, it is seen that coal consumption by Nigercem has generally

increased since the end of the civil war⁴². Between 1971, 1972 and 1981, the consumption of coal by Nigercem averaged about 53.1 per cent. The increment in consumption was caused by the expansion undertaken by the company in 1974, 1977 and 78. The coal/cement ratio is about 32 tons of coal to 100 tons of cement⁴³. However, Nigercem is no longer functional as it was privatised in 2002 and has been an operational dispute among the Ebonyi state government⁴⁴.

The NCC as well as the production of coal saw significant success from the 1920s till the 1960s. The discovery of oil was the major driving factor that led to the decline and eventual collapse of the coal industry in Enugu. The rise of petroleum occasioned the steady demise of the coal industry as industries began to switch to petroleum as a more efficient source of energy notably the NRC. The 1980s saw the consumption by the Nigerian railway drop to less than 3,000 tons. Much of the reason for the fall in coal demand is attributable to the railway's dieselisation policy, which received active consideration from 1954⁴⁵.

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CHAPTER FOUR
DECLINE OF COAL AND CURRENT REALITIES OF COAL
PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA

Introduction:

Enugu's coal mines enjoyed considerable success for a few decades, serving as the main powerhouse for the railway corporation, which was used to facilitate efficient transportation of coal, agricultural produce, human transport, etc. for years. The reign of coal as the main energy source for corporations seemed ideal and efficient, but this successful streak would soon end.

The discovery of oil in 1956 and the civil war are usually regarded or pegged as the primary factors that caused the decline of coal mining in Enugu¹. Most corporations especially the Nigerian Railway Corporation that relied on the coal industry for energy sources began the process of dieselisation as they discovered that petroleum was a more efficient and economical energy source. This change was also noticeable in the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), which switched to a different energy source in the 1980s to Hydro Electric Power (HEP), and gas-fired thermal stations generating electricity. Other corporations began to rely on other sources which crippled the coal industry as the need for coal as an energy source began to dwindle and fade². Before the discovery of oil, the coal industry faced some difficulties that may be attributed to the decline in the later years. Several reasons include poor working conditions and procurement of workers at the coal mines.

Procurement of Workers at the Coal Mines

A secondary factor was the procurement of workers at the coal mines. The colonial administration adopted the system of indirect rule to bridge the gap in communications and administration with the indigenes. With the discovery of coal, warrant chiefs were installed to administer their people on behalf of the colonial administration. There were two outstanding warrant chiefs in the Udi Division: Ozo-Nebechi Okachi of Oghe, a trader and the first person there to be appointed a warrant chief in 1909 and Onyeama of Eke, the last in the division to be appointed a warrant chief in 1910. The commencement of mining activities in Enugu decisively shaped the economic relationship between the indigenes and the colonial authority. The discovery of coal in Udi Hills, in which the position and role of the warrant chiefs, conveniently fell within the precincts of the mine in particular and those within the Udi Division, changed dramatically. The warrant chiefs became responsible for recruiting and maintaining a stable labour force while maintaining a reliable rail network to utilise the coal for daily operations. The early days of coal mining saw contractors managing production and being paid for the amount of coal produced. These contractors sequentially employed labourers who cut and carried the coal to the surface in their head pans; the contractors only paid for the product. The major labour supplier to the coal mines at Enugu was Warrant Chief Onyeama, who for several years received a large subsidy from the colonial administration in recognition of his services. The labourers received nothing. The Ogwumili's society was attributed to the efforts of Onyeama in

his forceful recruitment and supply of labourers for the Enugu Colliery which the British regime mockingly described as “a dreaded band of loyalists that committed all kinds of crime including several murders with impunity”. The Ogwumili society was responsible for submitting recruits or conscripts to contractors who supplied the Nigerian Railway Corporation with labourers. It had become common information that the warrant chiefs obtained and delivered fellow Nigerians to colonial authorities through forceful conscript labour and most of them were mustered towards the construction of the eastern railway line; the railroad connecting Port Harcourt Harbor to the coal mines at Enugu, that was subsequently completed in 1916. The colonial administration had very little care about how the labourers were obtained or paid because the indigenes had been conscripted into the colonial workforce way before the discovery of coal. The colonial administration received the complaints of the locals regarding Onyeama’s heavy-handedness and not very surprisingly in 1914, in several towns within Enugu the labourers revolted against the forced labour and terrible working conditions on the roads, railway lines and the corruption of the warrant chiefs, court clerks and native commissioner’s messengers and the British administration generally. The colonial authority opened fire with machine guns and massacred the revolters in their thousands. There was a huge disparity in the amount earned between Onyeama and the labourers. While the workers were paid next to nothing, Onyeama received an annual salary of about 400 to 500 British pounds because, to the minds of the colonial authorities, they believed the chiefs were doing a much more important job in keeping the supply of

labour stable. Workers were sacked midway into the work month to force them to default on their contracts and thereby forfeit their months' pay to their contractors and there were instances of a miner falling sick and not being granted sick leave; instead, he would be relieved of his job and had no recourse. The horrendous treatment of labourers by both the warrant chiefs and the colonial authorities caused immense dissatisfaction among the labourers who felt exploited and used. They toiled for hours on end on the construction sites and were paid very little. These factors created cracks within the coal industry and the mistreatment of labourers led to another significant event in Enugu's coal mine's history: The Iva Valley Massacre³.

The Decline of Coal in Enugu

Oil was discovered at Oloibiri, a creek community in present Bayelsa State on the 17th of January, 1956 by Shell BP.⁴⁰ After an array of evaluation, assessment and drill spem tests, the well was certified and production began in December 1957⁴. The hegemony of coal was overtaken by petroleum after its discovery. And was further threatened in subsequent years by the increased utilisation of other energy sources HEP and natural gas⁵. The Railway Corporation which was the major consumer of coal began to replace its coal-burning trains with diesel-powered engines⁶. Until the mid-1950s, coal was the most important energy source in Nigeria accounting for 64 per cent of energy consumed in the country in 1955⁷. The Shell BP company was the one that laid the first crude oil pipeline from the Oloibiri field to Port-Harcourt in 1958 to access export facilities for refining. After that, the finished products were imported back to

Nigeria for utilisation. The reason for the switch from coal to diesel was that diesel offered a better and cheaper alternative to coal in terms of energy generation. This served as an ample reason for the NRC to set the motion for the importation of diesel-utilised engines in September 1958⁸. Hon. J.I.G Onyia, a member representing Asaba Constituency expressed fears to the plenary of the Federal House of Representatives on the 10th of November, 1958, over the timely collapse of the coal industry as a result of the steady dieselisation of the two biggest coal consumers at the time; the Nigerian Railway Corporation and Electricity Corporation of Nigeria⁹.

The dieselisation policy can be attributed as the significant factor responsible for the fall in coal demand. It received positive consideration as the NRC attested that diesel locomotives were undoubtedly more economical to maintain than steam-powered engines. However, the implementation of the dieselisation policy was delayed until the late 1950s. The execution did not start until 10 mainline diesel engines were added to the stock' of 224 mainline and 60 shunting steam engines. The NRC purchased 8 additional mainline and four shunting diesel engines in 1959 bringing the total number of mainline diesel engines to eighteen. Simultaneously, the turn of events led to a deduction in the number of mainline and shunting steam engines in use from 224 and 60 in 1956 to 214 and 57 respectively. The NCC and the Eastern Regional government became agitated about the dire consequences that would follow the dieselisation policy, which would cause a reduction in the demand for coal by the railway. The NCC in 1959 demanded from the Federal government a guaranteed minimum purchase of about 200,000 tons of

coal per annum¹⁰. Hon. Onyia urged the federal government to consider the possibility of establishing a coal carbonisation industry to diversify the use of coal. Following the oil industry's exploitation, interest in the colliery continued to wane¹¹. The NRC on average consumed about 400,000 tons per annum in the 1950s, but it fell to 300,000 tons in the 1960s, with the railway-shared total consumption falling from 60 to 43 per cent¹².

In 1963, Chief Christian Chukwuma Onoh was the Chairman of the Nigerian Coal Corporation, he organised a study group on coal carbonisation and the stages of production which spanned domestic and industrial purposes. The intention behind establishing a carbonisation plant was to extend the relevance of coal beyond energy generation. Engr. Uche Okonkwo was a Cambridge University-trained mining engineer and a member of the British Association of Mining Engineers who led the group. They went to London for different levels of training and returned to establish a carbonisation plant at Bunker. The NCC in an attempt to prevent the coal industry from being abandoned, most of the locomotives on the eastern line continued to be steam engines up to the Civil War¹³.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1967 removed the last constraint on the policy of dieselisation. By 1967 coal consumption by the railway was 19,165 tons. The outbreak of the war caused major disruptions to coal production, causing the closure of the Enugu coal mines and the disruption of rail services in the Eastern Region. Many mines were abandoned during the Nigerian civil war, accounting for the low consumption. At the war's end in 1970, coal consumption by the NRC was 22,470 tons

or about 85 per cent of total coal production. Between 1971 and 1972 and 1972 and 1973 consumption rose from 90,915 to 128,557 tons. Between 1973 and 1974 and 1978 and 1979, coal consumption by the NRC averaged 49,207 tons. The end of the civil war in 1970 saw the steam engines that had survived destruction repaired and put back into use on the Eastern railway line. There was a slight improvement in the demand for coal by the railway because of this, however, consumption by the Nigerian railway dropped to less than 3,000 tons in the 1980s.¹⁴

The civil war also affected the coal production and consumption by the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN). At the end of the civil war in 1970, coal consumption was about 2,000 tons. By 1977 and 1978 the ECN became the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), and the coal demand had risen to about 64,000 tons. The following years, 1978 and 1978 saw the coal consumption rate decline to 43,190 tons and fell further to 14,000 tons by 1981. It was used mainly by the Oji River Power Station. This caused the station to operate at a third of its pre-war capacity. However, this was just the beginning of the troubles that faced the NCC. At the end of the Civil War, NEPA was caught up in a position to pick and choose which energy source it would utilise for future electricity generation. Judging by current projects, the option was to utilise hydroelectric power and gas-fired thermal stations to generate electricity. This was not a favourable economic development for the coal industry as the earlier proposal to build four new coal-fired power stations at Oji, Makurdi, Onitsha and Gombe between 1987 and 1990 could not happen because of the poor state of Nigeria's

economy. Till these plans are implemented, the future of coal will very deemed shortly after the energy calculations of NEPA.

The dieselisation policy and the civil war aftermath left the coal industry in shambles. The reopening of the eastern section of the Nigerian railway led to a slight increase in coal consumption, which was 5% in 1971, increased further to 6% in 1972, but fell back again to 5% in 1975¹⁵. The following years witnessed a sharp downturn in coal production in Nigeria. Nigeria has been unable to return to its peak production level of the 1950s. Since the 1970s production levels have been slowly falling as seen in the table below;

YEAR	PRODUCTION (METRIC TONS)
1970	59,000.00
1971	195,000.00
1972	343,000.00
1973	327,000.00
1974	304,035.00
1975	226,252.00
1976	135,541.00
1977	195,840.00
1978	218,860.00
1979	171,845.00
1980	169,787.00
1981	154,351.00

1982	56,021.94
1983	102,135.00
1984	76,076.58

Courtesy: Annual Abstract of Statistics, Federal Office of Statistics 1982 and¹⁶ 1985.

Unpublished Report, Federal Ministry of Mines, Power and Steel, Mines Department

The next table will show the Nigerian Coal Corporation's Local sales and exports between 1973, 1980 and 1981.

CUSTOMER	1973	1980	1981
Railway	128.6	3.6	3.2
NEPA	13.4	20.6	13.7
Niger Cement	120.6	126.1	81.5
Export	51.6	4.5	-
TOTAL	314.2	154.8	98.4

Courtesy: Nigerian Coal Corporation¹⁷

The corporation could not survive as the process of decline was moving at an incredible pace. In 1978, during the administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo, the NCC was given financial aid to develop the capacities of their workers in different special areas in the United Kingdom and Poland. On their return, so much could not be done to reposition the industry. By 1989 when Prof Gregory Iwu was appointed chairman of the

corporation, miners had started losing their jobs. The collapse of the industry led to more than 8,000 people and other workers from Ngwo losing their jobs¹⁸.

By 1999, the NCC had lost its monopoly over the coal industry as the current administration allowed the private acquisition of companies to begin operating coal fields in joint ventures with the Nigerian Coal Corporation. The aim was to sell the NCC's assets to private investors completely. The Nigerian Federal Government planned to sell 40% to private investors, and 20% to the Nigerian public while keeping 40%. The NCC-operated mines stopped working in 2002, and by 2003, the government announced that the technical committee was tasked with reviving the collapsed coal industry. The technical committee had not issued a report by 2004 and the NCC went almost bankrupt. The NCC began selling some of its assets to raise funds to pay its enormous debts; including employee salaries. While some news outlets hint at a possible sale of the NCC, the Nigerian Bureau of Public Enterprises, responsible for selling public enterprises, still lists the NCC for sale on its websites as of 2008. By 2010, Enugu coal mines had completely shut down and coal production stopped¹⁹.

Current Realities of Coal Production

The past decades of coal mining in Enugu have been characterized as a mixture of failed governmental promises and overall inefficiency. With the closure of the mines and the federal government's attempts to sell off some of the NCC assets to private investors, the question remains²⁰; will the coal mines ever reopen?

The privatisation was in full swing leaving workers retrenched, the NCC properties were sold off and a deal that killed the fortunes, dreams and livelihood of the industry was sealed. After the Civil War ended, the coal industry was not able to return. Nigeria still has huge amounts of coal estimated at 2 billion tonnes²¹. The coal is low in sulphur and is in high demand in the international market, but experts are concerned about the poor state of the industry. They believe that if coal is properly harnessed in Nigeria, it would restore the nation's decades of unstable power supply and also contribute to the nation's earnings and generation of employment.

The Failures of the Nigerian Government

One of the first attempts the federal government made at revitalising the coal industry was when it signed an agreement with Kopex, a Polish company based in Warsaw to take on the responsibility of mining and boosting production. While the NCC plays a supervisory role. However, this agreement was futile as efforts made to retrieve the documents of the agreements were unsuccessful and what Nigerians hoped would be a deal to revive the industry failed after a few years. Some believe the reason for the failed Kopex deal was because they brought obsolete equipment despite newer having been paid for and also because their method of mining was different so privatisation couldn't work for them. Kopex left due to their inability to continue exploration. The next country that won the bid to revive the industry was a company in Bulgaria. The agreement became known as "Bul-Nig" and according to the agreement, when production began it would take 40% of the gains while the NCC would take 60%. It was

also stated that if the coal is produced in Nigeria, it would be exported to Poland, Ghana, Egypt, South Africa etc. In 2002, President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration made some attempts to revive the industry by signing an agreement with South Africa for the development of the coal industry. The mines in Onyeama, Okpara and Owukpa were the main interests but mining development didn't commence and not much is known of the outcome of the deal presently. Chimaroke Nnamani former governor of Enugu state had protested against the 2003 planned privatisation by Olusegun Obasanjo. He demanded consultation with the federal government before any planned sale commences. Enugu state government lost mining fields to private investors but Sullivan Chime then governor of Enugu was able to take over two properties of the NCC bought from the Bureau of Public Enterprise (BPE) under the federal government's privatisation of its landed properties. The properties are the headquarters of the corporation situated along Okpara Avenue and the Colliery Hospital in Enugu. The former director-general of BPE, Benjamin Ezra Dikki said at the commissioning ceremony that the privatisation of the corporation started that started in 2007 goal was to hand over the coal blocks to credible investors who would invest money and expertise to mine coal blocks to create job opportunities thereby boosting the economy of the state and Nigeria. We are yet to see how the goals were achieved as companies with mining licenses haven't begun coal mining. Not to anyone's surprise the headquarters of the NCC has also been sold to private investors by the Enugu state government. According to reports, the signature of the private company contracted to construct a perimeter fencing around the premises

was seen at the entrance and attempts to enter the building were prohibited by a security guard. A miner by the Ohagwu stated his dismay at the state's government's actions "We have repeatedly made our feelings known that we want that structure back even if every other thing is sold. Because it is a very costly monument for the nation and not only the state. The industry played a very important role in Nigeria's independence and if not anything, can serve as a museum for the young generation."

The indigenes of Enugu have hoped for years to see a revival of the once-productive coal industry in the state, which they believe will provide electricity to residential areas, power industries, and employment. Despite these hopes and dreams, the state government has been on a streak of all talk and no work. In 2021, there seemed to be a glimmer of hope when the Minister of State, Mines and Steel Development, Uchechukwu Ogah visited the state and discussed the federal government's plans to revamp the expiring industry. Mr Ogah stated his team was trying to know what was already happening and what the federal government had done and could do to revive the coal mines and grow the economy. Also in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari during his election campaign had pledged to revive the coal industry and promised the abundant coal deposits in Enugu would be duly harnessed to generate employment opportunities for youths in the South East and the country overall. He specified that the coal deposits would be used to revamp the Orji River Power Station, which has the capacity to generate 30% of the nation's energy needs²⁰. This promise just like others has been abandoned nearly five years after. Former governor of Enugu state Ifeanyi Uguwanyi

also made ‘futile attempts to rehabilitate the industry. He expressed sadness on some occasions over the state’s inability to harness the economic benefits of coal deposits in the state. In his bid to resuscitate the industry, he urged the National Assembly to amend the constitution towards the transfer of the exploitation of coal from the exclusive legislative list to the concurrent list. He believed this would enable the state’s participation in issuing mining licenses and also urged the federal government to yield companies with mining licenses in the state to begin operations or be at risk of losing their licenses. During a trip to Poland for the COP24 in 2018, he discussed partnership opportunities to revive coal in the state with the Polish government. However, very little outcome of that meeting can be seen in real time although nearly 90,000 Poles had been employed in the coal sector for decades, enjoying high wages and benefits. He believed that if the governors were actively involved in the issuance of licenses, the situation of companies with permits who failed to begin operations would have been easily avoided. Ugwuanyi believed that the Enugu state had not at all benefited from coal deposits²².

Private Investors in Enugu:

Decades after the NCC ended mining operations in the state, private coal miners have taken over the industry making millions but their endeavours are severely degrading the environment and destroying livelihoods. Several indigenes have been at the mercy of these self-serving private investors. A woman by the name of Ovuta Beatrice is one of the aggrieved residents of Ngwo. After the loss of her husband in 2007, some fellow residents leased some portions of land to Beatrice to use for farming to feed

herself and her family. During the farming season in 2022, she borrowed money to plant some like cassava, vegetables, plantain etc which she hoped would yield a bountiful harvest as usual. However, her dreams were crushed on the 3rd of December when private coal miners came with bulldozers in the process of creating an access road for a newly found site, uprooting what she planted. The site is owned by a former national secretary, a woman who mines Queendaline Aghanati, and a man called Okwuchukwu Itanyi. The caterpillar was used to create the access roads used to transport coal to Lagos and the north which are used for floor tiles etc. They are used to destroy farmlands. The owners of the site promised to pay Beatrice compensation for the destruction after the destruction but she is yet to receive anything. Sadly, Beatrice is one of many farmers who have lost their farmlands and livelihoods because of the activities of private coal miners operating in Iva Valley. Amarachi Nwokoro, a mother of five is another unfortunate victim of these exploitations. She borrowed a sum of 300,000 to plant some vegetables in two locations and she planned to pay back in instalments money from selling the harvested vegetables but everything was destroyed in December as the access road to Oti was created. She tried getting the co-owner of the site, Itanyi to pay her money back but he promised that he would only pay about 9% of the money owed. Just like the others, she hasn't heard anything from him since. Mr Itanyi has equally claimed that the community did not sell him any of their lands as they are leased to private investors to work on. The farmers were warned to remove their crops before destruction proceeded. He also said that the business does not involve the government because the

lands belong to the communities but reports by community members say otherwise. Workers have stated that the government always sends an official who collects payments whenever trucks transport the coals to their final destination and one of the trucks at the mining community waiting to be loaded with coal. While the mining operations lasted, the owners of the lands were being paid and immediately after the work ended, the money stopped coming. Hence, they decided to take back their lands and run the business. Before the operations ended, the government would arrest any person who entered the mine without explaining oneself but now, anyone can come and go as they please. However, the state government has claimed to be unaware of any mining activity inside the valley.

Nevertheless, most of the farmers whose farmlands were destroyed to pave the way for coal mining in the valley are yet to receive any form of compensation.

Other than the destruction caused by the activities of the private investors, the community members who work in the mines in very difficult conditions get little pay compared to the operators who earn millions of naira. Reports suggest that on some days, about three to five days are loaded with coal, each worth between 7 million and 8 million naira, depending on the truck's capacity. Some of the money used to start the business is used to settle community members who own the lands. A woman was reported to have died while working in Onyema mining site after coal fell on her. Before she died, she was earning a measly 70 naira for filling a cement bag and 150 naira whenever she digs and fills a bag. Two sizes of bags were used: the cement bag and the

larger flour bag. Workers earn 180 naira for each flour bag and 250 naira when they dig and fill the bags. However, the owners of the site stopped operations after the woman's death. Some workers expressed dissatisfaction over the pay stating it's not worth the stress they go through to earn it. To meet their daily targets, workers at the mines come out by 8 am and close by 5 pm, leaving their jobs with headaches and backpains from hours of bending. Unfortunately, most of them whose only means of survival is working in the mines come back again. Some however do not return after working there as they have other options than subjecting themselves to the inhumane working conditions. However, Mr Igwe is different from those who fall sick from working in the mines. He has become accustomed to this life and has reportedly filled about 50 bags per day earning him 9,000 naira daily. Some days, he earns more depending on the amount of coal. Some workers have to wear hand gloves to avoid whitlow and shoes to prevent their legs from peeling after coming in contact with the coal²³.

There are also health and environmental implications that the excesses of these private investors have on the community. Coal being the greatest source of electricity generation worldwide also has great risks to the environment. Coal produced 36.3% gigatonnes (Gt) of global carbon dioxide emissions in 2021 which has caused current issues with global warming²⁴. The coal being mined and abandoned at the Onyeama site as it is done inside Iva Valley devastated the immediate environment, causing deforestation, loss of water, air pollution etc through the release of toxic chemicals. The trees that are brought down, burned and uprooted to make way for coal mining have

destroyed land which can no longer be used to grow crops. The dust generated from the mining activities also puts miners who live nearby at risk of developing lung disease i.e. pneumoconiosis because they have been exposed to airborne respirable dust²⁵. Burning coal also releases large amounts of carbon dioxide which traps the heat in the atmosphere and accelerates climate change. The negative effects of coal mining also affect people's places of residence.

Water sources have also been contaminated due to the mining activities. Portable water has become a luxury only a few homes can afford. It is common to see water tanks packed in front of some houses in Iva Valley. For many others, the only options available are the streams and springs used for bathing, washing and cooking²⁶. These miners who pollute the environment violate Section 123 of the Mining Act, "No person shall, in the course of mining or exploration for minerals, pollute or cause to be polluted any water or watercourse in the area within the mining lease or beyond that area". Section 125 of the Mining Act states that "a licensee or lessee shall pay compensation to the owner or occupier who suffers damages as a result of pollution of any source of water used for domestic and other purposes as a consequence of the exploration or operations in any work connected with the property, for any such damage not otherwise made good"²⁷. Coal mining requires a lot of water hence there is usually contamination of surface and groundwater that has been deformed or of growth when these water bodies are shared with mining communities when they use the same for their domestic activities.

With failed promises to provide clean water for residents, the residents don't know what to do.

Nigeria's Stance On the Usage of Coal:

The COP26 climate summit was held in Glasgow in November 2021 and attended by 120 world leaders. It was aimed to accelerate action to address climate change and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. At this conference, Nigeria was given until the end of the decade to move from fossil fuels i.e., coal as part of the efforts to minimise temperature rises with the Paris Agreement of 2015. It is also to ensure a transition to clean energy. About 23 countries made commitments to phase out coal and for this to happen, richer nations committed to helping countries that rely on coal for power generation. However, Nigeria does not stand anything from abandoning coal as the coal resources are still untapped. Nigerian government within international climate negotiations has been shaky. The problem that Nigeria has is sending individuals who are career politicians to represent the country during negotiations rather than people who are knowledgeable to negotiate on behalf of the country. It is believed that it would not be profitable for the government to begin to invest in coal for electricity because the country already depends on hydro and gas-fired thermal power plants which are used for electricity generation. The money that will be used to build a coal power plant can be invested in building a cleaner and easier-to-run power plant²⁸.

A Glimpse of Hope:

The journey to revive the coal industry has been tiresome, filled with empty promises and ineffective agreements but there seems to be a glimmer of hope. This is because a bill seeking to establish the Nigerian Coal Development Commission (NCDC) passed a second reading in the House of Representatives. The bill was initiated by the member representing Enugu North/Enugu South Federal Constituency in the National Assembly, Chimaobi Atu. He aims to repeal the Nigerian Coal Corporation Act and enact the NCDC Act to revive the nation's abandoned and neglected coal industry. Atu greatly emphasised the urgent need to revive the coal industry in Nigeria to cater for the country's shortfall in energy sources and highlighted the need to provide more. The bill also aimed to effectively manage the nation's coal industry as the old law was deemed outdated. Currently, the aggregate Nigerian coal potential demands stand at about 15 million metric tonnes annually. Atu also acknowledged the climate change issues surrounding fossil fuels discussed at the COP26 and assured Nigerians that all environmental health concerns would be thoroughly in the bill. The bill will likely be passed and hopefully pave the way for the revival of the nation's coal industry²⁹.

In other news, the Enugu State government announced December 2024 as the deadline for mineral title holders to commence coal mining operations. The announcement was made at the end of a meeting between the state's Mineral Resources and Environmental Committee led by the Chairperson, Samuel Okoro and other mineral title holders situated in the state. A communique was issued at the end of the meeting that resolved to initiate further engagement to identify challenges in the sector and

recommend solutions which would help foster effective mining. It also stated that the move was to restore Enugu State to its peak as the leading coal mining state in the obsolete Eastern Region of Nigeria. One of the agreements between the government and the mineral title holders is that the committee would demand the directories of all mineral titles in Enugu State through the Mining Cadastre Office. The agreement also upheld transparency and accountability to make sure that every title holder in the state adhered to the regulatory requirements. The committee said they were committed to ensuring that all titles became fully operational before 2024 ends. These are the efforts they are willing to take to eradicate mineral title inactiveness in the state³⁰.

However, there has been no indication to suggest that any of these bills or the communique have been enacted and are functional. The revival of the coal industry in Enugu continues to be a pipe dream sprinkled with layers of lies, failed promises and the government's negligence. Just like previous 'ineffective' efforts to revive the industry, present times may not hold any weight just like its predecessors. All we can do is watch and see if the tides will favour this once-buoyant industry.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

For decades, coal has been a great energy source for numerous nations. It has become the largest source of electricity globally, supplying over a third of the world's electricity. Coal isn't just used for energy generation and in producing tiles, batteries, cement, etc.; it is undeniably the most efficient fossil fuel. The discovery of coal in Ngwo-Enugu opened many doors to different opportunities for the colonial administration, as was seen in the activities that followed its discovery.

The Nigerian Coal Corporation was established with the motive of exploiting the mineral effectively while maintaining a monopoly over the market. The corporation was established to facilitate the smooth-running transportation of coal to local industries and foreign. The NCC and the coal industry in general enjoyed considerable success for years but met a steady decline after coal was discovered. Therefore, the study examined the reasons that necessitated the exploitation of coal by the colonial administration. Furthermore, the study presented a detailed discussion on the establishment of the industry by the colonial administration in Enugu, the acquisition of lands to set up collieries and mines. The industry played a role in the British administration during the war as the importation of coal was financially burdening on the administration. The establishment of collieries reduced the cost of the administration as the coal produced was sufficient to fund their needs, transport to their other colonies and sell to the foreign market. The industry enjoyed outstanding success as the establishment of the NCC

aided in better organisation of the industry. The NCC played a role in the distribution of coal to the Nigerian Railway Corporation as the NRC was the NCC's top consumer. The NRC steam engines relied on coal as an energy source to transport, agricultural goods, minerals and humans alike. Enugu became a thriving industrious city at that stage, having people come from other parts of the nation seeking employment in the mines. The mines had a mixture of workers from the indigenes of Ngwo and other parts of the nation, as camps and temporal residencies were set up to house them.

However, this budding industry did not last for long as the study focal point came to light; what led to the decline of coal? Secondary and primary factors were examined that necessitated the decline. The study showed how the discovery of oil in Bayelsa caused a death in coal mining in Enugu. Oil was seen as a more efficient energy source, leading to a transition from coal to oil. Many industries began to enact the dieselisation policy that switched coal engines with petrol engines for more efficiency. The NRC was one of the corporations that made this switch, and this action severely affected coal production levels in the NCC, which was the NCC's top coal consumer. With their top supplier replacing its coal engines with petrol engines, it didn't take long before other corporations and industries replaced coal as an energy source. The Civil War enabled this smooth transition, causing further drops in coal production levels, and by the end of the war, coal production had reached an all-time low. These factors continued to erase the industry's impact on Enugu and Nigeria at large. The federal and state governments made several efforts to revive the industry but none yielded anything.

All that is left are abandoned mines, and activities by private investors who exploit these mines with the “assistance of the government” for their benefit. The environmental degradation caused by coal mining and the dangers it presents to the communities that house these mines.

Despite the success that coal mining may have enjoyed in the past, the future for the industry remains dim as the world is gradually moving on to much safer, eco-friendly energy sources, so we wonder the direction the Enugu government would go in the face of numerous challenges.

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