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British Colonialism from Survival to Fulfillment
The Case of the Nigerian Traditional Authorities

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Degree of Doctorate in African Civilization*

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Dedications

To my parents,

My husband,

My children with love

To my four brothers:

Nour-Eddine, Mohamed Reda, Kadi and Sofiane.

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Abstract

Colonialism is a political phenomenon, whereby the sovereignty of a state and people are totally alienated for the benefit of a foreign power. This thesis, which deals with British colonization of the largest country in black Africa namely Nigeria, is principally designed to provide an analysis as well as a summary of major problems bearing on the history and politics of the imperial era. Its objective is not only to cover many aspects of the colonial past but also to explore the Nigerian pre-colonial past focusing on its major historical, political as well as social issues. Following a timeline of events, it highlights key episodes notably the nature of the traditional authorities in the Nigerian communities, the decimation of the population from the slave trade, the imposition of colonial rule and its effects and the transfer of power to Nigerians in 1960. Furthermore, this research work focuses on the historical processes that have affected the socio-political structures of chiefly authorities along the course of the colonial era. In order to achieve this thesis, I relied on official sources such as Colonial Office, Colonial Reports and Annual Reports. etc Other secondary sources were also very helpful including books and journals, which are related to the economic, political, social and cultural history of Nigeria.

In order to address major themes in Nigeria's history, this thesis is divided into four chapters, which are presented chronologically. The first chapter is concerned with the pre-colonial history of Nigeria discussing mainly the diverse structures of the Nigerian traditional societies and the major transformations in their social, political, cultural and economic landscape. The second chapter covers the period during which Nigeria came under British colonial rule. It focuses on the long and slow process by which the British took direct political control of the territories that were soon to make up the administrative unit called Nigeria. Chapter three emphasizes on the British colonial policy and its impacts on the traditional authorities. Finally, the last chapter tends to analyze the various indigenous subjects, who resisted British efforts to change their traditional institutions. It stresses on the new political class, which developed a national consciousness and claimed for the end of the British colonial regime and the handing over of political control to an indigenous leadership.

List of Acronyms

AG	Action Group.
AWA	Aba's Women Association.
CMS	Christian Mission Societies.
CWC	Central Working Committee.
DO	District Officer.
EUG	Egba United Government.
EWA	Enugu Women's Association.
NA	Native Authority.
NAS	Native Authority System
NCBWA	National Congress of British West Africa.
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and Citizens.
/ / /	National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons
NCWS	National Council of Women's Societies
NEC	National Executive Committee
NNDP	Nigerian National Democratic Party.
NPC	Northern People's Congress.
NWU	Nigerian Women's Union.
NYM	Nigerian Youth Movement
OAU	Organization of African Unity.
RNC	Royal Niger Company.
UAC	United African Company.
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association.
UNIP	United National Independence Party.
WASU	West African Students Union.
HMS	Her Majesty's

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Colonialism may be defined as a policy whereby a political power acquires or retains control over people in territories other than its own and it has often used subterfuges to justify its expansionist behavior all over the world.¹ The imposition of British rule in West Africa as a legal aspect was advanced on a variety of grounds. Some argued that this political occupation was related to certain events and the major changes which took place in the course of the nineteenth century such as the suppression of the slave trade , the pacification of the inter-tribal wars , the African acceptance to take advantages of modern trade established by foreign companies or even the need to benefit from the European civilization such as education , sanitation, while for others the economic factor seemed to be more significant.²

Therefore, this study of British colonialism of Nigeria³ is designed to highlight certain features of colonialism in West Africa in general beside the various stages by which this former British colony became part of the British Empire. Furthermore, the present work is intended to provide information about the Nigerian traditional societies and the major changes that occurred among the traditional authorities as a consequence of some sixty years of colonial rule. The research questions that guided this study are:

-How was administration organized among the Nigerian traditional societies?

-What happened to the traditional authorities from their early contact with Europeans up to the establishment of British colonial rule?

-What did the British do in order to occupy and rule such a fragmented territory?

-How did colonialism and other internal dynamics affect the power and role of traditional authorities in politics and governance?

¹- Jack Woddis., Introduction to Neo-Colonialism.(New York, 1967), p.14.

²- Guy Martin., "Africa and the Ideology of Eurafica", Journal of Modern African Studies.,vol20., n°2., 1982, p.65.

³- Nigeria takes its name from the River Niger. The word Niger is said to be a corruption of Nigir, of which the root 'Ni' indicates a waterway, the whole word being equivalent to 'big river'. C.K Meek, "The Niger and the classics: The History of a Name", Journal of African History, vol11, n1, (Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp1-17.

Before examining any feature or impact of British colonial policy on Nigeria, it is important to focus on the identification of the traditional authorities that existed before the imposition of such rule. Throughout the area, indeed, the local and regional variations led to the promotion of distinctive political institutions notably centralized and decentralized authorities. The first type, which included states of the northern, western and mid-western regions, was a political organization in which authority was centralized and in which coercion was a fundamental part of political control. The second type, however, which included states of the eastern region was decentralized relying more on customs and traditions rather than command and legislation.

Thereafter, it is worth mentioning the European relations that already existed there before the nineteenth century and how these had been modified by decisions taken by Britain since the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was, in fact, through the medium of trade that the coastal groups in the Niger Delta and Europeans came into contact in the fifteenth century and kept trade as the basis of their relations from then onwards⁴.

Besides gold, spices and ivory, the main African articles for export until the late nineteenth century was slaves. Throughout the period, the coastal rulers remained very much in control of their own affairs. Thus, the British and other European powers hardly produced any political repercussions in terms of their involvement in African politics.

These relations were to change when Britain decided to put an end to the overseas slave trade and to develop an alternative export staple to replace slaves. For instance, British determination to end slave trade led to a gradual intervention in the internal affairs of the southern states of what is today called Nigeria. The first chapter is, therefore, a prelude to the establishment of British colonial rule in the Nigerian regions focusing on their relations with European powers before the

⁴ A.G Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa, London and New York, Longman, 1973. p.164.

British conquest. It is also an attempt to construct an ideal type formulation of the major characteristics of traditional authority as it existed prior to colonial contact.

The first direct political intervention in the southern states came in 1851, with a British military action against Lagos to force its ruler to abandon the slave trade. A decade later, Lagos was ceded to the British. Meanwhile, the rulers of Great Britain, who were responsible for colonial and foreign policy were strongly opposed to any extension of territory in West Africa, but some changes left the Colonial Office with no alternative.

In the course of these changes, the British policy towards West Africa had changed. A strong desire to withdraw from the West African colonies was turned into the strong imperialist impulse which led to the occupation of southern Nigeria in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In fact, under pressure from other European powers, whose rivalries prompted the partition of West Africa, in addition to some economic circumstances, Britain was determined to extend its colonial policy into the interior. Thus, the development of the colony seemed more urgent than the British policy of withdrawal.

At the end of the nineteenth century, as Britain woke up to discover that the European nations after the Berlin Conference were about to appropriate the hinterlands of her colonies, effective occupation and administration of the colony became more desirable. In fact, the proclamation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate over the Niger Delta in 1885, the foundation of the Royal Niger Company, the annexation of the whole Yorubaland to the Lagos Protectorate in 1886 and the formation of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893 are the best events to illustrate British success in establishing an organized administration in the southern regions of what was to become Modern Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the British had to strive to conclude a number of treaties with the local chiefs in order to have a strong foothold. They underestimated the strength of the African authorities especially of the coast merchant princes like Jaja of Opobo, Nana of the Itsekiri and the Oba of Benin, who stood against the British advance and

who resisted till the end. This was probably one of the most important stimulants, which led the British to rely in their administration of the southern areas on the African chiefs, as agents for local government.

Steps towards the establishment of a more organized administration in what was to become Nigeria were done by the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. A decision to take the country effectively was undertaken in 1900, when the planned acquisition of the area took place. The Muslim North was declared a British Protectorate under F.D. Lugard as first High Commissioner and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was created to substitute the Niger Coast Protectorate.

Lugard succeeded quickly to bring all the northern emirates under Britain's colonial rule. Thereafter, he established an administrative system, which in its turn relied on the African rulers and brought great effects on their traditional position. Five years later, a new organization was brought to the Nigerian dependencies. Indeed, the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos became part of the new Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and eight years later the Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated to become Nigeria. Thus, the main objective of chapter two is to show the different steps, by which British rule was extended to southern Nigeria and its hinterland. Taking into account the growth of British imperialism in the interior, this chapter is also an enquiry into the various steps, by which Northern Nigeria was brought under Britain's control focusing on the several forms of African resistance there and on the major changes that Lugard's administration had exerted over the traditional emirs of the north. Furthermore, it attempts to show the major conditions under which the different parts of Nigeria were amalgamated.

The British in Northern Nigeria, which became the model for indirect rule, believed that it was their task to conserve what was good in indigenous institutions and assist them to develop on their own lines. The relation between the British political officer and the chief was in general that of an adviser, who only in extreme circumstances interfered with the chief and the native authority under him. However, where chiefs governed small political units, and in particular where their traditional

executive authority were questionable, the political officer found himself interfering in native authority affairs more frequently than ideally he should. This was the case in parts of Yorubaland, where the border line between advisory and supervisory in the activities of the political officer was not always clear. In fact, though indirect rule reposed primarily on a chief as executive, its aim was not to preserve the institution of chieftaincy as it was but to encourage local self-government through indigenous political institutions, whether these were headed by a single executive authority, or by a council of elders.

This system of indirect rule was, with modifications, practiced wherever possible in other Britain's colonies in West Africa. But, there were notable exceptions, especially in eastern Nigeria where the absence of identifiable executive authority in most communities made indirect rule as practiced in northern Nigeria almost impossible to apply. In such societies, the British imposed chiefs, who were granted certificates of nomination. In general, the British officer tended to respect his chief as separate but equal, though certainly not somebody with whom he could establish personal social relations.

It should be noted that, this period of colonial rule was highly traumatic for the traditional rulers, for it marked for them the beginning of the destruction of their traditional way of life. Thus, the status, position and power of the traditional rulers were gradually undermined. Chapter three is, then, an emphasis on the British colonial system of administration applied to both northern and southern Nigeria. It is also concerned with the impact of the British colonial institutions on the southern and northern authorities during the major phase of colonial rule between 1850 and 1930s, when Africans had few political and civil rights.

After a long struggle, Nigeria became part of British imperial expansion that focused on exploiting raw materials, minerals and foodstuffs important to western industrial development. Britain tried to encourage tropical export crops in Nigeria and to stimulate demand there for British manufactured goods. Hence, the colonies built a railroad network between 1890s and 1940s, and constructed roads at an accelerating rate after the 1930s. These developments along with the introduction of the pound

sterling as the universal medium of exchange, encouraged export trade in tin, cotton, cocoa, groundnuts, and palm oil. Britain succeeded to maintain its economic hegemony over the colony through military power, strategic alliances and the collaboration of indigenous rulers.

Further progress occurred in the colony of Nigeria. For instance, the policy of indirect rule advocated for the education of the native Nigerian in order to facilitate the communication between the British officers and the population. It was first left to the missions, whose teaching extended mainly in the south. A new departure was made in 1923, with the creation of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education. Its memorandum of policy coincided with the principles of indirect rule by declaring that the first duty was the education of the bulk of the people through village community schools. The Southern Provinces always enthusiastically eager for schools were ready to accept the new proposals, and to place the management of the new schools in the hands of the district officer and native authorities. The north followed very slowly, for schools conducted by Christians were not unnaturally regarded with suspicion by devout Muslims, unable to distinguish between the secular administration and missions under Government protection.

Most importantly, education led to the emergence of a class of Nigerian elites, who became conscious of the real economic and political situations of their country under colonial regime. Different riots, strikes, and protests swept the Nigerian regions. At the beginning, all the groups claimed for increased representation in the representative institutions. Although, the British colonial governors strove to find solutions to their problems through the imposition of several colonial reforms, most of them were still dissatisfied with their position. Therefore, radical groups mainly the nationalists emerged asking for immediate self-governing in the management of their African affairs. This new group, which most of the time opposed the traditional rulers, hurried the process of decolonization and the establishment of independence. The fourth chapter, thus, tends to explore the changeover that occurred in Nigeria after the rising of protests and the emergence of the Nigerian political parties, which played

prime roles in the political scene. It is also an attempt to show the real status of the traditional chief, which further undermined.

The conclusion tries to open new paths of research closely related to the themes developed.

Chapter One

The Pre-Colonial Nigerian Traditional Authorities and their Early Contact with European Powers

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Introduction

The continent of Africa, like the other continents in the world, has been the stage upon which the drama of human development and cultural differentiations has been played since the beginning of known history. Yet until very recently, the history of the great continent, its diverse cultural patterns and even the potential of the people, have been the subject of monumental distortions, decision and amusement among European intellectual community¹.

Prior to the twentieth century, the myth that Africans are people without a history, dominated the historiography of Europeans, which according to Thomas Hodgkin (1960) was, because Europeans who visited West Africa were not competent, and reported nothing more than the contemporary state of societies, which they encountered. Professor S.O Arifalo submitted that the historiographical assumption behind this attitude was founded on the late nineteenth century belief about history, that the only truly valid source of history was the written document and the societies, which had no writing had no history. Consequently, certain historians such as Harry Johnston, A P Newton and the others went on to make iniquitous statement about African history².

Contrarily to their opinion, early Nigerian scholars like J.F Ade Ajayi and Obaro Ikime and Kenneth Dike.etc devoted their time, energy and resources to debunk those horrid notions of Europeans. They were not only able to demonstrate the beautiful culture of the people of Nigeria but also accounted for their organized political systems and social structures.

With the insertion of colonialism and the western types of governments in Africa and Nigeria specifically, political systems of people were tagged retrograded. The people were said not to have possessed any sensible system of administration, apart from the ruler ship of bully kings, who possessed all powers, regarded as deities, do what they will and were beyond check. For Europeans, colonialism was the getaway

¹ - Uya O.E, Decolonizing African History, The Nigerian Chronicle, Saturday, December, 1974, p 18.

² - Ibid.

for the people and a deliverance from tyrant kings. From this backdrop, this chapter will examine the political systems of pre-colonial Nigerian states sighting examples of structures, kingdoms and empires that practiced leadership by consent and debunks European theories of a backward and tyranny state. For clarification, it will also examine the evolution of the socio-political organizations in Nigeria focusing on the centralized societies in one segment and the decentralized societies in another.

1- Development of Socio-Political Organizations in Nigeria

The history of the country Nigeria has featured many waves of human travels from across the Sahara, which has never been a complete hurdle between the lands to the north and south of the desert. Archaeological evidences from various parts of Nigeria suggest that parts of the country have been settled by man since the Paleolithic or Stone Age period. According to the 1952/1953 census, there were more than 200 distinct ethnic groups in Nigeria (now there are more than 450), most of whom have distinct customs, traditions and languages. The large and dominant groups include the Yoruba (at the time of census was 10 million), the Igbo (7 million), the Hausa (16 million), and the Fulani (5 million). Other prominent but less numerous groups include the Edo, the Ibibio and the Cross Rivers state, the Tiv and the Benue Valley, the Nupe of the middle Niger valley and the Kanuri of the Lake Chad basin. The large concentration of the smallest ethnic groups in the middle Belt, where there are more than 180 different groups, is a significant feature of the distribution of ethnic groups in Nigeria³.

For the people of the forest belt, the largest known peoples are the Yoruba and the Edo, who live in the south west or western states of Nigeria. It is important to note that the Yoruba were never united under a common government, rather consisted of several powerful states such as: Ife, Oyo, Egba etc...As with most Nigerian peoples, the extended family is the basic social unit of the Yoruba. More than the Yoruba, the Edo have a stronger sense of political unity that was under the central authority of the Oba. East of the lower Niger valley, the two major ethnic groups inhabiting the forest

³ - Udo. R.K , Environments and Peoples of Nigeria: A Geographical Introduction. (Heinemann Educational Books, Ibadan, 1980), p20.

belt are Igbo and Ibibio each of whom is divided into several sub-groups. Neither of these groups was ever organized into a large state or kingdom similar to those of the Yoruba and Edo. Rather, the largest political unit was the village group⁴.

The grassland or savanna peoples of Nigeria fall into two geographical groups namely, the middle belt peoples and the peoples of the far north. The two largest and most prominent of middle belt grassland peoples are the Tiv of the Benue Valley in the east and the Nupe of the Middle Niger Valley in the west. The Tiv are probably the most extreme of the so called stateless societies of Nigeria, while Nupe had an integrated political organization, which was similar in some ways to the Yoruba system. In the more open grassland areas of the Nigerian Sudan, the most numerous politically dominant groups are the Hausa, the Fulani and the Kanuri. The Hausa states though were not unified practiced a centralized system even till after the Fulani conquest of the nineteenth century. The Kanuri also practiced a similar system but under a central authority⁵.

For J.A Atanda, no one can say exactly how and when socio-political organizations began in Nigeria. According to him, the family was the primary unit of the socio-political organization. He traced the genesis of political systems in Nigeria from the emergence of the nuclear family as the primary socio-political unit with members bound together by a strong kinship ties, to the extension and aggregation of family units into lineages, to the extension of lineages into clans and the aggregation of lineages into villages, while villages expand into an overall authority of a state. He went on to divide the concept of rulership into two: centralized and non-centralized or decentralized. He argued that the different states and kingdoms in Nigeria operated at one time or the other either of the two concepts of ruler ship⁶.

The non-centralized states existed virtually in most part of the Nigerian region from early times, but many of these transformed to centralized states before 1900. A basic feature of the political system of the decentralized states was that authority was

⁴ - Udo.R K,op.cit, p20.

⁵ - Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, (H.E. Books ,Ibadan, Nigeria, 1980), p 7.

⁶ - Atanda J.A , *Political Systems of Nigerian peoples up to 1900*, (Ibadan, Nigeria, 2005), John Archers Publishers Limited, p 6.

dispersed, no single individual served as the symbol or personification of authority. Emphasis was placed more on collective leadership. The areas where non-centralized states most endured were central Igbo, the Tiv, the Idoma and many people inhabiting the plateau region in the central part of Nigeria and the western and eastern Niger Delta as well.

Centralized states existed in many parts of Nigeria up to 1900; typical examples were in Kanem-Bornu, Hausaland, Jukunland, Nupeland, Yorubaland and Edoland. A basic feature was that authority was centralized. Unlike in the non-centralized states, each centralized state had an individual, who was the symbol of authority. Indeed, he was the personification of the state. As Atanda put it, though these kingdoms were centralized, the people however prevented tyranny, through the use of an advisory council and the use of taboos. For clarification, it is worth illustrating the nature of power structure in Nigeria using examples of kingdoms in the north as well as in the south of Nigeria.

1-1. Centralized / Decentralized Authorities of the North

Contrarily, many people's opinions that all of the north operated a centralized and dictatorial system, there were decentralized states as well as centralized states. Even the centralized states did not in all totality exhibit tyrannical tendencies, rather there are examples to show that most of the kingdoms in the north of Nigeria were leadership by consent.

1-1-1. Centralized Authorities of Jukun

For the Jukun, as C.K Meek wrote, "*the Jukun system of government is in theory at least, of a highly despotic character. The king is supreme. His decisions have a divine authority, and there is no appeal.*"⁷ However to prevent tyranny, the Jukun people though believed in the divinity of kings safe guarded themselves in a variety of ways. The king was judged by results. If harvests were good, the people were prepared to put up with a moderate amount of tyranny, but if harvest were bad, the people demands for his death. More so the 'Aku' as the king is called is surrounded by many

⁷ - Atanda J.A ,op.cit.p 6.

taboos, which served as repudiation on his authority. Also, the king is compelled to give a consideration to the advice of his councilors, who form a particular caste, which is the embodiment of the Jukun tradition. The head of the councilor is the 'Abo Achuwu' who serves a checkmate to the excesses of the 'Aku'. The Abo can decide, if angry with the king to absent himself from the daily royal duties, which is a form of repudiation and embarrassment to the Aku. As a result of the sacredness to the king, he is not permitted to communicate with the people personally; thus the people go through numerous chiefs, who could decide which information the king should know about. These practices seriously placed the Aku at disadvantage. Thus, the Aku though in theory was supreme but in reality is well checked a such he cannot be totally regarded as a despotic leader, rather the system can be seen as a leadership by consent.⁸

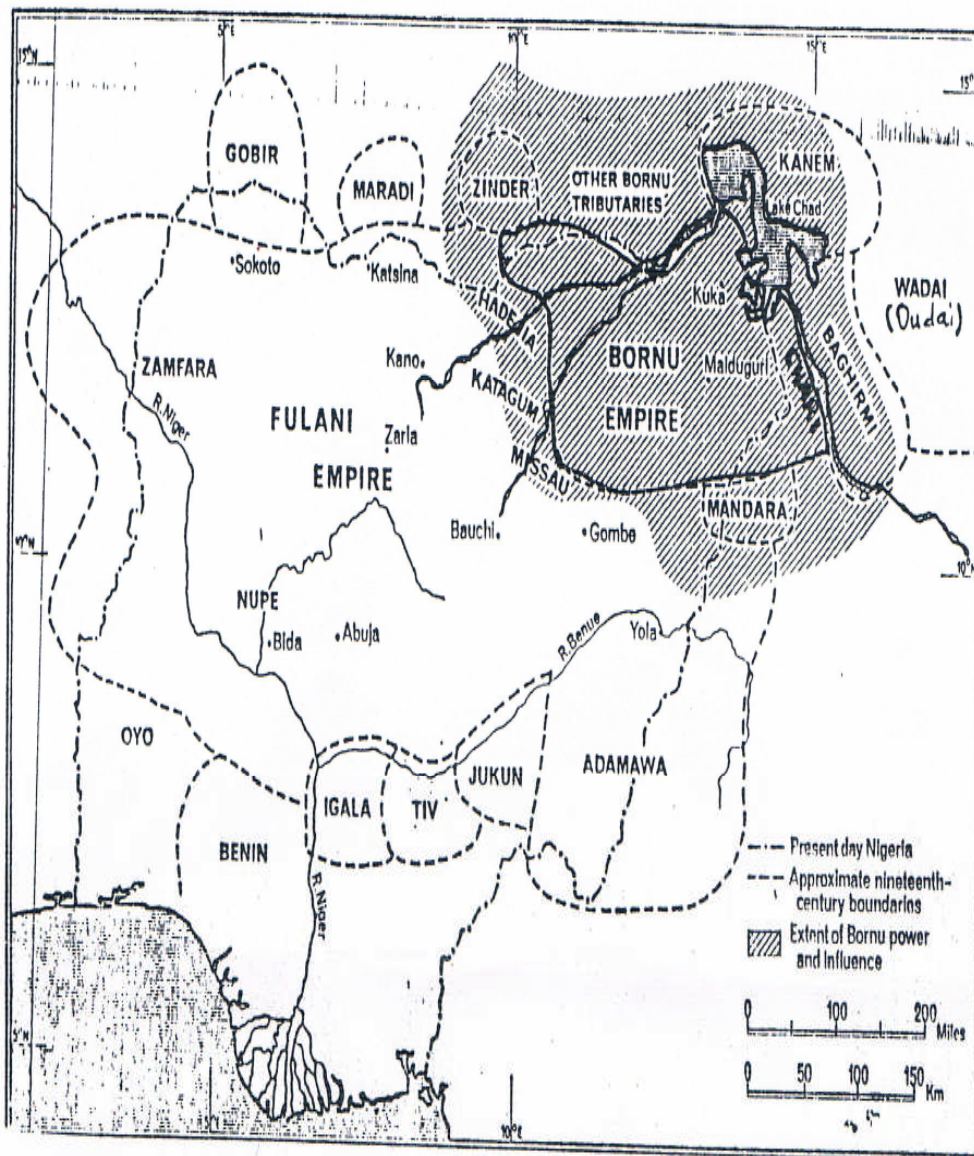
1-1-2. Centralized Authorities of Kanem- Bornu

By the eleventh century, the state of Kanem⁹ was becoming a powerful force to the northeast of Lake Chad. It had been founded by Kanuri-speaking nomad clans, who built up their wealth by raiding neighbors and engaging in the trans-Saharan trade. Much of their trading wealth came from the exchange of southern captives for horses from North Africa. The use of horses enabled the Kanem nomads to raid their neighbors more effectively¹⁰.

⁸ - O. Ikime, op.cit, p 14.

⁹ - See map n°1 showing Kanem-Bornu . on p14.

¹⁰ - Kevin Shillington, History of Africa, p 184.



Map n°1: Lake Chad region and the Bornu Empire in the 19th century

Source: Victor Turner, *Colonialism in Africa 1870- 1960*, p76.

In the second half of the eleventh century, the Kanuri-speaking saifawa clan established a new Islamic dynasty in Kanem. Islam had been an important influence in the state from as early as the ninth century. By the thirteenth century, the Kanuri of Kanem were marrying into the local farming population. Taxation of the farmers near the capital, Njimi, became more regularized instead of the former irregular pattern of nomad raids and extortion.

Kanem reached the height of its power during the reign of Mai Dunama Dibalami, who ruled from 1210 to 1248. He commanded a cavalry force of 40,000 horsemen, which he used to extend Kanem control over the trans-Saharan trade as far as the Fezzan. Raids against the So, southwest of lake Chad, were justified in the name of a jihad or holy war against the unbeliever. Captives taken in these raids were used to exchange for further horses from North Africa. Greater contacts across the desert prompted the growth of Islam among the Kanuri-speaking population, and pilgrimages to Mecca became a regular occurrence. A hostel was established in Cairo for pilgrims and students from Kanem¹¹.

A tributary state had been established in Borno, southwest of Lake Chad. In fact, Kanem went into decline and Borno began acting independently, trading directly across the desert and refusing to pay tribute. Kanem itself was becoming overstretched. It lacked the natural resources for such a large state and was too dependent on the personal authority of the Mai. Pastures were drying out and becoming overgrazed. At the same time, the Saifawa dynasty was struggling with a rival nomad clan, the Bulala, for the leadership of Kanem. In about 1400, the Saifawa dynasty saved their state from complete disintegration by moving their capital to the better grassland region of Borno. Kanem, then, officially became the tributary state, at times acting independently, at times acknowledging the authority of Borno¹².

By establishing their capital in Borno, the Mai of the Saifawa dynasty had access to a wider trading network. During the fifteenth century, they established

¹¹- Kevin Shillington, op cit, p184.

¹² - Ibid, p 185.

important trading links with the Hausa to the west, supplying salt and horses in exchange for Akan gold.

During the course of the sixteenth century, the Mais strengthened their grip on the people of Borno. There must have been considerable extortion of the peasantry, because Borno was shaken by a series of internal revolts. These were savagely put down as the Mais waged jihads across the country. Firm control was established over the peasant population who, once they submitted, were no longer subjected to raids. The income of the state became based more firmly on the regular taxation of the peasantry and customs dues on trade.¹³

As for the political system, Kanem-Bornu prior to the jihad, practiced a “democratic” political system. Indeed, the leadership was under a supreme chief, whose authority was limited, his power based on persuasion rather than coercion. J.E Lavers mentioned the presence of noble and vassal clans, who had limited powers. Even with the consequent development of the small settlement into an empire, the Mai as the king was called, was never a dictator, rather there were structures put in place to check his excesses. One of such was the introduction of Islam into Kanem-Bornu. With the introduction of Islam, there was the abandonment of divinity associated with the king. John E. Lavers further explained that the holders of the posts of Katgama and Yerima served as checks on the activities of the Mai. Also was the post of the Maina Kaigamabe, which was held by a slave. This enabled some level of checks as a result of the status (a slave) of the holder of the commander of the army¹⁴.

1-1-3. Centralized Authorities of Nupeland

For Nupeland, the people practiced a centralized system under the ruler ship of the Etsu. Nevertheless, the Etsu was surrounded by series of checks and balances in forms of officials that made him accountable to the people. First, there were the palace officials, who saw to the daily needs of the Etsu and his family, including the personal

¹³ - Kevin Shillington, op cit, p 185.

¹⁴ - John E Lavers, Kanem and Borno under Dynasties: Some Aspects of Change and Development c 700- 1900 D.AA Evolution of Political System in Nigeria. In J.F Ade Ajayi and Bashir Ikara (Eds) (Ibadan University Press Limited, 1985), pp19-26.

security of the incumbent. Second, there were also civil officials, whose duties affected the day to day affairs of the states and military officials, whose duty was the defense of the kingdoms against external aggression and the persecution of war. Lastly, there were the religious officials, comprising priests of the major cults such as; the Ndaduma, Ketsa and Gunnu, which had considerable influence on the lives of the Nupe people. The Etsu was compelled to work hand and hand with the priests, who were seeing to the welfare of the people. Thus, any full out with the priest will lead to the fall of such Etsu. In the middle 19th century, the land fell into the hands of the Fulbe. With this change in government, the structure of the government also changed. Though the Etsu was retained, the powers of the Etsu were drastically reduced. Government was made up of three major types of office holders; the Sarakizi, who were comprised of the “order of the Town elders’ and the ‘older of warriors’, the scholarly groups called the Ena Manzi and the third class of officials, the EnaWuzi (order of slaves).¹⁵ And as Sa’ad Abubakar (1985) submitted the Etsu Government following the takeover by the Fulbe, was constrained to abide by the injunction as stipulated by the Sharia and the Quran. The actions of the power had to be supported not by the exigencies of the moment but by the Islamic laws as interpreted by the intelligentsia.

The duties of the ruler and his chiefs, as well as the responsibilities of subjects were clearly stipulated. The Emir (Etsu) and his officials were not law makers but law interpreters and enforcers.¹⁶

1-1-4. Centralized Authorities of Hausaland

In the region of what is nowadays known as Northern Nigeria, the Hausa states arose by the eleventh century. These were developed into walled towns called Birni¹⁷, engaging in trade, servicing caravans and manufacture of various goods¹⁸. There were

¹⁵- Sa’ad Abubakar, Political Evolution or Revolution: The case of Nupe before the Advent of Colonial Rule. (Ibadan University Press,1985) ,p 67

¹⁶ Ibid ,p 69.

¹⁷- Birni also called Birane is a small city surrounded by a defensive wall. It is a capital around which clustered a host of satellite villages

¹⁸- History of Nigeria : Information and Much more from Answers.com
<http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery?=%20nigeria%20history> and print= true (entry 31/07/2007).

originally seven Hausa states namely: Biram, Daura, Kano, Gobir, Katsina, Rano and Zaria all of which had succeeded to establish a well organized political and military system¹⁹. Until the fifteenth century, these small states were on the periphery of the major Sudanic empires of the era. They were constantly pressured by Songhai to the west and Kanem-Borno to the east, to which they paid tribute²⁰.

The Hausa states had developed a well-organized fiscal system, a code of land tenure, a system of delegated administration and a trained judiciary²¹. They were considered as independent units since no Hausa state managed to subdue all the others. So, there was no Hausa single empire as stated by J.G Jackson:

«These states never formed an empire, nor were they ever brought under the rule of a centralized government. Each unit was independent since they sometimes cooperated with each other for the attainment of common objectives »²².

Each Hausa state was ruled by a Sarki or a king, who was assisted by a council of ministers. Both the king and his ministers were called the Saranta, whose duty was to rule the Talakawa or the inhabitants of the states. This organization is described in diagram A which shows the political structure of the Hausa states before the nineteenth century²³.

¹⁹-There were seven proper Hausa states which were called Hausa Bakwai or the Seven Hausas. These were: Biram, Katsina, Zaria (also Zazzau or Zegzeg), Kano, Rano (in the south-west of Kano), Gobir and Daura. There were also the Banza Bakwai, the latter being tribes who had been under Hausa influence for a long time and had therefore partly or wholly adopted the language and civilization of the Hausa. These were: Zamfara, Nupe, Kebbi, Gwari, Yoruba and Kororofa (Jukun). From: "Kebbi and Hausa Stratification" by M.G Smith, the British Journal of Sociology, vol 12, n 1 (March 1961) pp.52-64. Published by: Blackwell Publishing on the behalf of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

²⁰- History of Nigeria: Information and Much More from Answers.com Ibid.

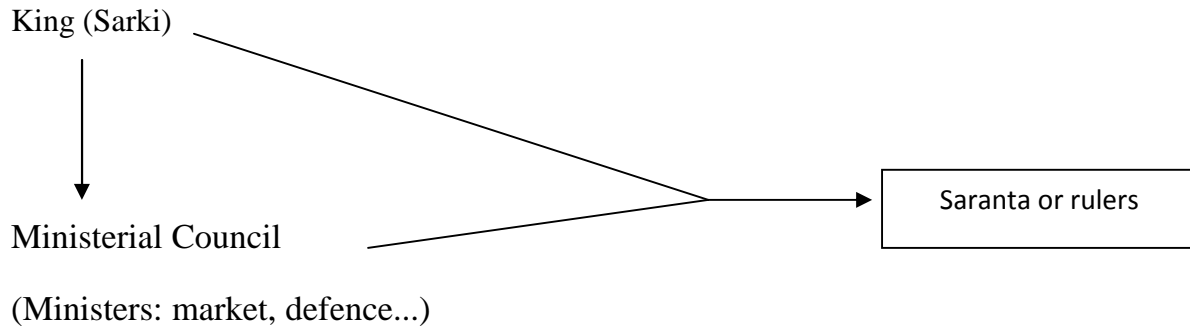
²¹- Colin Legun, Africa, a Handbook to the Continent, p.212.

²²- J.G Jackson, Introduction to African Civilization, p.220.

²³- See diagram A and B on p.19.

Diagram (A)

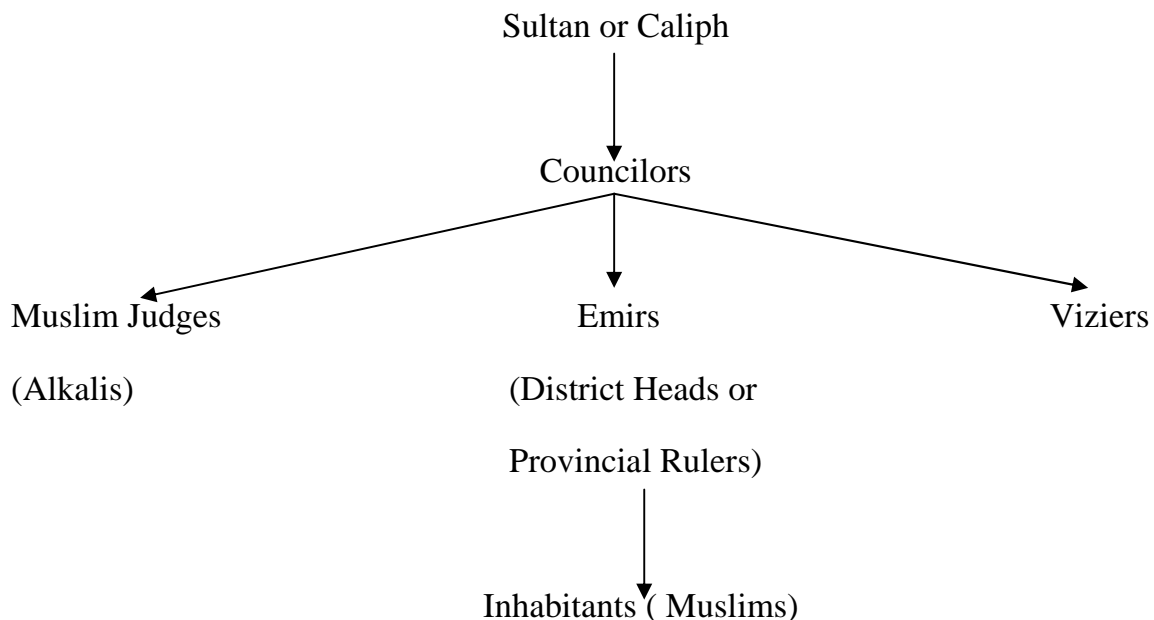
Political Organization of the Hausa States before the 19th century:



Source: M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, p 31.

Diagram (B)

Political Organization of the Fulani Empire in the 19th century:



Source : Tibenderama Peter K, op cit, p 67- 92.

Islam, which was gradually accepted by the Hausa people, arrived to Hausaland along the caravan routes in the fourteenth century. The Hausa people were then after, brought under the rule of one political system with the Fulani revolution of the early nineteenth century²⁴. In fact, there was a greater awareness of the principles of the Islamic Law, the Sharia. For instance, corruption, oppression and the illegal actions of the Hausa rulers were called into question by Islamic religious leaders, the fact which led to the declaration of the holy revolution, which swept the region at the beginning of the nineteenth century²⁵.

There had been, indeed, a series of jihads²⁶ which were waged within the states, the case which resulted in the emergence of Sokoto Caliphate or Empire, the largest single West African state at that time. This Caliphate was able to extend its frontiers as far as the Benue River, in the east and south of the Niger well into the Yoruba areas of the west bringing with it for the first time an extension of Islamic religious influence²⁷.

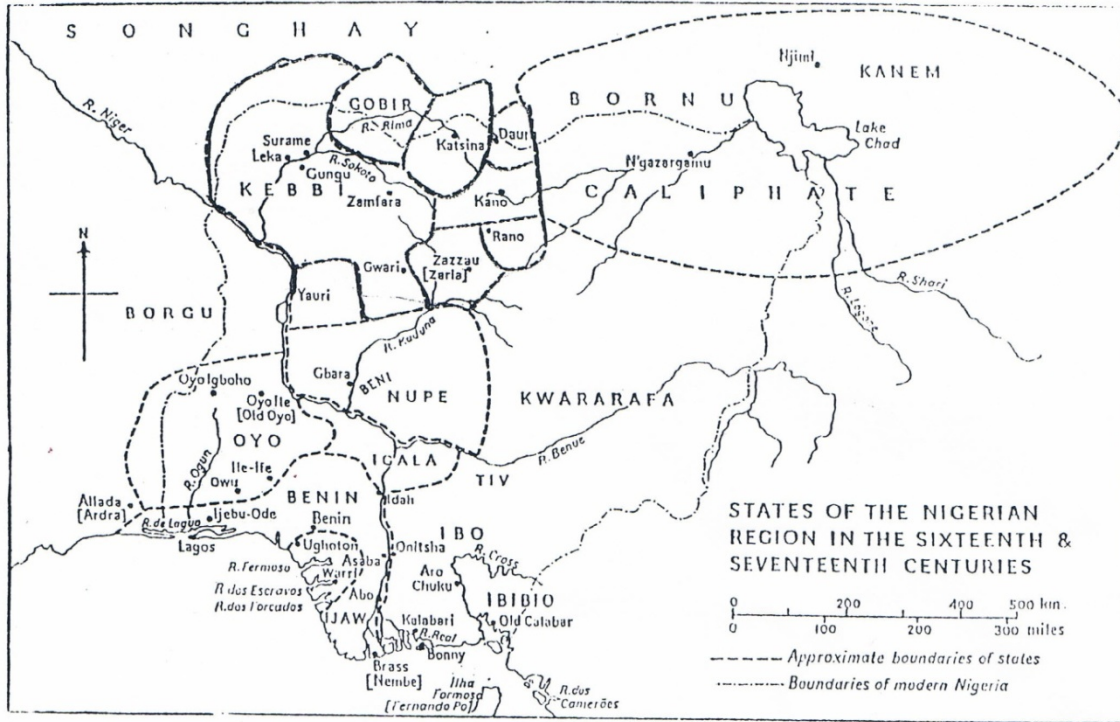
²⁴- Islam is no stranger to the political process in West Africa. Nearly a thousand years ago, Islam was a factor of political change in the kingdom of Takrur on the banks of the river Senegal and a little later in ancient Ghana and in the kingdom of Kanem near Lake Chad. Under the influence, in fact, of the North African Muslim merchants and Itinerant teachers and preachers, many rulers and their courts adopted Islam between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries, though they generally preserved much of their more ancient non-islamic social and political praxis. However, rulers such as Mansa Musa of Mali (1312-37), Askiya al-Hajj Mohammad of Songhai (1493-1528), and Mai Idris Aloma of Borno (1564-96) made ceremonial pilgrimages to Mecca and engaged in diplomatic exchanges with various rulers of Morocco and, in the last case, also with the Ottoman Sultan. Trans Saharan trade and the pilgrimage to Mecca provided continuing avenues of contact between the more or less Islamized kingdoms of West Africa and the heartlands of Islam in North Africa and the Middle East. Political as well as theological and mystical ideas passed along these conduits, and the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries saw a number of attempts-some more successful than others- to establish Islamic states in the area. One of the most successful of these was in the area of what is now Northern Nigeria in the early nineteenth century.

From: John Hanwick "An African case Study of Political Islam: Nigeria", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol 524, Political Islam (Nov 1992), published by Sage Publication, Inc in Association with the American Academy of Political and Social Science. (pp 143-155) on p. 145.

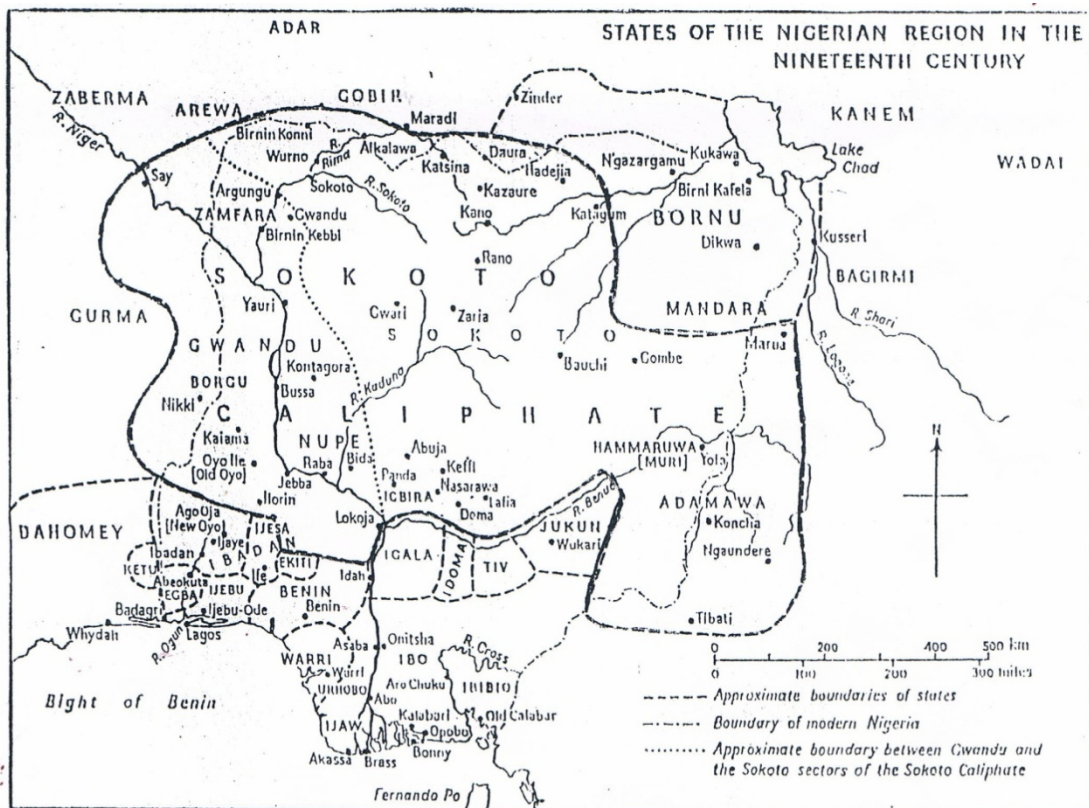
²⁵- R.O Collins, African History, p.67. He stated that: "In the late eighteenth century, Usman Dan Fadio began to preach in the Hausa state of Gobir against religious corruption and pagan practices. Though, the king of Gobir sought to counter his teachings, he only provoked him to declare a jihad or holy war against the unbelievers in 1802. Thereafter, his followers defeated the Hausa armies, captured the Hausa city states and replaced the Hausa rulers".

²⁶- Jihad : a religious war or a holy war.

²⁷- See maps 2-3 on p.21.



Map 2: The Hausa States in the 17th century
Source: T. Hodgkin, op cit, p 450.



Map 3: The Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century
Source: T. Hodgkin, op cit, p 450.

The leader of the Sokoto Jihad was shehu Usman Dan Fodio²⁸, son of a Fulani Muslim teacher in the northern state of Gobir, who led a "withdrawal" (hijra) of his followers from the Hausa state of Gobir in North-western Nigeria, established his own community as the touchstone of true Islam and declared a jihad first against Gobir and later against all the other Hausa states, whose rulers he proclaimed "unbelievers" (Kuffar)²⁹. This inspirer of the jihad had two main objectives, which were the conversion of the Fulani pastoralists, who still cling to pagan religious beliefs and the religious and social reform of the Muslim Hausa rulers. This man, indeed, strongly

²⁸- Shehu Usman : this man's name was Othman, "Dan" is the Hausa for "son of". Fodio was his father's name. "Shehu" is a high title of honour approximately equivalent to Emir or Ameer. C.Vocors Boyle, "Historical Notes on the Yola Fulani" *Journal of the Royal African Society* vol 10,n 37 (Oct 1910), pp.73-92, published by Oxford University Press on the behalf of the Royal African Society.

Usman was born at Marata in Gobir in December 1754. His education was broad consisting of the traditional sciences, of grammar, law, theology and prosody. He had several teachers who were inspired by the reformist ideas that were stirring throughout the Muslim world at that time. He carried his message of religious and social reform to the Hausa and he was elected Caliph and leader of the revolt against the Habe kings of Gobir. He died in 1817.

²⁹- John Hunwick, op.cit, p.145.

It was also mentioned that «The Fulani Sheikh, Usman Don fodio who was a mallam or a schoolmaster (a man of education) and who had been tutor to Yunfa, the then king of Gobir, forgot his position and dared to dispute the orders of his old pupils, now his king, and brave his wrath. Yunfa, incensed, ordered his death, and on his resisting ordered the slaughter of every Fulani in the land. The natural result was that all the threatened race flocked to Usman for their own salvation; and Yunfa coming with his army to execute his vengeance, met a compact body of desperate men, and was utterly routed. This battle of Koto or Rugga Fakko, fought in 1804, a few miles north of Sokoto, started the jihad, which ended in placing Fulani rulers over most of the Hausa states and several others.

In its beginning the struggle was purely racial, the attempted extermination of an alien race by the inhabitants of the land. It was not a sudden, unprovoked religious war for the forcible conversion of the country. Yunfa himself and many of his people were Mohammedans; but apparently the bulk of the Gobir people were still pagans, whilst all the Fulanis were devout Muslims. Consequently, the victory was attributed to the help of God and the power of the faith, and the Fulani who had hitherto spread their religion by peaceful proselytism, turned the racial struggle into jihad, or religious war.

This at once brought to their side large numbers of the indigenous peoples who had already embraced Islam, and thenceforward the struggle became a civil war, or rather a rising to overturn existing authority. The mallams, the preachers and schoolmasters, who had been the religious leaders of the converts to Islam, now naturally took the leadership of the religious revolts. In Kano and Nupe, to take two historical instances, the old dynasties were thrown down by their own objects, and the Fulani mallams, as religious leaders, were carried into power on the crest of the religious wave. They took to themselves the palaces and titles of the old kings, and procured a sacred banner and official recognition from Usman... etc.”

From: Major J.A Burdon, Resident of the Sokoto Province, "The Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol 24, N^o 6 (Dec 1904), pp 636-651 Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) p.640

criticized the government corruption and injustice of the rulers and judged them by the principles of the Sharia. According to J.S Trimingham:

«The Fulani justified their jihad against the Habe kings on the grounds that though they professed Islam in mixing practices with their observance of true faith, they were juridically pagans against whom it was legitimate to rebel »³⁰.

The efforts of Usman Dan Fodio led to the unification of the Hausa states of northern Nigeria and the incorporation within the new Islamic state of other non-Hausa lands and various polities to the North and West of Hausaland in what is now the republic of Niger. Some areas of northern Nigeria, however, remained beyond the pale of this new Islamic state. Principal among these was the ancient Muslim kingdom of Bornu in the northeast, which successfully defeated attempts by local Fulani to take control in the name of Shehu Usman. Other areas such as the uplands of the central plateau and much of what is called the "Middle Belt", the bulk of whose inhabitants were not Muslims, also remained outside the grasp of the new Islamic state, whose capital was established at Sokoto. Little attempt, indeed, was made to incorporate them during the nineteenth century. Instead, they were exploited as reservoirs for slaves for internal use within the Sokoto state and for export to North Africa. ³¹.

After the Jihad, Usman retired to religious life and the active leadership of the new Islamic Caliphate was taken over by his brother Abdulahi and his son Mohammed Bello. According to M.Crowther:

«The Sokoto Caliphate was organized by Bello and Abdulahi on the pattern outlined by the Shehu. The provinces ruled by Emirs were grouped into an eastern and western sector responsible to Gwandu and Sokoto respectively»³².

³⁰- J.Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, p43.

³¹- John Hunwick, op. cit, p 145.

³²- M. Crowder, op.cit, p.173.

The new state or the Caliphate, however, was not a unitary state³³. The former polities that were incorporated within it such as Kono, Katsina, Zaria, Nupe and Ilorin, retained their individual identities, though now they were governed by mainly Fulani dynasties descended from local warriors or scholars, who were given flags and authority to rule by Shehu Usman. These Emirs, as they were called, governed their territories with a large measure of autonomy, despite occasional Sokoto interference in succession, and they demonstrated their loyalty to the Caliph³⁴ of Sokoto by sending twice-yearly tribute³⁵.

It should be noted, that the old Hausa kingdoms were transformed into a number of separate Muslim emirates³⁶ or provinces that acted independently in local matters but they look their religious authority from the Caliph at Sokoto to whom they paid tribute. In fact, the emirs or principal rulers paid tribute to Gwandu or Sokoto referring matters of administration to the principal capital. Furthermore, the Viziers³⁷ of Gwandu and Sokoto made regular tours of their respective provinces reviewing administration and settling disputes. This political structure of the Fulani Empire is presented in Diagram B³⁸.

³³-The Fulani Empire was established in about the year 1810, with headquarters at Sokoto. It comprised, at the time of its greatest prosperity, in about the year 1820, some 120,000 square miles with a population of about 5 millions. Divided into great fiefdoms under Emirs, such as Kano, Gwandu, Zaria, Bauchi and Ilorin, it was, on the whole, well ruled for a space of fifty to sixty years. (Charles Lindsay Temple "Northern Nigeria", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol 40, n^o 2 (Augt 1912), pp 149-163, Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) on p155.

³⁴- The ruler of Sokoto Empire or "Caliph" was given his title either (in Arabic) Emir Al Muminin or (in Hausa) Sarikin Muslimin, both of which mean Commander of the Faithful. Sarikin is the Hausa for "king of"

³⁵- John Hunwick, *op.cit*, p.146.

The power of the Fulani hierarchy exerted from the historic, and to muslim eyes almost sacred, town of Sokoto, was delegated by the commander of the faithful or Caliph, to the great captains "Emirs" who had been successful in the Jihad. These became feudal lords and rulers over large areas and populations, and paid a portion of the taxes and tribute which they collected to the caliph. The most powerful of feudal lords or Emirs at that time was the Emir of Kano, whose territory exceeded 10,000 square miles with a population of about 2,000,000. (C.Lindsay Temple, *Northern Nigeria*, *op.cit*, p 156).

³⁶- It was stated that "the Fulani Empire was established over the Hausa land and 14 emirates were created under the overall control of the son of Usman Dan Fodio, the Sultan of Sokoto, who held the title of commander of the Faithful". R.O Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960*, p.11.

³⁷- Viziers or Waziri : Prime Ministers.

³⁸- See Diagrams A and B on p20.

The Fulani system of rule is said to have been adopted from the Habe dynasty, which preceded them, modified by the Koranic law. The Alkalis (judges) were generally men of much learning in Mohammedan law, and they boasted that their courts were no respecters of persons. Summonses were invariably obeyed, and the sentences of court enforced, estates of deceased persons were administered and a regular system of court fees obtained. The system of taxation was very complete, though very onerous. The title to all land appears to have been vested in the emir as feudal lord, while the chief officers of the state were chief-holders, generally resident at the capital. The emir received 50 per cent of taxes and the fief-holders 25 per cent. His principal retainer also resided at the capital, and received half of the remaining 25 per cent. The other half was again divided between the Fulani tax-gatherer in the district and the local headman.

In addition to this land tax, every form of handicraft (weavers, dyers, blacksmiths...etc) paid a tax. Caravans, canola-owners, sellers in the market and collectors of sylvan produce all alike paid a tax³⁹.

As previously mentioned, the emirs or feudal lords, who ruled over large areas and populations paid a tribute to the Caliph. The barons in their emirates subinfeudated their fiefs to a number of their more important followers, sometimes relations, sometimes successful generals and sometimes favorite slaves. These held a position similar to that of the Lord of the Manor in England in the fifteenth century. The peasantry, however, were divided into two classes. One of farmers born free, and one of farmers, who had been slaves and had been granted a certain measure of freedom known as Rinji. The first corresponded to the class known as "Freemen of the Manor" and the second to that known as "Cerfs of the Manor". The free farmers held the lands on condition of serving as soldiers in time of war, while the serfs were expected to fight and also to do a certain amount of labor without remuneration on the Emirs' farms, the walls of the towns, and other works of public utility. On occasions of offensive or defensive war, the Caliph counted on a general rally of Emirs from all his

³⁹ - F.Lugard, Northern Nigeria, op.cit, p7.

tributary dependents, and almost every year a great gathering of the clans took place at Sokoto⁴⁰.

In the Sokoto Caliphate, the feudal lords of the principal Emirates namely Gwando, Kano, Bida, Ilorin, Zaria, Katsina, Bauchi and Yola held their fiefs by appointment from Sokoto. In practice, the succession was very generally hereditary, but that principle was not recognized in practice, and the Caliph retained to himself very arbitrary powers of patronage.

The successor in the emirate is chosen, after the death of the former emir, by the council of Election. There are certain titles, which are hereditary in the various branches of the dynasty. The choice of a successor would naturally be made from amongst the holders of these titles, that is as a general rule from amongst the heads of the various branches of the family, but the holding of any particular title would constitute no claim to the Emiral succession. The importance in the state of any man, in fact, depends on his place in the general seniority throughout the whole family rather than on the holding of any particular title⁴¹. Thus, promotion through the various offices of state up to the highest is a matter of selection based mainly on seniority. To make clearer the matter of succession in the Fulani emirates, the following section will describe the fundamental principle of succession in the Fulani state of Bida.

1-1-4-1. Succession in the Fulani State of Bida

The centralized state of Bida, which is one component of the Sokoto Caliphate, is composed of three major parts. At the head of the dynasty, there is the emir, or King. Next to him is the Council of Princes, not hereditary as from father to son, but only so as confined to members of the ruling family, descendants of the founder of the dynasty. It consists of a succession of titles or offices in a carefully graduated order of precedence. The method of appointment is most interesting. The emir allows it to get about that he thinks of making a certain appointment or promotion. If the individual

⁴⁰ - L.T Charles, *Northern Nigeria*, op. cit, p 156.

⁴¹- J A Burdon "Sokoto History, Tables of Dates and Genealogy", *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol6, n^o 24 (July 1907) pp 367-374. (on p 370). Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal African Society.

mentioned desires the post, in this case he goes and asks the emir to give it him and if he does not do so, it is a sign that he does not want the rank; and another name is suggested. If the emir receives the request, he promises it his favorable consideration, allows this fact to be published, and then waits for a month or so to see whether the proposal is acceptable to the people. If no notice is taken of the suggested promotion, the matter is dropped unpopular. But if congratulations pour in, and the officer elect begins to be universally addressed by the new rank which is promised him, it is a certain sign that the appointment meets with approval, and it is then carried into effect⁴².

Through this council of Princes, the future Emir enters the service of the state, climbing the ladder of promotion by force of character, wealth and public service till he reaches at a ripe age the position of their-apparent from which he succeeds by right to the emirate. His first act, then, is to appoint his heir, his selection being limited to those members of the council, whose fathers have held the emirate, and who are themselves generally fitted, especially by seniority for the post. There can be no chance for an Emir's son succeeding direct to his father. He is, indeed, a mere nobody until he has climbed the ladder of promotion along with his cousins and other distant members of his family.

The third part is made up of the Council of Commoners, which is composed of all men not of royal blood holding important state officers such as: the waziri, vizier or prime minister, the commander-in chief, chief justice, chief liman or preacher, and the principal officers of the emirs household, these latter being mostly slaves. The method of appointment to this branch is very much as for the other. Indeed, the two branches do not deliberate separately or apart from the Emir, and only when called on by him. The whole council must be summoned for the consideration of all important matters; but the ordinary routine of state is carried on by a privy council composed of the two major officers of each branch, who are in constant consultation with the emir. But it is worth noting that the head of the council was the waziri, the leading commoner. In

⁴²- J.A Burden, "The Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria", op.cit, p 646.

fact, it was he who was second man in the state not the heir-apparent⁴³. It seems, therefore, an extraordinary thing that a race of nomad shepherds, whose own system was probably purely patriarchal, should have been able to build up such a constitution⁴⁴.

By the time of Usman's death in 1817, the Sokoto Caliphate extended from Shonghay in the West to the Benue River in the East. There followed further extension to the south as far as the Yoruba states of Nupe and Ilorin. Only Bornu and Gobir, the Tiv and Idona did not come under its control⁴⁵. This Fulani Empire was composed of a number of autonomous Muslim emirates, which took their religious authority from the Caliph at Sokoto and since it was an Islamic religious state, political power was equated with religious authority. Indeed, with the introduction of Islamic faith, the administrative control in these states became more sophisticated and refined. This was principally because Islam ruled through well codified laws. According A.A Mazarui:

*«Islam arrived with a codified law, the Sharia, with a system of taxation based on written scripture consisting of the Quran and the Hadith and with an idealised notion of centralized theocracy implying by definition the sovereignty of God and with an allegiance to the universal community of believers».*⁴⁶

⁴³- J.A Burden, "The Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria", op.cit, p 647.

⁴⁴ - Ibid.

⁴⁵- There are other great tribes ,who are pagans. These include the Baribas of Borgu-never conquered by the Fulani-the Gwaris , Kejes , and Kedaras of Central Nigeria ; the Basses , who appear to have originally constituted the bulk of the population, but now chiefly occupy the districts near the junction of the Niger and Benue. With them are much mixed in the large tribes of Igaras and Okpotos, who also populate the districts south of Lokoja, while the Kanuri form the original population of Bornu. In addition to these, there are innumerable other pagan tribes chiefly occupying the dense forest and hilly countries in the east , speaking an enormous diversity of languages such are the Munshis on both banks of the Benue , the Bassemas , and Yergums and Marghis further east and the Yauri in the north-west . They are in primitive stage of development, many go quite nude. They are addicted to murder and robbery, and are usually divided up into small village communities owning allegiance to no paramount chief. F. Lugard, "Northern Nigeria", op.cit, p 7).

⁴⁶ - A.A Mazarui, op cit, p 6.

It is worth mentioning that the old Hausa aristocracy had been replaced by a new Fulani one adopting Hausa language⁴⁷ and culture and that Islam led to the spread of literacy widely through the population. Furthermore, the unity of Islam brought an end to the destructive wars of inter-state rivalry.

1-1-5. Decentralized Authorities of Tivland

The Tiv society was one of those societies that exhibited, well-organized administrative political machinery; a decentralized system. The well-organized political structure of the pre-colonial Tiv societies was what prompted Dzurgba to assert that the pre-colonial Tiv society was a democratic one⁴⁸. It is important to note the system of government of the Tiv society was a decentralized one, which cannot be divulged from the structure that was embedded in functional political units. The basic unit of political authority was the 'Ya' that is, the compound, headed by the compound head. Tiv elders according to this arrangement were seen as the embodiments of supreme authority in their respective compound. It is, however, salient to posit that enormous power enjoyed by the council of elders was designed to checkmate possible ascendancy of the youths, who may aspire to get to the top through social and political structures within the society. The rationale behind this was to prevent political dominance of one group over others. It is expediently germane to argue that the political dominance of the council of elders known as Ijirtarmen was not a comprehensive one that suggests that other institutions were subservient to the compound heads. The motive behind this limited power emblem was to ensure the council of elders never transformed into an autocratic or microscopic few that will determine the political destiny of the entire society. The age grade system like any other Tiv institution possessed significance function and meaning. The age grade was

⁴⁷- The Hausa, language is spoken by practically all the tribes which came under the sway of the Fulani, sometimes in addition to the tribal languages, sometimes the tribal languages have disappeared. It is spoken by all traders. It has a large vocabulary and simple grammar, and a pronunciation which can easily be recognized. It is probably the easiest African language to learn, as it is the most complete and adaptable for these reasons, its use amongst the natives throughout the Niger territories and the Gold Coast is rapidly extending. It is the lingua-franca over two-thirds of those territories and fifty years hence will probably have extended over the whole of them, and even beyond them. (Charles Lindsay Temple, *Northern Nigeria*, op.cit, p155).

⁴⁸- Dzurgba A, *A Political /Social History of the Tiv of Central Nigeria: An Evaluation of Stereotypes in a historical setting*. (Ibadan, 2007). p3.

known among the Tiv as Kwagh, the group was theoretically powerful because it occupied a special position within the administrative machinery of the Tiv society. The decentralized nature of the political system ensured power distributed among various family or compound heads and various clans and various groups that make up the political system. It was this practice of power dispersal that made Robin Horton to posit that the Tiv society lacks the principle of power centralization, with no individual to demonstrate the capacity of power holder on full times basis⁴⁹.

From the examples given above for the north of Nigeria, it is clear that there were in the political system of the peoples structures that checked the excesses of their rulers and their rulers were not dictators as the Europeans made believed.

More so from the examples explained, there are strong evidences to prove that leadership was by consent, kings and councils of elders (where necessary) made decision after consulting the people, and the people had inputs in decisions that concerns them. Nevertheless, it is important to state that the Fulani revolution of the 19th century changed most of the political system of the peoples of the north of Nigeria. With the Jihad, a centralized state was created by the Jihadist that amalgamated most of the states of north Nigeria and created two large centralized kingdoms.

1-2. Centralized / Decentralized Authorities of the South

In the south of Nigeria, there existed well established social-political organizations. There was monarch in the Yoruba Kingdoms, Benin Kingdoms, Itsekiri Kingdom and Aboh Kingdom. There was also gerontocracy operating in the non-centralized communities of Ukwani, Urhobo, Isoko and western Ijo peoples.⁵⁰

First, the monarchical system was fundamentally a system in which the society was governed by or in the name of one person chosen from one family. In theory the ruler was a supreme power but in reality he was not. To check his extremes, he was

⁴⁹- Horton R, *A Stateless Societies in West Africa . History of West Africa*, vol1. In J.F Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (Eds).(Longman Publishers, London, 1972), p17.

⁵⁰- Atanda (1985) , op,cit, p 87.

assisted by what Atanda called an ‘institutionalized council of chiefs’.⁵¹ Such council known as the Ijoye, Igbimo or Ilu in Yoruba Kingdoms, Ojoye among the Itsekiri, Uzama in Benin, really constituted a check on the monarch’s power. This was because the chiefs were themselves to large extent spokespersons of other institutions like lineages; age grades sets and aristocratic societies that formed the basics of the society. This meant that the council of chiefs represented the people. For the Yoruba, the council of chiefs was grouped in two parallel lines, those on the right, who represented the wellbeing and those on the left, who represented the commoners’ wellbeing. The leaders of the two fractions were also part of what Akinjogbin and Ayandele called the supreme Council of State; the Oyome.⁵² The Ojoye of the Itsekiri could meet exclusively on the presence of the Olu (king). And when this happens the senior Ojoye conveys the views of the council to the Olu. The socio-political organization was such as to encourage the monarch to rule in the interest of the people as monitored through the chiefs. Chiefs were many and representing various interest; it was the balance of the interest that dictates what type of government policy or measure was acceptable in the long run. It is true that in some cases, examples like Oyo and Benin, the monarch and the chiefs on occasions embarked on power struggle for preeminence.

Such struggles had only succeeded in leaning the scale slightly in favour of either the monarch or the chiefs. Ayandele and Akinjogbin explained that of the Oyemesi to restrain the powers of the Alaafin was what led to the quarrel between the two in the 17th and 18th century. The chiefs became the watch dogs of the peoples’ liberty and were able to suppress any oppressive king without questioning the position of the monarch. The struggle according to Alayande and Akinjobin was for a hundred years.⁵³

In Benin also the attempt by the Oba, since the reign of Eware, to increase his power, with regard to that of the Uzama by creating new sets of chiefs, the Eghaevbo

⁵¹ - Atanda (1985) , op,cit, p 87.

⁵²- Akinjogbin A.I and Ayandele E.A, Yorubaland Up to 1800, (Heinman Educational books, Nigeria,1980), p 130.

⁵³ - Ibid, p135.

n'Ogbe and the Eghaevbo n'Ore, in due course increased the influence of the chiefs class. In like manner the attempt of the Oyomesi in Oyo to maintain or increase their power vis-a-vis that of the Alafin did no more than bring the repugnant abnormality of the short-tyrannical rule of BasorunGaha. In the end the status quo was restored under Abiodun.⁵⁴

The tendency against absolutism was even more gerontocratic system practiced in the non-centralized communities of Ukwani, Urhobo, Itsekiri and western Ijo for two main reasons. First, there was no centralization of power, which could provide a suitable base for autocratic rule. The largest unit of government was the village; and the village in which each inhabitant knew virtually every other's person's name, and was probably related to most by family ties, could hardly accommodate institutionalized absolutism. Secondly, ultimate authority even within the small unit of administration was vested not in an individual but in a council of elders, usually heads of wards in the village. It was the council of elders, known as Ekpako in Urhobo and Isoko, Udokua in Ukwani and Okesuawei in western Ijo and Amala in Igbo, which took communal responsibility for the affairs of the village. Although each council had a chairman, usually the eldest of the elders, such chairman did not have a domineering influence in the council. Indeed, it was the spokesman, rather than the chairman, of the council that had greater influence than any other in the village council of Ukwani, Urhobo, western Ijo communities and Igbo. And yet, the spokesman in spite of his role had no base for excessive exercise of power for two reasons. In the first place, he was more or less a co-opted member of the council.⁵⁵

He did not necessarily belong to the age-set of elders and was only chosen because he possessed a superior personality, a good speaking voice and a sound knowledge of the people's laws and customs. In the second place he could only voice out the wishes and decisions of the council.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ - Atanda (1985), op cit, p89.

⁵⁵ - Ibid, p90.

⁵⁶ - Ibid.

Thus and for a better understanding of the major political systems of Southern Nigeria, a selected number of states have been chosen:

1-2-1. Centralized Authorities of Yorubaland

The Yoruba⁵⁷ people are located in Yorubaland, which extends from Lagos state through the western region of Nigeria into Ilorin and Kabba provinces in Kwara state. Yorubaland also spreads across the Nigerian border into Dahomey, where the Yoruba people are commonly known as Anago. This territory is composed of several scores of chiefdoms, some of which such as Oyo, Egba, are particularly large, while others are relatively small.

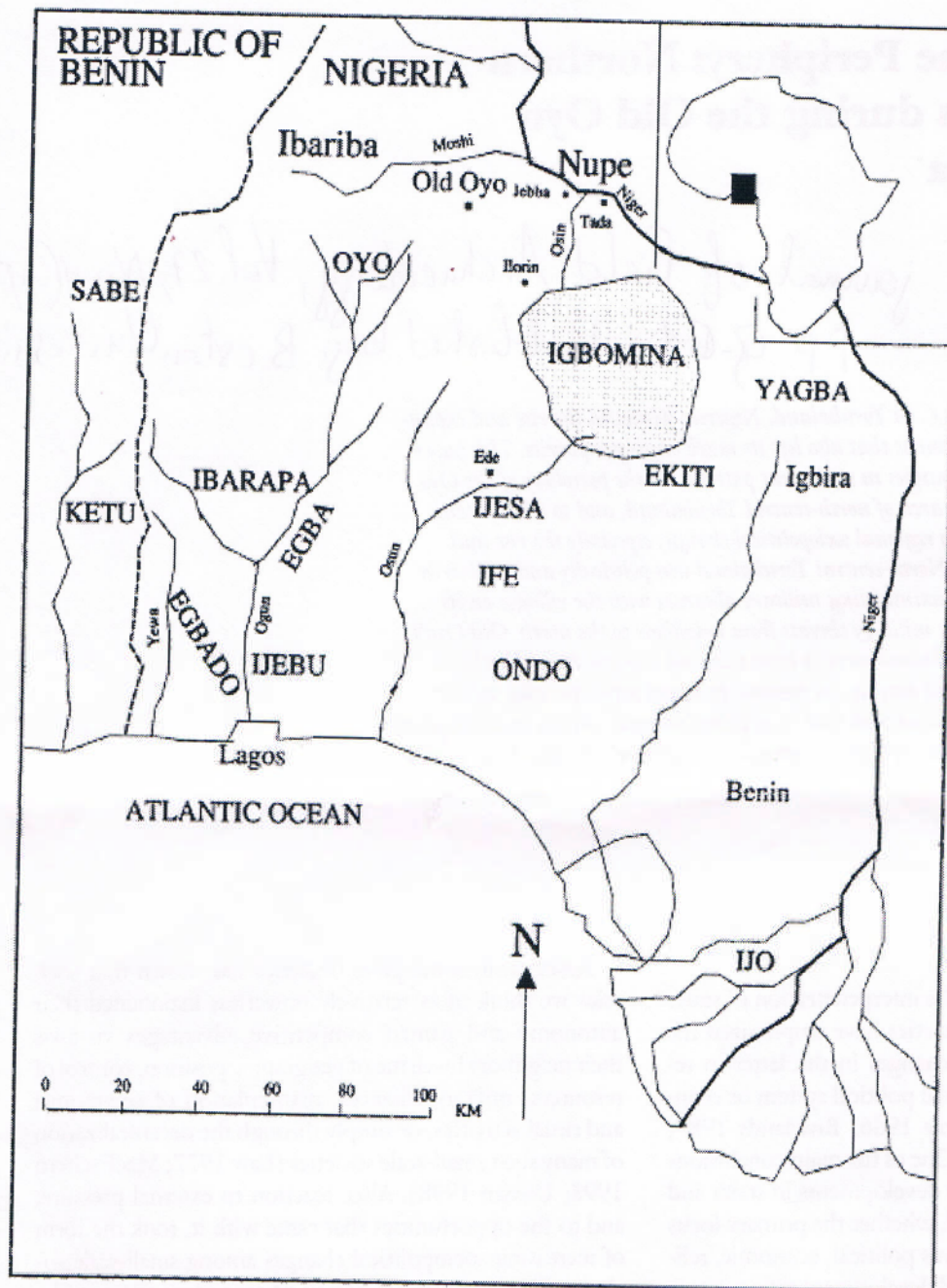
Each kingdom consists of a metropolis and a surrounding territory of villages and towns. Though all the Yoruba regard the Oni (king) of Ife as their traditional head and father, there is no cohesive political machinery uniting all of them since they are in several sub-groups such as the Ijebu, the Egba, the Oyo Yoruba and others⁵⁸. Each Yoruba sub-tribal group has indeed, its own traditional ruler known as the Oba or Bale⁵⁹.

⁵⁷- The word Yoruba first referred to people from Oyo and only later came to include Yoruba speaking people in general. According to Kevin Shillington, Yoruba originated as a Hausa name for the people of the Oyo empire and it refers to all those speaking the same language as the peoples of Oyo. The Yoruba states such as Ile Ife, Ede, Ilorin, Oyo..etc arose between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries. Oyo was the most important centralized city state in Yoruba area, which achieved prominence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but collapsed and disintegrated in the early years of the nineteenth. (Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, p.188).

⁵⁸- Anthony Okion Ojigbo, "Conflict Resolution in the Traditional Yoruba Political System", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, vol13, n 50.p276 (Ehess, 1970).

See also map n 04, Showing Yoruba land and its different sub-groups on p34.

⁵⁹- Aribidesi.A.Usman ; "A View from the Periphery, Northern Yoruba Villages during the Old Oyo Empire, Nigeria";*Journal of field Archaeology*; Vol27, n°1, p46(Boston University, Spring 2000). (Oba = a king or a head of a town or a village).

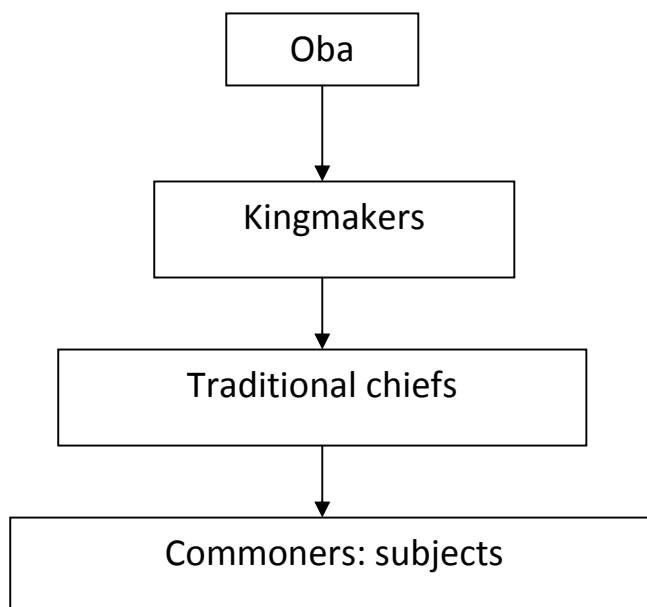


Map n° 4: Yorubaland and its Different Sub-Groups.

Source: Aribidesi A. Usman, "A View from the Periphery: Northern Yoruba Villages during the Old Oyo Empire Nigeria", *Journal of Field Archaeology*, Vol27, n° 01, (Boston University, 2000) , pp 9-67

The traditional political system in Yorubaland derives its structure from the social institution of the royal lineage and the several non-royal lineages or Ebi that make up the chiefdoms⁶⁰. Just as the royal lineage is at a higher social level, so also is it at a higher political echelon. In fact, the traditional political and governmental systems of the Yoruba have a pyramidal structure with an Oba at the apical end of the institution, while the lower strata of the kingdom are occupied by the various grades of traditional chiefs and the rest of the population. The king is chosen from only the royal household. Next in line to him on the political structure, are the kingmakers and chiefs, who all constitute the council of chiefs, and the commoners occupy the lowest level as the following diagram shows it⁶¹.

Diagram (C)



Structure of the Yoruba Political System.

Source; A.O.Ojigbo, op.cit, p.278.

⁶⁰- The social structure of the traditional Yoruba society can be divided roughly into two groups: the royal lineage and the non-royal lineage, the latter being the remaining members of the society who form the subject group. The royal lineage consists of both male and female members, all of whom have common patrilineal descent from the first king Oroba, who is normally regarded as the founder of the town or subkingdom.

The term Ebi is sometimes applied to non-royal lineages, but it should be emphasized that Ebi technically refers to a household or the extended family. The several Ebi that comprise a town are never dependent one on the other, but they all owe a common allegiance to the Oba. P C Lloyd, "Sacred Kingship and Government among the Yoruba", *Journal of the International African Institute*, vol 30, n3, pp.221-237(Edinburgh University Press).

⁶¹- Anthony Okion Ojigbo, op.cit, p.277.

The appointment of an Oba as the head of the political institution and government among the Yoruba was performed by senior grade chiefs and titled officials, after the royal lineage had chosen a successor. Just as the royal lineage could not interfere in the choice of candidates to inherit a hereditary title, so also the general public could not interfere in the deliberations of the royal lineage for the choice of an Oba.⁶²

For a better understanding of the traditional Yoruba political systems, the following section stresses on one of the longest and most important chiefdoms of Yorubaland namely the Oyo Empire which has greatly marked the political history of the region.

1-2-1-1. Centralized Authorities of Oyo

The kingdom of Oyo was before the nineteenth century the largest and most powerful of the Yoruba kingdoms. In fact, it expanded rapidly in the Yoruba area during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. This expansion was made by the kings Obalokun and Ajagbo, whose reigns probably occupied much of the seventeenth century and continued throughout the eighteenth century⁶³. Oyo was originally founded by a prince from Ife the ancestral cradle of the Yoruba. According to Samuel Johnson, the founder of Oyo was Oranyan, one of the sons of Oduduwa⁶⁴, the founder

⁶²- Anthony Okion Ojigbo, op cit, p 284.

According to Anthony Okion Ojigbo « in the Yoruba traditional society, the several ceremonial rituals that would legitimize the appointment of the new Oba, and the sanctifying sacrifices, were all done by the senior grade chiefs and the Ogboni cult. These religious ceremonies were many and complex, one of which was the ritual eating of the heart of the previous Oba. In Oyo, in particular, not only did the new ruler eat the heart of the previous Oba, he also drank from the skull, the belief was that a newly installed Oba, by so doing, acquired the magico-political power and wisdom of all the previous Oba, even as far up the ladder as Oduduwa himself. Anthony Okion .Ojigbo, Ibid.

⁶³- According to R.O Collins; African History ; p.132 : « Oyo rose to predominance, among the forest kingdoms of Nigeria during the seventeenth century, when its armies subordinated the peoples of Yorubaland in western Nigeria to the rule of the Alafin of Oyo. »

⁶⁴- The founder of Ife, Oduduwa, is said to have been a son of Lamurudu, the king of Mecca. Oduduwa with the chief priest Asara relapsed from Islam into idolatry and placed idols in the mosque. Opposition to these waves, however, was expressed by Asara's son Braima. Braima was seized and condemned to be burned to death, but this provoked a Muslim insurrection in Mecca in which Lamurudu was killed and Oduduwa driven out. Oduduwa, then, went to settle at Ife, taking with him a Quran captured from his Muslim enemies, which was adopted as an object of worship by his followers. Two brothers of Oduduwa who were expelled from Mecca at the same time became the founders of the kingdoms of Gogobiri and Kukuwa (that is, the Hausa kingdoms of Gobir and Borno, whose capital in the nineteenth century was at Kuka). Samuel Johnson; The History of the Yorubas; (London,1921), pp.3-4.

of Ife⁶⁵. The original capital of Oyo, founded by Oranyan, was at the site nowadays known as Oyo Ile, or Old Oyo, also called Oyoro (and known to the Hausa to the north as Katunga)⁶⁶. The latter remained the Oyo capital until the nineteenth century when the collapse of the kingdom occurred. In fact, in the 1830s, it was removed to its present site formerly called Ago Oja and nowadays often known as “New Oyo”⁶⁷.

During its period of power, the kingdom of Oyo comprised six ekun or provinces, three to the east of the river Ogun (the Ekun Osi or left-Hand provinces) and three to the west (the Ekun Otun or Right-Hand Provinces). At its greatest extent, the kingdom also included sections of the Igbomina Yoruba in the east and of the Egbado and Awori Yoruba in the south, while outside the kingdom proper tribute was exacted from the Egba Yoruba to the south and from certain non-Yoruba states to the south-west such as the coastal Egun states of Badagry and Allada (Porto Novo), the kingdom of Dahoney and the confederacy of the Mahi⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ - Samuel Johnson (1921), op cit; p.160.

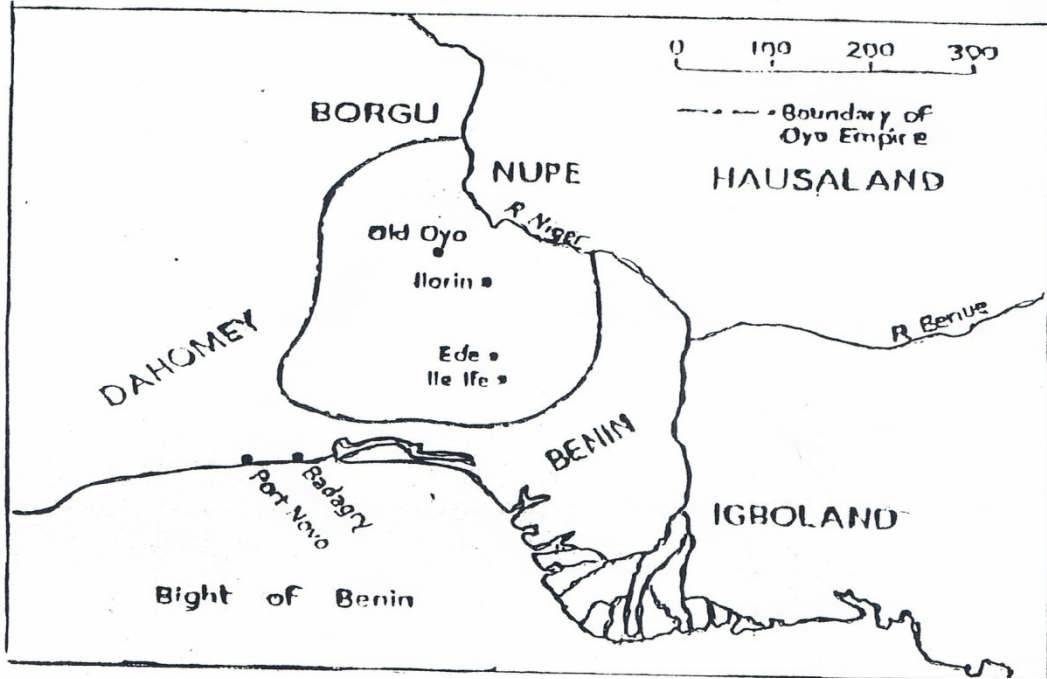
⁶⁶ - Robin Law; “How many time can History repeat itself? Some Problems in the Traditional History of Oyo”, *the International Journal of African Historical Studies*; (Boston African University Studies Center.1985), vol18, n1, pp 33-55 (on p 34).

“The site of Old Oyo lies 40 miles north-west of Ilorin and has been deserted since 1837. It covers an area of at least 20 square miles and is overgrown with orchid bush Savanna, which handicapped ground survey. The city appears to have been defended by three concentric banks and ditches and to have housed a substantial population. The sites of the palace, the house of the Aremo (the eldest son of the king), the king’s market and many compounds can still be identified. Frank Willet;”Recent Excavations at Old Oyo and Ife, Nigeria”; Department of Antiquities, Nigeria. Summary of a Communication to the Institute, 5 March 1958.

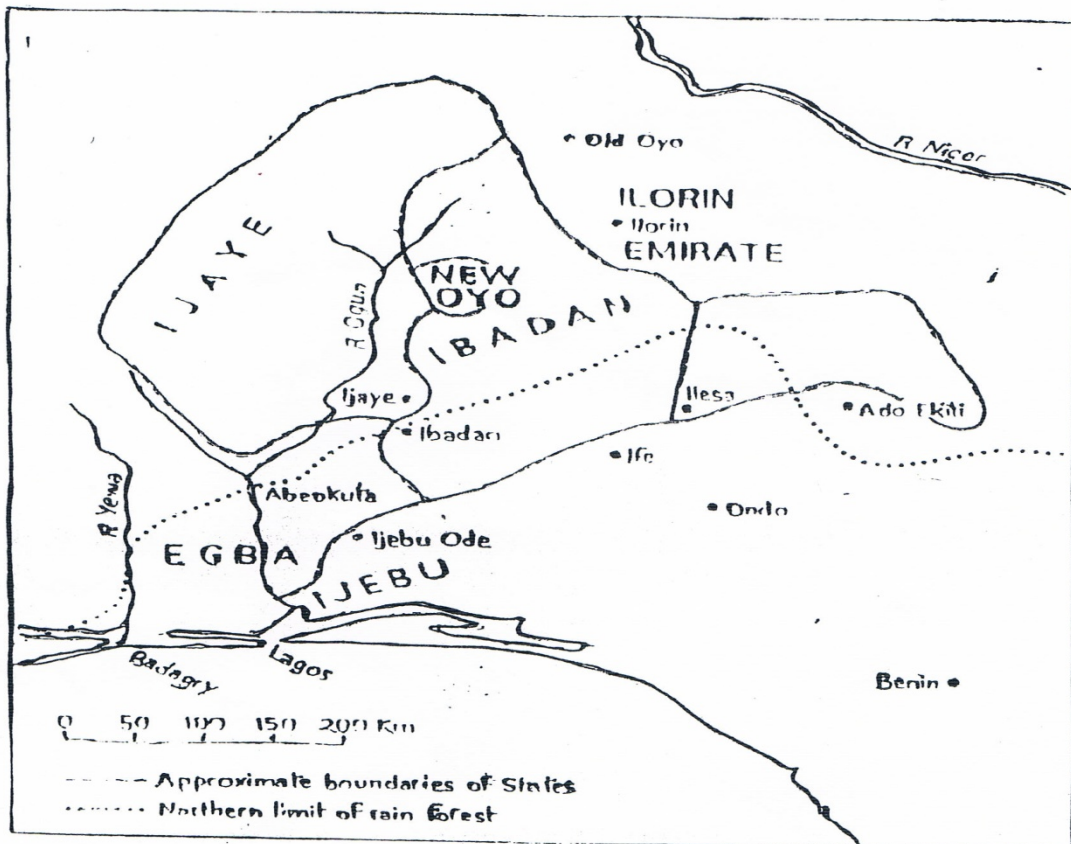
⁶⁷ - Robin Law, op-cit, p.35. R. Law also mentioned that the decline of the kingdom occurred in the nineteenth century, when the subordinate town of Ilorin became the center of a rival state, ruled by Muslim Fulani associated with the Caliphate of Sokoto in Hausaland. Oyoro was finally abandoned under military pressure from Ilorin and it was removed to New Oyo. For this see also maps 5 and 6 showing Yorubaland both before and after the disintegration of Old Oyo on p38.

⁶⁸ - See map7 showing the boundaries of Oyo kingdom and its tributaries on p 39.

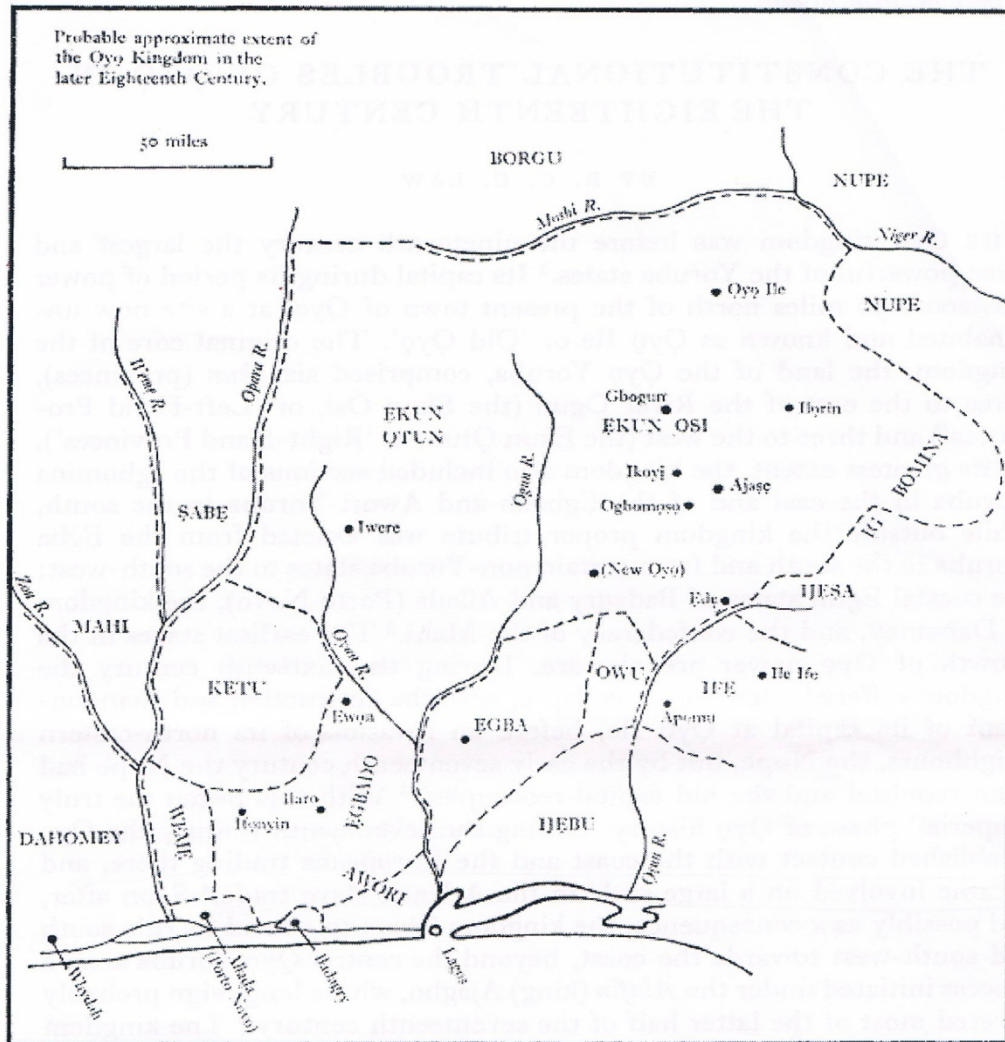
The Yoruba did not constitute any sort of political unit, even the name "Yoruba" was not originally applied to the whole linguistic group, but before the nineteenth century it designated only the Oyo kingdom. Kevin Shillington, op-cit, p.188.



Map n°5: Oyo Empire and its major states during the 17th century
Source: Elisabeth Isichei, *History of West Africa since 1800*, p70.



Map n°6: Yorubaland after the Disintegration of Old Oyo
Source: E. Isichei, *op. cit.*, p 76.



Map n°7: Boundaries of Oyo Kingdom and Its Tributaries.

Source: R.C.C.Law, "The Constitutional Troubles of Oyo in the Eighteenth Century".

Journal of African History. Vol12. N1, (Great Britain, 1971). pp25-44.

The political structure of the Oyo kingdom was complex, based on title grades, and different palace societies, religious groups and a council of chiefs. Each group within this kingdom has its own functions. At the top of the kingdom is Alafin (king of Oyo) who was himself regarded as the ekeji (or companion) of God⁶⁹. Next to the Alafin were his assistants responsible for the functioning of the policy, namely the Otun Efa (eunuch of the Right), the Ona Efa (eunuch of the Middle) and the Osi Efa (eunuch of the Left), whose functions were respectively, responsible for religious, judicial and administrative matters. Below the Otun Efa were many groups of the priestesses and priests of the several Orisha (Gods)⁷⁰. The Alafin was helped by a council of chiefs traditionally referred to as the Oyo Mesi⁷¹, headed by a basorun⁷². At the bottom of the political structure of the kingdom was the Ogboni⁷³ cult, which is really a religious society. The latter which was the most powerful political unit of the traditional Yoruba political system consisted of two grades, the Alawo (or senior grade) and the We-We-We (or junior grade). The senior grade was composed of two

⁶⁹- Aribidesi.A.Usman ; op-cit, p.45.

⁷⁰- J.F.A Ajaye and Michael Crowder; History of West Africa, p.89.

⁷¹-Oyo Mesi were the seven most important palace chiefs and advisers to the Alafin. Their decisions could easily override the Alafin, who was then forced to commit suicide. B.A Agiri; "Early Oyo History Reconsidered", History of Africa, African Studies Association, University of Lagos 1975, vol 2, pp.1-16 (on p.5). It is also stated by Samuel Johnson. (The History of the Yoruba from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate, p.177) that: "the long and successful reign of Alafin Ajagbo in the seventeenth century was followed by a succession of despotic and short-lived kings, 9 Alafins whose reigns were terminated prematurely by suicide... the opposition to these Alafins is presented as coming sometimes from the Oyo people, more commonly from the Oyo chiefs and more specifically from the Oyo Mesi".

⁷²- The Basorun is next in rank to the Alafin. He wears a beaded coronet while the Alafin wears a beaded crown. He has his own small throne and his wives are called Ayinba. The Alafin possesses a larger throne and his wives are called Aya'ba. The Basorun is head of the Oyo Mesi who constitute the royal council. Besides his exalted political status, the Basorun holds a very important religious position in the state. He is the chief's priest of Orun (a sky God). At its annual worship, the Basorun divined whether the ruling Alafin was acceptable to the gods. It is thought that before the nineteenth century, he had the power to request the death of any Alafin who was held to have been rejected by the Gods. Thus, the Basorun acts as Regent between the death of an Alafin and the installation of his successor. (B.A Agiri, op-cit, p.9.)

The Basorun also serves as commander in-chief and nominates for confirmation by the Alafin, the seventy junior war chiefs called the Eso (R.C.C Law, 1971, op-cit, p.29).

⁷³- The Yoruba ogboni Cult has been referred to as a typical "Secret Society". The Ogboni were in origin a cult group for the worship of earth and they also held regular meetings in secrecy for the discussion of political matters. The Oyo Mesi were members of the society, but held no position of authority within it. The Alafin did not attend its meetings but was represented by a woman who reported to him on the proceedings. Meetings set out to achieve unanimity, but if this proved impossible, the minority bound themselves ritually to uphold the majority decision. Peter Morton Williams, "The Yoruba Ogboni cult in Oyo", Africa, vol 30, n° 4, (1960), p.362.

subdivisions, the Ologboni and Erelu, both of which were equal in political importance. The Ologboni consisted of all the members of the Alawo senior grade, while the Erelu was made up of all female members of the senior grade and they represented the interests of the women of the chiefdom⁷⁴. According to Morton Williams: "*Every Oba must have Ogboni so that people may fear him*"⁷⁵. In theory, all the decisions rested with the Alafin, but in practice he was expected to take account of the views of the Oyo Mesi, who conferred separately from him⁷⁶.

In the traditional Oyo political system, all important chiefly titles belonged to particular lineages, and succession to the titles was determined by the lineage members. In fact chiefs were regarded, to some degree, as spokesmen of lineage interests, and the lineage exercised some control over the policy of its chief⁷⁷.

In Oyo, for instance, the title of Alafin belonged, like other important titles, to a single lineage. Thus, selection of an Alafin was made by the heads of the royal lineage, who then submitted names for approval to the Oyo Mesi, and the Basorun having the chief voice in the final decision⁷⁸.

One important feature in Oyo's political system was the operation of a constitutional mechanism for deposing or rather than for requiring the suicide of the Alafin. By the eighteenth century, in fact, it was an established convention that the Basorun interpreting the supposed will of the Gods and of the people of the Oyo could formally reject an Alafin who was thereby obliged to commit suicide.⁷⁹

S. Johnson also asserts that also succeeded originally the Alafin's eldest son, who was entitled the Aremo, normally succeeded, but that later, after suspicions that

⁷⁴- Anthony Okion Ojigbo, op-cit, p.281. For this see also diagram D and E showing the hierarchical structure of the traditional political system of Oyo on p42.

⁷⁵- Peter Morton Williams, op-cit, p.364.

⁷⁶- R.C.C Law (1971), op-cit, p28.

⁷⁷- Ibid.

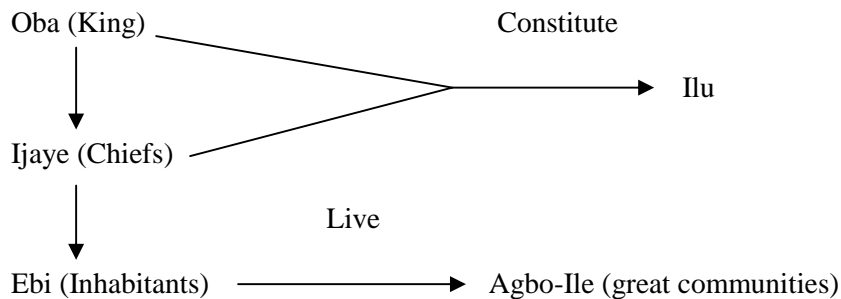
⁷⁸- S. Johnson (1921), op-cit, p.42.

⁷⁹- S. Johnson, Ibid, p 177,

He also stated that " the long and successful reign of Alafin Ajagbo in the seventeenth century was followed by a succession of despotic and short lived kings, 9 Alafins whose reigns were terminated prematurely by suicide...The opposition to these Alafins is presented as coming sometimes from the Oyo people, more commonly from the Oyo chiefs and more specifically from the Oyo Mesi".

Diagram (D)

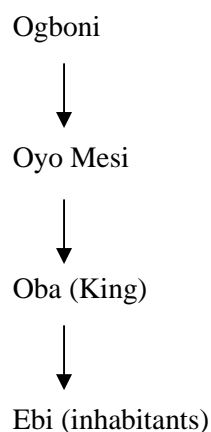
Oyo's Old Political Organization before the Collapse



Source : I.A Akinjogbin., « Le Concept du Pouvoir dans l’Afrique Traditionnelle, l’Aire Culturelle Yoruba », in, Le Concept du Pouvoir dans l’Afrique, Introduction à la Culture Africaine., Presse de l’Unesco., Paris., 1981., P.11.

Diagram (E)

Oyo's New Political Organization after the Collapse



Source: Jean Suret Canale., *Afrique Noire, Géographie, Civilisations Histoire*, 3^{ème} édition, Edition Sociale., 1973., Paris., p. 192.

certain Aremo had hastened their succession by parricide, that it became customary for the Aremo to commit suicide on his father's death⁸⁰. It should be noted here that succession in Oyo was not systematically from father to son, and that the Basorun had the total right both to depose the king and to appoint a new Alafin. But this did not prevent the Alafin to appoint members of his administration. In fact, once in office he could designate some officials and councilors but these royal appointees were always balanced by others who represented particular interests or a particular lineage. The latter were considered as the principal non-royal lineage of the capital. As stated by R.Law:

“This was most clearly the case of the Alafin, who did not in any meaningful sense act as the leader of the royal lineage and, whose members resided away from the palace and were organized under their own separate ward chiefs”⁸¹.

The kingdom of Oyo embraced a number of states, which remained largely independent and owed allegiance to the king. Indeed, the rulers of these states paid Oyo annual tribute and came annually with grass to mend the Alafin's roof as a symbol of their allegiance⁸². Thus, the allegiance of an extensive empire also had some significance for the Yoruba politics.

All the Vassal states of the kingdom were attached to patrons, known as "Baba Kekere" at the capital, who served as spokesmen of their clients' interests before the Alafin and transmitted their clients' tribute to the Alafin, receiving part of it back from him. Each Baba Kekere, indeed, might be a titled royal prince or principal wife of the Alafin, a high-ranking eunuch or slave, or one of the Oyo Mesi or of the non-royal chiefs. But this did not give the chiefs of the capital any very effective power. In fact, the number of towns under the patronage of non-royal chiefs was not large and the

⁸⁰- S.Johnson, op-cit, p.41

⁸¹- R.. Law, "Making Sense of Traditional Narrative, Political Disintegration in the kingdom of Oyo», *Cahier d'Etudes Africaines*, 87, 88, vol33, n 3-4, 1977, pp 337-401.

⁸²- Elisabeth Isichei, *History of West Africa Since 1800*, p.70.

position of the patron as intermediary between the Alafin and the Vassal towns was for many purposes ignored⁸³. It was, however, the role of the Alafin to appoint the representatives, who resided in towns of the kingdom and to collect tribute through his Ilari; from the subjects outside the kingdom such as Dahomey and the Egba⁸⁴.

As noted before, after the collapse of Oyo Empire, a set of independent states developed in Yorubaland such as Ilorin, Ijebu, Egba, Ekifi, Ondo, Ife...etc most of which were to maintain their traditional centralized political institutions with which they were familiar in their homelands. These new states, in fact, could not be lumped in one political structure, for they had differing political constitutions in which lineages and descent groups, in varying degrees played dominant roles⁸⁵. But in spite of the differences in political patterns and constitutions, certain features common to the traditional patterns of government among nearly all the groups of the Yoruba had been identified. These might include: monarchical institution, hereditary succession to the throne, ascription rather than achievement as criterion for appointment to political offices, essentially civilian nature of government and adequate safeguards against autocracy and despotism⁸⁶.

These features highlighted above tended to be superseded by new ones as the different Yoruba groups modified their political organization in response to the wars and confusion that attended the fall of the Old Oyo Empire in the nineteenth century. As a result of this modification, new states emerged such as Abeokuta, Oke-Odan, Ibadan, Ijaye, Ogbomoso, Oke-Iho, Saki, Osogbo, Ikirun, Ilorin, Ago Oja... etc all of which tended to depart from the monarchical institution hitherto characteristic of the Yoruba⁸⁷. There was, in fact, an increasing tendency towards despotism, which in one state especially, was unchecked. In addition, personal achievement rather than

⁸³ - By 1923, when the number of towns under Oyo had been greatly reduced, the only non-royal chief serving as a patron was the Basorun and he held only one town. (list of Native Authorities, submitted to the District Officer, Oyo, to the Senior Resident, Oyo-province, 27 Aug 1923; National Archives Ibadan, Oyoprof.3.1329).

⁸⁴ - R.C.C Law, "the Constitutional Troubles", op-cit. p.31.

⁸⁵ - P.C Lloyd "Sacred kingship and Government among the Yoruba" *Africa*, vol30, n3, 1960, p.221-237.

⁸⁶ - J.A Atanda, "Government of Yorubaland in Pre-colonial Period" *Tarkish*, vol4, n2, 1973, pp.1-9.

⁸⁷ - See map n°4 on p34.

ascription in these states became the criterion for holding office and in this period the military became pre-eminent in Yoruba politics⁸⁸.

For example, one particular new feature emerged in the process of development of the new Egba town, which was the pre-eminence of the warrior groups, the Olorogun (a society of warriors). Thus, each township had its own Ogboni (civil council) and Olorogun⁸⁹. Therefore, instead of unitary states as they had existed in the past, these new host towns quickly grew to become large conglomerates comprising different towns with their own Oba (kings), gods, lineages and hierarchies of chiefs.

For a better understanding of the new forms of government that developed in the Yoruba area after the fall of the Oyo, it is worth dealing hereunder with one of the new systems of administration that emerged in the new states mainly that of the Egba.

1-2-1-2. Political Organization of Egba in Abeokuta

The Egba had been one of the first Yoruba groups to win their freedom from the collapsing Oyo hegemony over Yoruba and other people during the beginning of the nineteenth century. Soon after, they lapsed into a long period of internal conflicts, the fact which led to the destruction of most of their towns and villages. Therefore, a number of scattered groups established themselves at Abeokuta⁹⁰.

Consequently, the new Egba city state was formed and Abeokuta became a city of at least 150 townships, each governing itself with its own chiefs and elders, and

⁸⁸ - G.O Oguntonism, "Political change and adaptation in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century", Canadian Association of African Studies, vol15, n 2, 1981, p.223-237.

⁸⁹ - S.O Biobaku, Egba and their Neighbours, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957) p.21-22.

The Olorogun chiefs could not be said to constitute a military despotism because they had to reckon both with traditional rulers and with civil Ogboni chiefs who were still regarded with traditional difference. Furthermore, no one of the Olorogun chiefs could establish personal autocracy because of the presence of other strong warriors. G.O Oguntonism, op cit, p 229 or C.M.S CA2/061b Journal of T. King, 11 August 1854, National Archives, Ibadan (N.A.I), Abe prof 2. "Intelligence Report on Abeokuta" by Blair, 1932.

⁹⁰ - J.F.Ade Ajayi and Robert Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth century, (Cambridge University Press,1964), p63-64.

each maintaining its own identity and tradition⁹¹. Abeokuta was, thus, a town with a "plenitude of Oba"⁹².

Each town there had to administer its own justice and to protect its own interest which could be at variance with the interest of other townships. The Egba, for example, who were autonomous, adopted the modes of government with which they were familiar, that is the forms of political organization used in their Yoruba homelands prior to the Diaspora. Perhaps the most influential political institution that each Egba township developed at that time was that of the Ogboni. In fact, the Ogboni system, which is said to have derived from Ile Ife, was an institution highly developed by the Egba people. Made up of important personages and not completely a masculine preserve, its function was to stand between head of each town and his people. This system restrained chiefs from becoming despotic, while ensuring that the governed did what they were told. The Ogboni constituted court and council, appointed and controlled chiefs, and preserved custom and tradition. It was, therefore, the executive, legislative and judicial body of each township in a single entity⁹³.

1-2-1-3. Political Organization of Ado at Ikiti

Ado is a compact town of 25,000 people, almost the largest settlement in Ikiti Division. It consists of three distinct but adjacent settlements- Oke Ewi (population approx 16,000), Odo Ado (approx. 7, 000) and Oke Ila (approx. 1,500). Each of these has its own chieftaincy system but the Ewi, is oba of all three settlement; Odo Ado and

⁹¹- Rev C.A Gollmer, "Giving Evidence before a Parliamentary Committee, Parl.Papers, vol5, n1, (1865), p241.

The Egba city state prospered rapidly holding perhaps as many as 100,000 people by mid century, when its wall measured some 20 miles in circumference (Rev.Isaac Smith Journal, 19 Aug 1851, C.M.S.C.A 2/082).

In the Egba and the neighbours, Biokabu speaks of 202 townships in 1870. S.Obiokabu, The Egba and their Neighbours 1842-1872 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957) p12.

⁹²- Robert Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba. (London, Methuen, Second Edition, 1976) p.183.

⁹³- Daryll Forde, The Yoruba Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria, (London, International African Institute. 1951), p.23. Also see S.O Biokabu "An Historical Sketch of Egba Traditional Authorities", Africa, XX11 (Jan, 1952), pp35-49.

Oke Ila unlike the subordinate towns of the kingdom, have no ruler of their own; their chiefs, however, have no right to appoint or depose the Ewi⁹⁴.

In the palace, a walled area covering some 15 acres, which lies in the centre of Oke Ewi around a large courtyard live the royal servants and migrant Hausa. In a series of small courtyards at one corner, the Ewi used to meet his chiefs. The Ewi, an educated ruler, has built a modern building behind the traditional structure. In front of the palace lies the town's principal market, and beyond this is a quarter in which lived the royal slaves. Close to the palace are the compounds of descendents of the past Ewis; beyond these, in a circle around the palace, are the large compounds of the other lineages of the town⁹⁵.

The Ewi or king of Ado is a sacred king, He is the direct descendent of the first ruler of the dynasty, said to be the founder of Ado. He rules in cooperation with a council of chiefs.

There are, indeed, three grades of the chiefs (Oloye) in Oke Ewi. Most senior are the Ihare chiefs; the Olori Marum (five heads) rank highest in this group- these five titles are hereditary within the five largest lineages. Below these are the junior Ihare , groups as the Elesi (five chiefs) and the Ijegbe (ten chiefs). Some of these titles are hereditary within the smaller lineages, while others are filled by appointment by the Oba and senior Ihare chiefs. The second grade is Ijoye, a group of at least twenty-two chiefs only the most senior title in the group is hereditary within a lineage. The third grade is the Elegbe; the most senior title is a hereditary and some other titles are reserved for members of the royal lineages. In Oke Ewi, as in other Ekiti towns, the chieftaincy titles seem to be as equitably distributed among the non-royal lineages as their number will allow⁹⁶.

Titles, which are hereditary within the lineage are the corporate property of all lineage members. On the death of a chief the lineage meets to elect a successor. The

⁹⁴ According to P.C Llyod. op cit. p 224. "The most senior making *Ihare* chiefs- the Odofin of Odo Ado and the Alarierin of Oke Ila- are rather more important than their opposite number- the Odogun of Oke Ewi; meetings of the chiefs of their respective settlements are regularly held in their houses".

⁹⁵ - P.C Llyod, op cit, p 225.

⁹⁶ - Ibid.p226

title should pass in rotation to each segment, though this is rarely followed strictly; a title can never pass directly from a man to his own son. The lineage is guided in its choice by the pronouncement of the Ifa oracle. The Oba and other chiefs may not interfere in such an election, save only to ensure that it is fairly conducted. The oba should accept the selection of the lineage and perform the ceremonies installing the new chief. Lineage meetings are presided over by the oldest man (olori ebi) and in these meetings the chief is ranked according to this age. His office as chief gives him such prestige in the lineage that he is often regarded as the head of the lineage.

In selecting men to hold those chieftaincy titles, which are not hereditary, the Ihare chiefs have a determining if not final voice. Since no Ihare or Ijoye titles may be held by members of the royal lineage, it will be appreciated that the chiefs are the elected representatives of the non-royal lineages in the Yoruba town⁹⁷.

In Ado, the Oba is chosen by the chiefs. We have, thus, the apparent dichotomy of a sacred ruler, who is democratically elected. The Yoruba themselves see nothing untoward in this, for while they hold their rulers in great reverence, they are quite ready to add that he "belongs to the people" and can be removed if he becomes unpopular.

1-2-2. Centralized Authorities of Igalaland (On the Niger-Benue confluence)

The Igala country is located at one of the natural crossroads in Nigerian geography, the Niger-Benue confluence. This strategic geographical position has brought its people into contact with a wide range of peoples and cultures including Yoruba, Ibo, Edo speaking people and Jukun⁹⁸.

⁹⁷ - P.C Llyod. op cit.. p 227.

⁹⁸ - The Igala country referred to in certain maps as Atagara or sometimes Okpoto) occupies an area of some 5000 square miles contained within an angle formed by the junction of the Rivers Niger and Benue. It is administered by a chief who has his headquarters at Idah on the Niger By the close of the 18th Century, Igala had developed into a large and powerful state, and had in all probability reached its Zenith. The eastern boundary of Igala proper ran from the River Ocheke through Agatu, Ocheke, Adoka, Boju, through the Idoma and Nsukka countries to Damoogoo on the Niger some little way above Oritsha. To this must be added the external fiefs of Igbirra Panda, Igbirra Igu (Koton Karifi) and Ishabe (Kakanda), whilst the Ata's writ on the Niger itself extended from the limits of the Benue=

The Igala form a kingdom whose ruler, the Ata Gala or Ata⁹⁹, has his capital at Idah on the river Niger. He ruled over loosely federated kingdom in which the major provinces were organized. The provincial chiefs were relatively autonomous in their provincial capitals, and were only subject to the king in certain sovereign matters such as the payment of tribute, jurisdiction over homicide, and succession to their own offices¹⁰⁰. But basically the kingdom conformed to what Southall calls the pyramidal or federated type rather than to the other type of kingdom, like Benin, in which power is strongly centralized¹⁰¹.

Igala is divided into clans, and its political structure is based on a system in which clans perform political functions at either the central level, in the capital, or at the provincial level or at the local level in the districts. Each clan has its own traditions

=confluence to the Bussa, where the British explorer Mungo Park met his death. From: Miles Clifford and Richmond Palmer, "A Nigerian chiefdom, Some Notes on the Igala Tribe in Nigeria and their Divine King", the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, vol66 (July, December 1936), pp 393-435 published by Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.(on p400)

⁹⁹- The king or chief in Igala bears the title of "Ata Gala". This divine person is believed to be charged with a sacred dynamism and he must not therefore place his bare foot in contact with the ground (it is observed that he never removes his sandals except when mounting a dais or ascending to the upper storey of his house) or sit other than on a stool or some other raised object, nor may he stoop to pick up anything, lest in so doing he touch the earth and this magic element escape from him into the ground where it would be lost. It is taboo to touch the person of an Ata (as a concession to the times he is prepared to shake hands with Europeans) or to sit upon his chair, mat or bed, or/with the exception of certain specially privileged persons ritually protected- to handle any part of his insignia. His privy is sacred and not to be entered even by the most favored of his acolytes, his spittle is a divine emanation and his chair-clippings and nail-parings are preserved. The Ata also lived in almost complete seclusion, accessible only to important officers of state and those sworn of his household who might not, under pain of direst penalties, divulge anything heard or seen within the precincts. Exceptions to this seclusion were audiences to the envoys of important personage obtained only after great difficulty the annual festivals when his appearance was of course obligatory, or when sitting in the "Ogbwede" (Council-Chamber) whether for the discussion of urgent affairs of state or when called upon to exercise his supreme judicial functions...etc. From: Miles Clifford and Richmond Palmer, A Nigerian Chiefdom. op.cit, p.408-409.

¹⁰⁰- J.S Boston, "Oral Tradition and the History of Igala", Journal of African History, vol10, n°1, (Great Britain, Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.29.43. According to M.Clifford and R.Palmer, "the provincial rulers or the fief holders of the Igala Chiefdom, received the title of "Onu" and an official salutation from the Ata, together with a gift of bead bracelets which were the outward and visible sign of their authority...The office of Onu was hereditary and though invalid unless the claimant received his title from the Ata in person and at Idah, the chief might not refuse to confer it. Each Onu and administered his fief through a Council of Elders and received from his people tithes of farm and sylvan produce a tributes of game, the pelts of leopards with claws intact, and the heart, were his perquisite as also were runaway slaves found within his territory. His powers were absolute except for death sentences which, with few exceptions, were referred to the Ata, he was the secular as well as the religious head, a priest-king...etc. M.Clifford and R.P, op.cit, p.398.

¹⁰¹- A.Southall, Alur Society (1956) pp.250-252.or in J.S Boston, op.cit, p.30.

and in each case the tradition is partly concerned with justifying and validating the clan's political function. For example, the royal clan is concerned with legitimating its right to rule, and bases this claim on the principle of descent from older dynasties in other kingdoms. The royal dynasty in Igala is an immigrant one¹⁰². The indigenous population of Igala is represented politically by a group of clans called the Igala Mela, who are supposed to have occupied Idah from the beginning. They act as kingmakers in the political system. There is also one other aristocratic clan, which is the clan of the Achadu, who is head of the Kingmakers.

The Ata ruled in cooperation with a number of councilors, whose duty was to assist him in the business of government and to represent him on various missions to outlying fiefs. These were as follows in order of precedence: The Ochai Ata (who was charged with the discipline of the Ata's sons), the Ondom Ata, the Oman Ata, the Amakoji Ata (who used to represent the Ata at rituals, which the Ata might be disinclined or unable to attend) and the Ohem Ogbolo (the trusted adviser and personal

¹⁰² - The tradition most in favour with the ruling house is that the chiefdom of Igala was founded by their ancestress Ebele Ejaunu the daughter of Abutu Eje, a noble of the Jukun Court at Wukari, who, for some reason had migrated westwards along the south bank of the river Benue and had settled in the vicinity of Amagedde. At his death Ebele Ejaunu is claimed to have assembled his followers and led them southwards through virgin bush till she reached Idah, where she was installed as chief with the title of Ata and met and married Omeppa, an Aro Slave, on whom she conferred the title of Ashadu. On her death, Omeppa summoned her brother Agenapoje and installed him in his sister's stead; it is on this account, they maintain, that the Ata is regarded as the "wife" of the Ashabu, which they support by reference to the highly involved installation rites, during the course of which the Ata must have his ears pierced like a woman and must go through a form of marriage with the Ashadu (M. Clifford and R. Palmer, *op.cit*, p 395).

Another local version contends that Agenapoje was a "sky-god" who descended miraculously upon a rock in the Niger opposite Idah and was the founder of the divine Kingship under whose aegis Igala was colonized.

Information elicited during recent years as the result of enquiries not confined to the ruling house or to Idah, but prosecuted systematically throughout Igala, entails a considerable modification of these legends. There is every indication of the existence of a quite extensive settlement on the Niger in the vicinity of Idah, long before the advent of the Atas which at some early date came under the influence of, and paid tribute to the Jukun King of Wukari; these people, it is contended were the indigenous Igalas and are believed to have derived from the same stock as the Yorubas, a belief which is founded on a very notable linguistic and cultural affinity. Practically all trace of the Jukun tongue, on the other hand, has disappeared and cultural and religious affinities are, generally speaking, confined to the ruling house and its connections, the descendants of the first Ata and his Jukun followers.

To return to Idah, there was in those early days no form of central organizations, the tribe consisting of a number of societies each under its own patriarch or petty chieftain; these latter, nine in number, were the primitive fathers of Igala. (M. Clifford and R. Palmer, *Ibid*, p396).

There is also other legends, which claims a historical link between the migration from Benin to Idah of a brother of the Oba of Benin.

confidant of the Ata). These members all together formed the executive and judicial Council of the Ata Gala¹⁰³.

Political offices in Igala are mainly hereditary, in patrilineal descent groups. Indeed, succession to the hereditary offices is done by rotating or circulating method of succession. The Royal title at Idah, for example, rotates around four lineages within the ruling house and this kind of rotation is found in all clan titles in Igala¹⁰⁴.

1-2-3. Centralized Authorities of Lagos (on the Lagoon)

The original Lagosians belonged to the Awori who, with the Ijebu, are the most southerly of the Yoruba-speaking people. Their town and island were known to them as 'Eko', though the name 'Lagos', deriving from the Portuguese word for 'Lagoon', became far more widely used¹⁰⁵. Never amounting to much more than a 'city state', this was among the smallest and in early times, least important of the Yoruba kingdoms. The first reference to the area is Pacheco's discouraging account of the 'region' of the river 'Lagua' where, apart from slaves, 'There is no trade or anything from which one can make a profit'¹⁰⁶. But Lagos possessed a physical feature of importance for the future, for here occurred the first permanent break in the beach and dune of the coast-line east of the Volta estuary, giving access though across a bar of great difficulty and danger, to the lagoon and a vast system of island waterways.

¹⁰³ - M Clifford and R.Palmer, *Ibid*, p.401.

¹⁰⁴ - J.S Boston, *op.cit*, p.38.

Whilst the choice of the new Ata rests in the hands of the Ashadu and the Igala Mela, their choice in fact is limited to eligible members of the "house" whose turn it is to succeed. Normally the heir-presumptive is the senior member of this house, but if he was of very advanced age, of feeble constitution, mentally deficient or notoriously evil character it would lie within the competence of the Ashadu and Igala Mela to pass him over in favor of a more likely representative, consultation of the oracle would facilitate such an arrangement and would exonerate the Ashadu from any suspicion of bias.

Assuming then that the heir-presumptive was persona grata, he would meanwhile have been informed secretly by the Ashadu of his father's ill-health and after a suitable interval to allow him to complete his arrangements and amass the necessary gifts, a herald would be dispatched to summon him to Igalogwa, the hereditary residence of the Ashadus. This Herald bears the title of Ikabe (M.Clifford and R.P, *op.cit* p 419).

¹⁰⁵ The name 'Lago de Curamo' was applied to the eastern lagoon. Osifekunde in P.D.Curtin (Ed), *Africa Remembered* (Wisconsin, 1967), pp239, he says that 'Karame' is the Bini name for Lagos.

There are traces of other names: Onim, Aunis and Awani (which must be Awari).

¹⁰⁶ Durte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, (London, 1937), p123.

Pacheco to this channel ‘which only small vessels of thirty to thirty-five tons can enter’ suggests that it was known to Europeans, and perhaps used by them, 1500. The first settlers, according to tradition, were refugees from disturbances on the mainland, but little else is remembered from these early days. Then, during the reign at Benin of Oba Orhogbua, and therefore probably in the sixteenth century, Lagos was conquered by a Benin army advancing westwards along the coast. The Awori ruler, the Olofin, was replaced by a new king, probably a Bini, and Lagos became tributary to Benin.¹⁰⁷

Lack of space and the poverty of the sandy soil made agriculture difficult, and the Lagosians were dependent on their neighbors for much of their food supply. One important local source of food, however, which could also be exchanged against imports from the mainland, was fish from the lagoon. Apart from fishing canoes, Lagos also maintained a fleet of war canoes, which gave her standing among the local powers, and for a time in the eighteenth century exacted tribute from Badagry. But the kingdom did not greatly extend its boundaries. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it consisted of the main island of Eko, its tiny neighbor of Iddo, and some scattered villages on the mainland stretching west to Iworo 26 miles distant and (if the claims of Oba Kosoko are accepted) to Leke 45 miles along the coast to the east.¹⁰⁸

The ruler of Lagos was known by the titles of Ologun, Eleko and (in recent times exclusively) Oba, the last being the general term in Yoruba for ‘king’ and also the title of the ruler of Benin. The monarchy seems to have been somewhat more authoritarian in character than was usual among the Yoruba, a feature probably reflecting the influence of the more centralized Benin kingship, but possibly owing something also to the increasing wealth, which accrued to the Oba from the slave trade¹⁰⁹. Buttressing the monarchy were three main orders of chiefs, known collectively as the White Caps: the Idejo, representing the original owners of the land

¹⁰⁷ Lagos tradition has been recorded by Robert Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba* (London, 1969), pp 89-94.

¹⁰⁸ Capt. J.Adams, “Remarks on the Country Extending from. Cape Palmas to the River Congo” (London, 1823), 100;FO84/940 , Frazer to Malmesbury, 14 Jan. 1853.

¹⁰⁹ “If this suggestion about the increasing wealth and hence power of the monarchy is accepted, Lagos would qualify as an example of those states in which the exploitation of the new resources began to change a tribally structured government into a highly centralized one”. P.C. Lloyd, *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London,1971), p 12.

and said to be descended from the leader of the first settlers; the Akarigbere, said to descent from the warriors of the conquering Benin army; and the Ogalada, a semi-priestly caste. There was also a fourth class of war chiefs, the Abagbon or Ogagum.¹¹⁰ This proliferation of chiefs and the Oba's power to add to the Ogalade and the war chiefs contributed to the consolidation of the royal authority.¹¹¹

During the eighteenth century, Lagos became a centre of the Atlantic slave trade. The beginning of the slave here on a large scale is traditionally ascribed to an invitation to a group of Portuguese slave traders to settle in the town by Oba Akinshemoyin.¹¹² By the last years of the century, the trade was thriving eclipsing not only that of the western Slave Coast but also the trade in the Benin River, and was stimulating and increasing demand for slaves in the Yoruba hinterland. It reached its height in the 1820s and continued to flourish in the 1840s.¹¹³

Meanwhile, the political life of Lagos was disturbed by a deep rift in the royal house. This stemmed from the succession to the throne on the death of Oba Ologun Kutere, probably between 1800 and 1805, when Adele, a younger son of the Oba, was preferred to his elder brother Oshinlokun. Although all sons born to a reigning Oba were competent to succeed him, there was much opposition to Adele. Ajayi considers that this reflects differences over slave trade, Adele wishing to introduce 'a more open policy' rather than to retain the Portuguese and Brazilian monopoly,¹¹⁴ but there is no tradition to support this theory. In 1820 or 1821, Adele was supplanted on the throne and withdrew to Badagry,¹¹⁵ whence he was recalled for a short second reign in the 1830s. The accession on his death of his son, Oluwole, passed over the young and

¹¹⁰ The Eletu Odibo, a leading Akarigbere, and the Ashagbon, head of the war chiefs, together consulted the Ifa oracle over the naming of a new Oba.

¹¹¹ The organization and precedence of the Lagos chieftaincies are disputed, and confusion has been increased rather than mitigated by the Ward-Price Commission of Inquiry into the headship of 'the House of Documu' of 1933 and the Lagos State Inquiry into the selection and appointment of chiefs of 1967. Seniority of chiefs within their order is fairly clearly based, however, on the date of their installation, the Iwoye ceremony.

¹¹² A list of rulers with their dates in: FO84/920, Campbell to Clarendon, 11 Sept 1853.

¹¹³ P.D Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade, A Census*, (Wisconsin, 1967), p227.

¹¹⁴ J. F. A. Ajayi, 'Political Organization in West Africa Towns in the Nineteenth Century-the Lagos Example', a seminar paper, Urbanization in African Social Change, University of Edinburgh, 1963.

¹¹⁵ For references to Adele at Badagry, see R. and J. Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Termination of the Niger* (London 1832), vol1, n37, pp48-50.

vigorous prince Kosoko, a son of Oshinlokun, who, after the failure of an attempt to gain the throne, went into exile first at Porto Novo and then at Whydah. Eventually Kosoko was allowed by Oluwole's successor, Akitoye (a younger brother to Oshinlokun and Adele), to return to Lagos. Four years later, in July 1845, he seized the throne in a coup. During all these troubles, there seems to have been no reference to Benin and the payment of tribute was discontinued.

Ejected from Lagos, Akitoye sought refuge, like Adele before him, at Badagary. Here his followers rallied to him, and he also obtained the support of the Egba of Abeokuta, on whom he had claims as the son of an Egba woman. Still more important, he became the protégé of the European missionaries and palm oil traders in the town. Hostilities were resumed across the lagoon, but at this point the course of events was interrupted. Akitoye appealed for help to Consul John Beecroft, the representative of Britain, the country whose cruisers had long been patrolling the coast to apprehend the slavers, and whose intervention on the African shore was now to lead, step by step, towards the creation of Southern Nigeria.

1-2-4. Centralized Authorities of Beninland

To the south and west of Ife, towards the Niger Delta and deep within the forest, was the Edo speaking people. Though, they mostly remained in small village chiefdoms, they too developed a centralized city State at Benin.¹¹⁶ This dynasty was at the height of its power in the sixteenth century but it started to decline three centuries later. It lost most of its northern territories as a result of the Fulani invasion in the early nineteenth century, while to the south its vassal states acquired gradually their independence.

The origins of the kingdom of Benin like those of Oyo are tied to Ife from which came the spiritual authority of the Oba. This latter was thought to be divine. According to I. Esichei, this dynasty traced its origins to Ife, to a son fathered by an Ife prince, Oranmiyan, who is also thought to be the ancestor of Oyo.¹¹⁷ The strength of the empire was attributed as much to its political organization as to economic

¹¹⁶ -See map n°8 which shows Benin Empire and its vassal states in the 16th century, on p56.

¹¹⁷ - E.Isichei, op.cit ., p.90.

prosperity. Unlike in Oyo the title of Oba was hereditary. Indeed, in the mid fifteenth century the Oba of Benin, Ewuare, had established a stable system of Oba succession by having his eldest son recognized as official heir¹¹⁸.

In Benin, the Oba had two functions as ritual priest and warrior king.¹¹⁹ He was revered by his people but he was not absolute. In fact, he ruled in co-operation with three categories of chiefs appointed by him. The first category was the Palace Chiefs with three grades covering various duties in the court and playing an intermediary role between the population and the king. The first grade included the Iwebe, the highest in rank, who had charge of the throne and of the Oba's ceremonial garments and who were also responsible for his stock of trade goods.¹²⁰ The second grade consisted of the Eweguae to whom individuals addressed themselves, when they wanted a private audience with the Oba. They also organized the feasts at which the Oba entertained.¹²¹ Finally, there were the Ibiwe chiefs, the lower in grade, who were responsible for population for keeping peace among them and reporting on them to the Oba¹²².

The second category consisted of the Town Chiefs, who formed a council of state together with the palace chiefs. In some ways, they filled the function of an opposition party for they alone had the right to argue with or censure to Oba in public.¹²³ Both the Palace and the Town chiefs were wealthy and powerful controlling large estates and numerous followers and the Oba had to balance them against each other. In addition, these Town Chiefs were led by more powerful chiefs, the Iyase, who acted as the Oba's chief adviser.¹²⁴ Finally, the third category of chiefs was the Uzama¹²⁵, whose powers were undermined by successive Obas and whose duty was to control the Oba's power.

¹¹⁸ - K. Shillington, *op.cit.*, p.190.

¹¹⁹ - Michael Crowder, *op.cit.*, p.46 : "The Oba was the focus of both the political and religious life of the empire participating in an incredible number of elaborate rituals, considering that he also had to govern an increasingly more powerful empire."

¹²⁰ - L.Mair, *op.cit.*, p.61.

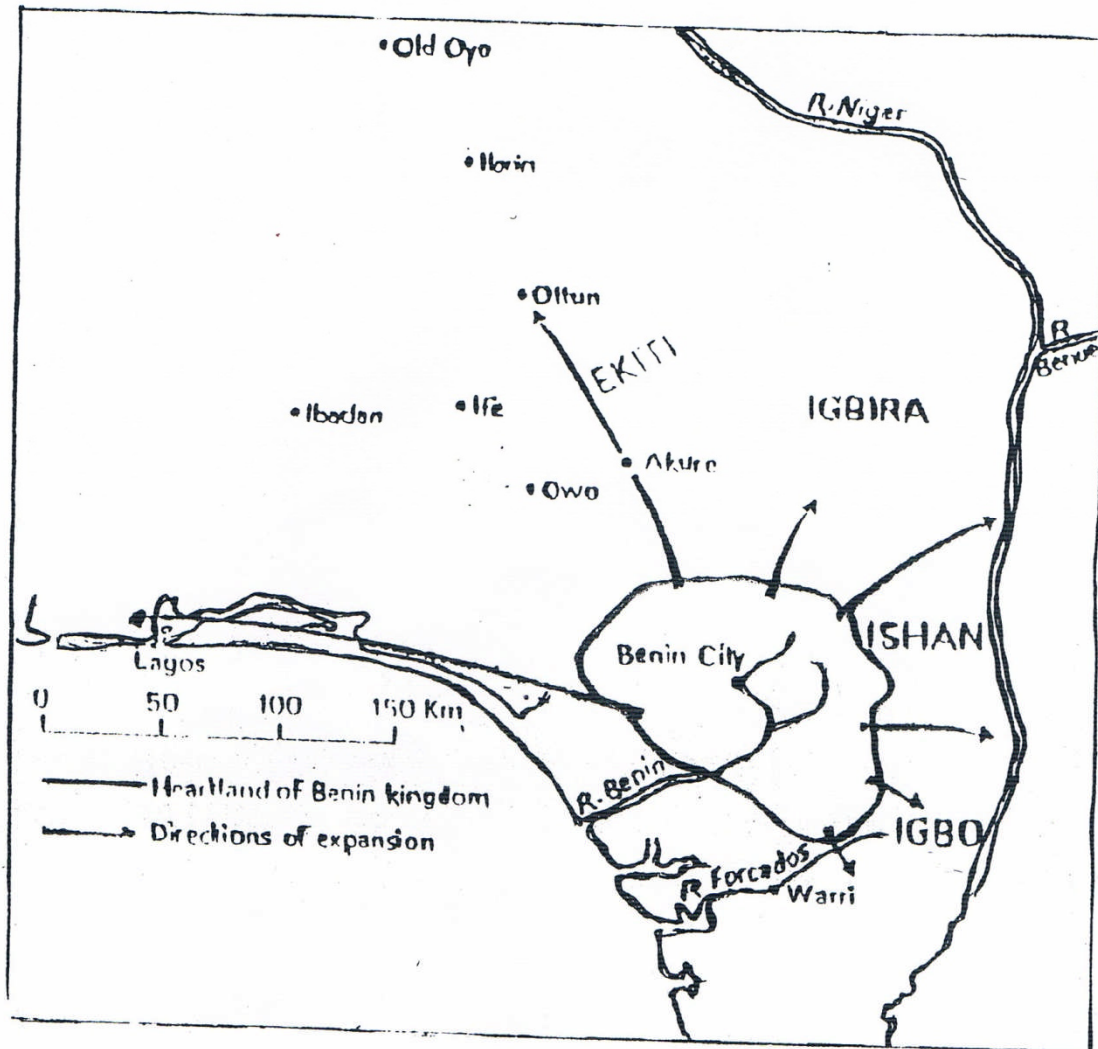
¹²¹ - *Ibid.*

¹²² - *Ibid.* p62.

¹²³ - *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ - M.Crowder, *op.cit.*, p.47.

¹²⁵ - It is stated that: "... the hereditary kingmakers [Uzama] were either descendants of the original chiefs who invited Oranmiyan to become king or those followers who came with him." - O.Collins, *op.cit.*, p.134.



Map n°8: Benin Empire and its Vassal States in the 16th century.

Source: E. Isichei, op. cit, p93.

The three categories of chiefs are presented in diagram (F) which shows the political organization of the kingdom of Benin. But when studying deeply this political organization, one may notice that these chiefs were given other names and other duties within the empire. According to Thomas Hodgkin, the Great Lords, the Aro De Roe and the Fiadors were used for instance to refer to the Palace Chiefs, the Town Chiefs and the Uzama respectively. In addition, the Aro de Roe's duty was to preside over the community, the slaves and the military affairs while the merchants, the Fulladors and the elders represented the Fiadors, who were responsible to the king. This organization is shown in diagram (G).¹²⁶

Benin, which appears to have been very prosperous with a well organized monarchy slipped into a long period of decline. In fact, at the beginning of the eighteenth century the kingdom was wracked by dynastic disputes and civil wars . As stated by O.Collins:

*“Rivalries among the nobles were exacerbated by a century of warfare and the rise of Oyo. Moreover, the traders of Benin could no longer compete on favorable terms with the slave merchants of Dahomey and Oyo.”*¹²⁷

Thus, economically depressed and politically confused, this empire could no longer exert a paramount influence on its vassal states such as: Igbo, Ekiti , Warri , Ottun ... and one by one they obtained their freedom .

1-2-5. Decentralized Authorities of Ebiraland (On the Niger- Benue confluence)

The Ebira, are the people of Okene, Okehi, Adavi and Ajaokuta local government areas of Kogi State. The word “Ebira” refers to the people themselves, their language and their geographical location. Other Ebira groups are Ebira Igu in Kogi and Koton

¹²⁶ - See diagrams F –G, on p59.

¹²⁷ - O.Collins, op.cit ., p.134.

Karfi local government areas of Kogi State. Ebira Toto and Umaisha of Nassarawa (Toto) local government area of Nassarawa State, Ebira Mozum of Bassa local government area of Kogi State, and Ebira Etuno of Igarra District of Okoko-Edo local government area of Edo State. Other Ebira are to be found in Abaji in the Federal Capital Territory and Agatu in Benue State, all in Nigeria. Ebira speakers belong to the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family, which also comprises the Nupe, Gbari and Gade. Recent in depth research indicates that the Ebira have been part and parcel of what is now generally known as Central Nigeria since 1000 BC.¹²⁸

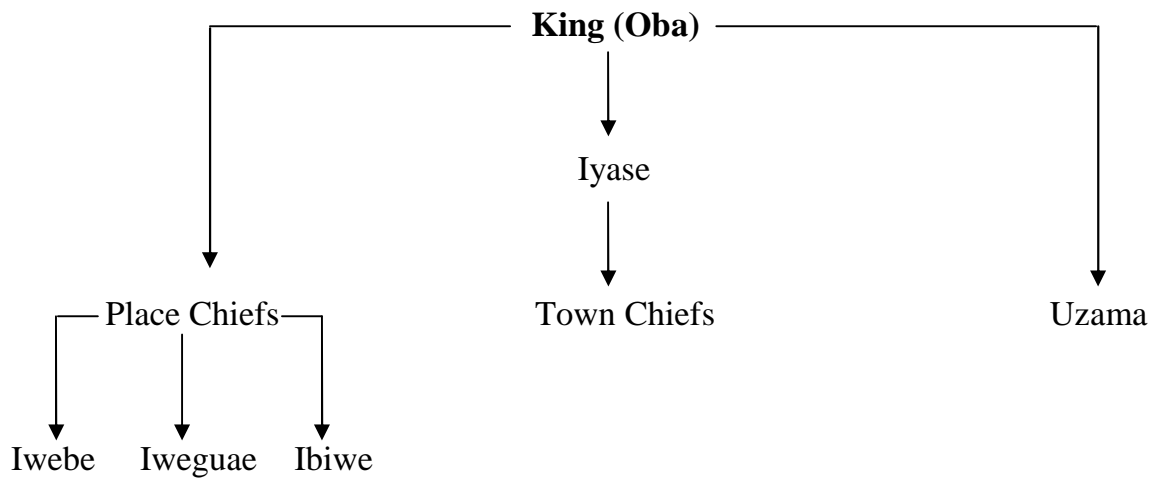
Generally speaking, the settlement pattern of the Ebira in their present location was largely determined by the topography of the area and their emigrational groupings. They settle in highly knitted related families, kindred, clans and clan-groups on several hill tops, which include Eikoku-Okenegwe, Okehi, Ukpai and Okerekere. The socio-political institutions, which became consolidated over time, were primarily geared towards the maintenance of discipline, social harmony and

¹²⁸ “Studying the various groups in the Niger-Benue Confluence area using historic-linguistic tools, historians rely on its branches like genetic classification, dialectology and glottochronology in which historical time is a core tool of analysis. Though Greenberg attempted to resolve the problem of language of Niger-Benue Confluence area; recent historical research by Bennett, Stark, Blench, Williamson and other confirm the antiquity of the human population in the region. They contend that by 4000 B.C, the Benue-Congo proto- languages spoken in this area evolved had developed. These studies derive Ebira language from the Nupoid group (also called Niger-Kaduna) of languages including Nupe, Gwari and Gade. The Nupoid according to historical jurist took off from a porto-language described as the Benue-Congo from which the other language groups which include the Platoid group also evolved.

In terms of archaeology, stone implements recovered by Soper, Davies and Shaw from the Ebira zone, extending from Keffi Nassarawa-Izom westward to Jebba and further upstream, have been associated with the Sangoan assemblage. The reading from this implements indicates that man have lived in this area as far back as more than forty five thousand years ago. The Ebira zone is also prominent in the pre-historic civilization of the Iron Age generally characterized in Central Nigeria as epitomized by Nok culture. Even recently in the late last century, the iron-working site of Ife-Ijumu (Kogi state, Nigeria) has been dated to 260 B.C. Thus, part of the conclusion that can be derived from all these is that the Ebira as a group existed for a long time in location within Central Nigeria not too far from where they are located presently. The Ebira Okene occupy the hilly stretch of land southwest of the Niger-Benue confluence area and share boundaries with the Yoruba-speaking people of Okoko, Owe and Ijumu to the west; the various Akoko-Edo people to the south and south west; the Hausa, Nupe and Ebira groups at Lokoja to the north; and the River Niger to the east. Ohiare J.A, The kingdom of Igu and Opanda 1700.1939, A Study of Inter- group Relation, (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1988), p 75.

Diagrams (F):

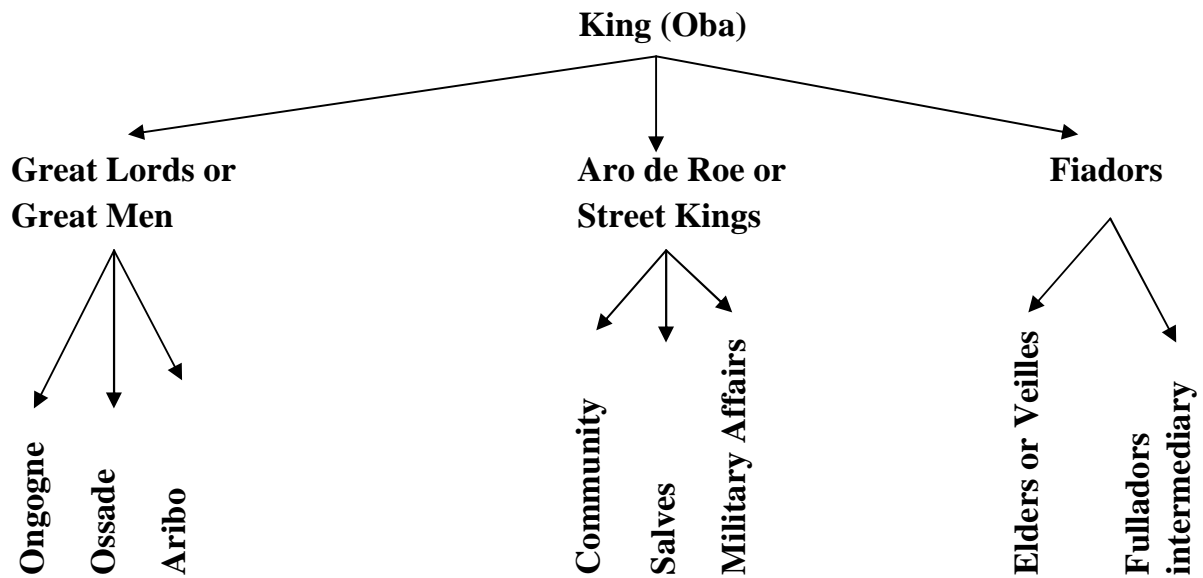
The Political Organization of Benin in the nineteenth century



Source: L. Mair, op cit, p 61.

Diagrams (G):

The Political Organization of Benin in the eighteenth century



Source: T. Hodgkin, op cit, p 197.

peace, which were essential ingredients for social relation and economic progress within Ebira ecological zone and in the people's diplomatic relations with other polities. The basis of political organizations of the Ebira started from the family. As the smallest unit, the family consisted on the father, wives, children and grand children. The unit lived in a specially designed Ohuoje (compound), while the Ovovu (outer compound), was an exclusive use of other people under the custody of the family. These included the family slaves, war or famine refugees on asylum and family laborers. The oldest surviving male was the head of the family. He personified the cultural, clannish and economic heritages as the representative of the ancestors in the family¹²⁹.

Several families, who believed they were patrilineally related by blood formed the next political unit of lineage, Abara. The head was the oldest surviving male of the lineage. Though, his decision was not final as he had to consult with the head of the families that made up the lineage, the chief had prerogative power over the economic activities of the lineage. The lineage land and relics were vested on him and the sylvan produce of the lineage were gathered in his place annually for distribution to the various member families based on the ancestral law of Ogagu. The clan was the next political unit to the Ebira of this study. Though third in the strata, the clan was the main and most sensitive of all the political units. Each clan had both a prefix in each name of either Ozi (i.e. children of) or Ani (i.e. the people of) and a totemic symbol indicating either a sacred object or an animal attached to their clan name.¹³⁰

In the past, a clan name served as identification mark for the various emigrational groups or parties. In the prefixes could be historically used to trace how clans migrated evolved and developed over the period of time. The head of each of the clans, many of which have also survived to the present was the oldest surviving male. His power was nominal as he administered through consultation. Nevertheless, he was considered the representative of the ancestors in the clan. He, therefore, executed

¹²⁹ Ahmed Adam Okene, Abdelrahmane Suberu, "The British Conquest of Ebiraland, North Central Nigeria, 1886-1917", *American International Journal of contemporary Research*, vol3, n6, June 2013, Kaduna, Nigeria, p 46.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

sanctions and controls over its members. These were thought to emanate from the ancestors, who watched over the affairs of the people from the world of the ancestral spirits.¹³¹

The largest socio-political unit among the Epira was the clan-group locally called Ekura. About six of such clan-groups survive to the present. They are Okengwe, Okehi, Adavi, Eika, Ihima, and Eganyi. Though each was self autonomous, they however related on issues of common concern. The head of each was Chief-Priest, Ohinoy-ete. Each group was made up of several clans, who believed to have distant patrilineal blood ties. For instance, the Okengwe group comprised of Akuta, Ehimozoko, Avi, Esusu, Ogu, Asuwe, Omoye, Omovi, Eira and Adobe. The Chief-Priest consulted the heads of the clans on any serious matter affecting the group. In addition, he administered justice and maintained the society of Epira in relative social harmony up till the eve of the British invasion at the beginning of the 19th century.¹³²

1-2-6. Decentralized Authorities of Iboland

The Ibo¹³³ country covers the major portion of the central province of southern Nigeria, the Niger dividing it into two parts, leaving the greater on the eastern side of river. This eastern portion is probably better known than the western, due no doubt, to its more rapid development. Indeed, the discovery of a coalfield at Ngwo and the flourishing palm oil markets, have done much to focus attention upon it.¹³⁴

¹³¹ - Ahmed Adam Okene, Abdelrahmane Suberu, op.cit, p 47.

¹³² - Ibid.

¹³³ - The origin of the word Ibo is obscure for it was not mentioned in the records of the early explorers. The country on the left bank of the Lower Niger, in fact, was spoken of as Elu-Ugwu, which simply indicates "high land" or hill. That on the right bank was called Ado, and this rather refers to Benin. There was a small town between Onitsha and Idah called Igbo, but this could hardly have supplied the name by which the whole country is known. The name was, doubtless, first met with at Onitsha. The people of this town claim to have come from the western side of the Niger, and some of the leading families state that they are of bini stock. These people designate all the eastern hinterland as Ibo, and the western side of the river as Enu-Ani. The word is usually spelt and pronounced Ibo, but to the native it is Igbo, the "gb" being used as an explosive sound. Ibwo is probably the nearest to the true pronunciation. Rev. G. T Basden, "Notes on the Ibo Country, Southern Nigeria", The Geographical Journal, vol65, n°1, (Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, January 1925), pp 32-41.

¹³⁴ - Ibid.

It is noteworthy that the Ibo people were for some centuries reputed to be the most truculent and savage of west African tribes for these people had specific features such as: a difficult language of many dialects, a lack of chief with any real authority, a wide variety of strange religious and magic-religious beliefs, the still almost universal belief in witches, the influence of many secret societies and sacred oracles, the division of each community into age grades and the complication of etiquette and rules of proper behavior as between juniors and seniors. All these characteristics provide fruitful causes of misunderstanding between Europeans and natives and have demanded an immense amount of patient and skilled investigation.¹³⁵

The Ibo speaking people are estimated to number four million and are therefore one of the largest tribes in Africa, but there is no Ibo tribal history, since they have attained to no higher political or social unit than the “commune” or small group of contiguous villages, whose customs and cults are identical, and who regard themselves as descendants of a common ancestor. It is, in fact, estimated that there are at least two thousand of such communes or clans¹³⁶.

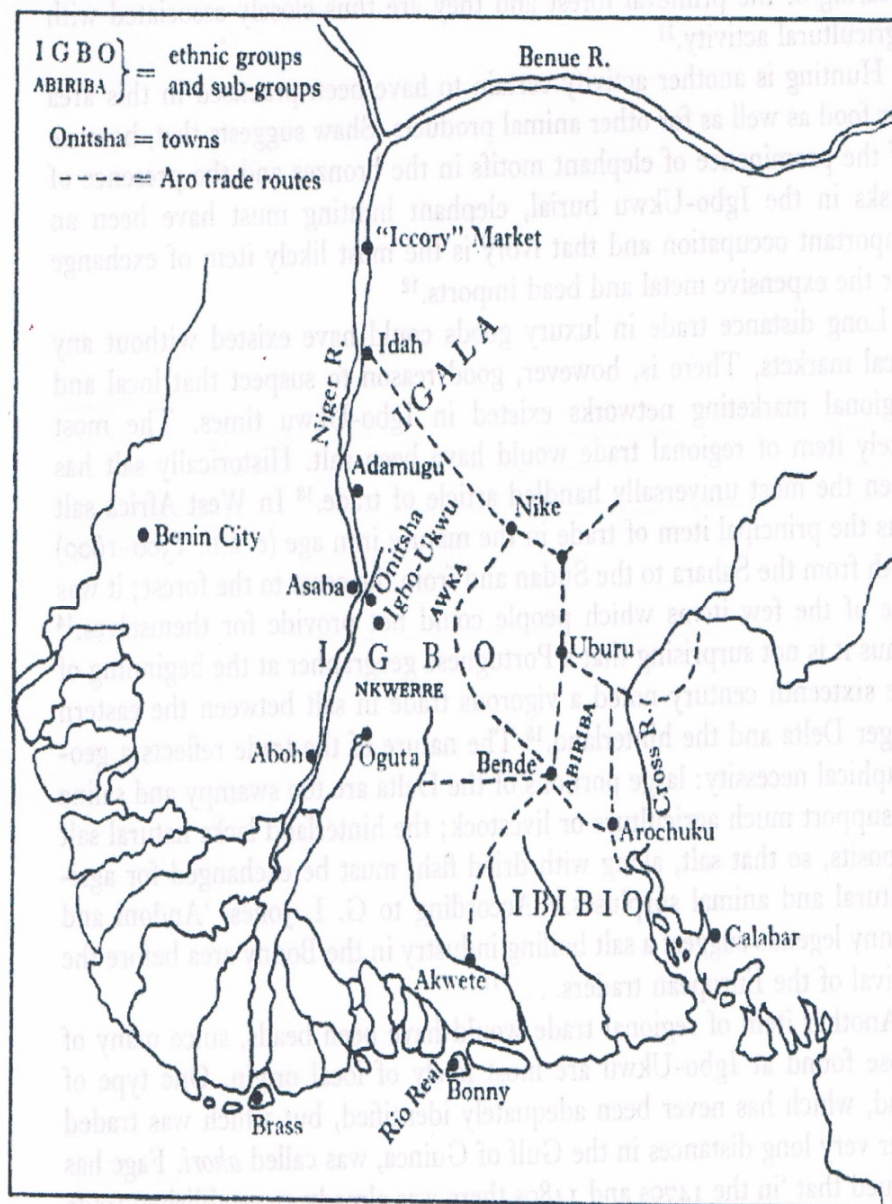
Kingship is a rare institution in Iboland and the bedrock institution of the Ibo peoples is the extended family or kindred. For instance, an extended family of ninety persons at Nsukka¹³⁷ (in the northern part of Iboland) is one of the six related families forming one kindred, the kindred being in turn one of six kindred, which form a hamlet. This hamlet and three other hamlets, form the villages or quarter and this village is one of the four composing the town or village group, or commune of Nsukka. The controlling body of such a village group is the general body, of family heads, the senior amongst them acting as ceremonial president. But although authority in such villages lays principally in the hands of the old men, this does not prevent the young and able men to assist the elders, who are foolish and to replace them as representatives and spokesmen. Moreover, wealth when it is coupled with ability, wins wide influence. Government is, then, the business of the whole community based on

¹³⁵- C. K Meek, “Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, A study in Indirect Rule”, *Journal the Royal African Society*, vol 37, n° 146, (January, 1938) pp 115-118 (on p 115), Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal African Society.

¹³⁶- Ibid, p 116.

¹³⁷- See map n°9, showing Iboland and Ibibioland in the nineteenth century on p63

the family organization and authority is, therefore, widely distributed¹³⁸. Another important feature in the political institution of Ibo society is the system of “title taking”. In fact, there are various types of titles and many of them confer a political as well as a social status¹³⁹.



Map n°9: Areas of Iboland and Ibibioland in the 19th century

Source: David Northrup, “The Growth of Trade among the Igbo before 1800”, *Journal of African History*, vol13, n°2 (Great Britain, 1972), pp 217-236.

¹³⁸- C. K Meek, op. cit p 116.

¹³⁹- Ibid, p 117.

For a better explanation of the pre-colonial political organizations that existed in Iboland, it is worth examining, here under, the political structure of one of the Ibo towns namely Asaba¹⁴⁰. The latter, which is situated on the western bank of the Niger, had greatly attracted European visitors to the area during the mid nineteenth century. Indeed a European visitor to the town wrote:

*“Asaba is finely situated on a rising ground, about 100 feet above the river, and is surrounded by walls, and by palisades of tall trees. The huts are numerous, but widely apart, they are oblong, well constructed, and many are whitewashed or colored.... The gardens are hedged in with tall coco-palms, plantains and bananas; yams are abundant, and fowls, fine sheep, and cattle seem plentiful. Altogether, we felt surprised that such an unprepossessing race should have a town so rich, so clean and so well lay out”.*¹⁴¹

Asaba’s traditional political system was well structured. There were, indeed, three main kinds of political authority, all of which were widespread in Iboland: the authority of the family head, Diokpa (equivalent to the Okpala elsewhere) over the extended family, the authority of the governing age-group, Oturaza, over the whole

¹⁴⁰- Asaba is an Ibo town, which, because of its position on the Niger, came into relatively early contact with Europeans. During the mid nineteenth century, this town became the administrative capital of the major British trading companies mainly the Royal Niger Company. The impact of the company on asaba, though great, was short-lived. But, one result of its choice of Asaba as a capital was the renewal of missionary endeavour, both catholic and Protestant, in the town. This in its turn was to have a very great impact on Asaba’s way of life. (The first C.M.S missionaries came to the town in 1875)

Elisabeth Isichei, “Historical Change in an Ibo Polity: Asaba to 1885”, *Journal of African History*, vol 10, n°3, (Cambridge university press, Great British, 1969), pp 421-438 . It is also stated and according to numerous accounts: “the town of Asaba was founded by a man called Nsebini (or Ujom) from Nteje (the latter is a town situated north-east of Onitsha, forming part of the Umueri group). Asaba, therefore, belonged to the Umueri clan of descendants from the common ancestor, Eri, the latter being an Igala warrior, who settled in Iboland, married Ibo wives and had seven sons: Nri, Agulu, Igbariamn, Anuke, Nteje, Nsugbe and Araba, who founded in Iboland towns that bear their names”.

F.O Isichei, *The Lower Niger and Tribes*, (London, 1906), p 34.

¹⁴¹- William Balfour Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Benue in 1854*, (London, 1856), pp 294-295.

town, and the limited and specific duties and the personal prestige of individuals holding particular titles¹⁴².

The Diokpa was the oldest man of the oldest surviving generation in a family. In fact, each quarter as well as each component family, acknowledged a Diokpa's authority. This man was regarded with reverence, for he embodied the authority of the ancestors, and he would settle family disputes, allocate land and so on¹⁴³.

The system of age-sets and age grades embraced the whole town, cutting across the particularism of individual families and quarters. Age sets, both of men and of women, were formed approximately every two years, though women's age sets were of little political importance. Several age-sets formed an age grade and each age-grade had its appropriate duties. For instance, children and youths tidied the streets and compounds, while men were responsible for various forms of public works such as burying the dead and defense. At the age of approximately fifty eight, they became members of the Oturaza, which was charged with the government of the whole town, and they retired after ten years service. Two officials, the Onoi and Oloto, each representing part of the town, acted in turn as the Oturaza's chairman and spokesman.

Moreover, a third official, Ayiwe or Ezeugbo, was of essentially ritual significance. He held the ofo symbol of authority for the whole town, and played a leading part in the annual ceremonies¹⁴⁴.

Like all the other Ibo towns, Asaba had a system of individual titles, which were acquired by purchase and by ritual. They were a source of personal prestige rather than of power. The lowest title was that of MKpisi, held by all freeborn men. The next was Ewu-Ogwa, taken as an immediate prelude to Alo the one above it. The highest title was that of Eze and its holders were called Eze, Obi or Igwe. The evidence suggests that in Asaba as elsewhere in Iboland the number of titled men

¹⁴²- Elisabeth Isichei, "Historical Change in an Ibo Polity: Asaba to 1885", *Journal of African history*, vol10, n°3, (Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, 1969). pp 421-438.

¹⁴³- Ibid. p 423.

¹⁴⁴- Ibid.

increased steadily. Originally, Asaba was ruled by a single Eze but the number of holders of the Eze title tended to multiply through time as stated by Isaac Spencer:

*“The number of Eze in Asaba had increased from about 200 to about 500 and their prestige had declined accordingly”*¹⁴⁵.

The title of Asaba was introduced in the early nineteenth century, but it was principally a dignity awarded to a wealthy and prominent man, rather than a position of power. The man whom Europeans regarded as successive rulers of Asaba namely the Ezebogo in the 1850¹⁴⁶ and the Obi Igweli in the 1870¹⁴⁷ did not hold the Asaba title. Indeed, each was simply one Eze among many, who achieved pre-eminence by his personal qualities¹⁴⁸.

As well as this structure of essentially prestigious titles, there were also other titles, which conferred particular duties and obligations, such as the Onoi and Oloto or the senior military officials, Odogun and Iyase. There was also the senior women official, the Omu, who with her revenue was responsible for regulating the affairs of the market¹⁴⁹.

1-2-7. Decentralized Authorities of Ibibioland

The Ibibio live in the southeastern part of Nigeria, on the Cross River. They reckon descent patrilineally. A household is composed of a father, his wife or wives, and their children. The latter live with their mother and older male offspring often attach a room to the main building and live there until they build their own house, while females stay with their mother until they get married. When many of the sons

¹⁴⁵- Isaac B Spencer « Asaba and the Asabans », (CMS Archives CA3/02), 10 september 1879. He resigned from the CMS in 1881 because of the inquisition into native agents at the time. He worked as a trader until 1887, when he accepted an invitation to return to CMS service, but he died soon after (CMS Archives, Niger Mission, 1881/116, 1887/91, 1889/96)).

¹⁴⁶- Rev Samuel Crowther and Rev John Christopher Taylor, The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, vol I, (London, 1859), p 39-40

¹⁴⁷- Northcote W. Thomas, Anthropological Report on Ibo Speaking Peoples of Nigeria, part IV, Law and custom of the Ibo of the Asaba District, Southern Nigeria. (London, 1914)? p 3

¹⁴⁸- Elisabeth. Isichei, op.cit, p 423.

¹⁴⁹- Ibid. p 424.

have reached adulthood and are married, all having a house around or beside that of the father, then the household has grown to what is known as household group, or compound (Ekpuk)¹⁵⁰.

Several household groups constitute a subfamily (ufok) and several subfamilies make up a family (nnung), including sometimes as many as several hundred people. Several families constitute a village (idung or obio), which may have a population of up to several thousand people.

A number of villages make up a village group, or lineage (oduk) of allies (iman), which must not go to war against any member of the group. In fact, an attack on any of them by an outsider means an attack on the whole group. Various village groups or lineages in Ibibioland form what is called a clan and clans make up a tribe.

It should be noted that in the Ibibio communities, the lineage groups recognize a remote and unascertainable ancestor. The clan, indeed, never represent a political structure nor does it constitute a central authority, involving the permanent or even occasional submission of the localized lineage groups. The traditional associations or the secret societies are an important institution in the life of the Ibibio communities.¹⁵¹ According to J.C Anene:

“The subtlety, complexity and stability which characterized the manner in which the Ibo communities organized their political life may be said to apply to the Ibibio”¹⁵²

As matter of necessary, the elders in Ibo and Ibibio communities had to belong to the traditional associations, especially Ekpo and Ekong. Indeed, no elder could afford not to belong to these important associations. It was a means of enhancing their status, as they had to pay a certain amount of money in order to be admitted to

¹⁵⁰- Daniel A. Offiong, «The Status of Ibibio chiefs », *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol 57, n° 4 (The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research, Oct 1984), p 100-113.

¹⁵¹- Ibid.

¹⁵²- Anene J.C, *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906*, (Cambridge University press, 1966), p 14.

membership. The amount of money increased as the rank within the society increased. Belonging to these associations was one of the ways of demonstrating to the people that one was a man of means. Ekpo was the executive arm of the village government while Ekong was in charge of war affairs. Furthermore, many decisions affecting the village and even the lineage were made at Ekpo meetings¹⁵³.

It should be mentioned also that Ibibio believe greatly in the supernatural world. In fact, among the Ibibio, religion, law, justice and politics are intricately interwoven. Law and custom are believed to have been handed down from the spirit world from immemorial antiquity and from ancestor to ancestor.¹⁵⁴

It must be noted also that the spirit world in the Ibibio community consists of an all powerful deity named “Abasi” who rules over the physical universe, other supernatural entities of lesser stature and mankind itself. This deity is of gigantic proportions, invisible to human eyes, and inhabits the sky and earth, signifying its omnipresence. The deity is helped by a multitude of spirits known as “Ndem”, who act as intermediaries between him and humans. They are, indeed, viewed as helpers or assistants or messengers rather than as deities in their own right. These spirits possess normal human male and female bodies and are visible only to religious specialist in a state of possession. They carry out certain tasks for Abasi and inhabit shrines called “iso idem”, when prayers and sacrifices offered. These sacrifices are passed on to Abasi, who in turn sends power or “odudu” for the desired ends if the supplicants merit it. The ancestors plead the cause of their families and lineages with the spirits for proper presentation to Abasi, the Supreme Being.¹⁵⁵

J.C Anene states just as in the case of the Igbo, Ibo and other communities of the south east of what is Nigeria, the nearest to what may be regarded as an organ of government is the council of elders named “esop mbong” or “esop isong”, who are

¹⁵³- Offiong D.A, « the Functions of the Ekpo Society of the Ibibio of Nigeria”, The African Studies Review, (1984), p 118-119

¹⁵⁴- Ibid, p 101.

¹⁵⁵- Ibid.,p 102.

fathers of component family segments. These “elders”¹⁵⁶ are principally the representatives and spokesmen of the ancestors. Furthermore, each elder possesses domestic authority because he is the intermediary between the extended family and the ancestors¹⁵⁷ .

As for the government of the lineage group, the center of control lies in the council of elders. The latter is not a legislative body. Indeed, the meetings of the elders are frequent but not formal. Indeed they meet when it is necessary to take a common action like sacrifice or to settle certain internal disputes that menace the well being of the group. The meeting is regularly at “efe-ekpo” a bush house where they sit to drink and talk over common problems. They can also meet in a special hall set aside for this purpose in the compound of the chief “efe obio”, or in most serious matters such as: swearing on oath “mbiam”, they will meet at the village square “ata esien”¹⁵⁸ .

It is also worth mentioning that in the Ibibio communities, there is no law-making in the ordinary sense of the word. In fact, there is no need to prescribe formally any laws as deterrents against behavior that offends collective conscience, because everybody accepts implicitly that departure from norms socially approved by the deity and spirits as well as the ancestors is likely to incur the displeasure and vengeance of the ancestors. When emergency laws are promulgated by the elders’ council, such laws are invariably given a divine sanction by a sacrifice to the deity Abasi¹⁵⁹ .

Similarly, there is no institutional judiciary. Judicial proceedings are, indeed, informal and are aimed at restoring solidarity. For instance, the extended family, “trial” is a matter of conciliation and a purification ceremony and when it involves

¹⁵⁶ -Generally, elders are addressed as « chiefs » in their respective communities. These elders are most often heads of extended families or man who hold some responsible position in the extended family, village, sub-clan or clan. In contemporary Ibibio, many villages select young educated men from traditional ruling families as their chief for the purpose of attending important government meetings and taking care of the general administration of the village council. Such villages always appoint an elder, who is responsible for rituals in the village. The young chief must be well versed in the history, custom and tradition of the people. Generally all the traditional rules are chiefs or elders.

¹⁵⁷ -Anene J.C, op.cit, p 13

¹⁵⁸ - Cowan, L.G, Local Government in West Africa,(1958)., p 62.

¹⁵⁹ -Offiong D.A, op.cit, p 102.

inter-lineage disputes, the elders meet although nobody is excluded from the assembly. Nevertheless, only the elders will take the decision and any one of them, who cannot attend can send his deputy, usually his eldest son¹⁶⁰. What is evident is that the emphasis on political balkanization of the Ibibio should not lead to the conclusion that they are isolated and also lacking in integrative mechanism. According to Anene:

“A definable political framework and subjection to the political authority are not necessarily the most effective criteria of group cohesiveness and unity”¹⁶¹

Anene also adds that among the Ibibio as well as the Igbo and Ibo, common interests in mythical values are more important unifying factors than the secular sanction of force, considered to be the prerequisite of large-scale political consolidation.¹⁶²

It is evident from the above presentation that the elders or the chiefs enjoyed very high status in pre-colonial Ibibio. They were, in fact, at the very pinnacle of their communities. They played very significant roles and were greatly respected by their people.

1-2-8. Decentralized Authorities of Igboland

In Igboland, there existed several separate villages or wards each covering a small geographical area and each representing a patrilineage. According to O.Ikime, the Igbo and the Ibibio were organized on a clan basis or in group of villages which trace their origins to a common male ancestor. Usually, there was the clan center where the founder of the clan settled. From that parent settlement, new settlements sprang. All such new settlements recognized their blood ties with parent settlement.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ -Offiong D.A, op.cit, p 102

¹⁶¹ - Anene, J.C, op.cit, p 15.

¹⁶² -Ibid.

¹⁶³ - Obaro Ikime ., The Fall of Nigeria (the British Conquest) ., p.161.

In the Igbo society, each village group had a number of different political institutions. It might have an assembly of elders or an assembly of all adult males, who could meet, when discussing important events. Thus, each family had a particular elder at its head. Furthermore, each village group contained a number of component villages, where a number of political principles were developed. Among these was the age grade linking together all the community's men of a particular age and each age grade had its own duties. Some towns for example were dominated by young men, while some others by rich influential men who gained a say in the affairs of the town.¹⁶⁴

These traditional societies also gave its members a great deal of say in the matters, which affected their lives. Thus people were free to achieve a position and status in society by their own efforts. Age, however, was not the only criterion for wielding influence and authority. As reported by O Collins:

“Proven success in various fields, war, hunting, farming... and also conferred special respect enabled a man to play a leading role within his community.”¹⁶⁵

Another typical feature, which marked these traditional societies was the absence of any central authority to which appeals could be made. Indeed, all disputes which arose between individuals had to be settled within the village and when inter-village disputes arose, a third village was often called to arbitrate.¹⁶⁶ Thus, in each village people had to be content with the decision of their elders. But, in some cases when the disputed groups were dissatisfied with their elders' decision, they had recourse to the supernatural. In fact, the Igbo believed in an almighty being omnipresent called Tshuku (God the Creator or the Supreme God) whom they

¹⁶⁴ - A.E.Afigbo, *The Indigenous Political Systems of the Igbo*, (Africa World Press, 2005), p156.

¹⁶⁵ - O.Ikime ., op.cit ., p.161.

¹⁶⁶ - T.Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.337.

constantly worshiped and whom they believed to communicate directly with them through its sacred shrine at Aro.¹⁶⁷

1-2-9. Decentralized Authorities of Ijoland

Like the Ibibio and the Igbo, the Ijo peoples of the Niger Delta lived in small villages, which were divided into a number of wards or houses. The head of the village was the Amanyanabo, who did preside over the village assembly, which consisted of all adult males. The Amanyanabo was often elected by the ward heads, who were usually chosen on the grounds of age. This organization is presented in diagram (H), which shows the political structure of the Ijo society.

The Ijo villages had developed early in the eighteenth century a number of small trading states such as : Bonny , Brass , New Calabar , Old Calabar... The latter ones were based on a fundamental social unit, the Canoe House,¹⁶⁸ which represented the basic trading unit rather than the Village House being organized by lineages. In the Ijo speaking communities of the eastern Niger Delta, the canoe house became the organizational unit responsible for conducting the slave trade with Europeans. A canoe house was a branch of a lineage that had developed enough wealth most likely through the trade in slaves, to equip a war canoe of fifty soldiers that could be put at the disposal of the state in times of peril. The ability to equip a war canoe served two functions.

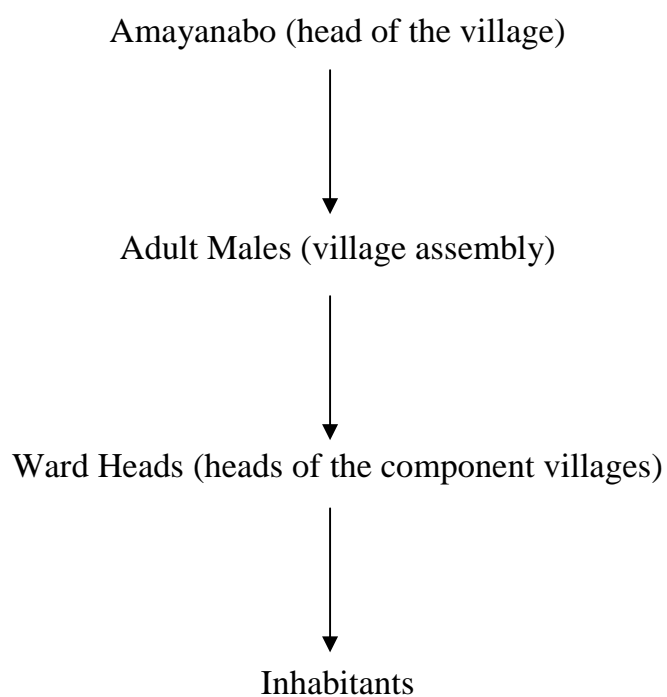
First, it illustrated the power of the house and by extension the house head in the community, thereby establishing the house as an important factor in local affairs. Second the war canoe could itself be used for the procurement of more slaves. Slaves could then be sold for more wealth or incorporated into the house. Those slaves incorporated into the house could help in the procurement of more slaves. Overtime,

¹⁶⁷ - T.Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.337.

¹⁶⁸ - "...The canoe house is based on the possession of a canoe though one equipped for war. It also possessed ordinary trading canoe for bringing slaves down from the markets of the interior. It consisted of a wealthy trader who was the head of the house. All his lineal descendants and slaves were members of the house. When he died preference to succession was given to one of his own children though a remarkable feature of these Ijo states was that a slave of outstanding ability could succeed to leadership. The new head of the house was chosen by all free born and slave members of the House ..." M.Crowder, op.cit ., p.61.

Diagram (H)

The Political Organization of the Ijo Society



Source: M. Crowder., op. cit., p 59

slaves became assimilated into their new houses, and through marriage or bravery in battles or slave raiding, could become fully integrated into the house, even to the point of becoming the house head. House systems such as these had emerged in both Bonny and Kalabari by the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁹

From what it has been examined earlier, it can be concluded that the country was a large area with major regions that had developed different forms of societies. Indeed, the latter were either states with a centralized authority, which dominated the northern regions or stateless societies with a decentralized authority which developed in the southern ones.

Having illustrated the African origin of both centralized and decentralized authorities in the Nigerian region, it is worth mentioning the way in which those African states maintained relations with each other. Trade, indeed, was the most important factor linking different societies. No region was economically independent; the regions relied on each other for goods they could not produce, making good inter-group relations of paramount importance. In addition, maintaining trade routes was an inter-state task that required members of all communities to contribute to clearing brush, providing security, and performing other duties that made trading as convenient as possible.

It is also of paramount importance to add that social and cultural organizations such as age grades and secret societies also facilitated good inter-group relations by providing levels of identity that stretched beyond individual community lines. Also crossing community lines was the common practice of intermarriage, which brought people from different backgrounds into new communities and forged cultural and biological ties between them. Closely related to intermarriage and trade was migration. People relocated across the region as a result of trading activity, intermarriage, displacement through war, and the slave trade. As a result, cultural barriers remained porous. Cultural activities such as festivals, food preparation techniques, and even words from different languages circulated across state and community lines. These

¹⁶⁹ - G I Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, (London Oxford University Presss, 1963), p280.

activities or words often became fully incorporated aspects of societies in which they did not originate. Indeed, many origin myths in the societies of the Nigerian region speak to the antiquity of the inter-groups relationships that existed in these areas. The Nupe in the middle belt region, trace their ancestry to an Igala prince, also in the middle but in further east. The Igala have traditions that link their origin to the Yoruba in the southwest. The Idoma claim descent from the Jukun, and the Efik, from the south east, claim their origin in intermarriage between an Igbo man and an Ibibio woman. The Urhobo, from the Niger Delta, claim their society was founded by the son of an oba (king) of the Benin dynasty to the west. Such traditions clearly indicate the African origin of these societies. More importantly, they illustrate the political and social connections that existed between groups that considered themselves distinct but related.¹⁷⁰

Thus, the territories in and around modern-day Nigeria constituted a dynamic area characterized by the existence of several powerful centralized and decentralized states, which were involved in political, economic, and cultural activities that both linked them together and accentuated their distinct contributions to the region as a whole. Trade remained the most important factor linking groups but with the establishment of Europeans on the Atlantic coast as permanent trading partners, this trade increasingly shifted towards one item: slaves. Thereafter, the slave trade would have a transformative impact on the individuals and the states of this region between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The section that follows will be a contribution to examine the various kinds of their trading intercourses focusing on the most important form of commerce “the slave trade”. It will also clarify the process through which the European commerce was extended from the coast to the Nigerian hinterland.

1-3. The Nature of Euro -Nigerian Relations during the Pre-Colonial Era

One of the most important aspects of West African history up to the beginning of the nineteenth century concerns the expansion of slave trade. This lucrative commerce became more widespread in the area known nowadays as Nigeria as a

¹⁷⁰ - Toyin Falola and Matthew M.Heaton, A History of Nigeria, p.38.

result of the interaction between its coastal groups and Europeans during the mid of the fifteenth century. Both, indeed, were engaged in trading relations exchanging European goods with African luxury commodities such as: gold, ivory and spices.¹⁷¹ But slave trade became soon important not only for these West Africans but for Europeans as well. This important form of African commerce was to last for about four centuries between 1450 and 1850. Henceforth, another form of trade known as legitimate commerce was to become dominant.

For a better understanding of the major stimulants which led to such transitions in their trading intercourses, it is worth studying the nature of the commerce that had existed between them before the emergence of slave trade. From now and then, it is probably important to examine the latter focusing on the main factors which led to its end and to the birth of the conventional trade as a substitute. But in order to develop such a legal trade and for different reasons, new groups of Europeans other than traders mainly the philanthropists and explorers started to show their interests in African affairs. These groups in effect played effective roles in abolishing slave trade and in co-operating well with West African groups.

1-3-1. Euro-Nigerian Relations during the Era of Slave Trade (1450 -1807)

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, African groups in the Niger Delta, Benin, Hausaland and Yorubaland built up an important network of markets and trade routes. They were involved in different forms of commercial intercourses. They have had long standing inter-and international commercial networks dating back to well before the creation of the country in 1914. The river systems served as major avenues of trade throughout the region, but beyond this there were many major roads concerning villages, towns and regions dating back many centuries. For example, in the northern savannas, people traded goods across the Sahara desert to North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The trans-Saharan trade trickled to a halt, later on in the twentieth century with the advent of British colonial rule. The savannas were also commercially connected to the states of the forest zone, which themselves traded with the coastal

¹⁷¹ - J.D Fage, (4th edition), op.cit., p.67.

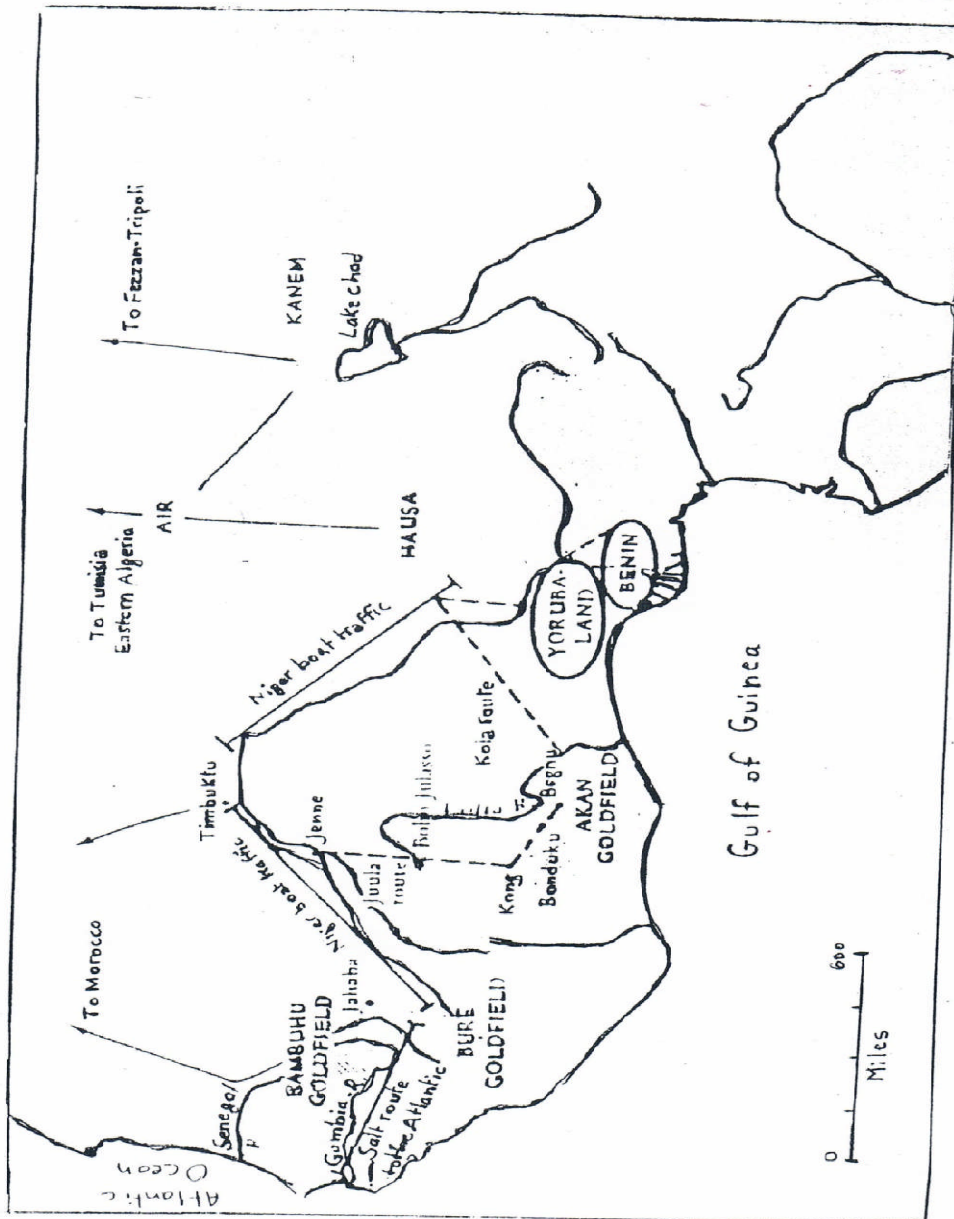
states. Nigerian communities also traded east and west throughout West Africa, as well as with each other, in ways that led to historical linkages between distinct, independent states in the region that long pre-dated colonial rule.¹⁷² Important items of trade in the pre-colonial period included food items, salt, leather goods, weapons, horses and textiles, all of which could be traded by barter as well as for beads, iron and copper rods, and cowry shells, which were commonly used as currencies.

Agriculture had always formed the basis of the economic activity and life style of most Nigerians. Nigeria, in fact, boasted a wide variety of agricultural landscapes, yielding a large spectrum of agricultural goods. Food crops included yams, cassava, bananas, rice, maize, millet, citrus fruits, groundnuts; cocoa and palm produce (oil, kernels, and wine). These products were produced both for domestic consumption and later on for export. Cocoa production flourished in the southwest, while palm oil and groundnut productions developed respectively in the southeast and the north. Non-food products were also abundant in Nigeria. Cotton, rubber and timber, have been important products, used both in domestic manufacturing and as export commodities over the years. Animal husbandry has also been a major occupation throughout Nigeria. In the savannas of the north, cattle-rearing has been an important aspect of the economy providing beef and milk as well as hides. Goats, guinea fowl, snails and eggs have been major protein sources and items of trade as well. In coastal communities, fishing has also been a major economic activity.¹⁷³

Agricultural labor has been complemented by local craftsmanship and artisanry in such areas as blacksmithing, leather-working, construction, textile manufacturing, building, boat making and so forth. One major example of economic diversification can be seen in the growth of iron working in many parts of the greater Nigerian area during the first millennium BCE. In fact, evidence of iron working and iron tools at archeological sites dates from the seventh century BCE at Taruga, near Abuja, in the middle belt region. The Taruga site is also known as the center of the Nok culture, most famous in archeological circles for the large terracotta sculptures found within a

¹⁷² - See map n°10 showing the Early Trade Routes in West Africa by 1500., p78.

¹⁷³ - Toyin Falola and Matthew M.Heaton, *op.cit* , p.19.



Map n° 10: Early Trade Routes in West Africa by 1500.

Source: P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson & J. Vansina, op.cit, p. 94.

500 kilometers of Taruga. At Taruga, there is evidence not only of the use of iron technology but also of iron smelting, which indicates a local knowledge of iron production. Other sites of archeological importance, in the middle belt region, include Tadun Wada, Kuchamfa, Jemaa Maitumbi, Kawuand Kagara, all of which were smelting iron between 900 BCE and 200 CE, the recognized dates for the duration of the Nok culture.¹⁷⁴

Iron smelting activities also occurred in other regions of the Nigerian area such as: Uffe Ijemu, in the southwest, where iron smelting dates back to 160 CE. At Opi, in the south east, the earliest dates for iron smelting may begin as early as the fifth century BCE. Even where there is no direct evidence of iron smelting, iron tools have been found across the greater Nigerian area. The Afkipo site has yielded dates between 50 BCE and 150 CE for iron tool use, while the Daima mound in the Lake Chad region of the Sahel indicates the iron tool use from between 500 and 600 CE.¹⁷⁵

Blacksmiths were certainly responsible for the development of iron tools in the places mentioned above. Other metals became important in the greater Nigerian area after the development of Iron working Manipulated copper, brass and tin became ceremonial and luxury items during the late first millennium CE. Elaborate copper and bronze artifacts from the Igbo Ukwu archeological site in the southeast date from the ninth century CE, while bronze and brass sculptures from Ife in the southwest date from eleventh century CE. Items from these sites include busts of elite figures, crowns, as well as anklets, bracelets, necklaces and so on. Tin deposits are plentiful in the Middle Belt region particularly in the Jos plateau area, like copper, bronze, and brass, tin was useful mainly for decorative purposes.¹⁷⁶

Blacksmiths and other metal workers became very important members of early societies in the greater Nigerian area. They formed guilds to protect the quality of their products and the knowledge used to create them. Metal workers became linked not

¹⁷⁴ - E.E Okafor,, *The Earliest Iron Smelting Sites in Africa*, (*Nigerian Heritage* 9, 2000),p.146..

¹⁷⁵ - P.Sanclair, B.Andah, A.Akpoko, *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, (London, Routledge, 1993).p432.

¹⁷⁶ - *Ibid*, p 435.

only with the livelihoods of everyday citizens but also with political hierarchy making them indispensable members of communities. As Aremu has put it:

“Metal craftsmen usually enjoyed prestigious and high-status positions in their societies because of the importance of their crafts to the social and economic reproduction of the society. Skilled copper, brass, bronze workers were often associated with the monarchs and the elite that monopolized their products...Blacksmiths were seen as the nerve center of economic activities like hunting, farming, wood carving palm wine tapping, medicine, fishing, cloth weaving...They were considered more important than the farmers, hunters, wood carvers, and medicine men because they manufactured some of the tools that those professions used”¹⁷⁷

Thus metal working not only added a new dimension to the economies of agricultural societies but also made further differentiation of economies possible through the tools they produced.

It is worth noting also that human labor was a commodity that could be bought and sold for a long time. Slaves, indeed, were a major item of trade for many centuries in parts of Nigeria, and played important roles in the domestic economies of many states in the Nigerian region. However, the main source of people for sale into slavery was those captured in warfare. These captives were either ransomed to the people they came from or integrated into the captor's society.¹⁷⁸ In the latter case, they were often forced to work as slaves. For instance, in the far interior the Muslim kings who collected and sold slaves for lucrative export to the north usually kept a few for their own use. Some, however, were exchanged for horses as it was the case for Bornu,

¹⁷⁷ - David A Aremu, Change and Continuity in Metallurgical Traditions, Origins, Technology and Social Implications in Pre-Colonial Nigeria, (London,1995), p136.

¹⁷⁸ - J.Iiffe ., op.cit ., p. 110.

fifteen or twenty slaves for a single Arab horse, while others were used in all kinds of purposes , in households , in workshops , in the armies , in the fields ...etc.¹⁷⁹ In Benin, for example , slaves were used in the mines . Indeed, Nalentin Fernandes, a traveller who went to Benin in the 1490s described how seven kings possessors of seven mines of gold had slaves who they put into the mines.¹⁸⁰

Slaves could also be sold for money or traded for goods. They could be given as gifts to family members and political supporters or as tribute to imperial overlords. Furthermore, they were used as sacrificial offerings in religious ceremonies in traditional settings. Female slaves served both as domestic labor and very often as sexual providers, particularly as concubines in the palaces of wealthy or noble Muslims in the northern savanna states. Because of this, young female slaves were always the most expensive and abundant slaves traded across the Sahara to the Muslim countries of North Africa and the Middle East.¹⁸¹

Slaves also had the opportunity to integrate themselves to their new communities through assimilation and overtime marriage and childbirth. They did not constitute a class in the African setting. They tended to live with the family that owned them as dependents within the household and tended to do the same type of work as other family members. Slaves of agricultural owners performed agricultural duties; slaves of artisans apprenticed as artisans. They were acculturated by the families, in which they lived and over time, might even marry into the family, thereby becoming emancipated through their relationship to free persons. The children of such slaves would be free as well.¹⁸²

In the Savanna regions, slavery was often governed by Islamic law. The Quran permits the enslavement of non-believers, making areas of recent conversion and areas on the frontiers of Islam prime arenas for the enslavement of non-Muslims. Paul Lovejoy has suggested that in the period from 650 to 1600 AD, the total number of

¹⁷⁹ - Hugh Thomas , The Slave Trade , the History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1440-1870 ., p. 47.

¹⁸⁰ - Ibid.

¹⁸¹ - R.A.Alabi, Late Stone Age Technologies and Agricultural Beginnings in pre-colonial Nigeria, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005), p95.

¹⁸² - Ibid.

slaves exported across the Sahara was 4.820.000 and that an average number of 3000 – 8000 slaves per year were traversing the main trans-Saharan routes.¹⁸³

It is important to note here that slaves existed in the area long before the arrival of Europeans. They were used as servants but they were at least considered a definite part of that society. In Bornu, for example, the kings often sent slaves out to govern their provinces and in Yorubaland the Obas often ruled through them. But in both cases, they could not be recruited to high office.¹⁸⁴ So, the trading patterns of these states with their neighbors included goods as well as slaves. The latter were gradually to become the principal commodity for either the West African internal commerce or external trade which started to develop with European nations from the fifteenth century. Therefore, many questions could be asked here about when and how the coastal groups in what is today Nigeria succeeded to develop slave trading relations with the European nations and who among the Europeans became involved in the trade.

In the late fifteenth century, a new contact with European nations became available for West African coastal groups. It was the Portuguese who initiated the contact with the coastal people. In fact, they succeeded to establish trading relations exchanging European luxury commodities with a wide variety of local products including spice, local textiles, gold, ivory... For instance, by the 1480s the primary commodity in Portugal's trade with Benin was pepper obtained through the coastal port of Gwato.¹⁸⁵

This external trade was to expand rapidly as the other European sea-faring nations such as the French, the British, the Dutch, the Danes ... soon joined the Portuguese to seek African products. But it was perhaps a central tragedy of African history that this trade came to be dominated more and more by the trade in slaves. It was in reality European necessity for the labor force in Tropical America which started the race for the Atlantic slave trade. Indeed, with the rapid rise of sugar-cane

¹⁸³ - E.E Okafor, op.cit, p146.

¹⁸⁴ - M.Crowder ., op.cit ., p.55.

¹⁸⁵ - Jacques Maquet ., *Les Civilizations Noires* ., p.184.

plantations there in the mid seventeenth century, the English, Dutch, French, Danes and other Europeans became more actively involved in slave trade.¹⁸⁶ Consequently, these main trading nations created privileged companies concerned to carry slaves from West African coastlands to America. For instance, the Cacheu Company and the Maranhao and Pernambucos Companies were founded by the Portuguese in the seventeenth century and eighteenth century respectively, while Britain established the Royal Adventurers Company in 1600, the Guinea Company in 1651 and later on the Royal African Company in 1672.¹⁸⁷ The latter exported about 6.000 slaves from Benin and 14.000 from Whydah by 1689.¹⁸⁸ These companies were also given defined trading monopolies in return for which they were expected to set up forts and factories that would promote trade and defend their founders' interests against hostile interlopers whether Swedes, Dutch ... all of whom at one time or another tried their hands at West African trade.¹⁸⁹

In the Bight of Biafra, three major slaving ports emerged. These were from west to east, Elem Kalabari (also called New Calabar), Bonny, and Calabar (also known as Old Calabar). The total numbers of slaves from those ports are really difficult to calculate but Lovejoy estimates that between 1600 and 1800, the ports of the Bight of Benin shipped out 1.473.100 slaves, with over 1.2 million of these slaves being dispatched in the eighteenth century alone.¹⁹⁰ In fact, between 1676 and 1730, the Bight of Benin shipped 730.000 slaves, a remarkable 42 percent of all the slaves taken from Africa during this period. For the eighteenth century as a whole, the Bight of Benin was responsible for 20 percent of total slave exports from Africa. Slave exports from the Bight of Biafra reached a peak of 175.400 in the 1780s, an average of 17.500 per year.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ - J. Maquet, op.cit., p.184.

¹⁸⁷ - T.Hugh, op.cit., p.290.

¹⁸⁸ - Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ - Peter Duignan & L.H Gann, *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960 (The Economics of Colonialism)*, V4., p.44.

¹⁹⁰ - Paul.E.Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Competing markets for males and Female Slaves in the Interior of West Africa", *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 28, n2, (1995), pp261-93

¹⁹¹ - Ibid.

After a century of intense and violent European competition, this trade reached its height and the British became the chief carriers. In fact, in the single year 1749 about 150 ships with a capacity for at least 50.000 slaves were sent out by the British : 70 ships from Liverpool, nearly 50 from Bristol, 8 from London as well as 20 or so ships from minor harbors such as Glasgow, Lancaster and Whitehaven.¹⁹² One year later, slave trade was made even easier for British merchants as an act was passed which made the commerce entirely open, so that it was henceforth : “lawful to all his Majesty’s subjects to trade and traffic to and from any part in Africa ...”.¹⁹³ Thus, the British were to establish themselves not only as leading traders on the coast but one of the chief exporters of slaves.

For instance, about 22.000 slaves were shipped annually from the major coastal ports.¹⁹⁴ The Bight of Biafra alone exported some 185.000 slaves to the British slave traders between 1791 and 1800 from its main anchorages such as: Old Calabar, New Calabar, Cross Rivers, Bonny and Opobo.¹⁹⁵

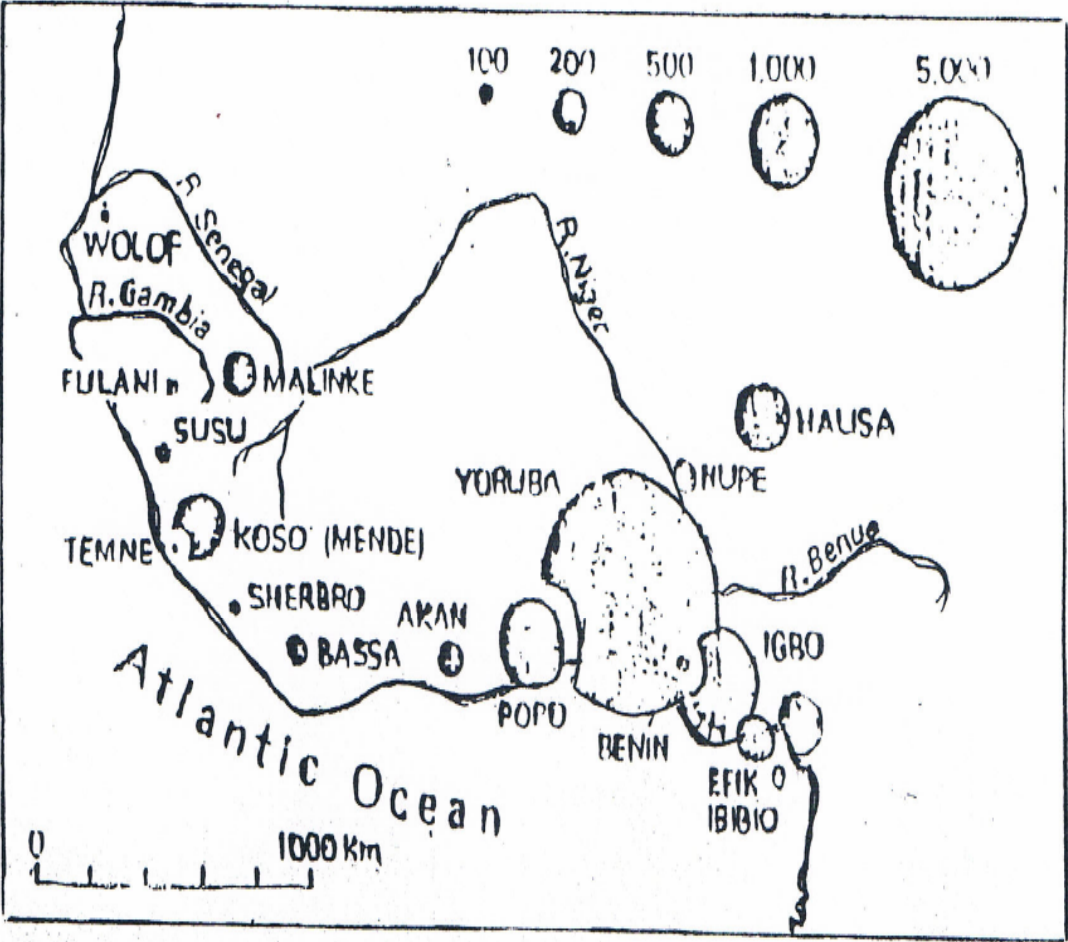
It seems clear now that West African ruling and merchant classes played an effective role in providing slaves to be exported by Europeans. They tended to cooperate with slave traders for it was probably their only way of gaining foreign exchanges which had often seduced them. But providing a great number of slaves to be sold will perhaps affect West African societies. Hence, it is interesting to examine the effect of slave trade on African societies in the Niger Delta in order to have a clear image about the different ways by which the latter became affected.

¹⁹² - T.Hugh, op.cit., p.264.

¹⁹³ - Elisabeth Donnan, “Early days of the South Sea Company”, Journal of Economic and Business History II, (3) (May 1930), p.474-84.

¹⁹⁴ - M.Crowder, op.cit., p.53

¹⁹⁵ - Ibid., p. 51. Also see map n° 11 showing the Origins of the West Africans Enslaved in the 19th century., p.85



Map n°11: Origins of West Africans enslaved in the 19th century.
Source: E.Isichei, op.cit, p 150.

1-3-2. Effects of Slave Trade on the Traditional Societies

As it has been examined earlier in the traditional societies of what was to become Nigeria, slavery was an established institution prior to the arrival of Europeans. The slave was principally a domestic servant, who could be used in all kinds of purposes. Though, he was not part of the kinship group, he was nevertheless accorded a position that he never possessed in the New World. But as slaves became gradually the commodity mostly in demand among Europeans, West African rulers and merchants organized themselves to export them. Once these Africans had exhausted their supply of domestic slaves in exchange for European products, they acquired new sources of slaves through the extension of warfare.¹⁹⁶ Prisoners of war were captured in the interior and taken directly to the coast or more usually were passed through a series of middlemen, who kept them to await sale and shipment to the Americas.¹⁹⁷

Above all, wars in the interior may not have been generally waged deliberately just to produce captives for sale. But the presence of Europeans on the coast offering what appeared to be high prices for captives undoubtedly stimulated warfare. This was especially when European guns were given as the major trading items.¹⁹⁸

Apart from the major effects of slave trade on West African societies in terms of stimulating the inter-tribal wars, the area of what is today Nigeria had been affected by depopulation. During the eighteenth century so more than 11.000 slaves were sent abroad annually from its territories.¹⁹⁹ It was estimated that in the heyday of slave trade some 19.450 slaves had been sold into slavery from the eastern Delta while Benin sold about 1.280 slaves to Liverpool in 1752.²⁰⁰

Thus, instead of benefiting from the strongest and potentially most productive members of these areas, the latter were forced to export a labor force, which created new wealth for Europeans and valuable raw materials such as gold, ivory ...etc and in

¹⁹⁶ - J.D Fage ., *History of Africa* ., 2nd edition ., p.226.

¹⁹⁷ - T.Hugh ., *op.cit* ., p. 250.

¹⁹⁸ - R.Hyam ., *op.cit* ., p.273.

¹⁹⁹ - P.Curtin, S.Feierman, L.Thompson and J.Vansina ., *op.cit* ., p.240.

²⁰⁰ - T.Hugh ., *op.cit* ., p.359.

return they obtained unnecessary consumer goods like guns which were induced to wage wars on the neighboring African territories.

Slave trade had also marked important effects on the political structure of West African traditional societies mainly those of the Niger Delta and its hinterland. As it has been examined earlier, the people in these areas were organized in villages, which were presided over by a warhead. But, the arrival of the European slave traders in the area stimulated the birth of a number of small trading states such as Bonny , Brass , New Calabar... which tended to adopt themselves with the new economic and political situations .In purely economic terms , there was an alteration in their trading patterns to satisfy the demands of slave trade . Thus, all of them became a major source of supply for slaves. In addition, the political organization of these villages underwent considerable modifications. Indeed, the Government of the village, which had been carried on by the adult males under the leadership of the Amanyanabo became in the hands of the leader and the leading traders of the state. As far as the latter are concerned, they developed a new ruling system based on the foundation of a canoe house, which became the basis of productive activity in the society.²⁰¹

It can be said now that as a result of slave trade, there was not only an increasing level of general warfare in the interior but also a serious loss of productive potential of the region. But whatever the effects it brought in terms of distorting the economic, social and political developments of the region, the greater evil of the Trans-Atlantic trade in people, was the extent of human suffering involved. Captives, indeed, were carried across the Atlantic Ocean in conditions so terrible that most of them could be expected to die from disease, maltreatment or even from exhaustion during the several weeks of their sailing.

This situation of the victims of slave trade was to change early in the nineteenth century, when trading in slaves was declared a prohibited activity. In reality many men in England had become aware of the evils of this trade since the end of the eighteenth century .The lead was taken by a group of Evangelicals, who were protestants of deep

²⁰¹ - M.Crowder ., op.cit ., p.61.

conviction and who opposed it on humanitarian grounds.⁽¹⁾ Thus, the British who had controlled the lion's share of the trade throughout the eighteenth century gave it up during the first decade of the nineteenth century. It is worth mentioning here that this abandonment of slave trade was not only as a result of the efforts of these reformers but also because economic circumstances had changed and the trade was becoming less profitable. Henceforth, slave trade was replaced by a more conventional commercial intercourse. Thus, African traders and European merchants built new trading relations, and extended the markets in which both of them had been accustomed to participate.

1-3-3. Euro-Nigerian Relations after the Abolition of Slave Trade (1807-1850)

The beginning of the nineteenth century marked an important transitional phase in relations between Europe and the area known nowadays as Nigeria. In fact, the suppression of slave trade and the gradual transition to legitimate non-slave commerce was the major change, which characterized that period. This idea of suppressing slave trade traces its origins to the late eighteenth century. At that time, philanthropists in Britain, France, North America and elsewhere working through the press, parliaments and diplomacy eventually achieved the abolition of the Atlantic slave-trade and of slavery in America, thus paving the way for the beginning at least of the abolition of slavery and the traffic in Africa.

In Britain, the humanitarians focused public attention on the evils of slave trade. Thus, the abolitionist movement, which grew out of their ideas led two major campaigns against slave trade. In fact, headed by Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce, the first campaign to prohibit this trade was organized in 1765.²⁰² The result was that slavery was declared illegal in England seven years later

²⁰² - O.Collins, op.cit., p. 136.

in 1772.²⁰³ In 1787, another anti-slave-trade campaign sponsored the establishment of a colony that would serve as a home for liberated slaves after the abolition.²⁰⁴

The abolitionists had been also active in the committees of the new protestant missionary societies such as: the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, the London Missionary Society in 1795 and the Church Missionary Society in 1799.²⁰⁵ All these societies declared that the commerce known by the name of African slave trade was repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality. Thus, because of the humanitarian motives Britain was induced to abolish her own slave trade few years later in 1807. But it would be quite wrong to think that slave trade came to an end at this stage in history. In fact, the first half of the nineteenth century was a period, when slave trade continued to flourish. For example, it was estimated that between 1800 and 1822 some 370.000 Igbo had been sold as slaves from eastern Nigeria.²⁰⁶ In addition, the river Benue provided between 1816 and 1839 about 15 slave ships.²⁰⁷ For this reason, the British found that it was the duty of their Government to act against slave trade especially where it was impeding the development of legitimate commerce.

British anti-slave-trade activities came to include the negotiation of treaties with African as well as with European authorities and the taking of political and naval initiatives to ensure the observance of these treaties. Indeed, a British naval squadron was established to ensure the implementation of the law²⁰⁸ while British diplomats brought increasing pressure to bear on other nations to outlaw this trade. As a result, the Spanish slave trade ceased to exist after 1815 followed by the French in 1816 and later on by the Portuguese in 1817.²⁰⁹

²⁰³ - In 1772, the abolitionists were encouraged by Judge Mansfield's famous judgement freeing slaves setting foot in England." From J.D Fage., *A History of West Africa* ., op.cit ., p. 113.

²⁰⁴ - R.O Ekundare ., op.cit ., p. 32

²⁰⁵ - Henry Brunschwig ., *L'Avenement de l'Afrique Noire du XIX^{eme} siecle a nos jours* ., p.22.

²⁰⁶ - M.Crowder ., op.cit ., p. 67.

²⁰⁷ - T.Hugh ., op.cit ., p.699.

²⁰⁸ - " The first West African squadron consisted at first of only 2ships : the Frigate Solebay (32 guns- Commodore E.H Columbine) and the Sloop Derwent (18 guns – Lieutenant E.Parker). They made a trial journey on the Nigerian coast in 1808." In T. Hugh ., *Ibid* ., p.574.

²⁰⁹ - Roland Oliver & J.D Fage ., *A Short History of Africa* ., p.136.

It is important to note here that though the British diplomacy had succeeded to persuade the principal European nations to declare slave trade illegal by 1817, the West African squadron was unable to capture the slaving ships that continued to export slaves to the Americas. The vast majority of them came from the Yorubaland and the Niger Delta. Indeed, the Yoruba civil wars of the nineteenth century produced a surplus of captives to be sold as slaves, while the great exporting ports of the Delta continued to engage in this trade right up the 1850s. According to T.Hugh, in 1826, there were twelve British merchant ships on River Bonny carrying slaves at the same time palm oil.²¹⁰ It was concluded, then, by the abolitionists that many areas were able to export slaves and legitimate products side by side for many years, the fact which led to the organization of new campaigns against slave trade.

Disappointed by their failure to check the actual shipment of slaves, the anti-slavery movement headed now by Thomas Fowell Buxton,²¹¹ the nineteenth century English philanthropist led the campaign against slave trade. Writing in the 1830s, Buxton argued that the slave trade could not be eliminated unless an adequate substitute was provided. He was of the opinion that slave trade and legitimate commerce were incompatible as he claimed:

*“Our great argument surely is that the slave trade kills all other trade.”*²¹²

But, the idea that legitimate commerce would be an effective way to stop slave trade seemed wrong to the British as slave trade had run its course in the 1840s. Thus, British Government took a new phase to ensure its suppression. In fact, African slave trading powers were forced to sign anti-slave-trade conventions.

²¹⁰ - T.Hugh, op.cit., p.697

²¹¹- T.F Buxton (1786-1845) was one of the England's leading 19th century philanthropists. He assumed the leadership of the anti-slavery party in the House of Commons in May 1824. In 1823, when the anti-slavery society was formed, he was a charter member. Taking up the cause of abolition, he concerned himself with the statistics of slavery operations. He prepared documents containing irrefutable facts to present in the House of Commons and framed positive principles on which to base his attack on the slave trade and slavery in Africa.

²¹² - Quoted in R Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p. 264.

British navy initiated the activity by ratifying treaties with the coastal rulers to gain their consent to the suppression of slave trade. However, the chiefs were promised certain compensation in return for giving up this trade. The ruler of Brass and king Pepple of Bonny initiated the signature of such an agreement in 1834 and 1839 respectively.²¹³ Three years later, other rulers such as Eyo and Eyamba, the chiefs of the two leading towns of Old Calabar and New Calabar (Creek Town and Duke Town) made a treaty abolishing slave trade in return for £ 2000 for five years, while Obi Osai of Aboh declared too to abandon slave trade if only a better commerce could be substituted.²¹⁴ Thus, anti-slave-trade treaties were gradually ratified. It may be noted that this system of treaty making, which was to be used later on in the establishment of British Protectorate over Nigeria nevertheless encouraged the birth of a legal commerce.

In the nineteenth century, the area was slowly changing from an economy which was predominantly slave trading, to one based on commerce in raw materials. It was not until the 1850s that slave trade finally collapsed and conventional commerce became important.

The European nations had been interested in West African palm oil early in the nineteenth century. The most important use of this product was soap, candles...etc. But the coming of railways and other new machinery in the nineteenth century in Europe and North America caused an increase in demand for palm oil on a large scale. Meanwhile, the industrial revolution relied on this West African export for more than it had on slaves. Thus, the Liverpool merchants, who had been busy with slaves until 1807 made a great transition to this business. For instance, Tobin and Horsfall imported from Benin 450 tons of palm oil to England in 1807 and 4.000 tons in 1830²¹⁵.

This change to legitimate trade seemed also to have been welcomed by a large section of West African society, which was tired of wars. Indeed, all the West African

²¹³ - O.Ikime ., op.cit ., p.7.

²¹⁴ - T.Hugh ., op.cit ., p.701

²¹⁵ - Ibid, p. 563.

states responded to the economic crisis caused by the suppression of slave trade by switching over to the palm oil production. According to J.D Fage, the British bought from the West African coast about 50.000 a year by the 1850s and about 1.500.000 a year by 1860s and nine-tenths of the palm oil trade was with the Niger Delta.²¹⁶

It seems clear now that the palm oil commerce predominated during the 1850s and British trading interests were being concentrated in two regions, Lagos the gateway to the rich forests of Yorubaland and the Delta ports, which were the outlet for the trade of the interior of eastern Nigeria.²¹⁷ Therefore, Britain's interest had been restricted to the coast. It was impossible for British merchants to penetrate inland not only because of the tight control the local rulers had on their territories but also because of the diseases to which they were subjected.

Trade of the interior, however, remained almost exclusively in the hands of the African middlemen, who secured their monopoly on the basis of their exclusive knowledge of conditions in the interior, while in the case of the lands beyond the Niger and Benue Rivers, no effective trade relations had been established. But this situation was to change gradually in the nineteenth century as the missionaries and explorers journeyed throughout the region. In fact, the discovery of the River Niger opened a highway into the hinterlands coinciding with the invention of the steamship, which facilitated the journeys on the river.

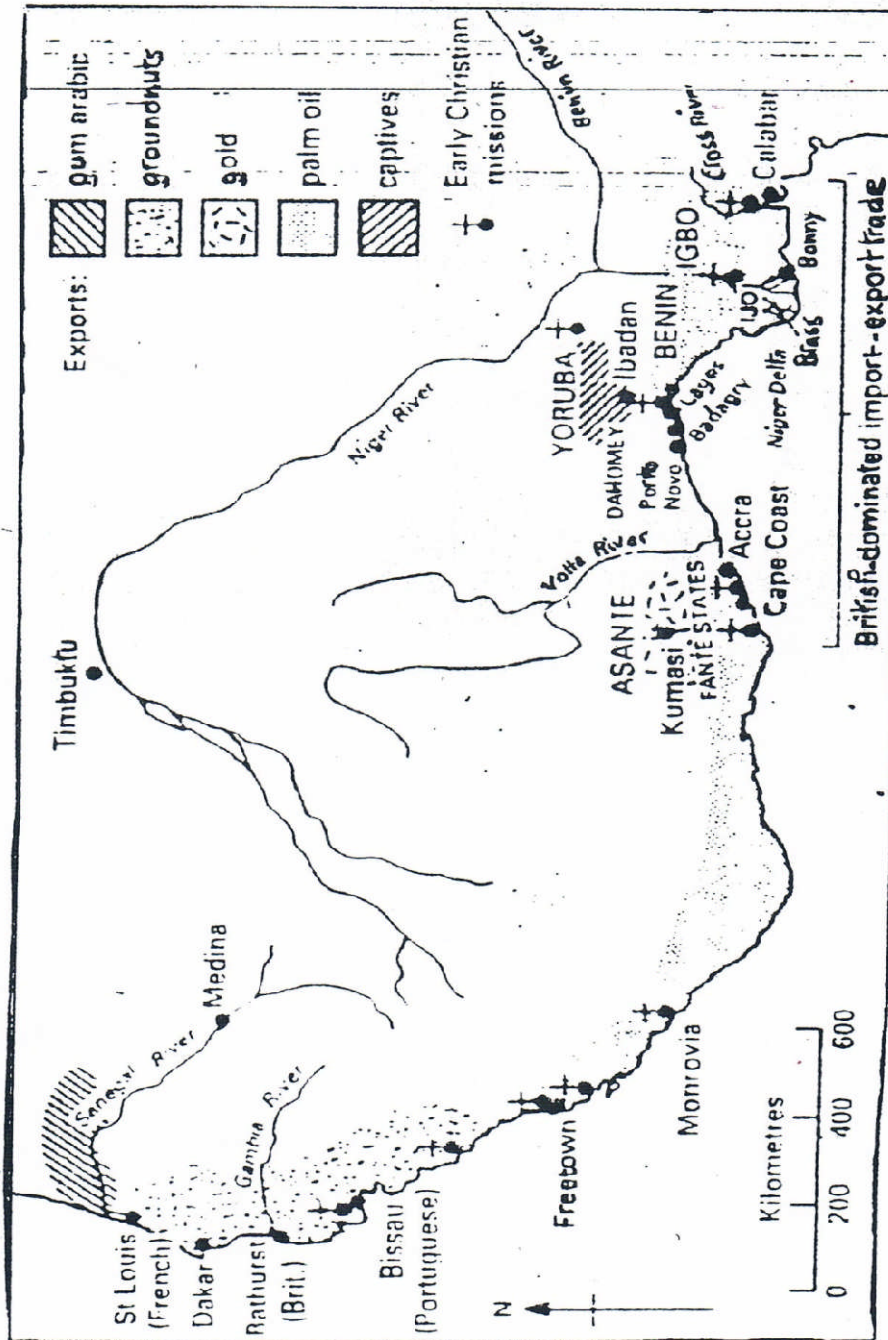
1-3-4. Trade and the Exploration of the Nigerian Interior

The anti-slave-trade movement was accompanied in Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the desire to find markets for the products of Britain's new industries. Meanwhile, as Britain's trading interest grew in West Africa, so did the desire of her merchants to trade directly with the markets of the interior. It was believed that the discovery of the Niger River might be the only way which would reveal practical means by which the interior could be reached, promote the abolition of slave trade and the development of legitimate commerce.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ - J.D Fage ., *History of Africa* ., op.cit ., p.341.

²¹⁷ - See map n° 12 showing the Expansion of Legitimate Commerce in the 19th century., p93.

²¹⁸ - R.Hyam ., op.cit ., p.268.



Map n°12: The Expansion of the Legitimate Commerce in the 19th century

Source: K. Shilington, op.cit, p 237.

The exploration of the Niger River dates from the founding of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa more commonly known as the African Association, in 1788. The latter equipped three unsuccessful expeditions inland of Nigeria between 1788 and 1793.²¹⁹ A fourth expedition was undertaken by a young Scottish doctor Mungo Park, who marched into the interior from the Gambia at the end of 1795 and who reached the Niger at Segu on July 12, 1796.²²⁰ Then, a number of official expeditions were sent out to penetrate the coastal curtain. Hugh Clapperton reached Sokoto from the north in the late 1822 and again from Badagry in the south in 1826.²²¹ Four years later, the Lander brothers completed the map of the Niger by canoeing from Bussa to the Niger Delta.²²²

The Landers, who had revealed the course of the lower Niger were followed by merchants, who were eager to make use of the information. Indeed, between the 1830s and the 1850s numerous unsuccessful trips up the Niger and the Cross Rivers were made by British traders, who aimed to keep legitimate trade alive and to acquire for themselves a wide knowledge of Africans of the Niger Delta. For instance, in 1832 a Liverpool trader Macgregor Laird²²³ led an expedition up the Niger, which aimed to open direct trade with the country beyond the Delta.²²⁴ Later on in 1841, a great Niger expedition was sponsored by British Government, which aimed to establish an agricultural colony of freed slaves at Lokoja. This, it was hoped, would become a center of Christianity and legitimate trade. As stated by R. Hyam :

²¹⁹ - Jean Suret Canale, *Afrique Noire, Géographie, Civilisations, Histoires*, p.228.

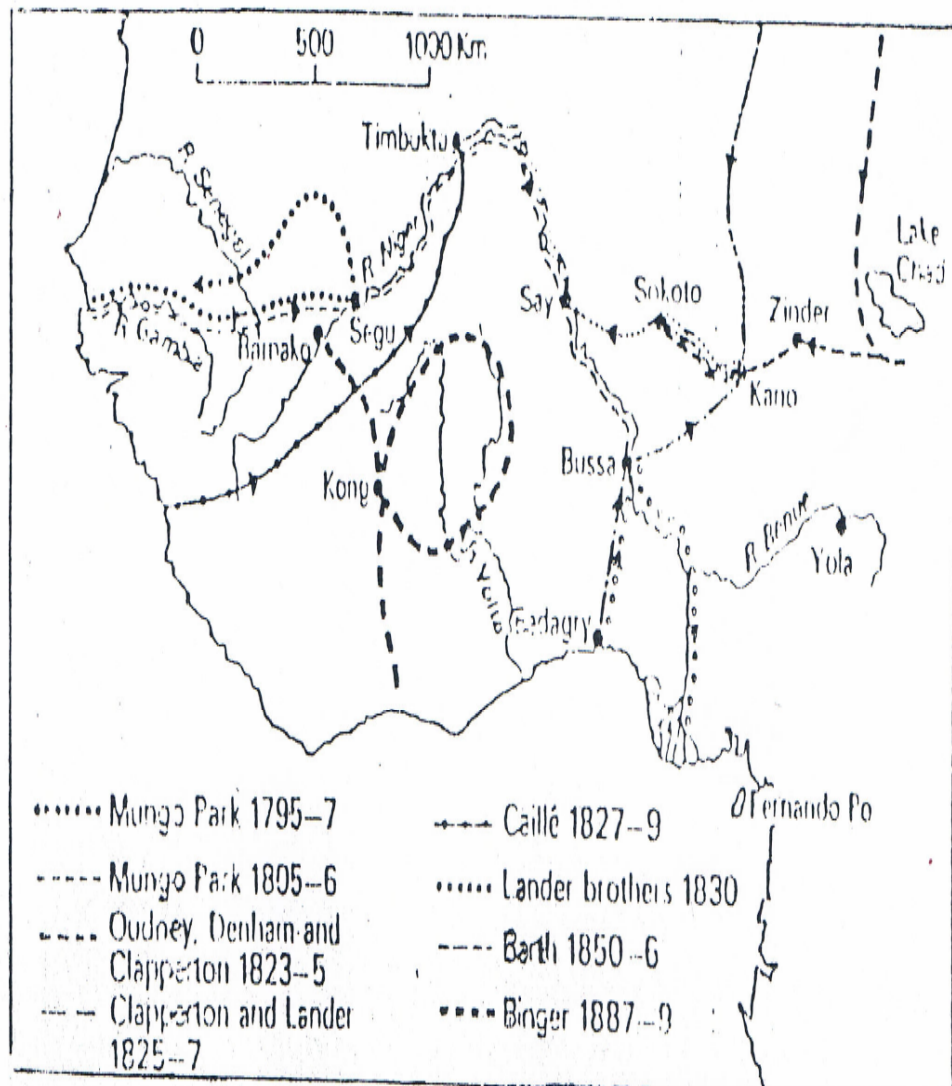
²²⁰ - O. Collins, *op.cit.*, p.70.

²²¹ - E. Isichei, *op.cit.*, p.159.

²²² - R. Oliver & J.D Fage, *op.cit.*, p.141. See also map n°13 which shows the Explorers in West Africa from the late 18th century to the late 19th century. p.95.

²²³ - M. Laird (1808-1861): founder of the Birkenhead firm of shipbuilders; built to Alburka the 55 ton paddle-wheel steamer in which this expedition was undertaken and himself accompanied the expedition, with its very heavy loss of life. He was one of the promoters of the British and American Steam Navigation Company founded to run steamers from England to New York and he started the African Steamship Company to develop communication and trade with West Africa. In 1854, he financed and fitted out this expedition known as the Pledge up the Niger and Benue which Baikie led.

²²⁴ - H. Brunschwig, *op.cit.*, p.50.



Map n°13: Explorers in West Africa from the late 18th C to the late 19th C.
Source: E.Isichei, op.cit, p 161

*“It comprised four Government commissioners authorized to make treaties and explore the chances for establishing a consul somewhere on the Niger, scientists and commercial agents for the Agricultural Society aiming to establish a model farm there.”*²²⁵

But, this expedition too was ravaged by sickness of the Delta and the result was that most of its members died. According to J.D Ajaye and M.Crowder , the result was a disastrous failure in which forty eight Europeans lost their lives.²²⁶ The expedition was recalled and for the next ten years, the British Government declined to participate in the opening of West Africa. It was not until the 1850s that a British governmental support for British traders and explorers was renewed. However, Dr William Balfour Baikie led an expedition up the Niger to Lokoja and then up the Benue to Yola in 1854.²²⁷ The great significance of this voyage was that the members of the expedition took quinine and no one of them died. Hence, it is interesting to note that residence and travel along the Niger and in all the regions of the Delta became more secure and the beginning of European penetration was facilitated. This was also to open the door to era of intensive trade and missionary work on the great river.

Conclusion

As it has been mentioned, most of the journeys made during the first half of the nineteenth century were disastrously unsuccessful as so many of their members lost their lives. But, it could not be neglected to mention that they were also of great importance as they enabled the British to establish trading relations with the interior, mainly with states along the River Niger. But though trade had been developed, the desired aim to ratify anti-slave treaties and to promote legal commerce was not achieved, as many areas still continued to exchange goods and slaves side by side for many years. This was due to the local disturbances, which dominated the region at that period. Indeed, the inter-tribal wars among the traditional societies in Yorubaland

²²⁵ - R.Hyam ., op.cit ., p.268.

²²⁶ - J.D Ajaye & M.Crowder ., op.cit., p.395.

²²⁷ E.Isichei. ., op.cit , p.161.

represented a fatal handicap to the suppression of slave trade and ensured its continuity. For this reason, new measures had been taken by the British to stop the export of slaves and to protect their trading interests there.

Hence, an intervention in the local affairs of the coastal states was felt necessary. Force, for instance, was used to expel the Kings and to install rivals who would promise to forbid the illegal trade together with the installation of a British Consul for the coast to keep an eye on them. These facts were to lead to the establishment of a policy of maximum intervention in the affairs of the coastal states, which in its turn was to affect their traditional authorities. British control had been exercised first on the coast, where British authority had been extended into the hinterland. It becomes obvious now that it was the abolition of slave trade, which paved the way for the establishment of colonial rule in the Niger districts and Yorubaland.

It should be concluded that the arrival of British colonialism in the Nigerian region had its origin in the events that took place in the south along the course of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the promotion of legitimate commerce had meant that British commercial interests were increasingly concerned with the political stability of the region. In addition, the Yoruba wars in the south had alarmed many British observers, as did the continuation of slavery and slave trade within the region. Thus, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the wheels were in motion for an eventual colonial takeover of the territories that would become southern Nigeria. By the first decade of the twentieth century, British forces had also overrun Sokoto and its emirates, bringing into existence the British Protectorates that were later consolidated into the single colonial administrative unit of Nigeria. The forces that led to the colonization of Nigeria, as well as the political and social make up of the Protectorates will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

British Colonial Occupation of Northern and Southern Nigeria

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Introduction

As it is well known, by the middle of the nineteenth century political and economic transformations had begun to change the make-up of states in the Nigerian region, to a greater or lesser degree. As the far north was transformed into an Islamic empire centered on Sokoto, the states of Yorubaland grappled with the collapse of Oyo Empire. In the Niger Delta and Calabar, established slave traders began to transform their business practices and power bases towards palm oil exports and were dealing with new forms of competition. Also affecting political, economic, and social processes was the growing influence of British trading interest and political officials, all of whom were primarily concerned with increasing British influence against what they saw as the nefarious activities of indigenous rulers and other European powers, notably France and Germany.¹ The power and influence of the British became tangible from around the middle of the nineteenth century, and by the end of the century circumstances had led to dovetailing of British interests that resulted in the colonial occupation of the territories that would become Nigeria. Therefore, this chapter is intended to show British motives for their colonial occupation in the different parts of the Nigerian region: Lagos and Yorubaland in the southwest; the Niger Delta and their hinterlands in the southeast; the territories surrounding the rivers Niger and Benue and finally the Emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate in the north.

What is evident is that circumstances under which colonial rule took hold were different in each of these regions, with the result that the process of colonization was drawn out: over forty years elapsed between the annexation of the coastal state Lagos in 1861 and the occupation of Sokoto in 1903. Differing regional circumstances also meant that different tactics were used in order to gain control of these regions. In the end, however, the most common and most effective tool of colonial expansion was the British willingness to use superior military force to subdue any opposition violently. By 1903, British predominance had been extended to create the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and the Protectorate of

¹ - A.G Hopkins, "Economic Imperialism in West Africa: Lagos 1880-92", *The Economic History Review, Review Series*, vol 21, n 3(Dec 1968), pp 580-606.

Northern Nigeria, where previously had existed autonomous, independent states under indigenous leadership.

Few years later, the Colonial Office and British Governors in Nigeria believed that centralizing the Protectorates under a single administration would be economically beneficial. For them, amalgamation would allow for a streamlining of existing expenses and would allow the central administration to divert resources as it saw fit—allocating southern revenue to the North as necessary. It would also allow for the centralization of infrastructural and development schemes, reducing waste and eventually bringing about the integration of the southern and northern economies on a much greater scale.² Therefore, this chapter will also concentrate on the major stimulants for amalgamating the Nigerian Protectorates.

2. British Occupation of Southern Nigeria (1850-1900)

As examined in the previous chapter, British intervention in the local political affairs of the coastal states of what is called today Nigeria began with the abolition of slave trade and the subsequent establishment of commodity exchange centers along its coast during the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the anti-slave-trade treaties guaranteeing the development of a legal commerce had been ratified with the major coastal states of the Niger Delta and the naval patrols had been established in order to control the slave traders. A. E Afigbo stated that:

“The campaign to eradicate the slave trade substitute for it trade in other commodities increasingly resulted in British intervention in the internal affairs of the Nigerian region during the 19th century and ultimately led to the decision to assume jurisdiction over the coastal area. Suppression of the slave trade and issues related to slavery remained at the forefront of British dealings with the local states

² Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, A History of Nigeria, Cambridge University Press, USA, (2008), p. 117.

and societies for the rest of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth century”³.

Most of the coastal groups, who had been associated over a long period with Europeans in slave trade, became increasingly involved in the legal trade. But it would be wrong to think that the promotion of the new commerce had guaranteed the suppression of slave-trade as the latter still continued to develop in the major ports of the coast mainly Lagos in the western region of the Niger Delta . For this reason Britain’s attitude towards this coastal state had completely changed and British colonial advance there became evident. In fact, Lagos was declared a Crown Colony during the 1860s and since then the British had remained very reluctant to the acquisition of more territories there. It was not until the 1880s that a new era for British imperialism started there.

Although British colonial advance began by the 1860s , the year 1885 was a useful date to mark the beginning of the colonial era because of the historic importance of the Berlin Conference (1884 – 1885)⁴ , which legitimized the scramble for Africa by sanctioning the partition of the continent among several European powers besides the British declaration of her Oil Rivers Protectorate in the south eastern region of what is today Nigeria . Thereafter, British Government had been able to penetrate into the vast hinterland, the fact which had facilitated to bring all of the southern territories under British colonial rule.

This colonial advance was conducted either by chartered companies like Goldie’s Royal Niger Company⁵ or by British consuls, who took the existing native authorities under their protection , but British Government was never far behind . In addition, African groups who represented a barrier to British expansion were bitterly crushed. There were powerful native states in the Niger Delta with whom the British had to deal carefully such as the kingdom of Benin in the west with its important coast vice-royalty under chief Nana and Opobo to the east of the main river under chief Jaja,

³ - AE Afigbo, Abolition of the Slave Trade in Southeastern Nigeria 1885- 1950, (USA, university of Rochester press, 2006), p 6.

⁴ - For the Berlin Conference, see Appendix 2

⁵ - For Goldie see Appendix1 showing notable people in Nigeria history.

while there were other states in the west under the Yoruba chiefs, with whom the British had to negotiate peace⁶. Thereafter, the British hurried to establish in these territories a firm administration, whereby most of the states remained under continued African rule.

This section, which covers the period between 1850 and 1900 is primarily concerned with the major phases of the colonial conquest of southern Nigeria, where the focus is made respectively on three regions : the south-western region , Lagos , where the small colony expanded into a protectorate covering most of Yorubaland , the Niger Delta where British consuls played an effective role both in breaking the power of African middlemen and in securing treaties allowing free trade and southern Hausaland, where Goldie's company succeeded in concluding treaties providing free commerce . It is also an attempt to show the major stimulants which induced Britain to bring changes in its expansionist policy towards West Africa between the middle and the late nineteenth century focusing on the total picture of European presence in West Africa, the scramble and the reasons for it.

2-1. British Occupation of Lagos

As noted before , in their bid to stop the slave trade , the British concentrated on trying to stop both European and African traders from engaging in the slave commerce .They succeeded in inducing most of Europeans to give up the trade, while they ratified anti-slave-trade treaties with West African coastal states . Agreements had been ratified during the 1830s and 1840s with the major coastal states, which was not the fact with the coastal district of Lagos. Thereafter, the British Government resorted to bring this state into submission. Thus, it is worth dealing with the process through which the British established their rule in the area focusing on the major factors which stimulated its occupation.

2-2. Main Motives for the Occupation of Lagos

For most of the nineteenth century, British officials as well as merchants and missionaries contributed to drive out the slavers, encourage the legitimate commerce

⁶ - R.O Collins., op.cit. p.149.

and facilitate the advance of civilization. British navy had been the chief instrument in the abolition of the West African slave trade. In addition, the strong desire of the British to stop this commerce required them to ratify anti-slave-trade treaties with most of the coastal states such as Brass, Old Calabar, New Calabar, and Opobo..., thus increasing British involvement and laying the groundwork for the ultimate imposition of imperial rule.

Anti-slave-trade treaties were to be used as an excuse for bombarding the states which denied the negotiation. As it was the case for Lagos, the area was bombarded into submission in 1851 and ten years later it became part of British Empire⁷. It was clear that the reason for its bombardment was that its ruler continued to engage in the slave traffic, which Britain was determined to abolish. In fact, the continuance of the slave commerce there was used as an argument justifying British conquest and colonial rule. That at least was the explanation offered by Lord John Russel⁸, the British Prime Minister in 1861 :

*“The Governments are convinced that permanent occupation of this important point in the Bight of Benin is indispensable to the complete suppression of the slave trade in the Bight.”*⁹

From this explanation it should be noted that slave trade was the first principal motive behind the occupation. But, this argument seemed to be not satisfactory since there existed much more important events than that. This territorial control, however, was linked with commercial expansion and rival competition. Britain not only sought from Lagos a real basis for breaking slave trade but giving her merchants a fair chance to expand their trade in the interior as Russel had put it:

⁷ - Quoted in R.Oliver and J.D Fage, op.cit. p.159.

⁸ - Lord John Russel (1792-1878): as Prime Minister (1846-1852) & (1865-1866); Minister of Foreign Affairs (1852-1855) & (1860-1865).

⁹ - T.Hugh, op.cit. p.777.

“The Government was determined to establish and develop permanent commercial intercourse by this route with the interior of Africa”¹⁰.

Britain’s hope was, therefore, to secure and open the hinterland for British commerce. But this could not be realized unless the British could secure themselves from international rivalries. In the occupation of the area, however, the main motive was to forestall the rivals mainly France. There was a strong fear from the French advance towards the area as the British Prime Minister, Palmerston¹¹ pointed out:

« If we do not take this step the French will be before hand with us and to our great detriment. »¹²

To sum up, Lagos was not only considered as an important base to abolish slave trade or simply a strategic route to open the interior and to expand British interests in what is today called Nigeria, but also an important gateway to paralyse the French expansion towards the area. Therefore, Lagos was soon placed under formal control and British Government contributed to its success.

2-3. Establishment of the Crown Colony of Lagos

As examined earlier, the coastal state of Lagos had increasingly become an important center to occupy since the mid of the nineteenth century. It was, indeed, the first region to become part of the British Empire in 1861. Ten years before, when the British Government strove to end the slave traffic, the area continued to be a ready market for slaves in Brazil and Cuba.¹³ Indeed, the Yoruba inter-tribal conflicts stimulated the export of an important number of slaves to the port of Lagos, the fact which hurried Britain’s interference in the local affairs of the area. But, the only way in which the British intervened at that time was with some reluctance to accede to a suggestion of British consul there and argue to the occupation of that city in order to

¹⁰ - Quoted in R.Hyam, op.cit, p.269.

¹¹ - Palmerston (1784-1865): Prime Minister (1855-1858) & (1859-1865) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1830-1841) & (1864 -1851).

¹² - Quoted in R.Hyam, op.cit, p.269.

¹³ - H.Brunschwig., op.cit. p.30 .

complete the suppression of the slave trade. In fact, when the ruler of Lagos, Kosoko¹⁴ refused to sign an anti-slave - trade treaty, which Britain had begun to negotiate with the African chiefs of the coastal regions from about 1840, the British Consul for Bights of Benin and Biafra, John Beecroft¹⁵ urged the use of force and the establishment of an effective political authority there.¹⁶ Thus, a British naval force under the leadership of the naval commander in West Africa, Commodore Bruce, was ordered to bombard the area in 1851.¹⁷

Thereafter, the king Kosoko had been deposed from his throne on the grounds of his slave trading activities and the British arranged for the installation of his uncle Prince Akitoye who had guaranteed the suppression of the slave commerce in the region.¹⁸ But after the death of this prince, there had been an increase of British interference in the affairs of Lagos. This was explained by the appointment of a separate consul for Lagos who was undoubtedly more than a consular representative of the British Government. It was Benjamin Campell¹⁹ who designated Akitoye's son, Documu, as Oba in 1853 in order to defend Lagos from the former ruler, Kosoko.²⁰ This man succeeded in developing Lagos commerce with the interior which was not to continue due to the local tensions, which increased in the Yorubaland. These problems originated from the constant warfare between the Yoruba states mainly between the Egba and Dahomey and between Ibadan and Ijebuland, which became more intense at the end of 1860.²¹

A year later, efforts were made by British officials to stop this situation, which paralysed their interests there. Many suggestions for instance were made to the

¹⁴ - Kosoko : ruled as king (Oba) of Lagos (1845-1851), after a successful revolt against his uncle and predecessor Akitoye was expelled and replaced by him as a result of British intervention at the end of December 1851. Thereafter, he withdrew to Ekpe (Epe) in Ijebu country. He was permitted to return to Lagos in 1862.

¹⁵ - John Beecroft (1790-1854): super intendent of works at Fernando Po (1829-34) , trader and explorer in West Africa (1834-49).He was appointed by Palmerston as Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra on June, 30, 1849.

¹⁶ - O.Ikime., op.cit. p.98.

¹⁷ - Ibid.

¹⁸ - R.Oliver & A.Athmore. op.cit. p.64.

¹⁹ - Campell Benjamin: trader and British consul at Lagos between 1853 and 1859.

²⁰ - T. Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.346.

²¹ - Camara Camille, ' Une ville pre-colonial au Nigeria ' ., *Cahier Etudes Africaines.*, vol 13., n°5., 1973., p .42.

Foreign Office by British consuls who succeeded Campell. According to Crowder, Consul Brand advised in 1860 that Lagos should be taken as a protectorate while, Consul Foote²² suggested that the only solution to the problem would be the introduction of troops and also the establishment of consuls in the most important towns of the interior. But the Foreign Office, which seemed to be not prepared to undertake such large territorial commitments was unfavourable to these suggestions.

This was to change afterwards, when the situation became more serious due to the intensification of the Yoruba wars. In fact, a vice - consul was appointed for Lagos. Mckoskry William²³ was given instructions to annex the town in order to secure it from slave traders, to protect and develop commerce and to exercise an influence on the surrounding tribes.²⁴ Thus, on August 6, 1861, king Documu was dismissed by Acting Consul Mackoskry in return for a pension of £1.000.²⁵

Thereafter, a new era in the history of British relations with that part of the coast started and British interests were firmly established there. A British Governor for the colony was soon appointed. It was Henry Stanhope Freeman, who administered it for three years from 1862 to 1865²⁶. Furthermore, a Legislative Council was instituted in 1862 to advise the Colonial Governor on the administration of the colony. It consisted partly of British officials and partly of non-officials, who were drawn from among British merchants, missionaries and educated Africans. Both of them were to be nominated by the colonial governor²⁷.

It becomes obvious now that with the occupation of Lagos, Britain had finally gained her first foothold on the southern region of what is today Nigeria mainly to secure her trade. But the latter became soon threatened by the deterioration of conditions in the interior and by the intensification of international rivalries, the fact

²² - Foote Henry Grant: British consul at Lagos between 1860 and 1861.

²³ - Mackoskry William: a trader of long experience at Lagos and vice-consul for the town at the time of its annexation.

²⁴ - M.Crowder., op.cit. p.136.

²⁵ - T. Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.777.

²⁶ - M.Crowder .,op .cit .,p. 136.

²⁷ - E . Isichei ., op.cit., p.213.

which was to lead Britain to undertake a further expansion beyond the frontiers of the colony.

2-4. Expansion of Lagos Colony

As noted before, Lagos was declared a colony with the hope that it would support existing trade posts and assist in the suppression of slave trade. But it became soon evident that this annexation had created more problems than it solved. The colony had to face problems during its early times due to the deterioration in relations between the Colonial Government and the rulers of the neighbouring states and to British engagement in a sharp controversy with the French on the Lagoon.

On one side, African rulers in the coastal neighbouring areas, west of Lagos, instituted a blockade of British commerce by closing the major trading routes probably because they brought good returns from the export duty on slaves. In addition, as they could not forget British occupation of Lagos, they seemed ready to co-operate with Britain's main competitor, France, in order to forestall British advance towards their areas. One example which can better explain this fact was the case of Porto Novo (one key port on the Lagoon). What happened in the area, indeed, shows how far this occupation was bitterly opposed by Africans and Europeans. According to J.D Hargreaves, Porto Novo had been placed by its ruler, King Soji, under French protection by a treaty of February, 25, 1863 in order to resist further British pressure towards the area²⁸.

On the other side and in order to stop any attempt to bring Porto Novo under British control, the local French authorities responded by extending their control eastwards to Appa, the coastal port on the Lagoon west of Badagry.²⁹ Then, the situation on the Lagoon became very tense and rivalries increased as the British feared other French political intrusions. For instance, they feared that their next step might be to claim Badagry. It was this stimulant, indeed, which induced the Government in Lagos to look for a further expansion in order to secure the colony. British control

²⁸ - J.D Hargreaves., *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa*., p.60.

²⁹ - Alfred Moloney, "Notes on Yoruba and Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, Africa" *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, vol 12, n°10 (oct 1890), Wilery on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers.

was, in effect, extended west of Lagos. This action was effected by the Lagos Colonial Governor, J.H Glover³⁰ who succeeded to expand the colony westwards to Badagry in 1863.³¹

Therefore, Glover succeeded to secure the western section of the Lagoon under Britain's control. In the meantime, the Governor of Lagos, Freeman was able to secure its eastern part. This was to happen within the same year, when he obtained from Kosoko the cession of two ports on the Lagoon east of Lagos, Palma and Lekki, in return for promises to develop the legitimate commerce.³²

It became clear, then, that British relations with both their African neighbours and European rivals along the coastal Lagoon were characterized by tension, the fact which led to the extension of British control beyond the frontiers of the colony both to the east and the west. This, however, was not the fact towards the hinterland mainly in the Yorubaland where the inter-tribal wars made any expansion of British control impossible. Wars among the Yoruba states, which flared up once more prevented such an advance and restricted the commercial growth of the colony. For instance, armies from Ibadan surrounded the state of Ijaye; they were resisted by the Egba jealous of Ibadan's growing power and by Ijebu Ode, the state which controlled the route from Ibadan to the coast.³³ But, these troubles do not mean that British influence remained out of Lagos hinterland. Indeed, British Government still unaccustomed to ideas of political responsibility in Yorubaland was forced at this time to intervene from Lagos in the politics of the area. One of the most important incidents, which demonstrated this, was the British interference in the foreign relations of the Egba. According to Crowder, when the Egba attacked Ikorodu, a trading terminal on the Lagoon north of Lagos, J.H Glover who was called by the Ikorodu for help led an armed intervention on the Egba on March, 29, 1865.³⁴

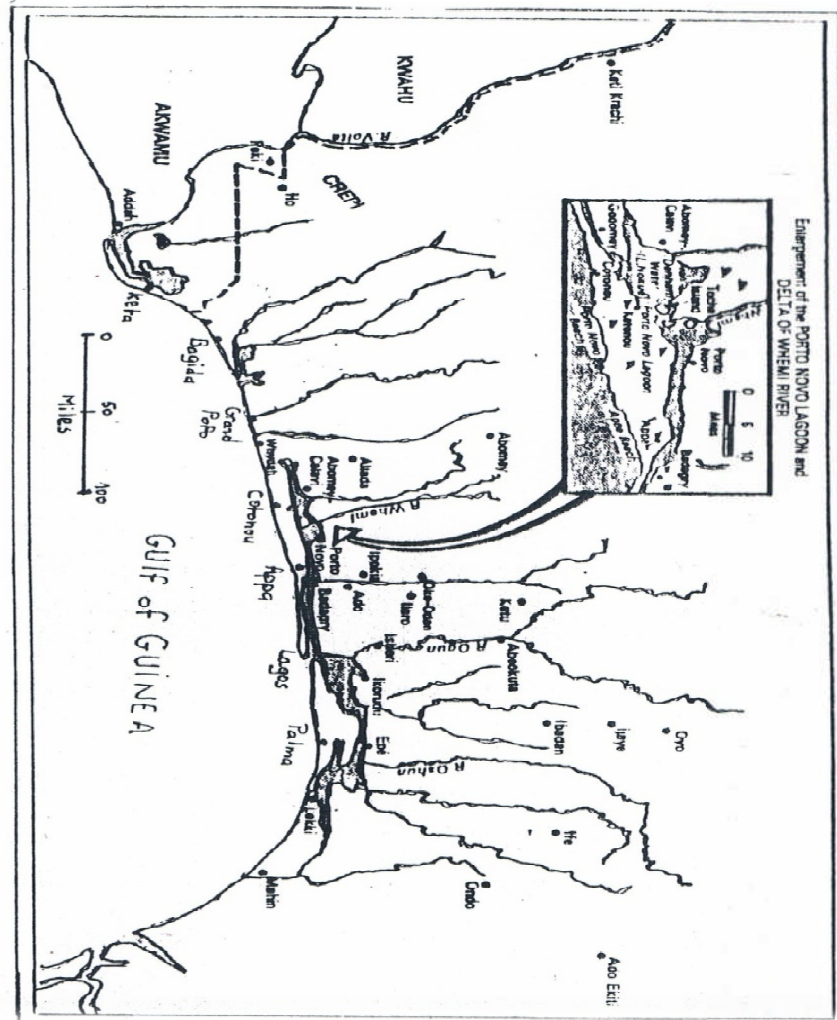
³⁰ - Glover John Hawley (1829-1885) : Royal Navy in 1841, Commander 1862 and served in Lagos as Colonial Secretary and administrator (1863-1872).

³¹ - M.Crowder., West Africa Under Colonial Rule .,p.49. Also see map n° 14 showing the Slave Coast in the 19th century, p109.

³² - J.D Fage ., A History of West Africa ., op.cit., p.141.

³³ - J.D Hargreaves ., Prelude to the Partition of West Africa ., op.cit ., p.57. Also see previous map n°13.

³⁴ - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p.138.



Map n° 14: The Slave Coast in the 19th century.

Source: J.D Hargreaves., West Africa Partitioned, p 130.

The result was that the Egba were defeated and British authority was extended far beyond the frontiers of the colony. This military success in effect enabled Glover to impose peace upon the Egba. But this pacification did not enable him to convene the general peace of all Yoruba as war between the Yoruba states broke out again during the 1870s.

It is noteworthy, then that African rulers in Lagos, notably Akitoye and his successors had been unable to bring the stability to the region that the British hoped for, the fact which stimulated the successive British consuls there, to negotiate treaties for the promotion of free trade. Such British officials are presented hereunder in order to highlight their activities, which were really instrumental in gaining ultimate control of the region.

2-5. British Consuls and the fall of Lagos

For a better understanding of the major steps, whereby Lagos was ceded to the British, it is worth examining the conditions, which led to the deterioration in relations between the different British Consuls, African rulers and members of European community there. The consequences of the violent intervention of the British at Lagos in 1851 were so far-reaching as to set the historian searching for causes, or even a single grand cause, of a comparable magnitude. This may in part account for the unsatisfactory and incompatible nature of the explanations, which have been adduced. Contemporaries and subsequent historians of the colonial school³⁵ accepted the official thesis that the action was undertaken with the overriding aim of ending the 'abominable traffic' in slaves, while mid-twentieth century historians have produced the charge (for their language too carries moral overtones) that the British were actuated by self-interest, mainly commercial³⁶. Both these views contain much that is true and important, but both over-simplify a situation of some complexity and over-stress the importance of human motive in historical explanation.

³⁵ - W.N.M. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (London, 1927), p2-3, and Sir A. Burns, *A History of Nigeria* (London, 1929; 1947 ed.), p.10.

³⁶ - R.J. Gavin, "Palmerston's Policy towards East and West Africa" (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1958), chaps. 4-5, and J.F. A. Ajayi, "The British Occupation of Lagos 1851-1861", *Nigeria Magazine*, 69(1961), p.97.

Suggestions that Great Britain should intervene at Lagos had been reaching Whitehall for some years before 1851. They came from three sources: the palm oil traders, the missionaries, and the Egba of Abeokuta³⁷. Although the Royal Navy was consistently lukewarm towards proposals for exploits on land, Denman's successful action in the Gallinas in 1840 argued against them. In 1850, Palmerston's enforcement of the Aberdeen Act and other pressures led to the closing of the Brazilian market and a revival of demand from Cuba and increased exports to the southern United States, and the price of slaves reached new levels. In these circumstances, Beecroft, whom the British Government had appointed in 1849, as their consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, came to accept the suggestion of the missionaries that Akitoye should be restored to his throne at Lagos in return for his signature of a treaty banning the slave trade there. Akitoye's previous dealing with the well-known slaver Domingo Martinez, according to Ayaji, 'destroyed the simple picture that the Lagos dispute was between slave traders and anti-slave traders'³⁸. But since Kosoko was in possession of Lagos and co-operating with the slave dealers there, it was natural that the ex-Oba at Badagry should see his best policy as being to win the support of the anti-slaving forces, a factor that has no direct bearing on British motives for adopting his cause.

Early in January 1851, Beecroft visited Badagry and pronounced Akitoye to be 'a quite prudent man'. On the Consul's return from Abeokuta, the former Oba presented him with a formal request for British protection, drafted by Gollmer, the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.)'s agent. Beecroft forwarded this to the Foreign Office, following it with a second, and rather wild, dispatch (apparently written under the strain of fever) recommending that an attack be mounted on Lagos from Badagry³⁹. In London, meanwhile, four days before Beecroft signed his second dispatch, a

³⁷ - FO8₄/816, Palmerston to Beecroft, 25 Feb. 1850, passing on these views. The traders' recommendation dates back to 1819: G.A. Robertson, *Notes on Africa* (London, 1819), p.290. It is also stated that the first missionary suggestions came from the Anglicans. CA2/085(b), Townsend to C.M.S., 25 March 1847. And also in FO8₄/816, Beecroft to Palmerston, 15 Aug. 1851, enclosing Sagbua and other chiefs to Palmerston, 15 Aug. 1851.

³⁸ - J.F.A. Ayaji, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1814- 1891* (London, 1965), p.38. For Martinez's career, which illustrates how slave trading and the palm oil trade could be combined, see D.A. Ross, 'The Career of Domingo Martinez in the Bight of Benin, 1873', *Journal of African History*. Vol6, n1 (1965).

³⁹ - FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Stanley, 4 Jan, 1851; Beecroft to Palmerston, 21 Feb. 1851, 24 Feb. 1851.

decisive step was taken when Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary in Russel's administration, wrote authorizing Beecroft to conclude a treaty for the abolition of slave trade with the ruler of Lagos. The next day, he wrote instructing the Council, to remind Kosoko, should be recalcitrant, 'that Lagos is near the sea and that on the sea are the ships and cannon of England, considering that these instructions were 'ambiguous', reflecting a division in the Cabinet, yet when he received them five months later Beecroft realized that he held in his hands an instrument, whereby the problem of slave traffic at Lagos could be drastically resolved⁴⁰.

Beecroft's decision to remove Akitoye from Badagry was justified by the fighting, which broke out in June between the ex-Oba's supporters there and the majority of the Badagry chiefs, who supported Kosoko. This was followed by two attacks on the town by Kosoko's war canoes⁴¹. Alarmed by these developments, the Egba, who had already sent troops to reinforce Akitoye's party in Badagry, urged the British to restore the former Oba⁴². Palmerston, reacting vigorously, persuaded the Admiralty to instruct the commodore of the Preventive Squadron to institute a blockade of the Dahomean coast and to make plans for an expedition against Lagos⁴³. But these measures were overtaken by events at Lagos in November.

Palmerston's two despatches of 20 and 21 February reached Beecroft in September⁴⁴, when the Consul replied that he was postponing a visit to Lagos 'until the rainy season subsides'⁴⁵. On 18 November Beecroft arrived off the town in H.M.S. Bloodhound, with Akitoye aboard. Two days later, at a conference with the British in his palace, Kosoko rejected the invitation to sign an anti-slaving treaty, and the

⁴⁰ - FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Palmerston, 20 Feb. 1851, 21 Feb. 1851, R.J. Gavin, 'Nigeria and Lord Palmerston', Ibadan, 12 (1961), 25. Ajayi, *Christian Missions*, 71, describes these instructions as 'a veritable cocktail of imperialistic gin and philanthropic tonic'.

⁴¹ - *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (CMI) II, 252-3, Gollmer to C.M.S., 5 July 1851; CA2/044 (c), Gollmer's Journal, 7 July 1851, 22 July 1851. FO8₄/886, Gollmer to Frazer, 4 Aug. 1851.

⁴² - PP. 1852, Liv (221), 130-I, 'Obba Shorun' to Jones, 3 July 1851.

⁴³ - PP. 1852, Liv (221), Palmerston to Admiralty, 27 Sept. 1851; Admiralty to Bruce, 14 Oct. 1851; Bruce to Admiralty, 6 Dec. 1851. FO8₄/858, Palmerston to Beecroft, 28 Oct. 1851.

⁴⁴ - The time taken by these despatches to reach the Consul was not unusual. Beecroft suspected that delays often occurred in the Secretary's office at Freetown.

⁴⁵ - FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Palmerston, 5 Sept. 1851.

negotiation ended abruptly⁴⁶. Beecroft lost no time in consulting with Commander Forbes, the senior naval officer in the Bights Division, telling him that having ‘used every available means... to make a treaty’, he had no alternative but to ask the Royal Navy for ‘a sufficient force to compel him [Kosoko] to make a Treaty or dethrone him and replace the rightful heir Akitoye’⁴⁷. On 23 November Beecroft showed Palmerston’s despatches to Forbes and it was agreed to enter the Lagos River with as large a force as could be collected⁴⁸.

There were two battles of Lagos. The first, in late November 1851, ended in the defeat of the British force, and the second a month later ended in the defeat and flight of Kosoko, leaving his ruined capital to Akitoye. Accounts of these battles have been given in several recent works⁴⁹, so that it is necessary here only to remark on the fierce resistance offered by Kosoko. The defence of Lagos was almost wholly based on fortifications along the shore containing over forty miscellaneous pieces of artillery. Indeed, as the onomatopoeic Yoruba name for the battles indicates-the Ogun Agidingbi, or ‘Booming War’- they were mainly artillery duels, and the gunfire was heard as far away as Badagry, where an American missionary commented: ‘bang-boom... the English... are abolishing the slave trade’⁵⁰.

Gavin writes that Beecroft had ‘dug up an old dispatch of 20th February 1851’ to justify his actions at Lagos. This is a misrepresentation, since the February despatches had reached Beecroft only two months before and were of current reference. Though Granville, who briefly replaced Palmerston at the Foreign Office, contented after the failure of November that the consul had exceeded his instructions⁵¹,

⁴⁶ - FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Palmerston, 26 Nov. 1851. There is no confirmation to the picturesque addition by Losi, *History*, 35, that Akitoye was present at the conference in European disguise.

⁴⁷ - FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Forbes, 22 Nov. 1851.

⁴⁸ - FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Palmerston, 26 Nov. 1851.

⁴⁹ C. Lloyd, *The Navy and the Slave Trade* (London, 1949), p.15, and W.E.F. Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers* (London, 1969), p205. The consular accounts are in FO8₄/858, Beecroft to Palmerston, 26 Nov. 1851, and FO8₄/886, Beecroft to Palmerston/ Granville, 3 Jan. 1852, and there is an eyewitness description of the second battle by a young Sierra Leonian, Samuel Davies, in *CMI*, 3 (1852), 60- 61. According to the last, Kosoko’s men ‘armed and manned their canoes’ for the battle, but none of the accounts mention any part played by these canoes.

⁵⁰ - T.J. Bowen, *Adventures and Missionary Labours*, (Charleston, 1857), p122.

⁵¹ - FO8₄/886, Granville to Beecroft, 24 Jan. 1852.

success in December mended matters and Malmesbury-Granville's Successor expressed entire satisfaction⁵². While Beecroft had been personally responsible for the rining of the intervention, the intervention itself can now be seen as the culmination of three separate but interlocking causal sequences of long-standing. The first arose from the politics of the island kingdom and its neighbours, while the two others were British, arising from the humanitarian drive to abolish the slave trade and from the less altruistic desire to protect political, commercial and religious interests. 'Colonial' and 'anti-colonial' historians alike have ignored or minimized the first, indigenous element in the explanation. But from the African point of view, the British naval and consular presence on the coast offered an opportunity which the party in eclipse at Lagos could not ignore.

2-5-1. Consul Campbell

In 1852, the restored Oba, Akitoye signed a treaty with the British in which he undertook to abolish the slave trade in his kingdom. Three articles added to the usual form of anti-slave trade treaty forbade human sacrifice, promised protection to Christian Missionaries and converts, and provided for the adhesion of the French government if they so wished, which they never did). During the next three months, naval officers obtained a series of twelve other anti-slaving treaties with neighbouring states, including one signed by six chiefs sent to Lagos from Ijebu Ode, who gave an additional verbal promise not to support Kosoko, who had sought refuge on their territory⁵³.

The British had thus gained a new foothold on the west coast, and one which in the high days of imperialism during the last two decades of the century was to provide a base for rapid and vast expansion. But those days were as yet far off. At this point two questions of limited scope present themselves: why, or more properly *how*, did the Consulate for the bight of Biafra, soon to be established at Lagos, acquire from its first years the character of a protectorate, and how was it that the British found it feasible

⁵² - FO8₄/886, Malmesbury to Beecroft, 23 Feb. 1852.

⁵³ FO8₄/893, Wilmot to Bruce, 11 Feb. 1852. FO8₄/894, Wilmot to Bruce, 28 Feb. 1852. FO8₄/920, Wodehouse to Campbell, 28 Feb. 1852. Also CMI, III (1852), 131.

and desirable to abandon their 'informal' system there after only ten years and to assume the obligation of colonial rule? The following outline of events in the consular decade will, it is hoped, provide some answers to these questions.

The immediate situation was precarious. The town was in ruins and of its population of about 22,000, only some five or six thousand remained. Kosoko was rebuilding his strength at Epe, some 30 miles down the eastern lagoon, where many of his former slaving associates joined him. Beecroft had departed for the seat of his consulate in the eastern Bight, while the over-extended Preventive Squadron of the Royal Navy could pay only intermittent visits to the Lagos roads, and the captains were reluctant to cross the bar into the river. Yet there was no delay in appreciation of the importance of the town as a centre for communication with the interior. Almost at once, the palm oil traders began to arrive. The Piedmontese Giambattista Scala⁵⁴ claimed to have been the first, reaching Lagos in February 1852, but he was soon joined by others and later in that month a commercial agreement was signed by a group of European merchants with the Oba and his chiefs⁵⁵. Soon afterwards the African Steamship Company of Liverpool began its mail service down to coast to Fernando Po and made regular calls at Lagos.

Like the traders, the Christian missionaries lost little time in establishing themselves under the new regime. This was more for reasons of missionary strategy than for the sake of the population who, even though most of the old inhabitants soon returned home, were far from numerous when compared with the great inland towns of Yorubaland. In particular, Lagos was regarded as 'the port of Abeokuta' and it was on that town that missionary hopes centered for a Christian commonwealth in Africa. The first to arrive were agents of the Anglican C.M.S., the first recorded Christian service being conducted at the Oba's palace on 11 January 1852 by James White, a 'native catechist' sent from Badagry⁵⁶. The next month the Rev. C.A. Gollmer came to Lagos

⁵⁴ - Scala's *Memorie* (Sampierdarena, 1862) give a romanticized, unreliable but still useful account of Lagos and Abeokuta in this period. Mr and Mrs J.B. Packman have prepared a translation with an account of Scala's life. See Robert Smith, 'Giambattista Scala, trader, adventurer, and first Italian representative in Nigeria', *J. hist. Soc. Nigeria*, forthcoming.

⁵⁵ - pp. 1862, LXI, no. 2, 214. It was signed by two Britons, a Hungarian and a Portuguese.

⁵⁶ - CMI, III (1852), 125-6, White's journal.

on an exploratory visit⁵⁷ during which he obtained from Akitoye a grant of five plots of land⁵⁸, and in June he moved the C.M.S. base from Badagry to Lagos.

With the traders and missionaries came the 'repatriates', as Gollmer remarked in 1853, the Sierra Leoneans were arriving 'almost by every mail'⁵⁹. Many now stayed in Lagos rather than making their way inland, and the influence of the Saro, as the Sierra Leoneans were called, quickly became greater than their numbers. As immigrants, without rights to fish or farm but in many cases with grounding in western education, they resorted to the new commercial life of Lagos and soon occupied an important place, a few as exporters in competition with the Europeans but most as middlemen in the palm oil trade. A smaller group of immigrants came from Brazil, some of whom had probably arrived as early as the 1840s, and others from Cuba. Most of this group, collectively known as Amaro – 'those who left home'- were, like the Saro, of Yoruba origin. They brought with them artisan skills.

Recognition of the importance of Lagos came slower in official circles in London than among those with first-hand knowledge of the town and its conditions. But when in June 1852, Beecroft asked permission to transfer Louis Frazer, his Vice-Consul at Whydah, temporarily to Lagos, the Foreign Secretary promptly agreed⁶⁰. In November Frazer was presented to Akitoye by Beecroft and the following month he entered upon his duties⁶¹. This first British representative at Lagos appears a somewhat shadowy, even shady, figure whose arrogance and lack of tact upset Oba Akitoye, as they had formerly upset the king of Dahomey⁶². Moreover, he showed himself to be over-much influenced by the European merchant community, whom he supported in their quarrel with the C.M.S. over the land on the waterfront, which Gollmer had

⁵⁷ - CMI, III (1852), 331-3, White's Journal.. During this visit Gollmer cultivated the acquaintance of the chiefs from Ijebu Ode who had come to sign the anti-slaving treaty.

⁵⁸ - A copy of the grant was enclosed in FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 28 May 1855.

⁵⁹ - CA₂/043, Gollmer to Venn, 6 Apr. 1853.

⁶⁰ - FO8₄/886, Beecroft to Malmesbury, 28 June 1852; Malmesbury to Beecroft, 13 Sept. 1852.

⁶¹ - PP. 1854, LXXIII, Beecroft to Malmesbury, 4 Feb. 1853. Fo₂/9, Frazer to Malmesbury, 13 Jan. 1853.

⁶² - FO8₄/816, Palmerston to Beecroft, 11 Dec. 1850; Palmerston to Frazer, 12 Dec. 1850; Frazer to Beecroft, 29 Jan. 1850. FO8₄/920, Clarendon to Campbell, 15 Sept. 1853.

obtained-unfairly, the merchants alleged- from Akitoye⁶³. He next brought down on himself the wrath of the commodore of the Preventive Squadron, Captain Bruce, for persuading one of the naval officers to mount an unsuccessful expedition with him to restore the pro-Kosoko chiefs, who had been forced to leave Badagry in June 1851⁶⁴. His final blunder was his involvement in the 'Amadie Affair', in which he protested against the arrest and expulsion by Akitoye, on the advice of a British naval commander, of a Hungarian merchant who had been implicated in the smuggling of slaves⁶⁵.

The situation at Lagos was slow to show improvement. The threat from Kosoko at Epe and his supporters in Lagos was growing, and political disturbances among the inland kingdoms of the Yoruba were diminishing the supply of palm oil to the Lagos market. Frazer was hardly the man to cope with these problems, and early in 1853 the Foreign Office decided to divide the consulate and to appoint a permanent consul at Lagos for the Bight of Benin. On the recommendation of Bruce, Benjamin Campbell, a trader and magistrate on the Isles de Los, was appointed to the post⁶⁶.

Although as early as August 1852, Stanley in the Foreign Office had referred to Lagos as a 'quasi-protectorate'⁶⁷. It was Campbell's tenure of the consulate there between July 1853 and April 1859, which established that character and laid the foundation for the colony and protectorate which were to follow. Campbell must therefore rank among the creators of Nigeria. When he came to Lagos, he had served for some twenty years on the West Coast. He was a man of fifty-two and in good

⁶³ - FO8₄/886, Russell to Frazer, 20 Dec. 1852; Russell to Beecroft, 22 Dec. 1852. FO8₄/920, Frazer to Russell, 13 Jan. 1853; Clarendon to Frazer, 28 Feb. 1853. FO₂/9, Frazer to Gollmer, 27 Jan. 1853; Gollmer to Frazer, 1 Feb. 1853. CA₂/087(a), White to Straith, 18 April 1854.

⁶⁴ - PP. 1854, LXXIII, Bruce to Admiralty, 3 March 1853 and enclosures.

⁶⁵ - PP. 1854, LXXIII, Phillips to Bruce, 23 June 1853 and enclosures. Scala, *Memorie*, 61-4, gives a rather different, probably less accurate, version of this involved affair. Frazer was himself suspected of holding four young Africans 'in servitude': FO8₄/920, Campbell to Clarendon, 23 July 1853, 19 Sept. 1853.

⁶⁶ - FO₂/9, Wodehouse to Beecroft and Frazer, both 19 Feb. 1853; Wodehouse to Campbell (1, 2), 28 Feb. 1853. FO₂/10, Admiralty to Wodehouse, 20 Jan. 1853; FO to Treasury, 19 Feb., 1853; FO to Bruce, 28 Feb. 1853. There is more correspondence from and to Frazer on FO8₄/920 and FO₂/12.

⁶⁷ - FO8₄/895, minute of 28 Aug. on Admiralty to Stanley, 26 Aug. 1852.

health, of strong personality and decided, though far from immutable, views, and though allowed to trade, he gave his full time to his post⁶⁸.

The main challenge to the regime during the first years of the consulate came from Kosoko. The former Oba had many adherents in Lagos, while at Epe he was building up an autonomous state which, though its capital was on Ijebu territory, included a considerable area between the sea and the lagoon which had apparently been subject to Lagos. From Orimedu (Palma) and Olomowewe on the coast, he could ship slaves and palm oil, while at Epe he had a large fleet of well-armed was canoes. He also derived support from the Portuguese and Brazilian slavers who had taken refuge with him.

‘Having put Akitoye on the throne we must maintain him there for the present at all events and follow out our policy’, Malmesbury minuted on letters from the C.M.S. and the Egba⁶⁹. The means by which this was done, and Kosoko kept at bay, was the subject of a previous article by the present writer⁷⁰, and will therefore be only very briefly summarized here.

Hardly had Campbell reached Lagos when, in early August 1853, fighting broke out in the town between supporters of Akitoye and of Kosoko. The opportune arrival of a naval vessel off the bar strengthened Campbell’s hand sufficiently for him to arrange a cease-fire, but within six days Kosoko launched an attack with his war canoes, landing a considerable force on the south side of the island. By now, however, three British cruisers were off the bar and on seeing Campbell’s flag of distress the captains sent eight boatloads of sailors and marines into the river during the night of 12/13 August. These arrived just in time to beat off a second landing by Kosoko near the Oba’s palace and to put the enemy to flight. Conditions in Lagos remained unstable, though a force of Egba warriors was sent by the chiefs of Abeokuta to help in

⁶⁸ - Earlier career of Campbell in Sierra Leone and elsewhere on the West coast is of considerable interest. FO8₄/891, Stanley to Hamilton, 30 Aug. 1852. FO8₄/886, Malmesbury to Beecroft, 14 Sept. 1852.

⁶⁹ - FO8₄/895, admiralty to FO, 26 Aug. 1852, enclosing correspondence with Townsend and Abeokuta chiefs, minuted by Malmesbury on 29 Aug. 1852. .

⁷⁰ - Robert Smith, ‘To the Palaver Islands: War and Diplomacy on the Lagos Lagoon in 1852- 1854’, *Journal.Historical.Society of Nigeria*, vol5, n1, (1960), pp3-25.

propping up Akitoye's government. At the beginning of September the Oba died suddenly and was succeeded by his eldest son, Documu, who was a little gifted with leadership as his mild father. Kosoko continued to dominate the lagoon, interrupting trade and hampering the supply of food to Lagos, and on two occasions his men captured parties of Egba traders making their way by land to Abeokuta. Two expeditions comprising Lagosians, Egba and British were sent across the lagoon in September and October, but achieved little, the second meeting with strong resistance when it attempted a landing at Epe. At the beginning of 1854 Campbell changed his policy from one of attempting to overthrow Kosoko to one of conciliation and diplomacy⁷¹.

In this, he showed a realistic appreciation of the situation and was reflecting the preference of the Royal Navy for avoiding actions on land; he was also turning from policies advocated by the missionaries to those of the traders. Interviews were held between the Consul and his advisers – amongst whom were representatives of the C.M.S. and the traders as well as the Navy- and Kosoko's chiefs, which culminated at the end of January in a conference on the tiny Palaver Islands in the lagoon. An interim agreement was reached under which trade was to be resumed and kidnapping abandoned. Documu instigated, Campbell believed, but Gollmer continued to ban trade between Lagos and Epe. In September, the Consul determined to reach a final settlement with Kosoko. Another conference took place this time at Epe, and in a short treaty, Kosoko forewent all claim to Lagos and abjured the slave trade. In return, he obtained recognition of his position at Epe and payment of a pension by the British – an obligation accepted only rather reluctantly by the authorities in London.⁷²

Although the treaty of Epe proved but an ephemeral settlement, the challenge from Kosoko had been contained and Campbell could henceforth concentrate on establishing at Lagos that system of consular rule, which Beecroft had developed in

⁷¹ - The change must have taken place between writing his dispatch about the kidnapping of the Egba traders, FO8₄/920, Campbell to Clarendon, 20 Dec. 1853, and the first week of January 1854, at the end of which he set off for his first meeting with a representative of Kosoko, which took place at 'the port of Jabu', Palma: FO8₄/950, Campbell to Clarendon, 29 Jan. 1854.

⁷² Ibid.

the Niger Delta. His means were slender – a small local staff, a limited budget, and for the first years only intermittent support from the Royal Navy- and his latitude wide – the only long-term aims laid down by the British Government being the fight against the slave trade and the encouragement of legitimate trade.

Despite the suspicion, fostered by the French, that he had himself been connected with slave trade through one of his former mistresses⁷³, Campbell was an alert and persistent opponent of the trade in humans. Though shipment of slaves from Lagos and its vicinity virtually ceased with the deposition of Kosoko⁷⁴, the consulate was well-placed for obtaining intelligence about its operation elsewhere. Campbell kept a sharp eye on the movement of known or suspected practitioners, as for example in his reports about the U.S barque *Carrier Pigeon* (he felt sure that the casks on board contained water for a slave cargo, not palm oil) and about the arrival in Lagos of the French ‘consul’ Lemagnière and a Senor Jambo⁷⁵. In particular, from 1857 onwards, the consul was reporting on the activities of the Marseilles firm of Règis Ainé who were engaged in shipping ‘contract labour’ from the West coast to French tropical plantations⁷⁶. Even more serious was the abuse of the U.S. flag to cover vessels taking slaves to Cuba. For several years American anti-slave cruisers were absent from the Bights, and the Americans were in any case uncooperative, professing to regard British humanitarianism as cover for the ambition to monopolize West African trade⁷⁷. To counter these activities, Palmerston suggested in 1857 that Whydah, the centre of the

⁷³ - FO8₄/1061, copy of a report of 23 March 1858 to the French Minister of Marine; Malmesbury to Campbell, 21 Dec. 1858; Campbell to Malmesbury, 23 Dec. 1858. FO8₄/1088, Campbell to Malmesbury, 28 Jan. 1859.

⁷⁴ - FO8₄/950, Campbell to Clarendon, 21 Dec. 1854, reports ‘a decided attempt’ to revive the trade at Lagos, but it seems to have been a false alarm. Also in FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 6 Jan. 1856.

⁷⁵ - FO8₄/950, Campbell to Clarendon, 27 March 1854. FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 2 Feb. 1855; Clarendon to Campbell, 8 May 1855. FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 16 Aug. 1856.

⁷⁶ - FO8₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 10 Aug. 1857, 31 Aug. 1857, 20 Oct. 1857. For the horrifying episode of the *Regina Coeli*, in 1061, Campbell to Malmesbury, 30 April 1858, 3 Aug. 1858.

⁷⁷ - FO8₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 6 July 1857, 1 Aug. 1857, 1 Dec. 1857. FO8₄/1061, Malmesbury to Campbell, 23 Feb. 1858.

revived trade, should be occupied, but despite Campbell's support the project was not pursued⁷⁸.

During these years, Campbell was concerned almost as much with the internal security of Lagos as with the slave trade. In 1855 and 1856, he reported serious plots against the regime. These seem to have been directed by a party among the indigenous community against the European traders and the 'repatriates' as well as against the consul. Campbell identified the moving spirit as Madame Tinubu, a great trader and niece to the deceased Oba Akitoye, and after the discovery of the second plot he persuaded Dosunmu to send her out of Lagos⁷⁹. Another problem was the breakdown of the relations established with Kosoko by the Treaty of Epe and renewed rumours of Kosoko's machinations against Lagos⁸⁰. This led to a rift between Campbell and some of the European merchants who resented the measures concerted between Dosunmu and the Consul to interdict trade between Lagos and Epe⁸¹. Throughout these alarms and quarrels, Campbell enjoyed the confidence and, where it could be given, support of the royal Navy, but he was conscious of the lack of visible means to enforce his authority. Finally, in December 1857, after repeated requests to the Admiralty, the steam gunboat H.M.S. *Brune* was stationed in the Lagos river, and thereafter British interests at Lagos were assured of the support of a small but readily available force⁸². Yet Campbell was able to tell the foreign Office that trade was growing at Lagos. His returns showed a rise in exports from £178,828 in 1856 to £255,100 in 1857⁸³. Palm oil was by far the largest item (1856, 97.7 percent; 1857m 88.8 per cent);

⁷⁸ - FO8₄/1031, minutes by Palmerston of 25 June 1857 and 6 Oct. 1857 on Campbell to Clarendon, 4 April 1857 and 1 Aug. 1857 respectively. FO8₄/1061, Campbell to Clarendon, 6 Feb. 1858.

⁷⁹ - FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 2 Feb. 1855, 12 Feb. 1855. FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 26 March 1856. For a general account of Tinubu's career, see S.O. Biobaku in K.O. Dike (ed.) *Eminent Nigerians of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1960), 33- 41.

⁸⁰ - FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 1 Oct. 1856, 4 Nov. 1856.

⁸¹ - FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 29 Nov. 1856, with numerous enclosures. FO8₄/1115, memorandum enclosed in Brand to Russell, 5 April 1860.

⁸² - FO8₄/1031, Clarendon to Campbell, 3 Oct. 1857; Campbell to Clarendon, 7 April 1857, 4 Sept. 1857, 22 Dec. 1857.

⁸³ - FO8₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 5 Jan. 1857. FO8₄/1061, Campbell to Clarendon, 2 Feb. 1858. There was also much smuggling, especially of ivory.

attempts to increase of cotton through Lagos met with some success⁸⁴, but it was uphill work to interest the local merchants in this commodity⁸⁵.

Growing prosperity did not make for better relations between the consul and the European community. The trade of Lagos was regulated by agreement between the Oba and the merchants. The first commercial agreement, that of February 1852, provided that a customs duty of 3 per cent *ad valorem* (according to the value) should be paid to the Oba on imports and of 2 per cent on exports; in return the merchants were afforded protection and facilities for their trade. As it proved impossible to determine satisfactorily the amount of imports, Campbell negotiated a new agreement in March 1854 under which a fixed duty was paid on exports and the Oba relinquished import duties and the right to trade on his own behalf⁸⁶. Within two years these arrangements ceased to satisfy Dosunmu, partly because of the dishonesty of his own officials, partly because of evasion of duties by some of the Saro, and partly because of the inflation of the local currency which followed the breaking by Régis of the Hamburg monopoly of the cowrie supply from Zanzibar. Eventually Documu accepted an offer by Scala to farm the dues. This was bitterly resented by the other European merchants, who sent petitions to the Foreign Secretary and to the Navy urging Campbell's removal; they claimed that the consul had influenced the Oba in Scala's favour, reduced the Oba to a 'mere puppet', and was exercising 'absolute and irresponsible power in the island of Lagos'. The charges were dismissed by Clarendon, who minuted that 'the English traders at Lagos appear to be a set of turbulent ruffians'⁸⁷.

With the other section of the European community, the Christian missionaries, the consul's relations tended to vary inversely with his relations with the merchants.

⁸⁴ - Campbell received a stream of directives on this subject. FO8₄/1031, FO₂/20, and FO₂/24.

⁸⁵ - CA2031(a), Crowther to Venn, 28 Nov. 1853 for an early complaint.

⁸⁶ - FO8₄/950, Campbell to Clarendon, 1 June 1854.

⁸⁷ - FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 14 May 1856, 25 Sept. 1856, 29 Nov. 1856. See also CA₂/031(a), Crowther to Venn, 25 March 1856, 3 May 1856. Campbell identified the ringleader of these opponents as Grote, O'Swald's agent. For the attempt by the sierra Leone merchants to summon Scala before their committee because of non-payment of debts and for the campaign in London against Campbell by a Mr. Gregory, see FO₂/20, FO₂/22, and FO₂/24.

On arrival in Lagos he had lived in the C.M.S. compound and had been closely associated with Gollmer in the struggle to defend the town against Kosoko; yet he soon came suspect that Gollmer had used his influence with Akitoye to foment trouble between the Oba and his rival⁸⁸. Then his support for the merchants' claim to a share in the coveted land along the river and the grant which he himself obtained of land on the waterside for the erection of a permanent consulate – the famous 'iron house' – soon gave rise to a clash of the greatest bitterness. In an effort to sort matters out, officers of the royal Navy measured and re-measured the land in 1855 and 1856, and accusation flew to and fro in Lagos and between Lagos and London. Only after Gollmer left Lagos did this dispute between Church and State die away, and at last in July 1857 Crowther, Gollmer's successor, was able to tell the Society that the consul had 'been regular at Church since the last quarter' and was now showing friendship towards the missionaries⁸⁹.

Campbell duties were not confined to Lagos. His consulate covered some 300 miles of coast from the eastern extremity of the Gold Coast to the southern tip of the Niger Delta. In addition, he had assumed responsibility for the relations of Lagos with her neighbours. There was, first of all, the problem of Badagry, where the local chiefs, who had opposed Akitoye, remained in exile and the consequent instability prevented the revival of trade. Eventually, in July 1854, two of the leading chiefs, with Campbell's encouragement and with reinforcements sent by the king of nearby Porto Novo, drove out their rival the Mewu, and re-established themselves in the town. This intervention by the Consul was criticized by the missionaries and disapproved of by the foreign Office, where Campbell's explanations were only reluctantly accepted, and it did little to arrest the decline of this once-prosperous port⁹⁰.

⁸⁸ - FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 30 July 1855.

⁸⁹ -FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 4 April 1855; Skene to Campbell, 10 April 1855; Skene to Irving, 11 April 1855, enclosed in Campbell to Clarendon, 28 May 1855; Clarendon to Campbell, 24 May 1855; Campbell to Clarendon, 3 Oct. 1855, 7 Dec. 1855(36). FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 28 May 1856, CA₂/031(a), Crowther to Venn, 25 March 1856, 28 July 1856.

⁹⁰ - FO8₄/950, Campbell to Clarendon, 1 June 1854, 12 Aug. 1854 (and FO minute of 22 Nov. 1854), 14 Aug. 1854, 6 Dec. 1854; Clarendon to Campbell, 21 Sept. 1854 (12, 13). FO8₄/976, Clarendon to Campbell, 21 Feb. 1855; Campbell to Clarendon, 17 Oct. 1855. FO8₄/1061, Campbell to Clarendon, 20 April 1858.

Relations with Dahomey provided a continuous worry for the consul. The kingdom disregarded the anti-slaving treaty of 1852, allowed slave exports from Whydah, practiced human sacrifice, fostered coalitions against the Egba, and every dry season threatened to repeat the 1851 invasion of Abeokuta⁹¹. Campbell never visited Abomey, the capital⁹², though in 1857 he went as far as Whydah to investigate the pillaging of the *Columbine*, a British trading wreck⁹³.

Towards the Egba state at Abeokuta, Campbell's attitude was ambivalent. He provided it with ammunition against a possible Dahomean attack and warned the Dahomeans and their allies against the consequences of such an attack, but he did not take the same rosy view of the Egba as did the missionaries. Their government, he realized, was weak, and they frequently broke their pledge not to indulge in slave raiding and trading⁹⁴. Moreover they were constantly interrupting supplies of palm oil to the Lagos market in an attempt, Campbell thought, to gain direct trade with the European exporters rather than deal with the middlemen, and to obtain payment in cowries rather than manufactured goods⁹⁵. The consul paid two visits to Abeokuta, in 1854 and 1855, on the second occasion persuading the chiefs to sign an agreement permitting foreign traders to settle and trade in their town⁹⁶.

Beyond Abeokuta lay the powerful city of Ibadan which in these years was extending its short-lived 'empire'. Campbell does not seem to have attempted to establish relations with the authorities there, despite the presence in the city of an

⁹¹ - FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 15 Feb. 1855, 30 Aug. 1855. FO8₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 26 June 1856 and enclosures. FO8₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 7 March 1857 and enclosures. FO8₄/1061, Campbell to Malmesbury, 3 March 1858, 7 April 1858.

⁹² - See FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 15 Sept. 1855 for a projected visit, also Clarendon to Campbell, 5 Dec. 1855, 29 Dec. 1855.

⁹³ - FO₂/20, Campbell to FO, 7 March 1857, 30 July 1857; FO to Campbell, 20 April 1857. FO8₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 30 May 1857.

⁹⁴ - FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 2 Oct. 1855, 6 Dec. 1855, 7 Dec. 1855, 8 Dec. 1855. FO8₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 1 July 1857. FO8₄/1061, Campbell to Clarendon, 3 March 1858.

⁹⁵ - FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 30 Aug. 1855, enclosing copy of McCoskry to Campbell, 19 Aug. 1855. McCoskry thought that a revival of slaving was the main cause of Egba obstacles to trade.

⁹⁶ - FO8₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 7 Dec. 1855, 8 Dec. 1855. FO8₄/1061, Campbell (in Manchester) to Malmesbury, 30 July 1858, enclosing a copy of the agreement of 22 May 1858. The second visit followed the burning of Scala's premises in Abeokuta by a hostile crowd: see Scala, *Memorie*, 131-9.

agent of the C.M.S. With Ijebu Ode to the east, however, both he and the missionaries were anxious to open communications, but their efforts were repulsed⁹⁷. Nor was Campbell able to visit Benin, although he went three times to the Benin River in order to check raids by Ijo pirates on the factories of European oil traders⁹⁸.

In June 1858, Campbell handed over his consulate to Lieutenant Lodder R.N., commander of H.M.S. *Brune*, and embarked for England. During his leave he had talks with members of the cotton trade and delivered a lecture in Manchester Town Hall on the prospects for cotton production in Yorubaland and other parts of Africa. On his return to Lagos in January 1859, he found that in his absence many of the familiar problems had revived⁹⁹. The slave trade was regaining ground at Whydah and in its vicinity; the supply of palm oil had dropped drastically; there were rumours again of Kosoko's hostile plans; a great slaughter of human victims had accompanied the funeral ceremonies of king Ghezo of Dahomey; the Admiralty were pressing for the removal of the *Brune* from the lagoon¹⁰⁰. Finally, the consul was being harassed by Foreign Office demands that he should explain French charges about his earlier connexion with the slave trade, allegations which, a Whitehall official considered, derived from French resentment at Campbell's denunciation of the Régis scheme for recruiting contract labour in West Africa¹⁰¹.

Campbell tackled matters with his usual energy. In February he was able to report that the merchants had reached a new agreement with Oba Documu under which they competed by tender for framing the export duties¹⁰². The same month, he

⁹⁷ - CA₂/028 for a letter of 2 Nov. 1852 from Awujale of Ijebu Ode to Forbes, virtually repudiating the anti-slaving treaty signed by his chiefs at Lagos earlier that year.

⁹⁸ - FO₈/₄/976, Campbell to Clarendon, 16 Oct. 1855. FO₈/₄/1002, Campbell to Clarendon, 24 March 1856, 26 June 1856 (21). FO₈/₄/1031, Campbell to Clarendon, 2 Feb. 1857, 3 Nov. 1857. FO₈/₄/1061, Campbell to Malmesbury, 1 March 1858.

⁹⁹ - FO₂/20, Campbell to FO, 2 Dec. 1857. FO₈/₄/1061, Campbell to Malmesbury, 29 July 1858; 18 Oct. 1858; Malmesbury to Campbell, 4 Sept. 1858. FO₂/24, Campbell to FO, 7 Aug. 1858, 1 Nov. 1858; FO to Campbell, 10 Nov. 1858; Campbell to FO, 20 Dec. 1858 and FO minutes.

¹⁰⁰ - FO₈/₄/1088, Campbell to Malmesbury, 28 Jan. 1859, 4 Feb. 1859 (2,3), 7 Feb. 1859.

¹⁰¹ - FO₈/₄/1061, minute by Wylde, 11 May 1858, on a report of 23 March 1858 from Gorée to the French Minister of Marine. See note 53 above.

¹⁰² - FO₂/28, Lodder to FO, 30 May 1859. FO₂/35, Brand to FO, 12 Jan. 1860, enclosing a memorandum of the conference in February 1859.

held conversations with Kosoko's representatives on the lagoon and sent warning messages about the withholding of oil to the Ijebu and the Egba¹⁰³. In March, he visited the king of Porto Novo in an attempt to reopen trade on the western lagoon¹⁰⁴. His report on this visit was his last word to reach Whitehall, for on 17 April 1859, after a short attack of dysentery, he died at Lagos¹⁰⁵.

During the years of Campbell's consulate, Lagos had greatly changed, and was still changing. The population was rising, to reach some 30,000 in 1861. It now contained, moreover, a considerable group of 'repatriates' who, though numerically only about one-tenth of the total, constituted an elite of great importance¹⁰⁶. Education was spreading; the missionaries had started primary teaching alongside Sunday Schools almost as soon as they began their services, and two months after Campbell's death the first secondary school was opened¹⁰⁷. The physical aspect of the town was changed too. Burton gives a vivid picture of the European-style buildings along the waterfront, adjoining the consulate, 'a corrugated iron coffin containing a dead consul once a year', and the C.M.S. compound which had occasioned such squabbles¹⁰⁸. But the hazardous bar had not changed: all goods had to be carried either over the bar in canoes or on lighters from the beach, causing, in Scala's estimate, a 30 per cent loss on imports due to breakages, theft and deterioration caused by salt water¹⁰⁹.

The two years following Campbell's death saw the 'iron coffin' occupied by two acting consuls, Lodder and Hand, naval officers who survived their ordeal on shore, and two substantive consuls, Brand and Foote, who both died of dysentery and

¹⁰³ - FO8₄/1088, Campbell to Malmesbury, 4 March 1859 (6), 5 March 1859, 6 March 1859, 22 March 1859.

¹⁰⁴ - FO8₄/1088, Campbell to Malmesbury, 5 April 1859.

¹⁰⁵ - FO₂/28, Lodder to FO, 2 May 1859.

¹⁰⁶ - PP. 1856, 68, Q. 1458, McCoskry's evidence.

¹⁰⁷ - Church Missionary Record (CMR), XXVIII (1856), 55-4, XXVIII (1857), 71-3, CMR, v (NS, 1860), 109. See also J.F.A. Ayaji, 'The Development of Secondary Grammar School Education in Nigeria', *Journal. History. Society. Nigeria*, II, 4 (1963).

¹⁰⁸ - Burton, *Wanderings*, 212-3.

¹⁰⁹ - *Memorie*, 224. There are many references in consular accounts and elsewhere to the loss of human lives and material on the bar in these years.

fever after only six months in their post¹¹⁰. In London, meantime, the return of Palmerston to office presaged a more forceful British policy in West Africa, especially in prosecuting the drive against the slave trade. This was reflected at Lagos in the increased interest taken by the consulate in the affairs of the hinterland, where the intermittent wars were coalescing into the major conflict known as the Ijaye War, in which the Ibadan fought the Egba allied to the Ijaye. Apart from increasing the supply of slaves for both the export market and domestic slavery, the war made movement on the 'roads' ever more difficult, greatly diminishing the supply of oil. But the resources of the consulate were still too feeble to make any effective attempt at conciliation in the interior, as was demonstrated by the failure of the mission, which Consul Brand sent under Lodder to Abeokuta and Ibadan in April 1860¹¹¹.

Another important development was the increased interest being shown by the French in Lagos. Régis had opened establishments at both Lagos and Epe as early as 1854 and 1855 respectively. Now, in November 1859, Lodder reported the alarm caused in Lagos by the arrival there of the French cruiser *Renaudin* whose captain, after calling on Oba Dosunmu, went on to visit Kosoko at Epe¹¹².

In April 1860, consul Brand, after referring to the constant threat of Dahomean aggression, reverted to Palmerston's suggestion three years before that Whydah should be occupied. He argued further that Lagos should be controlled 'either as a possession or by way of a Protectorate'. This was necessary '*To do justice to this place... and to put it in a position to become what it seems by nature intended to be*'¹¹³. There is no direct evidence that attention was given to this dispatch in London, but four months

¹¹⁰ - Lieutenant E. F. Lodder, R.N., Acting consul from November 1859; George Brand, formerly Vice-Consul at Loanda, consul from November 1859 until his death in June 1860; Lieutenant-commander H. Hand, R.N., Acting Consul from June 1860; H. G. Foote, formerly Consul at Salvador, Consul from Dec. 1860 to his death in May 1861.

¹¹¹ - FO84/1088, Brand to Russell, 9 April 1860, 16 April 1860, 8 May 1860 enclosing Lodder's report of 7 May 1860.

¹¹² - FO84/1088, Lodder to Russell, 3 Nov. 1859 enclosing a petition by 38 'native traders' against the rumoured stationing of a French gunboat in the Lagos river. The dates for the opening of the Régis factories are from B. Schnapper, *La politique et le Commerce français dans le Golfe de Guinée de 1838 à 1871* (Paris, 1961), 172-3.

¹¹³ - FO84/1115, Brand to Russell, 9 April 1860 (16). In a dispatch of 18 April 1860 Brand told Russell that the king of Dahomey was unpopular at Whydah and it needed little to bring about a revolt there.

later Wylde in the Foreign Office minuted on a warning by Acting Consul Hand of possible Dahomean intervention in the Ijaye War that ‘the only measure that would counterbalance and thwart’ the king of Dahomey’s proceedings ‘would be the taking possession of Lagos’. The logic of this was not impeccable, but the argument was forceful enough for Wodehouse, the Palmerstonian Under-Secretary, to suggest that ‘We might ask the Colonial Office their opinion as to taking possession of Lagos’¹¹⁴.

2-5-2. Last Consuls

Early in June 1860, consul Brand embarked on a Hamburg sailing vessel in the hope that a change from the fetid air of Lagos would cure an attack of dysentery, but within a few days he was dead¹¹⁵. Not until the end of the year did a new consul take over from lieutenant-commander Hand of the Brune who, like Lodder before him, had assumed charge in the interregnum. This was Henry Grant Foote, an energetic man of thirty-nine whose confidence presaged the full-blooded imperialism of the last decades of the century¹¹⁶.

One the Foote’s first actions, was to send H.M.S. Brune, now under Lieutenant Stokes, to Badagry, where there had been further disturbances¹¹⁷. He then suggested that a vice-consul should again be appointed at Badagry – the trader William McCoskry had briefly held the post there in 1855-6. He recommended Pearce, a Saro employed at the consulate, for the position, but on the foreign Office’s demurring, he instead appointed Thomas Tickel, ‘one of the few reputable British merchants in Badagry’¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁴ - FO8₄/1115, Hand to Russell, 8 July 1860 and minute of 14 Aug. 1860. Gavin, Palmerston’s Policy, 244, seems to attribute this minute to Russell, but the signature is clearly ‘W’.

¹¹⁵ - FO₂/35, Hand to FO, 16 June 1860. FO₂/36, admiralty to FO, 13 Aug. 1860. Brand’s death took place on board H.M.S. Alecto to which he had been transferred, and he was buried at Badagry in a brick vault built, ironically, by Jambo, the Brazilian ex-slaver.

¹¹⁶ - For the Foote’s background and appointment, see FO₂/35, Foote to FO, 14 Aug. 1860, 1 Sept. 1860. His wife gave an account of the domestic side of life at the consulate in her *Recollections of Central America and the West Coast of Africa* (London, 1869).

¹¹⁷ - FO8₄/1115, Brand to Russell, 9 Feb. 1861 (6, 9), 8 March 1861 (11), 8 May 1861; Foote to Wylde, 10 March 1861; Russell to Brand, 20 April 1860. FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 8 Jan. 1861 (3, 4), 8 Feb. 1861.

¹¹⁸ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 9 Feb. 1861 (6, 9), 8 March 1861 (11), 8 May 1861; Foote to Wylde, 10 March 1861; Russell to Foote, 23 March 1861 (12). See K. Folayan, ‘The Career of Thomas Tickel in the Western District of Lagos, 1854- 1886’, *J. hist. Soc. Nigeria*, v, I (1969).

Foote soon proposed his own remedy for the slave trade: to place a 'Sergeant's guard' of negro soldiers at Badagry, Porto Novo, Agoueye, and Benin, with a consular guard of 100 men at Lagos and a shallow draft steamer there for sending reinforcements, an idea which struck Palmerston as 'deserving of serious attention'¹¹⁹. Yet the need for such measures was almost past. In March 1861 Lincoln assumed the Presidency of the United States and in Cuba about this time Serrano was beginning to enforce the long-ignored anti-slaving laws, so that the export trade in slaves from West Africa was at last drawing to its end.

In April 1861, Foote visited Abeokuta, and though he found the town very unlike what he had expected from the glowing reports of the missionaries, he returned to Lagos an enthusiastic protagonist of the Egba cause¹²⁰. The next month, a detachment of ten West Indian soldiers arrived in Lagos from Sierra Leone under Captain A.T. Jones. This was to serve as an advance party for a larger force intended for the defence of Abeokuta against Dahomey, presumably a result of Foote's advice coupled with an earlier recommendation by commodore Edmondstone¹²¹. Jones paid a visit to the Egba camp at Ijaye in order to prepare a report on the capacity of the Abeokutan army; he then set out for Ibadan to try to arrange a truce in the war, but almost at once succumbed to an attack of fever¹²².

The last major acts of the consular regime were the two waterborne expeditions undertaken by Foote in February and April 1861 against Porto Novo, where king Sodji was diverting trade away from Lagos to Whydah. After the first, in which H.M.S. *Brune* alone was used, Foote wrote to Wylde at the Foreign Office in an excess of self-congratulation that he had 'accomplished in $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour of sharp firing what all sheets of foolscap written by Campbell and Brand could not effect'¹²³. But instead of

¹¹⁹ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 9 Feb. 1861 (10) and minute of 20 July 1861.

¹²⁰ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Wylde, 6 April 1861; Foote to Russell, 8 May 1861 (20, 21).

¹²¹ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 9 Jan. 1861, 9 March 1861, 1 April 1861, enclosing Edmondstone to Foote, 12 March 1861; Russell to Foote, 23 Jan. 1861, 23 Feb. 1861.

¹²² - J.F.A. Ajayi and R. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1971), p75.

¹²³ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 8 March 1861; Foote to Wylde, 10 March 1861. For the protests by some local merchants, see Russell to Foote, 23 April 1861 (15, 16); McCoskry to Russell, 30 May 1861. An unsigned and undated minute of the file, probably by Palmerston, castigates the Royal Navy for their cooperative attitude in the suppression of the slave trade: '...if left to themselves they would=

opening the lagoon to trade, Sodji built a barrier across it behind which he stationed his war canoes. A second, stronger expedition set out which, after breaking down the barrier, mowed down the Porto Novo defenders and set the town ablaze with rockets. Two weeks later, king Sodji signed a treaty with the British and almost at once supplies of palm oil began to flow down the lagoon to Lagos¹²⁴.

Meanwhile, the case for taking direct control of Lagos and Whydah put forward by Brand in April 1860 seems to have aroused no attention from Russell, Palmerston's Foreign Secretary, or from Newcastle at the Colonial Office. But towards the end of 1860 or early in 1861, Russell's caution (or his 'stubborn but brittle resistance', as Gavin calls it) changed to acquiescence in the project so far as Lagos was concerned¹²⁵. The arguments for annexation were well-known: to further the suppression of slave trade (this, as Cell points out¹²⁶, was not yet an anachronism), to encourage legitimate trade, check Dahomey and protect Abeokuta, and (considerations more apparent in Lagos than in London) to protect property, especially that of Europeans and immigrants, provide stability of government, and regulate if not suppress the widespread use of domestic slaves. Then, at the beginning of 1861, a marked increase in French interest in the Bight of Benin seems to have precipitated action.

In January 1861, Foote announced the arrival to Lagos of the French naval steam frigate *Danae* and the hurried visit of its captain, Commander Bosse, to Epe. He himself accompanied Bosse on a visit of courtesy to Oba Dosunmu¹²⁷. As Cell has

=take no adequate means to accomplish the object. They look upon the West Coast with the same vague apprehension with which our Fleet in the Bosphorus looked upon the Black Sea before they entered'.

¹²⁴ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 9 May 1861 (22), with minutes by Russell and Palmerston expressing strong approval; Foote to Wylde, 10 May 1861. FO₂/39, Foote to FO, 7 May 1861. An account by Burton in *Wanderings*, 194, mentions criticism of the action by 'a portion of the Manchester press, from which officers and gentlemen have ought to fear save praise'.

¹²⁵ - CO₆/58, Russell to Newcastle, 7 Feb. 1861; Gavin, *Palmerston's Policy*, 243-6.

¹²⁶ - J.W. Cell, *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth century: the Policy-Making Process* (Yale, 1970), 281-2.

¹²⁷ - FO8₄/1141, Foote to Russell, 9 Jan. 1861, 9 Feb. 1861. See also CO₁₄₇/1, Freeman to Newcastle, 1 July 1862.

recently emphasized¹²⁸, French interest in Lagos and its neighbourhood was associated with a shortage of labour in their colonies and their scheme for labour recruitment in West Africa. Negotiations with the British Government for a convention allowing them to recruit contract labour in India had been resumed in 1859, but were still not concluded. On 7 February 1861, Russell wrote to Newcastle that the Government could not allow Lagos 'to fall again into the hands of the slavers' nor become a 'Depot for negroes to be exported as Labourers to the French Colonies', and he asked for approval of the project for taking possession of 'the Town and island of Lagos'¹²⁹. On 3 March Palmerston minuted, '*As it is supposed that the French want to form a military establishment at Lagos might it not be useful that we should get this Lagos chief [Documu] to enter into Treaty with us to place himself and his territory under British Protection...*'¹³⁰. Seventeen days later he wrote on Foote's account of his conversation with commander Bosse that 'we may find ourselves in difficulties if we don't take time by the forelock'; he sympathized with Foote's complaints about the ineffectiveness of the *Brune*, adding 'The naval lords of the Admiralty... have always done as little and that little ad grudgingly as possible in the way of furnishing Cruizers for suppression of Slave Trade'¹³¹.

The Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary had determined their policy, and they waited on a reply from the Colonial Office to Russell's suggestion of 7 February. After receiving reminders in March and June, and presumably after some discussion in Cabinet, Rogers, the permanent head of the Office, wrote on 19 June to notify Wodehouse of Newcastle's reluctant concurrence in the scheme for taking Lagos¹³². The Consul was thereupon told that the matter had 'been decided in the affirmative'. A minute by 'W' – probably Wodehouse rather than Wylde- commented that much would have to be left to 'the discretion and judgement of Mr. Foote'¹³³.

¹²⁸ - Cell, Colonial Administration, chap. Viii. See also a review of Cell by G.E. Metcalfe, J. Afr. Hist. XI (1970), 615-6.

¹²⁹ - CO₉/6/58, Russell to Newcastle, 7 Feb. 1861.

¹³⁰ - FO₈/1141, minutes of 3 March 1861 and 4 April 1861, following Foote to Russell, 7 Jan. 1861 but probably misplaced and referring to Foote to Russell, 9 Jan. 1861.

¹³¹ - FO₈/1141, Palmerston's minute of 20 March 1861 on Foote to Russell, 9 Feb. 1861.

¹³² - CO₉/6/58, Rogers to Wodehouse, 19 Jan. 1861.

¹³³ - FO₈/1141, Russell to Foote/McCoskry, 22 June 1861, and minute of 20 June 1861 on the draft.

But Foote had died at Lagos a month before this dispatch was written, and the instructions came to the hands of the Acting Consul, William McCoskry¹³⁴. McCoskry put himself in touch with Commander Bedingfield, senior Officer on the bights, who promptly brought his cruiser, J.M.S. *Prometheus*, across the bar. On 30 July the British intentions were explained to Oba Dosunmu, whose hesitations were countered by an ultimatum threatening an attack on Lagos, and on 6 August the Oba appended his mark to the Treaty of Cession at the consulate¹³⁵.

The British reduction of Lagos in 1851, their establishment of a semi-protectorate under the consuls, and the annexation of 1861 were due to a complex of causes, partly British, partly African: the movement to suppress the slave trade and to prevent its revival under the guise of contract labour; the encouragement of legitimate trade; the need to protect British and immigrant interests; missionary ambition; French rivalry; the rift in and subsequent weakness of the monarchy; the disordered state of the interior; the Dahomean threat to Abeokuta. Benjamin Campbell, the first substantive consul, laid the foundation of British rule, while his short-lived successors Brand and Foote helped to persuade the British government that it was desirable and feasible to effect the transition to a colony. The consular decade at Lagos was a time of change which foreshadowed many of the issues of the Partition and was the first step in the making of Nigeria.

It became, thereafter, evident that though the British influence had been extended into the Yorubaland by the 1860s, no settlement was achieved there where internal struggles still continued to threaten the British commercial advance towards the hinterland. Therefore, Lagos remained the only official possession with what was to become Nigeria until after the 1880s.¹³⁶ However, Britain like most other western

¹³⁴ - McCoskry, known to the Lagosians as Oba Apongbon, 'Chief Redbeard', had a long career on the coast and, like Campbell, is ripe for biography. While visiting Britain early in 1861 he bought the Clyde tug *Advance* which did yeoman service across the Lagos bar. It was McCoskry who as first (Acting) Governor of Lagos laid down the roadway along the waterfront, famous as the Marina.

¹³⁵ - FO84/1141, McCoskry to Russell, 5 Aug. 1861, 7 Aug. 1861; Bedingfield to McCoskry, 8 Aug. 1861. For the protests against the annexation and for the annexation proceedings, see PP. 1861, LXI (2982) (3003). There is an entertaining description by Burton, *Wanderings*, 216- 17, probably based on information from McCoskry.

¹³⁶ - See map n°15 which shows the European West African possessions in 1879 .p134

European powers strode into West Africa consolidating footholds on the coast and expanding into the interior of the region.

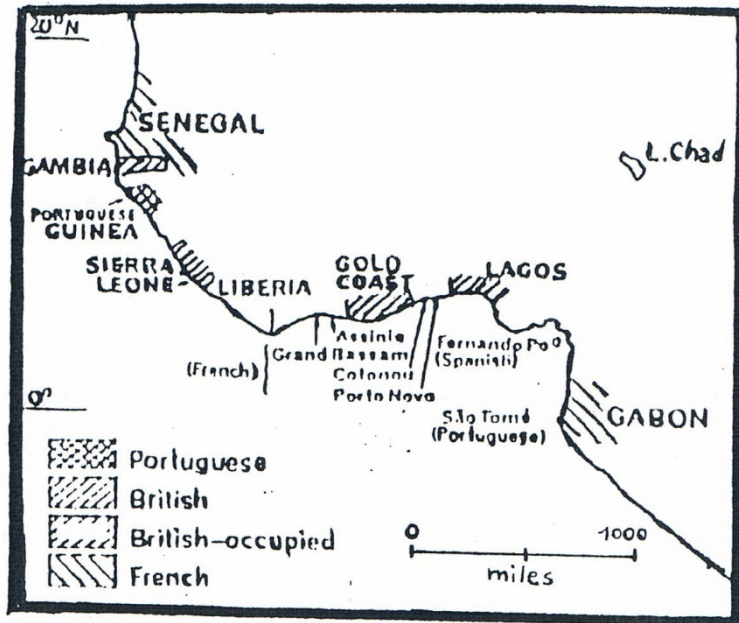
By 1895, the British had been able to expand their authority not only over Lagos' hinterland but also over most of the mid-western and south-eastern regions and their hinterlands.¹³⁷ But only a few years before this momentous process had started, a Select Committee of the House of Commons on West African settlements had strongly recommended a withdrawal from the settlements. So, for a better understanding of this change in Britain's expansionist policy towards her West African possessions between 1860 and 1880, the following section will deal with the major criticisms expressed by British members of Parliament in favour of colonialism in West Africa and also it will treat the most important events, which stimulated Britain's long hostility towards any expansion there until about 1880.

2-6. Attitude of British Members of Parliament and the Select Committee of 1865

For most of Tropical Africa before the 1880s, though British authority increased towards its coastal posts in Lagos, Accra and Freetown, the general rate of expansion was slow. In fact, the few British possessions on the coast only served as commercial centers and Britain seemed reluctant to undertake any colonial expansion there. Territorial expansion beyond the colonies was seen by British statesmen not necessary for they had probably feared the financial expenses of administering them. From the very beginning, indeed, British Government expected each colony to pay its own way with occasional help in the form of loans and grants.¹³⁸ Unfortunately, troubles which occurred on the spot required from British Government successive grants and strong reinforcements at least for the protection of British interests there. For example, Britain was drawn into wars with Lagos, the fact which brought trade into a standstill. In addition, conflicts in the Bight of Benin between producers and middlemen chiefs along the unpacified lines of supply had been strangling British

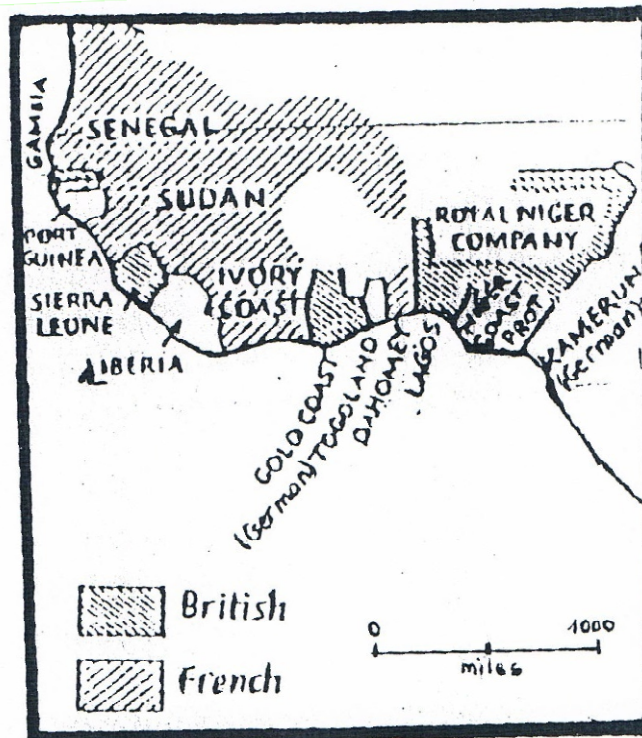
¹³⁷ - See map n°16 which shows the European West African possessions in 1895 .p 134

¹³⁸ - P.Duignan & L.H Grant., op.cit ., p.8.



Map n°15: European West African Possessions in 1879.

Source: Peter Duignan and L.H Gann, *Colonialism in Africa 1870- 1960. The Economics of Comonialism*, p 63.



Map n°16: European West African Possessions in 1895.

Source: Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial century 1815- 1914*, p 271.

trading stations.¹³⁹ Such seemed the hopelessness of the situation that made the Colonial Office think of giving up British settlements.

Members of Parliament in their turn found that the British Government, who was responsible for the promotion of trade and the defence of the colonies should show a strong hostility towards any question of continuing to pay for the local defence of the West African colonies out of British treasury. For instance, the conservative Member of Parliament, C.B Adderley¹⁴⁰ spoke about the wasteful policy of colonization in West Africa as he asserted in Parliament as late as 1864:

“The British possessions on the West Coast of Africa waste a million pounds every year. The attempts to create a civilized Negro community in Sierra Leone had failed, the Gold Coast had involved the Government in several unjustifiable wars and the trade of Gambia and Lagos was at best negligible.”¹⁴¹

In the meantime, he proposed to the British Parliament for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry to report on British West African settlements. Consequently, a British officer with West African experience, Colonel Henry Ord had been hurriedly sent in February 1865 to West Africa in order to examine all aspects of conditions in the settlements. On March 9th 1865, Henry Ord submitted his report in which he gave support to the scheme for the union of the West African colonies pointing that the improved administration would allow them to achieve financial self-sufficiency and refusing the abandonment of the settlements which would surely bring risks of damage to the British commerce.¹⁴² The result was that the Colonial Office, which had been induced not to abandon its responsibilities soon responded by appointing the Parliamentary Committee. The latter issued a report that recommended the following:

¹³⁹ - F.H Hinsley., The Partition of Africa ,New Cambridge Modern History ., p.30.

¹⁴⁰ - Adderley Charles Bowyer (1814 -1905) : conservative politician and colonial reformer . Member of Parliament (1840-1878),Vice-President of the Council (1858-1859) , Under Secretary for colonies (1866-1868) & President of the Board of Trade (1874-1878).

¹⁴¹ - Quoted in R.A Huttenback ., The British Imperial Experience ., p.153.

¹⁴² - J.D Hargreaves ., Prelude to the Partition of West Africa ., op.cit ., p.23.

“The object of the British policy should be to transfer to Africans the administration of all the Governments with a view that a Government should abandon all its settlements apart Sierra Leone.”¹⁴³

This meant only withdrawal of formal territorial control in the interests of the economy and not withdrawal of expanding informal and commercial enterprise as it was issued in the report:

“All further extension of territory or assumption of Government or new treaties offering protection to native tribes would be inexpedient...the object of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all Governments with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all except probably Sierra Leone.”¹⁴⁴

The most important point to state here is that withdrawal from the West African settlements and the promotion of self- Government had been recognized to be the best solution. But, it was soon realized that an immediate withdrawal would not be possible probably because British officials on the spot had found that Britain’s difficulties might be solved in another way or simply because British traders throughout West Africa still demanded more protection. Therefore, as a solution British Parliament decided to amalgamate the administration of British West African colonies under a common Government. According to J.D Fage, it was decided for the unification of the Gold Coast, Lagos and Gambia under the Governor of Sierra Leone, while further expansion of rule or protection over further African territories would not be contemplated by the British Government.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ - Quoted in E.Isichei., op.cit .,p.153.

¹⁴⁴ - Quoted in R.A Huttenback., op.cit ., p.153.

¹⁴⁵ - J.D Fage ., A History of West Africa ., op.cit ., p.142.

This situation was to change shortly afterwards as opinion on colonial matters in Britain had completely changed. Indeed, Disraeli¹⁴⁶, the Conservative Prime Minister, who took office in 1874 called for an imperial policy. He decided that the protected West African states should be annexed and that together with Lagos should be constituted into a new Crown Colony independent from Sierra Leone.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the Gold Coast and Lagos had been administratively separated from Sierra Leone.

Henceforward, colonial annexation had been judged necessary and the former view that the colonies were expensive responsibilities had been completely changed. There had been, in fact, a great enthusiasm for territorial expansion beyond the coastal possessions mainly towards the interior during the 1880s. This transformation in British attitude in favour of colonialism not only originated from the alteration of the international situation but also from the major events, which happened during the thirty years past between 1860 and 1880. The latter had so deeply involved Britain in the affairs of her West African colonies that it seemed no longer possible for her to evacuate. Thus, it is worth dealing now with the most important conditions that stimulated such a change in Britain's colonial attitude in order to explain more the phenomenon of imperialism and pinpoint the cause of Britain's imperial expansion there.

2-7. Growth of British and European Imperial Interests in West Africa

Britain's political involvement in West Africa in general remained very small until the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Intervention in the hinterland at this time was usually reluctant and designed for the protection of the trading and humanitarian interests already established there. Up to 1880, indeed, there had been a growing awareness that the colonies were no more than troublesome and expensive. In addition, none of the European powers had shown much interest in taking on more responsibilities in Tropical Africa. Therefore, Britain did not seem ready to play any

¹⁴⁶ - Disraeli Benjamin (1804-1881), Earl of Beaconsfield 1876, Conservative Prime Minister 1868 & (1874 –1880) & Chancellor of the Exchequer (1852-1858) & (1866 – 1868).

¹⁴⁷ - J.D Fage., op.cit ., p.145.

colonial game and she appeared to enter a period, which was referred to in history as the era of anti-imperialism.¹⁴⁸

In the 1880s there had been a distinct change and British imperialism seemed to enter a new phase. This decade was a turning point in West African history. Unlike the West African Committee of 1865, which urged for giving up all but one of the West African settlements, extension beyond the coastal posts mainly towards the interior was judged at that time by British officials necessary. For instance, British control which had been hitherto asserted over Lagos in the 1860s had been extended over the vast hinterland of the colony between 1892 and 1902.¹⁴⁹

At the same time, the European nations notably the French, the Germans and the British, who had hitherto intervened in the West African regions through economic penetration or religious missions started to move quickly from one conquest to the next and without waiting long enough to establish a firm administration over a territory first acquired. They had been able to set up their own spheres of influence and they also hurried for the acquisition of more territories by asking their home Governments to annex them so as to have a protected trade zone of their own.¹⁵⁰ These events were referred to by Europeans as the scramble for African territories that brought nearly most of West Africa into the colonial period.

That form of colonialism had been justified on a variety of grounds. The main arguments put forward in its favour are usually the following: the suppression of slave trade, the pacification of the inter-tribal disputes and the distribution of the various social benefits of European civilization to the indigenous people.¹⁵¹ But whatever the arguments advanced in defence of colonialism, there are still other motives which are

¹⁴⁸ - J.Gallagher stated that: "The 19th century was divided into periods of imperialism and anti-imperialism according to the extension and contraction of the British Empire... The mid-Victorian formal empire did not expand and the period was anti-imperialist, while the later-Victorian empire expanded rapidly and this was the era of imperialism." John Gallagher, The Decline, Revival and fall of the British Empire, p.12.

¹⁴⁹ - F.H.Hinsly: "The partition of Africa" in the New Cambridge Modern History vol XI, Material Progress and Worlvide Problems 1870- 1898", (Cambridge University Press, Great Britain), 1979., p 311. Also see previous maps n° 14 & n°15 .

¹⁵⁰ - P.Curtin, S.Feierman, L.Thompson & J.Vansina, op.cit., p.451. Also see map n° 17 showing the European partition of West Africa during the late of the 19th century., p140.

¹⁵¹ - R.Hyam, op.cit., p.268-269.

thought to have constituted the new imperialism. These are stated by C.C Eldridge as follows:

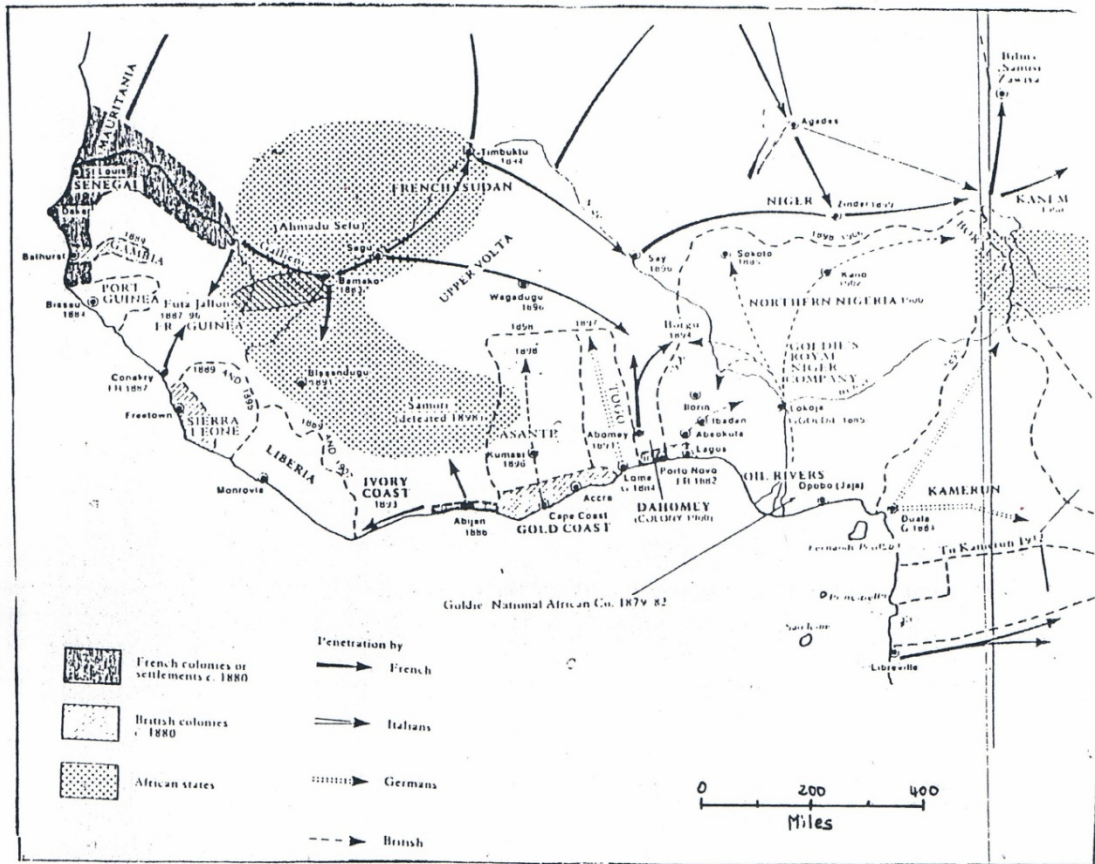
“... promoting commerce, Christianity and civilization, philanthropy to the white man’s burden to the most sophisticated and controversial theories. These include imperialism as the final stage of capitalism, the search for raw materials and markets, outlets for surplus capital, over production... trade rivalries, power politics, national prestige... insubordinate and ambitious men on the spot... the collapse of indigenous societies and the clash of cultures... All of these contributed naturally to the history of the period 1870-1914.”¹⁵²

It is important to note here that the economic factors seem to have been the most significant. For instance, the paradox in Britain’s imperial history towards her West African colonies had been interpreted by some imperial historians such as Lenin, Langer and Schuyler, whose argument pointed to one interpretation related to an important economic factor. Indeed, Britain’s indifference to empire during the middle of the nineteenth century and her enthusiasm for it by the late of the century had been directly related to the rise and decline in free trade beliefs. Lenin for example wrote:

“When free competition in Britain was at its height between 1840 and 1860, the leading British bourgeois politicians were...of the opinion that the liberation of the colonies and their complete separation from Great Britain was inevitable and desirable.”¹⁵³

¹⁵² - Quoted in C.C Eldridge ., Victorian Imperialism ., p.144 –145.

¹⁵³ - Quoted in V.I Lenin ., Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism ., p.71.



Map n°17: European Partition of West Africa during the late of the 19th century.
Source: R. Oliver and A. Athmore, op cit, p 113.

Professor Schuyler extends this to the decade from 1861 to 1870 for it was during those years that tendencies towards the disruption of the empire reached their climax¹⁵⁴. On the contrary, Professor Langer finds that in the last quarter of the century, there was an obvious danger that the British export market would be steadily restricted which had to lead to the emergence of the movement for expansion.¹⁵⁵

The three arguments may be summarized in this way: during the middle of the nineteenth century, the British Empire did not expand, while by the late of the century it expanded rapidly and the change was caused by the decline of free trade. In addition, the slow European penetration of West Africa, which began to escalate into a scramble for territory during the 1880s had been explained by a complex of reasons mainly economic ones.

The economic competition between the European nations during the late nineteenth century or at that particular stage in the growth of European capitalism had been considered as a major stimulant for empire building in West Africa.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, with the rise of capitalism, the European nations including Britain needed more territories to invest capital. Such a historical interpretation was given by different commentators in the search for the explanation of Europeans' activities in West Africa. J.A Hobson, for instance, in his text 'Imperialism' (a study 1902) concentrated on the economic causes of imperialism and especially on the role of investments or capitalist imperialism. His idea was simple:

“ Over-production... and surplus capital which can not find sound investments within the country force Great Britain, Germany, Holland, France to place larger and larger portions of their economic resources outside the area of their political domain

¹⁵⁴ - R.L Schuyler ., The Fall of the Old Colonial System ., p.45.

¹⁵⁵ - W.L Langer ., The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902 ., p.75-76.

¹⁵⁶ - P.Curtin, S.Feierman, L.Thompson & J.Vansina ., op.cit ., p.451.

and then stimulate a policy of political expansion so as to take in new areas."¹⁵⁷

In essence, Hobson maintained that European countries invested in new areas and then found themselves having to annex those territories in order to protect their investments. But to invest capital was not the only economic motive behind the European imperialism of the late nineteenth century. However, trade competition was considered to be a more important stimulant to empire building.

There was a competition for palm oil, which had become West Africa's major overseas export.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, the European move towards protectionism and their acquisitive actions in West Africa had been explained by European's need for the protection of their markets and trade there. Indeed, European merchants to West Africa feared that their competitors might forestall their access after annexing a section of that region. Thus, they responded by asking their home Governments to annex so as to have protected trade zones of their own.¹⁵⁹ The British Minister of Commerce, Chamberlain¹⁶⁰ pointed out:

*"If Britain had remained passive , the greater part of the African continent would have been occupied by her commercial rivals who would have proceeded, as the first act of their policy to close this great potential market to British trade...not to be forestalled in these markets of the future was a matter of life and death."*¹⁶¹

Other factors other than economic ones contributed to European empire building in West Africa during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The rapid European colonial conquest there was only possible, however, because the Europeans had the capacity to do it. The European military, medical and technological

¹⁵⁷ - Quoted in M.Pearce & G.Stewart ., British Political History Democracy and Decline., p.177-178.

¹⁵⁸ - R.O Ekundare ., op.cit ., p.79.

¹⁵⁹ - P.Curtin, S.Feierman, L.Thompson & J.Vansina ., op.cit ., p 452.

¹⁶⁰ - Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914): Minister of commerce (1880-1886) & of colonies (1895-1903).

¹⁶¹ - Quoted in R.Hyam ., op.cit ., p.283.

advances as a result of the industrial revolution gave them the force to conquer territories in that part of the African continent and made their conquest easier and cheaper than ever before.

Two obstacles had hitherto confined the British to the West African coastline. The first concerned the disease especially malaria, which in the early nineteenth century killed many of their agents either merchants, officials or missionaries. On the Niger expedition of 1841, for example, 28% of the European personnel died of disease after an average of less than two months up the river.¹⁶² But in 1874, British military forces of some 2,500 Europeans were sent on an expedition to sack Kumasi but only 2% of its members died from disease.¹⁶³ The second obstacle was the absence of the overwhelming military superiority. But, with the development of the firearms, better and cheaper weapons became available to the Europeans. Thus, the differential in military power between the Europeans and the West Africans had facilitated the conquest.

Meanwhile, there was still another major event beginning in the mid 1870s in the Congo Basin, which had led to the scramble in that part of Africa. In fact, in 1879 King Leopold of the Belgians whose attention had been centred on the Congo Basin claimed international recognition for the Congo independent state.¹⁶⁴ This fact had created pressures of competitive annexation elsewhere in Africa. For example, in the western part of Africa Germany claimed Cameroon and Togoland, while France started an important advance from the Senegal towards the Upper Niger.¹⁶⁵ Thus, when Europeans decided to embark on territorial acquisition, it was impossible for Britain to stand aside if she wished to protect her interests. Britain hastened to formalize its existing informal relations all along the coast especially near the mouth of the Niger in order to prevent the French advance from the Upper Niger.

From what it has been mentioned, it should be noted that there were rapid changes in the international political and economic situations, the fact which led

¹⁶² - P.Curtin, S.Feierman, L.Thompson & J.Vansina., op.cit ., p.283.

¹⁶³ - Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ - R.Oliver & J.D Fage ., op.cit ., p.186.

¹⁶⁵ - John Iliffe ., *Africans. The History of a Continent* ., p.189.

directly to a transformation in Europeans' attitude in favour of imperialism towards West Africa. In the course of these changes, British policy towards West Africa was turned up side down. A strong desire to withdraw from that part of the African continent was turned into the strong imperialist impulse, which led to a gradual extension of British colonial rule there. In what was to become Modern Nigeria, British imperial push of the late nineteenth century started first from the southern regions mainly the Delta and along the Niger River from where European interlopers had tried deliberately to break into her richer and predominated markets of West Africa. It was this stimulant, indeed, which encouraged the British Government to reverse its policy of non-interference there and to proclaim a protectorate over the Niger Districts.

2-8. British Colonial Advance in the Niger Districts

The interests of British traders until the proclamation of the protectorate over the Niger districts had been concentrated mainly on the Niger Delta region , where palm oil was the only major produce of West Africa to be of interest to Europe at that time . For instance, the famous Oil Rivers of the Niger Delta formed the largest centre of production of palm oil accounting consistently for more than half of the West Africa's palm exports in the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ The importance of the region was not only due to the abundance of palm trees in its hinterland but mainly due to many navigable waterways such as the Niger , the lower Kwa Ibo river and the Niger's many tributaries, which enabled the easy transport of palm oil.

Britain's need to control this trade, which became increasingly of great importance during the 1860s and 1870s led to a gradual British advance in the Delta hinterland, where they were able to establish trading stations. In fact, up to the 1870s trade in both the hinterland and the Delta had been almost in the hand of British merchants, who had been able to establish a number of British firms to compete for commerce on the lower Niger. As stated by Crowder, four major British companies were operating there, Messrs Alexander Miller Brothers and CO (Glasgow), James Pinnock and CO (Liverpool), the West African Trading Company (Manchester) and

¹⁶⁶ - P.Duignan & L.H Gann ., op.cit ., p.310.

the Central African Trading Company (London).¹⁶⁷ All these companies had pushed their way into different areas of the Niger valley. This advance as will be seen threatened the Niger Delta traders, who feared that the British would monopolize trade, the fact which made them determined to prevent any further penetration of the hinterland and to campaign against the companies which would disturb their internal trade. Thus, British vessels steaming up river had encountered well directed gunfire from fortified points along the Niger River. The most important event which illustrated this was the conflict that occurred there mainly between the Itsekiri traders and the firm of Louch and CO in 1871. Similar incidents occurred in Onitsha, Patani, Akassa, Asaba and Idah.¹⁶⁸

This British domination for commerce in the 1870s does not mean that the British companies remained the only major trading force there. Indeed, there was no way in which Britain could prevent new firms entering the lower Niger trade. Other European firms set themselves up in business along various parts of the coast and along the Oil River namely: La Compagnie du Sénégal et de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, la Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Equatoriale and the German Company.¹⁶⁹

Governments of some European nations had become more interested in West Africa. For instance, the French and the Germans who had shown little interest in the region started to look to the West Coast for expansion. They became interested in the Niger Delta, which had hitherto been the exclusive preserve of the British for the fulfillment of their economic hopes. According to J. Iliffe, the French started by developing a plan aiming at linking their protectorates of the North with the West Coast through extending their territory from the Senegal while the Germans envisaged an advance from the Cameroon.¹⁷⁰

This intense competition between European powers led the West African trade to enter an era of amalgamation. This first began in the late 1870s when Sir George

¹⁶⁷ - M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, op.cit., p. 148.

¹⁶⁸ - O. Ikime, op.cit., p. 32.

¹⁶⁹ - Endre Sik, *Histoire de L'Afrique Noire*, p. 293.

¹⁷⁰ - J. Iliffe, op.cit., p. 189.

Taubman Goldie (1846-1925)¹⁷¹ succeeded in consolidating a number of rival firms into the United African Company . As stated by J.F Ajaye and M.Crowder:

*“In order to prevent further French and German competitions, all the British trading companies were amalgamated to form the United African Company which soon became known as the National African Company by November 1879.”*¹⁷²

An extension of French or German interest to the Niger Delta would be surely a matter of great importance to British commerce since British traders were almost in control of the Niger trade. But Britain at that time did not seem to be prepared to accept any extension on the part of her rivals probably for the purpose of monopolizing the Delta trade. As an illustration, it was concluded that the French must be kept out of the Niger as it was complained in a Colonial Office memorandum in 1833:

*«If the French are allowed to go on unchecked, we shall find our trade excluded and the Niger will become a French river from source to mouth Foreign trade in fact must soon succumb and disappear»*¹⁷³

It is worth mentioning here that at the time when Goldie strove to protect the British trading interests , another era of tension and competition developed . On one side , the French agents sought treaties with the African local rulers on the lower Niger while Bismark declared German protectorates in Togoland and the Cameroons , the fact which would surely threaten the long established British trading interests there .¹⁷⁴

On the other hand , the serious trade depression from which the West Coast merchants began to suffer intensified British rivalries not only with European groups

¹⁷¹ - For more details see Appendix 1: notable people in Nigerian history.

¹⁷² - J.F Ajaye & M.Crowder., op.cit., p.400.

¹⁷³ - Quoted in R.Hyam ., op.cit ., p.281.

¹⁷⁴ - J.Illife ., op.cit ., p.189.

in the Niger Delta but with Africans as well. British traders became increasingly anxious to lower their costs by getting rid of tolls, customs and other restraints on trade in the interior or by eliminating African middlemen, whereas Africans attempted to protect themselves against falling prices by obstructing supplies and by other devices.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, the need for commercial consolidation and the strong desire to the protection of the inland trading posts against European interlopers and African rivals made Goldie ask for a political representation rather than an economic one. He claimed for a royal charter so that he could establish effective control over the Niger through his agency as O. Ekundare showed it:

*“Goldie believed that only a royal charter conferring on his company the full support of the Government, in relation to the whole valley of the Niger could enable him to fulfill his task.”*¹⁷⁶

Goldie was refused the charter for his company for perhaps his Government had no wish to intervene but he proceeded to conclude a number of trading treaties with some African rulers and to exclude trade rivals from the region. For instance, in 1880 he had been able to make an agreement with the Emir of Nupe who granted monopoly to the United African Company in return for supplying him with arms.¹⁷⁷ In addition, in 1884, he prevented the German expedition which was intended to make agreements with the Emirates lying to the north of the Niger. According to J.D Hargreaves, Goldie succeeded in stopping Herr Flegel, who was sent by the Germans in order to negotiate treaties with the Caliph of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu.¹⁷⁸

Henceforth, the British realized that an effective control was becoming necessary in order to forestall other European nations from dominating the Niger Delta. This fact was the major stimulant which led the British Foreign Office to appoint a consul for the Oil Rivers, who would be able to ratify protectorate treaties.

¹⁷⁵ - Jo Lindsay, Economic Relation in Africa and the Far East, the New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge University Press, 1966), p 571.

¹⁷⁶ - R.O Ekundare, op.cit., p.62

¹⁷⁷ - J.A Ajaye & M.Crowder, op.cit., p.400

¹⁷⁸ - J.D Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition of West Africa, op.cit., p.98.

Consul Hewett¹⁷⁹ succeeded in negotiating a number of treaties and in placing the coast between Lagos and the Cameroons under a protectorate, the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885.¹⁸⁰

This growing atmosphere of competition or of what was known in history as the scramble for Africa threatened to bring about an armed clash between European rivals, the fact which led Bismark to call for the Berlin Conference (November, 15, 1884 to August, 26, 1885)¹⁸¹ in order to achieve some kind of international agreement between the European competitors. Agreements were reached on the free navigation of African rivers and on the rights of individual nations to claim parts of the continent by effective occupation.¹⁸² Indeed, the delegates had supported the Niger Navigation Act that insisted on the principle of free trade. As it was declared in the 26th article of the Conference, that the navigation of the Niger River would be free for the merchant ships of all the nations either for the transportation of goods or that of the travellers.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the Conference recognized the British protectorate over the Niger Districts.¹⁸⁴

It is also important to note that the conference had been soon followed by a scramble as the European powers rushed to stake out their areas of effective occupation. Much of the running of the British was made by chartered companies for probably the Foreign Office was not prepared to bear the cost of administration there. Goldie at last got his company chartered under the title of the Royal Niger Company in 1886 investing it with administrative as well as commercial power. In fact, it was given a political control over the territories with which the company's agents had signed treaties while the territories which had been brought under protection by the consul became the Oil Rivers Protectorate.¹⁸⁵ In addition, the company did not receive

¹⁷⁹ - Hewett Edward Hyde : Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra (1880-1891).

¹⁸⁰ - J.D Fage., *A History of West Africa* ., op.cit .,p.165.

¹⁸¹ - E.Sik ., op.cit .,p.301.

¹⁸² - Jack Watson ., *Success in European History 1815-1941* ., p. 255.

¹⁸³ - H. Brunschwig ., *Le Partage de L'Afrique Noire* ., p.124.

¹⁸⁴ - M.Crowder ., *The Story of Nigeria* ., op.cit ., p.151.

¹⁸⁵ -Ben. N. Azikiwe, "Nigerian political institutions", *Journal of Negro History*, vol 14, n°3 (July 1929), Association for the study of African-American Life and History Incorporation, pp.328- 340.

officially recognized trade monopoly but specific administrative privileges as R. Robinson and J.Gallagher put it:

“The company was empowered to administer justice, to enforce treaty rights, to collect customs duties and to spend the receipts solely on the expense of rule.”¹⁸⁶

Thus , in the Niger Delta Goldie created a monopoly by any means including administrative and judicial control and the imposition of customs duties , the fact which led to bitter conflicts with the Delta states which had become extremely preoccupied with securing their middlemen position in the face of the British push into the Niger valley. It is worth mentioning here that the appearance of the Royal Niger Company and the establishment of the Oil Rivers Protectorate were to have momentous consequences on the southern regions . The African groups who resisted there were soon conquered and the establishment of British colonial administration became henceforward necessary.

2-9. Extension of British Conquest to Southern Nigeria and the Southerners’ Resistance to Colonial Rule

As noted before, the military conquest of West Africa was precipitated by the terms of the Berlin Conference, which insisted that European powers should effectively occupy a territory before they could claim sovereignty over it. Britain, in effect, hastened to formalize its existing informal relations all along the coast especially near the mouth of the Niger in order to prevent the advance of European competitors. But though a protectorate had been proclaimed over the Niger Districts in 1885, there was no effective government there. Only a British Consul, who frequently found himself the arbiter between Goldie’s company and the Delta middlemen, whom the Royal Niger Company was attempting to circumvent.¹⁸⁷ The resistance of the Delta chiefs, however, forced the representatives of the British Government to bring changes in the organization and the title of the Oil Rivers Protectorate and to embark on territorial acquisitions from the coast to the interior.

¹⁸⁶ - R.Robinson & J.Gallagher ., Africa and the Victorians, The Official Mind of Imperialism ., p.181.

¹⁸⁷ - R.O Collins ., op.cit ., p. 149.

The process of occupation was often brutal and conducted by empire builders like G.T Goldie and H.H Jonhston¹⁸⁸, who organized their own personal expeditions which brought large areas under British rule. The Delta middlemen, who had been able to establish monopolistic control of the palm oil trade such as chief Jaja of Opobo and Nana of the Itsekiri were soon removed. In fact, their inability to increase the supply of palm oil led the merchants to bypass them penetrating the interior themselves and thus destroying their commercial empires.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the other traders who hindered the plan of British subjects like the merchants of Benin and Brass were punished by British punitive expeditions.

Meanwhile, the British Governor in Lagos pressed into Yorubaland in response to a French control in Dahomey. In fact, he resorted to sign a number of treaties promoting peace with most of the Yoruba states such as Ilorin, Ibadan, Oyo...and thus paving the way for the establishment of colonial rule.

It should be noted here that the resistance of African groups in the Niger Delta, Benin, Yorubaland and Igboland had taken many forms. In fact, constrained by technological inferiority, they had to decide whether to fight or to negotiate with British invaders. But whatever the decision they might have taken, the most important fact was that both the warrior societies of the east and the pacific people of the west had fallen under a British colonial regime. The following section deals with the different steps by which the southern states mainly : Opobo , the Itsekiri kingdom , Benin, Igbo , Brass and the Yoruba states became respectively part of British Empire focusing on the various reactions of African rulers in each state .

2-9-1.The Defeat of Opobo

Opobo is one of the most important states of the Niger Delta (Oil Rivers) region which was ruled by king Jaja.¹⁹⁰ This man with exceptional abilities was the only one

¹⁸⁸ - Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston(1858-1927): served as Vice-Consul in the Cameroons and Acting-Consul in the Oil Rivers from 1885 to 1888.

¹⁸⁹ - R.O Collins ., op.cit ., p. 149.

¹⁹⁰ - Jaja (1821-1891): was an Ibo who was sold as slave when he was 12 years old. He assumed the title of Head of Anna Pepple House of Bonny in 1863. He established the rival state of Opobo in 1869". From T.Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.371.

of the Delta rulers, who had been able to sign treaties with the British recognizing his sovereignty and his exclusive rights to his commercial hinterland . As stated by T.Hodgkin :

“Consul Charles Livingstone [made a treaty with Jaja in 1873] empowered him to stop any white traders from establishing factories anywhere above Hippopotamus Creek and under which he was empowered to stop and hold any vessel for a fine of one hundred puncheons of oil.”¹⁹¹

Furthermore, he signed a treaty with the British Consul Hewett on January 8 , 1884 , by which he placed his country under the protection of the British Crown . As stated by Consul Hewett :

“The Queen does not want to take your country or your markets but at the same time she is anxious that no other nation should take them. She undertakes to extend her gracious power and protection which will leave your country still under your Government; she has no wish to disturb your rule...”¹⁹²

Jaja, who had been treated with considerable sympathy by British consuls, came into dispute with them, when he was determined to exclude their commerce. In fact, this principal middleman of the Delta, whose power and wealth depended on maintaining his strategic position between the source of the palm oil and European buyers represented a handicap to the British attempts to establish freedom of trade after the Berlin Conference. He vigorously opposed free trade and sought to protect his source of supply by barring the way to the navigation of the Niger. As a first reaction, he closed the inland markets mainly Ohambela and Essene and he excluded British traders from the Qua Ibo River.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ - T.Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.372.

¹⁹² - Quoted in M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p. 159.

¹⁹³ - J.F.A Ajaye & M.Crowder ., op.cit ., p.399.

This tension increased, when palm oil prices began to collapse. At that time, he was forced to show his strong resistance to British trading companies in order to protect his commercial interests. In fact, as British firms struggled to trade directly with the native producers of the oil and not through Jaja's prices, he proceeded to more violent measures to enforce his monopoly of trade. Thus, he replied by banning all trade with them while he decided to ship his oil directly to Europe. According to M.Crowder, when the five British trading companies combined to force down the prices and duties which Jaja's monopoly enabled him to charge, he arranged to trade with the sixth Merchants House (Messrs A.Miller Brothers of Glasgow) and also to trade directly with Britain without paying the duties.¹⁹⁴

Jaja's behaviour was never accepted by Consul Hewett, who believed that he was the source of all the problems that had arisen in the Niger Delta as he pointed out:

*« Jaja is determined to use his exceptional power and influence among the native tribes to oppose the extension of European trade and to keep traders within such limits as the middleman of the coast may choose to impose...he is acting in such a manner as to make the exercise of the British Protectorate difficult unless he is sharply dealt with. ».*¹⁹⁵

Jaja was therefore considered to be a middleman, who aimed at preventing direct contact between the tribes of the interior and the European companies. It became clear to the British that his overthrow would be the only way which would open the road to British commercial expansion, the fact which led to his invitation on a British gunboat to discuss the differences. But this man, who had overcome so many dangers and difficulties fell victim to treachery at last. Once on board, he was given the choice between the bombardment of his town and his own deportation as M.Crowder stated it:

¹⁹⁴ - M.Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, op.cit., p.118.

¹⁹⁵ - Quoted in J.D Hargreaves, *West Africa Partitioned*, op.cit., p.115.

“Jaja was invited to embark on the British gunboat Goshawk for Accra for a discussion of the situation .The result was that he was deported to the Gold Coast as he recognized that he could not fight the British Government who menaced to undertake an immediate bombardment on Opobo if he would not accept British terms.”¹⁹⁶

It is fair to say, then, that the removal of Jaja started the gradual breaking of the sovereignty of the peoples and rulers of Southern Nigeria and also freed the field for British economic and political manoeuvres. Later events yet to come after Jaja’s episode would show us how the British dealt with the other rulers of the southern regions who knew their rights and who had the ability to protect their trading interests against British traders and would also show how far this quickened British imperial push towards their areas . But before examining these future events , another point requires to be stressed which concerns the British decision to undertake an effective administration over its Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1891 under the leadership of Major Claude Macdonald¹⁹⁷ who was to set up a new authority there .

2-9-2. Macdonald’s Administration in the Oil Rivers

It was after the defeat of Opobo in 1887 that the British tried to make their power effective on the Oil Rivers. Jaja’s deposition was a first step in the transformation of consular authority into more effective control. Indeed, after 1891 changes in the organization and title of the Oil Rivers Protectorate occurred.

After the deportation of Jaja, the British tried to extend their control into the hinterland of Opobo which was not possible for them due to the renewed problems which occurred from those, who claimed for the return of their ruler. This major

¹⁹⁶ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.120.

¹⁹⁷ - Major Claude Machould had been appointed Consul General and commissioner of the oil Rivers protectorate (in July 1891) which was under the jurisdiction of the foreign office. Sever years later he was nominated Secretary of State for the Colonies. He served also as Minister at Peking and Ambassador in Japan.

From: Henry L. Galway, “Nigeria in the Nineties” ,Journal of the Royal African Society, vol 29, n° 115 (Apr 1930)pp48-96. Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal African Society.

problem stimulated the Foreign Office to appoint a special commissioner in order to examine the situation in the Oil Rivers. It was Sir Major Claude Macdonald, who was charged in 1889 with the task of reporting on the situation inquiring into the position of the Royal Niger Company and giving instructions about how the Oil Rivers Protectorate could be best governed.¹⁹⁸ The latter issued a report stating that the Delta states preferred a Crown administration different from company rule¹⁹⁹. Unlike what was desired, an effective protectorate over the Oil Rivers was declared as it was put :

“On January 1, 1891, Britain established an effective government for her protectorate with a revenue in the first years of nearly £90,000 derived from import duties and to whom Macdonald himself was appointed as Commissioner and Consul-General and which from 1893 became known as the Niger Coast Protectorate.”²⁰⁰

The new administration differed from the previous one in the number of consular officers, which in effect had increased. There was only one consul in the earlier consular authority while Macdonald established vice - consulates in all the Delta states and had, in addition, customs and staff. According to J.D Hargreaves, the consul became Commissioner and Consul General with increased administrative responsibilities, the vice-consuls increased in number to six and also assumed new functions and an armed police force supplied with launches gave the administration means of enforcing its decisions.²⁰¹

It is, then, clear to mention that the events which happened in the Niger Delta since the 1890s enabled the British to bring gradually the Oil Rivers and its hinterland under British effective control. There was another important event, which happened in the Oil Rivers and which stimulated British Government to extend its control there.

¹⁹⁸ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.121.

¹⁹⁹ - Ibid.

²⁰⁰ - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p. 161.

²⁰¹ - J.D Hargreaves ., West Africa Partitioned ., op.cit ., p. 125.

This was the clash that occurred between Britain and the Itsekiri state, which in its turn showed a strong resistance towards British imperial advance.

2-9-3. The Fall of the Itsekiri

The Itsekiri kingdom is an important trading state in the Benin River west of the Niger Delta, which had been ruled since 1883 by chief Nana. This trader, who controlled trade of the Benin River and its tributary the Ethiope River was even more vigorous than Jaja in his resistance to the British. He strongly resented the British merchants, who aimed to break Delta states monopoly of trade to their own profit, the fact which led him to react when he felt the British interference with his internal trading affairs. This was to happen in 1894, when he was accused of blocking the trading routes, the fact which led to his invitation by the British to discuss their differences as O.Ikime showed it:

“Nana was accused of obstructing the British trade with the hinterland and also of human sacrifice .These accusations were sent to him by Sir Ralph Moor²⁰² who invited him to meet on a British gunboat to discuss the situation.”²⁰³

But, Nana showed his refusal, the fact which led to the intensification of the crisis. Remembering what happened to Jaja, Nana’s refusal seemed logical. But the result was that he was overthrown as had been the case for Jaja. Indeed, in 1894 Nana’s capital Ebrohimi was assaulted and taken by a massive combination of British armed forces and he was at last deported after fiercely defending his capital.²⁰⁴

It is important to mention that the deportation of the Delta states’ rulers was considered by British officials as an effective tactic to overthrow the African authorities and to ensure British control over these states .This fact did not concern only Jaja of Opobo and Nana of the Itsekiri Kingdom but was to continue to affect the Oba of Benin.

²⁰²- Ralph Moor: Consul General of the Niger Cosat Protectorate (1896-1900), and High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (1900-1903).

²⁰³ - O.Ikime., op.cit ., p.46.

²⁰⁴ - E.Isichei ., op.cit ., p.123.

2-9-4. The Defeat of Benin

As it was the case for Opobo and the Itsekiri kingdom, it was the economic factor and the steady expansion of colonial boundaries which led to the British conquest of Benin. The latter was a very important trading state in the mid-western region of what is today Nigeria. Its trade had been developed with the Yoruba country to the west, the Itsekiri to the coast, Nupe to the North and with Europeans. Its famous port was Ughoton on the Benin River. British traders had been trading in Benin throughout the first half of the nineteenth century establishing firms on the Benin River, where palm oil could be bought.²⁰⁵

During the 1880s, British Consul of the Oil Rivers Protectorate, Hewett, who started signing treaties with the people of the Niger Delta sought the need to push into Benin for the ratification of a protectorate treaty. But no official British visit was made there even though the area was regarded as part of the Oil Rivers Protectorate after its recognition by the Berlin Conference in 1885. This was to wait until 1892, when the British were forced to enter in the region in order to regulate trade. According to O.Ikime, British Consul for Benin River, Sir Gallway²⁰⁶ arrived in Benin on March 1, 1892 in order to negotiate a treaty with the Oba. This latter was accused by the Itsekiri merchants of blocking trade when he had stopped trading in certain articles like palm kernels and rubber which he sought to monopolize.²⁰⁷ But the Oba refused the signature of the treaty though the other chiefs did.²⁰⁸ This fact led to a future dispute between the British and Benin.

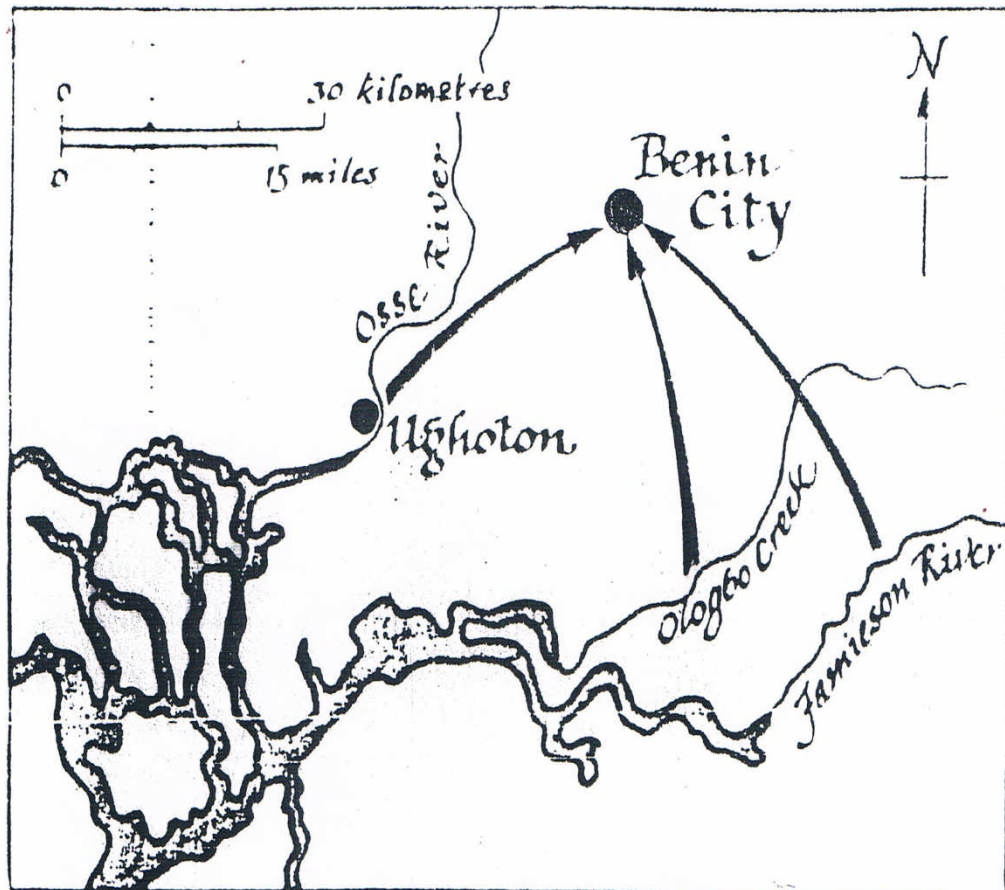
In the years that followed, tension between the British and Benin mounted as the Oba continued to place his ban on trade. It became soon clear for British officials of the protectorate that in order to defeat the Oba's resistance. A military conquest would be planned. But this was to wait till 1896, when British Acting Consul in the protectorate sought permission from the Foreign Office to embark on a military expedition.

²⁰⁵ - See map n° 18 showing the Benin City and its major ports during the 1890's., p.157.

²⁰⁶ - Sir Gallway: Vice-Consul in the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1891.

²⁰⁷ - O.Ikime., op.cit., p.154.

²⁰⁸ - O.Ikime., op.cit., p.154.



Map n° 18: Benin City and its Major Ports during the 1890's

Source: O. Ikime., op cit., p 164.

According to Crowder, in April 1896 Acting Consul General Phillips, who acted for Ralph Moor after his departure to Britain, sought permission to attack Benin and to remove its Oba.²⁰⁹ But such an action was postponed till 1897 when Phillips and the whole of his party were put to death. In fact, when they left for Benin via Ughoton in 1897, they were killed.²¹⁰ It was this incident, which made the British determined to launch an attack on the city and to send its Oba to exile as Jaja and Nana had been before him.

With the conquest of Benin, the British succeeded in gaining control over the coastal states of the Eastern Delta (with the exception of Brass). These states which had resented the loss of their political authority disliked even more the British determination to penetrate into their hinterlands and to deal directly with the oil producers. But unfortunately, they were not able to prevent such an advance which started for instance into the Igbo-Ibibio hinterlands as from about 1896.

2-9-5. The Occupation of Igboland and Ibibioland

The Igbo and Ibibio in the south eastern regions of what is today Nigeria are stateless people, who lived in inter-village feuding and had no experience of external rule. These groups who had been able to launch several revolts against the British were exceptionally difficult to conquer. Indeed, they were not fully defeated until 1919.²¹¹ The most famous group of the Igbo and Ibibio was the Aro on whom the British attack did not take place until 1901.

After the occupation of the coastal states, the British began to look to the interior for expansion. It was possible for them to realize such an advance into the hinterlands from two centres, the Cross River area and the Atlantic seaboard with Bonny, Opobo and kalabari as bases. In those areas, the British had also to send military expeditions in order to break the resistance of the people there. For instance, in 1898 an expedition was sent on the Ikwo, Ezza and Izzi groups in the Cross River

²⁰⁹ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.123.

²¹⁰ - J.Maquet ., op.cit ., p.182.

²¹¹ - J.Iiffe ., op.cit ., p.195-6

zone while another was sent in the following year on the villages North of Azumini River²¹².

The groups stated above were instigated to resist the British penetration by the Aro, who were considered as the political leaders of the Igbo and Ibibio.²¹³ The Aro in their turn, who did not hope to lose their middlemen position and who maintained strong hostility towards the British advance into the hinterland induced the British to send a military force against them. According to Crowder, an expedition was sent by Sir Ralph Moor on December 24, 1901 under the command of the Lt Colonel H.F Montanaro, who succeeded to defeat this principal centre of the south-eastern regions.²¹⁴

The defeats of Opobo , the Itsekiri , Benin , Igboland and Ibibioland show how far Britain followed an aggressive policy towards the chiefs of the Delta states under her protection .This attitude was not restricted to her Niger Coast Protectorate²¹⁵ where British consuls played an effective role in defeating the power of African chiefs because a similar situation was to be confronted in the Royal Niger Company territories, where the company assisted in breaking the power of the Delta states mainly Brass .

2-9-6. The Royal Niger Company and the Defeat of Brass

As noted before, after the grant of the charter of 1886, the Royal Niger Company was given certain administrative privileges such as collecting customs duties, administering justice and enforcing treaty making but it was not given permission to engage in great programmes of political expansion. Indeed, the political functions conferred to its officials were designed for the aim of regulating the activities of the merchants in the Niger districts .In other terms to prevent the presence of foreigners from precipitating conflict and disorder. According to J.D Fage, the

²¹² - L.E.A Steel, "Explorations in Southern Nigeria" *The Geographical Journal*, Vol 32 n°1, (Jul 1908), Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society (the Institute of British Geographers), pp 6-21.

²¹³ - Ibid.

²¹⁴ - M.Crowder ., *The Story of Nigeria* ., op.cit ., p.129.

²¹⁵ - Report on the Niger Coast Protectorate, 1891-4 (C7596), 16.

Royal Niger Company was empowered by its charter to administer justice and to maintain order in areas where it was authorized to do so by treaties between it and the African rulers.²¹⁶

On the contrary to what it was expected, Goldie went to establish there a trading monopoly that was ruining the Delta's commerce. This fact led to the outbreak of serious conflicts with the British merchants, who had developed the commerce of the area and also with the African suppliers in the coastal trading states mainly Brass. In fact, when the Brass merchants felt the company's intervention in their own trading affairs, they became more preoccupied with securing their middlemen's position in the face of Europeans' push into the Niger valley. But the company had caused great suffering to the men of Brass, whose whole livelihood had depended on trade with the Niger Company's territories from where they were excluded.²¹⁷ It was this economic injustice that stimulated the outbreak of a revolt between Brass and the company in 1895.

Brass which is one of the city states of the Niger Delta had long continued to keep control over her own affairs. But all this was to change, when the British influence started to be gradually felt by Brass merchants in the 1880s. Henceforth, Brassmen began to face a major problem, which was the decline of their internal trade, the fact which led to the rise of bitter protests. For instance, merchants of Brass, who wanted to trade within the Niger Company territories were obliged to pay duties as O.Ikime showed it:

*“They were forced to pay £50 for licence to trade and £100 for trade in spirits. They were also obliged to pay an export duty of 20% on all the produce they sold at that time, while the Government of the protectorate itself did not charge any duties on export.”*²¹⁸

²¹⁶ - J.D Fage ., A History of West Africa ., op.cit ., p.172.

²¹⁷ - O.Ikime ., op.cit ., p.136.

²¹⁸ - Ibid ., p.137.

Therefore, grievances against the company's rule became widespread among Brass traders, the fact which led them to write to Sir Macdonald who was appointed commissioner at that time stating the oppressive terms, which the company had imposed on them and claiming for certain rights. The Brass traders pointed that:

*“... Every river had markets to trade to feed them. And this trade that we have and finished today had been just begun and finished, we would not have felt it so much ... and as it is snatched away from our hands by the Niger Company, we really felt it keenly...if part of the Niger River is not given to us the war with the Niger Company will not stop...”*²¹⁹

But up to 1895 nothing was done for Brass merchants, the fact which made them determine to fight. This was to happen within the same year, when they attacked the company's port at Akassa aiming at destroying the company's depot and headquarters there.²²⁰ Unfortunately, the rising failed and the Brassmen suffered much in consequence.

So, from all that happened in the Niger Delta, one can conclude that with the assistance of both Goldie's Royal Niger Company and British Consuls, Britain had been able to conquer the whole coastline of Southern Nigeria and to defeat most of the peoples of the hinterland of her Niger Coast Protectorate during the end of the nineteenth century.²²¹ As it was seen, Jaja was sent to exile in 1887 followed by Nana in 1894. Three years later, the British conquered the ancient kingdom of Benin and between 1901 and 1902, they mounted the Aro expedition against Igboland. Furthermore, Goldie's company defeated the state of Brass in 1895.

British presence in the Niger Delta, then, seemed to be very effective in the late nineteenth century. But this does not mean that effective British control was limited to the Niger Delta and its hinterland since there was at the same time a steady

²¹⁹ - Quoted in T.Hodgkin ., op.cit ., p.377.

²²⁰ - Blue Book, Niger coast protectorate, 1896- 7, C.O, 464/1, ff-81 and 95- 7.

²²¹ - J.D Fage ., A History of West Africa ., op.cit ., p.173.

process of conquest and expansion towards the hinterlands of Lagos Colony. Meanwhile, Britain had been active in extending her influence over the Yoruba hinterland of her Lagos Colony, the fact which was not possible for her during the 1860's due to the local disturbances of the period. A protectorate over the Yorubaland had become increasingly desirable because of the frequent stoppages of trade which had so frustrated the Lagos Government. According to J.D Fage, this situation began to be solved in and after 1886, when the war had brought Lagos trade with the interior practically to a standstill. Since this was also a period of low prices in the world markets for palm oil and other products, the British traders at Lagos became convinced that only the extension of British control over the Yorubaland would save the situation.²²²

2-9-7. Britain's Imperial Advance into the Yorubaland

As it was previously mentioned, in 1861 the British established Lagos Colony, where British authority had been quickly extended along the coast both to the west and east. But this was not the fact towards the hinterland. Indeed, the British were not able to extend their commerce into the interior because of the Yoruba internal wars which lasted for more than half a century from the 1820s until the 1880's.²²³

Thereafter, in order to develop trade and to extend British influence there, the Lagos Government thought of promoting peace in the area, which would embrace all the Yoruba states. Peace, in effect, was needed in the interests of trade. As noted before, the attempts to promote peace were made during the 1860's by G.H Glover who succeeded to impose peace upon the Egba while he failed to convene general peace of all Yoruba states as the internal wars broke out again in the 1870s.²²⁴

This attempt to promote pacification was renewed by the Lagos Government one decade later, when the commerce of the area had been brought into a standstill. The colonial administrators in Lagos might have chosen a peaceful penetration to the hinterland for the promotion of commerce believing that they would face opposition at

²²² - J.D Fage ., *A History of West Africa* ., op.cit ., p.141.

²²³ - M.Crowder ., *The Story of Nigeria* ., op.cit ., p.138.

²²⁴ - Ibid.

home. For them, a new rebellion would probably provoke that opposition and expensive military operations were not hoped. Thus, it was better for them to accept surrender on conditional terms than to face the criticism that was bound to follow expensive military operations. That pacification was clearly understood by C.A. Moloney²²⁵ who administered the Government of Lagos several times. According to J.D Hargreaves, the latter proposed a British blockade of all imports of arms into the Yoruba country, which he thought would induce the Yoruba states to send their representatives to Lagos to negotiate peace terms and which would develop their country and also promote their commerce.²²⁶

Thereafter, when C.A Moloney returned to Lagos in 1886 as Governor of the separate colony,²²⁷ he started by sending letters to the Yoruba combattants urging to the end of war. According to M.Crowder, two of his respected clergymen, Samuel Johnson and Charles Phillips were sent respectively with messages to Ibadan and Ekiti-parapo inviting them to state their peace terms and permitting to the Colonial Government acting as mediator.²²⁸ Hence, many warriors were ready to respond to this suggestion by signing the desired treaty. In fact, Oyo, Ibadan, Ijebu, Ondo and Ekiti-parapo, all together ratified a treaty of peace on June 4, 1886.²²⁹

Peace was signed and the warriors agreed to put an end to the war for the promotion of commerce. But with the establishment of peace in the hinterland and since the British Governor in Lagos had been permitted to act as mediator, there would be no doubt that the British could at last extend their control there. It was also not surprising that having helped to bring peace in Yorubaland, Britain began to impose her rule there by force. In 1892, indeed, the Ijebu was beaten to submission and one year later, Ibadan was occupied by a British force. In 1895, Oyo was bombarded and

²²⁵ - Moloney Cornelius Alfred (1848-1913): Captain served in various posts in West Africa and the Bahamas from 1867. He administered the Government of Lagos 1878-84 where he became Governor 1887-91. He died in 1902.

²²⁶ - J.D Hargreaves., West Africa Partitioned., op.cit ., p.134.

²²⁷ - It was decided on the basis of the Committee's report that Sierra Leone should become the seat of Government for all the West African dependencies of Great Britain. Thus, Lagos was administered with the rest of the British West African territories from 1866 to 1874 and with the Gold Coast from 1874 to 1886. In the latter year, it was separated from the administration of the Gold Coast.

²²⁸ -M.Crowder., West Africa under Colonial Rule., op.cit ., p.128.

²²⁹ - J.D Hargreaves., West Africa Partitioned., op.cit ., p.139.

conquered and in the years that followed other parts of Yorubaland were gradually occupied.²³⁰

2-9-7-1.The fall of Ijebu

Ijebuland is a territory situated in the eastern part of Lagos. It offered a strategic trading route to Ibadan and Oyo. This location gave to the Ijebu opportunity to maintain their position as middlemen for long time. But after the signing of the peace treaty of 1886 by which all the Yoruba states agreed to open routes for commerce, the Ijebu felt that the British were threatening this position. Indeed, the British aimed to open a commercial line with Ibadan using Ijebu as a base. But when the Lagos Government sought to develop trade with Ibadan through this area, the Ijebu foresaw that this would deprive them from their position as middlemen the fact which led them to close their trading routes.²³¹

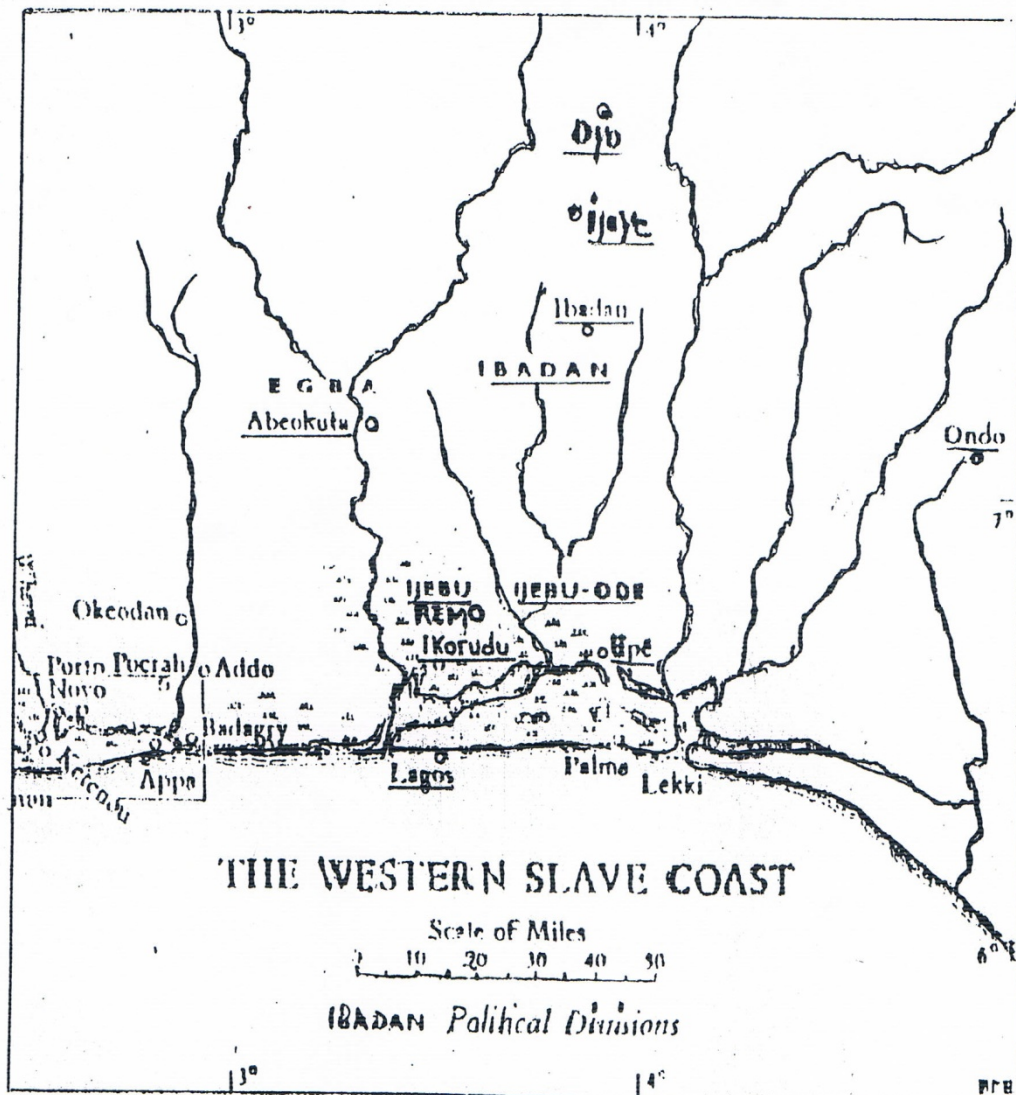
Henceforth, for the purpose of reopening this commercial line, the Lagos Governor attempted to enter the town in order to discuss the situation. Acting Governor Denton who administered Lagos after Moloney's retirement attempted to visit the ruler of Ijebuland, Awujale, in order to secure a peaceful solution to the problem. But the Ijebu refused to discuss trade with him.²³² This act was considered as an insult for which the Ijebu had to pay in 1892. Although Governor Gilbert Carter obtained an apology from the Awujale for his treatment of Governor Denton in addition to a treaty which would guarantee free trade, he sent a successful military expedition against Ijebuland on May 15, 1892.²³³

²³⁰ - See map n°19 showing the major states of Yorubaland ., p.165.

²³¹ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule., op.cit ., p.126.

²³² - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p.168.

²³³ - O.Ikime ., op.cit ., p.56.



Map n° 19: The Major States of Yorubaland in the 19th century.

Source: J.D Hargreaves (1968), op.cit., p 55.

The defeat of Ijebu had great effects on the rest of Yorubaland. Indeed, the major success that the British realized there paved the way for a further expansion of British control in the Yoruba hinterland. The following year, in fact, the governor of Lagos was able to sign new treaties with the various Yoruba states. So, the speed by which Ijebu was defeated induced the rest of the Yoruba states to seek peace in order to gain the British friendship. According to J.D Fage, the Egba soon presented their apologies to the Lagos Governor for their closing of the trading routes in the past while the Abeokuta chiefs signed in 1893 treaties by which they agreed to end the entire dispute with the Egba, to accept British settlements and to stop closing their trading routes.²³⁴

It was the ratification of these peace treaties, which enabled the British to extend their control in all the Yorubaland . In fact, in the few years following the Ijebu expedition, they were able to establish in Ibadan troops, who had orders not only to bring Ibadan but also Ijesa, Ekiti and Oyo under British rule.

2-9-7-2. The Conquest of Oyo

As it was previously mentioned, Yoruba wars were brought to an end by the peace treaty of 1886. Alafin Adeyemi 1, who ruled Oyo in the late of the nineteenth century had signed the treaty. He had his own reasons for wanting peace to be concluded between the warriors. According to E.Isichei, this Alafin welcomed the arrival of missionaries into his country in order to provide him with arms and ammunition that would help him to defeat his enemies, Dahomey and Ilorin, which started their attacks on his territories respectively from Upper Ogun area and the Iseyin.²³⁵ Thereafter, the missionaries induced Adeyemi 1 to ask the Governor of Lagos to intervene with his political affairs in order to bring peace. In fact, he asked Reverend D.Olubi and Reverend Samuel Jonhson to write a letter for him to the Lagos Governor inviting him to help negotiate peace between Ibadan and Ekiti-parapo.²³⁶

²³⁴ - J.D Fage., *A History of West Africa.*, op.cit. p.171.

²³⁵ - E.Isichei., op.cit ., p. 71.

²³⁶ - O.Ikime., op.cit ., p.113.

When doing this, the Alafin, ignored that he would prepare the way for the fall of his empire under British control. What the Alafin needed from missionaries in reality was to help him in his wars against Dahomey and Ilorin. He never expected that this would hurry the gradual push of British influence and power into the Yorubaland, which started soon after 1886.

The Alafin felt the British advance into the Yoruba country in 1888, when he was forced to sign a peace treaty, thus providing more chance for the widespread of British influence. According to J.D Hargreaves, the Lagos Governor, Moloney, signed a peace treaty on July 25, 1888, whereby the Alafin was made to argue that he would not give away any part of his domain or enter in any agreement with any power without the permission from the Governor.²³⁷

The Alafin felt another British threat five years later when he was asked to sign another treaty, by which he would give permission to the Lagos Governor to be in charge of any disputes which may arise in the Yorubaland between either the British or Yoruba subjects. Indeed, any disputes between the parties to the treaty were to be referred to the Governor in Lagos.²³⁸ The Alafin might have known what he was doing when he signed these treaties, but he did not believe that his powers were in any way reduced.

In the same year (1893), Ibadan signed a treaty with the British by which it accepted to have European officers and British soldiers stationed in the town. This fact enabled the British to order Captain Bower who was placed in charge of all Yorubaland outside Lagos to take residence there.²³⁹ It was from this area, then, that the British started their intervention with the Oyo affairs and so created the crisis which led to its bombardment in 1895.²⁴⁰

Once Oyo had fallen, the British went to establish their rule over what used to be known as the Oyo province. Thus, by 1896 all of Yorubaland south of Ilorin became under the effective control of the Lagos Government. Only the Fulani

²³⁷ - J.D Hargreaves ., West Africa Partitioned ., op.cit ., p.162.

²³⁸ - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p.169.

²³⁹ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.126.

²⁴⁰ - Ibid .

Emirates prevented further access of British trade to the interior. Indeed, Ilorin and the other Fulani Emirates came within the sphere of operation of the Royal Niger Company.²⁴¹

From all the events which happened in the southern regions, one can conclude that the British occupation of the south had been effected by conquest and diplomacy under three agencies: the Niger Coast Protectorate dependent on the Foreign Office, the Royal Niger Company and the Lagos Colony dependent on the Colonial Office.

It also becomes obvious that the southern regions had been divided into colony and protectorate. The Lagos Colony represented the land acquired before the scramble in 1861 while the protectorate was the large hinterland acquired after it notably: the Oil Rivers Protectorate acquired in 1885 to become the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1894 and the Protectorate and Colony of Lagos declared in 1886.²⁴² Thus, different kinds of administration had been developed on the same territory.

Having established political dominance in the entire southern regions, the British continued their advance towards the northern ones. This was accomplished through various means, most commonly by treaties of protection in which local authorities ceded partial or but sovereignty to the United Kingdom.

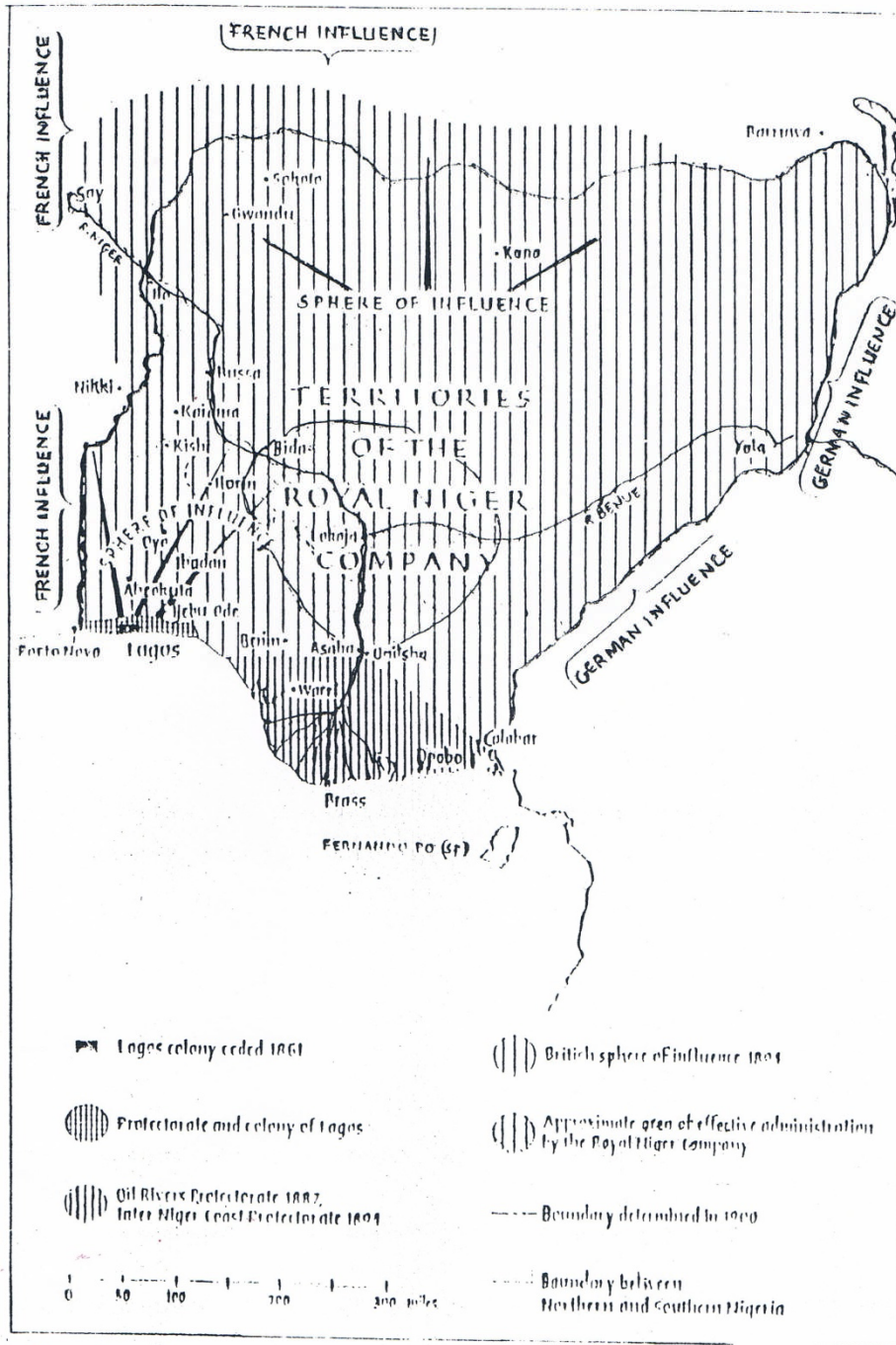
2-10. British Occupation of Northern Nigeria (1900-1914)

The largest part of Northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century was the Sokoto Caliphate, where Islam became its official religion. Most of the old established Hausa Kingdoms had embraced the Islamic faith by the early sixteenth century under which they had developed a well organized fiscal system, a regular scheme of local rule through appointed district heads and a trained judiciary administering the tenets of Mohammedan law.²⁴³ The Fulani, who gained the ascendancy in the greater part of the

²⁴¹ - Blue Book, Niger Coast protectorate of the Southern Nigeria, 1990, CO 473/1, ff 127 and 52.

²⁴² - See map n°20 which shows the Growth of the British Influence in Nigeria by the late 19th century. P169.

²⁴³ - Lord Hailey., op.cit., p. 453.



Map n°20: The Growth of the British Influence in Nigeria by the late 19th century.
 Source: Michael Crowder., West Africa and Colonial Rule., op cit., p 46.

Fulani jihad launched by Usman Dan Fodio in 1804 had formed part of this organized system of rule.²⁴⁴ Outside the Caliphate were the Muslim state of Bornu and the non Muslim state of Tiv with which the Fulani Emirates were hardly on friendly terms.²⁴⁵

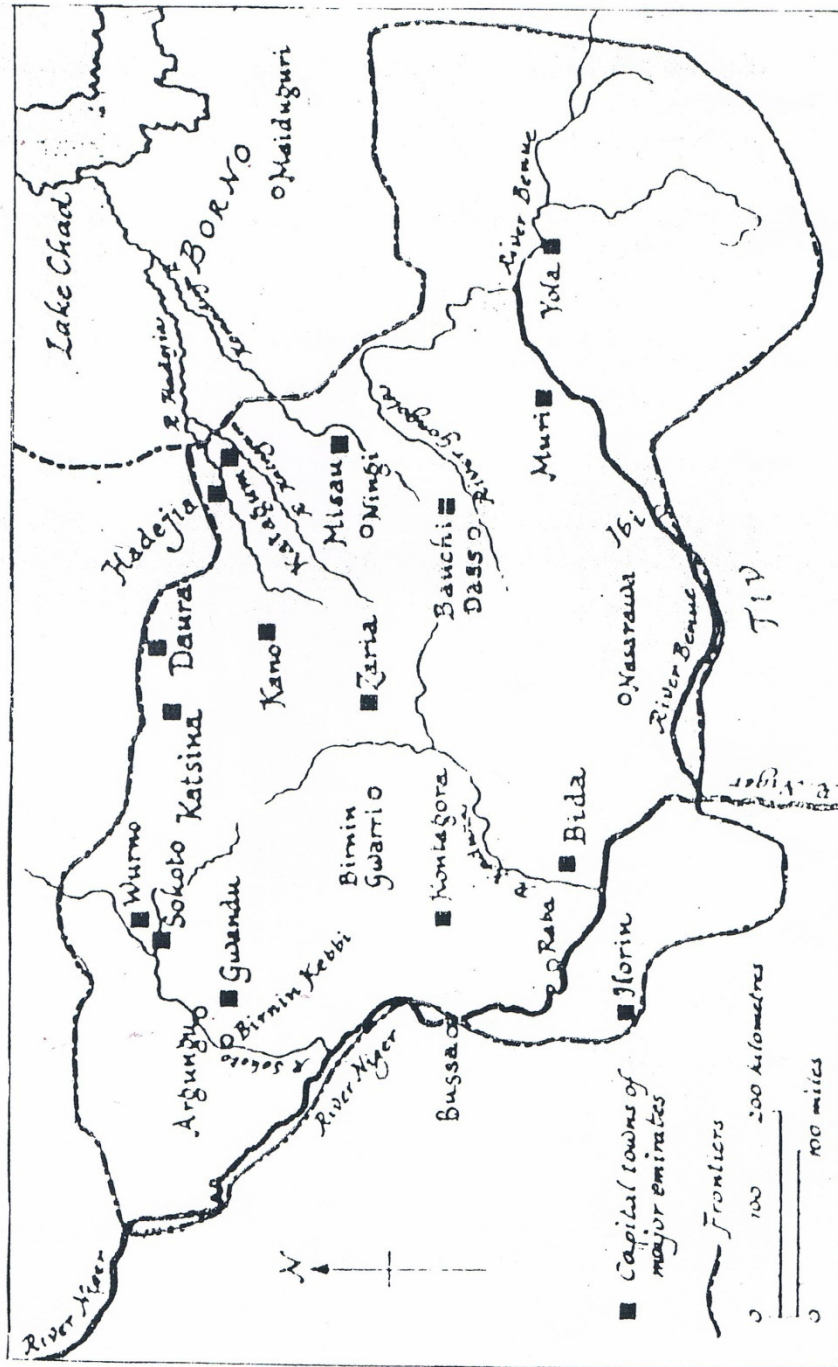
As it was the case in the South, before the establishment of any colonial rule, European merchants were able to establish business relations with the Sokoto Caliphate notably with the Emirates along the Niger Benue waterway. They succeeded to secure with the Emirs treaties, which were considered no more than trading agreements. This situation was to change especially from the 1880s as European companies trading there sought not only to monopolize trade but also attempted to exercise political rights over the Emirates. This transition from commercial to political imperialism is well illustrated by the activities, which were undertaken by the British represented by Goldie's Royal Niger Company and the French, who competed with them for the promotion of their imperial ambitions. As it will be seen, relations between Goldie's Company and the Emirates tended to deteriorate after that date, which made the company launch attacks on the Southern Emirates, the fact which in its turn led to the revocation of the company's charter in the late nineteenth century.

Thereafter, responsibilities of the Royal Niger Company to the north were taken over by British Government and a protectorate was declared over Northern Nigeria under the leadership of Frederick Lugard.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ - Colin Legun., op.cit., p. 212.

²⁴⁵ - See map n°21 showing the Sokoto Caliphate before the British conquest., p171.

²⁴⁶ - Frederick Dealtry Lugard (1858 – 1945) : served in the Indian Army before arriving in East Africa in 1888 . Thereafter , he was instrumental in establishing the British presence in Nyasaland , Uganda and Nigeria . In 1900 , he was appointed High Commissioner in Northern Nigeria . Between his Nigerian appointments, he was appointed Governor of Hong Kong (1907 – 1911) and served on the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations and as Chairman of the International Institute of African Languages . As Governor of Northern and Southern Nigeria (1912 – 1913), he united the two provinces in 1914 and served as the Governor General of Nigeria from 1914 to 1919 . He wrote The Rise of Our East African Empire in 1893 and later on The Dual Mandate for Tropical Africa in 1922 in which he presented the fundamentals of Indirect Rule discussing the relations between native rulers and the British staff . He died in 1945. For more details see Appendix showing notable people in Nigerian history, p.172



Map n°21: Sokoto Caliphate before the British Conquest (19th century)

Source: O. Ikime., op cit., p. 170.

The latter was entrusted with the work of establishing a British administration for the protectorate, which he accomplished through a series of military expeditions extending up to 1906.²⁴⁷

Under Lugard's administration much of the existing African political structure was retained. Indeed, the northern Emirs together with their councillors and officials became officials of the new native administration.²⁴⁸

Henceforth, Lugard argued that the amalgamation of Nigeria should take place mainly for economic reasons.²⁴⁹ The first step towards unification was made in 1906, when the Southern Nigeria Protectorate and the Lagos Colony amalgamated while complete unification was achieved in 1914, when both the latter were united with the Northern Protectorate under a common administration.²⁵⁰ This section which covers the period between 1900 and 1914 is mainly concerned with the major phases for the establishment of British colonial rule in Northern Nigeria focusing on the major conditions under which the different regions of Nigeria were amalgamated.

2-10-1. Royal Niger Company and the Problems of the North

Contact between British merchants and the Caliphate in Northern Nigeria started from the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact, British explorers like Clapperton and Barth, who sought to reach the Niger using the caravan trade routes across the Sahara were able to visit Sokoto and to sign commercial treaties with the Caliph. E. Isichei reported that Oudney, Denton and Clapperton who were instructed to secure a treaty in 1822 with the Sultan of Sokoto binding him to stop the slave trade and to check the course of the Lower Niger travelled from Tripoli to Lake Chad.²⁵¹ Oudney died, Denham explored the Bornu area and Clapperton travelled to Sokoto, where he learned that the Niger flowed South. Immediately after the latter returned

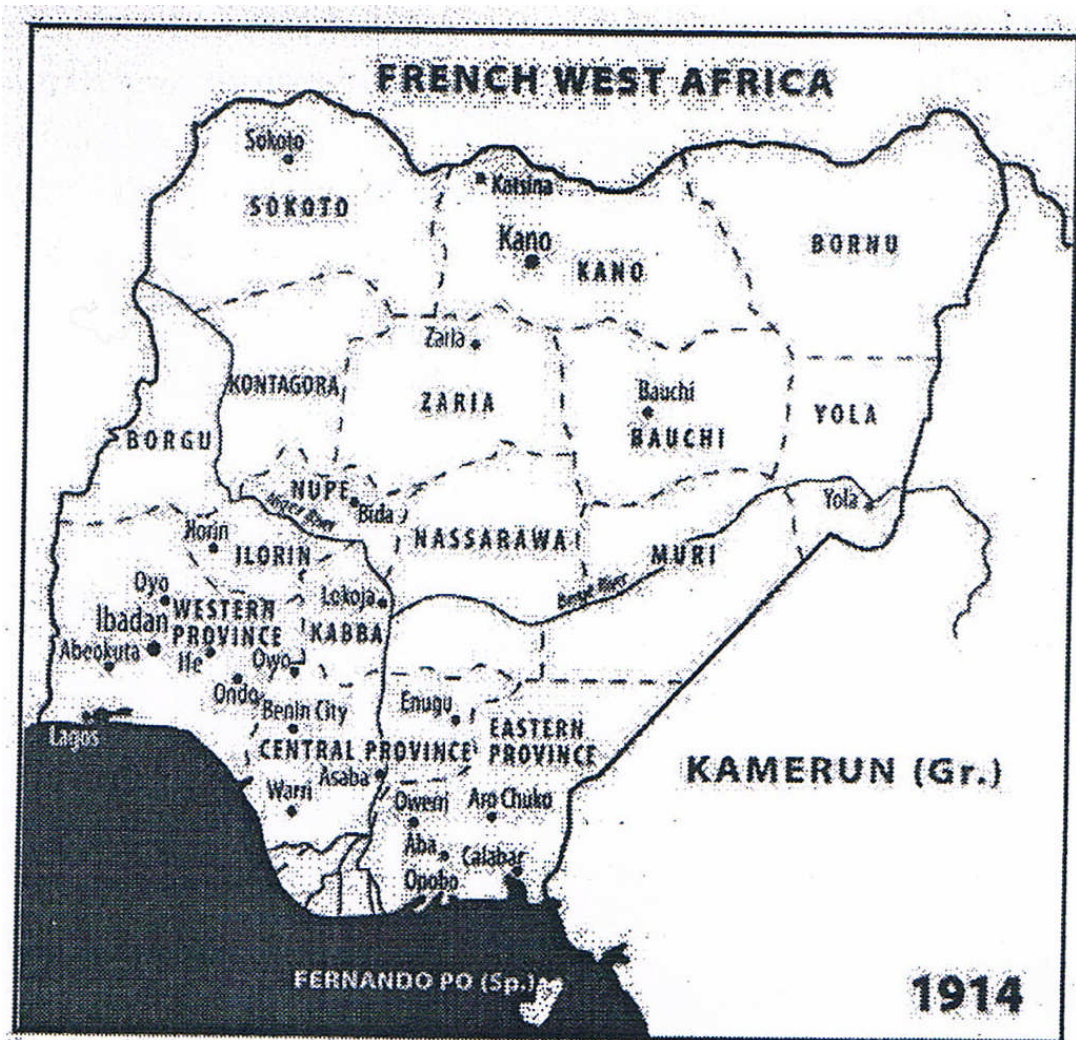
²⁴⁷ - A. F. Mockler Ferryman, "British Nigeria", *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol 1, n°2, (Jan 1902), Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal African Society, p p 160- 173.

²⁴⁸ - Paul Fordham., *The Geography of African Affairs.*, p.110.

²⁴⁹ - R.O Ekundare., op.cit., p.105.

²⁵⁰ - Charles Lindsay Temple, "Northern Nigeria", *The Geographical Journal* vol 40, n° 2 (August 1912), Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, p p 136- 149.

²⁵¹ -See map n°22, showing colonial Nigeria in 1914., p173.



Map n°22: Colonial Nigeria in 1914.

Source: Toyin falola and Matthen. M. Heaton., op cit, p94.

home, he set out for the Niger again and travelled to Sokoto from Badagry.²⁵² In addition, Dr Heinrich Barth left Tripoli and visited Katsina, Kano, Bornu and in 1852 he continued via Sokoto, Say to Timbuctu.²⁵³ Thus, both men secured agreements which laid down the rules which were to govern trade between Europeans and the Caliphate.

The treaty of May 2, 1853, which was granted to the British Government by the Emir of Sokoto, Ali, is a sample of the protectorate treaties, which were signed by the Northern Emirates. In the treaty, it is pointed that:

*“Traders from England shall travel under safe conduct through the territories of Amir al-Muminin Ali with their children... No Governor in the territories of Ali shall lay hold of them nor shall any danger befall them. They shall return safely with their property and their honour and their honour inviolate... They shall traffic in everything except slaves for the Emir will not allow them to purchase slaves. This is all peace .”*²⁵⁴

It should be noted here that the British were given free access to the north only for commercial reasons. The treaty, in fact, did not confer to them any political right over the region while the Caliph saw himself as their protector. Hence, British firms which had hitherto developed commerce with the Niger Delta states were able to extend increasingly their trade to the Emirate of the north. Furthermore, the French companies, which had already established trading stations on the Niger River, joined the competition for trade in the Benue, the fact which led Sir Goldie as it has been previously mentioned, to form the National African Company, which was to become the Royal Niger Company.

²⁵² - E. Isichei ., op.cit., p.160.

²⁵³ - J.D Fage ., A History of West Africa ., op.cit., p.126.

²⁵⁴ - Quoted in O. Ikime ., op.cit ., p.223.

This agency was able to overthrow the French threat and to secure treaties with the Northern Emirates. According to J.D Hargreaves, Goldie was able to expel the French from the Benue and to secure treaties with the Caliph of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu in 1885, whereby the Emirates were determined to trade only with the National African Company.²⁵⁵

It is clear to mention that the company was given entire charge of all trading interests in the areas on both sides of the rivers Benue and Niger. It was, for instance, granted rights to control foreign trade while Sokoto and Gwandu were not permitted to enter into relations with foreigners without having permission from the company. In return, the company accepted to pay 3000 and 2000 bags of cowries annually to Sokoto and Gwandu.²⁵⁶

This situation was not to continue as the relations between the company and most of the Emirates began to deteriorate. Indeed, the emirs soon realized that the company was proceeding to act as if the treaties had given it permission to exercise political rights on their emirates, the fact which made them react to this development. For example, when the company began to collect tribute from the European merchants instead of the emirs, the latter pointed that all foreign merchants were free to trade with their dominions and invited the French for trade. This was to happen for instance in Nupe territory in 1892, when the emir Maliki ordered the company to leave his territories and at the same time invited the French to trade with him.²⁵⁷

Thereafter, the emirs' reaction had put the company in a more complex situation in which the company had not only to confront the emirs but also the French rivals. The French intrusion in the Northern Caliphate at this time was considered as a break to the treaty which they had hitherto signed with the British. This Anglo-French agreement was signed in 1890, by which the French agreed that the Fulani emirates south of the line between Say on the Niger and Barruwa on Lake Chad were reserved to the company.²⁵⁸ But the company aiming to demonstrate to the British

²⁵⁵ - J.D Hargreaves., West Africa Partitioned ., op.cit ., p.98.

²⁵⁶ - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p.67.

²⁵⁷ - Ibid., p.68.

²⁵⁸ - Armand Colin ., Afrique Noire Contemporaine ., p. 110.

Government that it was capable of forwarding British interests in this part of West Africa soon responded by establishing military posts there and by driving the French away from the emirates. As an illustration, the French Government was forced to withdraw from Muri and Adamawa in 1893 and from Nupe three years later while the company proceeded to establish military posts in Leaba, Jebba and Bayibo.²⁵⁹

Henceforth, it seemed to the emirs that the British were violating the protectorate treaties, the fact which led to conflicts against the company. But Goldie was strong enough to defeat the emirs' resistance. For example, the defeat of Nupe and Ilorin in 1897 was one of the most important milestones marking the progress of the establishment of alien rule in Northern Nigeria.²⁶⁰

Nupe, which was unwilling to sacrifice its sovereignty to the company fell at the same time, when the company embarked on war with the Fulani emirates of Ilorin. Indeed, Goldie found it necessary to conquer both emirates not only for the purpose of breaking the power of the emirs but also in order to stop the French advance in Borgu. According to R.Oliver and J.D Fage, it was the need to reach Borgu before the French who had conquered the native kingdom of Dahomey in 1893 which had involved Goldie's company in its first military clashes with the African states laying within its chartered sphere mainly the emirates of Nupe and Ilorin.²⁶¹

During the conquest, Ilorin had been a much more aggravating problem than Nupe for it brought the company into conflict with the Colonial Office and the Lagos Government. In fact, as the Yoruba country was under Lagos protection and the emir of Ilorin continued his raids into Yorubaland, the pressures from the Lagos Government to be allowed to take over Ilorin and restore it to Yoruba as distinct from Sokoto control were becoming more persistent.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ - F.D. Lugard, "Northern Nigeria", *The Geographical Journal*, vol 23, n°1 (Jan 1904), Blackwell Publishing on Behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, pp 1- 27.

²⁶⁰ - J.F.A Ajye and M.Crowder., op.cit., p.425.

²⁶¹ - R.Oliver and J.D Fage ., op.cit., p.190. Also see map n° 22 showing the Royal Niger Company's campaign against Nupe and Ilorin in 1897., p.129.

²⁶² - M.Crowder ., *West Africa under Colonial Rule* ., op.cit ., p.130.

2-10-2. Royal Niger Company and Ilorin

Ilorin had been part of the Yorubaland before the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire. It had become part of the Fulani Empire and had fought against the Yoruba during the Yoruba wars. As noted before, the treaty of 1886 brought peace to the various Yoruba groups but did not regulate relations between the Yoruba and Ilorin. This fact led Ilorin after the signing of the treaty to continue its raids into the Lagos territory.²⁶³

As it has been mentioned in chapter 2, after the treaty of 1886 the British who played the role of peacemakers gradually occupied the Yorubaland. Probably, the British Government in Lagos would have liked to occupy Ilorin also but it was not possible since Ilorin was part of the territory which the British Government in London had allowed the Royal Niger Company to control. Thus, in such a situation one may question about how the Lagos Government reacted as Ilorin continued its raids in areas that were brought under its own control.

The incident which happened in 1894 provides us with the best answer for this. In fact, following a clash between Ibadan and Ilorin, Captain Bower was asked by the British Governor in Lagos, Sir Gilbert Carter, to travel to Ilorin in order to try to delimit a boundary between Ilorin and the Lagos Protectorate.²⁶⁴ But nothing was done, the fact which stimulated the Lagos Government later on to write a report to London seeking for a solution. When Ilorin forces attacked the Lagos forces stationed at Odo-Otin, the governor sent his report arguing that the Royal Niger Company had no real control over Ilorin and that if it could not keep it under proper control the Lagos Government should be allowed to occupy the area and would bring it under effective control.²⁶⁵

Thereafter, the Colonial Office urged the company to take action against Ilorin. In fact, Goldie, who feared that the French might move to Ilorin and interfere with the company's territories, acted by sending a military force against this Emirate. Once

²⁶³ - O.Ikime ., op.cit ., p.120.

²⁶⁴ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule., op.cit ., p.131.

²⁶⁵ - O.Ikime ., op.cit ., p.121.

defeating the area in 1897, Goldie had signed a treaty by which the emir agreed to take directives from the company as well as to accept a boundary with Lagos.²⁶⁶

This defeat did not mean that Goldie was able to establish effective administration in Ilorin as it was expected. Instead, the Company's defeat of the area was accompanied by deterioration in the relations with the Caliphate on one side and with the French on the other, the fact which threatened the position of the company by the end of the nineteenth century.

2-10-3. Position of the Royal Niger Company (1897-1900)

Although Ilorin and Nupe were defeated, the company failed to establish any effective administration over both Emirates. This defeat resulted in the deterioration in relations with the Caliphate and in bringing the British into competition with the French rivals. According to Crowder, following this conquest the Caliph of Sokoto responded two years later by refusing to recognize the conquests of Nupe and Ilorin and by breaking off all relations with the Royal Niger Company.²⁶⁷ In addition, the company was brought into close contact with the French who on one side were pressing north-eastwards from Dahomey into Borgu and on the other they had advanced down the Niger beyond Say to as far as Bussa.²⁶⁸

For these reasons and with the principle of effective occupation always in the background, British Government sent a military force known as the West African Frontier Force under the leadership of F.D Lugard. The result was that British Government succeeded in keeping the French out of Northern Nigeria and an Anglo-French agreement was signed which traced the northern and the western boundaries of Nigeria .

The agreement of July 14, 1898 recommended that in the western region of Northern Nigeria, the French were forced to accept a boundary drawn halfway between Say and Bussa and in the Northern region, they were only able to reach Lake Chad through the southern fringes of the Sahara, while the greater part of the Fulani

²⁶⁶ - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit ., p.178.

²⁶⁷ - Ibid .,p.73.

²⁶⁸ - J.D Fage ., A History of West Africa ., op.cit ., p.173.

Emirates was recognized as British territory.²⁶⁹ Thus, the Royal Niger Company's failure to extend effective British influence in Northern Nigeria and to secure British commercial interests there led two years later to the withdrawal of the company's charter.

This change of British policy was clearly explained in Lord Salisbury's letter of June 15, 1899 to the Secretary of the Treasury, in which he gave his reasons for the revocation of the company's charter. In the letter Salisbury points that:

*“The Marquess of Salisbury has for some time past had under consideration the question of approaching the Niger Company with a view to relieving them of their rights and functions of administration on reasonable terms ... There are , however , other cogent reasons for the step now contemplated . The West African Frontier Force , now under imperial officers , calls for direct imperial control ; the situation created towards other firms by the commercial position of the Company , which , although strictly within the right devolving upon it by Charter , has succeeded in establishing a practical monopoly of trade , the manner in which this commercial monopoly presses on the native trader , as exemplified by the rising in Brass, which called for the mission of inquiry entrusted to Sir John Kirk in 1895 , are some of the arguments which has influenced his Lordship ... ”.*²⁷⁰

The British Government took over the administration from the company and declared a Protectorate of Northern Nigeria for which Frederick Lugard was appointed as High Commissioner. According to John Bowle, the British Minister of the Colonies

²⁶⁹ - H. Brunshwig ., *Le Partage de l'Afrique Noire* ., op.cit., p.140.

²⁷⁰ - Quoted in M Crowder ., *The Story of Nigeria* ., op.cit ., p. 171.

Chamberlain²⁷¹ designed Lugard as High Commissioner for the newly created protectorate and who with a budget of more than one million pounds a year managed to control a country with more than ten million inhabitants.²⁷² Furthermore, the Royal Niger Company's territories South of Idah and the Niger Coast Protectorate territories were integrated to form the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.²⁷³

From what it has been already mentioned, one can conclude that by the close of the nineteenth century, the territory was divided into three administrative parts. There was the colony of Lagos with its own Yorubaland Protectorate; there was the large Southern Nigeria Protectorate and the immense Northern Protectorate. According to I.F Nicolson, both the latter were still largely paper protectorates under High Commissioners with autocratic legal powers, which were subject to colonial regulations and to rigid control of expenditure.²⁷⁴

It should also be noted that British decision to establish a protectorate over Northern Nigeria meant that Britain was ready to take a new forward policy in the North. That policy involved as the events would prove the conquest of Northern Nigeria.

2-10-4. Lugard's Conquest of the North

As it was previously mentioned, in 1900 after the Niger Company lost its charter, Sir Frederick Lugard was placed in charge of the government of Northern Nigeria. This man of strong abilities, who hoped that trade would follow the flag undertook series of military expeditions that brought African states of the Savannah under British control.²⁷⁵ After his appointment as high commissioner, Lugard declared what used to be known as Northern Nigeria a British Protectorate. This proclamation was made in Lokoja at a ceremony held on January 1, 1900 whereby he declared the following:

²⁷¹ - Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), Minister of Commerce (1880-1886) and of colonies (1895-1903).

²⁷² - John Bowle., The Imperial Achievement. The Rise and Transformation of the British Empire., p.201.

²⁷³ - M.Crowder., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.128.

²⁷⁴ - I.F Nicolson., The Administration of Nigeria, Men, Methods and Myths ., p.35.

²⁷⁵ - Peter Duignan and L.H Gann ., op.cit ., p.99.

“We are charged to hold in peace and order this vast territory, no mean part of that empire, whatever may betide elsewhere; we have a charge to fulfil.”²⁷⁶

Lugard might have known from the beginning that the Northern Emirates would have to be taken by force since Islam forbade Muslims to accept infidel rule. But he may have hoped that it would be possible not to go to war against them. He tried, however, to achieve the fall of the Caliphate through diplomatic moves. At the initial stage he wrote to the Caliph of Sokoto informing him of what he had done and asking him to accept Britain’s control, but the Caliph refused Lugard’s declaration.²⁷⁷

Hence, it became obvious that the only way by which British rule could be effectively established in Northern Nigeria was through military conquest. The first Emirates which were to fall to the British were the southern ones. In fact, the first clash of arms between Lugard and the peoples of Northern Nigeria occurred in Bida, Kontagora and Adamawa in 1901.²⁷⁸ Lugard justified his conquest by claiming to the Colonial Office that the emirs of these emirates were barbarous slave raiders who should be chased. For instance, he claimed that the emir of Kontagora was a slave raider of the worst type, who had desolated a great area of the country and who had captured 8,000 slaves.²⁷⁹

Lugard’s next act was to move northwards. The British in their imperial advance in Northern Nigeria had followed a typical pattern. When they were dealing with the people of an emirate, they were simultaneously pushing their way towards their neighbours in the northern direction of the emirate. Thus, Lugard’s next attack was on Bauchi, Gombi and Zaria the rulers of which were overthrown in 1902.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ - M.A Author ., “Northern Nigeria Under Lugard’s Rule” ., Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria ., V4 ., n° 1 ., Dec 1967 ., p.47.

²⁷⁷ - O.Ikime ., op.cit., p.198.

²⁷⁸ - M.Crowder ., The Story of Nigeria ., op.cit., p.180.

²⁷⁹ - P.K. Tibenderam and Togin Falola, “Sokoto Province Under British Rule 1903- 1939” The International Journal of African Historical Studies, vol 24, N° 1 (Boston University Press 1991), pp 183- 148.

²⁸⁰ - M.Crowder., West Africa under Colonial Rule., op. cit., p.134.

Thereafter, the British continued their advance and chased the rulers. They did not find this task at all easy. Though they were never sure how the rulers would react at any given time, they continued to organize themselves for the defeat of the other emirates. The lessons of the past should have made it quite clear that the remaining emirates would react violently against any violation of their sovereignty by the British.

Kano became hostile to the British, when they seized the control of Zaria. Indeed, after the occupation of the latter the Emir of Kano urged the remaining towns to fortify their walls and to oppose the British by force, the fact which stimulated the British under the leadership of Colonel T.N Morland to bombard Kano on January 29, 1903²⁸¹. After this defeat, it was perhaps logical that the British should occupy Sokoto if they were to establish themselves effectively in the Caliphate.

Relations between Britain and Sokoto tended to deteriorate after the defeat of the major northern emirates, as all the emirates owed loyalty to the Caliph and their rulers paid annual tribute to Sokoto. It is therefore easy to see what their conquest might have meant to the Caliph in Sokoto. In fact, after the defeat of most of the emirates, the Caliph responded furiously in 1902 by writing to Lugard showing his refusal to the British presence in the north. In order to show how the Caliph behaved, O.Ikime quoted the Caliph's letter to Lugard as follows:

*"The Governor Lugard ... We did not invite you to put right [affairs in] Bauchi or anywhere else ... We do not request help from anyone but from God ..."*²⁸²

Another letter which was considered by Lugard as a declaration of war pointed the following:

"Between us and you there are no dealings except as between Musulmans and unbelievers... War, as God Almighty has enjoined on us".²⁸³

²⁸¹ - Quoted in O.Ikime., op.cit., p.192.

²⁸² - Ibid., p.201. See the whole text of the letter in Appendix 3.

²⁸³ - Quoted in M.Crowder., West Africa under Colonial Rule., op.cit., p.135.

From what it had been written in the letter, it becomes clear that Britain's next move should be on Sokoto, the headquarters of the Sokoto Caliphate. In fact, Lugard had begun to prepare for what he knew would be war against Sokoto. Lugard's expedition on Sokoto was sent on March 15, 1903, which resulted in the defeat of the emirate and in the installation of a new Sultan Mohammed Attihiru II (1903-1915), who was not designed Caliph but Emir to express his independent status.²⁸⁴

The fall of Sokoto to British forces marked the end of the caliphate's era. Indeed, the newly installed emir had ceased to have anything to do with the emirates and their emirs. His authority was confined to the Sokoto emirate and the British Governor assumed the functions hitherto performed by the Caliph.²⁸⁵ Lugard soon made this very clear to the emirs. In fact, in his address to the newly appointed emir of Sokoto on March 21, 1903, he declared:

*“The old treaties are dead, you have killed them. Now these are the words which I, the High Commissioner have to say for the future. The Fulani in old times under Dan Fodio conquered this country. They took the right to rule over it, to levy taxes, to depose Kings and to create Kings. They in turn have by defeat lost their rule which have come into the hands of the British. All these things which I have said the Fulani by conquest took the right to do now pass to the British”*²⁸⁶

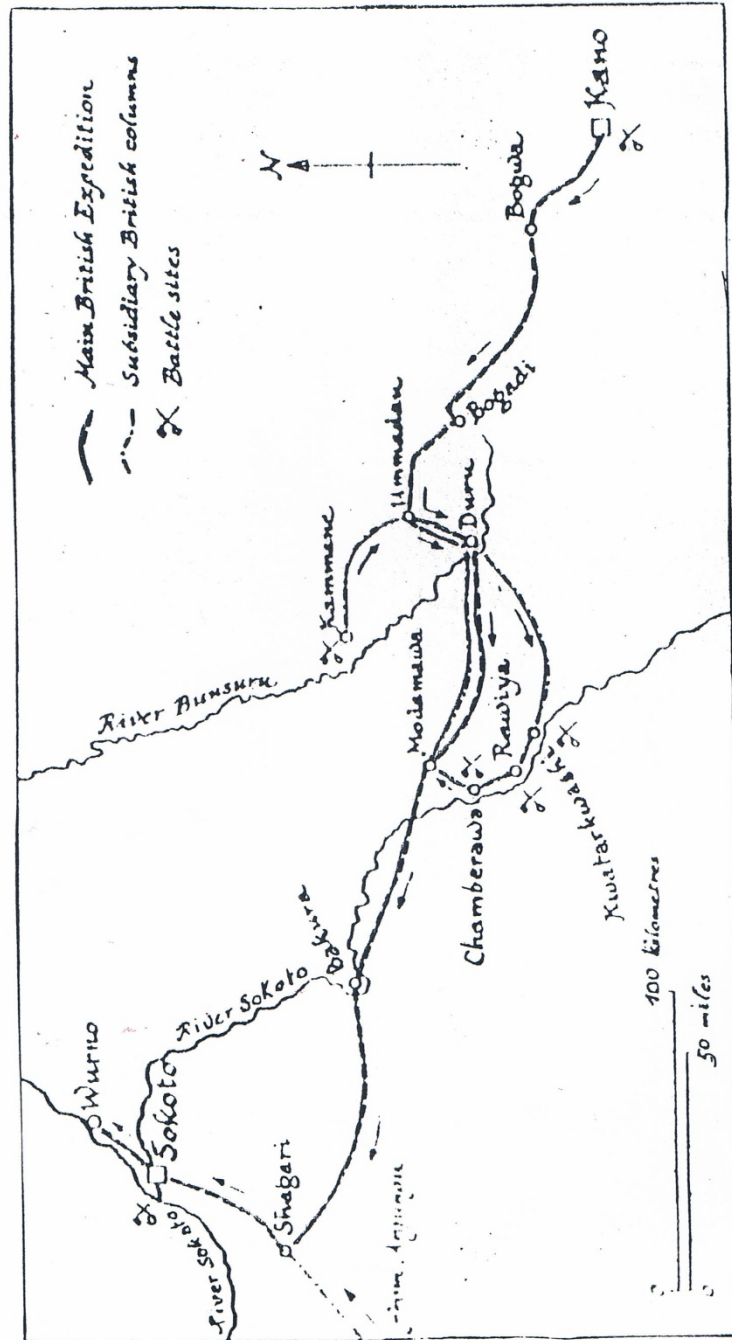
The destruction of the Caliph's power over the emirates left the Muslims of Northern Nigeria leaderless. This put the British in a much stronger position to effect the changes necessary to bring about greater colonial control. But Lugard's

²⁸⁴ - J. Bowle, op.cit., p.201.

Also see map n° 23 showing the routes of the Kano-Sokoto Expedition., p.184 .

²⁸⁵ - Ibid.

²⁸⁶ - Peter K. Tibenderana ., ‘The Irony of Indirect Rule in Sokoto Emir Nigeria 1903-1944 ’., The African Studies Review ., Vol.31., n°1 ., April 1988 ., p.67. (See the whole text in Appendix 4.



Map n° 23: Routes of the Kano-Sokoto Expedition.

Source: O. Ikime, *opcit*, p 200.

destruction of the caliphate does not mean that Britain's complete occupation of the northern regions of Nigeria was achieved.

As it was noticed before, the Sokoto Caliphate did not cover all Northern Nigeria. Within the 'paper protectorate' lay also the Muslim state of Bornu, which was controlled by Rabeh and parts of the pagan areas mainly Tivland. Here the British occupation had taken another form. The Colonial Office was determined to bring both territories peacefully under alien rule and not through war. What happened in Bornu would highlight this policy of peaceful penetration.

2-10-5. British Occupation of Bornu

Bornu is situated in the Lake Chad region, where the interests of European rivals were found most of the time opposed by the end of the nineteenth century. States of the Central Sudan mainly Oudai, Baguirmi and Bornu were of strategic importance to Germany, France and Britain as their territories formed a bridge not only between West and East Africa but also between the Equatorial regions and the northern part of the continent. The possession of the region would signify for France the creation of a French Colonial Empire linking her possessions of Western and Equatorial Africa while it would give opportunities for Britain and Germany to enlarge their possessions adjacent to the region (Britain- Nigeria and Germany- Cameroon).²⁸⁷

The great Empire of Bornu had been conquered in 1893 by Rabeh, who had swept to the area from the Egyptian Sudan, where he had worked with its governor of Darfur, Zubeir Pacha. The latter had been deposed and imprisoned by Cairo.²⁸⁸ Rabeh, who was judged to hamper the French interests in the Lake Chad region confronted several military expeditions, which resulted in the collapse of his empire.

Three French military expeditions entered the Bornu Empire in 1897 from three directions: the south of Oubangui Chari, the Senegal and and from the north across the Sahara under the leadership of Gentil Bretonnet, Voulet Chanoine and Foureau Lamy

²⁸⁷ - E. Sik ., op.cit ., p. 325.

²⁸⁸ - M.Crowder ., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.137.

respectively. The expeditions resulted three years later in the defeat of Rabeh.²⁸⁹ The French, then, restored the Shehu of the defeated Kanemi Dynasty of Bornu, Abubakar Garbai, who was asked to pay a sum of money in return for killing his rival Rabeh. According to Ronald Cohen, the Shehu Garbai was allowed to organize the political structure in the traditional way and to pay for them 80.000 Maria Theresa dollars per year as a tribute.²⁹⁰

As the Bornu state was declared a British possession by the Anglo-French agreements of 1898 and 1899²⁹¹, the Shehu who realized that the British were already organizing the conquest of what was to become Northern Nigeria sent messages to the British requesting that the latter should recognize him as the ruler of Bornu.²⁹² But when the British armed force arrived to take over Bornu in 1902, a sum of 65.000 Maria Theresa dollars remained to be paid by the Shehu Abubakar Garbai to the French.²⁹³ It was this fact which gave to the British an opportunity to make a peaceful access to Bornu.

Unlike what happened in the other parts of the Muslim states, Lugard chose to make Bornu submit peacefully to British rule. In this case the British did not have to fight. Instead, they promised the recognition of the Shehu on the throne if he ceased paying the rest of the sum demanded by the French and submit to their rule, a proposal which he gladly accepted.²⁹⁴ Thus, the commandant of the West African Frontier Force, Colonel Morland was sent in 1902 by Lugard to Bornu in order to give a letter to Garbai appointing him as Shehu of British Bornu.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ - E.Sik ., op.cit., p. 326.

²⁹⁰ - Ronald Cohen ., "From Empire to Colony : Bornu" ., in ., Victor Turner ., Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960 (Profiles of Change : African Society and Colonial Rule)., p. 105.

²⁹¹ - The treaty of June 14 , 1898 : « The partition of Bornu was determined by an Anglo-French agreement by which Zinder, Kanem, Baguarimi and the lands east of Chari were to be given to France, Dikwa and the territories between the Chari and the Yesderam to the Germans and the rest to the British. ». (Bornu was recognized as a British sphere of influence)., From M.Crowder., op.cit., p .181.

-The treaty of March 21 ,1899 : Bornu was recognized a British possession while Britain recognized the Union (by the Lake Chad region) of the French possessions of West and Equatorial Africa. From A. Colin., op.cit. p.110.

²⁹² - R.Cohen., op.cit., p.105. .

²⁹³ - M.Crowder., West Africa under Colonial Rule ., op.cit ., p.138.

²⁹⁴ - O.Ikime., op.cit. p.181.

²⁹⁵ - Victor Turner., op.cit. p. 105.

In Bornu like elsewhere, the African rulers did not wish to become under the supervision of the British. But once accepting the British suggestion, the Shehu probably thought that it would be possible for him by peace to re-establish his authority and reconsolidate the heritage of his fathers.²⁹⁶ He surely never believed that the British would stay in Bornu permanently; otherwise he would refuse their suggestion. But at a time when Britain had become committed to the building of a British Empire in Africa, such a belief was not defensible. In doing so, the Shehu had put Bornu in a position leading to its downfall.

With the conquest of Sokoto and the defeat of Bornu, the British became masters of most of Northern Nigeria. It took them many years before they could subdue the smaller groups, many of whom did not come under effective occupation until after the First World War. For instance, a peaceful policy of “*festina lente*” (hasten slowly) was pursued from 1907 right up to the end of the decade for the occupation of the Tivland.²⁹⁷

With the occupation of the North, the British had been able to establish an effective administration in three regional units, which had been accepted as representing natural divisions of the Nigerian territory: the eastern region, where the large Southern Protectorate governed peoples of the Delta and its hinterland, the western region, where there was the administration of the Lagos Colony with its own Yorubaland Protectorate and finally the Northern Protectorate ruled mostly by Muslim Emirates with a typical administration.

Few years afterward, the colonial office decided to amalgamate the northern and southern region into a single administrative unit. The ostensible reason for amalgamating the Nigerian protectorates was economic. Indeed both the colonial office and Lugard believed that centralizing the protectorates under a single administration would be economically beneficial. It is henceforward worth examining the major steps and conditions under which Nigeria was unified.

²⁹⁶ - O.Ikime., op.cit., p. 183.

²⁹⁷ - Ibid., p.177.

2-11. . Unification of Nigeria

As noted before by January 1, 1900, the whole territory of what is today Nigeria was reorganized into three administrative areas. There was the Lagos Colony and its Yorubaland Protectorate, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, which was formed from the Niger Coast Protectorate and the southern parts of the Royal Niger Company territories and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. This West African territory was in fragments of protectorates, each with its own fiscal policy and was guided by different considerations in its administrative policies.²⁹⁸ The existing arrangement imposed hardships on the British and Africans alike. Differences in communication and economic life between the three administrations became apparent, the fact which stimulated the British administrators to claim for their unification.

The first step toward political unification was taken in 1906, when the Southern and the Northern Provinces of Nigeria were formed. This question of partial amalgamation as a solution to the administrative problems was not a new one. It was , however, mooted many years before by Sir Ralph Moor of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1896, the fact which led to the appointment of the Niger Committee one year later in order to discuss the situation. The Committee advised for the division of the country into two parts, coastal and inland provinces.²⁹⁹ The latter were what became in 1906 known as the Southern and the Northern Provinces of Nigeria: the first joining together the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria³⁰⁰, the second consisting of the former Royal Niger Company's territories.

With this partial unification economic problems were raised and differences between the North and the South became obvious. Southern Nigeria was rich enough to balance its budget and to subsidise Northern Nigeria. The latter's administration was so poor that the revenues it raised locally and what it got from the South was not

²⁹⁸ - J.F.A Ajaye and M.Crowder. op.cit.,p.439.

²⁹⁹ - Ibid .

³⁰⁰ - In 1906 , Sir Walter Egerton (Governor of Lagos and High – Commissioner for southern Nigeria between 1904 and 1906) called for the fusion between Lagos and Southern Nigeria . Thus, Southern Nigeria was divided into three coastal provinces of the West, Center and East based respectively on Lagos , Warri and Calabar with the seat of Government at Lagos . Taken from I.F Nicolson., op.cit. p.104.

sufficient to balance its budget. It was therefore dependent on subsidies made by the Imperial Government. As stated by Crowder:

*“The Northern Protectorate was running at a severe deficit , which was being met by a subsidy from the Southern Protectorate and an Imperial Grant in Aid from Britain of about £300.000 a year.”*³⁰¹

Henceforth, the unification of the two protectorates was considered desirable in order to overcome these economic problems and to facilitate better utilization of resources. Lugard realized that Northern Nigeria could be modernized only when it became politically amalgamated with the south and linked by railways with the coast.³⁰² This complete unification was not achieved till 1914 , when the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated . Lugard justified this amalgamation on economic grounds arguing that while the material prosperity of the South derived mainly from customs duties had increased with astonishing rapidity, the North which depended on the annual grants from the Imperial government was not able to balance its budget and was starved of the necessary staff and unable to find funds to house its officers properly.³⁰³ Furthermore, Lugard found that the British policy applied in Nigeria was not correct as he claimed on October 18, 1912:

*“The whole system and policy on which this country [Nigeria] has been run not only in the old days but right up to now seems to me wrong.”*³⁰⁴

Thereafter, Lugard was appointed Governor General of Nigeria with the task of amalgamating the Northern and the Southern Protectorates. This political unification was finally achieved on January 1, 1914. Lugard, then, chose to maintain the distinction between the North and the South. He refused the schemes which had been proposed to him claiming for the political division of the country. For instance, the

³⁰¹ - M.Crowder., The Story of Nigeria., op.cit., p.196.

³⁰² - R.Oliver and A.Athmore. op.cit., p.130.

³⁰³ - R.O Ekundare., op.cit., p.105.

³⁰⁴ - Quoted in I.F Nicolson., op.cit., p.180.

editor of the African Mail at that time, E. D Morel, suggested the division of Nigeria into four large provinces while the Lieutenant Governor of the north, Temple, advocated its division into seven provinces: three in the north and four in the south.³⁰⁵

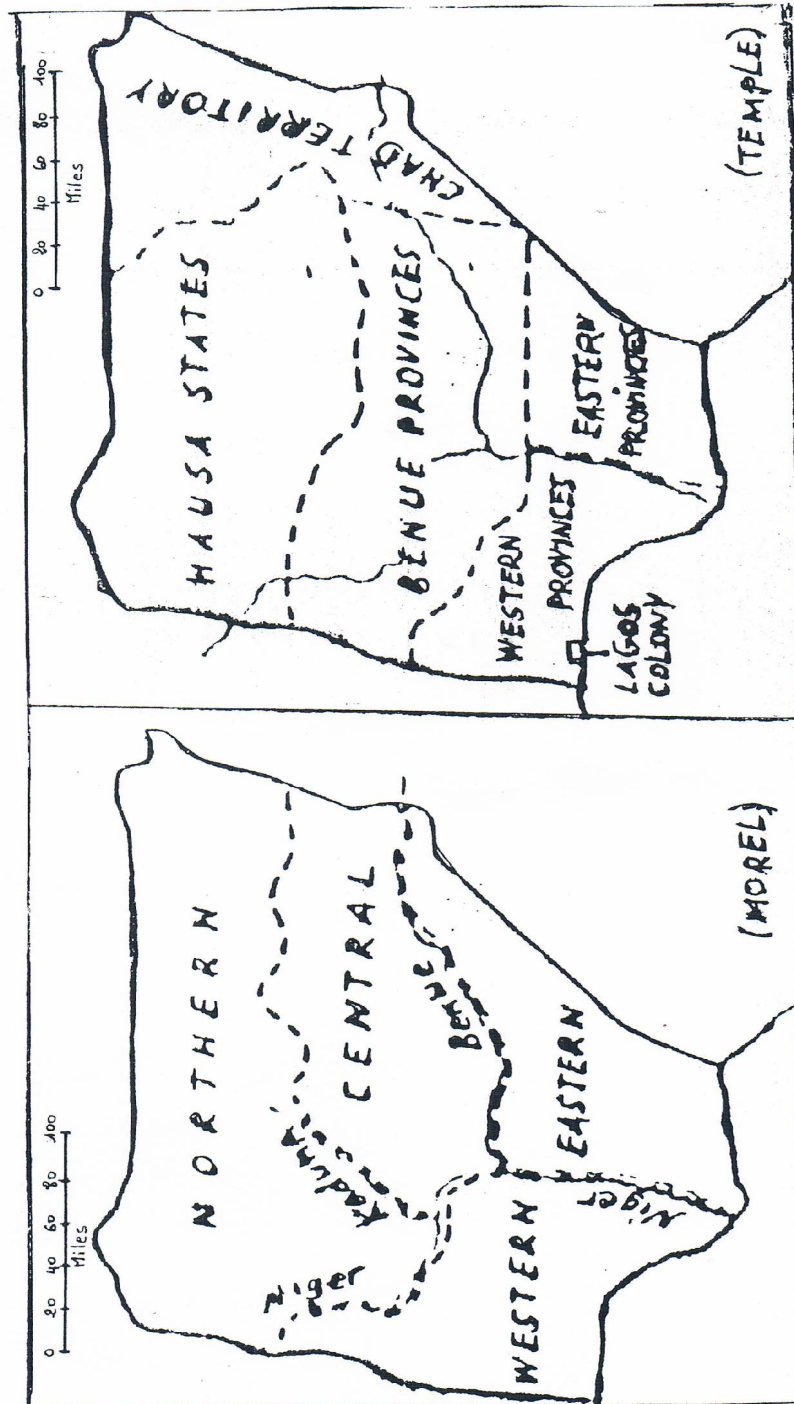
Lugard refused both suggestions for he probably did not want to break up the administration he had devised for the North. Thus, the northern and southern provinces of Nigeria retained their status as British Protectorates while the capital Lagos remained as a colony. Lugard was appointed Chief Justice, who acquired complete jurisdiction through the Protectorates. In addition, a Supreme Court for the whole Nigeria was established and a Nigerian council was set up with a majority of officials with only three nominated Africans from the North and three from the South.³⁰⁶

Conclusion

The colonization of Nigeria was a prolonged process, taking more than forty years to accomplish. Local circumstances and the influence of traders, of French and German incursions tended to dictate the process of colonization, in the end however territories were brought into submission mainly by the use of force. Colonization brought under the sole rule of the United Kingdom previously independent states that had been interconnected commercially and to some extent culturally over the previous centuries, but had not experienced political unification of any kind. The process of governing the conglomeration of states that was soon to become amalgamated into a single Nigeria was thus, by necessity, inorganic, alien, and transformative. The peoples and institutions of the Nigerian region were changed deeply and permanently in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Thus, the next chapter tends to discuss the nature of British administrative system applied to both northern and southern Nigeria emphasizing on the major political, social and economic changes that British colonial administration brought about to the traditional authorities in the first half of the twentieth century.

³⁰⁵ - M.Crowder ., *The Story of Nigeria* ., op.cit ., p.192 . Also see map n°24 showing the Proposed Administrative Reorganizations of Nigeria in 1914 on p191.

³⁰⁶ - I.F Nicolson ., op.cit ., p.204 – 8 .



Map 24: Proposed Administrative Reorganizations of Nigeria in 1914.
Source: M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria.*, op cit., p 197.

Chapter Three

British Colonial Policy and its Impact on the Nigerian Traditional Authorities

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Introduction

Nigeria was administered as a Colony and Protectorate under a system of indirect rule. The latter developed in Northern Nigeria and was extended later on in most of British Africa. In Northern Nigeria, the Fulani and other Islamic kingdoms were conquered by a small British force, which was faced with the problem of having to administer a large territorial area, having a large population, with only a limited European complement to do so.¹ In an area where inter-tribal warfare was common, the effort to provide a framework of stability and peace under the British flag, partly as a device to stimulate trade and partly because stability and peace were regarded as essentials of British rule, would have required a large police and administrative staff. This was impossible and the defeated chiefs and emirs were called upon to give their allegiance to British and, in return were allowed to rule according to their own laws and customs, backed up by the prestige and force of British arms. The ideal was a system of dual authority in which the chiefs and the district officials co-operated closely. The traditional pattern of life was maintained as much as possible, except where that pattern was repugnant to British law.²

This system worked reasonably well as the chiefs served as agents of British rule. The commonly accepted official view was that so long as the structure of tribal government was maintained, no violation of tradition would take place, hence there would occur no fundamental breakdown in social life. It was therefore presumed that there would result few disruptions, which might require a large administrative staff, a costly item for a reluctant Colonial Office. What was certain was that, this indirect rule system worked out as envisioned in Northern Nigeria, where it was believed that by developing local agencies of rule under the chiefs would surely bring about self-government. But in the Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria, the very opposite of what was expected occurred. In these areas, in fact, putting chiefs in the administrative

¹ A.C Burns, History of Nigeria, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1951 .p.15.

² David .E.Apter, "British West Africa, Patterns of Self-Government", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol298, Contemporary Africa Trends and Issues (March,1955), pp117-129.

hierarchy of the colonial service, no matter how indirectly violated the traditional prescriptions of office of these authorities.³

In such territories, where no traditional system of formalized chieftaincy existed, the British had appointed paramount chiefs, who had no indigenous source of support. Indeed, a particular form of local administration developed during the early days of colonial rule, which was referred to by warrant chief system. Each town was represented by a chief, who was given a government warrant to sit on the bench of the court of his area. Those warrant chiefs were treated as justices of peace and as executive agents of the government responsible for carrying out its orders in the town under their jurisdiction.⁴ Therefore, this chapter tends to examine the nature of the British colonial policy, and its different forms of administration applied to the different regions of Nigeria. It also attempts to show the major impacts of the colonial regime on the Nigerian Traditional Authorities.

3. British Colonial Administration in Northern and Southern Nigeria

As mentioned in chapter two, the British possession of the mid nineteenth century was a Crown Colony with formal institution and British law. But this method became impracticable in the huge territories acquired after the scramble. A new system of administration, however, which tended to respect and to maintain the traditional institutions was created and named the Native Authority System. In fact, it was believed that the development of the native administration as organ of local rule might form the basis on which to build up the organization of government⁵. But the political situation of the traditional societies gave birth to different systems of native authority represented either by councils of chiefs, the traditional chiefs or simply by councils or a set of councils. The latter were dominant respectively in the western, northern and eastern regions. It is therefore worth dealing now with the nature of British administrative systems applied to Southern Northern Nigeria focusing on the

³ David E. Apter, *op.cit*, p120.

⁴ G.I Jones, "The Warrant Chiefs, Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria", The International Journal of African Historical Studies, vol6, n4, (Boston University African Studies Center, 1973). pp 716-718. Warrant is a certificate of recognition given to them by the British Government.

⁵ - Lord Hailey, An African Survey, A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara, p. 308.

relationship between the new colonial administration and the traditional system of government.

3-1. British Colonial Administration in Southern Nigeria

For most of the nineteenth century, Britain tended to adopt a colonial policy in West Africa whereby a small number of African could participate in the representative institutions even during the earlier phases of colonial rule. Each of the West African colonies was divided into a colony and a protectorate. Unlike the colonies centered on coastal towns such as Freetown, Accra and Lagos, the protectorates in the interior were administered through traditional African leaders and institutions or through newly constituted native administration often organized along ethnic lines and headed by traditional chiefs⁶.

The Crown Colony, Lagos, of the mid nineteenth century was governed directly by British officers, who were responsible to the colonial governor. In fact, the district administrative officer was considered as the local representative of the colonial government, whose duties were to maintain law and order and to supervise the collection of the tax⁷. Therefore, most of the administrative decisions and laws were to be made within the colony itself rather than by the Colonial Office or Parliament in London.

As noted before, Lagos was given a Legislative Council in 1862 comprising a majority of British officials to run the administrative affairs of the colony and belonging to the institution of the central government⁸. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the colony, who were not officials, were to be appointed to the Legislative Council by the colonial governor as representatives of colonial opinions. These were known as the unofficial members, who were usually British residents in the colony such as merchants and missionaries. But some educated Africans could also be nominated to the Legislative Council⁹.

⁶ - Paul Fordham., *The Geography of African Affairs*, p. 124.

⁷ - R. Oliver & J.D Fage, *op.cit*, p. 207.

⁸ - *Ibid*.

⁹ - E. Isichei, *op.cit*, p. 213.

Contrary to the former administrative system, which had been adopted for the coastal Colony Lagos during the middle of the century, the Southern Protectorates of the late nineteenth century mainly the Niger coast Protectorate and the Protectorate and colony of Lagos had been ruled in co-operation with the traditional institutions. Indeed, a new administrative regime had been developed known as the Native Authority System, which was recognized as the guiding principle in the administration of the African affairs¹⁰.

Native Authority System had contemplated that all the traditional authorities, whether they had been chiefs, chiefs in councils, councils of headman or groups of elders, had to rely mainly on the authority they derived from indigenous custom, when giving their help in the furtherance of all projects of social or economic welfare developed by the administration¹¹. The system had also contemplated that the native authorities should act independently within the framework of statutory regulations and administrative supervision to which they had been subjected; and they also had to depend on the support received from the government rather than on the influence derived from traditional sources¹².

The British Government sought for the integration of the native institutions within the British colonial administration for it held that law and order within the colonial state could depend only upon the continuity of traditional authority or merely because the government lacked certain things among these: a great number of personnel, sufficient financial resources and well-developed communication infrastructure. Thus, the British had to depend totally on the African chiefs to run their administrative affairs.

Native Authority System varied greatly from one region to another as there existed certain regions, where conditions were not favorable to its introduction. Indeed, the great diversity of traditional political units including large scale societies,

¹⁰ - L. Hailey, *op.cit.*, p. 308.

¹¹ - L. Hailey, *op.cit.*, p. 453.

¹² - *Ibid.*.

small chiefdoms and stateless societies reflecting different levels of political, social and economic development led to such a variation.

Above all, the British Government tended to respect the integration of large units, wherever they existed and to rule such areas indirectly through traditional rulers and chiefly hierarchies. But in many areas, where political units were small and where power was divided among groups of elders, the Government resorted to dissolve the larger indigenous political units ruling the divided sections through nominated chiefs.

As it has been examined in the previous chapter, in the south-western regions mainly the Yorubaland, there were kingdoms which possessed a large measure of autonomy under the leadership of hereditary office holders or heads of aristocratic families. In such areas, circumstances were not favorable to the introduction of the Native Authority System and the British had to recognize the Yoruba chiefs as the local representatives of the indigenous authority. This was to happen in 1892 and 1893, when the Royal Niger Company had concluded agreements for the suppression of the slave trade with the most important Yoruba chiefs and by so doing had recognized them to such a position¹³. But at this stage little was made by the British Government to find a definite place for them within the framework of its own organization of rule¹⁴.

In the Yoruba country, British administration had made use of the traditional institutions but had assigned to them no place in the organization of local rule. It was not until 1900 that British Government intervened with their native affairs for the improvement of the judicial system. According to M. Perham, Proclamation n°9 of that year provided for the establishment of councils consisting of nominated African

¹³ - L. Hailey, *op.cit.*, p. 460.

¹⁴ - *Ibid.* According to J.D Ajaye and M. Crowder., *op.cit.*, p. 453: "The first serious attempt to recruit the traditional elite of the Yorubaland into the service of the colonial Government was made by Governor MacCullum in 1897, when he undertook the reorganization of the councilor government of the traditional Yoruba aristocracy by launching the program at Ibadan with the reorganization of Ibadan Council of Chiefs. The latter was enlarged to include a European resident".

members with a District Commissioner as Chairman in order to discharge functions, which were primarily judicial in character¹⁵.

Henceforth, a new judicial system had been established in the Yoruba divisions. It recognized the courts of the chiefs and their councils as Native Courts and it allowed the chiefs to appoint court members, but it did not give them the authority to sit on the bench¹⁶. These courts had as a whole been accustomed to deal with the great majority of all civil and criminal cases affecting Africans.

Thereafter, British administration continued to depend heavily upon traditional chiefs and their courts to help govern the vast area and population of Yorubaland under its control. It was not until 1916, that Native Authority System had been extended to Yorubaland by an Ordinance of that year¹⁷.

Unlike the administration of the south-west, in the south-eastern regions another form of government was established, which ruled through African chiefs but did not retain the traditional form of Government. Among the Igbo and Ibibio peoples, for instance, the British had found a large number of village democracies. In such areas, the chiefs were no more than village ritual headmen, who had little political status and authority. Furthermore, the legislation for that people was not a primary issue and the rules of life were set by customs and reinforced by supernatural sanctions¹⁸. Thus, the situation was less favorable to the introduction of the Native Authority System and as the British could not find local rulers as agents for extending and establishing their rule, they ended up by creating chiefs where none had previously existed.

In such areas, the British were compelled to set up councils of Chiefs to which they assigned specified executive and judicial powers¹⁹. The members of these

¹⁵ - Margery Perharm., *Native Administration in Nigeria.*, p. 61.

¹⁶ - L. Haiely, *op.cit.*, p. 463.

¹⁷ - L. Hailey, *op.cit.*, p. 461.

¹⁸ - J. Lombard., *op.cit.*, p. 423.

¹⁹ - This administrative system came into existence in 1891 and by these councils; each with its rudimentary treasury fed by court fees and fines directing and financing local projects represented the main instrument of British administration throughout much of the Niger coast Protectorate.

councils received warrants²⁰ that is why they came to be known as warrant chiefs, who were a disastrous failure to the African society. They not only tried courts cases but also controlled forced labor and were often selected in a haphazard fashion without proper enquiry into indigenous political practice and systems of authority²¹.

Hence, the British continued to govern through these imposed chiefs until 1906, when a first Ordinance dealing with the system of native administration was passed. In fact, Ordinance n°7 of that year provided for the establishment of native councils or courts comprising nominated African members with the district Commissioner as chairman and by which Africans had both civil and criminal jurisdiction and also the right to make rules for the preservation of peace²². As stated by J.D. Ajaye and M. Crowder:

“The councils of chiefs, which met where they could be supervised and presided over by European political officers were known as Native Councils and given wider power than were the minor courts, which sat in district and provincial suburbs, where they had to be presided over by one of the native chiefs”²³.

To sum up, traditional authority tended to persist in the south-eastern and the south-western regions where the British successfully modernized traditional authority structures, while reinforcing the prestige of chiefly authority. For clarity, it is worth examining hereunder the nature of colonial administration applied to both regions.

3-1-1. British Colonial Administration in South-Eastern Nigeria

As it has been stated, the Warrant Chiefs System, also called the Native Court System was introduced to eastern Nigeria. Indeed, whatever position of responsibility, power and influence a Warrant Chief enjoyed was derived from the ‘warrant’ or ‘certificate of recognition’ by the Government, which made him a member of the

²⁰ - Warrant is a certificate of recognition given to them by the British Government.

²¹ - E. Isichei., op.cit., p. 206.

²² - L. Haiely, op.cit., p. 465.

²³ - J.F. Ajaye & M. Crowder., op.cit., p. 452.

Native Court. Even when the Warrant Chief functioned as the executive authority in his remote village, he did so as a member of the Native Court, which was really the local authority. Thus, a description of the origin and structure of the Warrant Chief System is, indeed, a description of the origin and structure of the Native court in its judicial, executive and legislative aspects²⁴.

In Eastern Nigeria the policy and practice of co-operation in local government between the representatives of British Government and indigenous or supposed indigenous rulers predated the formal declaration of the British Protectorate. In the palmy days of the city-states of the Oil Rivers, indigenous rulers alone dealt with the problem of maintaining law and order both amongst their own peoples and between the latter and the trading community of Europeans. But towards the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, the indigenous political system of the coastal states entered a period of progressive decline owing, partly, to the fact that the men who succeeded the headship of these states often lacked the political astuteness of their predecessors on the throne, and partly to the economic decline, which overtook the states with the suppression of slave trade and the determined effort of European merchants to undercut the position of the coastal middlemen. It was this threat of political vacuum with its attendant chaos that in the periods led to the many experiments in co-operation in local government matters amongst British consuls, European supercargoes and the coastal aristocracies²⁵.

The earliest of these attempts took the form of the court of Equity, which coming into existence in bonny in or just before 1854, soon spread to the other city-states. Each Court of Equity comprised the leading European and African merchants in the community in question, with the British consul serving as a sort of court of appeal; Whatever that they succeeded in maintaining a measure of law and order among the wild 'gentlemen' of the commercial community of the coast. In five respects, the court of Equity was the precursor of the Native court as it existed under the Warrant Chief System. Firstly, it contained the essential germ of the principle of associating African

²⁴ - Afigbo, A. E.: "The Warrant Chief System in Eastern Nigeria 1900- 1929" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibandan, 1964), p. 91.

²⁵ - Afigbo, A. E, op.cit, p. 92.

leaders with the work of the 'new' administration between the Benin and Cross Rivers. The African merchants, who sat in the court with the supercargoes, were generally the members of the traditional aristocracy, who led the main strings of the middlemen trade of the coast. Secondly, the experiment was a manifestation of the feeling that indigenous African systems of government needed strengthening before they could satisfactorily meet the increasing demand of a more effective and progressive government. Thirdly, it was a pointer in the direction of the possibilities of a cheap administration. Fourthly, the court of Equity, like the warrant Chief Court was based on the principle that one or two members of an Eastern Nigerian community, acting in concert with some Europeans or under the direction of a representative of the British Government, could, contrary to tradition, lay down the law for the rest of the community. And lastly, it established for the British the principle of charging such a single institution with judicial, executive and legislative functions²⁶.

In 1885, Britain formally declared a Protectorate over the Oil Rivers partly as a result of international developments, and partly because she had come to realize that her trade was on the increase and "that the absence of civilized rule makes it essential that the lives and property of the traders should be protected by British officials"²⁷. Under the protectorate, it was hoped that the local chiefs would "*as hitherto, manage their own affairs, but would have always at hand counselors and arbitrators in matters of difficulty and dispute*"²⁸. Since the court of Equity had been abolished at the same time as the protectorate was proclaimed and since the consular officials were too few to maintain law and order effectively between the various local communities and the European traders resident in them, it became necessary to find a new instrument of government that would enjoy the approval of all concerned.

²⁶ - Afigbo, A. E, op.cit, p49.

Jones, G.I. The Trading States of the Oil Rivers (O.U.P., 1963), pp. 77- 80.

Burns, A.C, History of Nigeria (Allen and Unwin, 7th Impression 1958), pp. 135 -136.

²⁷ - Lister to Bramston, 5.10.1883. C/1279, quoted in Tamuno, S.M.: "The Development of British Administrative Control in southern Nigeria 1900- 1912", (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1961), pp. 25- 26.

²⁸ - Lister to Bramston, 5.10.1883. C/1279, op.cit, pp. 25- 26.

The more imaginative and adventurous of the consuls tried hands at solving this nagging problem. The first attempt was made by consul Hewett in 1886. In that year, Bonny was brought to the brink of complete disruption as a result of a quarrel between the two leading house heads –Oko Jumbo and Waribo Manilla Pepple. In a bid to restore harmony to the distracted city-state, Hewett sidetracked these two over-mighty ‘barons’ and set up a council of five chiefs in which he vested legislative and executive powers and thus the right to govern Bonny. He also conferred on it the right to deal with all disputes, which might arise between Bonny people and those from neighbouring groups. Hewett retained for himself the right to veto any action of the council with which he found himself in opposition²⁹. This experiment is remarkable for its exclusion of European merchants, but has only limited significance as no attempt was made to extend it to other states.

However the most ambitious attempt in this period to deal with this problem of formulating a local government system for the Protectorate was made by H. H. Johnston when acting consul in 1887. Johnston’s deportation of King Jaja had nearly led to political paralysis in Opobo. The acting consul was therefore forced to set up a governing body, which would help to restore quiet at Opobo and pave the way for a stable administration. It was for this reason that he introduced his scheme for ‘Governing Councils’. A Governing council was to comprise a president, who was to be the consul, a vice-president and a secretary who were to be Europeans, three African chiefs, four European traders and an-officio member, who was to be the senior naval officer on the coast. It was to meet weekly and appeals were to life from it to the supreme consular authority. It was charged with keeping the peace, maintaining the highways and other means of communication, regulating commerce, hearing minor disputes and raising taxes for local development. After establishing this institution at Opobo, Johnston proceeded to extend it to other city-states. But the foreign Office considered Johnston to have exceeded his powers in the matter and so vetoed the whole scheme³⁰.

²⁹ - Anene, J.C: “Establishment and consolidation of Imperial Government in Southern Nigeria 1891-1906” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, London 1952), p. 63.

³⁰ - Anene, J.C.:, op.cit, pp. 64- 67.

Thus, long before the British decided in 1891 to establish an effective administration in the Oil River (later Niger Coast Protectorate), there had already been established a powerful tradition of seeking to associate the rulers of each local community with the management of its own local affairs under the new regime. Under Sir Claude Macdonald, this tradition led to the establishment of the system of local administration, which later came to be popularly known as the Warrant Chief System. *“To avoid, where possible, an open rupture with the (local) chiefs”,* a historian of this period has written, *“Was a cornerstone of the policy of Sir Claude Macdonald. That disputes internal and external were bound to occur, he was fully aware. He therefore created machinery for local administration, which he intended to serve a variety of purposes. This machinery for local native administration was a kind of revival of the Governing Councils set up by H. H. Johnston and rejected by the Foreign Office”*³¹. Macdonald called the local bodies he set up Native Courts or more precisely Native councils if they sat as District or divisional headquarters and were presided over by European political officers, and Minor Courts if they were presided over by local chiefs and sat at centers far away from administrative headquarters and could not receive the close and constant supervision of European officers³².

A year or two after Macdonald’s appointment, the earliest of the Native Councils had come into existence. By 13th February 1892, what was called the “High Court of the Native council of Old Calabar” of which the Consul General himself was president and which was not only a court of first instance but also a court of appeal for a number of Minor Courts in the Cross River valley was already in existence. Also by 2nd July of the same year, Native courts had been established at Bonny, Buguma and Degema. It was not certain how many of these courts were actually established by Macdonald, but it was known that before he left the protectorate, these local arms of the central government were already functioning in places like Calabar, Bonny, Degema, Akpayafe, Tom Shott, Adiabo and Itu. Each met twice a month for business³³. Under Sir Ralph Moor, who succeeded Macdonald as Consul-General and

³¹ - .Anene, J.C.:, op.cit p. 68.

³² - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit., p. 103.

³³ - Anene, J. C., op.cit., p. 189.

who in the period before 1914, gave the local government system of Eastern Nigeria its distinctive character. The number of these courts grew rapidly as new territory was brought under British control³⁴.

For much of the period 1891- 1900, the Warrant Chief System was indeed amorphous in structure, and it is not known whether during those years there was only definite legal enactment setting out clearly directives for the setting up or procedure of Native Courts. Thus, there was no uniform terminology for the Courts. In Warri, in 1891, a Native Court was called Governing council, a name which recalls Consul Johnston's still-born programme of the 1880's³⁵. In Bonny, in 1892, it was called Native Council. In Calabar, in the same year, it was called 'Court of the Native Council for the District of Old Calabar'. Courts, not presided over by European political officers were called 'Minor Courts' on the Benin River in 1896 and 'Local Councils' at Degema in 1897. Furthermore there was no fixed number of people, who could sit as members of the bench³⁶. But in spite of all this, the period saw the steady crystallization of certain traditions, which were later carried over from the Niger Coast Protectorate to the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. By 1899, for instance, it was already established, that all members of the Native Court must hold warrant from the Government³⁷ and that there was to be a distinction in name, jurisdiction and power between Native Councils and Minor Courts. In fact, the Native Courts Proclamation of 1900 was an attempt by Ralph Moor to systematize and give legal basis to the local government practices and experiences of the years of the Niger Coast Protectorate³⁸.

This proclamation, which came into force on 1st May 1900, gave legal sanction to the already existing two-tier system of Native Courts. In the lower tier were all Minor Courts above which were the Native Councils. Each Court in either of these grades consisted of 'chiefs' holding warrants from the High Commissioner or his representative. For any session, a Native court was to comprise the president, the Vice-

³⁴ - Afigbo, A. E., *op.cit.*, p. 66.

³⁵ - Calprof. 6/1 Letter of 15.9.91 from Vice-Consul Forcardos to the consul-General.

³⁶ - Calprof 8/5 records dated 30.6.92, 24.5.95 and 11.11.95.

³⁷ - *Ibid.*

³⁸ - Afigbo, A. E., *op.cit.*, pp. 93- 94.

President, three other Warrant Chiefs and a special member summoned to represent the village or district, in which the dispute arose. For the Minor Court, the President was to be elected quarterly by the members. The two classes of courts were to be guided as far as possible by “native law and custom not opposed to natural morality and humanity”. Every Native Court enjoyed the power to be made by laws for “the peace, good order and welfare” of its area of authority. Such laws were to deal with matters like the construction and maintenance of roads, the establishment and preservation of landmarks, the prevention and abatement of nuisance and the provision of grounds for burying the dead. Each court also enjoyed specified executive powers; the power to bind people over the peace, to prevent or suppress public disturbances, to execute the orders of the Supreme Court or of a District Commissioner, to arrest and send to the Supreme Court those accused of such serious crimes as robbery, murder and slave dealing³⁹. Subsequent amendments of this proclamation in 1901 and 1906 brought the Native court much more under the control of the Supreme Court. For instance, it was provided that the Chief Justice or any judge could at any stage transfer a case from one Native Court to another or to the Supreme Court or to the court of a District Commissioner. Every month, each Native Court had to forward to the Chief Justice or any judge appointed by him a full list of the criminal cases decided by it in which penalties of more than twenty pounds fine or three months imprisonment had been imposed. This list operated as an automatic appeal on behalf of every person convicted, whose name appeared on it, and the Chief Justice could “without hearing any argument” revoke or amend the judgment⁴⁰.

All the same, however, especially in matters of supervision, the political staff retained extensive control over the Native Courts. For instance, a District Officer could at any stage transfer a case from a Minor Court to a Native Council or from the latter to his own court. The High Commissioner enjoyed the power to withdraw for a stated period the power of any Native Court, which abused its powers. He could also suspend or dismiss individual members, who abused their powers, and could issue orders

³⁹ - Calprof 10/2 Native Courts Proclamation, n°9 of 1900.

⁴⁰ - Laws of southern Nigeria 1900 and 1901, pp. 435- 439.

regulating the fees of the members, the execution of their judgments and the keeping of court records⁴¹.

To ensure that the Warrant Chief System was effective and served the purposes of a progressive local government, the Administration brought into existence two measures calculated to bolster up the authority of the local 'chiefs'. Moore came to the Oil Rivers at a time when, owing to the steady decline of the middleman trade monopoly and the rapid spread of Christianity, coastal society, which had been built on the slave boom of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was facing the threat of collapse. This posed the danger that the slave population of the coast would desert the houses and thus destroy the authority of the house heads. If this happened, Moor's policy of ruling through the 'tribal system' would be endangered⁴². The earliest of the two measures taken by Moor to prevent this happening came in 1899 in the form of a proclamation for "*the better maintenance of the trade system of the New Calabar (Degema) people*" which sought "*to maintain intact the native system of House Government, and to establish cordial relations between the chiefs... and their boys, so as not to interfere with the rights of the chiefs or the responsibility of the boys*". This proclamation regulated the services of house members to their heads in such a way as to uphold the economic position of the latter and with it their political authority. The proclamation was first to apply to Degema, and if successful was to be extended to the other portions of the Niger coast Protectorate⁴³.

The failure of this measure to achieve the desired purpose led to the introduction of the famous House Rule Proclamation of 1901, which was applied to the whole of Southern Nigeria since the house system was thought to exist throughout the entire region. By the provisions of this proclamation, every member of a house who refused to submit "*to the control, authority and rule of the head of his house in accordance with native law and custom*" was to be liable to prosecution; any member wandering about without any visible means of subsistence could be arrested without a warrant by any court official and sent to the District Commissioner, who could

⁴¹ - Laws of the Colony of southern Nigeria, vol. ii (1908), p. 127.

⁴² - Calprof 10/2 Native Courts Proclamation N°9 of 1900.

⁴³ - C.S.O. 1/13 N° 134 of 25.8.99.

forcibly return him to his house head. Also no employer could engage a house member without the consent of his house head⁴⁴

Confident that he had thus secured the authority of the chiefs, whom he hoped to make use of under the Warrant Chief System, Moor proceeded to give them the opportunity for progressive government under the guidance of the Protectorate Administration. To this end, he introduced in 190, the Roads and Creeks (Rivers) Proclamation under which the High Commissioner could at any time declare that a water-way or a road was to be maintained by chiefs of the village through which it ran, and the chiefs would have the power to call any man or woman of specified ages residing in their areas of authority to work on the water-way or road for any length of time not exceeding six days in a quarter. It was through the application of this proclamation that the first roads in the Protectorate were made, and the water-ways maintained⁴⁵.

Also towards the same end of progressive government, Moor provided the Native Courts with local treasuries. The unsettlement, which accompanied the imposition of British control, gave Moor and his successor, Sir Walter Egerton, no time to plan and introduce direct taxation. Consequently, the local treasuries in their time derived their revenues entirely from court fees and fines. Each Native Council and Minor Court had its own treasury into which all its income went. By means of these, local treasuries Native court houses were built, good roads were made, rest houses were put up and maintained and Warrant Chiefs and their assistants rewarded “*for good work*” done. In general the Court Clerks and Messengers depended on these treasuries for their pay, each being a charge on the court he served. The Warrant Chiefs too got their sitting fees from the same source⁴⁶. To Moor, the merit of this system was its educative value to the Warrant Chiefs. He believed that their participation in the expenditure of the funds of local treasuries provided them with “*an object lesson in civilized administration*” and he hoped that through that lesson they

⁴⁴ - C.S.O. 1/13 N° 134 of 25.8.99.

⁴⁵ - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit., pp. 110- 111.

⁴⁶ - C.S.O. 1/13 N°167 of 3.10.99; N°16 of 7.1.03.

would be able to realize that the position, which they occupied, was one of power and trust⁴⁷.

These were the essential features of the Warrant Chief System in Eastern Nigeria until 1914, when Sir Frederick Lugard made an effort to remold it along the lines of the system, he had established in Northern Nigeria.

Sir Frederick Lugard, who between 1900 and 1906 had established Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria saw the amalgamation of the two Nigerias in 1914, as offering him the opportunity to introduce the Northern type of the system into the southern Provinces. Indeed, Lugard introduced a set of judicial reforms. First, he passed the Native Courts Ordinance whereby, he ended the subordination of the Warrant Chiefs and their courts to the Supreme Court and its judges.

Second, in 1916 Lugard extended the provisions of the Native Authority Ordinance, which made possible the appointment of sole native authorities, to the Eastern Provinces. In a telegram of 9th March 1917, the Residents of the Eastern Provinces were invited to submit the names of chiefs they recommended for elevation to the status of sole native authorities. The Residents of Onitsha and Calabar replied favourably and in consequence some Warrant Chiefs were made paramount chiefs and sole native authorities for their Native Court areas. But in the rest of the region, especially in the Owerri and Ogoja provinces, where the Residents refused to share in Lugard's idealism and optimism nothing came of the scheme. Instead Native courts rather than individual Warrant Chiefs were gazetted Native Authorities⁴⁸. Continuing in pursuit of this ideal of rising in the region influential chiefs, who would become native authorities on the Northern Nigerian model, Lugard and his lieutenants drew up a scheme for the education of sons of chiefs, with a view to make them able "*leaders of their compatriots*". Elaborating on this scheme Lugard wrote:

"I am cordially in agreement with the great value of educating chiefs' sons, and if there are no chiefs as Dr Maxwell says in Owerri then to educate the boys

⁴⁷ - C.S.O. 1/13 N° 409 of 26.8.03.

⁴⁸ - E. P. 3759. The whole file, Nigerian Gazette, 1917, pp. 352- 4.

from their selections will be made to fill positions, which with assistance of government may develop into chiefships. For I have constantly held and expressed the view that the first condition for progress in a very loosely knit community such as the Ibos or the Munshis (Tiv) is to create units of some size under progressive chiefs”⁴⁹.

Finally between 1914 and 1918, Lugard attempted to introduce the provisions of the Native Revenue Ordinance into the Eastern Provinces because, he argued, it would enable him “*to set up a system of administration through Native Chiefs somewhat on the model of the northern Provinces*”⁵⁰. The attempt failed partly because it was opposed by the political officers on the spot and partly because the Colonial Office thought it would lead to disturbances at a time, when the empire was engaged in the First World War⁵¹.

Within less than a year of Lugard’s final departure from Nigeria grave, dissatisfaction was expressed with the Warrant Chief System as it was inherited from him⁵². The then Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, called upon the political officers stationed in Eastern Nigeria to report on whether the reforms of Lugard had occasioned improvement or the opposite in the structure and working of the Warrant Chief System⁵³.

With the exception of a few dissentient voices, these officers pronounced Lugard’s reforms a grave mistake which was bound to lead to unqualified failure. “*I wish to assert as strongly as possible*”, wrote Mr. Lyon, a political officer stationed at Udi, “*that in my considered opinion the present system is an unnatural one... based on a system which is borrowed from a country (Northern Nigeria) of dissimilar*

⁴⁹ - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit. p. 173.

⁵⁰ - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit., p. 174.

⁵¹ - Ibid., pp. 182- 6.

⁵² - C. 176/19. Letter from F. P. Lynch dated 14.10.19.

⁵³ - C. 176/ Letter dated 26.11.19 from the Secretary, southern Provinces to all Residents in the Eastern Provinces.

customs”⁵⁴. For our present purposes, however, the important point is that the question was raised of how to make the Warrant Chiefs System truly ‘indirect’ by bringing it to harmonize with the indigenous political institutions and practices of Eastern Nigerian peoples.

To this end Hugh Clifford first sent the Secretary for Native Affairs, Southern Provinces, Mr. S. M. Grier, and then the latter’s assistant, Mr. G.J.F. Tomlinson to report in full on the Warrant Chief System and recommend ways and means of bringing in into agreement with the indigenous system of government. Grier and Tomlinson recommended four main reforms. Firstly, they said, the Native Court should be recognized on a clan basis with a view to ensuring that no clan was split, as was then the case, between two or more court areas. *“Even at the risk of using a priori argument”*, wrote Mr. Tomlinson, *“I cannot believe that any tribal unit, be it described as clan, sub-tribe or town is so destitute of the consciousness of common kinship that its administration as a single entity will not be more efficient and more in keeping with the spirit of the people than its partition between one or more Native Court areas or administrative divisions”*⁵⁵. Secondly, they recommended a scrutiny of the traditional credentials of all existing Warrant holders with a view to gradually displacing upstarts and replacing them with ‘hereditary chiefs’. Thirdly, they advised a recognition of all the traditional heads of villages and quarters with a view to achieving a more equitable representation of all communities in the courts, and finally that the parent town of each clan be discovered with a view to making its head a paramount chief⁵⁶.

The Governor sanctioned these recommendations and asked his officers in Eastern Nigeria, to direct efforts towards their implementation since it was hoped this would usher in the millennium. From 1923, this programme occupied the attention of political officers, but owing to a legion and more of unsuspected difficulties, which need not detain us here, the reforms proved impossible of speedy achievement⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ - C. 176/19. Conf. L. 4/19 dated 11.1.20 from Mr. Lyon.

⁵⁵ - Tomlinson, Report on the Eastern Province (Lagos, 1923), p. 13.

⁵⁶ - Grier: Report on the Eastern Provinces (Lagos, 1922), pp. 7- 15.

⁵⁷ - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit. pp. 260- 270.

Before the reforms had reached any satisfactory stage, the Government decided to introduce direct taxation into the Eastern Provinces as part of the process of reform. At the time, Lugard's dictum: "*Without a tax there can be no treasury and without a treasury no real eventual measure of self rule*"⁵⁸ was accepted as an article of faith. In fact, it had come to be argued by most people that the problems of the Warrant Chief System arose from the fact that it was not a system of Indirect Rule, and that it was not Indirect Rule, because it had no native treasuries as was the case in the emirates and Yoruba areas. Therefore, to make the Warrant Chief system into Indirect Rule it was necessary to introduce direct taxation into the Eastern Provinces⁵⁹. The attempt to apply this measure as a means to the desired administrative goal had failed for the Warrant Chief System collapsed in a scene of riots in 1929/30.⁶⁰

It must be pointed out, then, that there were different gradations of Indirect Rule. If in the Fulani Emirates, the British aimed at and achieved one of the most celebrated versions of this system of local government, in Eastern Nigeria they also aimed at, but fell far short of, the same thing. The consequences of such riots was the realization by the British, that no amount of makeshift reforms could harmonize the Warrant Chief system with the indigenous governmental ideas and practices of the Eastern Nigerian peoples and that a totally different system had to be found.

3-1-2. British Colonial Administration in South-Western Nigeria

In the rigidly structured colonial administrative system, major Yoruba city-states, especially those with long-standing monarchical traditions, assumed greater political significance in the years immediately after the imposition of colonial rule.

The complex indigenous social and political environment from which British administration constructed new political arrangements was complicated by the underlying impact of Christian missions, Islamic influences and rapid social change.

⁵⁸ - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit. pp. 260- 270.

⁵⁹ - Ormsby-Gore: Report on West Africa, Cmd. 2744, p. 116.
C.S.O. 26. N° 11720. Vol. II, pp. 239c- 239d, 279.

⁶⁰ - Afigbo, A. E., op.cit., Chap. 6.p320.

This conflicting notion of traditional political authority was most profoundly expressed among many Obas, chiefs, educated elites and local communities in Oyo Province.

Before discussing the impact of the British policy of indirect rule on the relations among Obas, chiefs, Western-educated elites and local communities, it is necessary to sketch briefly the fluid nature of traditional authority among the major towns in Oyo Province in the late nineteenth century, when the Yoruba region came under British colonial rule. The most populous and complicated jurisdiction in colonial southern Nigeria, Oyo Province consisted of major Yoruba towns such as Ibadan, Oyo Ile-Ife, Iseyin, Iwo, Ede, Ikirun, Eruwa, and Okeiho-Iganna. As Yoruba urban centers, many tributary communities were linked to these towns by history, custom, tradition, special economic relations. At least in the context of the turbulent geo-politics of the nineteenth century⁶¹, most of these towns themselves were in turn considered tributaries of more dominant-metropolitan- city-states such as Ile-Ife, Oyo and Ibadan. The metropolitan status of Ile-Ife and Oyo had more to do with their traditional pedigree in Yoruba mythology, tradition and history. On the other hand, although created in the early nineteenth century, Ibadan rapidly gained political prominence because of its remarkable success in the regional wars of the century⁶². The colonial treaties that were signed between the British and Yoruba Obas and *Bales* (head chiefs) conceded suzerainty over other hometowns to these states to the basic of their alleged political pre-eminence at the end of the nineteenth century. Of the rulers of the four metropolitan city-states, it was the Alafin of Oyo, who gained the most from this interpretation of authority on which the British subsequently grafted their colonial administrative structure.⁶³

⁶¹- S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland : Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitipupa, 1840-1893 (London, 1970), p86..

⁶²- Ibid.

⁶³ - The voluminous local history by the Oyo Yoruba Anglican minister Reverend Samuel Johnson, completed in 1898, and first published in 1922, underscored imperial domination of Oyo rulers in the Yoruba region before the imposition of colonial rule. A synthesis of nineteenth-century oral and written accounts of Yoruba history, this landmark study attributed Oyo pre-eminence to the corpus of Oyo tradition. While Johnson recognized the spiritual significance of Ile-Ife (and the Ooni its king) as the mythical foundation of Yoruba civilization, this perspective shows up Oyo (and the Alafin its king) as the supreme political head of the Yoruba region. For a detailed analysis see Samuel Johnson, The History of the Yoruba: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate (Lagos, 1966), p89.

Presumably, because of its military and political supremacy in the Oyo-Yoruba sub-region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,⁶⁴ the British granted the Alafin sovereignty over other monarchs, *Bales and* chiefs in this critical Province.⁶⁵

In the early colonial period, the initial instrument of political control in Oyo Province was the council of chiefs that was established in Ibadan in 1897. This council that had jurisdiction over Ife-Ilesha Division Consisted of the resident, the bale, the Otun Bale, the Osi Baale, the Balogun and other senior chiefs of Ibadan. A year later, British authorities in Lagos established a similar council in Oyo town. This Native Authority (NA) council that had jurisdiction over Oyo Division consisted of the resident as president, Alafin and seven of his most senior chiefs. With Ibadan as the administrative headquarters of neighboring towns and villages, including Ife-Ilesha Division, and Oyo having its own separate NA, the influence of the *Ooni* (the ruler of Ile-Ife – the mythical cradle of Yoruba civilization) diminished considerably during the earlier years of colonial rule.

At the turn of the century, a more centralized administrative structure adopted by the colonial government of Sir Henry E. McCallum conferred considerable authority on the Alafin at the expense of other Yoruba Obas in the province. This centralized administrative structure led to a highly contentious notion of traditional political authority among Obas and elites. McCallum's policy was further advanced by his successor Sir William MacGregor, who was governor in Lagos between 1899 and 1904. MacGregor's Colonial Ordinance of 1901 conferred considerable authority on Obas designated 'paramount rulers' such as the Alafin and the Ooni. This colonial policy further deepened the Alafin's authority, while eroding the pre-existing power, autonomy and prestige of rulers considered 'non-royal' head chiefs (Baales), especially the bales of Ibadan, Ogbomosho and Iwo.⁶⁶ J. A. Atanda notes the immediate implication of this interpretation of Yoruba political hierarchies:

⁶⁴- Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire, c. 1600-1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford, 1977), p33.

⁶⁵- The following Anglo-Yoruba treaties recognized the Alafin as the pre-eminent ruler of Yoruba land: The 1886 treaty with Yoruba Chiefs; The 1888 Treaty with the Alafin of Oyo ; The 1893 Treaty of peace, Friendship and Protection Between Alafin of Oyo and Head of Yoruba land and H. E. G. T. Carter on Behalf of H. M. The Queen, 1893.

⁶⁶- Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, p85-127.

*“Since, at least by tradition, one paramount chief was ‘more paramount’ than the other, the idea soon arose that the ‘most paramount’ chief should also be the most powerful. And in Oyo Province, that most paramount chief, was none other than the Alafin, ‘head of Yorubaland’. It is largely this type of thinking that led to the policy of ‘reviving the ancient powers and glory and the Alafin’, creating, as it were, a new Oyo Empire”.*⁶⁷

Macgregor’s policy also increased the paramount rulers’ jurisdiction in legal matters. For instance, when the colonial government decided to extend the Supreme Court’s jurisdiction over Ibadan in 1940, it was the Alafin, who approved the provision.

The policies initiated by Governors McCallum and Macgregor were consolidated during the long stewardship of Captain William A. Ross, a resident of the province between 1914 and 1931. Following the steady elevation of the Alafin of Oyo by successive colonial policies, Captain Ross carried the Lugardian policy of Indirect Rule to its logical conclusion. A former district commissioner of Oyo division, Ross worked ceaselessly to advance the authority and prestige of the Alafin, whom he considered the legitimate ruler of the Yoruba people. Consequently, he worked hard to undermine the influence of other Yoruba rulers, most especially Ibadan’s bales, whose regional power had come under some threat in the recent past. His long services in Oyo town, and his special friendship with Oba Siyanbola Ladigbolu I, the Alafin of Oyo were critical factors here. With Ross as resident, the Alafin’s control was extended throughout the province- over the total of 14,831 square miles, making in the largest Province in colonial Southern Nigeria.⁶⁸ Although British authorities initially assumed that the Alafin’s supreme status would legitimate colonial objectives in the

⁶⁷ - Atanda, op.cit., p 102.

⁶⁸ - Kemi Morgan (ed), Akinyelse’s, History of Ibadan Part Three (Ibadan, 1900), p34.

region, the relationship deteriorated between Obas, chiefs and powerful lineage in the nineteenth century.⁶⁹

In this excessively authoritarian political arrangement, Alafin Ladigbolu acquired de facto and de jure suzerainty over other region Obas and Baales. From the perspective of Ibadan chiefs, Ross had not only usurped their political powers, but had overturned existing power relations among northern Yoruba communities. The ceremonial homage, which Ibadan chiefs had paid the Alafin as ‘spiritual father’, for example was, conveniently interpreted as de facto suzerainty of Oyo over Ibadan.⁷⁰ To reinforce this authoritarian structure, both Ross and Alafin Ladigbolu summoned ‘traditional’ themes of the grandeur of the ‘old Oyo Empire’, along with its myth of the Alafin’s seniority vis-à-vis other Yoruba rulers. This arrangement obscured what in fact had been a fluid nineteenth-century political environment, in which the Alafin’s authority had been in doubt, and the status of Ibadan as the pre-eminent military power had been undisputed.⁷¹ In short, Ross ignored the political dislocations of this previous area, and the extent to which the rise of new towns- such as Ibadan, Ijaye and Abeokuta, with their war-based economy- had undermined Oyo’s influence.⁷²

Despite these contradictions, Alafin Ladigbolu secured suzerainty over other major rulers in the Province such as the Ooni of Ife, the Owa of Ilesha and the Bales of Ibadan, Ogbomosho, Oshogbo, Iwo, Iseyin, Ede, Ejigbo and Ikirun. This controversial interpretation of Yoruba traditional authority⁷³ had been the subject of much debate by local historians. Its rationale stemmed from a neo- tradition structure that embraced the Alafin as balance of power among Obas and Bales in the Province even in the turbulent nineteenth century. Thus, with this colonial administrative arrangement, Ross’s elevation of the Alafin was a reconstruction of legacy of Oyo imperial dominance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which had been eroded by the Yoruba wars of the nineteenth century. Despite the apparent problem with this arrangement, the perspective still had some ideological appeal given the enduring

⁶⁹- Kemi Morgan (ed), Akinyelse’s, op. cit., p34.

⁷⁰- Ibid, p35..

⁷¹- Awe, ‘The Rise of Ibadan’, (Ibadan, 1920), p45.

⁷²- Ibid.

⁷³- Ibid, p52.

claims that the pre-eminence of Oyo (with its ruler the Alafin) was in fact the traditional order of things. Furthermore, the policy invested considerable resources into the interpretation of specific Yoruba 'paramount ruler' as royal potentates of historic towns, with local *Bales* as their subordinate head chiefs of tributary towns and villages. While this rigid policy undermined the prevailing political arrangement, it nevertheless defined the framework in which the colonial encounter was later expressed.⁷⁴ The implementation of this Lugardian notion of traditional authority required constant intrigue, regular manipulation of local rulers and the arbitrary use of the legal instruments of the colonial state. Given the contradiction between the evolving colonial order and the political arrangements of the nineteenth century, the indirect rule system failed to ensure a viable political structure capable of mediating competing political forces in the region. By embracing the Alafin, as the supreme traditional ruler of the Province, this strategy of native administration supplanted the evolving political arrangement in the nineteenth-century northern Yoruba region.

Given the inconsistencies between the new order and the previous political relationships among provincial towns, the Indirect Rule system failed a stable mechanism for mediating conflict among contending political forces and interests. The system, thus, relied on excessively authoritarian measures and the persistent manipulation of local groups.⁷⁵ Within individual towns, this policy sanctioned the authority of Obas and chiefs favored by British administrators over NA structure, the native courts and tax collection. And while senior Obas competed for power in the provincial system, colonial rule extended their influence beyond their pre-colonial status within their respective towns. For example, while the *Alafin* and the *Oyo* *mesi* chiefs (the influential kingmakers) dominated the region before the nineteenth century, the latter's influence was severely curtailed under colonial rule. Not surprisingly, this colonial arrangement resulted in an inefficient and corrupt system of local administration. And while the military pre-eminence of Ibadan rulers grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, Ibadan clearly lacked the moral authority on which to build the hierarchical order that generally characterized the indirect rule system. Consequently,

⁷⁴- Kemi Morgan (ed), *Akinyelse's*, op.cit, p38.

⁷⁵- Atanda, op.cit, p101.

without a viable tradition political authority, the system of indirect rule could not withstand the political pressures that emerged in the early years as suzerain of the region, Obas, Bales and educated elites of other city-states consistently questioned the legitimacy of this colonial arrangement.

A neo-traditional concept that embraced the Alafin as the fulcrum of power among the rulers in the Province had clearly undermined the pre-existing political arrangements. To legitimate the Alafin's 'traditional' pre-eminence, the colonial regime deployed historically intelligible, but highly contentious interpretations of traditional monarch as royal potentates. It was naïve to assume that this reconstructed notion of traditional authority could create political order among competing obas, chiefs, educated elites and local people.⁷⁶

As far Ibadan's chiefs were concerned, Captain Ross's tenure brought little more than persistent humiliation. Succession to important Ibadan chieftaincy titles came under the Alafin's authority, as did all decision of significance to local administration that had previously been made by the Bale and chiefs. Tight political control of Ibadan chiefs and district towns were ensured through Ross's removal of uncooperative Bales and chiefs. In the first two decades of his residency, three Ibadan Bales- Irefin, Shitu and Ola, who in various ways questioned the legitimacy of the provincial NA structure, were deposed. Their sudden deposition had little to do with substantive issues of local administration. Rather, Ross and the Alafin simply suspected that they were disloyal. Moreover, Ross affirmed the Alafin's authority bringing most communities in the province under his judicial control. For example, despite the reservations of senior British administrators in Lagos, the resident pushed through a measure that gave the Oyo appeal (with the Alafin as president) appellate power over the appeals court in Ibadan, and other appeals court (including Ife Division) in the Province.⁷⁷ Indeed, in an attempt to cement fully the hegemony of the Alafin in the provincial NA, Ross moved his administrative headquarters from Ibadan to Oyo. At least on matters of local administration, Captain Ross's version of indirect rule Ibadan as Georges Jenkins puts it, was 'a matter of very direct control mitigated

⁷⁶ Robin Law, *op.cit*, p54.

⁷⁷-Jenkins, *Ibadan politics*, (Ibadan, 1925), p156.

only by intrigue'.⁷⁸ Ross was not concerned with establishing an efficient local government structure, responsive to pressing problems of administration and development. Rather, he was preoccupied with erecting an authoritarian system under the undisputed control of the Alafin. Embracing the Alafin as the source of legitimate authority, local government in Ibadan in the early decades of colonial rule was reduced to tax assessment, simple mechanisms of chieftaincy succession and the adjudication of 'native' law and it ignored the idea of local government as an expression of communal aspirations.⁷⁹

Ross not only deteriorated chiefs in Ibadan, but also marginalized the city's small class of educated Christians and wealthy Muslim merchants. In fact, for him, indirect rule meant the total exclusion of the rising Christian elite, who because of their education became increasingly vocal about urban affairs.⁸⁰ They formed new social groups that raised questions about the provision of municipal services and the subordinate of Ibadan to the Alafin. On this issue, Christian and Muslim elites collaborated with the traditional chiefs to challenge Ross's policies. As early as 1914, the Egbe Agba O'tan (organization of local elders) was founded. It defended Ibadan against the policies of the colonial authorities.⁸¹ The organization broadened its political base by appointing the Ooni of Ife as patron in 1923. In March 1928, it made the educated 'crown' prince of Ife, Adesoji Aderemi (who succeeded as Ooni two years later), as honorary member. The domain of the Ooni of Ile- Ife, the mythical cradle of Yoruba civilization was itself subjugated to the Alafin; by embracing the Ooni and its influential 'heir apparent', the Edge posed a traditional counterweight to the political supremacy of the Alafin⁸². Moreover, with the support of prominent members of the Egbe, a news-paper called the Yoruba New was founded in January 1924 to express the views of the Ibanan educated elite. In addition, the newspaper

⁷⁸ - Jenkins, op.cit., p187.

⁷⁹ - Ibid. p188.

⁸⁰ - Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well, Marriages, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Lagos*, (Cambridge, 1985), p48.

⁸¹ - Jenkins, op.cit. p189.

⁸² - Gavin William, *Garveyism , Akinpelu Obisesane : Ibadan, 1920 – 1922*, in Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (eds), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa: Essays in Honour of A. H. M. Kirk –Greene* (London, 1993), p116.

advanced the concerns of prominent Muslim merchants. In 1921 the cooperation between wealthy Muslim merchants and Christian elites, led to the formation of another local organization, the Ibadan Native Aboriginal Society. It was not until 1922, however, with its transformation into the Ilupeju Society (society for the unity of the town), that the organization committed itself to a policy that would eventually restore Ibadan's independence from the Alafin.⁸³ The political alliance between the emerging new elites – educated Christians, Muslim and women merchants – and chiefs was also influenced by the boom in commodity prices in the mid – 1920s and the subsequent decline of the 1930s.⁸⁴

Despite the plight of Ibadan's chiefs during the era of Captain Ross, the collaboration between the chiefs and the educated elites resulted in sustained campaigns for pipe – borne water, a modern hospital, the construction of paved roads and a town hall in the 1920s. The agitation, which had little support from the resident, nevertheless led to a modest improvement in Ibadan's municipal development in the 1930s and the 1940s⁸⁵. These accomplishments were made despite Ross's emphatic endorsement of Ibadan's subordinate status within the 'traditional' hierarchy of rulers and towns. Within Ibadan itself, chiefs, community leaders and the new men were well aware that this Lugardian concept of indirect rule not only violated the spirit and the letter of the treaty of June 1893, which had ceded military realities of the nineteenth century.

The disparity between the political realities of the nineteenth century and the Lugardian system of Indirect Rule, thus, provided a fault line through which competing interests sought to undermine Captain Ross's overrule. In Oyo Province, the initial tremors were the reaction of local interests in Ibadan to the Alafin's suzerainty over the town's chiefs, and the demands of increasingly restless local elites for a more responsive NA structure. Once Captain Ross retired from the colonial service in 1931, these rumbles gave way to an avalanche that was precipitated by

⁸³ - Gavin William, *Garveyism*, Akinpelu Obisesane, op.cit., p116.

⁸⁴ - Jenkins, op.cit, p56.

⁸⁵ - National Archives of Nigeria, Ibadan (hereinafter NAN, I) Oyo Provincial File (Oyo Prof.) 2/3.

major colonial reforms and elite agitations for a responsive local administrative system.

Ross left a legacy Ibadan's people would remember for many decades: an inefficient administrative structure marked by the domination of the Ibadan NA and other districts by the Alafin. Despite Ross's policies, the 1930s ushered in a dynamic period, where new social and economic developments would bring rapid social change, precipitated by the interaction of powerful local interest groups such as chiefs, educated Christians, Muslim and women traders, artisan guilds and farmer's groups.

Defined in the broader context of constitutional reforms implemented in the 1930s and the 1940s, under Sir Donald Cameron, governor of Nigeria from 1930 to 1935, and Sir Bernard Bourdillon, governor of Nigeria from 1935 to 1939, Ross's successor, H. L. Ward-Price, was committed to the creation of a more efficient system of local government. Thus, by the early 1930s, it was evident that the Lugardian structure of Indirect Rule was no longer acceptable to both the educated elites and the more progressive British administrators. According to Governor Cameron, for instance, *'the time was past, when anyone could pretend that indirect rule was a scared and mysterious art peculiar to Nigeria and understood by a chosen few'*⁸⁶. For indirect rule to continue as a viable system of local administration it would have to adapt; reformers such as Cameron and Bourdillon contended that it was time for British tradition to be drawn upon in this respect. The 1933 Native Authority Ordinance and the Native Court Ordinance expressed this official attitude. The Native Authority Ordinance required that 'paramount rulers' consult a council of chiefs on all matters affecting the welfare of local people under their jurisdiction. While they still retained their executive powers under the supervision of the residents and district officers, paramount rulers would have to recognize the councils' advisory and consultative roles⁸⁷.

⁸⁶- Isaac. W. Okonjo, British Administration in Nigeria, 1900- 1950: A Nigerian view (New York, 1974), p213.

⁸⁷- Isaac. W. Okonjo. op.cit, p213

This historic provision, reflected in the popular parlance ‘chiefs and council’, was a fundamental departure from the autocratic sole NA system favored by Ross and his contemporaries. Despite this new ordinance, ‘paramount rulers’ such as the Alafin retained considerable political power; in fact, they could override the advice of their council, and take sole action in emergency situations⁸⁸. Cameron’s policies were carefully implemented by Bourdillon⁸⁹. Despite its limitations, the Native Authority Ordinance affected two major areas of local politics in Oyo Province. First, for the time in four decades, colonial authorities curtailed the centralized power of senior *Obas*, such as the Alafin⁹⁰. Second, the reforms immediately boosted the morale of educated elites, whose increasing rumbles over inefficient local administration were becoming a concern to senior colonial officials. In the specific case of Oyo Province, British administration had by this time lost confidence in the chiefs’ ability to manage effectively such a large and complex province. Indeed, colonial memoranda during this period show that Cameron’s ideas of reform called for increasing the involvement of educated elements in the daily activities of native authorities’ councils⁹¹. Inevitably, these reforms had a significant impact on the political arrangement in Oyo Province, especially the relations between the Alafin and Ibadan’s elites.

Due to their social cohesion, reflecting their exposure to Western education and missionary training, Ibadan’s Christian elites, like their counterparts in other Yoruba towns, were poised to take advantage of these constitutional reforms. In Ibadan, this pressure for reform was expressed through a new town-based organization, the Ibadan Progressive Union (IPU), inaugurated by prominent local Christians in June 1930. The group that emerged as the dominant political force in the city had its origins in the historical and cultural preservation society, Egbe Agba O’tan, founded in 1914. Taking advantage of the new political environment, IPU men openly embraced the reforms that would give them an initial entry into local politics. The IPU men effectively

⁸⁸- NAN, I: Native Authority Ordinance, 1933.

⁸⁹-Robert D. Pearce, Sir Bernard Bourdillon: The Biography of a Twentieth Century colonialist (Oxford, 1987).p89.

⁹⁰-NAN, I: Bourdillon’s keynote address to the conference of Yoruba *Obas*, ‘1939 conference of Yoruba *Obas*’.

⁹¹ - NAN, I: Bourdillon’s keynote address to the conference of Yoruba *Obas*, ‘1939 conference of Yoruba *Obas*’.

articulated Ibadan's interests, mobilizing diverse groups in the city (including the chiefs) against the domination of the Alafin⁹².

As the self-appointed voice of the city, IPU men pressed Resident Ward-Price⁹³ for the independence of Ibadan division, the provision of public infrastructure and the inclusion of educated elites in local administration. Their persistent demands, coupled with the excesses of the Alafin's couriers⁹⁴, and the progressive dispositions of Ward-Price and senior British administrators in Lagos, all combined to encourage reforms at various levels of provincial administration⁹⁵. In Ibadan, Ward-Price encouraged local chiefs to nominate two prominent Christians, I.B. Akineyele and J.O. Aboderin, as advisers to the council in 1933⁹⁶. Convinced that the efficiency of the divisional NA council would depend on the progressive transformation of Ibadan's chieftaincy institution, Ward-Price, with the support of Christian elites, also encouraged the senior chiefs to install two educated men as junior chiefs⁹⁷.

More importantly, the reforms led to the most remarkable constitutional change in Ibadan's colonial history: the subdivision of Oyo Province and the granting of independence to Ibadan in 1934⁹⁸. The new council included nine senior chiefs: four from Ibadan (Ibadan's baale and three senior chiefs) and the baales of northern district towns of Ede, Iwo, Ogbomosho, Oshogbo and Ejigbo. As the headquarters of this new divisional NA council, Ibadan chiefs now had jurisdiction over the legal and financial matters in these major towns. Significantly, this agitation also led to the change of the title of Ibadan's baale (head chief) to olubadan (oba of Ibadan) in 1936⁹⁹. This grand change conferred on the Olubadan the prestige traditionally reserved for historic

⁹² - NAN, I: Pyo Prof. 236.

⁹³ - Convinced that Captain Ross's alliance with the Alafin encouraged stagnation, the new resident, H.L. Ward-Price, briefly embraced the educated Ooni of Ife, *Oba Adesoji Aderemi*, as an ally in his attempt to reform the administrative structure of the province. Ife's strategic limitations, however, forced him to shift his attention to Ibadan as the focal point of administrative reform. H. L. Ward-Price, *Dark Subjects* (London, 1939).

⁹⁴ - NAN, I: Oyo Prof. 636/647.

⁹⁵ - *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ - *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ - Toyin Falola, *Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893- 1945* (Lagos, 1989), p261.

⁹⁸ - Atanda, *op.cit*, p247.

⁹⁹ - *Ibid*, p282.

Yoruba crowns such as the ooni of Ife, the alaaḡin of Oyo or the owa of Ilesha. An added plum, Ward-Price, citing administrative convenience, moved his headquarters from Oyo to Ibadan in 1934¹⁰⁰. The reforms triggered tensions between Ibadan chiefs and Christian elites, led to strong oppositions from the Alafin and controversies between Ibadan elites and elites of the northern district towns of Ede, Ogbomosho, Oshogbo, Iwo and Ejigbo. The researcher will now turn to a brief discussion of the tension between Ibadan elites and those of northern district towns in the 1930s and the 1940s.

Just as Ibadan's chiefs and educated elites had opposed the domination of the Alafin, the chiefs and elites of the four district towns now questioned Ibadan's claims to legitimacy as superior traditional authority¹⁰¹. Thus, following the announcement of the new policy of administrative reorganization, Bales, chiefs and educated elites of district towns promptly opposed this new interpretation of traditional authority, making Ibadan the Division's suzerain.

The resistance of Ogbomosho chiefs and elites illustrates how opposition was mobilized against yet another rigid case of indirect rule. As in Ibadan, where the elites of the Egbe Agba O'tan and later the IPU used their modern skills to challenge the domination of the Alafin, Ogbomosho's educated Christians utilized Western and indigenous cultural forms to advance their parochial concerns. This was expressed particularly through a proliferation of local historical writings that were popular by the beginning of the twentieth century in most Yoruba towns¹⁰². In Ogbomosho, as in other towns in the Province, the objectives of local historians in the 1930s were mainly to advance hometown and elite interest within the prevailing colonial dispensation. As had I. B. Akinyele with his *Iwe Itan Ibadan* (The history of Ibadan), N. D. Oyerinde, Ogbomosho's influential Christian¹⁰³, used his book, *Iwe Itan Ogbomosho* (The history of Ogbomosho), to advance the status of his hometown in the NA jurisdiction. Oyerinde's history, published with the support of the Ogbomosho Progressive Union

¹⁰⁰ - Atanda, op.cit, p283.

¹⁰¹ - NAN, I: Oyo Prof. 236/647.

¹⁰² - Robin Law, 'Early Yoruba historiography', *History in Africa*, 3 (1976), p76-7.

¹⁰³ - J. A. Atanda, *Baptist Churches in Nigeria, 1850- 1950* (Ibadan, 1988), p128- 9.

(OPU)¹⁰⁴ in 1934, challenged the traditional assumption of the colonial NA structure, notably the subordination of Ogbomosho to Ibadan rule. He questioned the veracity of Akinyele's *Iwe Itan Ibadan*, which represented Ogbomosho as having been a vassal of Ibadan in the nineteenth century. Babatunde Agiri notes the political significance of Oyerinde's book: 'It provided the historical arguments for Ogbomosho politicians during their agitation first for the separation of Ibadan Division from the autocracy of the Alafin between 1931- 1932 and secondly for the creation of the Oshun Division from Ibadan Division during 1948- 1951'¹⁰⁵. Oyerinde's history of Ogbomosho was a book of important political dimensions that drew selectively from both oral and missionary accounts for colonial consumption. Like Akinyele's *Iwe Itan Ibadan*, it shows literacy and modern skills were utilized as instruments for the advancement of specific political interests¹⁰⁶.

Within the town itself, the OPU, under the leadership of Oyerinde, like its counterparts in Ibadan only a decade before, was concerned with the slow pace of reform and what it regarded as the stranglehold of conservative chiefs over the local council. While they articulated hometown doctrine in opposition to Ogbomosho's subordinate status, educated Christians cautiously denounced the NA council, under the control of the Bale and the chiefs, as inefficient and corrupt. Despite their spirited opposition, Ogbomosho and other district towns remained subject to Ibadan until the late 1940s, when the colonial government introduced a comprehensive local government reform as the initial critical policy of decolonization¹⁰⁷. Indeed, resistance to British colonial policy in Yorubaland up to the years of independence.

It has been deduced in chapter two that with the occupation of the North, the British had been able to establish an effective administration in three regional units which had been accepted as representing natural divisions of the Nigerian territory: the eastern region where the large Southern Protectorate governed peoples of the Delta

¹⁰⁴ - N. D. Oyerinde, *Iwe Itan Ogbomosho* (The history of Ogbomosho) (Jos, 1934).p83.

¹⁰⁵ - B. A. Agiri, 'The Development of Local Government in Ogbomosho, 1850- 1950' (M. A. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1966), p45.

¹⁰⁶ - Graham Furniss, 'Oral Culture and the Making of Meaning', *African Affairs*, 91 (1992), pp271-6.

¹⁰⁷ - N D .Oyerinde, op.cit, p89.

and its hinterland, the western region where there was the administration of the Lagos colony with its own Yorubaland Protectorate and finally the Northern Protectorate ruled mostly by Muslim Emirates with a typical administration.

In the Muslim north, a dual system of British and Muslim law was instituted. It was found, in fact, that the obvious way to control the Emirates was to rule through their traditional authorities and to use their elaborate hierarchy of officials for the running of the government¹⁰⁸. The following section will examine the nature of British system of local administration applied to Northern Nigeria taking into account its relationship with the northern traditional institutions.

3-2. British Colonial Administration in Northern Nigeria

As noted in the previous section, British Government attempted to rule the southern territories of what is today Nigeria with the maintaining of indigenous systems of government in order to ensure the extension of their rule. In fact, Native Authority System whereby they sought to convert the administrative institutions of African people into instruments of British policy had been introduced. This method of British administration was first given a systematic form by F. D. Lugard during the years which followed the proclamation of the Protectorate of northern Nigeria in 1900¹⁰⁹. In the northern territories, Lugard made also use of the traditional African rulers at local government but he raised the practice to a theory of colonial administration called Indirect Rule¹¹⁰.

Indirect rule simply refers to a system of colonial administration, whereby subject African states are administered by their own rulers under an overlord. Its declared objective was to evolve for Africans a new politico-administrative structure based on the fusion of those things that were considered good in their political and

¹⁰⁸ - O. Collins., op.cit., p. 149.

¹⁰⁹ - L. Haiely., op.cit., p. 453.

¹¹⁰ - The theory of Indirect Rule was formulated by Lord Lugard in his book *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* published in 1922. In this book, he described the system of government he had worked out for the administration of the Sokoto Emirates of Northern Nigeria and he recommended its application to all British Tropical African colonies. From Richard A Frost, "Reflections on British Colonial Policy, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 18, N°4, (University of Columbia, Dec., 1945), pp. 309- 320.

administrative systems with carefully selected ideas and institutions from British political and administrative experience¹¹¹. In other terms, this means to institute a compound system of British and African law using African traditional values and standards together with British standards. But it does not mean that there was a complete acceptance of all social African laws. The British accepted only the laws which conformed to their needs and rejected all the principles which does not correspond to their ideas.

Indirect Rule had also been seen as a dynamic process in which traditional African society would be constantly adapting itself to innovation¹¹². The use of the indigenous structures of government as means of administration or the cooperation between African chiefs and the colonial administration would harmonize colonial policy with the traditional life, thus leaving to the latter the possibility to adapt itself to the modern conditions. According to J. A. Burdon, a resident at the Sokoto Province:

“Our aim is to rule through the existing chiefs, to raise them in the administrative scale, to enlist them on our side in the work of progress and good government. We cannot do without them. To rule directly would require an army of British magistrate, which both the general unhealthiness of the country and its present poverty forbid. My hope is that we may make of these born rulers a high type of British official, working for the good of their subjects in accordance with the ideals of British Empire, but carrying on all that is best in the constitution they have evolved for themselves, the one best understood by, and therefore best suited to, the people. Our present task is to gain their confidence. Without this there can be no real progress. The first step is to

¹¹¹ - A. E. Afigbo., “Anthropology and Colonial Administration in south-Eastern Nigeria 1891-1939”, *Journal of the Historical society of Nigeria.*, vol 3., N°1., December 1975., p. 20.

¹¹² - M Crowder., *West Africa under Colonial Rule.*, (London, 1968), op.cit., p. 234.

uphold and strengthen their authority over their subjects. This had necessarily been greatly weakened by their defeats at our hands. Its rehabilitation is slowly progressing, and is gradually inducing a sense of gratitude and trust”¹¹³.

It should be mentioned that the idea of accommodating British colonial policy to African traditional institutions began as a reflection of political pessimism. In fact, the old nineteenth century reluctance to make large commitments was still apparent in the adoption of the Indirect Rule system. This reluctance had been fortified by certain unavoidable pressures among these the shortage of funds and staff.

Lugard like most of his predecessors knew that any development must be self-financing within each African territory and that nothing could be made for Africans if it involved regular spending from the British treasury. In addition, the imperial grant in aid from Britain to every colonial dependency was not always sufficient. In northern Nigeria, for instance, Lugard had to rule its large population which was about ten million with an annual grant of about £ 100.000¹¹⁴. Thus, ruling through the established indigenous institutions seemed to be the cheapest course and the answer to exiguous resources.

Apart from the shortage of funds that forced the British Colonial Government to co-operate with the existing indigenous institutions, there was an enormous lack of staff. It was impossible to provide enough staff for direct administration and the Colonial Government had to rule with the minimum use of British personnel. This was not only due to the lack of adequate finance but also to the British ignorance of African local structures and traditions.

The use of native agencies, furthermore, was not only to be the cheapest means for ruling Africans but would be less disruptive to the social order. Therefore, the Colonial Government the prime role of which was to maintain law and order had to

¹¹³ - J. A. Burdon Resident at the Sokoto Province, The Geographical Journal, Vol. 24, N°6 (Blackwell Publishing, Dec. 1904),pp. 636- 651.

¹¹⁴ - J. Bowle., op.cit, p. 201.

ally itself with the traditional rulers in order to avoid any kind of disturbances. For example, the Fulani emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate seemed to be effective collaborators and Lugard could not bypass them. They were considered as invaluable medium between the British staff and the native peasantry¹¹⁵. It would be difficult, then, to find anyone capable of taking their place and they would constitute a danger to the state if ousted from their positions. As stated by R. Hyam:

“Those African institutions which had survived in the struggle for existence, were regarded as having in some sense proved their worth and should therefore be preserved”¹¹⁶.

The preservation of the traditional Emirs would have been a demanding task. This particularly was due to the existence of Islamic religion in the densely populated Muslim areas of northern Nigeria. Lugard knew that the establishment of a British system of government would not be easily accepted by Muslims since Islam forbade them to accept infidel rules. He was also sure that the Muslim emirs who had been able to establish well developed Islamic institutions could be violent if their religion and their efficient system of ruling were threatened. The Satiru rebellion of 1906 in Sokoto, for instance, showed him the Muslims' deep attachment to their independence, their religions and their way of life¹¹⁷. The British Colonial Government could not afford to ignore the existing Islamic institutions; consequently, co-operation with them was advisable.

For the reasons already mentioned, Lugard did not dissolve the native administration and Muslims continued to be ruled by Muslim law under the administration of the Emirates courts. Every Sultan and Emir he proclaimed after taking Sokoto:

¹¹⁵ - R. Hyam., op.cit., p. 289.

¹¹⁶ - Ibid., p. 290.

¹¹⁷ - O. Ikime., op.cit., p. 86.

“... will rule over the people as of old time... but will obey the laws of the governor and will act in accordance with the advice of the Resident”¹¹⁸.

The Emirs were effectively given the opportunity to rule their people but under the supervision of British residents attached to each of their courts. This means that they were not given complete freedom to run their administration and they had to rely on the resident. The latter was a political officer who played an intermediary role between the Colonial Governor and the Emirs. His prime role was to advise the Emir and not to become directly involved in the administration of local matters. According to Lugard:

“The Resident acts as sympathetic adviser and counselor to the native chief, being careful not to interfere so as to lower his prestige, or cause him to lose interests in his work. His advice on matters of general policy must be followed but the native ruler issues his own instructions to his subordinate chiefs and Districts heads not as the orders of the Resident but as his own”¹¹⁹.

It is worth mentioning here that the Muslim Emirs were not the effective rulers for they were not allowed to inaugurate policies of their own. They were not left as the de facto rulers of their people but had to rule their native administrations depending on the British administration officers. Furthermore, they could not reject the advice given to them for these were derived from the orders of the governor. In fact, the Resident was not allowed to give direct orders but had to obey the colonial governor and to ensure that his orders were transmitted without any regard to African discontent¹²⁰. Thus, the Emirs whose prime duty was to maintain the political stability and

¹¹⁸ - Quoted in J. Iliffe., op.cit., p. 201.

¹¹⁹ - F. D. Lugard., The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa., (1922), p. 201.

¹²⁰ - I. F. Nicolson., op.cit. p. 137.

organization of their emirates had not only to accept the British demands but also to maintain good relations with Residents.

From the very beginning of colonial rule, the Emirs knew that the British were interested in loyal chiefs who could contribute positively to the security of British rule and the uncooperative chiefs could be easily dismissed. The degree of influence which the emirs under British rule wielded in administrative matters depended on their personal relationships with the British administrators. In this case, if an Emir had good relations with the British officers, he could be allowed to wield more influence in the administrative affairs of his emirate and if he proved to be intransigent in his demand to wield powers which the British administrators were not prepared to grant him, he could easily be replaced. According to Lugard, a native ruler can be guided and controlled and if necessary replaced¹²¹. This summarizes the position of the native authority vis a vis the British colonial administration.

Under the indirect rule policy, the British administration and the central power kept the management monopoly over certain fields such as: security and the use of armed forces, land disposition, legislation and fiscality of general order. For instance, the native rulers were not permitted to raise or control armed forces or to grant permission to carry arms¹²². They were not given either the right to appropriate lands for public purposes or for commercial requirements because the right of disposing of native lands was reserved to the Governor by ordinance¹²³.

¹²¹ - R. Von Albertini., *Decolonization and the Future of the Colonies*. p. 134.

¹²² - O. Collins., op.cit., p. 213. He stated that "The native administration maintains a police, who wear a uniform but do not carry firearms. On the other hand, the Government armed police are never quartered in native towns, where their presence would interfere with the authority of the chiefs. Like the regular troops, they are employed as escorts and on duty in the townships".

¹²³ - F. D. Lugard., op.cit., p. 208. He stated: "in the northern Provinces (but not in the south) the right of disposing of Native lands is reserved to the governor by ordinance. In practice, this does not interfere with the power of the native ruler (as the delegate of the governor- to assign lands to the natives under his rule, in accordance with native law and custom, or restricted him or the native courts from adjudicating between natives regarding occupancy rights in land. No rents are levied on lands in occupation by indigenous natives. Leases to aliens are granted by the Central Government".

The right to legislate was also restricted and the native rulers could not issue rules without the consent of the Governor. As stated by Lugard:

“The right to legislate should remain in the hands of the central government- itself limited by the control of the Colonial Office... The native ruler authority, however, exercises very considerable power in this regard. A native ruler and the native courts are empowered to enforce native law and custom, provided it is not repugnant to humanity or in opposition to any ordinance. This practically meets all needs, but the native authority may also make rules on any subject, provided they are approved by the governor”¹²⁴.

That meant that the native rulers and their courts were kept in the traditional structure while their real prerogatives were seized by the British Governor. Furthermore, local authorities’ nomination and particularly that of the chiefs stayed submitted to the control of the colonial Government. According to O. Collins, the confirmation of the successor to a chieftainship and the deposition of any ruler for misrule or other adequate cause were reserved to the Governor¹²⁵.

Under the Indirect Rule Policy, the native authorities in all the Fulani provinces were allowed to carry out the basic functions of local government. They had powers to initiate development projects to improve socio-economic development; their task had a triple aspect. They were in charge of maintaining order and recovering taxes and powers, which were submitted to them by the Central Government. They had also the responsibility of services that they ought to manage as chiefs of local government and which were financed by the local treasuries. Finally, they were invested of technical functions and were obliged to ensure the execution of certain works financed by the

¹²⁴ - Quoted in O. Collins., op.cit., p. 213.

¹²⁵ - Ibid., p. 214.

Central Government services. In addition to that, they benefited from great financial possibilities disposing in the beginning of half of the amount of the general tax¹²⁶.

The institution of a similar local administrative regime in all the provinces did not mean that a real Indirect Rule was everywhere practiced. On the Bauchi Plateau on south of the Benue River, for instance, there were the non-Muslim provinces which had not been subjected to the effective Fulani system of rule. In these regions the traditional political system was divided similarly to that of eastern Nigeria. Social cohesion among these groups was obtained through custom and consensus not only with families but within clans and as far as possible between clans¹²⁷. In addition, the wielders of power were the elders who were selected from designated families or clans¹²⁸.

Among such groups, the British could not find rulers or agents for establishing and extending their rule. Thus, the preferred solution for Lugard was to impose chiefs as it had been the case for the stateless people of eastern Nigeria. In fact, he ended up by establishing artificial districts headed by artificial councils which comprised nominated African chiefs and to which were assigned specific executive and judicial powers¹²⁹. In these regions, there was a matter of a local government regime but the administration tended to be more direct. According to L. Hailey:

“Political Officers were required to undertake a direct responsibility in such areas, in the course of

¹²⁶ - J. Lombard., op.cit., p. 171. According to F. D. Lugard., op.cit., p. 201: “ The tax supplies the means to pay the emir and his officials. The district and village heads are effectively supervised in its assessment by the British staff. The native treasury retains the proportion assigned to it (in advanced communities a half) and pays the remainder into Colonial Revenue... the native administration receives also the fines and fees of native courts. From these funds are paid the salaries of the Emir and his council, the native court judges, the district and village heads... The surplus is devoted to the construction and maintenance of dispensaries, settlements, schools, roads, court-houses and other buildings. Such works may be carried out wholly or in part by a Government department, if the native administration requires technical assistance, the cost being borne by the native treasury”.

¹²⁷ - A. A. Mazarui., op.cit., p. 69.

¹²⁸ - J. Lombard., op.cit., p. 37.

¹²⁹ - J. F. A. Ajaye and M. Crowder., op.cit., p. 455.

which they normally made use of appointed District Heads similar to those employed by the Fulani”¹³⁰.

To sum up, because of the small number of personnel, limited financial resources and an undeveloped communication infrastructure, the colonial state in northern Nigeria depended heavily upon traditional African rulers and chiefs to govern the vast areas and population under its control. Where the British did not find rulers and chiefs to govern certain areas, they often created their own chiefs to administer them.

The system of indirect Rule, which had been applied there permitted to the traditional rulers and chiefs to govern their territories under the supervision of the British authorities. The survival of the traditional authority, however, did not alter the fact that rulers and chiefs were clearly subordinate to the colonial power structure and could be deposed if they did not follow the dictates of the colonial administration. The real ruler under the colonial system was loyal and he was forced to accept the superiority of the colonizer, to maintain order, to collect taxes for the colonial regime and to provide forced labour for public works projects. Thus, the position of the native rulers was fundamentally changed by colonialism which imposed an overlord above them. In order to understand how much change colonialism exerted over the northern traditional authorities, the following section will examine the impacts of the colonial administration on these authorities focusing on the major political reforms which weakened the traditional institutions.

3-3. The Impacts of the Colonial Administration on the Traditional Authorities of Northern Nigeria

As it has been examined earlier, the British made a mutually advantageous alliance with the native authorities of Northern Nigeria. Lugard would never have governed such large territories with white officials alone. In fact, many factors prevented it including the lack of adequate finance and staff. Lord Hailey wrote about these native authorities who occupied “*such a position that could not be compared*

¹³⁰ - L. Hailey., op.cit., p. 454.

with another one in the diverse African colonial territories”¹³¹. The British Colonial Government not only admitted the powers of all the rulers but had left to them great administrative responsibilities and mainly very wide realization possibilities in technical fields. This new position as argued by certain historians enabled the native rulers to increase their powers over their subjects. For instance, O. Awolowo stated that:

“The emirs under colonial rule were all clothed with powers and prestige far in excess of what they ever wielded or enjoyed before the advent of the British conquest”¹³².

This argument may obfuscate the real effects of British colonialism on Northern Nigeria. It was probably based on a certain interpretation of Indirect Rule and not on the real situation during the colonial era. The real emir under colonial rule was powerless placed in a complicated situation in which he had to assume a dual role of responsibility toward the colonial regime and his people.

As it was previously mentioned, under the colonial administration the emirs had not powers of their own. Despite the relative autonomy allowed to them, the colonial Government had always reminded the aspect essentially dependent of the African authorities and their subordination toward the British powers. Indeed, since the first years of the twentieth century Lugard declared:

“The Government policy is that these chiefs [Fulani Kings] rule their people not as independent, but dependent rulers”¹³³.

It is from this principle that the first bases of Indirect Rule were later established obliging the British officers appointed in each province to act as the counselors or advisers of the emirs without usurping their posts. Thus, the emirs had to

¹³¹ - Quoted in J. Lombard., op.cit., p. 172.

¹³² - O. Awolowo., Path to Nigerian Freedom, p. 59.

¹³³ - Quoted in J. Lombard.op.cit, p. 160.

rule their provinces depending on the colonial administrators and deriving their decision – making power from the colonial Governor. They were no longer allowed to govern according to the Caliphate’s traditional structure of government not to obey the Caliph like of old time.

With the fall of Sokoto in 1903, some basic changes were made in the structure of the Sokoto Caliphate. The latter which was basically centralized and articulated through the person of the Caliph was abolished as a political unit and each emir had to head a district native administration with powers of subordinate legislation, jurisdiction and tax collection remitting part to the British authorities¹³⁴. At the top of the society, a colonial regime articulated with a local one and maintained contact with all sectors of the administration through a colonial officer or a Resident. The Caliph’s position, then, changed and his powers were reduced.

As noted in chapter 1, during the pre-colonial period the Caliph or the Sarki Musulmi was not considered as the political and the religious leader of the Sokoto Caliphate but also as the supreme judge of the Islamic law, ‘the Sharia’. His main duties included the appointment and deposition of emirs and the enforcement of the Islamic law. From the beginning of the British reorganization of the Caliphate, however, the title given to the Caliph was “emir” to express his dependent status¹³⁵. His authority was limited over the districts of the Sokoto emirate. The British governor assumed the functions which had been performed by the Caliph.

Lugard made this very clear to the emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate in his address to the newly appointed Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammed Attihuru II on March 21, 1903¹³⁶. Thus, the British utilized for the local government not the political system of the Caliphate but the administrative system of the emirates. The empire disintegrated but the provinces or emirates were preserved in modified forms¹³⁷.

¹³⁴ - J. Illife., *op.cit.*, p. 230.

¹³⁵ - The emir was accorded a courtesy title of Sultan. This title became official in the 1930s.

¹³⁶ - See the text of the letter of appointment of M. Attihuru II in Appendix 4

¹³⁷ - J. F. A. Ajaye and M. Crowder., *op.cit.*, p. 455.

The major modifications that the British brought to the emirates included the deposition of the emir's councils. Lugard abolished them arguing that the counselors held sinecure offices at the emirate capitals as courtiers while leaving the administration of their fiefs to their slaves, who oppressed the people¹³⁸. Furthermore, the Sultan's council in Sokoto emirate was suppressed. Among the Sultan's councilors only the Waziri or the Vizier was recognized as a councilor and was allowed to continue residing in Sokoto¹³⁹.

The omission of the emir's councilors destroyed the pre-colonial administration which depended on their services. Lugard's decision deprived the emirs as well as the sultan from their counselor's advice at the time when they needed them to control the colonial situation. The emirs, therefore, became more dependent on the British Residents for advice.

It is important to note that the main objective of the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria was to undermine the authority of the native rulers and to make them more receptive to British inspired changes and innovations. In order to reach this aim, Lugard introduced a number of political reforms which affected the traditional social and economic conditions.

The Native Authorities Proclamation of 1902 brought modifications to the traditional system of succession. Although the emirs were allowed to stand at the summit of the hierarchy with district heads and village heads at the lower levels, they were not permitted to designate their successors like of old time according to their native law and custom¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁸ - D. M. Last., *The Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 122.

¹³⁹ - P. K. Tibenderana., *op.cit.*, p. 70. *Ibid.*, p. 88, he stated: "The Waziri was the Sultan's most senior councilor whose executive duties included the supervision of Magagin Gari (a ruler who acted as the de facto mayor of Sokoto town) and Magagin Rafi (an administrator who supervised the collection of taxes) were appointed district heads and ordered out of the capital to live in their respective districts".

¹⁴⁰ - J. F. A. Ajaye and M. Crowder., *op.cit.*, p. 455. It is stated that: "The Native Authorities Proclamation recognized the existing hierarchy of chiefs. Five grades of chiefs with different authorities were accepted. At the top were the most important emirs like the rulers of Sokoto, Gwandu, Bornu... At the bottom were the district heads of the politically fragmented non-Muslim communities. The right to appoint these chiefs was vested in the High-Commissioner".

In fact, in the case of important chiefs like those of Sokoto, Kano, Gwandu, Bornu, succession became subject to the approval of the Colonial Governor in order that the most capable claimant might be chosen¹⁴¹.

The Governor took the right to change the native chiefs in case of disloyalty or incompetence. However, as long as they complied with the demands of the colonial authority, they retained a privileged position within the colonial system. This means that the real rulers were the British and not the Africans. The latter did not acquire the right to choose their leaders independently but had to depend on the consent of the Colonial Governor.

The intervention of the British administration in the appointment and dismissal of native administration staff was not the only factor which weakened the strength of the traditional authorities. The British interference in the traditional system of taxation played a crucial role in undermining their power. Tax reforms were gradually introduced in order to provide enough revenue for the colonial administration. But although the emirs and the chiefs continued to collect the taxes prescribed in the traditional fiscal system, they were obliged to pay one-fourth of this revenue to the Colonial Government¹⁴².

This system of taxation was reorganized under the provisions of the Native Revenue Proclamation of 1906. The native authorities had to surrender to the protectorate administration one quarter of the total amount of revenue collected while the remaining three-fourths of the tax should be divided between a fixed amount representing their personal income and further amount representing provision for expenditure on public purposes¹⁴³. Thus, the native authorities power on taxation was gradually reduced. This became more apparent when the system of the native

¹⁴¹ - O. Collins., *op.cit.*, p. 216.

¹⁴² - R. O. Ekundare., *op.cit.*, p. 107. He stated that: "... in 1904, the colonial government passed the Northern Nigeria Land Revenue Ordinance by which the chiefs continued to collect the taxes, and they were required to pay one-fourth of this revenue to the government...".

¹⁴³ - L. Hailey., *op.cit.*, p. 454.

treasuries was established¹⁴⁴. This system deprived the traditional rulers of any say in the expenditure of the tax. It became the duty of the Resident to design the native administration's budget and to submit it to the Colonial governor at the beginning of each financial year¹⁴⁵.

Under British rule the judicial power of the traditional authorities had also been undermined. The Native courts Proclamation of 1906 introduced certain judicial limitations. Although it maintained the judicial council of the leading emirs and recognized the judges of the native courts, the Alkalis or Alkalai¹⁴⁶, the latter were allowed to administer in accordance to the customary law under the supervision of the British staff¹⁴⁷. In addition, the power to create native courts and to appoint and dismiss the Alkalai and judicial council members lay with the Resident and not the Sultan as it had been the case during the pre-colonial era¹⁴⁸.

To sum up, although the British policy had been respectful toward the traditional organization and had preserved a big part of the chiefs' powers in Northern Nigeria, the colonial administration had affected the local authorities in different ways. The Sultan and emirs became powerless and ruled in name only. They lost power over taxation, land, legislation and the appointment of chiefs. British rule was then indirect in the sense that British administrators had African assistants and not because the African leaders were the de facto heads of their people.

For further understanding of the nature and effects of the British Colonial Policy on northern Nigeria, it is worth highlighting the position of the traditional rulers

¹⁴⁴ - "The native treasuries or baitulmali were established in 1911 by the Native Revenue Ordinance. Under this system, the money was placed in a public building and systematically administered. The emir, his chiefs and other functionaries got their salaries out of it, while what remained was devoted to providing public needs in the province under the supervision of the Resident"/ Taken from J.F. A. Ajaye and M. Crowder., o.cit., p. 456.

¹⁴⁵ - P. K. Tibenderana., op.cit., p. 84.

¹⁴⁶ - P. K. Tibenderana., op.cit., p. 80. It is stated the the emirates courts except that of the emir were presided by specially trained officials, the Alkalai or Alkalis. The alkali sat with a number of clerks, the Malams, trained in the law but he was the sole judge. Under British rule the alkali was required to submit a monthly report to the Resident on the cases heard by his court.

¹⁴⁷ - F. D. Lugard., op.cit., p. 201.

¹⁴⁸ - P. K. Tibenderana., op.cit., p. 80.

in their performance of a dual role of responsibility towards the colonial regime and their people notably in Sokoto Emirate.

3-3-1. Affects of the Colonial Administration on Sokoto Emirates

It is commonly argued by historians that the British practiced in Northern Nigeria a non-interventionist indirect rule system of administration, which did not entail the introduction of drastic changes in the traditional political institutions. Indeed, it has been suggested that Lugard and his successors followed a policy of minimal interference in the process of local government, preferring to let the traditional political institutions develop along their own lines laid down or suggested by the European administration. However, traditional political institutions in the emirates were allowed to function more or less as they had during the pre-colonial period. It is usually argued that the only modification which were made to traditional political institutions were those which were intended to make their institutions more efficient. Therefore, the British administration of northern Nigeria has the reputation of indirect rule par excellence¹⁴⁹.

Under colonial rule the emirs increased their powers and retained the initiative to formulate and execute local development projects as well as effecting important local administrative decisions¹⁵⁰. It is stated that the chiefs in British West Africa lost their sovereignty with the onset of colonial rule; they nonetheless increased their powers over their subjects in their new position as dependent rulers “*because the traditional checks and balances to the exercise of their authority were neutralized by the same colonial authorities*”¹⁵¹. O. Awolowo added that under colonial rule the emirs were “*all clothed with powers and prestige far in excess of what they ever wielded or enjoyed before the advent of the British conquest*”¹⁵².

¹⁴⁹ - M. Crowder (1968), op.cit, p. 169.

¹⁵⁰ - Perham. M., Native Administration in Nigeria, (2ne ed., London: Oxford University Press., 1962), p97.

¹⁵¹ - M. Crowder & O. Ikime, West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence. (Ile-Ife: university of Ife Press., 1970), p123..

¹⁵² - O. Awolowo., Path to Nigerian Freedom., (London: Faber and Faber., 1970.), p. 59.

These claims fostered the belief that the role of the British administrator in the Muslim emirates of northern Nigeria was to advise the emir and not to become directly involved in the administration of local matters¹⁵³. Thus, Crowder¹⁵⁴ argued the a British administrator in the Muslim emirates of northern Nigeria “*had no formal executive function*” and that the primary responsibility of such an officer was that of *watchdog for the central administration: to see that the Native Authorities (NA) were running smoothly, that there were no abuses of the system, and to give “advice either where it was sought or where he considered it necessary”*. S. Abubakr¹⁵⁵ echoed this view when he wrote that during the 1920s the British were “*unwilling to interfere too much in local Government affairs... for fear of tampering with the dignity of the local rulers*”.

These arguments focused on the nature and effects of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. As the British conceived it, indirect rule was a system of colonial administration through which the traditional chiefs were regarded as an integral part of the machinery of government. They possessed well-defined powers and functions recognized by government and by law and were not dependent on the caprice of a political officer¹⁵⁶. The essential characteristic of indirect rule from the British point of view was that the tutelary power should recognize indigenous political institutions controlled by a native executive “*as real living forces, and not as curious and interesting pageantry by which European influence was brought to bear on the native indirectly...*”¹⁵⁷. Accordingly, the European official’s role in determining the orders of the Native Authority was to be genuinely limited to persuasion in all possible

¹⁵³ - M. Crowder & O. Ikime, op.cit., p46..

- O. Ikime., Groundwork of Nigerian History., (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1980), p. 473.

¹⁵⁴ - L. H. Gann and P. Duingnan, Colonization in Africa, 1870- 1960: The history and Politics of Colonialism, 1914- 1960, vol. 2., Cambridge: Cambridge university Press., 1970., pp. 339- 40.

¹⁵⁵ - O. Ikime.(1980)., op.cit., p. 473.

¹⁵⁶ - F. D. Lugard., Political Memoranda Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative, (2nd ed., London: Frank Cass and company, Ltd., 1970)., p. 296.

¹⁵⁷ - C. L. Temple., Native Races and their Rulers., (2nd ed., London: Frank Cass and company, Ltd., 1968), p. 30.

circumstances. Where it did become necessary to put pressure on the Native Authority “*the appearance of his freedom of action vis-à-vis his subjects was to be preserved*”¹⁵⁸.

The official interpretation of indirect rule, however, overlooks one cardinal point in the power relations between the emirs and the colonial administration. The emirs had no powers of their own. British authority over Northern Nigeria came from conquest and was absolute¹⁵⁹. Sir Frederick Lugard, the first governor of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1900- 1906) made this very clear to the emirs. In his address to the newly appointed Sultan of Sokoto and other Sokoto dignitaries on March 21, 1903, Lugard declared¹⁶⁰:

*“Every Sultan and emir and the principal officers of state will be appointed by the High Commissioner throughout his country. The High Commissioner will be guided by the usual laws aside if he desires for good cause to do so”*¹⁶¹.

Now, by grace and not by right, some of these powers would be returned to the emirs by delegation, to be kept according to good behavior. In fact, Lugard¹⁶² warned that the chief himself must understand that he “*has no right to his place and power unless he renders his proper services to the State*”. Needless to say, the proper services were within the competence of the governor from whom the emirs derived their decision-making power.

Hence whatever powers the emirs had, they could only be exercised at the pleasure of the governor. It is also assumed that the “*Sole Native Authority*” system, whereby the British recognized the emirs but not their councils, turned them into

¹⁵⁸ - L. P. Mair., *Native Policies in Africa*. (London: G. Routledge., 1936), p. 123.

¹⁵⁹ - R. Heussler., *The British in northern Nigeria*, (London: Oxford University Press., 1968), p. 29.

¹⁶⁰ - A. H. M. Kirk-Greene., *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: selected Documents 1900- 1947*. (London: Oxford University Press., 1965)., p. 43.

¹⁶¹ - P. K. Tibenderana, “The role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of northern Nigeria, 1903- 1931: The Case of Sokoto Province”, *Journal of African History*, 28 (Great Britain, 1987), pp. 231- 237.

¹⁶² - F. D. Lugard., *Political Memoranda Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative.*, op.cit., p. 298.

autocratic ruler”s. B.J. Dudley tells us, for instance, that in the nineteenth century the emirs were never complete autocrats” *but under the British adoption of the Sole Native Authority having powers to override their councilors tended to turn the emirs into the “autocrats they later became”*.¹⁶³

Before examining the claim of Dudley and others, it is pertinent to assess how colonial rule reduced the Sultan’s power. Prior to the imposition of colonial rule, the Sarkin Musulmi was the political head of the Sokoto Caliphate, the religious leader of the community, and the supreme judge of the Islamic law (shari’a). His duties included the appointment and deposition of emirs and the enforcement of the shari’a. Although there was a large body of legislation in the form of God’s own ordinances, the Sarkin Musulmi exercised discretionary powers of legislation to supplement the divine law.

The fall of Sokoto to British forces on March 15, 1903, marked the end of the Caliphal era. The newly installed Muhammad Attahiru II (1903- 1915) was not designated Caliph but emir to signify his dependent status. He ceased to have anything to do with the emirates and their emirs. His authority was confined to the districts of the Caliphates metropolis, i.e., Sokoto emirate. The British Governor assumed the functions hitherto performed by the Sarkin Musulmi. The dismemberment of the Caliphate was largely dictated by Lugard’s fears that Sarkin Musulmi’s retention of his power over the emirs would attenuate their loyalty to the governor since they would continue to owe allegiance to their religious leader. Although the British were prepared to utilize the administrative system of the emirate, they were not prepared to tolerate the political system of the Caliphate. Hence, while the Caliphate disintegrated the emirates were preserved in considerably modified forms.

The destruction of the Caliph’s power over the emirates left the Muslims of Northern Nigeria leaderless. This put the British in a much stronger position to effect the changes necessary to bring about greater colonial control. Although the Sultan continued to bear the courtesy title of Sarkin Musulmi, he had no means to mobilize

¹⁶³ - F. D. Lugard., op.cit, p 298.

Muslim public opinion against the British administration. The claim that the Sole Native Authority System turned the emirs into autocratic rulers by increasing their powers vis-à-vis the councils is false.

This system did not recognize the sultan's council and it did not allow the sultan to exercise more power than the pre-colonial Caliph. For instance, although the Caliph had an advisory council he was under neither religious nor political obligation to consult it or to accept its advice unless it reflected his own views. Under the Islamic concept of state and leadership, he alone was responsible to God for the governance of the Muslim community¹⁶⁴.

The Caliph's Muslim councilors knew this and could not have challenged the caliph's prerogative to govern the community according to his own dictates, even if this was contrary to their advice. It was no uncommon for emirs to act contrary to the advice of their councils without causing a political storm. For instance, in 1875 the emir of Gwandu, Hanufi (1875- 1876), set aside Maliki as the choice of his council for the post of heir apparent (dangaladima), and instead appointed a man of his choice, Abdulkadir¹⁶⁵.

Similarly, there was nothing in the traditions of Sokoto, which prevented the Caliph from ignoring the advice of his council, if he chose to do so in the interests of community welfare. The position of the councilors vis-à-vis the Caliph was further weakened, because they were subject to dismissal if they failed to perform their duties to the Caliph's satisfaction¹⁶⁶. This ruled out any intransigence on the part of the councilors. They had to be obsequious to retain their posts. Therefore, it is erroneous for one to suggest that the Native Authority System conferred on the Sultan more powers than the pre-colonial caliph exercised and by suggesting that during the pre-

¹⁶⁴ - P. K. Tibenderana., "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946"., (Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1974), pp. 39- 73.

¹⁶⁵ - S. A. Balogun, "Gwandu Emirates in the nineteenth Century with special Reference to Political Relations, 1817- 1903", (Ph. D. thesis, University of Ibadan., 1972), p. 255.

¹⁶⁶ - P. K. Tibenderana., "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946", op.cit., pp. 66- 73.

colonial period the caliph's power were circumscribed by his advisory council. The caliph was absolute sovereign outside the dictates of the shari'a.

The Native Authority Ordinance of 1916, which recognized the emirs as Sole Native Authorities, did not accord them more power than the pre-colonial emirs enjoyed¹⁶⁷. To the contrary, this ordinance seriously weakened the emirs' powers. For instance, according to section ten of the ordinance, a British administrative officer was empowered to direct the Native Authority in his area of jurisdiction to issue orders which he deemed necessary for the proper administration of the area and good government. The same section also empowered an administrative officer to direct a Native Authority to cancel an order which he had reason to believe should not have been issued. Section thirteen stipulated a fine of £50 for any Native Authority who willfully failed either to issue or cancel an order as directed by a British administrative officer or failed to exercise the powers conferred on him by the ordinance¹⁶⁸. The Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 turned the emirs into puppets who could not make administrative decisions without instructions from the British.

The period between 1903 and 1924, during which the sultan's council was in disuse, marked the nadir of the sultan's authority in the colonial history of Sokoto. On the inception of British rule in northern Nigeria, Lugard abolished the emir's councils, arguing that the councilors held sinecure offices at the emirate capitals as courtiers while leaving the administration of their fiefs to their slaves, who "oppressed the people". From what is not known about the pre-colonial emirate government, none of the emirs were surrounded with sinecure officials¹⁶⁹. Lugard refused to recognize the councils which forced the emirs to become dependent on the British for advice. Thus,

¹⁶⁷ - J. F. A. Ajayi., and B. Ikara , Evolution of political Culture in Nigeria. (Ibadan: University Press Limited., 1985)., pp 134- 40.

¹⁶⁸ - Nigeria, The law of Nigeria, (ed. D. Kingdom., Lagos: Government Printers., 1923)., pp. 801-806.

¹⁶⁹ - D. M. Last. The Sokoto Caliphate, (London: Longman., 1967), p48

Also H.A.S. Johnston., The Fulani Empire of Sokoto., (London: Oxford University Press., 1967), p79

S. A. Balogun, Gwandu Emirates in the nineteenth Century., op.cit.p127

R. A. Adeleye., Power and diplomacy in Northern Nigeria, 1804- 1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its Enemies, (London: Longman., 1971), p76.

local opposition against Britain- inspired changes in the emirate administration was minimized¹⁷⁰.

Of the sultan's councilors only the waziri, whose duties were regarded by the British as administratively productive, was recognized as a councilor and allowed to continue residing at Sokoto. The remainder of the councilors were appointed district heads and ordered out of the capital to live in their respective districts.

Lugard's decision to expel the Sultan's councilors from the capital destroyed the pre-colonial machinery, which depended on the services of the councilors for its success. Hence, the non-recognition of the sultan's council weakened Sultan Attahiru's position with the British. It deprived him from his councilors' advice at a time, when he most needed it to make adjustments to the colonial situation. Consequently, Attahiru was far from more dependent on the British for advice. The situation was worsened by the fact that Attahiru was an old man, timid, different, and with little education. He was also ignorant about the needs and requirements of the colonial regime. The fact that Attahiru had no council made him realize that whatever went wrong in the administration of his emirate would be blamed on him personally. To insulate himself from such charges, especially in light of the uncertainty of his tenure of office, Attahiru was lethargic toward the administrative affairs of his emirate. He deemed it safer to leave the running of his emirate to the British and their hand-picked local allies.

It was noted, for instance, that during Waziri Bukhari's tenure of office (1903-1910), it was enough for Attahiru to study the general principles, leaving the details to the waziri who, according to Resident E. J. Arnett, "*was in fact the ruler of the state*"¹⁷¹. Waziri Bukhari exercised this authority at the expense of the sultan. After Bukhari's death in 1910, Attahiru left the administrative affairs to his emirate to the British and two of his officials, the majidadi, Usman, and the sintali, Saidu. Waziri

¹⁷⁰ - C. N. Ubah., "Administration of Kano Emirates under the British, 1900- 1930", (Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan).p.88.

¹⁷¹ - Nigerian National Archives Kaduna [hereafter NNAK], Sokprof 3/27/S.2916/491; Arnett to Secretary Northern Provinces [hereafter SNP] July 29, 1918.

Ambo, who succeeded Bukhari, lacked the administrative ability and was disliked by Resident Arnett who regarded him as “an imbecile and not fit to hold the viziership”. In fact, Usman and Saidu succeeded in making Ambo ineffective to the extent that in 1912, the year he resigned, the resident described him as a “mere figure-head and of no account in the direction of the state”¹⁷². Usman and Saidu continued to play a dominant role in the administrative affairs of Sokoto until the 1920s. They were so powerful that in 1921 they attempted to unseat Attahiru’s successor, Muhammad Maiturare (1915- 1924), for endeavoring to regain control of his emirate¹⁷³. However, to Maiturare’s relief the two men were dismissed in 1922 on the orders of governor Sir Hugh Clifford, to whom Maiturare had complained about their insidious attempts to overthrow him¹⁷⁴. This strengthened the Sultan’s hand in running of the Sokoto Native Administration¹⁷⁵. However, Maiturare died before he could regain full power from the men placed by Usman and Saidu.

It was left to Muhammad Tambari (1924- 1931), son and successor to Maiturare, to complete the task of restoring the Sultan’s authority with the NA officials. Tambari was equal to the task. He was a man of strong character, energetic, doughty, obdurate, and audacious. He fought precariously to ensure that the British considered his ideas in the administration of his emirates. His accession to the emirship brought to the scene a sultan, who was determined and eager to exercise his authority within the limits of the colonial situation.

Unfortunately for Tambari his elevation to the emirship coincided with the implementation of the British administration’s policy to restore the emir’s councils. The functions of the Native Administration (NAs) expanded as a result of the government’s increased activity in the economy and social services. By the late 1920s,

¹⁷² - NNAK, Sokprof 3/37, Arnett to Governor, July 29, 1912.

¹⁷³ - P. K. Tibenderana., “The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946”., op.cit., pp. 307- 19.

¹⁷⁴ - P. K. Tibenderana., “The Making and Unmaking of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Tambari, 1922- 1931”., *Journal of the historical society of Nigeria* vol9/n1., (1977)., p. 95.

¹⁷⁵ - :Native Administration” (NA) refers to those administrative and/or financial units with a definite identity and with functions essential to the working of the whole system. This definition is adopted from Kirk-Greene., op.cit., p. 30.

the British realized the necessity of giving the emirs executive councils to assist them in the administration of their emirates. Accordingly, the sultan's council was restored in 1925. Sultan Tambari preferred to run his emirate single-handedly, however, and ignored the council. In 1928 the sultan's council was reconstituted into an executive council with each councilor assigned a portfolio. The sultan became the chief coordinator of the councilor's activities. With the reorganization of his council, Tambari had no choice but to delegate some of his prerogative powers and functions to the councilors. This earned him British praise. For instance, in 1929 the resident described him as a "good judge of men", noting that since the reorganization of his council he had "run an efficient administration"¹⁷⁶. Thus, until his deposition in 1931, Tambari continued to adhere to the spirit of power-sharing with the councilors.

Although Tambari delegated some of his prerogative powers to the councilors, he continued to pay detailed attention to his councilors' activities. He remained in complete control of the administrative affairs of Sokoto. Tambari was prodded into this action in 1928 by the British blunder of imposing upon him as his waziri, Abbas, a man whom he regarded as his implacable enemy. This destroyed the spirit of cordial cooperation between the sultan and the council. Tambari supervised the councilors' administrative activities very closely to ensure that those among them who were close associates of Waziri Abbas did not sabotage his administration and ruin his reign. This action made Tambari the most effective sultan during the colonial period.

Many of the gains made in the restoration of the sultan's powers with the council during Tambari's reign were lost during Hassan's reign (1931- 1938). Hassan was a man of spineless character, too scrupulous and impressionable. He would, therefore, not have stubbornly insisted on exercising the sultan's powers as conceived by his immediate predecessor. Rather, he allowed himself to be dominated by Waziri Abbas (1928- 1948), who became the de facto ruler of the emirate"¹⁷⁷. This fact is hardly surprising. Abbas was a man of strong character, ingenious, ambitious, and well-educated in Islamic sciences. He was also instrumental in the election of Hassan to the

¹⁷⁶ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14, Backwell to SNP n.d.

¹⁷⁷ - Interview with Mr. J. H. Carrow, the former resident of Sokoto, 1933- 1942, Weymouth, September 23, 1971.

emirship¹⁷⁸. Because of this, Abbas usurped the sultan's powers and functions while Hassan looked on innocently.

Hassan was not totally without influence over the affairs of his emirate. His amiable personality caused the British to like him and thus to readily accept his ideas on the administration of his emirate in the few occasions he chose to express them¹⁷⁹. Abbas, until his death in 1948, occupied the position of unimpaired authority in the local affairs of Sokoto NA.

The Sole Native Administration System was abandoned in 1952 and replaced by the chief-in-council system. From the early 1930s onward, the emirs were under the British administrator's instructions not to make any important decisions in administrative matters without consulting their councils. Those who failed to abide by these rules were usually reprimanded and ordered to comply¹⁸⁰.

It is important to note that even before the Sole Native administration was rescinded, the position of the sultan with his council was seriously weakened by his powerlessness to appoint and discipline its members. This power lay instead with the British. The councilors were not the sultan's agents. Rather, they were officials with a status and authority that challenged the position of the sultan. The sultan did not enjoy special legal status with regard to his conditions of service over his councilors. They all derived their power from the British. In every case, unfailing loyalty to the British administration was a *sine qua non* for retention of office. Consequently, the councilors owed their allegiance not to the sultan but the British. This seriously curtailed the sultan's influence over the council; whenever the councilors were faced with the choice of either obeying the British or the sultan, they always obeyed the former¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁸ - . K. Tibenderana, "The role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of northern Nigeria, 1903- 1931: The Case of Sokoto Province", op.cit,p76

¹⁷⁹ - Interview with Carrow, Weymouth, September 23, 1971.

¹⁸⁰ - Interview with Sir Bryan Sharwood-smith, the former governor of Northern Nigeria, 1952- 1957, Bexhill-on-Sea, August 3, 1971.

¹⁸¹ - P. K. Tibenderana., "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946"., op.cit., pp. 307- 19.

Clearly, the adoption of the Sole Native administration System did not bestow more power on the sultan than the caliph enjoyed during the nineteenth century. Rather, this system coupled with other British-inspired administrative changes of Sokoto NA lessened the sultan's powers. With the restoration of the council in 1925, the sultan became the intermediary with other councilors and ceased to be its dominating force.

The diminished authority of the sultan is not surprising. It was the general policy of British empire-builders in Africa to weaken the authority of traditional rulers to achieve colonial control¹⁸². For example, the terms of the Anglo-Buganda Agreement of 1900 transferred most of the Kabaka's powers and functions to his ministers and council (Lukiko), which left the kabaka as a figure-head. This arrangement was salubrious to the colonial regime in Buganda because it allowed the British to control their appointees, i.e. the members of the lukiiko. The kabaka derived his power from Kiganda traditions which he could provoke to defy British authority. A similar situation existed in the Benin kingdom where the oba's main functions and powers were transferred to his council by the British, which then left him a mere figurehead¹⁸³.

There were a few exceptional cases, which do not include any of the major emirates, where the adoption of the Sole Native Administration System increased the powers of the local rulers vis-à-vis other traditional political institutions. For instance, in Oyo the king (Alafin) under colonial rule acquired more power and functions at the expense of the council (Oyo mesi)¹⁸⁴. The king of Ijebuland (Awujale) also wielded more power than was due to him traditionally¹⁸⁵. It must be realized, however, that the alaaфин and the Awujale did not gain their power by the adoption of the Sole Native

¹⁸² - M. Crowder & O. Ikime, West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence. op.cit., pp. 272- 85;

- D. A. Low. And R. C. Pratt., Buganda and British Overrule, 1900- 1955. (London: Oxford University Press., 1960),p44.

¹⁸³ - P. A. Igbafe., Benin Under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule on an African Kingdom, 1897- 1938., (London: Longman., 1979), pp. 156- 66.

¹⁸⁴ - J. A. Atanda., The New Oyo Empire, op.cit., p. 211.

¹⁸⁵ - Crowder and Ikime., op.cit., pp. 239.

Administration System per se but rather as a result of deliberate misinterpretation of this system by British administrative officers¹⁸⁶.

Furthermore, one of the main reasons why successive sultans under colonial rule failed to perform their duties was that they were powerless to appoint and discipline NA staff. Although under the provisions of the Native Authority Ordinance of 1916, a Native Authority (emir) was empowered to employ any person to assist him in carrying out the duties imposed upon him by the ordinance, the power to appoint employees of the NAs lay with the British. In fact, it was explicitly stated in the emir's letters of appointment that they could not appoint the "principal chiefs and their deputies". This power was in the hands of the governor¹⁸⁷. This platitudinous declaration sapped the courage from the emirs to challenge British authority over the appointment of NA staff. To do so would have meant a breach of the conditions of service which would lead to depositions. Thus, there was little friction between the Sultan and the British over the appointment of the NA staff despite the latter's highhandedness in the matter.

The bureaucracy of the Sokoto NA consisted to hereditary officials and officials appointed on the basis of personal achievement, especially in Western education. The senior cadre territorial chiefs, including members of the sultan's council, held hereditary titles. This did not, however, curtail the colonial regime's right to appoint chiefs of its own choice. Succession to hereditary titles in Sokoto was not strictly by the principle of primogeniture. In every case, all male descendents of the first title holder were legitimate heirs of that title. The result was that there were always several legitimate contenders for any vacant title. Accordingly, the British exercised equal freedom in appointing NA employees to hereditary titles and non-hereditary titles.

Until Tambari's reign (1924-1931), no sultan had challenged the British administration's authority to appoint and dismiss NA staff. During the reigns of Attahiru and Maiturare, the British appointed NA staff at will. Indeed, during this

¹⁸⁶ -J. A. Atanda., op.cit., pp. 156 ; Crowder & Ikime., op.cit., pp. 246.

¹⁸⁷ - Rhodes house Library, Oxford, MSS. Brit. Emp.S. 77, "Sultan Attahiru's Letter of Appointment", March 22, 1903, by Lugard.

period district heads well-known to be disloyal to the sultan, but who enjoyed the support the British, retained their offices against the wishes of the sultan. On other hand, those who were loyal to the sultan, but showed a lukewarm attitude to British rule were dismissed¹⁸⁸. The British increased the effectiveness of their rule, or so they thought, by rewarding loyal chiefs and dismissing the disloyal ones. In 1907 C.L. Temple, the resident of Sokoto, allowed the district head to Tambawel, Shefu, to retain his office after trying and finding him guilty of several serious offenses. Temple explained his decision to the governor by stating that he was influenced by Shefu's "genuine and through loyalty to the Government"¹⁸⁹.

In 1911, the district head of Kaura Namoda was dismissed on the orders of the resident, ostensibly for being disloyal to the sultan but in actuality for being uncooperative with the district officer¹⁹⁰. However, it took Maiturare from 1916 until 1922 to convince the governor to depose the Majidadi. Indeed, in finally accepting Maiturare's request the governor remarked that "of late the Majidadi instead of being the power behind the throne he had become something very like the throne itself"¹⁹¹.

The fact that Maiturare could not alone dismiss a messenger like the majidadi indicates the powerlessness of the sultan in the management of the NA bureaucracy. Until the governor came to Maiturare's aid the resident had ignored Maiturare's incessant pleas to dismiss the majidadi. From 1903 to 1924, in fact, the main objective of the British administration was to undermine the authority of the sultan and to make him more receptive to British-inspired changes and innovations. The British appointed men of a "strong character", who could not be "in the pocket of the sultan" to positions of authority. Interestingly, this policy was not limited to Sokoto but was also exercised in other emirates¹⁹².

¹⁸⁸ - . K. Tibenderana., "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946".,op.cit., pp. 216.

¹⁸⁹ - NNAK, Sokprof 2/9, "Sokoto Provincial Report N°34 for quarter ending June 30, 1907", by Temple, n.d.

¹⁹⁰ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/27, "Sokoto Provincial Annual Report for 1911", by McAllister, n.d..

¹⁹¹ - Co583/118, Clifford to CO., March 16, 1922.

¹⁹² - M. A, Tukur., "The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno and Neighboring States, 1897- 1914", (Ph.D. thesis, Ahumadu Bello University., 1979)., pp. 413- 415.

The divergence of interests between the sultan and the British over the appointment and dismissal of NA staff was largely caused by the fact that while the former was mainly interested in the personnel who could uphold the Islamic traditions, the latter were merely interested in loyal chiefs who could contribute positively to the security of British rule regardless of whether they were upright Muslims or not.

Sultan Tambari's accession to the emirship in 1924, however, brought about a slight change in the attitude of the British administration. Tambari was appointed in the face of vehement opposition from the majority of the Sokoto nobility¹⁹³. The British zealously supported Tambari's candidacy because they regarded him as an asset in their fight against Mahdism¹⁹⁴ which they viewed as a threat to the security of their rule in Northern Nigeria¹⁹⁵. In turn, this ardent British support, which alone made Tambari's appointment possible, predisposed the nobility to be hostile to his reign.

Not surprisingly Tambara found it very difficult to gain the confidence and loyalty of some of his officials including Waziri Machido, who had opposed his appointment¹⁹⁶. In June 1925, the resident of Sokoto, C. A. Woodhouse observed that Tambari found his position rendered somewhat difficult by the attitude of the opposing parties¹⁹⁷. The British willingly assisted Tambari by appointing his loyalists and by deposing his political enemies. Thus, Tambari established his hold on the Sokoto people and became an effective tool of the British administration in its crusade against Mahdism. Tambari knew that the British regarded him as their only credible ally (interview with Adiya, sultan Tambari's second eldest son, Sokoto, August 9, 1975) and he thus tried to exploit this situation to enhance the political fortunes of his family.

¹⁹³ - P. K. Tibenderana., "The Making and Unmaking of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Tambari, 1922- 1931", op.cit., pp. 91- 110.

¹⁹⁴ - Mahdism was a fanatical and anti-European doctrine exploited by local Muslim reformists or Arab nationalist demagogues to foment troubles for colonial regimes in Muslim dominated territories like Northern Nigeria in the name of Pan-Islamism. C. N. Ubah., "British Measures against Mahdism in Northern Nigeria 1928, a Case of Colonial Overreaction", *Islamic Culture*, L, 3, (1976), pp. 169- 83.

¹⁹⁵ - P. K. Tibenderana., , "The role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of northern Nigeria, 1903- 1931: The Case of Sokoto Province", op.cit.p185.

¹⁹⁶ - P. K. Tibenderana., "The Making and Unmaking of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Tambari, 1922- 1931", op.cit., pp. 91- 110.

¹⁹⁷ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.126 Resident to SNP, June 21, 1925.

Soon after his appointment Tambari, thus, launched a bitter campaign against the chiefs, whose loyalty he doubted, including Waziri Machido, with the objective of having them dismissed from office. In September 1925, at Tambari's request, Waziri Machido resigned. This was in spite of the fact that the resident regarded Machido as a "genius who had performed his duties beyond reproach"¹⁹⁸. The British, however, sympathized with Tambari, realizing Machido's disloyalty¹⁹⁹. Apart from Machido the sultan persuaded the resident to sanction the dismissal of other NA officials including the magajin gari, Usman; the chief judge of the Muslim courts (grand alkali), Samaila; and the majidadi, Usman. Tambari's loyalists replaced them.

Tambari chose Abdulkadir to succeed Machido instead of Machido's brother, Abbas, who was preferred by the British. Resident C. W. Alexander thought that Abdulkadir lacked the ability to perform the duties of the waziri, "being a very old man of little education". Tambari persisted in stating Abdulkadir's ability to be a successful waziri, and Alexander convinced the lieutenant governor to postpone the appointment²⁰⁰. After a three-month deadlock, during which Tambari remained adamant, Alexander requested Lt. Governor Palmer to approve Abdulkadir's appointment as the new waziri. He noted with a sense of frustration that, although he would personally have preferred to see Abbas appointed to waziriship, it was "unless to attempt to force on the Sultan a man he does not want"²⁰¹. Instead of approving Abdulkadir's appointment on a permanent basis, Lt. Governor Palmer appointed him on one-year's probation so that "*the British see whether he will be able to discharge the duties of the Waziri properly or not*"²⁰².

Abdulkadir's appointment, although temporary, was a significant victory for Tambari not so much because of his high office but because of his audacity to stand by his decision. The British administration's desire to assist Tambari to establish his authority in the face of continued opposition from sullen councilors also contributed to

¹⁹⁸ - NNAK, SNP9/12, "Sokoto Provincial Annual Report, 1924", by Webster, February 17, 1925.

¹⁹⁹ - . K. Tibenderana., "The Making and Unmaking of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Tambari, 1922- 1931"., op.cit., pp. 91- 110.

²⁰⁰ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/27/1925/4, Alexander to SNP, October 1, 1925.

²⁰¹ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/27/1925/7, Alexander to SNP, November 30, 1925.

²⁰² - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14, Palmet to Governor, December 16, 1925.

his success. Unfortunately for Tambari, however, his victory was short-lived. In September 1929 the acting resident of Sokoto, H. O. Lindsell, raised the question of Abdulkadir's confirmation as the waziri. Lindsell informed the Lieutenant Governor that there was nothing on record to show that Abdulkadir's appointment had been confirmed. Abdulkadir's lack of administrative acumen encouraged Lindsell to pursue this issue. He observed, for instance, that Abdulkadir remained what he was in 1925, a "worthy old man of little education and not fitted to uphold the dignity of the vizierate of Sokoto". He therefore strongly urged the Lieutenant Governor to appoint a "more energetic Waziri"²⁰³. Lieutenant Governor Palmer concurred. Accordingly, in late September, he asked the substantive resident of Sokoto, H. F. Backwell, to badger Tamburi into dismissing Abdulkadir and replacing him with a "real Waziri"²⁰⁴.

Backwell, who also despised Abdulkadir, carried out the lieutenant governor's order solicitously. In early October, he proudly reported to Palmer that Tambari had agreed to dismiss Abdulkadir and to replace him with Abbas. Backwell asserted that Tambari had been made to realize that Abdulkadir was unfit for the waziriship²⁰⁵. Palmer zealously sanctioned Abdulkadir's dismissal and Abbas' appointment as his successor.

Backwell's assertion that Tambari agreed to Abdulkadir's dismissal and Abbas' appointment is untrue. The fact is that Tambari was hustled into accepting Abdulkadir's dismissal and Abbas' appointment by Backwell's revelation that the orders emanated from Palmer who was long regarded as Tambari's "good friend". He was also told that the British had made up their mind to appoint Abbas as the new waziri whether he supported him or not.

Under these circumstances, and to retain his job, Tambari acquiesced in the British decision to elevate Abbas to the waziriship. Tambari's tenure of office depended on his readiness to obey the orders of the governor as stated in his letter of appointment:

²⁰³ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/32/28/3, Lindsell to SNP, September 13, 1928.

²⁰⁴ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/32/28/4, SNP to Backwelle, September 20, 1928.

²⁰⁵ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/32/28, Backwell to SNP, October 6, 1928.

“Ignoring the emir in matters of appointment and dismissal of NA staff, was out of the question... on grounds of policy... nor can we accept assertion that the Native Authority controlled the appointment and dismissal of its officials, with the British having only confirmatory powers.”²⁰⁶

Abdulkadir’s dismissal, despite Tambari’s ardent support for him, demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the powers lay with the British and not with the Native Authority. It cannot be denied, however, that the emirs who were favored by the British administration were influential in the appointment and dismissal of their staff. Nonetheless, this was influence and not power. If by power, it is meant the ability to take decisions independently without fear of retribution.

Perhaps, the British decision to impose Abbas on Tambari as his waziri resulted from their belief that he had sufficiently consolidated his authority over his people to suppress any turbulence, which might erupt from Abbas’ appointment.. This optimism was presumptuous, however. Tambari’s initial opposition to this appointment sullied the credibility of his administration among the Sokoto nobility and Muslim scholars, who held Abbas in high esteem because of his scholarship in Islamic sciences. The protracted scuffle between Tambari and the resident over the Abbas appointment left the former’s image among the nobility at its lowest point. Indeed, the episode left many well-intentioned subjects of the sultan disgruntled and embittered²⁰⁷. Despite British efforts to reconcile Tambari and Abbas, the two men remained resentful of each other. Abbas’ appointment so infuriated Tambari that Tambari seized the earliest opportunity to undermine Abbas’ supporters so that he could not position himself to challenge the sultan’s authority.

Soon after his appointment, Tambari instigated the removal of two key Abbas’ supporters from the council. These were the magajin rafi, Abubakr, and the galadima, rufai, whom Tambari accused of disloyalty. Commenting on this incident, Backwelle,

²⁰⁶ NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14, Palmet to Governor, December 16, 1925.

²⁰⁷ NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/32/28, Backwell to SNP, October 6, 1928.

who sanctioned the removal, observed that the magajin rafi was removed because “he and his entire family were opponents of Atiku’s dynasty”, while the galadima was removed because of his “involvement in several intrigues against the Sultan”²⁰⁸.

Abbas, however, must share part of the blame for some of Tambari’s political moves against his supporters. Upon his appointment, Abbas and his supporters embarked on a vicious campaign to discredit and undermine Tambari’s authority. Tradition demanded that Abbas cooperate with the sultan and serve him faithfully. However, Abbas’ strategy proved effective. Tambari openly exposed his antagonism toward the politically important families in his pursuit of Abbas’ supporters and angered the upper echelons of the Sokoto society.

Not surprisingly, by the end of 1930, the campaign launched against Tambari by his political enemies had discredited him so much that in January 1931 the British deposed him. According to the lieutenant governor; the deposition was allegedly for having “earned the odium of all sections of the community by disgracing the Sultan’s position of leader of the Moslem faith”²⁰⁹. Tambari was deposed, however, not because he had alienated all classes of his people, but because the British administrators accepted the assertions of his political enemies²¹⁰.

The lesson learned from Tambari’s deposition is that the British, by elevating Abbas to the waziriship, destroyed the prerequisite for a successful reign and a harmonious relationship between the sultan and his waziri. That an astute sultan like Tambari could not cause the dismissal of his waziri, who was openly working for his deposition, is further proof that the sultan had no power to discipline the NA staff except with the concurrence of the British administration. This situation contrasted sharply with the pre-colonial situation when the caliph was the only source of authority²¹¹.

²⁰⁸ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.14/32/28, Backwell to SNP, October 6, 1928.

²⁰⁹ - Nigerian National Archives Ibadan, [hereafter NNAI], CSO26/2/13139, Alexander to Cameron, January 16, 1931.

²¹⁰ - P. K. Tibenderana., “The Making and Unmaking of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Tambari, 1922- 1931”, op.cit., pp. 110- 34.

²¹¹ - D. M. Last., op.cit., p99- and; P. K. Tibenderana., “The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946”, op.cit., p.70.

It is surprising that the British deposed one of their favorite emirs so readily. However, Tambari was specifically appointed to extirpate Mahdism from the Nigerian political scene. By 1930, Mahdism no longer posed a threat to the security of British rule in Northern Nigeria²¹². It was for this reason, and the fact that in early 1930 Tambari's fervent supporter, Lt. Governor Palmer, left Nigeria, that the British administration decided to side with Abbas and not the sultan.

The humiliation suffered by Tambari to stop Abbas' appointment, and his subsequent deposition made British authority over the appointment of NA staff more sanctimonious. None of Tambari's successors, Hassan (1931- 1938) and Abubakar III (1938-), wished to suffer the same fate. Throughout the period 1931- 1944, neither Hassan nor Abubakar ever seriously attempted to challenge British authority over NA staff appointments. They both lionized the resident in these matters²¹³.

To recap, the intervention of the British administration in the appointment and dismissal of NA staff, especially at the district level, seriously undermined the sultan's authority to protect his subject's rights against the avaricious activities of corrupt and oppressive chiefs. The NA staff knew that as long as they were loyal to the British administration, their tenure of office was secure. Extortion and oppression of the commoners occurred, during the 1920s and 1930s, at the hands of territorial chiefs²¹⁴. Unlike the sultan, who was required by the tenets of Islam to protect the peoples' welfare, the British were prone to tolerate oppressive chiefs in office as long as such chiefs were deemed thoroughly loyal to the colonial regime. The source of the sultan's authority was also no longer Islam but the British, which meant that the sultan could no longer command absolute loyalty of NA officials or the support of his subjects. This point was driven home by the sultan's inability to stop the British from vitiating the Muslim society.

²¹²- M. A. AlHajj, "Mahdist Tradition in northern Nigeria", (Ph.D.thesis, Ahmadu Bello University,1973), pp. 193- 218.

²¹³ - D.M Last, *op.cit*, p102.

²¹⁴ - P K Tibenderana., "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946, *op.cit.*, pp. 359- 68.

Contrary to the theories of indirect rule, British administration of Northern Nigeria introduced changes, especially in the judicial systems, which were injurious to the Islamic way of life. Not surprisingly, many people lost respect for the sultan and other emirs, who were regarded as collaborators of failing to abate obnoxious British policies. In the context of the Fulani-Hausa society veneration is another word for obedience in the title-holders (masu sarauta) and talakawa (commoners) relations. Talakawa obedience to the emirs diminished as the latter's prestige waned²¹⁵. Perhaps nowhere else was this more pronounced than in the Sokoto's Emirate.

Before the advent of colonial rule, in fact, Sokoto was a Muslim state where the rule of the shari'a reigned supreme²¹⁶. Under Islamic law the caliph holds all power of jurisdiction and has absolute authority to deal with litigations²¹⁷. He is at liberty outside the penalties fixed for certain offenses in the Qur'an (hudud singular had) to determine what conduct constitutes an offense and what punishment is to be applied in each case²¹⁸. Thus, although the caliph delegated some of his judicial powers to trained Muslim judges (alkalis) and district heads, he nonetheless continued to exercise effective control over the administration of justice in the caliphate. He was the final arbiter in all litigations. With the advent of British rule, the people of Sokoto expected the sultan to continue to play the role of the final arbiter and to safeguard the tenets of Islam. Unfortunately for them, the Native Courts Proclamation of 1906 and its successor, the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914, stripped the sultan of judicial power.

²¹⁵ - The caliph, like his emirs, was not a divine ruler. He derived his power from Islam. Accordingly his subjects' obedience to him depended on his success in upholding the tenets of Islam. Thus, if he apostatized, he would lose his subjects' loyalty and obedience. The fact that the sultan under colonial rule could not successfully protect Islam against the encroachment of British colonialism attenuated his subjects' loyalty and veneration for him. Many of them regarded him as a collaborator with the colonial regime unworthy of their respect. Hence, the more the British interfered with Islam the more the sultan's popularity among his subjects dwindled. N. J. Coulson., Islamic survey: A History of Islamic Law., (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press., 1964)., p. 130.

²¹⁶ - Unlike the emirs of Kano, Daura, Katsina, Zaria, and many other who together with their functionaries oppressed their subjects and failed to administer their territories in strict observance of the shari'a, the caliph made pertinacious efforts to administer the Sokoto emirate in strict observance of the shari'a .Ibid.p136.

²¹⁷ - M. Khadduri and H. J. Liebensy, Law in the Middle East., vol.1.(Washington: Middle East Institute., 1965)., p. 236.

²¹⁸ - N. J. Coulson., op.cit., p. 132.

Under the provisions of these ordinances, the power to create native courts and to appoint the alkalis and judicial council members lay with the resident and not with the sultan. Although the native courts were to administer the shari'a and customary law, they were forbidden to impose on offenders any punishment, which was repugnant to natural justice and humanity as understood by the British.. The resident was also empowered to suspend, reduce, or otherwise modify any sentence or decision of a native court; or order a retrial before the same court or another court in the province. The resident was also empowered to judicial policy. According to the British, the essence of the colonial judicial system was to ensure that there was justice from bribery, open to all, and based on the British principles of humanity²¹⁹.

Although the sultan was appointed the president of the Sokoto judicial council, he had no authority over the laws administered by the native courts. Nor did he have authority over the alkali's courts. In fact, the sultan, along with other emirs, was warned that if he interfered with the alkali's courts work, he would be "severely punished"²²⁰. This warning made a mockery of the shari'a under which the sultan, as a Muslim ruler, was personally responsible for the administration of justice. The sultan, like any other member of the judicial council, was subject to dismissal if he failed to support the judicial innovations introduced by the British²²¹. In light of this warning, either the sultan had to approve colonial judicial innovations, or risk deposition. This was not an easy choice. Every incumbent sultan knew that if he did not support British judicial policy, they would easily find someone else who would embrace it²²².

Furthermore, the British introduced judicial changes which affected the Islamic way of life and the administration of justice in general. For instance, they abolished the canon-cal alms required of all Muslims (zakat)²²³. Although Sultan Attahiru protested,

²¹⁹ - Nigeria., The laws of Nigeria. (ed. D. Kingdom., Lagos: Government Printers., 1923), pp. 436.

²²⁰ - . D. Lugard., Political Memoranda Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative, op.cit., p. 181.

²²¹ - Nigeria., The laws of Nigeria., op.cit., p. 438.

²²² - - P. K. Tibenderana, "The role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of northern Nigeria, 1903- 1931: The Case of Sokoto Province", op.cit.p145.

²²³ -A, Y. Ali., "The holy Qur'an Text, Translation and commentary". The Muslim Students' Association of United States and Canada., 1975, pp. 48, 69, 112, 231.

arguing that the abolition of zakat was direct interference with Islam, the British would not tolerate a religious tax in a secular state. The collection of zakat thus became illegal under the provisions of the Native Revenue Proclamation of 1906. Subsequently, the payment of zakat went into desuetude, although there were many Muslims prepared to pay it in addition to the general tax imposed by the British on northern Nigerians. Under the provisions of the Native Revenue Proclamation of 1906, however, the sultan and his agents were forbidden to collect taxes which had no governor's sanction²²⁴. The discontinuance of the payment of zakat was a serious blow to the welfare of Muslims. It means that communities could no longer aid the infirm, the poor, indigent debtors, and poor Muslim travelers, all of whom are legal beneficiaries of zakat²²⁵. Because the village communities could no longer adequately provide these material needs, many of these people flocked to towns as beggars.

The caliph expended the revenue derived from zakat on the poor, on building mosques, and for the maintenance of Muslim teachers (malams) whose work in advancing Islamic education was critical to the sustenance to the umma (Muslims). Thus, through hindering the work of the malams, the abolition of zakat undermined the moral standards of the Muslim community and the furtherance of the frontiers of Islam. The British expended the revenue derived from the colonial taxes on government and NA projects without any provision for the development of Muslim education or for building mosques²²⁶.

Although Attahiru opposed the abolition of zakat, he was powerless to do anything about it. The governor, by right of conquest²²⁷, determined which taxes would be abolished or collected, and how the revenue would be spent. Indeed, when Attahiru protested, Lugard told him that it was not his administration's intention to

²²⁴ - Northern Nigeria., *Laws of the Protectorate of northern Nigeria.*, (ed. E.A. Speed., London: Stevens and sons, Ltd., 1910), pp. 605-10.

²²⁵ - A. Y. Ali., *op.cit.*, p. 458.

²²⁶ - P. K. Tibenderana., "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946"., *op.cit.*, pp. 425- 69 and in O Ikime., "The British and Native Administration Finance in northern Nigeria, 1900-1934"., *Journal of the historical society of Nigeria* vol7, n4/(1975), pp. 673- 89.

²²⁷ - A. H. M. Kirk-Greene., *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria.*, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

bolster artificially a “*decadent creed [i.e., Islam] or favor it*”. Lugard further stated that “*if Islam had vitality it would live, if not, it was not the function of his administration to Endeavour to resuscitate it*”²²⁸. This remained the British attitude toward Islam until the 1930s²²⁹.

It is generally assumed that the emirs had effective control over the expenditure of Native Administration revenue. This assumption is fostered by the belief that the NAs, as local governments, had a definite share of the native revenue and the right to expend it for legitimate purposes of local government²³⁰. While, it is true that the NAs were entitled to a fixed share of tax revenue, the power to spend the revenue lay with the British. Throughout most of the 1903-1944 periods, Sokoto NA received 60 percent of the tax revenue collected within the emirate while the remaining 40 percent went to the central government.²³¹

Prior to 1911, the sultan controlled the expenditure of the tax revenue granted to Sokoto NA. However, with the establishment of the naïve treasury (*baitumali*) in 1912, the sultan lost this power. The resident designed the NA budget and submitted it to the lieutenant governor at the beginning of each financial year. Although Sokoto NA, in common with the other major emirates, had discretionary powers to make some minor adjustments to the budget, these powers could not be exercised without the concurrence of the resident²³². This negated the discretionary powers granted to Sokoto NA, since the resident in effect had the power to veto and budget proposals he disliked. The lieutenant governor’s office paid close attention to NA budgets²³³, which acted as a further check on the budgetary powers of the sultan and the emirs. For example, in 1917, the lieutenant governor refused to grant the sultan permission to spend a sum of £69 on an educational project supported by Resident Arnett. Arnett argued that it was unfair for the lieutenant governor to forbid the sultan, whose NA’s

²²⁸ - NNAK., Sokprof2/2/5/1904, “Minutes on Bordon’s memo on Tribute to Sokoto Province”, by Lugard n.d.

²²⁹ - M. A. AlHajj, op.cit.p.57

²³⁰ - Crowder & Ikime., op.cit., p21.

²³¹ -Ibid

²³² - CO583/46, temple to Lugard, May 2, 1916.

²³³ - Ibid.

revenues in 1917 stood at £40,000, to spend a small sum on an important elementary education development program. The lieutenant governor reminded Arnett, however, that Sokoto was not “*an independent unit with financial autonomy but a province of Nigeria*”. He admonished Arnett that the sultan, like the other emirs, had to learn to subordinate his ideals of expenditure to those responsible to the governor-general for the administration of northern Nigeria, i.e., the lieutenant governor²³⁴. In fact, a year earlier the lieutenant governor deleted the budget items for the purchase of Arabic books for use by Arabic language students²³⁵. Again, in 1934, the British ignored Sultan Hassan’s request to spend NA revenue on the establishment of girls’ schools. Instead, the British introduced co-education despite Hassan’s warnings that many Muslim parents opposed co-education for religious reasons and that it thus would hinder female education²³⁶. In 1938, the British rejected Hassan’s proposal to spend some of the NA’s surplus reserve funds on teacher training for elementary schools. They ordered a halt in the expansion of elementary education, pleading a lack of trained teachers as the reason for this retrogressive measure²³⁷.

Hassan’s proposition was poignant. Indeed, for an estimated population of 1.4 million people in 1938, the Sokoto emirate had mere nineteenth elementary schools. Yet Sokoto NA had huge financial resources. In 1938/39, Sokoto NA budgeted for £102,600 and had surplus reserve funds amounting to £124,700 plus £63,000 worth of investments in the United Kingdom²³⁸. Hassan’s proposal to train teachers to facilitate the expansion of elementary education was unacceptable to the British, however, because it was against their policy of limiting schools’ intake to projected employment opportunities in the NAs²³⁹. Thus, throughout the period 1938- 1944, educational expansion was very minimal, although Hassan’s successor, sultan Abubakar, was one

²³⁴ - P.K. Tibenderanan., “The Emirs and the spread of Western Education in northern Nigeria, 1910-1946”., *Journal of African history* , vol24,n/3., (1983)., pp. 519- 20.

²³⁵ - NNAK, SNP 10/4/550P/1916, “Sokoto Provincial Annual Report for half year ending June 30, 1916”, by Arnett, August 14, 1916.

²³⁶ - P.K. Tibenderanan., “The Beginning of girls’ Education in the Native Administration Schools in Northern Nigeria, 1930- 1945”., *Journal of African History* vol26,/n1., (1985)., pp. 93- 104.

²³⁷ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/2/4757/62, Carrow to Superintendent of Education, March 23, 1938.

²³⁸ - NNAK, SNP 17/4/32076, “Sokoto Provincial Annual Report for 1939”, by Ross n.d.

²³⁹ - P. K. Tibenderana., “The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900- 1946”., op.cit., pp. 384- 91.

of the most vociferous proponents for educational growth at all levels. In fact, the sultan was not the only ruler who dissipated his efforts in trying to persuade the British to allow the NAs to spend more funds on education. For instance, in 1935, British authorities closed down Gwandu middle school in keeping with their policy to reduce the number of middle schools in northern Nigeria, despite the passionate pleas by the emir and his council that Gwandu NA had sufficient revenue to finance the school²⁴⁰.

Perhaps more puzzling was the chief commissioner's refusal to endorse Sultan Abubakar's proposal for Sokoto NA to engage the services of a female medical doctor for Sokoto general hospital had one male doctor on its staff. Sultan Abubakar, who appreciated the feelings of Muslim women on this subject, exhorted Resident Carrow to include in his 1939/40 budget proposals for Sokoto NA, an item for the payment of a female doctor's salary. Carrow concurred but he found it necessary to seek the chief commissioner's advice. It was not the usual practice for the NAs to recruit European personnel on their own. To Carrow's astonishment, Chief commissioner T.S. Adams rejected the proposal outright. He contended that, although Sokoto NA had adequate revenue to pay for a salary of a female doctor, the proposal was out of step with the poor economic conditions prevailing in northern Nigeria at the time. In fact, Adams rebuked Carrow for having encouraged the sultan and his council to believe that their proposal was feasible²⁴¹. Adam's decision complied with governor Sir Bernard Bourdillon's policy enunciated in 1937, which stated that if a demand was made by a NA to increase revenue for new services, the government would not meet such a demand unless the services in question were in keeping with the budgetary position of the whole country²⁴². Thus, since the sultan's proposal was not warranted by the budgetary position of the NAs of northern Nigeria as a whole, it had to be rejected in the interests of underdevelopment!

The foregoing observations demonstrate that the sultan had no power over the expenditure of NA revenue. This power lay with the British administrators, and, thus,

²⁴⁰ - P. K. Tibenderana, *op. cit.*, pp. 410- 411.

²⁴¹ - NNAK, Sokprof 3/1/C.3/23/102/64, SNP to Carrow, October 19, 1938.

²⁴² - CO585/234/30393, "Speech to the Residents conference, Northern Provinces, 1937", by Bourdillon n.d.

the sultan consequently lacked initiative in policy matters relating to socioeconomic development. The sultan wanted to direct more funds toward socioeconomic development projects, especially in the areas of education and health, in which successive sultans under colonial rule were keenly interested. Unfortunately, on British orders these funds were either put on “Fixed Deposit Accounts” in British-owned banks in Nigeria or invested in the United Kingdom²⁴³. Ostensibly, this was to build up surplus revenue against possible falls in tax revenue, but in actuality the purpose was to assist British business and to deprive the NAs of funds for development.

British administrators in Northern Nigeria, viewed socioeconomic development, as a danger to the longevity of British rule in the area. They believed that the more Hausa Muslims advanced materially and educationally, the more they would demand to govern themselves*.²⁴⁴ Therefore the policy of the British administration of northern Nigeria was not to encourage socioeconomic development beyond what was deemed necessary for the smooth running of the country. This, in part, explains why the British administrators were generally opposed to the sultan’s proposals for the allocation of more NA revenue to education, health services, and other social and economic projects. It is therefore erroneous to blame the sultan, or any other emir, for northern Nigeria’s backwardness in socioeconomic development compared to southern Nigeria. The blame for this ugly of affairs lies squarely with the colonial regime.

It should be noted that whatever British had chosen to rule those regions during the late of the nineteenth century either by retaining the traditional authorities or superseding them, the most important of all is that great changes occurred as a result of the creation of the new administrative system. Thus, the following section attempts to examine the changeover as it occurred in Southern Nigeria after the incorporation of

²⁴³ - O. Ikime., “The British and Native Administration Finance in Northern Nigeria, 1900- 1934”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* vol7,/n4., (1975)., pp89-156.

* - The British administrators believed that unlike the “pagan native”, who was likely to cling to his tribe and his hereditary customs, even under the influence of western education. A Hausa-Fulani Muslim was “very much inclined by nature to assert himself” with the result that once he had thrown off his allegiance to nature, custom, and authorities under the influence of western education, he would become obstreperous and attempt to reassert his independence.Ibid.

²⁴⁴ - NNAK, SNP6/3/C.144/1907/1, Burdon to Girouard, October 18, 1907; C. L. Temple., *Native Races and their Rulers.*, (2nd ed. London: Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., 1968)., pp. 211- 29.

the traditional authorities into the British colonial administration. It is also an attempt to answer certain questions concerning the nature and effects of the structural changes brought about by the British colonial policy, which had profound effects on the economic, social and political life in Southern Nigeria.

3-4. The Impacts of the Colonial Administration on the Traditional Authorities of Southern Nigeria

When a kingdom with any organized hierarchy of authorities is conquered by an outsider, it is rational for the conqueror to maintain this hierarchy in being as the most convenient way of attaining his own ends. It has been mentioned that in the southern regions of what is today Nigeria, the British lacked information about the people they were to govern, the fact which stimulated their reliance on the traditional authorities. They did what they could do to find someone with traditional authority to act as an intermediary between their inadequately staffed administrative service and the Africans.

In the Yorubaland, where the British had found well-organized chiefdoms, they tended to rule with the maintaining of the traditional institutions. Indeed, chiefdoms were not broken up and administrators for the most part respected the traditional system of government. The chiefs and indigenous agencies were responsible for a wide variety of tasks. Essentially public works and administration at the local level were left in their hands²⁴⁵.

In the south-eastern regions, they often acted in appointing warrant chiefs as agents for local Government. In such areas, the British were faced with a situation, in which there were no readily apparent political authorities through whom they could govern. Thus, they established courts on which African chiefs could sit. These chiefs and the native courts superseded the traditional popular assemblies as the means of local Government. Thus, there is no doubt that such an intervention of the British colonial administration within the traditional institutions had brought structural alteration to the organization of the indigenous authorities. It involved, indeed, a

²⁴⁵ - M. Crowder.,(1968)., op.cit., p. 212.

considerable change in the position of the African chief. Miss Mary Kingsley pointed out:

*“Towards the end of the 19th century, there was a difference between governing Africans through African institutions but according to European principles and governing Africans according to African principles”*²⁴⁶.

With the existence of the colonial regime, the local authority had enjoyed a new status. Vis-a-vis the colonial administration and its representatives, the chief was entirely powerless depending on the policy of that administration and its representatives. But vis-à-vis the local population, he was no more than an autocrat, who was not bound to consult his people in everything he did²⁴⁷.

As it has been mentioned in chapter 1, before the advent of colonial rule the chief was responsible of this people and if he became unacceptable to them he was to be deposed. Most of the southern states had an elaborate system of checks and balances to prevent the chief to be too powerful. The colonial regime, however, disrupted this mechanism for the continued status and power of the chief depended not on his being acceptable to the people he governed but upon his being acceptable to his British overlords²⁴⁸. He was often forced to pursue policies, which were highly unacceptable to his people such as providing forced labour for public works projects and cheap wage labour for British enterprises. This subordination of the traditional African leader to the colonial bureaucracy performing unpopular tasks, undermined chiefly authority throughout the southern regions. In fact, the creation of the warrant chiefs in the south-east shows how the traditional ruler's status and authority had been weakened there.

²⁴⁶ - M.H. Kingsley., West African Studies (3rd edition)., pp. 401- 402.

²⁴⁷ - Ibid.

²⁴⁸ - E. Isichei., op.cit., p. 205.

The chiefly authority became more weakened by the limitation of the chief's powers. In fact, prior to the establishment of colonial rule, the African ruler dominated all aspects of life; but with the establishment of the colonial administration most of his powers mainly political, economic and judicial had been reduced. Perhaps, the main reduction in the chief's powers was the limitation on his judicial competence. Indeed, there had always been disputes to settle both before and after the arrival of the British.

As noted in chapter 1, in the indigenous system disputes were to be settled either in the chief's court by the exercise of force or by religious sanctions depending on the lineage relationship between the parties involved. But British administration had destroyed these jurisdictions by establishing native courts. The latter, which were presided by the British political officers maintained justice and issued rules with the sanction of the governor while they were allowed to judge civil disputes and to try minor cases. But they were never allowed to try serious criminal cases or any dispute involving a European²⁴⁹.

Beside the judicial role of the chief which had been modified, the economic situation of the traditional institutions had also been altered prior to the imposition of the colonial regime; the rulers of the southern regions devised various means of raising adequate revenues for running their administrations. Revenues were mainly collected in food stuffs and provided for them while the British traders were made to pay taxes in the form of customs and shipping dues for the support of the indigenous Government²⁵⁰. But with the advent of the British administration, it became the turn of the African rulers to pay for the British Government and at the same time they had to maintain their indigenous local government which worked as part of the colonial administration.

British administrators found that the most attractive source of revenue was the customs duty particularly on imported goods²⁵¹. They had also recourse to forced labour which was essentially a tax paid in work rather than in money. In fact, all able-

²⁴⁹ - M. Crowder (1968)., op.cit., p. 228.

²⁵⁰ - R. O. Ekundare., op.cit., p. 38.

²⁵¹ - Ibid., p.66..

bodies males between 15 and 50 and females between 15 and 40 were liable for labour, road making and similar work up to six days a quarter²⁵².

It should be mentioned here that whatever the effects British colonial administration had brought on the status, prestige and power of the traditional local authority, the most important of all is that the British colonial policy of the late nineteenth century did not destroy the basis of chieftaincy. It restructured and modified it to suit the British needs, but it remained fundamentally the same. It should also be stated that this colonial regime was less destructive to the position of the southern local authorities if compared with the one which has been imposed on the traditional authorities in Lagos during the middle of the nineteenth century.

With the expansion of British colonial rule in the coastal district of Lagos, the power and position of the African kings had been directly destroyed. Control of power passed directly from the kings to the British District Officers, who were responsible of the colonial Governor. The latter were required to govern and advise with the consent of the Legislative Council, which means that local laws began to be framed by the colonial governor and the Legislative Council rather than the kings and their councils²⁵³. Even though the Legislative Council included some representatives of the local communities, the latter represented a minority compared to the government officials and they were also to be nominated by the governor rather than elected by their fellows²⁵⁴. In addition, they were not given the power to affect members of the Legislative Council. According to Crowder, no much notice was taken of their opinion and their presence did not circumscribe the authority of the colonial Governor²⁵⁵.

The district officers also exercised some control over the way the local authorities governed themselves. Traditionally, it was the king's responsibility to maintain law and order within his chieftdom and to protect his people from external

²⁵² - J.D. Ajaye & M. Crowder., op.cit., p. 108.

²⁵³ - Immanuelle Wallerstein., Social Change, the Colonial Situation., p. 182.

²⁵⁴ - Ibid.

²⁵⁵ - M. Crowder (1968), op.cit., p. 203.

enemies, but this was given to the district officer who really represented the British administration²⁵⁶.

To sum up, after the occupation of the Delta hinterlands and Yorubaland which had been realized by conquest and diplomacy, the British had adopted there an administrative system, which tended to respect the traditional local institutions in order to ensure the extension of the British rule. But this administration had affected the local authorities in different ways in terms of reducing the chief's powers and lowering their positions while asserting the British authority.

3-4-1. Affects of the Colonial Administration on the Traditional Authorities of Ibibioland

The appearance of colonial administrators around 1901 and the resulting colonial situation brought about certain changes in the Ibibio traditional institutions and therefore in the status of the chiefs. Changes in the economic, political, religious and educational institutions of the Ibibio, were embarked upon, all basically designed to facilitate exploitation of the people and their natural resources.

This colonial administration assumed the ultimate power and then set about getting the conquered people to accept that power as being legitimate. To a large extent the endeavor to legitimize colonial rule bore some fruit partly because of the coercive power of the colonial rule which in turn produced changes in the attitudes of the colonized, particularly the new elites, toward the colonial government. In this process several factors, but mainly political ones, collaborated to erode progressively the power and status of the chiefs. With the advent of colonialism the resident or district officer replaced the traditional rulers, the chiefs or elders, as the effective authorities. Power and authority essential for the performance of the government functions or law-making, law application and law adjudication, which previously had been held by the chiefs, were now shared between native/local authority, and imperial/national authority, with the latter being superior to the former. Not surprisingly, native authority fell within the territoriality of the chiefs. Theoretically,

²⁵⁶ - I. Wallerstein., op.cit., p. 184.

what has been outlined above was supposed to have happened but in reality it wasn't exactly so.

The first and most fundamental agents of European influence in Ibibio were the missionaries, who attempted to convert people to the Christian religion. This brought about a serious conflict which often resulted in open confrontations. The chiefs were the custodians of traditional morality; the preaching of the missionaries and their proselytes was a direct assault on the practices led by the chiefs. So the attack on the missionaries and their converts on the traditional practices was a clear affront to the status and prestige of the chiefs²⁵⁷.

Missionaries led many attack against traditional institutions, because they stood between them (missionaries) and the work of converting the people to the Christianity. According to Monday Efiang Noah²⁵⁸, "*the first major event that brought Protectorate forces into Ibibio hinterland occurred in 1897*", and the missionaries were responsible. The Qua Iboe Mission, which since 1887 had been operating in Ibuno had instigated the consular agent at Eket to seek military intervention as the Ibibio had thought that "*government is a sort of myth*" and that "*until some sort of order had been established by force of arms... it will be little use attempting any serious administration*"²⁵⁹. The Ibibio people, particularly the chiefs, did not want to have anything to do with the missionaries and the colonial establishment. Thus, the pro-consul for Eket –Alfred Asmall Whitehouse- complained that the Ibibio had refused to attend consular courts to have their palavers settled. He went on to say that the Ibibio had informed him "*they were not slaves of the white man, let him come himself if he wanted to see them*"²⁶⁰. Another British official, A.C. Douglass, said he was told by a "*rather truculent*" Ibibio chief, whom he had invited for an interview on the authority of Queen Victoria that he

²⁵⁷ - J. Messenger., "Religious Acculturation among the Annang Ibibio"., in *Continuity and Change in African Culture.*, William R., Bascom and M. J. Herskovitz, eds.; (Chicago: University of Chicago Press., 1959).p125.

E. A. Ayalende., *The missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842- 1914.* (New York: Humanities Press., 1966), p83..

²⁵⁸ - E. F. Noah., "The Establishment of British Rule among the Ibibio, 1885- 1910., Part One: The Military Approach", *Nigeria Magazine* ,n148., (1984)., p. 41.

²⁵⁹ - Ibid., p. 42.

²⁶⁰ - Ibid,p43.

(the chief) would honor that first invitation, but should another one be contemplated in future, he would prefer the “Big White Queen” coming herself to see him rather than sending her agents. In short, the Ibibio resisted the authority of the British and their missionary cohorts and the result was a bloodbath everywhere. For example, in about 1897 “*all Ubiom towns within a radius of five miles were obliterated and a proclamation was issued forbidding any rebuilding or replanting of crops until two chiefs from each of the villages that opposed the British had been handed over to the consul*”²⁶¹. It is clear that the chiefs and the people in general did not take kindly to the intrusion of the British. They fought to protect their status.

Following the incessant violence as the result of the confrontations between the Ibibio and the combined force of the missionaries and the colonial administration, there was an informal agreement, whereby the people agreed not to be fighting one another but to co-exist peacefully. As observed by Scarritt²⁶² this kind of compromise between Christian converts and the non-converts “*was such that it left intact many customs and much of the authority of traditional rulers; it left Christians, however, in under solved conflict between old ways and new dogma*”.

One of the results of this compromise was that it enabled the proselytes to get assistance from the village elders. For example, the building of a church was no longer the affair of the Christian converts alone; everybody in the village had to be involved and any such decision was enforced by Ekpo, Ekpe or any other traditional association deemed fit. A beautiful church in a village became a source of pride to all the villagers and since the Christian converts were very few it was essential for all in the village to join hands to build the church. In this was converts became indebted to the chiefs and, in many matters, compelled to accept the authority of the chief which, as we know, derived from the traditional religion, the very target of the Christians.

The colonial administration found the traditional structures so useful that it refused to use force to suppress them, despite continuous appeals by the missionaries

²⁶¹ - E. F. Noah, op.cit, p43.

²⁶² - J. R. Scarritt., “Political Change in a Traditional clan: A Structural-Functional Analysis of the Nsits of Nigeria.” The Social Science Foundation and Graduate School of International Studies., (University of Denver, Monograph N°3., 1964-65)., p. 22.

to suppress Ekpo association, the backbone of the chiefs. By the 1920s, the British had succeeded in getting Ekpo to modify its practices such as beheading offenders, but nothing more. In fact, Ekpo decisions still included executions but they were not reported to the colonial officials for fear of reprisal. Thus as late as 1951, nine years before Nigeria became independent, Eva Stuart Watt²⁶³ wrote: “*although the presence of the British government has to some extent checked their gross outrages, yet this order Ekpo still exerts considerable power*”.

In the political institutions, not many changes took place and they operated almost as they had been in pre-colonial Nigeria; the British simply superimposed other political structures on them. The 1906 Ordinance N^o7 of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria set up Native Councils, which were in fact courts. Members of the courts were used as executive agents and this was why a class known as warrant chiefs was created²⁶⁴. When the Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 was passed, the warrant chiefs became in effect Native Authorities. People were unhappy about warrant chiefs, because non-chiefs in the traditional sense were often imposed upon the people.

Apparently because of this dissatisfaction, Native Authorities, in 1934, were constituted along more traditional lines. What had existed as clan councils became Native Authorities; simultaneously separate Native Courts were created, which had jurisdiction over the same areas. In view of the fact that Native Authority councils met at the court house, and also because the courts were composed of chiefs or their agents, there was little differentiation between the two bodies in terms of structure.²⁶⁵

The performance of the adjudication function was more important than system of decision making. Thus the village chiefs as court were more important than the village chiefs as Native Authority despite the fact that the latter collected taxes and aided in the maintenance of law and order. In view of the fact that there were always more chiefs than available offices, each court had a rotating judge (or president) and

²⁶³ - E.S.Watt., *The Quest of Souls in Qua Iboe.*, (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott., 1951)., p. 23.

²⁶⁴ - Hailey., *op.cit.*, p. 158.

²⁶⁵ - *Ibid.*

jury, appointed from among the chiefs and their designated representatives²⁶⁶. After 1945, few members of juries were persons with Western education; they were actually chosen by the chiefs, even though such jury candidates went through the process of an election.

The dissatisfaction over the functioning of the local political structures led to the setting up in 1948 of a select committee from the Eastern House of Assembly to study the system of local government and propose reforms; most of their recommendations were enacted into law by the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance of 1950. The new structures took after those of the British system of local government. This Ordinance placed local administration directly under the regional authority and greatly broadened the basis of popular participation. A three-tier system of local government, made up of the county, the district, and local areas, on the model of local government in England and Wales, was established²⁶⁷.

The county became roughly coterminous in area and authority with the divisional native authority; districts corresponded to the larger individual native authorities, and comprised both urban and rural areas; and localities became equivalent to clans. Quite a few functions, such as control over secondary schools, some roads, and dispensaries, were assigned to county councils. Most of the functions went to district councils, which also served as the rating authority for the entire system. Vague and minor functions were reserved for local councils; their main attraction was that they constituted electoral colleges for elections to county and district councils²⁶⁸.

As observed by Scarritt²⁶⁹, British law, modified and applied to Nigeria, was the basis on which all cases were decided in theory. But in practice, however,

“Virtually the only cases which came before the Native courts were tax and land disputes, many of them involving, inevitably, the authority of the

²⁶⁶ - J. R. Scarritt., op.cit., p. 27.

²⁶⁷ - E. O. Awa., Federal Government in Nigeria. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press., 1964)., p. 302.

²⁶⁸ - Ibid., p. 303.

²⁶⁹ - J. R. Scarritt., op.cit., p. 28.

colonial government. All other cases, including even some land disputes, were settled in traditional courts in accordance with customary standards. Because most cases did in fact concern local custom rather than colonial law, the British permitted the continuance of this practice.”

Despite the fact that traditional leaders were involved in the new courts and Native Authorities, they saw them as intruding links with the colonial administration, not as substitutes for older forms; they viewed the situation as reducing the status of their chiefs, making them agents of the British, and so they tended to ignore the new structures in favor of traditional structures. Lord Haiely²⁷⁰ comments on this situation that “if not in form, this amounted in effect to a return in large areas to the indigenous system by which justice was administered by meeting of heads of kinship groups or extended families or village elders”.

By 1954, council members were elected. Of significance was the reality that only those who received the blessing of the elders could win, In fact, council members were selected by the elders in the traditional ways and each village voted as a unit in accord with the announced decision of the chief and village heads. The chiefs remained very influential, even when they were not members of the councils. No decision could be taken which would conflict with the traditional view of the matter. As noted by Cowan,

“A question is discussed at some length and adjourned until the following meeting. At the gathering the chairman announces that a decision has been made, the substance of which is accepted without further argument. Closer inquiry reveals that the problem was resolved in discussion at the village or family level, with appropriate consultation with

²⁷⁰ - Haiely., op.cit., p. 172.

*traditional authority. Announcement of the decision in the council meeting, then, is largely pro forma*²⁷¹.

Cowan is largely correct. The decision Cowan refers to, was not made at the family or village level. What happened was that the lineage or clan head was informed about the matter, which had been debated upon. The lineage or clan head would then dispatch his messenger with palm fronds to each of the lineage or village heads summoning an emergency meeting on a specified date and time. Palm frond signifies a grave matter, which involves Isong. If the messenger was not dispatched with palm fronds, he would be given nuk enin, the traditional symbol of Isong. When the messenger appears with either of the two symbols, it depicts a grave situation and all must show up or send their immediate lieutenants. At the meeting the decision was taken and it was subsequently reported at the Council.²⁷²

With the establishment of the eastern region House of Chiefs in 1959, titles of first and second-class chiefs were created. First-class chiefs were appointed or reorganized by the regional government, while second-class chiefs were selected by members of the various clans. Second-class or clan chiefs were ex-official members of the new county councils and comprised approximately twenty percent of their membership; but if their number was greater than twenty percent, some other traditional leaders would be appointed to fill the vacancies. A clan head was appointed chairman of each council; he presided, participated in various ceremonies, and gave advice on traditional matters, but neither engaged in debates nor voted. Second-class chiefs could be elected to council positions. This era saw the adulteration of the sacred institution as people, who would not normally have been qualified to become chiefs canvassed and became one, because of their political connections. But the people knew them and never accorded such “chiefs” the recognition associated with the traditional chiefs. The Ibibio people came to distinguish between the traditional chief recognized and made by the people, and political chiefs appointed by government.

²⁷¹ - L. G. Cowan., Local Government in West Africa., (New York: Columbia University Press., 1958)., p. 122.

²⁷² L. G. Cowan, op.cit. p123.

It should be concluded that, all those changes aimed at integrating the older authority with the new secular structure. In that endeavor, territorial boundaries were made to correspond to the traditional social units and traditional rulers were made to serve in the new councils. Those activities tended to take away power and authority from the traditional circle but only in theory, because in practice the traditional sector was still very strong. Furthermore, most cases were still decided in the family, village, lineage and clan courts. This is so because traditionally, no case is settled until litigants swear an oath that they will not bewitch or harm in any way any²⁷³. People still believed in the ancestors and the ability of the elders to curse any disobedient person. People still became sick and, despite medical treatment, still relied on the traditional healing method, which required the elder to make some sacrifice to Abasi, spirits and ancestors. One must agree that there was some erosion of the authority of the chiefs, especially as the council administration tried to make them their agents. But on the whole chiefs still enjoyed high status.

3-4-2. Affects of the Colonial Administration on the Traditional Authorities of Iboland.

In the decentralized Societies the chiefs were regarded as middlemen between the alien colonial government and local communities. This view is much too simple, for it overlooks the important impact of chiefs on local political life. In many cases chiefs not only acted as local political government but also used their new powers to dominate all traditional political and judicial institutions. Far from being overshadowed by the old structures, they exercised so much power that the authority of the old was greatly diminished. Many Ibo chiefs became the de facto law-givers and law-makers of local areas; people came to them to settle disputes, despite the fact that judicial power were supposed to reside in the, local councils, which had been judicial bodies before the colonial period. There were also significant variations between tribes, previously chiefless. Some, like the Ibo, created strong collaborationist chiefs. Others did not. This development had far-reaching implications for the speed and pattern of social change.

²⁷³ - D. A. Offiong., "Social Relations and Witch Beliefs Among the Ibibio", *Africa* 53(3): 1., 1983.

In pre-colonial times, the Ibo were congregated in village groups, governed by council of elders. They were decentralized and fragmented into a number of autonomous communities administered by councils. They gave wide political influence to men of singular ability, but the influence of these men was not hereditary or authoritarian. Their positions depended on tendering good advice and having it accepted by their peers.²⁷⁴

This institution contrasted markedly with the politically centralized societies, such as the Hausa-Fulani emirates in Northern Nigeria, the Yoruba with recognized heads or chiefs, often selected from royal lineages. They had formal bureaucracies of judges, military leaders, and tax collectors, whose specially designated functions contrasted with the democratic, councilor, and diffused government of elders, which administered the chiefless societies. In the decentralized councilor polities, most adult males had the right to voice their views during council meetings. Although before the colonial period the Ibo had seen the emergence of greater leaders exercising extensive powers, none was able to establish a royal lineage or bestow his enlarged authority on a follower. These men rose to prominence entirely on their own talented leadership.

This pre-colonial institution was disrupted by British colonialism. The British had trouble understanding decentralized societies, accustomed as they were to chiefs in Africa. They also preferred to create chiefs because they needed single agents, whom they could hold responsible for the tasks of local administration.

In Iboland, the British grouped the small Ibo village communities into larger, artificial units, over which local courts exercised jurisdiction. The courts were composed of men chosen by the British to represent the village and called 'warrant chiefs' from the government warrant bestowed on them. Many assumed wide-ranging administrative authority over their local communities. The warrant chiefs were still in power in 1929, when riots brought the system into ill repute and caused the British to abolish it after some years. The women rioters directed great violence against the chiefs, hated for their corruption, oppression and their role in introducing local

²⁷⁴- C. K. Meek, Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe (London, 1937) p78. Also in , H. E. Lambert, Social and Political Institutions (London 1956), p96.

taxation in 1929.²⁷⁵ Thus, chiefs had extensive power until the late 1930s, when many of their functions began to be taken over by specialist colonial official.

The Ibo had a number of lesser chiefs, but at the same time a few men did distinguish themselves as leaders, wielding enormous powers and providing local administrative continuity. The most famous in Onitsha Province was Chief Onyeama. He came forward, when his area was first occupied around 1908. He was from a poor family, as far as can be ascertained, but he soon asserted himself and became virtual ruler of a large area called Abaja. His power stretched beyond this community; his people regarded him as ‘their mouthpiece and intermediary with the Government in all matters affecting the tribe as a whole’.²⁷⁶ Nearly as influential were Chukuani, Mba Chuku, Eze Okoli, and Walter Amobi.²⁷⁷

Coordinate conservative and that its recruitment patterns did not keep pace with changing economic and educational conditions. Scholars would have us believe that chiefs were generally older and less well educated than – especially – the nationalist elite. Indeed John Lonsdale argues that one of the root causes of Ibo nationalist discontent was that the older generation did not hand over power to the new generation as tradition dictated.²⁷⁸

Since local African administration acted as a purposeful and efficient extension to the colonial government, it was an important factor in forcing the pace of social change. Chiefs helped with the introduction of taxation, which was not traditional among the Ibo. Direct personal taxation was introduced into Iboland in 1927, the fact which led to the Aba riots of 1929.

The power of chiefs included the recruitment of communal labour for work on local projects deemed of public benefit. These included the construction of local

²⁷⁵- A. E. Afigbo, ‘Revolution and Reaction in Eastern Nigeria:1900-1929’ , Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria , vol3, n3, (Ibadan,December 1966), pp.539-57. Also, H. A. Gailey, The Road to Aba (New York, 1970).

²⁷⁶- Secretariat, Southern Province, to Chief Secretary, 17August 1923 ; CSO 26/I 09253/I, Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan.

²⁷⁷- W. H. Cooke, Annual Report for Onitsha Province, 1920-21; CSO21/5, 13, N. N. A., Ibadan

²⁷⁸- John Lonsdale, ‘The Emergence of African Nation’, in T. O. Ranger (ed.) Emerging Themes of African History (Nairobi,1968), p. 211.

buildings and sanitation schemes, and the making and maintenance of roads and footpaths. Although the work was much resented since it was unpaid, it made an important contribution in linking rural communities to each other and to larger commercial and administrative centers. Chiefs were responsible for preserving public order, a duty which necessitated wide and often arbitrary powers. They had the authority to fine and imprison for a long list of offences, largely connected with the preservation of public order. Their rule was a factor in widening the scope of political activity. Location among the Ibo native court areas forced previously autonomous communities into new political units. The chiefs themselves did not always bring about political integration, for they engendered antagonisms as well as loyalties, but they did tend to undermine ancient local allegiances and to direct people's vision towards the location, district, province, the tribe, and even the nation.²⁷⁹

Where strong local administrative units existed, the chiefs not only implemented their formal responsibilities, but often went beyond these powers. They became powerful recruiters of wage labour for European settlers and the colonial administration in Nigeria.²⁸⁰ Their legal powers to do this recruiting of supposedly voluntary labour were unclear. Wages-earning employment was not immediately attractive to Africans. Wages were low; they were unfamiliar with the new money being introduced by colonial governments, and had not yet acquired a desire for the consumer goods which the new money could purchase. Thus pressure and coercion were applied through the chiefs, especially among the Ibo. Chiefs Onyema, for instance, was the principal supplier of labour to the coal mines at Enugu in Eastern Nigeria and for a number of years was paid a large subsidy by the administration in recognition of this service.²⁸¹

Chiefs sent out their agents, who physically rounded up people, beating those who resisted. They also played a major role in undercutting local political and

²⁷⁹ - Kenya, Native Labour Commission, 1912-13 : evidence and report (London, 1913), and, for the Ibo, the letter from Tug well to Buxton, dated 7 June 1911, Anti-Slavery Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

²⁸⁰ - A letter from Tug well to Buxton, dated 7 June 1911, Anti-Slavery Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

²⁸¹ - Lt. Governor to Secretariat, Southern Province, 3 April 1923; CSO 26/I 09253 /V.I, N.N.A.Ibadan.

economic self-sufficiency and mobilizing human and material resources for colonial exploitation. They were early primary agents in the introduction and enlargement of the market economy through the collection of taxes and labour recruitment. One must remember of course that these two societies were traditionally characterized by a high degree of economic and political autonomy among family and kin.

As noted, Ibo village communities produced enough for their own economic needs and had their own political organs. They generated only small economic surpluses for trade outside the local units. The Ibos had been involved in the international slave trade. In the nineteenth century, palm-oil exports had emerged to take the space of slave exchange. The new trade was dominated by the Aro peoples, a sub-group of the Ibo, who were located in colonies through-out the area and through their commercial acumen – and control of oracles - regulated long – distance trade.²⁸² Thus, one can say that the vast majority of economic transactions in both societies occurred within a family and local nexus. Similarly, political institutions were intertwined with family and village. Although the Aro oracles provided some over-arching political integration for the Ibos, both societies lacked fully articulated political institutions beyond local levels and were characterized by the frequent violence of their inter-community relations. Thus, colonial chiefs were agents of political and economic mobilization for the new colonial rulers, forcing hitherto locally oriented resources to be made available to them.

S. N. Eisenstadt has described a similar process in his well-known study of pre-modern, centralized, bureaucratic empires.²⁸³ The rulers of these states also freed human and material resources from local organs, such as family and kin groups, and used them to build their bureaucratic states.

Ibo chiefs were local agents of colonial regimes linking local politics and economies to a larger national and international framework. Although chiefs were

²⁸²- Simon Ottenberg, 'The Oracles and Intergroup Relations', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* (Albuquerque), vol16, n3, (1958), pp. 295 – 317; and Robert F. Stevenson, *Population and Political Systems in Tropical Africa* (New York, 1968), p58..

²⁸³- S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires: the Rise and Fall of the Historical Bureaucratic Societies* (London, 1963), p157.

expected to perform many functions, they had little supportive and coercive apparatus under their own control. Even in those African societies with traditional bureaucracies, including police and military forces, local administration was stretched and distorted by the new demands. Ibo societies did not have chiefs or formal, autonomous bureaucracies. Few changes introduced by colonial governments were easily accepted by local populations. Unpaid communal work had little appeal. Only in the 1930s did Ibo villagers take a voluntary interest in the projects. Taxes were unpopular; the populace could not see concrete benefits from them.²⁸⁴

The formal supporting administrative apparatus surrounding chiefs was minimal, in keeping with the need for economies in local administration. Ibo chiefs had court clerks, who were often men of great power; in some cases their power exceeded that of the chiefs because they were translators in court cases, and through control of the translations they were sometimes able to determine the outcome of cases. Ibo chiefs were allowed a small number of court messengers, whose duty was to relay messages between them and British officials. These men were not supposed to be armed. The local police force was under the authority of British officials and was there to support the chiefs if necessary. But the British were reluctant to call it into action and impressed upon the chiefs the need to govern on their own.

The amount of money allocated for local administration was pitifully small. In 1924, the populous District of Awka in Eastern Nigeria spent £ 3, 419, mainly to pay the chiefs, a native court clerk, and six court messengers.²⁸⁵ This was of course before the introduction of direct local taxation, but even after 1927 local budgets remained small. The Awka District expenditure for 1931, just as the old warrant chiefs system was being abolished, was only £4, 725.²⁸⁶ A budget of less than £5,000, even in colonial Nigeria, was barely enough to support a skeletal administration, certainly not the large local apparatus necessary to enforce the labour recruitment and the economic

²⁸⁴ - Lt. Governor to Secretariat, Southern Province, 3 April 1923; CSO 26/I 09253 /V.I, N.N.A.Ibadan.

²⁸⁵ - 'Report on the Working of the Native Courts in the Southern Provinces' ; Nigeria Sessional Paper n31 of 1924.

²⁸⁶ - Henmant to Cunliffe-Lister, 30 July 1932, enclosing the Southern Provinces Native Administration Estimates, 1932-3; CO 583/185/1533, Public Record Office, London.

change the British were demanding. The 1931 Awka budget, in fact, paid the salaries of village headmen, 6 court clerk, 42 court messengers, 5 road inspectors, a carpenter, a motor driver, 30 court compound labourers, and an African supervisor of works. One could hardly fault the British for their ability to stretch revenue, but local administration was clearly on a small scale and lacked a coercive apparatus under the direct control of the chiefs.

The results were inevitable. Chiefs were forced to create their own para-administrative and military bodies in order to solidify their power and to do the bidding rules. As consequence, chiefs were seen as the 'farthest extension of the colonial administration and agents of social change'.²⁸⁷ But according to Okafor, they were the institutions used for maintaining local stability and order. Their existence during the early colonial era was merely a cultural revival, rather than the creation of something new where nothing had existed in the past. Furthermore, they were conservative and reactionary and as consequence they did not embrace innovations warmly. Rather than, they helped to force the pace for change, they helped to slow it down.²⁸⁸

To summarize, British system of administration that was known popularly as Indirect Rule and more precisely as Native Authority System recognized the traditional authorities or the Nigerian leaders "chiefs" as local agents of government. In fact, a real picture of those African chiefs under colonial rule was that of collaborators. But, it was evident that after their initial resistance against colonial invaders, those defeated rulers either accepted the new order or were deposed and replaced by chiefs, who were prepared to co-operate with administrations in their task of governing vast territories with a minimum of personnel. Even where this system of ruling left chiefs' considerable power and initiative at the local Government level, it was usually assumed that the continued devolution of such power and initiative was dependent on their willingness to follow the guidelines laid down by the British

²⁸⁷- Letter of 3 January 1855 from R. Moor to the under secretary of state, Foreign Affairs, CO/444/1, P. R. O., London.

²⁸⁸- Sammuell Okafor, "The Ibo Chiefs and Social Change", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 1, N1 (May,1972). pp. 128-9.

administration and their efficient discharge of their duties. To exemplify, an Emir as theoretically powerful as that of Kano was perceived by Margery Perham during the heydays of Lugard's Indirect Rule, to be largely a creature of the British administration as she asserted:

*“The Emir is treated with the greatest deference and all decisions are nominally taken by him, with the European officer never acting directly himself. Yet, the Emir may be a man put largely in our choice after the death or deposition of his predecessors. Thus, in administrative matters, he must be partly, and may be entirely, controlled by the Resident and his senior staff. Indirect rule is, indeed, a kind of inversion of the constitutional trick we have learned in England. The autocratic Emir retains nearly all his powers in theory while in practice, behind the curtain, he is checked and propelled, not by ministry, still less by a democracy, but by an unobtrusive, kindly, middle aged Englishman who derives his authority from the military power and wealth of Great Britain”.*²⁸⁹

It is important, thus, to draw an elementary distinction between the following roles of the traditional chiefs. First, as government agents, it was their duty to execute the instructions of the colonial administration, whether or not it was with local popular consent. Second, as the traditional representatives of their people, it was their duty to serve their wishes, as far as possible. Finally, as persons with their own views, they had to report and sometimes express these also. For most of the time, for instance, the chiefs and their people opposed taxation; accordingly, they were involved in the collection of taxes as government agents. It should be remembered that they were

²⁸⁹ Margery Perham, *West African Passage: A Journey through Nigeria, Chad and the Cameroons*, A.(H.M Kirk Greene Edition ,London 1983), p65-66.

performing a function imposed on them by Ordinance, rather than carrying out the wishes of either themselves or their people.

Conclusion

It is worth stating, that although the position and status of traditional chiefs had completely changed during the colonial era, they were still admired for their being “*the farthest extension of colonial administration and agents of social change*”²⁹⁰ Indeed, during the colonial period, the British brought not only changes in the political structures of Nigerian communities but also in the economic ones, the fact which led to significant social changes. A new class of educated Nigerians emerged claiming for a real participation of Nigerians in the governance of their country. In the course of such changes, the powers, status, and position of the traditional authorities were further undermined. Therefore, the next chapter tends to explore the major social, political and economic developments that British policy brought to Nigerians and which, radically transformed Nigeria into not only a developed but an independent nation.

²⁹⁰ N.U A kapan, «Have Traditional Authorities a Place in Modern Local Government Systems”, Journal of African Administration, vo7, n3, (London, 1955), pp109-116. Also Letter of 3 Jan 1899 from R Moor to the Under secretary of State, Foreign Affairs, CO/444/1, P.R.O, London.

Chapter Four

Politics of Improvements and the Rise of Agents of Change

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Introduction

As mentioned in chapter three, colonial rule brought many changes to the societies of Nigeria. Charged with the task of governing the territories of Nigeria, expanding the commerce of the country, and promoting progress and civilization for people they considered inferior and backward, British colonial officers went about restructuring Nigerian societies in the years after their colonial conquest. The purpose of colonial rule was, theoretically, to alter only those customs, traditions and institutions that the British considered harmful to Nigerian progress, leaving existing political and social institutions intact to the greatest degree possible. In practice, however, colonial policies made transformative changes to Nigerian societies in many ways the fact which led to significant alterations in political institutions and economic orientation.

British Colonial Administration utilized the concept of Indirect Rule, which operated differently in different regions, as determined in large part by the administrative outlook of British Authorities in each protectorate, and by the diversity of indigenous political institutions throughout the protectorates. This colonial system claimed to respect the traditional political institutions and promote continuity between indigenous and colonial regimes. But in practice, it alienated traditional authorities from their subject populations through their association with the colonial regime. Furthermore, traditional rulers found that they maintained their power at the behest of the British colonial officers, who made sure that colonial directives were enforced at all times. Insubordinate indigenous rulers soon found themselves ousted and their places taken by more malleable replacements.

Modifications in the political and economic structures of Nigerian communities also led to significant changes. In fact, cities grew rapidly as people moved to urban areas looking for jobs in the colonial service or in commercial firms. Traditional age and gender roles shifted as people reacted to the new labor requirements of the colonial economy. Furthermore, a new class of European-educated, literate, English speaking Christians emerged particularly in Southern Nigeria, keen on holding the colonial regime responsible for its actions and demanding a greater role for Nigerians

in their own governance. This situation resulted in high tensions between ruler and subjects, mainly in the south where the impact of colonial rule was most intense. In the course of such paramount change, many groups mobilized to protect their own interests in a colonial system that often seemed to disregard their well-being. Some people, for instance, organized, demonstrated and even rioted in the effort to make their voices heard. Others attempted to enter into dialogue with the colonial government to have their needs addressed. By the end of the first two decades of the twentieth century, anti-colonial resistance, which until then had been mostly a local phenomenon, was poised to become a full-fledged nationalist movement.

As the nationalists struggled to negotiate rapid changes, they found ways to vent their frustrations with the overbearing, racist colonial regime, through dialogue where possible, and through demonstrations, protests, and violent outbursts where necessary. But those combined efforts led only to certain reforms within the colonial administration rather than independence from the colonial system. It was until after Second World War that a new generation of activists emerged to fight not only for local improvements within the colonial system, but also for complete independence for the whole of Nigeria from British rule. But with the gradual advent of the nationalist educated class to power, and the adoption of new reforms, the rule of the chiefs over their people had come to acquire new significance. Although, the traditional rulers were still regarded by the members of their communities as symbols of group unity, pride...etc, they no longer maintained their status and position of previous times. Therefore, a real confrontation was to develop between two major conflicting Nigerian groups: the Traditionalists and the Modernists.

4. Education and the Making of Nigerian Elites

Nigeria's educational growth is bound up with the history of the Christian missions. In fact, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society led the way followed by the Church Missionary Society. These bodies having established themselves at Badagry in 1842, embarked on a campaign of education, which progressed so well that soon they opened schools in close succession. Other Missionary societies quickly followed. The United Free Church arrived in Calabar in 1847; the Southern Baptist

Convention came in 1853, and the Roman Catholics began pastoral and educational work in the 1860s.¹

Like the rest of Africa, Nigeria had complex forms of education, which served to pass on knowledge from generation to generation, assist in solving problems, and act as a socially integrating force. Society had certain implied rules and regulations, which bound it together and education of the youth was a cardinal point in these rules. Each Nigerian region concentrated on a well indigenous education.² The introduction of Western education entered this historical pattern in two cataclysmic ways: it failed to integrate with and build upon indigenous forms and teachings, and its message and objectives were entirely different. It destroyed the people's pride in their traditional values; it also taught them that the single road to escape head taxes, forced labour, the apprentice system, and so forth and the one path to god houses, the city, and money was a certificate in education. It was the sole means of breaking out of the confinements of peasant life into the glorious existence of the bourgeoisie.

The immediate result of Euro-Nigerian contact was the evolution of an elite group, whose origins are to be found in the earliest nineteenth century. According to J.F.A Ajaye:

“The missionaries did three things at the mission station to guarantee the development of an elite group: he introduced literacy, he trained missionary agents, and he fostered through technical education a class of people with the art to make Bibles or the money to buy them”³

Thus, the desire of the mid-nineteenth century missionaries to create an African middle class was centered to their proselytizing efforts, and the emergence of such a class is perhaps the most concrete feature of the social revolution the missionaries envisaged. One is inclined to say that all facets of later developments in Nigeria's educational advancement were built on the foundations, which these pioneers laid. The

¹ J.F.A.Ajaye, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891*, (Longman, London, 1964), p.128.

² A.Callaway, “Nigeria's Indigenous Education : The Apprentice System”, *Odu*, vol11, n1, 1964.

³ J.F.A.Ajaye, *op.cit*, p.142.

tide of the European policy changed in the 1880s and 1890s, when British political annexation of the interior began and expanded. The semi-altruistic policy of the Christian Missions in education gave way to the enlightened self-interests of the colonial masters. Far from the missionaries' avowed aim to train people "with the aim of making Bibles", the imperial lord was only interested in educating the natives in so far as the beneficiaries from such education could provide supportive man -power to satisfy his political and economic interests.

In any case, government participation in education was very skeletal in the beginning. The First Education Ordinance was passed in 1882, and a Department of Education was not established until 1903 and that to cover only the Southern Provinces.⁴ However, the first three decades of the twentieth century were decades of growth. As it has been noticed a Department of Education was established in the Southern Provinces in 1903, its counterpart was established in the Northern Provinces in 1910. The first important post-primary educational institution, namely King's College was opened in Lagos, and in 1914 and 1915 Training Departments were added to the Government's Schools at Worry and Bonny. Katsina College opened in the north in 1921. Queen's School for girls opened in 1927 and in 1929 two Government Colleges were established, one in Ibadan and other in Umuahia.⁵

These developments, however, were soon followed by the financial Depression of the 1930s, which consequently forced government to reduce its grants to educational agencies. The depression was followed by the Second World War, but despite all the war time difficulties, the swelling demand for education forced development onwards. In the meantime, Government was not idle. Commissions were set up to review existing educational policies, but these were auspices under the Colonial Office.

It must be pointed out that the trend of development was not even throughout the whole country. The south was very receptive to the new influence, whereas the reception was much slower in the North, where western education was viewed with

⁴ H.G Jonhson, "The System of Education in Nigeria", in Imperial Education Conference Report, vol4, n6, (H.M.S.O, London, 1911),pp45-69.

⁵ *Ibid.*

skepticism since it was construed to weaken the hold of traditional beliefs and customs among its recipients. The end of the Second World War, which ended by the breaking up of the world's great colonial empires, brought in their wake a new dimension to the nationalistic feelings, which had been simmering for some time. Nationalists begun to think in terms of educational policies that would be geared to the fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of Nigerians, and not designed to serve the whims and caprices of colonial agents.

As noted above, the foundation of western education in Nigeria was laid by Christian missionaries, who were eager to use literary training to introduce Christianity and win converts to their religion. Their original purpose, in fact, was to teach the people to read the Bible and to understand the principles of Christianity. Meanwhile, these missionaries also used western education to train Africans as catechists, messengers and other positions needed to assist them in realizing the social and economic development and transformations desired by the European missionaries and their agents, which means creating a mass of Christian educated Africans "elites"⁶. The following section is, therefore, an exploration of the major activities of the missionaries in Nigeria during the colonial period.

4-1. Missionaries "The Winds of Change"

During the British colonial times, the Missionaries succeeded to establish a number of schools mainly in the southern parts of Nigeria. Indeed, facing the necessity to train Africans to assist in establishing churches and religious services in villages clustered about the center of their work, they found it necessary to establish schools in order to train Nigerian people. Sometimes, they undertook to destroy the indigenous customs of the people, holding that as a matter of loyalty to Christianity, all practices connected with heathen rites should be abandoned. Generally, however, broadly

⁶ The elite concept applies to a group of persons who, in one way or another, have attained the highest rank in society, who stand at the peak of social strata. They are the people looked upon by the masses as leaders, as decision makers in political and economic spheres, as the persons at the top in major segments of the society. Regardless of origins and background, all who are successful (i.e who have attained a position of prestige) as measured by the current norms of the society are included within this elite concept. Margaret Katzin, *Nigeria's Emerging Elite, Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol10, n3, (The University of Chicago Press, April, 1962), pp320-323.

educated missionaries made it a point to study not only the language but the customs of the people, in order to understand them and help them to a better plane of individual and community life. Knowledge of native cultural life was regarded as essential for both government and mission personnel. Sympathetic understanding of cultural backgrounds has made for adjustments in education that take into account and promote the wholeness of life of the Nigerian people.

The first African bishop, for instance, known as Samuel Crowder was a Nigerian, who had been educated at Fourah Bay College and in Great Britain. He was a pioneer figure in the expansion of Anglican missions in Nigeria and in all of West Africa. Furthermore, the Wesleyan Methodists established a mission in 1842, closely followed by the Church Missionary Society the same year. The first center at Badagry was soon moved to Lagos. The Church of Scotland established a center in Eastern Nigeria in 1846. The Hope Waddell Institution and the Duke Town School both at Calabar are large and most influential schools. These centers have done much to train teachers and leaders for schools in the outlying villages. The Southern Baptist Convention established missions in 1853 and has maintained them continuously. The Roman Catholic Mission was established in 1868.⁷

After considerable consultations between the Church Missionary Society and local merchants and traders, the first secondary school was established namely the Church Missionary Society Grammar School in Lagos in 1859. Its Secretary from 1841 to 1872, Henry Vann, firmly believed in the development of adequate human resources, and that the school must be self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating, and should employ African personnel. The African commercial and business elite also required that were well –trained and equipped to handle political and economic transactions between Africans and outsiders involving record keeping and correspondence regarding the exchange of European and African goods and

⁷ Jackson Davis, "Education in British West Africa", The Journal of Negro Education in Dependent Territories, (Summer, 1946), vol15, n3 , pp358-369.

services. Africans also gradually began to recognize the advantages of the attractions of post primary education.⁸

Secondary schools gradually began to spring up in the various parts of Nigeria. Ethnic-based secondary schools were built such as: Oduduwa College in Ile-Ife, Edo College in Benin City and Imade College in Owo, to respond to the various needs of communities and individuals eager to take advantage of the new opportunities for advancement and promotion in the new society that emerged with the coming of the missionaries and the colonial administrative bureaucracy.⁹

Government strong participation in education began in 1882, with the appointment of a single inspector of schools for British West Africa, including Gambia, Sierra Leone and Gold Coast and Nigeria. One of the first steps was the constitution of a board of education, which developed general policies and began to make grants to the mission schools. The first government school was King's College at Lagos, a secondary school for boys established in 1909. Queens College at Lagos, a similar school for girls, was opened in 1927. In 1929, the Government established Training Colleges at Ibadan and Umuhia, and in the following year three centers for training rural teachers were established. In 1926, the Board of Education worked out a coordination of the missions and placed on a more systematic basis the giving of the government grants. This led to a better understanding on the part of the missions as to territories that each would undertake to save; and the government through its grants and inspection, undertook to knit together the whole effort, to give greater assistance, and to supply the most serious gaps, which were found to exist. The Higher College at Yaba, which was opened in 1934, was an outcome of these efforts.¹⁰

Initially Nigerians expected much from the attainment of western education, but they quickly became disappointed and frustrated over the result. This disenchantment was expressed in complaints from Africans and Europeans alike that the imported

⁸ J.A A Ajaye, "The Development of Secondary Grammar School Education in Nigeria", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol2,n3, (1963), pp517-535.

⁹ J.A A Ajaye, "The Development of Secondary Grammar School Education in Nigeria", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol2, n3, (1963), pp517-535.

¹⁰ Jackson Davis, op.cit. p.360

educational system failed to achieve its objectives. Western education was considered too European and ill-suited and irrelevant to African needs and that in the process, the indigenous values of love, community relationships, and profound spirituality were being lost. At the same time, some complained that the new system had introduced new values of intolerance, hatred, disharmony, pride and even arrogance. It was also suggested that there was too much rote learning and too little application of the principles being taught in the schools. Colonial officials, thus, resolved that massive reform was required.

For that, a committee was sent from London to report on education in West Africa. It reported that western education had little prospect for success, because it was transplanted to a soil that was unwilling to let it grow, and it suggested for that formal schooling should be adapted to suit its environment. With regard to secondary education, the commission argued that it should aim at training African leaders and suggested that activities of secondary school should be determined with particular regard to the needs of such leadership. Among the subjects that were considered relevant were sciences, physiology, hygiene, social studies, mathematics ...etc. It also emphasized that formal schooling should concentrate on “indigenous education” and be adapted to local needs¹¹.

The colonial government officials, however, who believed that formal schooling in the colonies must take the culture of the natives into account, shared their views with others in London and this theme was echoed throughout the colonial period. The Imperial Education Conference of 1912, 1927, 1937 and the Advisory Committee Reports on Education in the colonies all emphasized this idea and a 1925 white paper stressed the need for an education adapted “to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various people conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life”. It was dispatched to all the provincial Governors, and Lord Lugard described it as “one of the principal landmarks of imperial policy”.¹² Four years later, W.Ormsby-Gore, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Chairman for the Advisory Committee on Education in the

¹¹ Colin Wise, *A History of Education in British West Africa*, (London, 1957).p35.

¹² M.Perham, Lugard, *The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, (London,1960), p661.

colonies, reiterated the position that schooling had to be adapted to the circumstances and lives of colonial peoples. He stated that:

*“ In all parts alike, the need is felt for an education, which will preserve and develop the individuality and traditions of the various peoples, whether indigenous or immigrant, and which will give them at the same time the means of acquiring a scientific and technical mastery of the forms of nature and a wider outlook on human experience.”*¹³

It appears that the British government considered its policy of adaptation of education to suit local needs as extremely important. In pursuance of this policy, it supported the formation of the International Institute of African Languages and Culture, which instituted five prizes for the best books written by Africans in African languages. This action was taken, according to the authorities of the institute, to give impetus to the production of vernacular literature.¹⁴

It should be stated that the British did their best to provide facilities for Nigerians, as far as education is concerned. While, there were many areas wholly lacking village schools, enough centers had been established to constitute a framework of a system which needed only to be expanded as staff and funds were available. The people were alert and eager to learn. One of the most encouraging sign of progress was a number of village schools operated by native administrations, or local taxation. Sometimes bush-schools were conducted on a voluntary basis by persons, who learned to read and write in a village school.¹⁵

It is, furthermore, pertinent to state that during the colonial period, Nigerian traditional leaders “traditionalists” realized that education was one weapon with which to fight the intrusion of the white-man’s ways. Local communities had become aware

¹³ W.Ormsby-Gore, “Research and Experiment in Overseas Education”, *Overseas Education*, vol1, n1, (October,1929), p.2.

¹⁴ E.A Ukong-Ibekwe, “On the Study of Vernacular Languages”, *Nigerian Teacher*, vol1, n4, (1935),p32

¹⁵ Jackson Davis, op.cit. p.360

that those among them, who were blessed with educated sons and daughters, got on better with the representatives of the colonial regime. The difference was even more pronounced in cases, where the educated elements included the traditional head of the community. By the time of independence, many Nigerian communities had made education compulsory for traditional rulers. Today, none of the powerful traditional rulers are bereft of a good education. What is sure is that a claim of western education may facilitate the identification of traditional rulers with the elite class and thus may enhance their prestige and overall bargaining power. It is often said that knowledge is power.¹⁶

It is also worth mentioning that cultural differences among ethnic groups, as well as the timing, nature, and extent of ethnic groups' contact with Europeans have generated a highly differential distribution of education among Nigeria's peoples. The results have had remarkably regional cast, especially when considered on north-south axis. Ethnic groups in Nigeria, particularly those near the coast, have been the first and foremost recipients of European schooling.¹⁷

Northern Nigeria was of the last regions to experience western education. British colonial administration prohibited missionary activities in the dominant Muslim areas of the north. Hanns Vischer was director of the Education Department in the Northern Provinces from 1910 to 1919, when these provinces for purposes of education, were still administratively separate from the rest of Nigeria. He established schools for the sons of the chiefs and for the training of artisans, taking care to ensure that tradition was not disrupted. These first schools built in Kano, with the support of the Native Administration, "*in matters of dress, correct practice in the form of salutation and courtesies to chiefs and those in authority, and in general behavior and more of life...were required to conform to the best traditions of local society.*"¹⁸ Graduates of mission schools in the Southern Provinces were considered by Lugard,

¹⁶ O.M L aleye and Victor Ayeni, "On the Politics of Traditional Rulership", International Journal on Politics, Culture and Society, vol6, n4, (Springer, 1993), pp555-571.

¹⁷ N.K Onuba Chukunta, « Education and National Integration : A Case Study of Nigeria », African Studies Review 21, (sep 1978), pp 67-75.

¹⁸ Adedeji Adelabu, »Studies in Trends in Nigeria's Educational Development , An Essay on Sources and Resources », African Studies Review, vol14, n1, (April,1971), pp101-112.

to be disrespectful of authority and to have lost touch with their own people; so he hoped such results could be avoided in the north. Education in the Northern and Southern Provinces of Nigeria was separately administered until 1928, when a single director of education was appointed for both areas.

Overall, it should be mentioned that by the late nineteenth century, increasing number of Nigerians were taking advantage of the opportunities that European education in a mission school could offer, of which the most notable was the ability to read and to write in English. With the onset of colonial administration and the expansion of the colonial economy based on increased import-export commerce from the 1890s, the ability to read and to write in English became the stepping stone to a middle class career. European –educated Nigerians could find reasonably paid jobs as clerks in the Native Courts or councils, or in other civil service positions in the colonial regime. They could also work as intermediaries for the European trading firms that dominated the export trade. Still others went into the service of the church, often becoming teachers in the very schools in which they have been educated. The 1921 indicated that there were approximately 32,000 European-educated Nigerians roughly 0.5 percent of the population. Another 4 percent of the population reportedly had attained what the colonial Government called “imperfect” education, meaning they had begun but not completed primary schooling.¹⁹

For most part education was limited to primary education or industrial training. It was not initially thought that universities would be necessary or practical in Nigeria. It was mostly limited to rudimentary reading and writing skills, as well as instructions in Christian theology. The vast majority of European- educated Nigerians, therefore, received at best full-primary; many received only a partial primary education. By 1926, there were eighteen secondary schools, although high admission fees limited attendance. A very small students found opportunities for post-secondary education abroad, either in Sierra Leone or in the United Kingdom, and became the few Nigerian

¹⁹ Philip S Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Inteligencia and Atlantic Ideas*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), p50.

doctors, lawyers and engineers of the colonial era. By 1921, Southern Nigeria boasted only seventy-three professionals with such training.²⁰

Education opportunities remained limited, even those who received the most limited training improved their chances of finding employment with the colonial government or the European trading firms. For example, by the end of the nineteenth century, the colonial government in Lagos employed forty-five civil servants, while by 1901, over 1.100 civil servants and commercial clerks worked there. This number increased to over 5.300 by 1921.²¹ The expansion of the colonial export economy, therefore, had a significant impact on the demand for European education in southern Nigeria, where the bulk of European commerce took place.

All in all, European education did have an effect on the behaviors and beliefs of the Nigerians, who received it, molding them over the decades into what has been called an African middle-class; African in heritage but with many European tastes and values. The European educated population inhabited a cultural milieu influenced both by their indigenous roots and by the lifestyle provided by their foreign education. Because European education was firmly linked to the Christian missions, most of the Nigerians who were educated in the European fashion also became practicing Christians and assimilated many of the values of nineteenth and twentieth-century Christianity into their own lifestyles. For example, while many Nigerian communities continued to allow the institution of domestic slavery, most European-educated Nigerians believed in the anti-slavery cause.²²

It should also be stated that because their skills coveted and relatively high-paying jobs, with the colonial administration or European trading firms in the cities, the European educated elite was also exposed to and receptive of British culture in the way that poorer, rural Nigerians were not. A taste transfer therefore occurred among the members of the European-educated middle class, as they began to identify, at least in part with the culture, in which they were educated and in which they worked. The

²⁰ Philip S Zachernuk, *op.cit.*, p 51.

²¹ *Ibid*, p48.

²² Kristin Mann, *Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Nigeria*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), p72.

European educated middle-class earned better wages and, therefore, had greater purchasing power than other Nigerians. As a result, they bought more imports than other Nigerians, particularly luxury items such as European clothing, hats, shoes, books, radio sets and automobiles, as well as building European styles homes.²³ Possessing such items became a status marker-visibly setting European-educated Nigerians apart from their “uneducated” compatriots.

Even though, educated Nigerians understood that they had gained much under colonial rule, they had also good reasons to reproach the colonial regime. The latter, in fact, was founded on the ideology that Africans, as a race, were inferior to Europeans and needed gradual amelioration under British supervision. However, this was the basis of the Dual Mandate.²⁴ As a result to this ideology, the same European employers that gave jobs to educated Nigerians based on their individual merits also kept them subjugated based on their racial background. Instance of this, Lugard disdained them claiming that mission schools inculcated in their pupils “discontent, impatience of any control, and an unjustifiable assumption of self-importance in the individual”, all of which made the European educated-Nigerian a threat to both British rule and traditional social norms.²⁵ The ideal Nigerian was one who had attained enough education to be useful to the colonial system but not enough to think himself the intellectual equal with white man. Within the colonial government and European firms, only low level bureaucratic positions were filled by Nigerians, and there was little opportunity for promotion or advancement within the colonial government or European firm once hired.

²³ H.H Smythe and M.M Smythe, *The New Nigerian Elite*, (Stafford University Press, 1971), p 170.

²⁴ In his book, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922), Lord Lugard tried to draw together various ideas into a comprehensive theory of colonial policy which could then be applied to the African colonies.

1-Mandate to the indigenous population: This was the concept of trusteeship (the idea of promoting the welfare and advancement of colonial people.

2-Mandate to the rest of the world: this involved the responsibility to develop Africa’s resources and make them available.

Lugard did not that these objectives were necessarily in conflict, he believed that they could be made complementary. From: Wallace G.Mills: St Mary’s University: <http://husky1.smu.ca/~wmills/>

²⁵ Margery Perham, *Lugard : The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, (Collins, London, 1960), p586.

Nevertheless, the European educated middle –class Nigerians relished their position as cultural intermediates to a great extent. Many of them, in fact, believed in the civilizing mission of the British colonial adventure. They owed their own heightened material and social position to the civilizing influence of Christianity and mission education. They saw themselves as links between the old, traditional ways and the new modern life styles, and countrymen the values of anti-slavery, commerce, and Christianity. Meanwhile, however, they were constantly reminded of their Africanness, which was treated by Europeans as evidence of weakness, savagery, and corruption. This class of Nigerians, by and large, refused to see their indigenous heritage this way, rather, they wore it as budge of pride. Just as they promoted the benefits of the civilizing mission to other Nigerians, they also promoted the values of their indigenous societies among themselves and to the British colonial administration, in an effort to illustrate both pride in their heritage and the capacity of Nigerians to advance on their own terms. They sought to prove both to the British and other Nigerians that civilization did not have to mean the abandonment of one’s heritage and the imitation of a foreign lifestyle.²⁶

Furthermore, European middle-class Nigerians consciously promulgated an identity that blended the “traditional” and the “modern”, showing that these two classifications were not mutually exclusive. While continuing to believe in the benefits of European education and Christian values, they also embraced their local African cultures.

Efforts on the part of European educated elites to distinguish themselves from a British culture that did not view them as equals were accompanied by direct protests and criticism directed at the colonial regime, which continued to exclude European-educated Nigerians from the processes of government and to subordinate traditional authorities to alien domination. Literate elites for instance, used newspapers to reach all elements of Nigerian society. Perhaps, the most famous newspaperman in the first decades of the colonial period in Nigeria was Hebert Macaulay, the European educated

²⁶ H.H Smythe and M.M Smythe , op.cit, p172.

grandson of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowder.²⁷ Macaulay's newspapers, such as the Lagos Daily News, leveled passionate criticism at the colonial regime and earned him the title of "father of Nigerian Nationalism". Newspapers spoke to the colonial government, urging reform, criticizing politics that affected Nigerians, and pushing greater involvement of Nigerians in their own government. Elites also used newspapers to spread their message of African pride and intelligence, actively opposing the racist ideologies put forward by the colonial regime.²⁸

Beyond the Euro-educated elite, working class Nigerians and peasant farmers also had good reasons to feel frustrated with the colonial regime and the changes that colonial rule had brought to traditional political, economic and social structures. To illustrate, anti-tax protests became one of the most common forms of anti-colonial resistance that emerged in Southern Nigeria in the first three decades of the twentieth century. These early forms of colonial resistance "demonstrations, riots, protests, criticisms etc" saw mixed results. Indeed, most managed to achieve some tangible improvements, but none were able to achieve their full goals. It must be noted that they occurred only at local level in the period before 1930, for there was no coherent Nigeria-wide nationalist movement at that time and nothing like Nigerian national identity had yet emerged. This would change as a result of developments in the 1930s and 1940s.

4-2. The Rise of Anti-Colonial Protests

As mentioned previously, the British penetration into the different territories that make up the present day Nigeria was resisted by the native occupants of these territories. These were considered as the early phase of nationalist struggle in the country. By the twentieth century, however, especially after the amalgamation of 1914, the phase of Nigerian nationalism²⁹ changed as nationalist struggle began cutting

²⁷ See Appendix 1 showing Notable People in Nigerian History.

²⁸ Nozomi Sawada, "The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society", (PhD. Thesis, of Philosophy, University of Birmingham, Centre of West African Studies, July 2011). Chapter 2. p56.

²⁹ Nationalism is a term generally used to describe two phenomena: first, the attitude which members of a nation have when they care about their national identity and second, the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to sustain self-determination. The term has been defined as; "loyalty="

across ethnic affinities. Nationalists during this period were struggling for the actualization of the Nigeria of their dream.

What became known as nationalist movement in Nigeria or Nigerian nationalism after the amalgamation of 1914 had its roots prior to the amalgamation. Olusanya stated that:

*“The emergence of Nigerian nationalism predated the establishment of effective British rule over the whole country now known as Nigeria. This is because the various areas, which now constitute modern Nigeria were acquired at different times and certain forces and conditions favouring the emergence of the nationalist idea were already at work before 1914, when Nigeria became an administrative unit.”*³⁰

The resistance mounted against the British by the indigenes and traditional rulers of the territories that were later merged to become Nigeria constitute the early phase of nationalist movement in Nigeria. On knowing that the British rule would deprive of their powers, these people resisted the penetration of the British. This resistance, indeed, took many forms. There was non-cooperation with British in trade and the wars were fought against them. Example of these, the wars of 1901-1902 mounted by the Aro and their allies against the British in eastern Nigeria the Ijebu war of 1892, the Benin war of 1897...etc.

Resistance struggle during this period was equally gathered from the activities of individuals, who stood against the very western culture that have nourished them having been denied respectable place within their ancestors' culture. This made them to ravenously turn towards their ancestors' culture for pride restitution, as well as for

=and devotion to a nation, especially a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on the promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups”. <http://www.merriamwebster.com>.

³⁰ Olusanya, G.O, *The Nationalist Movement in Nigeria*, in Ikime.O Groundwork of *Nigerian History*, (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), p545.

the strength to face the situation. These individuals were, in fact, the product of mission schools. By educating them and subsequently denying them with the Europeans, the Christian Missions helped to contribute their own quota for the emergence of nationalist movements in Nigeria. This group of Nigerians was led by men such as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), a foremost Pan-Africanist and an advocate of West African culture; Bishop James Johnson (1871-1938), an author and diplomat whose writings and activities demonstrated his deep concern of Black life and subsequently became the first black man to assume the position of the field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured people (NAACP); Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917)- a Nigerian Yoruba Baptist Minister, John Payne Jackson, the editor of Lagos Weekly Record (a newspaper founded in 1890) ...etc. These did not only strongly oppose the attempts of European Christian Missions to deprive Nigerians from their rights, but they were never weary of advocating a consciousness of those aspects of European or western culture, which to them seemed to be of no value to Africans. Additionally, they were equally advocates and founders of the indigenous churches, which were the first manifestations of cultural nationalism. An example of these churches was the United Native African Church founded in 1891.³¹

Furthermore, some of these advocates rebuffed western culture by giving up their western names and dresses. For instance, David Brown Vincent (1860-1917), who was named as the Baptism following his Saro's father's Christian religious identity as Catechist of the Anglican Church in Nigeria, did not only change his name to Mojola Agbebi in the late 1880s, he also gave up the wearing of English dresses even when in Europe. In a similar vein, Reverend Jacob Henryson Samuel (1860-1925) of the Methodist Church, who was named at birth, also assumed the ancestral name of Adegboyega Edun in 1904 following his appointment as the first secretary of the Egba United Government ((EUG) in 1902.³²

³¹ Ubaku K Chika, "Impact of the Nationalist Movement on the Actualization of Nigerian Independence" *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research*, vol2, n1, (2014), pp54-67.

³² Ibid, p57.

There were no effective organizations by this period to channel the various grievances of the Nigerian people. The People's Union formed by doctor Obasa and Dr Randle in 1908 to agitate against the Lagos Ancillary of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (LAARPS) formed in 1910 and which on coming into existence took up the agitation over land question were ineffective in championing the cause of the people.³³ In fact, effective organizations did not emerge until after 1914, when it became apparent that there would not be an effective opposition if an opposition movement was not properly managed and organized. It equally dawned on these people that it is with this feature that nationalist movement will be able to challenge colonial administration more effectively.

The amalgamation of the Nigerian northern and southern regions in 1914 saw the emergence of the nation as a political entity. This development changed the face of nationalist struggle as the educated elites and the traditional rulers started sharing a common historical consciousness. They began to share the vision of one Nigeria of their dream. Nationalist struggle during this period started cutting across ethnic, linguistic and cultural boundaries. It started by acquiring the feature for justice, equality, and participation in government, and subsequently, it was directed towards actualizing independence for the country.

Different factors were responsible for the growth of nationalist struggles during this period. They can be grouped as internal and external factors. Some of the internal factors include the early resistance struggles, the activities of the press and elite discontent, and the economic depression during this period.

The early resistance struggles consist of the various oppositions put up by the indigenous people against colonial penetration. There were equally thoughts on nationalism expressed during this period. An example of these thoughts was captured from the expression of Edward Wilmot Blyden where *“he emphasized that Africans should pay attention to the original contributions of the continent and should not*

³³ - Ubaku K Chika, op.cit, p58.

emulate their races.”³⁴ Other acts of resistance experienced during this period were the secessionist within the church, when Africans were urged to establish their own churches. These early activities inspired the nationalists.

The activities of press during this period also assisted in stimulating national consciousness. These activities brought about increase in the number of the newspapers. The press, indeed, was guarding the rights and liberties of the people, and at the same time tried to interpret the people’s ideals and aspirations. It was interested on policies and national issues. John Payne was a great influence during this period. Through his paper, the Lagos Weekly Record, known for its anti –imperialist stands, he advised Africans to unite and fight their common heritage. He did not only champion the cause of Africa, but also popularized and encouraged the activities of protest movements. Other newspapers, whose activities contributed to the awakening of political consciousness, in Nigeria by this period include The Nigerian Times and The Nigerian Chronicles.³⁵

Furthermore, colonial policies contributed in stimulating national consciousness as traditional rulers and educated elite were dissatisfied with these policies. There was racial discrimination in the colonial system, as Nigerians were not considered eligible for top civil service positions. They were, for instance, excluded from the well kept quarters of towns known as European reservoirs and in most cases they were denied good jobs, and even if they were appointed, they did not have equal status and salary with their European colleagues. These colonial activities contributed in spurring nationalist feelings among the educated elites.³⁶

Economic depression experienced during this period equally encouraged the growth of nationalist struggle. The depression brought about retrenchment, unemployment, and economic hardship. There was, in fact, a drastic fall in wages. Consequently, the nationalist for poor financial management criticized the

³⁴ Falola T, Uhomoibhi M, Mahadi A and Anyanwu U, History of Nigeri 3, Nigeria in the twentieth century, (Ikeja, Longman, Nigeria, 1991). p154.

³⁵ Nozomi Swada, “The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society”, (Ph D thesis, University of Birmingham ,Centre of West African Studies, July 2011)

³⁶ Omolewa M, Certificate History of Nigeria, (Harlow Longman Groups,1986), p184

government. They, therefore, started to claim for reforms. For example, among the economic problems that induced the nationalists to struggle were the imposition of taxation, land expropriation for government purposes, which became a source of grievance for a people passionately attached to their lands, the intensification of economic exploitation, which was detrimental to the economy of the country; as well as the high prices, which were charged for imported goods and low prices paid for primary products.³⁷

In addition, the activities of Nigerian students were one of the external factors that contributed to the growth of nationalist struggle in Nigeria³⁸. These students contributed their own quota to nationalism during this period having organized themselves into organizations. One of these organizations was the West African Students Union (WASU) founded in 1925 by Labido Solanke, an indigene from Abeokuta, Ogun state. The organization served as a pivotal point for Young Nigerians, who were politically aggressive to agitate for the freedom of their countries from European domination. Fostering a spirit of unit, cooperation, national consciousness and racial pride among members, acting as information and research centre on African history and culture, presenting to the world a true picture of African life and philosophy; and promoting good will and understanding between Africans and other races, constitutes the objectives of the organization. Additionally, it called for many reforms in West Africa. Though its various activities, however, the WASU provided those students, who subsequently emerged as political leaders in their countries with political experience.³⁹

Another external factor was the Garvey Movement. This movement was carried out by the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican in 1914. Commenting on its impacts on Nigeria, Falola wrote:

³⁷- Olakunle A. Lawal, "British Commercial Interests AND THE Decolonization Process in Nigeria 1950-1960", *African Economic History*, n22, (1994), pp93-110.

³⁸ - Fewzia Bedjaoui, "British Policy towards Immigrants' Entry and their Education from the 1960s to the late 1980s", Magister thesis in British civilization, UDL, Sidi Bel Abbes, 1999, p. 120.

³⁹-Hakim Ade, Pan Africanism and West African Nationalism in Britain, *African Studies Review*, vol43, n1, (April 2000), pp69-82.

“The Garvey Movement had notable impact on nationalist activity in Nigeria. His message on racial solidarity and cultural nationalism spread to Nigeria. In Lagos, a branch of the movement was formed in 1920 under the leadership of Patriarch J G Campbell, the Reverend SM Abiodun and Reverend WB Euba.”⁴⁰

Garvey wanted the political independence of Africa. He believed that the Negro could only experience salvation via a free and independent Africa. He founded a newspaper named *Negro World*, which was widely circulated. His views were equally aired through this newspaper. His ideal, which was expressed via his newspaper, influenced nationalists such as Ikoli and Nnamdi Azikiwi, Writing on the influence of Garvey on Azikiwi, Olusanya stated that: “The motto of Garveyism: One God, One aim, One destiny, appealed to him he therefore resolved to formulate his philosophy of life, as far as practicable, towards the evangelization of universal fatherhood, universal brotherhood and universal happiness”⁴¹

The influence of the Second World War also constitutes another external factor that contributed to the growth of nationalism in Nigeria during this period. Indeed, nationalist feelings and activities were strengthened by the influence of soldiers, who had fought in the war. Most of them, however, returned with new skills but there were no means for practicing them. This embittered the returned soldiers. In addition, these soldiers had witnessed that the whites were not superior to the Africans following the defeats of the British by the Japanese in the Far East. Additionally, in India, these soldiers came in contact with Indian strong nationalistic feeling. They saw people, who were not better off about to be granted their independence. These factors prepared the minds of the returning soldiers for a movement to reform.⁴²

⁴⁰- Falola (1991), op.cit, p62.

⁴¹- Olusanya GO, op.cit, p554.

⁴²- Eluwa G.I.C, Ukagwu M.O, Nwachukwu A.C.N, A History of Nigeria for Schools and Colleges, (Onitsha, Africana First Publishers Limited, 1988), p120.

All the factors discussed above stimulated the nationalists to fight energetically for the freedom of their people from colonial yoke. These efforts of the nationalists were to continue after 1920s, when more effective organizations were formed contributing tremendously in the actualization of Nigerian independence. The emergence of these political organizations validates the views of Hodgkin, which hold that African political parties arose from colonial situation; the subservient group trying to modify its relationship with the dominant group. They continuously served as vehicles that aired the grievances, expressions, and the aspirations of Nigerians. They, indeed, contributed in creating political consciousness among Nigerians. Some of them had newspapers, which served them and played significant roles in sensitizing the general public on the situation of the country. They also made public the views of the members of their organizations.⁴³

An example of these organizations was a branch of the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) created in Nigeria following the formation of the organization in 1920. It contributed to nationalists' movement by sending a petition to the secretary of State for colonies making the following demands: the establishment of a legislative council in each of the British West African territories with half of its members being elected Africans; African veto over taxation; that appointment and deposition of chiefs should be left in the hands of the people; abolition of racial discrimination in civil service; development of municipal government; repeal of certain ordinances; and the establishment of a university West Africa.⁴⁴ The result of this petition was the incorporation of the elective principle in the new constitution that was developed for Nigerians in 1922. This gave the Nigerians the opportunity to be elected into the legislative council.

Another organization was formed by noble Nigerian elite, Herbert Macaulay⁴⁵, on 24 June 1923 called the NNDP (Nigerian National Democratic Party). It championed national cause by criticizing the colonial government over income tax of 1927, the appointment and deposition chiefs' ordinances, the reform of provincial

⁴³ - Hodgkin T, *African Political Parties*. (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1961), p46

⁴⁴ - Crowder M (1966), *op.cit*, p98.

⁴⁵ - See Appendix 1

courts and the extension of the indirect rule system to Lagos. It also claimed for the development of Nigeria's resources and equal economic opportunities for Nigerians. In addition, it claimed for compulsory education and the development of higher education institutions the fact which led to the establishment of Yaba High College in 1932, thereby making the emergence of higher education institutions in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Youths Movement was formed, which turned into a national organization in 1938, It asked for free education, universal adult suffrage, protection of Nigerians against unequal economic competition and higher appointment of Africans in the administrative branch of the civil service. Six years later, it was followed by the NCNC (National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons) formed on 26 August aiming at achieving internal self government for Nigeria. The contributions of the organization to nationalist movement were mostly left after the Second World War. Its newspapers, particularly, *West African Pilot*, played a significant role in creating political awareness among Nigerians. It carried out hostile campaigns against the colonial administration.⁴⁶

The NCNC devoted itself to the constitutional proposals presented by Sir Arthur Richards to the legislative council. These proposals were received with hostility by the organization for mainly they did not grant the Nigerians a great participation in the whole process of Government and administration. Consequently, several groups and organizations began their protests against the constitution.⁴⁷ Leading the protest, the organization toured the length and breadth of Nigeria stimulating the people. It also sent delegates to London to ask for reforms. This goal, however, was not achieved, the fact which made the organization enter into a dormant phase. It reappeared on the Nigerian political environment in 1951, with the emergence of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the Action Group (AG).⁴⁸

⁴⁶- Crowder M (1966) , op.cit, p98.

⁴⁷-Richard Constitution 1944-1951: established Houses of Assembly in each of the three regions and a House of Chiefs in the north, the houses of Assembly comprised official members (those appointed by the Governor, and unofficial members selected by Native Authorities from amongst themselves. From: "The Role of Traditional Rulers in an Emerging Democratic Nigeria" Uche Nworah (info@uchenworah.com).

⁴⁸- Crowder M (1966), op.cit, p99.

Apart from political organizations and newspapers, there equally emerged professional unions during this period. Some of them therefore include the Railway Workers Union formed in 1932, the Post and Telegram Workers Union, the Marine Workers Union, the Public Works Department Workers Union, the Fishermen's Association formed in Lagos in 1937, the Taxi drivers Union formed in 1938, the Women's Sellers Union formed in 1940, the Nigerian Students Union formed in 1939...etc These unions in one way or another contributed to the nationalist movement with moral, financial and physical support. Its workers constituted the bulk of the literate population and it was through them that the illiterate masses got the ideas about freedom.⁴⁹

As noted previously, political, economic and social changes significantly affected Nigerians' attitude towards the colonial government, creating widespread disaffection and providing an impetus for the burgeoning nationalist movement that emerged during the first half of the twentieth century. Although resistance to British colonial rule existed and thrived from the very beginning of the colonial regime, this resistance pushed for reform within the colonial system rather than independence from it. In fact, these early nationalist movements such as the Ekemeku Movement, the Women's war (Aba Women's Riots), the Ibibio Unions, the Mahdist Movement...etc illustrated the capacity of average Nigerians to organize and voice their opposition to colonial policy despite the obstacles.

4-2-1- Ekemeku Movement (1900- 1910)

The word Ekumeku in its indigenous meaning is onomatopoeic, conveying the idea of a whirlwind or something fast, devastating, invisible and yet forcefully real. It has a connotation of reality shrouded in fantasy, which throws much light on the society's general nature; it lies deep in the people's past. During the pre-colonial era, most of the towns had companies or clubs or societies made up of the bold, brave and sturdy men (Ikolobia), who were the objects of local pride during the times of inter-town strifes. Most of these men were renowned for their prowess and had become heroes of a sort. Most of these early societies formed by these people were for limited

⁴⁹ - Falola(1991),op.cit, p70.

and worthy objectives like the Odozi Obodo society of Onitisha-Olona, which was a party for the reconstruction and proper government of the town. In reality, this was the ruler's (Obi's) party⁵⁰. In some instances, radicals and extremist young men of the towns formed groups to oppose the worthy clubs and pursue a policy of 'might is right', seizing goods and ravaging towns. But this was not the essential characteristics of all indigenous pre-colonial town societies. In Ogwashi-Uku, there was the Ogana society, organized solely to oppose a trader from Aboh, Mr. I.T. Palmer, who was popularly believed to be leading the Royal Niger Company's officials into the Asaba hinterland⁵¹.

After the exploration of the Niger, traders and missionaries turned the river into a high waterway of proselytization and the advancement of commerce. The United Africa Company, later the National Africa Company and Royal Niger Company, established a trading station at Asaba on the Niger between 1882 and 1883. The Company acquired a piece of land on which they built their trading stores, instead of trading from hulks with the people. From this modest beginning, the Company made a treaty with the people, ostensibly to protect them, but mainly to trade. The use of this treaty by the Company to make pretensions at effective political power and penetration into the hinterland towns provoked an indigenous reaction⁵². The various societies (Otu0 in the hinterland towns were easily converted into the Ekumeku society. The most notable of the pre-colonial town societies which formed the nucleus of the Ekumeku movements were the otuochichi societies like the Odozi-Obodo, the

⁵⁰ - Interviews with Elumelu Okwudinou and Ajimuka Etokwe of Onitsha-Olona 15 Dec. 1962; Obi Mordi of Ogbowe, Obi Okolichi of Ogbowe and Monwuchie of Ogbowe, Ibusa 18 Dec. 1962. Obi Mordi is the next to the most senior Obi in the whole of Ibusa. A very old man now bent with age, he claims to have been born during the Ngiga War (Aya Ngiga), i.e. c. 1874, and still talks firmly, remembering events with delightful relish.

⁵¹-Interview with Okwufuleze, Umuenze Quarter, Ogwashi-Uku 10 Dec. 1962; Joseph Mordi of alum Quarter, Ubuluku 13 Dec. 1962.

⁵² - Interview with (i) Hon. F. H. Utomi, 10 Dec. 1962. He was the senior Tutor, St Thomas's College, Ibusa and was writing the local history of Ogwashi-Uku when interviewed. (ii) J. I. G. Onyia of Asaba 14 Dec. 1962. He was a member of the *Otu Raza* (the governing age-grade) of Asaba, and was born in 1896. Issele-Uku was the area of earliest reaction of young men and chiefs against the Obi for supporting the Royal Niger Company and Missionaries in 1893.

Idimoboro town club of Onitsha-Olona and Ezi⁵³, the Ogana and Onumba societies of Ogwashi-Uku⁵⁴ and the Akpala and Amuma societies of Ubuluku⁵⁵. In addition, most of the uncommitted able-bodied age-groups in all the towns came under the banner of the Ekumeku movement.

Initially therefore, the aim of the Ekumeku movement was to drive out the Royal Niger Company's personnel from Asaba hinterland and their trading stores at Asaba and Onitsha-Olona⁵⁶. The movement easily spread to all the towns in Asaba district. These included the Ezechime group of Issele-Uku, Onitsha-Ugbo, Onitsha-Olona, Onitsha-Uku, Ezi, Obomkpa, Issele-Azagba and Issele-Mkpitime. The Ekumeku centres also included the Aniocha group of towns-Ibusa, Ogwashi-Uku, Ashama, Ubuluku and areas near Agbor like Akumazi. A major clash came in 1898, when the Ekumeku movement had a direct confrontation with the Royal Niger Company's forces in a bitter armed struggle. In retaliation, the Royal Niger Company bombarded Asaba from the H.M.S. Flirt⁵⁷, moved troops into the Asaba hinterland, and succeeded in compelling an uneasy peace till the revocation of its charter and the taking over of its territories by the British Colonial Administration in 1900. The Ekumeku movement, therefore, ante-dated the advent of the British and the establishment of British judicial and administrative institutions like the native courts.

After 1900, with the determination of the British administration to penetrate into the interior of Benin and Asaba territories, the Ekumeku movement was actively revived and systematically organized in the Asaba hinterland. It became essentially a secret war cult, organized on an inter-town co-operative level and dedicated to resisting European encroachment or the establishment and consolidation of British rule. All able-bodied young men who wanted to demonstrate their prowess and local

⁵³ - Interview with Okwudinou and Ajimuka Etokwu of Onitsha-Olona 15 Dec. 1962.

⁵⁴ - Interview with Okwufulueze of Umuneze Quarter, Ogwashi-Uku 10 Dec. 1962.

⁵⁵ - Interview with Micjael Odu, Idumuosome Quarter of Ubuluku. He claimed to have taken part in the Ekumeku war of 1911 and to have preserved the gun used during that war.

⁵⁶ - Interview with F. H. Utomi at Ibusa 10 Dec. 1962; J, I, G, Oniya 14 Dec. 1962; G.O. Tolefe of Umuaji Quarter, Asaba 11 Dec. 1962.

⁵⁷ - Interview with G.O. Tolefe of Asaba 11 Dec. 1962.

patriotism joined the movement⁵⁸. At this time, the Ekumeku movement took on the character of a national military association and the whole of the Asaba hinterland, though some towns were more active than others, became permeated with a militancy which was to defy British rule for a decade. In a sense, the Ekumeku Society can correctly be described as an 'anti-European club'.

In the various towns, it was organized around prominent personalities, whose defiant and daring exploits in the ensuing struggle with British forces, revived in the people's minds forgotten traditions of militancy. The most notable of these were Dunkwu, Elumelu, Idegwu and Chiejina of Onitsha-Olona, Nwabuzo Iyogolo of Ogwashi-Uku, Awuno Ugbo the Obo of Akumazi; Nwoko of Ubuluku, the Ekumeku trumpeter; Mordi of Ubuluku, one of the best Ekumeku marksmen⁵⁹ and Onwuadiaju of Issele-Azagba, who later turned the greatest traitor to the cause of indigenous resistance by becoming the chief informant of the British, who identified the Ekumeku leaders and revealed their plans⁶⁰. Contact was kept up and maintained between the various branches of the society by the use of emissaries in a relay process, to transmit messages, plans of meetings and the latest developments, from one village to another. Nocturnal meetings were characteristic, and members were never seen in action during the day. The mode of summoning meeting was kept secret through the use of signals intelligible only to initiated members. Messengers would at times shake bullet containers around private houses in a carefree manner to announce the time of meetings to members without actually saying a word.

At other times, trumpeters were sent round to convey information on meetings by means of the trumpet. Some emissaries used ordinary finger counting and gesticulations to indicate the times of meetings to members. It was on account of these secret performances that the society was often referred to as the 'league of the silent ones'. It may be pointed out here that membership of the Ekumeku was voluntary, but

⁵⁸ - Interview with Obi Nwaeyizie of Ezi 15 Dec. 1962. Age c. 82.

⁵⁹ - The information on Ekumeku leaders given by Hon. F. H. Utomi was corroborated by Obi Chiogor, Obi Okocha and Obi Konewa, all of Umueka, Ibusa 18 Dec. 1962; Obi Mordi, Okolichi of Ogbowe, Ibusa 18 Dec. 1962 and J. I. G. Onyia of Asaba. Awuno Ugbo was described as the youngest Ekumeku leader (Nwanta Ekumeku).

⁶⁰ - Ibid.

its aim made it attractive to those who considered themselves brave. One aspect of the organization of the Ekumeku was its zonal arrangement around two centres⁶¹. Near to the River Niger and in the north-east corner of the Asaba district, the central meeting place for the Ekumeku was Onitsha-Olona. Here Ekumeku branches from Ezi, Illah, Obomkpa, Issele-Mkpitime, Autumah and Ugboodu sent their delegates whenever there was any central meeting. To the west of the district and in the interior, the central meeting place was Ubuluku. This was the centre for Issele-Uku, Onitsha-Ugbo, Ogwashi-Uku, Ashama, Adonta and Akumazi.

Though the Ekumeku had the character of a nationalist resistance directed primarily against alien rulers, indigenous supporters of British rule were similarly marked out for liquidation. The houses of such 'traitors' were usually burnt and destroyed, their livestock butchered and carried away, and such people could be pounced upon on their way to and from their farms and sometimes killed. Against the British, the Ekumeku's main target of attack were native court buildings, government rest houses, which were usually burnt down, and mission stations which were often attacked and destroyed. The personnel of British institutions, such as enthusiastic chiefs, court clerks, messengers and policemen, were also objects for attack. In conformity with its name, the Ekumeku members were not usually seen and known, yet their swift and devastating activities were frightfully real in all the areas of operation. Asaba town itself was a quiescent centre of the movement, which was thoroughly driven underground there.

The reason for this lies probably in the fact that being directly on the Niger, Asaba was within easy bombardment of naval boats, and was a garrison centre of troops both during the days of the Royal Niger Company and later under the British administration. Though there was no British-trained indigenous army to mutiny, there was a great deal of truth in Father Humbert's impression at Ibusa in 1902, when he stated that there was simmering in the Asaba hinterland, 'a conspiracy which might

⁶¹ - The most useful information on the organization of the Ekumeku was from Okwufulueze of Umuneze Quarter, Ogwashi-Uku. Various other informants like Obi Okolie of Ashama 10 Dec. 1962, and G.O. Telefe of Umuaji Quarter, Asaba, also gave useful information on this aspect.

equal the Indian Mutiny for the purpose of riding the country of the white man⁶². At the time, his gloomy foreboding was dismissed by Fosbery, who did not understand the Ekumeku, as 'based on no stable grounds'⁶³, but time was to confirm the correctness of Father Humbert's impressions.

Under British rule, the first serious manifestation of Ekumeku activities was in 1902. In that year, many of the towns in Asaba hinterland increased their arms purchases and resorted to an open defiance of the authority of British officers and their agents⁶⁴. All around Issele-Uku, for example, the towns refused to recognize and obey summonses issued by the Issele-Uku native court. This same defiant attitude towards the native court was also manifested at Ogwashi-Uku. The attitude of the people towards the native courts was for several reasons one of implacable hostility. In the first place, these courts interfered with the existing indigenous organs of government by vesting powers in a few individuals selected at random. The people reacted by boycotting these courts and repudiating the authority of the court members. Secondly, the defiant carriage and malpractices of the native court functionaries incensed the people of the Asaba hinterland against British rule of which these courts were a symbol. Specifically, the people were angered by the discriminatory, often vindictive and excessive fines imposed by the court members, their usurpation of the pre-colonial machinery for the adjudication of cases, the partiality of their decisions and their disdainful treatment of chiefs who were not made members of the native courts⁶⁵. During the Ekumeku uprisings therefore, the destruction of native court building, among other things, became a characteristic feature of the movement. When the leader of the anti-British group of Ogwashi-Uku, Mr. Azu, was summoned by the Divisional Commissioner, Central Division, Mr. Fosbery, he ignored the commissioner and refused to put in an appearance to defend his actions. In October 1902, a policeman sent to Oko-Okwe on a report lodged, by an Oko-Okwe man was severely attacked,

⁶² - N.A.I., Cal. Prof. 10/3, iv. Fosbery to High commissioner, n° 19 of 2 Sept. 1909.

⁶³ - N.A.I., Cal. Prof. 10/3, iv, Fosbery to High commissioner, n° 19 of 2 Sept. 1909.

⁶⁴ - N.A.I., Cal. Prof. 10/3, vi., Fosbery to High Commissioner, n° 19 of 2 Sept. 1902 dated at Ubuluku and n° 2 of 16 Sept. 1902 dated at Asaba contain details of this defiant attitude.

⁶⁵ - N.A.I., B.P. 1521, 4 ff. W. Fosbery, Div. Comm. To High commissioner, S. Nigeria 'Reports on Asaba' 16 Sept. 1902.

manhandled, and had his uniform torn to shreds. The man who lodged the complaint at Asaba, which drew a policeman to the village, had his house burnt down and his livestock killed. During the same tour an Ogwashi-Uku chief refused to go to Ubuluku to answer Mr. Fosbery's call.

All these acts of defiance constituted an open indication that under the Ekumeku movement, the towns in Asaba district were rejecting British control, even when Fosbery was accompanied by a force of forty-seven soldiers under Captain Kirkby. It may be mentioned here that the real nature of the Ekumeku movement and the society responsible for its activities were never quite understood by the British administrative and military personnel in the Central Division, of which Asaba formed a district⁶⁶. The district Commissioner for Asaba confessed in February 1902 his inability to sift the evidence from his spies and witnesses employed in the Asaba hinterland to report on the Ekumeku movement⁶⁷. It was to remain for many British officers an elusive enigma. At the time of its most active operations, all members of the Ekumeku society were pledged to an oath of secrecy⁶⁸. Those aliens, who tried to find out the truth about it had a difficult task, since most of those who were confronted with questions were, more likely than not, members of the society who would not divulge its secrets. In the presence of the District Commissioner and fearing that official reaction would tell severely on them, the chiefs of the villages involved hastily admitted the existence of the society, but explained its aims and nature only in halves⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ - In the 1880s, Asaba was the headquarters of the Royal Niger Company. It became a district of the Central Division of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900 and in 1906 Asaba became a district of the Central Province in the amalgamated Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. After the 1914 amalgamation, Asaba became a division of Benin Province.

⁶⁷ - N.A.I., B.P. 1521, R.A. Roberts to Secretary, S. Nigeria, Old Calabar 17 Feb. 1902.

⁶⁸ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/93 Egerton to Crewe Confl. Of 19 Apr. 1910 (enclosure). Capt. G. N. Sheffield's report on Ogwashi-Ukuk operations.

⁶⁹ - N.A.I., B.P. 1521, 20 off. Notes and statements on the Ekumeku by Reginald A. Roberts, District Commissioner, Asaba 1902. The Obi of Akuku reported that his people had formed some bad company. Two chiefs from Ugboodu admitted that their people had formed a company called Akumeku with no good motive. The Obi of Atuma stated that his people had formed a company called Ekumeku with the object of making war with the government. An indigenous trader, Mr. I. T. Palmer, called the Ekumeku 'this wicked club which made the people put on false appearances of friendliness in the presence of government officials'.

Confronted with a welter of half-truths and sometimes bewildering accounts, the District Commissioner, Mr. Roberts, concluded that the movement originated because the people in the hinterland knew that only an insufficient number of troops were the Asaba⁷⁰. The object of the society in Mr. Robert's own view was to 'regain their own laws and freedom to harass towns weaker than themselves who refuse to join the Ekumeku'⁷¹. His answer to the danger posed by the society was a patrol of the Asaba district with a large force before the movement assumed dangerous proportions.

For his part, after touring the Asaba hinterland for almost a month in order to find out the extent and influence of the Ekumeku and ascertain the general indigenous attitude towards the new British administration, the Divisional Commissioner, Central Division, Widenham Fosbery, concluded that the society existed only in certain quarters in Ogwashi-Uku, and that it engaged in nocturnal activities like robbery, seizures and in the process generated disorder and lawlessness. He thought that the 'Otuochichi' societies in Onitsha-Olona and Ezi were similar but different⁷². Fosbery showed a glaring lack of understanding of indigenous character when he opined that 'most if not all the towns concerned were hardly on visiting terms and the natives were daily seizing and murdering each other, therefore a combination on their part against the white man would be next to impossible'⁷³. Years of attempts at suppressing the Ekumeku were to reveal that a combination of the towns in Asaba hinterland against the white man was not only possible but was also already existing reality in 1902 when Fosbery was writing his report.

Resistance was encountered in almost all the towns visited by Fosbery between 19 August and 11 September 1902. In spite of his holding court in many centres and trying to settle local disputes, his patrol ended in futility. If the patrol was really designed to test the people's acceptance of British rule, Fosbery got unmistakable signs of its rejection. The people of Onitsha-Olona and Ezi were specially reported as

⁷⁰ - N.A.I., B.P. 1521, 23. R. A. Roberts to Sec. Southern Nigeria., Old Calabar, 17 Feb. 1902.

⁷¹ - Ibid.

⁷² - N.A.I., Cal. Prof. 10/3, IV. Fosbery to High Commissioner, S. Nigeria, N° 19 of 2 Sep. 1902; C.O.520, 18. Moor to C.O. N°43 of 28 Jan. 1903 (enclosure A). Actually, Otuochichi simply means a secret and nocturnal society.

⁷³ - Ibid.

being most insolent, while Illah people were on the 'verge of an outbreak'. He therefore advocated, as Roberts had earlier done, the sending of a powerful force of about 200 troops to teach the people 'a stern lesson'⁷⁴. Complying with this recommendation, Moor issued instructions for dealing with Asaba hinterland towns under Major Moorhouse in December 1902⁷⁵.

With Fosbery and Chichester as political officers and Brevet-Major H. C. Moorhouse as officer in command of the troops, a powerfully composed military expedition left Asaba on 1 December 1902 and spent the whole month carrying out serious military operations against the towns in the Asaba hinterland⁷⁶.

Towns like Onitsha-Olona, Ezi, Ogwashi-Uku and their surrounding villages were burnt and many of their quarters were levelled to the ground. The people were not allowed to commence rebuilding their houses until all known Ekumeku leaders were surrendered. Several of these leaders were taken into Asaba jail after being sentenced to six months imprisonment each. Native courts were established at Onitsha-Olona, Ogwashi-Uku and Ibusa. At the end of the operations, Fosbery hoped that, once the native courts got into proper working order, the Asaba hinterland would give no further trouble, because he thought that 'the Ekumeku and other secret societies have been completely broken and the power of the Government fully demonstrated'⁷⁷. Thus after dealing with the towns militarily, and the Ekumeku leaders by imprisonment, native courts were inaugurated as a way of establishing 'law and order', upholding the power of the government, and ending the Ekumeku activities. This was because, looking at the Ekumeku society as an essentially lawless band of brigands, military

⁷⁴ - N.A.I., Cal. Prof. 10/3, IV. Fosbery to High Commissioner, S. Nigeria, N° 19 of 2 Sep. 1902; C.O.520, 18. Moor to C.O. N°43 of 28 Jan. 1903 (enclosure A). Actually, Otuochichi simply means a secret and nocturnal society. Also in B.P. 1521, 32.

⁷⁵ - N.A.I., Cal Prof 9/2, iv, High Commissioner Moor to Fosbery, n°14 of 7 Oct. 1902.

⁷⁶ - C. O. 520/18 Fosbery to High Commissioner, S. Nigeria, 2 Jan. 1903; H. C. Moorhouse: 'Report on Operation in the Asaba hinterland during December 1902'.

⁷⁷ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/18. Fosbery's report of 2 Jan. 1903. These courts had been established in obedience to Moor's instructions on the operations. See N.A.I., Cal Prof. 9/2, iv, Moor to Fosbery, n° 14 of 4 Oct. 1902.

operations and native courts were adjudged the best tools to restore sanity in the area of Ekumeku activities⁷⁸.

But the burning of towns, the destruction of dwelling and the imprisonment of Ekumeku leaders left behind an abiding legacy of bitterness, while the establishment of courts presented the people with a visible reminder of British rule which they detested. Rather than having the anticipated results, the operations of 1902 intensified the people's will to resist. Events began to build up towards a large-scale trial of strength between a determined Ekumeku movement and British forces. By the end of 1903, the menacing attitude of the people to British officials had reached a point where the District Commissioner for Asaba, Mr. William S, Boyle, was turned back to Ogwashi-Uku in an attempt to reach Ubuluku - a distance of about 21 miles from Asaba⁷⁹. The Ubuluku people warned that they would allow no government official to enter their town. Nocturnal Ekumeku meetings were being held in centres like Ogwashi-Uku, Ubuluku and Onitsha-Olona. It was evident that the simmering rebellion, which had been scotched in 1902, had reached bursting point by the end of 1903.

The expected major outburst of armed resistance in the Asaba hinterland occurred in 1904. This rising of the Ekumeku in 1904 was characterized by the destruction and looting of mission houses beyond Issle-Uku, the burning of native court house and considerable acts of violence. The signal was given on the 16 January 1904, with the assault on an indigenous missionary and his companion at Idumje-Uno. This was quickly followed by the destruction of C.M.S. Stations at Udumuje-Ugboko, Akuku, Onitsha-Olona and Atuma⁸⁰. The Roman Catholic Missions at Ezi and the native court houses at Onitsha-Olona and Ubuluku were burnt, while chiefs friendly to the British and Christians were either molested or killed. The evidence given in court at the trial of some Ekumeku leaders revealed a bold and comprehensive plan to

⁷⁸ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/13, 29. Ian Hogg to Ag. High Commissioner (Fosbery) 14 Mar. 1904; Cal. Prof. 9/2, iv, Moor to Fosbery, n° 14 of 7 Oct. 1902 and enclosure.

⁷⁹ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/13, 29. Egerton to C.O. n°207 of 7 May 1904 and enclosures; B.P. 1521, 49, 'Report on the Asaba District for Quarter ending 31 Dec. 1903' by W. S. Boyle.

⁸⁰ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/13, 20. Egerton to C.O. n°208 of 7 May 1904.

restore the status quo. This included the murder of the Issele-Uku chief for his benevolent attitude to the missionaries and the British⁸¹, and the destruction of the mission house at Illah and of the United Africa Company's factories on the Niger⁸².

Finally, Asaba was to be wrested from British control in order to compete the return to and full restoration of the traditional ways of government. The destruction of native court houses during the violent Ekumeku outburst of 1904 was followed by the release of those imprisoned by the courts, the cessation of trade and the closure of markets. Almost all the towns in the Asaba hinterland were involved in this movement, and the threat to the factories on the bank of the Niger at Illah caused the Asaba commercial community considerable anxiety⁸³. Mission stations were deliberately attacked because British troops often used them as camping sites⁸⁴. The missionaries themselves often evacuated the missions before the arrival of troops. This was proof that there was effective liaison between missionaries and administrative officers in the war of extermination against the Ekumeku movement⁸⁵. By teaching the Christian converts to despise secret societies and resistance movements, the missionaries acted as a divisive force in the society and introduced a conflict of values, which divided indigenous efforts.

In their support of the Royal Niger company's and British administrative laws against traditional religious rites, which involved human sacrifices, the immolation of slaves and the institution of domestic slavery, the missionaries symbolized a new order which in itself constituted the very antithesis of all that the indigenous society held dear⁸⁶. An ideological cleavage was thus introduced into the traditional Ibo society in the Asaba hinterland. The younger chiefs, supported by the majority of the able-bodies

⁸¹ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/13, 29. Report by Copland Crawford, Divisional commissioner, 25 Apr. 1904.

⁸² - Ibid.

⁸³ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/24. Fosbery to C.O. n°48 of 9 Feb. 1904; C.S.O. 1/13, 28, 154.

⁸⁴ - Enugu Archives, I.D. C.S.O. 8/11. Father Zappa's letter dated 27 Jan. 1911 to Egerton claiming indemnity for the mission house destroyed at Ogwashi-Uku in Dec. 1909.

⁸⁵ - Ibid. On 15 July, 1909, District Commissioner Richardson wrote to Rev. Fr. Zappa at Ogwashi-Uku that 'during the course of the next week it is intended that some troops will commence operations against Ogwashi-Uku'. This was an advance notice of the attack that eventually came off in Nov. 1909.

⁸⁶ - E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on modern Nigeria* (Longmans, 1966), 14.

young men in the various localities, resisted the new influences in defence of the traditional status quo. The older rulers supported the missionaries, whom they had invited to settle in some of their villages, as was the case of Issele-Uku⁸⁷. The Ekumeku attack on missions and missionaries was, in addition to reasons already given, also largely due to the social impact of militant Christianity on the people of the Asaba hinterland.

The Ekumeku outburst of 1904 constituted a major challenge to British power in the Asaba District. This challenge was swiftly taken up by the British officers. Even before the arrival of troops, the Divisional Commissioner, Mr. Crawford, and J. Davidson, the Assistant Divisional Commissioner at Sapele, had moved the few troops and police at Asaba to Issele-Uku and the rebellious areas. Between 19 January and the middle of March 1904, extensive military operations were undertaken in the Asaba hinterland under Captain Ian Hogg⁸⁸. The Ekumeku forces were concentrated at two centres – Ubuluku and Onitsha-Olona. The few forces at Akuku were scattered by British troops. Using Akuku as the base of operations, Ezi and Onitsha-Olona were marched upon. By 25 January, Akuku and Atuma have surrendered. Troops were sent out daily to all surrounding towns. By 31 January 1904, Ugbodu was occupied, and from there an attack was made on Idumuje-Ugboko and its neighbourhood. By 11 February active opposition had ceased in this area. The march on Ubuluku was made through Ubulu-Okiti, and the people made a final stand against the British forces at Ubuluku, offering stubborn resistance between 11 and 16 February. When indigenous peace overtures were answered by the British demand for an unconditional surrender of the ring leaders, fighting was resumed⁸⁹.

By 12 March, all centres of active opposition had been crushed. In all, military operations were taken against seventeen towns, while twelve were fined and ‘visited’ for harbouring fugitives. Stringent conditions were imposed on the towns. These

⁸⁷ - J. C. Anene. *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885- 1906* (C.U.P., 1966), 240-1; Interview with J.I.G. Onyia of Asaba 14 Dec. 1962.

⁸⁸ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/24. Egerton to C.O. n°208 of 7 May 1904 enclosures. Ina Hogg’s Report on Asaba Hinterland operations dated 14 Mar. 1904.

⁸⁹ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/24. Egerton to C.O. n°208 of 7 May 1904 enclosures. Ina Hogg’s Report on Asaba Hinterland operations dated 14 Mar. 1904.

included the handing over of all those actively connected with the Ekumeku, the payment of compensation by the towns to the families of all those killed for their loyalty to the British, the imposition of fines on the towns and the rebuilding of all mission stations and court houses destroyed by the movement⁹⁰. The resistance was broken up, if only temporarily, with the arrest of about 345 Ekumeku members out of which 300 were locked up to undergo trial.

To show how grossly the British misunderstood the Ekumeku and the intentions of the people, the native courts established in Ibusa, Onitsha-Olona, Onitsha-Ugbo, Ogwashi-Uku and Illah were closed down or suspended till the people's behaviour justified their being reopened⁹¹. Native courts were left only at Asaba and at Issele-Uku. Thus, the very institutions of European rule which the people wanted abolished were closed down. The closure was, of course, meant as a punishment to the people.⁹² It was a curious coincidence of interests between the British and the indigenous people of the Asaba hinterland. Another reason for closing the courts was probably because, in the absence of proper supervision, they appeared to have failed largely in their duties. Whatever the arguments were for it, there is no doubt that, by closing the native courts, the British were unconsciously and unwittingly helping to promote the cause of a society, which they were so much bent on destroying.

After the military operations of 1904 and the trial and punishment of Ekumeku leaders, the British officers, as in 1902, felt happy to report to the Colonial Office with confidence, that '*adequate punishment has been inflicted on the towns and... The Ekumeku society will not be heard of again*'⁹³. It took a few more years for them to learn that, though battered and scattered, the Ekumeku movement was not broken, and it only needed time to regroup its forces and once more take the field against British troops. This did not take place until 1909, though the Agbor rising of 1906, in which a

⁹⁰ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/24. Fosbery to C.O. n°48 of 9 Feb. 1904; C.S.O. 1/13, 28, 189.

⁹¹ - Ibid.

⁹² - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/13, 29. Notes on the Ekumeku by Ian Hogg to Acting high commissioner, 14 MR. 1904. Cal. Prof. 10/3, iv. Fosbery to high commissioner, n°19 of 2 Sept. 1902.

⁹³ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/13, 29, 721. Egerton to C.O. n°208 of 7 May 1904.

District Officer, Mr. O. S. Crew-Read, was killed at Owa, was at first wrongly attributed to the Ekumeku movement⁹⁴.

By the mid 1909, it had become clear that the people of the Asaba hinterland had recovered from the military encounters of 1904 and were once more ready to challenge British power under the aegis of the Ekumeku movement. The occasion for this challenge was the chieftaincy dispute between Nzekwe, son of the deceased chief of Ogwashi-Uku, and Okonjo, who insisted that he had a right to the throne⁹⁵. When his summons to Ibusa by the District commissioner coincided with news that Okonjo had got the services of a lawyer, Nzekwe, believing he would be caught and deprived of his throne, decided to resist, after securing the support of all neighbouring Ogwashi-Uku villages subscribing to the Ekumeku movement. What is important here is not that there was a succession dispute at Ogwashi-Uku, but that, because the machinery for resistance existed, British authority was defied until the British had to resort to very prolonged military operations. Nzekwe's first act of defiance was his refusal to meet the District Commissioner, Mr. Richardson, at Ibusa. Nzekwe also refused to hand over the £100 fine he had collected from the people of Ogwashi-Uku for the murder of an Ibusa man⁹⁶. The second major provocative act of defiance was the burning and destruction of the government rest house and the C.M.S. buildings at Ogwashi-Uku⁹⁷. Thirdly, all the approaches to Ogwashi-Uku were barricaded to prevent any entry into the town⁹⁸.

The British replied with a military expedition under Captain Sheffield, initially with a maximum gun, three officers, one N.C.O., a medical officer and 131 rank and

⁹⁴ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/36. Egerton to Elgin Confl. Of 16 June 1906. See also "The Crew-Read tragedy and its sequel", *The West African Mail*. 21 Sept. 1906.

⁹⁵ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/93. Egerton to C.O. Confl. Of 17 May 1910.

⁹⁶ - The fine followed the refusal of Ogwashi-Uku people to supply witnesses or identify the murderer. The fine of £100 and the additional £20 for failing to come to Ibusa were described by the Provincial commissioner, Central Province, Mr. H. Bedwell, as 'very ill-advised'. He instructed that the fine should be reduced to £30. Enugu Archives: C.S>:E. 1/8/171. 'Special Instructions to Political Officer, Ogwashi-Uku Patrol' by W. Egerton.

⁹⁷ - Enugu Archives: C.S:E. 1/8/171. 'Special Instructions to Political Officer, Ogwashi-Uku Patrol' by W. Egerton.

⁹⁸ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/19, 30. Lt. Col. Trenchard's (Commanding S. Nigeria Regiment) Report Enclosure in Egerton to C.O. n° 375 of 1910.

files. The troops arrived at Ogwashi-Uku from Onitsha on 8 November 1909. The ‘very strong opposition’⁹⁹ offered by the indigenous troops led to a reinforcement of sixty men and one officer being sent later. After heavy casualties¹⁰⁰, the troops of the southern Nigeria Regiment engaged in these operations withdrew to Onitsha on 18 December 1909, without effecting any settlement of the issues at stake¹⁰¹. The people were given three weeks within which to surrender. Rather than do this, the Ekumeku troops, feeling temporarily victorious, swooped on the Roman Catholic premises, used as the camping ground by British forces, and burnt the buildings¹⁰². Captain Sheffield returned with troops to Ogwashi-Uku on 6 January 1910, and they were engaged in fierce fighting ‘for several days’ before regaining their camp. From 6 January to 4 April, the troops were consequently engaged by day and night without capturing Nzekwe and the ring leaders¹⁰³. The seriousness of the situation led to the despatch of heavy reinforcements of five officers, 160 rank and file and two maximum guns under Major Bruce, who left Lagos to take over command. The operations spread from Ogwashi-Uku to Aniogu between 4 and 6 May with heavy firing from the people’s stockades along the paths leading to the villages beyond Aniogu. This led to the death of Captain H. C. Chapman and three soldiers. Subsequently, the troops marched on Anyadike, Olo, Adonta and Aba, and finally the decisive battle was fought at Ubulu-Uno on 15 May. This last pitched battle broke the backbone of the resistance, and the chiefs and people began to surrender in groups between 21 and 25 May. Nzekwe finally surrendered with about 200 soldiers on 27 May.

Though the military suppression of the Ekumeku in Ogwashi-Uku had been ruthlessly effected by the end of May 1910, involving the destruction of houses and farms, it was certain that the whole of the Asaba hinterland had not been reconciled to

⁹⁹ - N.A.I., C.S.O. 1/19, 30. Lt. Col. Trenchard’s (Commanding S. Nigeria Regiment) Report Enclosure in Egerton to C.O. n° 375 of 1910.

¹⁰⁰ - By 12 Dec. 1909, seven N,C,O.’s and men had been killed, fifteen soldiers wounded, seven carriers killed and seven wounded. C.S.O. 1/19, 30. Trenchard’s Report in N° 375 of 1910.

¹⁰¹ - Enugu Archives: I.D. C.S.O. 8/11 as C.S.E. 1/64/6. Rev. Father Zappa’s letter to Egerton 27 Jan. 1911. Claiming indemnity for the Roman Catholic Mission houses destroyed during the rising.

¹⁰² - Ibid.

¹⁰³ - Egerton to Crew Confl. Of 19 Apr. 1910 in P.R.O., C.O. 520/93.

British rule. The other Ekumeku towns were itching for action. As Captain G. N. Sheffield observed at that time:

*'... the whole of the Asaba district appears to be in a very restless state, the Ekumeku Society which had been dormant is again becoming active and it is not confined to one or two towns; the people are swearing ju-ju not to attend court or obey summonses; and in many minor ways are showing a disposition to throw off government authority...'*¹⁰⁴.

The sharp and severe fighting of 1909-10 proved to be the last flare emitted by the Ekumeku in the Asaba hinterland. During the Ekumeku wars¹⁰⁵, many of leaders were captured and imprisoned, while a few defected, turned informants to the British and helped in tracking down the most notable of the Ekumeku leaders.

4-2-2. Aba Women's Riots (November- December 1929)

Both men and women wielded political power and authority (though in differing degrees) in pre-colonial Igbo society, where social roles and responsibilities were the channels through which power diffused, and where gender equality was measured in comparative worth. Hierarchical relationships in Igbo society were determined by age, experience, ability, marital status, and rites of initiation. Individual earned power, authority, and respect as result of their moral probity, leadership charisma, persuasive oratory, heroic military service or gallant prowess as well as intellectual and business acumen – attributes that were not the sole possession of one gender¹⁰⁶.

All the institutions and female organizations in Igbo gave women an opportunity to perform important and diverse political, judicial, and religious functions

¹⁰⁴ - P.R.O., C.O. 520/93. Enclosure in Egerton to Crew Confl. Of 19 Apr. 1910.

¹⁰⁵ - These are fondly recapitulated by the elders in Asaba District as 'Aya Ekumeku'.

¹⁰⁶ - Gloria Chuku, Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900- 1960, (New York: Routledge, 2005), p8.

that complemented those of men. In these capacities, women and their organizations acted as checks and balances in Igbo socio-political structures. This socio-political system was to change when it encountered the external force of British colonialism.

Colonialism unleashed forces and innovation that had far-reaching effects on Igbo women in particular and the entire society in general. The period was characterized by the introduction of taxation, Western education, a new monetary system, land alienation and commercialization, improved transportation systems, urbanization, and the introduction of new technologies. The period also saw the increasing penetration of foreign capital and goods in Igbo society, as well as missionary proselytization and the erosion of Igbo culture and religion. While some of these factors created opportunities that women exploited to enhance their status in society, others undermined their economic, political, and religious power. A few examples will suffice here.

The colonial administrators and other European in the Igbo region imposed their Western conceptions of state, family, and gender roles on the Igbo notions that were prejudiced against women. The British indirect rule system, which was imposed on the Igbo, governed through male authorities and also formalized male institutions. At the same time, colonial administrative systems ignored female equivalents¹⁰⁷. The newly established Native Courts, which constituted the smallest unit of colonial administration in Igbo region, superseded the popular village assemblies. The courts were administered by British district officers and a few handpicked Igbo men who served as warrant chiefs, court clerks, and messengers. Some of the warrant chiefs were very unpopular and lacked traditional legitimacy because they were corrupt, were persons of no consequence, or both.

The new colonial political structure almost rendered the Igbo kinship ties and dual-gender political system redundant. Women's socio-political organizations, age-grade societies, and other institutions that helped to foster checks and balances in the Igbo political system, and thus maintain equilibrium in the society, were weakened.

¹⁰⁷- Judith Van Allen, "Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women", *Canadian Journal of African Studies* vol6, n2 (1972), pp165-81.

The colonial administrators began to deal directly with male agencies on all local matter including those that previously belonged to the female domain. Consequently, the pre-colonial women's organizations and their leadership ceased to be politically active. For instance, women lost their authority over the marketplace to the newly appointed all-male market administrators. Women's power and authority were also undermined by the Christian onslaught on oracular consultation and the Native Ordinance Act of 1901, which declared all judicial institutions but the native courts illegitimate.

Similarly, the new colonial economic order favoured men more the women. Men and boys were trained in skills needed to manage newly introduced technologies and also were employed in the Native Courts, the transport industry, in the mines, the Christian missions, and expatriate trading companies. Women's access to Western education- the gateway to modern employment- was limited by its dual-gender structure that emphasized domestic science training for girls and leadership and technical instructions for boys. Access to the newly introduced British money also favoured men more than women through the male-dominated cash crop economy and the colonial gendered employment policy that discriminated against women. Colonial economic policy favoured men more than women in access to land, extension services, high-yielding palm seedlings, fertilizer, demonstration farms, oil presses, kernel crackers, pioneer oil mills, cassava graters, loans, and other innovations and new technologies that put men in a position to dominate the export and local economies of the region. With the above advantages, men penetrated and controlled female economic spheres. As a result, most Igbo women were pushed to the informal and petty sector of the colonial economy¹⁰⁸.

Women responded to the erosion of their position in the political, social, religious and economic spheres during the colonial period through a variety of distinctly female political mechanisms: boycotts, strikes, sit-ins, sleep-ins, and protest demonstrations against male authorities. During this period, women's anger was

¹⁰⁸ - Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance*, (Taylor and Francis Group, New York,2001),p 101

focused against the colonial government, missionaries, foreign trading companies and their Igbo agents. Some of the women's wars against these authorities included the 1916 demonstration over the colonial control of marketplaces, the 1925 Nwaobiala Movement to restore societal order and preserve Igbo heritage, the 1929 Water Rate Demonstrations, the 1929 Women's War, the Anti-Tax Demonstration of the 1930s, Price control and Produce Inspection Protests, and the Pioneer Oil Mill Demonstrations of the 1940s-1950s¹⁰⁹. The colonial authorities usually responded harshly to these uprisings, but the women never gave up. In the end, the colonial authority prevailed. However, women were able to achieve some successes in both the economic and political arenas. While some took advantage of the opportunities unleashed by colonialism, foreign capital, and mission education to become successful entrepreneurs, others served in the newly reorganized administration following the 1929 Women's War¹¹⁰.

Igbo women participated in the politics of decolonization of the 1940s-1950s individually and collectively through membership in women's organizations. Migration and economic diversification gave women an opportunity to form ethnic and career-based affiliations and associations in the newly emerging urban centers that provided bases for their political mobilization. One such women's association was the Nigerian Women's Union (NWU) formed in 1949 under the leadership of Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti¹¹¹. NWU became the Federation of Nigerian Women's Societies in 1953, with Mrs. Ransome-Kuti as its president and Mrs. Janet Okala and Mrs. G.I. Okoye as two of its four vice presidents. In 1959, the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) was born as a none-partisan umbrella society for women's organizations that would help to foster the education of Nigerian women, their welfare, and enhanced status in society.

¹⁰⁹ - Martin Thomas, *Violence and Colonial Order*, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p285.

¹¹⁰ -Ibid. He examines profiles of ten such women entrepreneurs, as well as a few of them who were appointed to serve in the newly reconstituted colonial local government.

¹¹¹ - Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was one of the most visible female political figures in Nigeria. She was a Yoruba of Abeokuta stock. For more on this formidable political icon. Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

Subsequently, branches of these associations were established in major cities in the Southern part of the colony. These included, for example, the Enugu Women's Association (EWA) and the Aba's Women Association (AWA). While the AWA was established in 1959 under the leadership of Mrs. Margaret Ekpo¹¹², the EWA was formed much earlier, in 1945, following the general strike of railway, postal, telegraph, and technical workers. Some of the founding members of the EWA were Mrs. Janet Okala, Mrs. G.I. Okoye, Alice Afamefuna, Priscilla Onyia, and Madam Peter Okoye.

Women also formed women's wings of the major political parties in colonial Nigeria. Although women's associations of the political parties were not autonomous, they did provide a platform for women to engage in the political process. Southern women (including Igbo) were enfranchised in the 1950s, partly due to the mounting pressure women put on the colonial government for participation in the political processes, but also for reasons of political expediency. The enfranchisement of women was supported by Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo (two of the most prominent southern politicians of the time), both of whom appreciated the advantage of an increased Southern electorate¹¹³. Enfranchisement offered women an opportunity to participate in election processes as voters, and also enabled some women to contest for elective offices. A few women who held political positions did so through their association with one of the major political parties of the time. The party was the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, later, the National Council of Nigeria

¹¹² - Margaret Ekpo was born in 1914 at Creek Town (in present Akwa-Ibom state). Her father, Okorafor Obiasule, was originally Igbo, but later became an Efik through naturalization. She married an Ibibio man, Dr. John Udo Ekpo in 1940. She made Aba (an Igbo city) her base or second home. During her residency in Aba, Mrs. Ekpo became an active politician and a mobilizer of women. She occupied both elective and appointive political positions as the president of the Aba Women's Association, a chief in the Eastern house of Chiefs, and twice the member of the Eastern House of Assembly representing Aba Urban North constituency. Stella A. Effah-Attioe and S.O. Jajaj, *Margaret Ekpo: Lioness in Nigerian Politics* (Abeokuta: ALF Publications, 1993).

¹¹³ - The franchise for women in the North was not achieved until 1976 through the Federal Military Government fiat. The Draft Local Government Edict N°189 of 1976 included the Local Government electoral Regulation which stipulated among others things that every male or female above the age of eighteen was eligible to vote. The late enfranchisement of Northern women was due to the persistent opposition from Muslim women in Kulle, who were not supposed to come out in public where they would interact with men other than their husbands and relatives.

and the Citizens (NCNC), formed in 1944 under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe. Through such associations, a few women leaders (for example, Mrs. E. Iheukumere and Mrs. Mary Nzimiro) became members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the NCNC in the 1950s. The NEC and CWC were the two most important decision-making organs of the party.

There were also female members of the Regional Working Committees of the NCNC. For the Eastern Working Committee, there were Mrs. Janet Mokelu, Mrs. Flora Azikiwe (wife of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe)¹¹⁴, Mrs. A.N. Wogu, Mrs. Mary Nzimiro, and Mrs. Adanna Okpara. These women served on the Committee between 1957 and 1965. While Mrs. Mabel Ojike became the deputy mayor of Lagos in 1951, a few other Igbo women served as city council members under the NCNC. These were Mrs. Comfort Okoye in 1954 and Mrs. A.N. Wogu (1955-65) both in Port Harcourt, Mrs. Jessie Egbutchay (1955) in Aba, Mrs. Janet Okala (1955) in Onitsha, Mrs. Janet Mokelu (1956) in Enugu, as well as Mrs. Bessie Ogomba and Mrs. Cecilia Iwunze (1959) in Lagos¹¹⁵. Mrs. Margaret R. Nwogu contested for the Orlu Southeastern Constituency as an Independent, but lost.

On December 12, 1959, Michael Okpara was elected the premier of Eastern Region and Akanu Ibiam its governor. Among the thirty Executive Committee members were Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, Mrs. Felicia Obua, Mrs. Mary Nzimiro, and Mrs. J.M. Ededem. Many of these women and others contributed immensely in the election to political office of Igbo men both at the regional and national levels of government through their organization and mobilization of female voters. Some women turned their homes into gathering and hosting places for NCNC members and supporters. Mary Nzimiro, for example, hosted many NCNC delegates in Port Harcourt, and was thus called the “Mother of NCNC” in that city. She helped her husband, Richard Nzimiro, in his election as the first mayor of Port Harcourt Municipality.

¹¹⁴ - See Appendix 1.

¹¹⁵ - J.E.N. Nwangwu, *Aba and British Rule, 1896- 1960* (Enugu, Nigeria: Santana Press, 1973), 234.

The leading role of Igbo women in mobilizing the womenfolk in southeastern Nigeria enabled the NCNC to control the Eastern regional government, obtain seats in the National Assembly, and elect Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the first president of Nigeria. There is no doubt that Southern women were very forceful in their demands for participation in political processes of the time and also very visible in the decolonization politics of Nigeria. Their political activities significantly facilitated the decolonization process and the achievement of Nigeria's independence in October 1960.¹¹⁶

4-2-3 The Ibibio Union (1928-1950)

The Ibibio Union was an organization, which sought to use collective representation to accommodate, resist, modify, and manipulate the colonial system. The problem created by Warrant Chiefs, some of whom were arbitrarily chosen, the high handedness of their courts, forced labor, tax demands, and the general unpleasantness of responding to the numerous and often excessive colonial demands can be counted as the initial factors responsible for the emergence of the Ibibio Union. It advocated populist ideals of good education for all regardless of sex, good roads, better prices for agricultural products, and good sources of water supply. Even though, there were within the union elements of bourgeois tendencie, the Ibibio Union remained basically the instrument for consolidating peasant class interest.¹¹⁷

The union was inaugurated at the Qua Ibo Church, Uyo on 28 April 1928, embracing all the Ibibio people. It should be noted that before its formation, there were already in existence a few segmental Ibibio organizations such as the Ibibio Mainland

¹¹⁶ - It is certain that but for the politics of regional and ethnic nationalism as well as political bickering of leading nationalists in colonial Nigeria, especially the unpreparedness of the North which leadership opted for a later date with threat of secession, the country's independence could have been achieved much earlier than 1960. James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Larry Diamond, "Class, Ethnicity, and the Democratic State: Nigeria, 1950- 1966", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol25, n3 (1983), pp457-89; Adiele E. Afigbo, "Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State", *Publius* vol21, n4 (1991), pp13-29; Martin Lynn, "The 'Eastern Crisis' of 1955-57, the Colonial Office, and Nigerian Decolonization", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* vol30, n3 (2000), pp91-109.

¹¹⁷ - Ahanotu A.M, *The Role of Ethnic Unions in the Development of Southern Nigeria 1916-1966*, (London, Frank Cass), p.155.

Association, the Iboku Congress, the Calabar National League and many others, all of which dealt with segments of the Ibibio people. The union attempted to bring all the existing segmental unions under the canopy of one organization¹¹⁸.

By 1928, it had become clear to the Ibibio people that they would have to adopt aspects of the values of the colonizing power to work for changes within limits imposed by the colonial authority. Military confrontation with the authorities had proved to be largely futile, and the court system, even with its many flaws, had given permanence to the new order. This new order emphasized among other things, development according to a western prescription, involving the embrace of western type education not only as a means to secure employment in the new economic structure, but more importantly as a means to gain familiarity with western style constitutional provisions and legislative procedure.¹¹⁹

By this time, too, it had become clear that the traditional educational system was inadequate in the light of the new economic, political, and legislative demands. Efforts on the part of the Christian Missions to provide western education had been not only sesultory but haphazd. The Prosbyterian, the Qua Iboe, the Methodist and the Roman Catholic Missions, all of which operated in Ibibioland, were conservative in their educational policies and divisive in their attitude towards other missions, which militated against educational development.¹²⁰

It is worth mentioning that education along western lines had come to be seen as a means to achieve all the development programs. The organizers of the union, indeed, argued that even beyond considerations of employment in government establishments and meaningful participation in western-style legislative and constitutional deliberations, the acquisition of western education was, in itself, crucial to the independence of mind and body. Thus, the union stated that by advocating

¹¹⁸-Ahanotu A.M, op.cit, p156.

¹¹⁹- Udoh, E.A, "The Missionary Scramble for Spheres of Influence in Eastern Nigeria 1909-1952", *Ikengal* vol1, n2, (1972), pp22-26.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*

education for men and women, it desired to produce more intelligent and capable leaders and useful citizens for the country.¹²¹

Thenafter, it was in the educational program that the Ibibio Union scored its most significant success. For example, in 1938, the union sponsored the scholarship of six Ibibio students at universities abroad.¹²² Furthermore, the Union urged the colonial government to make living conditions in the rural areas attractive. In fact, it urged the colonial government to provide hospitals, water, roads and bridges. It also wanted the government to dredge the Opobo port and extend the railway to Oron for easy transportation of agricultural products. In 1945, the union changed its name and became known as Ibibio State Union, which attracted further educated members. The latter, participated effectively in the political parties that emerged in 1950s claiming for more participation in the representative institutions. For instance, its leaders Chief Nyong Essien, Chief Efiang Okong Eyo supported the NCNC, while Dr Udo Udoma, Avan Ioku and Professor Eyo Ita joined the United National Independence Party (UNIP).

It should be mentioned that the combined efforts of the various nationalist movements, which revolted and for many reasons against the colonial regime, at different periods of time, along the course of the first half of the twentieth century, stimulated the colonial authorities to introduce reforms. The latter led not only to the emergence of more organized nationalist organizations, but to the establishment of independence.

4-3. British Colonial Reforms and the Rise of Forces of Change

Just as colonial rule altered traditional political institutions in the name of civilization, so too did it transform the economy of Nigeria. Ideally, the British believed that they could bring Nigerian societies into civilization through the development of modern economy. By expanding the commercial infrastructure and promoting increased trade throughout Nigeria, British colonial administrators believed

¹²¹ - Ituen, BP, *The Ibibios and the Efiks*, (Kano, 1950), p.56.

¹²² - "Subject of Instruction by a delegation of Ibibio Union to the clans of the six Ibibio Districts". In Eketdist 1 / 2 /43. National Archive. Enugu.

that they were fulfilling the dictates of the Dual Mandate, making the colonial endeavor profitable for both European merchants and Nigerian producers. In fact, the colonial economy did far more to enrich existing British commercial interests than to develop Nigerian industry and commerce into a modern economy.¹²³

The British approach to economic improvement had three main objectives. The first objective was to expand the Nigerian commerce through the exportation of raw materials-cash crops and minerals+ and to import the European finished goods. To facilitate this commerce, the British made large-scale improvements to the transportation and communication infrastructure of Nigeria, building roads, railways, telegraphs, and ports and expanding the navigable waterways. The second objective was to bring Nigeria into a cash economy based on the United Kingdom's currency. The third goal was to force the Nigerians to work for that currency. Over time, colonial economic policy resulted in the growing dependence of Nigerians on an export economy dominated by European firms, with which indigenous Nigerian enterprise could not compete and conducted business primarily with a view towards European profitability at the expense of Nigerian producers.¹²⁴

The most important export crops produced in colonial Nigeria groundnuts and cotton in the north, cocoa in the southwest, and palm produce in the southeast. Subsistence crops such as cassava, yams, and millet remained important throughout the period. The British economic scheme was to divert as much agricultural production as possible towards the exportation of cash crops, however, with the result that subsistence farming suffered under the colonial regime. The exportation of cash crops such as: cotton, cocoa, palm kernel ...etc grew rapidly in the period before 1930. The mineral exports like tin, gold, silver and diamonds also developed Thus, and in order to facilitate the transport of such commodities, the colonial government undertook large-scale projects to improve the transportation infrastructure of Nigeria For example

¹²³ - Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *op.cit*, p.119.

¹²⁴ - *Ibid*.

in 1912, the Lagos line joined with Kano line, making it possible for goods to be shipped from the north straight to Lagos.¹²⁵

Cash crop production, whether of cocoa, groundnuts, or palm produce, was dominated by small-scale producers who continued to use traditional methods of growing, harvesting, and preparing products for market. The existence of very small scale producers meant that they competed with each other, when the time came to sell their goods, which kept prices low. Further adding to the difficulties of small-scale farmers, cash crops were produced in the Nigerian interior but had to be exported from the coast. Farmers, therefore, either had to pay to get their goods to the coast themselves, or sell to middlemen, who transported the goods to the coast and sold them to the European shipping firms at a slightly higher price.¹²⁶

The exploitative nature of the colonial economy ensured that very little sustainable development occurred during the colonial period. Neither the European firms, nor the colonial government were willing to invest in the long term development of Nigeria in the period before the Second World War. European firms took their profit back to Europe, enriching shareholders at the expense of exploited Nigerian labor. Because so much of the wealth of Nigeria was being extracted for European profits, very few Nigerians earned enough to invest in local projects of their own. A few local industries continued to flourish such as: traditional textile weaving, brewing, and blacksmithing, but other local craftwork could not compete with the huge quantities of cheaper European imports that flooded the market.¹²⁷ Nigerians, therefore, became producers for and workers in an extractive economy that did little for the long-term development of their country.

Furthermore, and most importantly all colonial taxes had to be paid in cash. The imposition of direct taxation made it impossible for Nigerians to avoid participating in the colonial economy. Many Nigerians, as a consequence, found themselves engaged in the wage labor force at least part-time. After, the Second World War, and because Nigerian economy was affected by the crisis that gripped the world

¹²⁵ - Ekundare, op.cit, p.179.

¹²⁶ - Ibid, p180.

¹²⁷ - Ibid.

during 1920s and because of the collapse of the export market, the colonial administration began to make significant changes to the colonial economic model, undertaking large development and modernization schemes to appease the calls of a growing body of Nigerian Nationalists for greater economic and political independence.

It should be mentioned that the world depression added economic grievances to this growing discontent. The fall in the prices of cash crops keenly affected African produce buyers and transport owners. Indeed, European firms frustrated their attempts to participate in the import/export trade or to share credit facilities through the banks. The agreements of these firms to combine to fix low producer prices and high prices for their imports outside the operation of the world market further underlined the exploitative nature of the colonial economy. The African produce buyers and transport owners replied by organizing a boycott and trying to get farmers' co-operative unions to support them in withholding their produce. Thus, branches of the Lagos, later Nigerian Youth Movements (NYM) were being formed in different towns to debate and formulate ideas of political action to redress these grievances.

The British played down the importance of these manifestations of discontent but proceeded even before the outbreak of the Second World War to consider proposals for a suitable constitution under which Nigerians could participate in the discussion, and in somewhat a distant future even in the management of their own affairs. The idea was to create such institutions as to enable Nigerians to become involved in the responsibilities of government while they continued to learn from the British the arts of parliamentary government. The answer of the British officials in 1944 was the Richards Constitution, which was promulgated without any consultation with Nigerians. It proposed that the representatives of the various Native Authorities, meeting in regional councils of Northern, Eastern and Western Nigeria, should delegate some of their members to a central legislative council to discuss common problems. Its chief merit was that it offered, for the first time, a common political form for the whole of Nigeria. However, to use the native authorities as the basis of representation was unacceptable to the western educated elite, who especially in the

south, had been excluded from those councils and who viewed as unprogressive vagents of colonial rule. The educated elite would have preferred direct elections, though with a franchise limited to the enlightened educated minority.¹²⁸

The British agreed, in 1949, to abrogate the Richard's Constitution but insisted on involving not just the educated elite but also the mass of the people and the traditional rulers in an extensive exercise of constitution-making at village, district and provincial levels. The result of this widespread involvement was to bring into the open the problem of translating the limited cultural and economic contacts in Nigeria into concerned political action and eventual common nationhood. Although the pace of advancement towards autonomy and sovereignty continued to be discussed heatedly, it soon ceased to be the major issue. It became overshadowed by the question by whom and in what manner the powers being given up by the British were to be shared, how self-government would mean adequate participation of all groups in Nigeria and not the domination of all by a few. Therefore, various constitutional conferences in Lagos and London throughout the period 1949-1960 sought the right and acceptable constitution.

The British began with the revision of Richard's Constitution. This revision had been enabled by the unpleasant experiences acquired from the radical activities in connection with the constitution. Consequently, proposals were put forward by the new governor, Sir John Mcpherson, before the legislative council, wherby he had promised that the past errors would be averted and that the opinion of the public would be completely sought for. The promise was fulfilled and resulted in 1951 Mcpherson Constitution.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ - Akin L and Mabogunje, Nigeria, Physical and Social Geography, (London, Europa Publications, 1984),p.660

¹²⁹ - The Mcpherson Constitution 1951: under the constitution; traditional rulers in the north and the wesr made direct input into the selection of the members of their regional Houses of Assembly, at the Intermediate Electoral College in the west, and at the Final Eletoral College in the North. In addition, regional houses of Chiefs were established in both the north and the west, which equally influenced equally alongside the Houses of Assemby the passage of legislation in the area.. Furthermore, traditional rulers were represented in the selection of members of the national House of Representatives both directly through the participation of the House of Chiefs, as well as indirectly through their influence over the composition of the Regional Houses of Assembly. Uche Nworah, (info@uchenworah.com).

The constitution was a milestone in the struggle for Nigeria's independence. It recognized the right of people to actively participate in what concerned them. Nigerians participated in drafting the constitution and this was for the first time since colonial administration was instituted. The constitution also introduced some measures of responsible government. At the centre, there was a new council of ministers (made up of ministers nominated from each of the three regional assemblies, who took active part in making policies for the country's administration) that replaced the old executive council. The constitution equally encouraged the enlargement of franchise. It also laid emphasis on regionalism and brought about the rise of more political organizations to compete for new opportunities offered by the responsible government. Accordingly, two political organizations, which were regional and not national emerged, the AG and the NPC. With their formation as well as the emphasis of the constitution on regionalism, the forces of ethnic nationalism, and regional division and disunity came into active play in Nigerian politics. This development was evident in the 1951-1952 elections, whereby the NCNC won seats in the east, while NPC and AG made similar achievements in the north and the west respectively.¹³⁰

Political Parties, however, became divided along regional lines. They became forums for resolving intra-regional disputes and for safeguarding regional interests. For instance, the NCNC, which under the leadership of Nnamdi Azikiwi and Herbert Macaulay, had evolved as a national front to fight the Richard's Constitution, became more and more an eastern, and particularly an Ibo Party. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was northern by definition and dominated by the traditional elite of the Hausa-Fulani, led by Ahmadu Bello¹³¹, the Sarduna of Sokoto, premier of the northern region. The Action Group (AG), which had roots in the Nigerian Youth Movement, was essentially a western Nigerian and Yoruba dominated party. Minority groups within each region, who felt their interests neglected started to organize splinter parties.¹³²

¹³⁰ - Hodgkin T (1961), op.cit, p64.

¹³¹ - See Appendix 1.

¹³² - James Roberson, "Sovereign Nigeria", *African Affairs*, vol60, n239 (Oxford University Press, Apr.1961), pp145- 154.

The policy of NPC was to ensure that the north did not become dominated by southerners, who had had better facilities to acquire western education. They, therefore, opted for strong regional autonomy as well as a united north dominating the central government on account of its size. They demanded at least 50% representation and would tolerate nothing that might endanger this position, like the demand for the creation of more regions or the adjustment of boundaries to allow Ilorin and Kabba to join the Yoruba West. On other issues, they maintained skillful flexibility taking their stand in the way to win support for northern interests or at least to keep their southern opponents divided. The Action Group led by Obafemi Awolowo, the premier of the west also stood for strong regional autonomy, at least to limit the extent to which the West in the days of postwar boom in cocoa prices was subsidizing the rest of the country. It pressed for a rapid advance to self government and the adjustment of boundaries to enable Lagos, Ilorin and Kabba to be integrated with the west. In return, they were willing for the creation of more regions to allow the non-yoruba parts of the west to have a region of their own and to break up the preponderance of the north.¹³³

The NCNC under pressure from eastern migrants in different parts of the country, favoured a centralized constitution with rights of easy access to land, jobs and trading opportunities for all Nigerians in all parts of the country. Eventually, they accepted the strength of the demand for a federal constitution, but they continued to press for as strong central government as possible and the sharing of the revenue according to need rather than derivation.

The constitution as it gradually emerged moved from the 1949 idea of a centralized government, devolving power to newly created regions, to the 1954 autonomous regions of delegating specific powers to a federal government sharing others such as education, agriculture, health, and economic development on a concurrent list, leaving reserved powers with the regions. The new constitution or the Lyttelton Constitution, in fact, saw the establishment of a federal structure of government for the whole country, with each of the three main ethnic groups namely the Igbo, Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba, given dominance over their various regions.. The

¹³³ - Akin L and Mabogunje, op.ciy, p661.

constitution provided that internal self-government would be granted to those regions desiring it in 1957. It also provided that members of the legislative council should be elected directly. Furthermore, ministers were provided with full ministerial responsibilities and provisions on revenue allocation and status of Lagos as a federal territory were made by the constitution. The constitution, however, had its shortcomings. One of them was the regionalization of the Nigerian civil service. Hence, it could not serve as a unifying link for the federation.¹³⁴

To sum up, nationalism introduced ethnic politics and regional disunity in Nigeria's political environment, but it contributed to the liberation of the country from the nefarious claws of colonialism.

4-3-1. From Colonial Reforms to Decolonization

Extant studies on Britain's decision to commence colonial reforms after the Second World War have focused on why that imperial nation undertook the reforms, which eventually led to decolonization and the transfer of power in British African colonies in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The positions of the scholars of Britain's imperial disengagement from the African colonies are varied. While a category reforms started because it had always been the long term objective of colonial rule to relinquish power after a period of tutelage since colonial rule itself was a burdensome duty undertaken by the imperial powers¹³⁵.

Wm Roger Louis stated that international pressures, especially by the United States, during and immediately after the Second World War compelled the colonial

¹³⁴ - The constitution greatly reduced the constitutional powers of the traditional rulers both at the center and in the regions: At the federal level the legislature was divided into two Houses; The Senate was composed of 12 representatives appointed by the governors of the regions. The Governor-General also appointed two representatives for Lagos, while the chiefs of Lagos elected one. The Oba of Lagos was automatically a member. The House of Representatives consisted of 320 members, who were directly elected and for the first time, the house of chief played no role in this process. In addition, members of the House of Chiefs were not allowed to be members of the Senate, nor member of any regional legislature. At the regional level, the Houses of Chiefs and Houses of Assembly held similar functions. Either House could introduce legislation which required the approval of the other House. The cabinet of Councils of ministers at the federal level and the executive council at the regional level also provided a role for traditional and appointed rulers. Uche Nworah (info@uchenworah.com).

¹³⁵ - C.E Carrington, The Liquidation of the British Empire 1941-1945, (London, 1961), p37.

powers (especially Britain) to embark upon colonial reforms¹³⁶. Yet another explanation offered for the commencement of colonial reforms suggests that events within the metropolis dictated a change from rigid imperial control to an attitude of liberalism in colonial management¹³⁷. And finally, it has been argued that colonialism collapsed after 1945 as a result of pressures mounted by the colonized peoples themselves¹³⁸. Taken individually, these positions are necessary for an explanation of an aspect of the rationale for Britain's decision to embark upon administrative reforms in the colonies. An adequate explanation can be found in the conclusion of Dennis Austen who had posited that:

“Colonial governments went consentingly to their fate, but they had also to be pushed in that direction and that they were pushed... by local events in the colonial territories which obliged the Colonial Office and local governments alike to introduce reforms at a pace which in the post-war years began to quicken beyond all their calculations”¹³⁹.

In 1947, the first major manifestation of the official mind of the British government about the future of colonialism in British Africa came in the form of a dispatch signed by the Labour Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones (himself a virulent anti-colonial spokesman during the war), which expressed the desire of Britain to embark on the integration of the educated elites into local colonial administration¹⁴⁰. The decision to embrace the educated elites who, for nearly fifty years, had been sidelined in the scheme of things meant, in practical terms, that the traditional rulers who had been the bedrock of British indirect rule would have to be jettisoned and their

¹³⁶ - Wm Roger Louis, Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, (Oxford, 1982), p154.

¹³⁷ - R D Pearce, The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-1948, (London, 1986), p 67

¹³⁸ -Kalu Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, (London, 1964), p89.

¹³⁹ - Dennis Austen, “The Transfer of Power, How and Why”, in W.H Morris Jones & J Fischer, Decolonization and After, (London, 1986), p 10.

¹⁴⁰ - John W. Cell, “On the Eve of Decolonization: The Colonial Office Plans for the Transfer of Power in Africa”, Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, vol. 8, n°3, 1980, and R.D. Pearce, ‘An addendum to John Cell’, Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, vol. 10, n°2, 1982.

influence gradually wound down¹⁴¹. However, the intention to reform colonial rule remained just that, mere intention, until riots broke out in Accra in 1948¹⁴² and the rise of radical nationalism apparently woke the British up from what can be rightly described as an imperial slumber¹⁴³.

In Nigeria, a major step taken by the British to implement this policy of colonial reform was the decision to recall Sir Arthur Richards (later Lord Milverton) from Nigerian and replace him with Sir John Macpherson as Colonial Governor from 1948. The arrival of Governor John Macpherson in Nigeria marked a significant watershed in the history of Britain's colonial rule in Nigeria after 1945 because he personified the liberalism that had come into effect within the Colonial Office and the changed attitude of British officials towards emergent nationalism in Nigeria after the Second World War. Unlike his predecessor Sir Arthur Richards, who was 'Lugardian' in his attempt to browbeat the nationalists into conformity with Britain's war-time expectations, Sir John Macpherson developed a close working relationship with the nationalists. He wasted no time in courting the friendship of the nationalist leaders who had been isolated by Arthur Richards's hostility. This shows that John Macpherson was conscious of the mood in the Colonial Office, the readiness for change¹⁴⁴, and symbolized them as far as the future of the colonies was concerned¹⁴⁵.

By the beginning of 1950, a clearly discernible pattern in British colonial policy had appeared: constitution-mongering, which then became the major instrument of containing anti-colonial nationalism in Nigeria. This was a strategy adopted by Britain to contain the forces of Nigerian nationalism and control the pace of the devolution of power. This was because at the heart of the constitution-making strategy was the

¹⁴¹ - David Killingray & Richard Rathbone, op.cit. p. 17.

¹⁴² - Details of the Colonial Office's perception of the aftermath of the Accra Riots of 1948 and its implications for nationalism in Nigeria can be found in the National Archives (Ibadan) (NAI), CSO 583/4/48, Macpherson to Cohen, 19 July 1948.

¹⁴³ - E.E.G. Iweriebor, *Radical Politics in Nigeria, 1945- 1950: The Significance of the Zikist Movement*, Zaria: ABU Press, 1996; and H.I. Tijani, 'Britain and the Foundations of Anti-Communist Policies in Nigeria' 1945- 1960', *African and Asian Studies*, vol. 8, n°1-2, 2009.

¹⁴⁴ - R.D. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938- 1948*, (London: Frank Cass, 1982), p63., and A.N. Porter and A.J. Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization: 1938- 1964 (vol. 1)*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1987),p76..

¹⁴⁵ - Olakunle Lawal, op.cit., p154..

concept of preparation, which was meant to tutor the colonial peoples in the niceties of western liberal democratic government. The strategy of constitution-making was expected to keep the British ahead of the nationalists. However, rather than assuage the forces of Nigerian nationalism, the stratagem merely unleashed the inherent ‘Oliver Twist’ nature of Nigerian nationalist politicians, who were never satisfied with the tokenism offered by the British. Once a modicum of reform was introduced by the British in the early 1950s, Nigerian nationalists demanded more. Merely giving them an opportunity to have a say in their own affairs was not satisfactory, they wanted to control their own destiny. Indeed, on the eve of the commencement of colonial reforms that became decolonization in the 1950s, the centrifugal forces within Nigeria, exemplified by mutual suspicion and antagonism between the political parties which appealed to sub-nationalisms (ethnicity), had become so pronounced that even the date of self-government had to be different from one region to the other¹⁴⁶.

The concept of preparing the colonies for self-government had taken roots in 1951, when the first set of elections were held, ostensibly, to incorporate the educated elites into local colonial administration at both the regional and central levels. This election was to provide the British officialdom with the first opportunity to impart to the new leaders of the country the whole ethos of western parliamentary government. For the Nigerian nationalist politicians, it was an opportunity to learn the basic niceties of ‘modern’ government. However, decolonization or the transfer of power was not being contemplated at this stage. In fact, it was not until almost a decade after the famous local government dispatch was released that the whole discussion about British disengagement from Nigeria started. Between 1952 and 1956, British officials were content with playing the role of supervisors, overseeing the management of the colony by the new elites that had just been incorporated into local colonial administration.

Up until 1957, British colonial officials believed that outright political independence for Nigerian was still about a decade away. However, with independence for the Gold coast in 1957, it dawned on the Colonial Office that it was

¹⁴⁶ - J.Prosser Gifford & Wm, Roger Louis , Decolonization and African Independence, The Transfers of Power, 1960- 1980, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988),p78..

just a matter of time before Nigerian nationalists demanded self-government from Britain. In March 1957, Sir James Robertson wrote to the Colonial Office about the possibility of Nigerian politicians asking for independence in 1959¹⁴⁷, an opinion which was considered disturbing by another senior official of the Colonial Office who actually proposed delaying independence until some time in 1960, arguing that Nigeria could then be better prepared for independence¹⁴⁸. Although the colonial Office had expected all along that the independence of Gold Coast would have an impact on Nigeria¹⁴⁹, the Colonial Secretary himself suggested at the April 1957 constitutional conference that the conference should not be allowed to agree on 1959 as a date for independence for the federation¹⁵⁰. It was thought that Britain needed a generation to prepare a united Nigerian for democracy while in 1959, an official noted that two more stages were necessary before the final transfer of power¹⁵¹: one step after the 1957 conference, and with some three or four years of preparation, the next after 1960 or 1961.

Colonial officials sounded rather altruistic about putting in place an enduring structural legacy for the emergent nation. Sir James Robertson had noted in June 1956, when nationalists were calling for another round of meetings to review the Lyttelton constitution¹⁵² as agreed in Lagos in 1954, that the Colonial Secretary should emphasize the danger to the 'whole machinery of government which are posed by too frequent changes'¹⁵³. He then advised the Colonial Secretary not to allow himself to be drawn into agreeing, even tentatively, to any date for Nigerian independence¹⁵⁴. Robertson believed that sudden independence for Nigeria may lead to the collapse of

¹⁴⁷ - TNA, CO 554/1583, Robertson to Lord Perth, 16 March 1957.

¹⁴⁸ - TNA, CO 554/1583, Minute by T.B. Williamson to Secretary of State, 16 March 1957. The proposal was to grant minimal autonomy to the Federal Government at the resumed constitutional conference forecast for 1957.

¹⁴⁹ - TNA, CO 554/1583, Minute by T.B. Williamson to Secretary of State, 5 April 1957.

¹⁵⁰ - TNA, CO 554/1583, Minute by Alan Lennox-Boyd, 6 April 1957.,

¹⁵¹ - TNA, CO 554/1583, Minute by T.B. Williamson to Secretary of State, 5 April 1957.

¹⁵² - The Lyttelton Constitution was the outcome of the deliberate tinkering undertaken by the Colonial Office in consultation with Nigerian nationalists and essentially based on its perception and understanding of the trends at work in Nigeria. A useful study of the Constitution can be found in Kalu Ezera, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p73.

¹⁵³ - TNA, CO 554/905, Robertson to Eastwood, 11 June 1956.

¹⁵⁴ - Ibid.

the country and compared independence for Nigeria to a machine which must be in running order before it was granted to the country¹⁵⁵.

But although Sir James noted that once a semblance of independence was granted it would be difficult to stop it altogether, he pointed out the danger of delaying self-government unduly. If Britain wished to retain the goodwill of the Nigerians, it would be better for the initiative to come from her than for her to be forced to concede it¹⁵⁶. Although the Colonial Office appears to have been convinced that it owed Nigeria a duty to lay a solid foundation for its political independence, its officials shared Robertson's observation that it would be too risky to delay independence further. One official noted that it would not be worthwhile to 'risk the forfeiture of Nigeria's goodwill towards us by refusing the present demand for the sake of hanging on for a further three or four years'¹⁵⁷. It was also realised that the prestige and reputation of the United Kingdom were high in Nigeria at that time and that it would not be in Britain's interest to jeopardize some fundamental interests¹⁵⁸.

The protection of British interests was one major factor in the capitulation of the Colonial Office on the issue of independence for Nigeria in 1959. Bureaucrats in Church House later agreed that if Britain was to retain her privileges in Nigeria as well as the capacity to influence Nigeria's thinking on international affairs in directions that would favour her, then independence must be conceded to the nationalists¹⁵⁹. One official did note that nobody who had been acquainted at Colonial Office level with Nigerian affairs could possibly recommend (with equanimity) that Nigeria should be given independence in 1959 or 1960¹⁶⁰. But the dominant view remained that of Tom B. Williamson, the leading official in charge of Nigerian affairs at the Colonial Office at this time. He argued that if the demand for independence in 1959 was confirmed by

¹⁵⁵ - TNA, CO 554/905, Robertson to Eastwood, 11 June 1956.

¹⁵⁶ - Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ - TNA, CO 554/1583, Williamson to Gorell-Barnes, 9 April 1957.

¹⁵⁸ - Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ - Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ - TNA, CO554/1583, Minute by Gorell-Barnes to Secretary of State, 9 April 1957.

the government of Northern Nigeria, it would be extremely difficult and dangerous to resist such demand¹⁶¹.

It is, however, important to note that Nigerian politicians themselves had different reasons for demanding self-government in 1959. For instance, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the Action Group Party, told Sir James Robertson at the end of April 1957 that 1959 was just a target date to be used as a propaganda tool¹⁶². On their part, the northern emirs encouraged politicians, and particularly Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who had been leading to Federal Government since 1957 under the general direction of the British, to support self-government in 1959. The emirs feared that if independence was delayed, they would lose much of their power to the emerging educated class and would not be able to recover their old authority¹⁶³.

At the same time, there was no unanimity within the colonial administration in Nigeria about the desirability of independence for the country in 1959 or early 1960. While Sir James Robertson alerted the Colonial Office to the danger of further delay to self-government for the federation¹⁶⁴, the governor of the North, Sir Brian Sharwood-Smith, advised delay¹⁶⁵. To him, while Britain ought to retain the goodwill of Nigerians, what was needed at that time was a delaying action with Her Majesty's Government au umpire, and the means to be provided by the nationalists. In other words, British officials needed no special tactics to pre-empt Nigerian nationalist politicians, considering the inherent and seemingly perpetual conflicts within the nationalists' camp¹⁶⁶. By mid-1957, the Colonial Office had accepted in principle that

¹⁶¹ - TNA, CO554/1583, Minute by Gorell-Barnes to Secretary of State, 9 April 1957.

¹⁶² - TNA, CO 554-1583, 'Note on a conversation with Awolowo', in Robertson to Williamson, 23 April 1957.

¹⁶³ - TNA, CO 554/1583m 'Note on a Conversation with Balewa', in *ibid*.

¹⁶⁴ - Sir James Robertson recalled in a post-tenure interview that he told the Colonial Secretary 'in 1958 of 1959 (...) that if we did not give independence in 1960, we were going to have a lot of trouble', in A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, *The Transfer of Power: The Colonial Administrator in the Age of Decolonization* (vol.3), (Inter-Faculty committee, Oxford University, 1979), p. 128.

¹⁶⁵ - TNA, CO 554/1596, Sharwood-Smith to Williamson, 14 April 1957.

¹⁶⁶ - The phenomenon of intra-nationalist conflicts has been discussed fully in Olakunle Lawal, *op.cit.*, pp. 176- 201.

federal self-government for Nigeria was a matter that could not be delayed without the acquiescence of Nigerian politicians. Meanwhile, Tafawa Balewa had been found to be the most acceptable 'rallying point for divergent opinions in Nigeria and had thus been pencilled down for the Prime Ministership of Nigeria, if and when independence was eventually granted'¹⁶⁷.

The next round of controversy, then, centred upon what date would be mutually acceptable to the colonial power and the nationalists. By 1958, pressures were mounting among nationalists for self-government in April 1960. In May 1958, Sir Ralph Grey reports to the Colonial Office that Balewa and some Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) Ministers had become convinced of the need to have independence in April 1960¹⁶⁸. The new interest in self-government found support and agreement in the position of the movement for colonial Freedom in London, which included over 100 MPs. This movement passed a resolution opposing Britain's rejection of 1959 as date of Nigeria's independence¹⁶⁹. By the end of May 1958, Balewa was asking the governor-General to help him look for a 'celebration officer' (i.e. someone to take charge of the planning and arrangement of suitable celebrations) for independence¹⁷⁰.

Colonial Office bureaucrats, however, remained reluctant to assign a specific date for the attainment of independence by Nigeria. For instance, Maurice Smith, a senior official at the Colonial Office, strongly advised against April 1960 as the date for Nigeria's independence. He gave two major reasons for his objection.

The first was that any acceptance of April 1960 would be an embarrassment to Britain's relations with the Central African Federation, apparently, because the Colonial Office was not even contemplating outright independence for the area as of this time. His second reason was the 'situation in Nigeria itself'¹⁷¹: Although some

¹⁶⁷- Sir James Robertson said that Balewa was 'greatly respected by other parties' and that when the choice of a Prime minister had to be made, 'the choice was not difficult', in Kirk-Greene, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

¹⁶⁸- TNA, CO 554/1596, Grey to Eastwood, 8 May 1958.

¹⁶⁹- TNA, CO 554-1596, Helen Bastable (Secretary of the Movement for Colonial Freedom) to commissioner for the Northern Region, 7 May 1958.

¹⁷⁰- TNA, CO 554/1596, Robertson to Macpherson, 27 May 1958.

¹⁷¹- TNA, CO 554/1596, Minute by Maurice Smith to A, Emmanuel and C.G. Eastwood, 15 May 1958.

progress had been made since 1957, there was little doubt that a federal government at that time was likely to be an uneasy coalition¹⁷². He compared the situation to that in France where successive coalition governments stayed in office as long as they were able to avoid any decisive action that might offend the interest of at least one of their diverse components. Smith also cited disorder in the East and the West and the permanent threat of troubles in the North as evidence of Nigeria's unpreparedness for self-rule. To him, the Eastern regional government of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was perhaps the most 'inept display of regional government yet seen in Nigeria, while the northern government still hangs almost entirely on the vain and unreliable Premier. Only in the West does government appear to be competent and stable'¹⁷³. Furthermore, Britain's Cabinet was reluctant to grant independence because it feared that the expansion of the Commonwealth might lead to the creation of an Afro-Asian bloc within the organisation itself¹⁷⁴. Nigeria, if it became independent, would tip the numerical balance in favour of the Afro-Asian group¹⁷⁵. Consideration was also given to the need to address the feeling of the old Commonwealth, particularly South Africa, about such enlargement¹⁷⁶.

In spite of the reservation outlined above, Britain was left with little or no choice but to agree that Nigeria would become independent in 1960. In fact, sir Ralph Grey informed Sir John Macpherson in June 1958, that political facts in Nigeria indicated that: '*the real power to determine the pace of events has in fact passed from us to the local people and that attempts made to persuade them to a slower pace would be misunderstood and merely result in a loss of goodwill*'¹⁷⁷. By mid-1958, there were indications that the Colonial Office had given up the struggle¹⁷⁸ against independence in 1960 and the Cabinet agreed, provided that essential constitutional and military

¹⁷² - TNA, CO 554/1596, Minute by Maurice Smith to A, Emmanuel and C.G. Eastwood, 15 May 1958.

¹⁷³ - Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ - TNA, PREM 11/2436, Minute, Cabinet Meeting, 11 September 1958.

¹⁷⁵ - Ibid. Some of these countries included India, Australia, Canada, Pakistan, Ceylon, the Federation of West Indies, Bangladesh.

¹⁷⁶ - Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ - TNA, CO 554/1958, Grey to Macpherson, 24 June 1958.

¹⁷⁸ - in 1958 for instance, Alan Lennox-Boyd informed the British Cabinet that outside the Western Region, there was no evidence of Nigerians being capable of running their own affairs well enough. TNA, CO 554/1958, Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the British Cabinet, July 1958.

safeguards were guaranteed¹⁷⁹. In March 1959, the Colonial Secretary wrote to the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Kilmuir, who was also the Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the British parliament, asking for agreement to authorize the Parliamentary council to draft the necessary Bill on Nigerian Independence¹⁸⁰. In July 1959, the Colonial Office commended the drafting of the Nigerian Independence Bill¹⁸¹. Once a decision was taken in the Colonial Office, some attempts were made to prepare for physical imperial disengagement. Preparation for outright independence meant the formalization of Nigeria's membership of international organizations and the establishment of diplomatic offices in major political and economic capitals of the world.

4-3-2. The Preparation for Independence

As part of the general preparation of Nigeria for independence, Britain took steps to train some Nigerians in the art of practical diplomacy by attaching such individuals to the Foreign Office in London and sending some of them to the University of Oxford for training. Some were also posted to important political and economic capitals for affiliation to British Missions. From 1958, some forty Nigerian public officers commended training in anticipation of the first diplomatic posts to be established after independence. One such training centre outside the United Kingdom was Washington D.C., where one Reginald Barrett, a British official heading the Nigerian liaison Office, an autonomous arm of the British Embassy in the United States, supervised the exercise¹⁸². The Nigerian officers were trained in the vagaries of diplomatic procedures, protocol, international relations and their social usage. The British government also arranged with United States officials from the State Department to give lectures and discuss practical problems with the trainees. Some also took regular courses in 'African Issues in International Relations' at the John

¹⁷⁹ - TNA, PREM 11/2436, Minute, Cabinet meeting, 11 September 1958.

¹⁸⁰ - TNA, CO 554/1610, Macleod to viscount Kilimuir, 3 March 1960.

¹⁸¹ - TNA, CO 554/1610, Minute by Barder to Smith, 23 July 1959.

¹⁸² - TNA, CO 554/1554 for details of the proposals for the training of Nigerian for career posts in the diplomatic service. See also Vernon McKay, *The rise of Africa in world Politics*, New York: Macfadden Books, 1964, p. 154.

Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies¹⁸³. They spent some time in New York to observe the United Nations, serving as members of the British Delegation¹⁸⁴. These men were to form the core of Nigeria's first set of career diplomats, trained along the lines of western, and especially British, diplomatic traditions. It is, however, important to note that these were part of the general preparations for self-government for Nigeria (not independence), at least a decade or so from 1956-57. The nationalists simply seized the initiatives and accelerated the process beyond the imagination of British officials.

Nigeria's post-independence foreign policy became a campaign issue in the elections that were organized in 1959, before independence. The character of Nigeria's post-independence foreign policy could no longer be ignored by the Nigerian political parties. In January 1959, therefore, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa asked his secretary, Peter Stallard, to request the schedule officer in the Foreign Office, S.J. Fingland, to produce for him, on a personal basis, a note on the foreign policy of an independent Nigeria. This seemingly simple invitation provided an opportunity for colonial officials to influence the thinking of the federal Prime Minister on foreign affairs on the eve of independence¹⁸⁵. Significantly, another official, A.E. Emmanuel, noted that:

“Balewa's request seems to offer to us a most unique opportunity to exert a favourable influence on the minds of Nigerian Ministers in foreign policy matters. In the first few years of Independence, we have been thinking of how to use this opportunity to the best advantage and we think that if our advice is to make the strongest impact, it should come from the Governor-General rather than in the form of an informed note by Fingland”¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸³ - V. Mckay, op.cit., p. 156.

¹⁸⁴ - Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ - TNA, CO 554/2059, Snelling to Fingland, 19 January 1959.

¹⁸⁶ - TNA, CO 554/2059, Minute by Emmanuel to Allen, n.d.

Thus, the colonial Office, with due consultation with the Foreign Office, embarked upon a rigorous attempt to shape Nigeria's post-independence foreign policy from early 1959 until the final disengagement in 1960.

S.J. Fingland suggested the following broad policy outlines which Britain should encourage Nigeria to pursue after 1960¹⁸⁷. First, Nigeria should not be encouraged to pursue a policy of 'neutralism' in the Cold War politics of the post-1945 era. The ostensible reason for this suggestion was that 'neutrals were not always able to control their degree of neutrality and may find themselves supporting a far from neutral interest', and that in any case, neutrals 'could not escape involvement in the event of a thermonuclear war because many of them would be as dead as combatants'. Above all, neutralism was found to be morally unjustifiable while 'practical politics' would not permit any such policy¹⁸⁸.

Second, Nigeria's most important relationship should be her close and fundamental tie with the United Kingdom and her position as an independent constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth of Nations. This was to encourage Nigeria to search for and support those countries whose policies were animated by the same belief as her own¹⁸⁹. On her part, Britain appointed a man of Cabinet rank, Lord Head, who was previously Secretary of State for War (1951- 56) and also Minister for Defence (1956-57), as the first High Commissioner to Nigeria. This, in the words of a top official of the Colonial Office, 'showed the importance attached by the UK to the post'¹⁹⁰. It is also important to note that S,J,G, Fingland found it desirable to 'formally cast off his "adviser"'s hat and don, publicly, (his) U.K. one in preparation for the opening of the high commission Office on the 1st of October¹⁹¹.

Third, Nigeria should seek countries whose attitudes to basic human values and free institutions she could respect because they were in large measure identical to her

¹⁸⁷ - TNA, CO 554/2059, suggested Outlines of Foreign Policy of an Independent Nigeria, January 1959.

¹⁸⁸ - Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ - Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ - TNA, CO 554/2554, C.G. Eastwood to D. Williams, 7 July 1960.

¹⁹¹ - TNA, CO 554/2554, Gardner-Brown to C.G. Eastwood, 4 August 1960.

own. It was specifically stated that Nigeria should particularly aim to retain and expand her existing ties of friendship with the United States¹⁹².

Fourth, although it was suggested that Nigeria should condemn racism, she was also enjoined to refuse to 'pillory' her friends publicly or to join forces with other countries in denigrating them in, for instance, the United Nations¹⁹³. This suggestion might explain why Nigeria later spurned the call by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to sever diplomatic relations with Britain over the unilateral Declaration of Independence by Rhodesia in November 1965.

Fifth, it was suggested that in her African policies, Nigeria should avoid friendship with radical countries and be 'careful of Nasser's design to dominate Africa'¹⁹⁴. Nigeria should be suspicious of any form of Pan-Africanism which could lead its followers to accept, consciously or unconsciously, the domination of outside influence and thus to fall into a worse form of 'colonialism' than they had ever known. In the same vein, no West African Federation should be allowed to break Nigeria's friendship with other countries such as the United Kingdom or with the Commonwealth. Significantly, the outline also suggested that Nigeria's foreign policy after independence would be better with the 'free world' in order to harness and develop –through foreign capital- her vast potentialities¹⁹⁵.

It is interesting to note that a number of actions taken by the Balewa government really followed this suggestion. For instance, African liberation, which was expected to be a major focus of Nigeria's African policy, received a rather lukewarm attitude from the Balewa administration- although in the short term, Nigeria championed the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961¹⁹⁶.

In 1962, the Nigerian government refused military training facilities to the liberation movements from Angola, just as at the 1961 Monrovia Conference of

¹⁹² - TNA, CO 554/2554, Gardner-Brown to C.G. Eastwood, 4 August 1960.

¹⁹³ - Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ - Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ - Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ -Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining empire: The road to Decolonization, 1918- 1968*,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 319- 321.

African states, Balewa had warned against 'indiscriminate aid' to the liberation movements. In the same manner, against the 1963 date fixed by the All-African Peoples Organization of the independence of all colonial territories, Nigeria moved a motion in the United Nations that set 1970 as the target date for their independence. In fact, *The Economist* rightly opined in 1961 that Abubakar had a more hesitant approach to African unity than Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and this explained their divergent positions on the subject in the run-up to the formation of the OAU in 1963¹⁹⁷. In 1960, the Prime minister had taken a tour of West Africa and met the leaders of Ghana, Togo, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. After talking to Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa¹⁹⁸ about his trip, Sir James Robertson, the outgoing Governor-General, reported that

“(Balewa) had enjoyed meeting M. Houphouet Boigny and found him not only pleasant but held similar views to his own. He does not disguise his dislike of Dr. Nkrumah, and his suspicion of M. Sekou Toure, though he was pleased to discover, in conversation with M. Sekou Toure, that the latter shared his dislike of Dr. Nkrumah. The Prime minister seems bent on forming a group of states in West Africa with similar ideas, who can counter Dr. Nkrumah’s influence, and work together for economic, social and cultural rapprochement, rather than for the formation of a closer union¹⁹⁹.”

It can then be seen that although Balewa was tutored by the British on a preferred direction of an African policy, it was clear from the onset that he had his own preferences and idiosyncrasies as to what road Nigeria should tread on Pan-

¹⁹⁷ - *The Economist*, 7 October 1961.

¹⁹⁸ See Appendix I.

¹⁹⁹ - TNA, DO 177/12, Robertson to Permanent Under-Secretary of State, September 1960. Also in Olajide Aluko, *Ghana and Nigeria: A Study in Inter-African Discord*, (London: Barnes and Noble, 1978), p. 64.

African matters. In fact, in spite of the admonition of the British that Nigeria should play down on the idea of African unity, Balewa declared: “We belong to Africa and Africa must claim first mention in our external affairs”²⁰⁰. The British were conscious of this tendency. J.O. Moreton, a senior official at the British High Commission in Nigeria, wrote to the Colonial Office confirming the sentiments already identified with Balewa at independence| ‘I have always said that Nigerians are Africans first and foremost and that their foreign policy would be dictated primarily by their relations with other African countries. The Commonwealth and Britain come some way behind’²⁰¹. The implication of this was that once the Nigerian nationalist politicians assumed power, they were more inclined to toe an independent line.

Sixth, British concerns centred on Nigeria’s attitude towards the Soviet Union in a post-colonial era. Nigeria was advised against any close dealing with the Soviet Union, ‘which had a sinister record of promoting subversion in other countries, especially through the formation of local communist parties’²⁰². She was to be discouraged from any immediate exchange of diplomatic representation with the Soviet Union or with other Iron Curtain countries²⁰³. By August 1959, the Nigerian Federal Prime Minister was ready to implement this particular recommendation as he asked Fingland how he could counter Russian advances or diplomatic relations without yielding any ground²⁰⁴.

This suggestion appeared to have been well taken. In the words of Oye Ogunbadejo, Balewa ‘held tenaciously to the western values he had inherited from the British’²⁰⁵. According to him, Balewa’s perception of and attitude towards the Soviet Union was a result of his devoutly religious disposition to many issues. In ‘a normative approach to foreign relations’, his foreign policy was clear cut: ‘either

²⁰⁰ - Olajide Aluko., *opcit*, p. 88.

²⁰¹ - TNA, DO 177/12, Moreton to V.C. Martin, 17 October 1961.

²⁰² - TNA, DO 177/12, ‘Draft Confidential Annex on Nigerian Foreign Policy After Independence’, n.d.

²⁰³ - *Ibid*.

²⁰⁴ - TNA, DO 177/12, cited by Allen in his letter to Gallagher, 5 August 1959.

²⁰⁵ - Oyo Ogunbadejo, ‘Ideology and Pragmatism: The soviet Role in Nigeria, 1960- 1977’, *Orbis*, vol. 25. N°4, (1978). pp45-67.

support the West and be in good and respectable company, or support the communist and be in the company of evil'²⁰⁶. Obviously the Prime Minister took the admonition of the British to heart in his dealings with the Soviet Union during the early years of Nigeria's independence. Although the Soviets were invited to Nigeria's independence celebration, Balewa told the delegation that Nigeria was interested only in economic, not political, relations²⁰⁷. This disguised hostility was only abandoned by the Nigerian government in the late 1960s when the realities of the civil war brought it home to the Nigerian authorities that there could only be permanent interests but not permanent friends in international relations²⁰⁸.

However, much as Balewa appeared rather patronizing and ever-willing to do the wish of the British government, local opinion and domestic politics also influenced his attitude towards some of the emergent issues of a diplomatic nature in the early years of independence. Balewa was particularly aware of domestic public opinion: he complained to the British high commissioner in 1961 about criticism in the press and political parties that the country, even after independence, was being run by the British. For Balewa, *'all these accusations in the press and by word of mouth are rubbish and the people who believed them are either trouble-makers or ignorant'*²⁰⁹. It would appear that in spite of the strenuous effort on the part of Britain to implant her interest in the official and sub-conscious minds of Nigerian decision-makers on the eve of independence, officials and the political class missed no opportunity to repudiate this pro-British attitude immediately after political independence was granted.

When Nigeria achieved independence in 1960, it was a nation in name only. It existed as a political and legal entity, not as an effective and emotive identity. It was not a nation in the sense of community and common character. It was merely a state

²⁰⁶ - Oyo Ogunbadejo, *op.cit.*, pp45-67.

²⁰⁷ - A concise discussion about the fortunes of Soviet relations with Nigeria has been discussed by J. B. Ojo, 'Nigeria and Soviet Relations' Retrospect and Prospect', *African Studies Review*, vol. 19, n°3, (1976), pp45-52..

²⁰⁸ - Even after the civil war, the first country visited by the Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, was Britain. In a way, this was meant to show that 'despite Biafra there had not been any fundamental change in Anglo-Nigerian relations', J.B. Ojo, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

²⁰⁹ - TNA, DO 177/12, Lord Head to Sir Clutterbuck, 17 January 1961.

encompassing many ethnic nations, each claiming their own separate heritage, language and culture. As stated by Awolowo:

“Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression, adding that there are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are English, Welsh or French. The word Nigerian is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.”²¹⁰

At independence, its people for the most part had not yet come to think of themselves as Nigerians. Ethnic loyalty, in fact, took precedence over national identity. The nation's people identified themselves primarily as Hausa-Fulani, Ibo or Yoruba for example. Their identity as Nigerians lay in the shadow of their tribal and parochial allegiances.

Historical hostilities and rivalries among many of the peoples agglomerated within Nigeria accounted for some of the conflicted sense of common national identity. The colonial legacy contributed significantly, however, to furthering the collision of loyalties in the new nation. For instance, the structure of British colonial administration of the artificially drawn territory restricted development of a national consciousness within the broad expanse of Nigeria's borders.²¹¹

It is worth mentioning that Britain's practice of Indirect Rule System in colonial Nigeria had perpetuated separate ethnic and local identities. By using traditional native institutions and tractable tribal chieftains as their functionaries in exercising the doctrine of indirect rule that colonial administrator Frederick Lugard fashioned, the British sheltered the parochial political patterns of many ethnic groups. Particularly in

²¹⁰- Obafemi Awolowo, *Yoruba Elites and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, (USA, Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.2.

²¹¹- Ben Dudley, *Instability and Political Order: Politics and Crisis in Nigeria*, (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1973), p240.

the north, where Hausa-Fulani tribal leaders resisted European education, indirect rule contributed to the persistence of isolated tribal identity.

British regional government further compounded the persistence of separateness. Although united under a government, colonial administration from 1906 to 1922 divided Nigeria into the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, which included Lagos and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. That administration was further fragmented into the Northern, Eastern and Western region maintained from 1922 to 1957, with the federal territory of Lagos created in 1954. These regions became essentially self-governing in 1960 at the times of Nigeria's independence.as a tenuous federation.²¹²

Furthermore, it should be stated that the colonial structure maintained ethnic isolation and reinforced it with regionalism. With the larger ethnic groups dominating the separate political regions, the colonial experience provided little basis for fusing ethnig groups in any common sence of nationalism. It certainly fostered no history or tradition of national community.

Independent Nigeria emerged as a new political entity without a common history or common tradition. It had to build itself as a nation, while at the same time developing its powers as a state. Thus what would be the position of the traditional Nigerian rulers in such a modern and fragmented entity ?. From what it has been examined in chapters three and four, there is no doubt that traditional rulers in Nigeria have gradually witnessed the erosion of their powers, from depending upon British colonial administration to dependence upon elected politicians. Indeed, as their roles narrowed that of the political parties increased. The last section is, therefore, an attempt to highlight the major conditions under which the Nigerian traditional authority, represented mainly by the traditional chiefs, had been undermined ranging from the pre-colonial past up to Independence.

²¹² Ben Dudley, *op.cit*, p144.

4-4. The Changing Position of the Traditional Authorities

As noted in chapter 1, the position of the leader of the traditional authority or more precisely the Nigerian chief, where it existed and especially in centralized states was guided by specific institutionalized traditions, with respect to accession to office and performance to functions. The office, often, resided in specific lineages that were genealogically linked to the founding ancestors. However in cases, where there were multiple candidates to a chieftaincy position, merit qualifications would become an important criterion in addition to heredity. In instances, where no single family lineage could establish undisputed claims, a system of rotation by the successor would be chosen from the competing houses in turns was preferred²¹³.

The chief, in the pre-colonial era, represented the political, social, economic, legal and military head of the traditional state. As political head, he was responsible for the maintenance of good order in his state. He was the guardian of fundamental values of his people and mediated between them and the spiritual forces. He administered tributes, court fines, market tolls, and other revenues. He was also the final arbiter in the administration of justice. It can thus be said that in the pre-colonial era chiefs commanded a great deal of autonomy. However, the chief ruled with the advice of the council that has been variously termed an inner or Privy Council. Where the system functioned well, these institutional checks as well as the queen mother safeguarded against dictatorial tendencies. As Busia observed:

*“The chief had to keep strictly the injunction
that he was to act only on the advice of his elders”²¹⁴.*

Thus, the chief ruled by consensus and, indeed, he could be destooled or dethroned for violating the trust, sanctions or taboos of the state as well as for incompetence.

As expansive territories were being brought under colonial control in Nigeria and other territories, the British were faced with cost and logistical issues associated

²¹³ - Kwame Arthin, *Traditional Rule in Ghana Past and Present* (Accra, Ghana: sedco, 1985), p. 344.

²¹⁴ - K.A. Busia, *The position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashani* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951),p 15.

with colonial administration. Unable and unwilling to commit the resources necessary to administer their colonies effectively, the British resorted to the familiar policy of indirect rule and devolution. In fact, recognizing that the traditional rulers were the centers of economic resources, they decided that it would be a cheap and pragmatic policy to rule the “natives” through their own leaders.

As noted in chapter two, in the process of instituting the colonial administration, chiefs and their councils, especially in Northern Nigeria, came to dominate local administration. The key issue of Lord Lugard, in fact, was finding the best rulers and policy choice to carry out the harmonious dual. Applied with great success, especially in Northern Nigeria, Frederick Lugard Governor and subsequent Governor-General of Nigeria, extended indirect rule to Southern Nigeria, strengthening the powers of some chiefs they chose and creating new chiefs, where none existed. According to Ibrahim Gambari:

*“once put into practice, the policy of indirect rule led to entrenchment of the power of indigenous rulers and their growth beyond the limits traditionally assigned to them.”*²¹⁵

It must be noted, however, that the autonomy of action referred to here was only in serving the colonial masters and circumventing tradition, and not in relation to the pre-colonial status of chiefs. These added powers in many ways became the source of arbitrariness and corruption, which the British later used as excuses to dethrone, depose or punish some chiefs.

The chiefs retained legal powers and authority over land allocation and local taxation, thereby maintaining some degree of autonomy, especially in issues that were considered as falling under the domain of “customary law,” as interpreted by “Native Courts.” Thus, though the boundaries of these administrative spheres were not sharply demarcated, there was some degree of separation between the central government and local administration, hence the notion of a dual system. One may

²¹⁵ - Ibrahim Gambari, *“British Colonial Administration,”* in *Nigerian History and Culture*, ed. Richard Olaniyan (London: Longman, 1985), p. 166

think that the British were really concerned with preserving the moral and spiritual significance of the chiefly office of the natives, when in reality; the aim was to undermine traditional structures.

Using the legitimate rulers of the Hausa-Fulani, for example, the policy of indirect rule was institutionalized by the creation of the “Native Authorities” system, which maintained a strict hierarchy of chiefs classified by grades and class. This structure allowed the British to effectively control all sectors of society without deploying a large number of colonial officials. In retrospect, chiefs made it possible for the colonial government to bring immense, often impassable territories under their control. They carried additional responsibilities of a civic nature, as they were entrusted with responsibility for local infrastructural development, including agriculture, health, education, and livestock farming. Inevitably, as they performed the function of auxiliaries to the colonial government a go-between linking the two centers of administration. They found themselves in an uncomfortable, often unenviable position. Their relationship with the seats of colonial administration became increasingly ambivalent, as they were the object of local discontent.

Chieftaincy under the Native Authorities system was closely identified with the colonial government in almost every area with such political structures. According to M. G. Smith:

*“Under increasingly bureaucratic procedures, district chiefs...were now required to conduct their administrations within the framework of impersonal rules and to live on their salaries or other legitimate incomes.”*²¹⁶

And the meager stipends they received from the central government neither compensated for their unpopularity as instruments of taxation nor assuaged their compromised position as salaried officials. The reality is that the colonial government

²¹⁶ - M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 334.

had succeeded in employing the strategy of divide and rule to polarize chiefs and the emergent nationalists.

For their troubles, many chiefs fell victim to destoolment at the hands of the colonial administration, or became collaborators. For instance, in the period from 1904 to 1926, in Northern Nigeria, where emirs were deposed under the leadership of Sharwood-Smith, including the Lamido of Adamawa, Waziri of Borno, Emir of Bauchi and Argungu, Shehu of Dikwa, and the Attas of Igbirra and Igala.²¹⁷ , Chiefs had clearly lost their autonomy under colonialism. It may be debatable whether the chiefs consciously considered themselves as collaborators. Dunn and Robertson, among others, have contended that chiefs did not view themselves as conscious cogs of imperialism²¹⁸. Yet cases like that of the Alake of Abeokuta in 1901 and 1903 suggest that chiefs were conscious collaborators more than was readily visible. Conscious of the British search for a “great chief,” the Alake collaborated with them in his attempt to suppress rebellions in Abeokuta, thereby transforming himself into a very strong authoritarian leader in direct contradiction of the democratic Egba government that had been in place.²¹⁹

In terms of the chiefs’ power, the Native Authorities in Nigeria (1947) entrenched their increasing diminution in autonomy. Lord Lugard’s Political Memoranda of 1907 painted a clear picture of the diminished role of the chief, when it cunningly stated that:

“There are no two sets of rulers—British and Native working either separately or in cooperation, but a single government in which native chiefs have well-defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with the British Officers. Their duties should never conflict and should overlap as little as

²¹⁷- A.D. Yahaya, *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria* (Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1980).p54.

²¹⁸- John Dunn and A. F. Robertson, *Dependence and Opportunity: Political Change in Ahafo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 93.

²¹⁹- *Ibid.*

possible....”²²⁰ While this statement was a source of inspiration for Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in his 1950 Native Authorities reform proposal, Balewa himself acknowledged that the chiefs did not have “well-defined place, rights, obligation or powers,” except as given by the British.²²¹

The introduction of the Authur Creech-Jones’ Local Government Dispatch recommendation in 1947 provided a conciliar system that basically imposed restrictions on chiefs, including direct central governmental control. By any means, having elected councilors meant representative democracy and not the “natural rulers” of Africa. For many of the chiefs, the duality of control at both the local and national levels was very clear. The 1951, Pott-Maddocks Commission further reduced the powers of the chiefs even more by establishing Chiefs’ Advisory Councils, Outer Councils for the districts, and Native Treasuries for all the Native Authorities throughout northern Nigeria. As it were with the Ghanaian cases, these councils subordinated the chiefs to the established British authority. There is no better place for understanding the limits or the lack of chiefly powers in Nigeria under colonialism than the constitutional frameworks adopted over a period of time, beginning with the Richards Constitution of 1947.

As mentioned before, the Richards Constitution created a common legislative council for both the north and south, through the establishment of Regional Councils and the House of Chiefs. It also recognized regionalism through the acceptance of the tri-regional structure for Eastern, Western and Northern Nigeria. Furthermore, in 1951, the John MacPherson Constitution provided for wider political participation for all Nigerians, in addition to the creation of Regional Houses of Assemblies, Houses of Chiefs and Executive Councils.

²²⁰- Cited in Bello Ahmadu, *Sardauna of Sokoto, My Life*, 2d ed. (Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1986 [1962]), p. 73. Also see Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1965).

²²¹- Ahmadu, *op.cit*, p. 73

Finally, the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954 further created the dominant regional structure that limited chieftaincy to the regional and ethnically based political parties of the Action Group (AG), National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC). While it can be stated that Native Authorities' reforms were attempts to create new progressive changes, in reality, they were antithetical to the Nigerian chieftaincy in general.

The constant attacks on the NA system by leaders such as Tafawa Balewa and other major opposition politicians lent credence to the undermining of chieftaincy. The ruling Northern People's Congress (NPC) pushed for the creation of a Minister of Local Government and an elected premier solely to oversee the NAs. Thus the introduction of the Chiefs-in-Council system was part of the grand strategy to reduce the powers of the chiefs by both the British and Nigerian nationalists. Similarly the vast system of District Officers (DOs), who were political appointees, subordinated chiefs to the Provincial Administrative Law. Thus, the authority to appoint or depose chiefs was vested in the hands of few politicians as was clearly happening in both the North and South. Perhaps the major nationalist attack on the Nigerian chieftaincy came from no other than Chief Awoloworeco himself, a leading national politician, whose contempt for the institution stemmed from chiefs' role as collaborators in the independence movement in the South.

Conclusion

From what it has been examined in this chapter, It should be concluded that since the colonial era, the traditional rulers "chiefs" have been dependent on the central Government for recognition of their legitimacy as representatives of their people as well as for obtaining economic and political favors in the interest of the people they represent. But, in the intricate and delicate power struggle between the local and central authority forces, the former had already lost out. For instance, by the onset of the independence, the nationalists were predicting that the forces of modernization and social change would relegate chieftaincy to either inconsequence or oblivion.

It will be, however, misleading to assume that the elaborate political structures and institutions of pre-colonial era did not have any meaning or usefulness and thus must be discarded. Furthermore, chiefs can be considered to be points for the evocation of local and ethnic pride. Indeed, they are the repositories of local history and spirituality and upholders of local values. Unfortunately, traditional rulership had been drawn into a political situation, in which it had to negotiate with other key societal interests for its own survival; and as a result of its new political role, it had become greatly transformed from what it used to be. The institution, in fact, no longer had a life of its own and its future had become uncertain.

General Conclusion

The study of British colonization of Nigeria has been designed to clarify certain features of British colonialism in West Africa in general, and in Nigeria in particular. It should be noted from the outset that though British political occupation occurred in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century; the nature of the British conquest and the reaction of traditional authorities to this colonial takeover were determined by developments, which took place earlier in the nineteenth century. This is the case in Southern Nigeria, where certain well-known events such as the suppression of slave trade and the development of legitimate commerce as well as the rise of consular power played effective roles in determining relations between the British and Africans during the era of conquest and effective occupation. For instance, British activity in certain parts of Southern Nigeria such as the bombardments of the coastal states helped to undermine the effective sovereignty, strength and resistance of African rulers long before the period of the occupation. This was the case of Lagos, when its traditional ruler refused to ratify the anti-slave-trade treaties.

With regard to Nigeria, it is necessary to draw attention to certain facts particularly the divergences between the traditional political organizations and the nature of inter-group relations, which helped in the fall of the country. In fact, in the first half of the second millennium, various rich and powerful kingdoms emerged within the region. These early cultures formed the roots for some of the cultural groups existing in Nigeria today. They were independent from one another, each having its own political structure, cultural traditions and social patterns. Primary, among these independent kingdoms were the states of Yoruba, Hausa, Edo, Nupe and Kanem. There existed also the stateless societies most of whom concentrated in the eastern regions. It could be stated that, the interests of these Nigerian groups differed from one group to another and often conflicted. Thus, the British took advantage of these traditional political and ethnic rivalries. For instance, in the Yorubaland while states of the interior such as Ibadan and Abeokuta were ready to open trading relations with the coastal state of Lagos, the Ijebu were anxious to maintain their middlemen position and seemed ready to do anything to block these routes. Furthermore, when certain groups rejected British advance and mounted meaningful resistance against them, others

preferred to side with them for promoting pacification. By siding with the British, such groups were probably seeking to use the British as allies for the promotion of their own specific interests but they never realized that they were aiding British imperialism.

Such divergent interests affected the ability to mount more effective opposition to a common enemy. Even though some people took up arms in defence of their sovereignty and independence, this resistance remains as a source of their weakness. Indeed, though Nana of Itsekiri, Jaja of Opobo, Oba of Benin, Awujale of Oyo and Muslims of the Northern Caliphate ...were all forced to fight, they never fought against the British as a united entity .This was the major factor which facilitated British occupation of their territories.

It is also important to add that even defeated, these West African ethnic groups did not immediately accept British rules for many years after the actual conquest, they continued in their own way to show that the British were not welcomed and that their loyalty to them was forced. The Ekemeku rebellion in southern Nigeria was the best example. To realize their imperial ambitions, the British in their turn decided to continue their advance even though they did not find this at all easy and were never sure how the African rulers would react at any given time. Thus, the British settled down to try to rule peoples, who had only accepted their rule because they had failed on the battlefields.

This work was also designed to show the various changes of British policy towards West Africa. This policy had undergone three major modifications. It was firstly marked before the 1880s by Britain's reluctance to expand its control over further territories as recommended by the Committee of 1865. Indeed, British coastal colonies were maintained to assist in ending the overseas slave trade. At that time, the value of tropical products had not been fully recognized and the African interior was still unknown. However , between 1880 and 1900 and under the pressure of competition from other European powers , Britain reversed her policy from non-interference to intervention in West Africa .The strong need , in fact , to withdraw

from the colonies was turned into a strong imperialist desire, which led to the occupation of Nigeria .

After the military conquest, the British succeeded in establishing an effective administration in both the southern and northern regions of Nigeria. They had usually found it necessary to designate local subjects, whom they would use as spokesmen for the generality of the population. Before the conquest, the African rulers could be used to mediate between Africans and the colonial government. But once alien rule had been established, it was for the new overlords to decide whom they should treat as the appropriate channels of communication.

In certain areas where the British had to deal with highly structured traditional states like the Muslim emirates of the north or the Yoruba kingdoms of the west, the British could not afford to neglect the traditional authorities. The preservation of the traditional rulers proved to be a convenient way to rule and maintain peace there.

On the contrary, in the fragmented societies mainly in the south-eastern regions and in Pagan areas of the north, the British had to impose and not to preserve the traditional rulers. But whatever the method of administration the British had chosen for ruling Africans either by preserving the traditional forms of organization and Government or by innovating new institutions , the most important of all is that British colonial rule had great impacts on the traditional local institutions . The maintaining of the traditional rulers did not mean that the latter remained the de facto heads of their people .The African rulers had to account for the slightest decision and actually represented a screen to British residents .

British colonialism proved to be a shattering experience for many Nigerians. Although the imposition of colonial rule led to the abolition of slavery and the establishment of peace , it also meant the end of the African political , economic and cultural autonomy , the transformation of the Nigeria's rulers into colonial subjects with few political and civil rights and the decline of traditional authority and values. These injustices were the main stimulants which led various Nigerian groups in the years immediately following the establishment of rule to demonstrate their non-

acceptance of British regime by revolts and other manifestations of discontent. These struggles were sometimes passive, sometimes diplomatic and constitutional, and sometimes violent. They were first directed towards equality, justice, and participation in government, and subsequently assumed the dimension of campaigns for Nigeria's independence.

Nigerian Nationalist movements brought about the emergence of newspapers, which laid the foundation for journalism in the country; the emergence of higher education institutions, which provided the Nigerians with the opportunity to acquire higher education; the emergence of political organizations and associations, which provided Nigerians with the opportunity to participate in the political affairs of their country; the emergence of professional unions; the establishment of a federal structure of government and constitutional reforms, which laid the foundation for subsequent constitutional reforms experienced after independence. Additionally, nationalist movement introduced ethnic politics and disunity in Nigeria's political environment. This development continued to adversely affect the political development of the country after independence.

After a long struggle of the nationalists, however, the British decided to develop a constitution that would reflect the differences in the three major cultural regions. There were many failed attempts to create a constitution before independence in 1960, simply because of the regional differences. Thus, the British divided the country into three regions, the Hausa north, the Yoruba southwest, and the Ibo, southeast. Each was to govern in its own region with its own courts and civil service. This development was to affect the political development of the country after independence.

Furthermore, one of the major Nigerian institutions that have been affected by colonial rule was that of the traditional rulers or chiefs. The latter represented the supreme authorities during the pre-colonial era. They were heads of traditional polities, who exercised varying degrees of political, religious, economic and military leadership in pre-colonial times; and their authority was circumscribed by institutionalized systems of checks and balances.

During the colonial era, their authority was subjected to various forms of manipulation including collaboration, undermining and co-option; and with the emergence of the new educated modern class, they became object of hatred scorn and popular discontent for they were highly criticized for corruption and bribery.

What could be suggested is that the institution of chieftancy should not be demised. Instead, it could be transformed from static into a dynamic phenomenon. It must move also onto a global stage, enabling the chiefs to mediate between their districts and the world. The chiefs must also play effective roles as brokers. For instance, they have to adapt practices conducive to modernization.

What seems evident too is that tradition is not the mere and rigid preservation of the past. It requires continuous dialoguing and reinterpretation of the past with a view to making sense of the present and directed toward facing the challenges of the future, for tradition may be doomed to irrelevance if it ceases to meet the needs of the present as well as those of the future. Therefore to survive into the future and play an effective role on the local and world stage, the Nigerian chiefs must be capable of charting new courses and landscapes or a new socio-political path for them and their communities. They must have the capacity to mediate between the past and the future.

In view of the political and constitutional problems of modern Nigeria, it is perhaps; time that Nigerians look into traditional rulership in order to identify its underlying principles as it represents Nigeria's only truly indigenous political philosophy.

The researcher would hope that all the episodes previously analysed would help better understanding key themes that have shaped the history of Nigeria. Further research may include investigation that would advocate for the glolalisation of the institution of chieftaincy. Besides, as Nigeria is one of the world's largest oil producers, she needs to reconsider a more equal distribution of wealth, notably through a budget of both health and education.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Notable People in Nigerian History

(whose names are included in this thesis)

1-Awolowo, Chief Obafemi (1909-1987)

Founder of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Action Group, both Yoruba-dominated organizations, that pushed for Nigerian independence and the extension and preservation of Yoruba interests and culture in a multi-ethnic, federate Nigeria. He studied law and commerce in London in the mid-1940s, and returned to Nigeria to practice law and politics. Awolowo contested the post of prime minister in the 1959 general election, but the AG lost to the NPC-NCNC coalition, and Awolowo became the leader of the opposition. After his failing out with Western Region premier S.L. Akintola in 1962, Awolowo was charged with corruption and treason and sentenced to ten years in prison. He was later pardoned by Yakubu Gowon and became a federal office-holder in the military regime. He ran for the presidency of the Second Republic in 1979 and 1983, but lost both times to Shehu Shagari. He died in May 1987.

2-Azikiwe, Nnamdi (1904- 1996)

Founder of the National council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (later Nigerian Citizens), which became one of the largest parties vying for independence of the unified Nigeria from British colonial rule. Azikiwe was born in Zungeru, in northern Nigeria, to Igbo parents and was educated in several mission schools throughout Nigeria. He traveled to the United States for university education, where he became involved in the Pan-African movement. On his return to Nigeria he became a successful journalist and activist in the Nigerian Youth Movement, before breaking away and founding the NCNC in 1944. As its leader, Azikiwe became the first indigenous governor general of Nigeria in 1959 and its first ceremonial president in 1963. He was ousted from this position by the coup of January 15, 1966, but he never retired from politics, running unsuccessfully for president in both 1979 and 1983. The national airport in Abuja, the country's capital, is named after him.

3-Balewa, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa (1912-66)

Born in Tafawa Balewa Town in what is now Bauchi State, Balewa trained to become a teacher, receiving his teaching certificate in 1933. He taught at Bauchi Middle School and, after studying at the Institute of Education AT THE University of London, became an education officer for Bauchi province. He was one of the founding members of the Northern People's Congress, which became the largest and most powerful party in northern Nigeria and which won control of the federal legislature in the 1959 general elections. Balewa became the first prime minister of Nigeria and governed during the tumultuous First Republic. His power and promotion of the 'northernization' agenda made him a prime target for the organizers of the coup of January 15, 1966, in which he was abducted and killed.

4-Bello, Ahmadu, the Sarduana of Sokoto (1910- 66)

A grandson of Usman dan Fodio, Bello became the most important northern politician between the 1940s and the 1960s. Although he lost a bid to become the Sultan of Sokoto in 1938, he was named the Sarduana (war leader), a very important position. He went on to become a founding member and leader of the NPC, and the premier of the Northern Region in 1954. Along with Prime Minister Balewa, Bello was instrumental in promoting the

'northernization' agenda of the NPC-dominated First Republic. He was killed in the coup of January 15, 1966, which ended the First Republic.

5-Bello, Muhammadu (1781- 1837)

Son of Usman dan Fodio, and one of the leaders of the Islamic revolution, that resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. After the death of his father, Bello took over the reins of the government, taking the title of Sultan of Sokoto, and continued to spread the revolution to new frontiers and to quell internal resistance. Under Bello, Islamic politics, justice, education, and culture, which had once been the reserve of the wealthy and powerful elite, began to spread throughout Northern Nigeria.

6-Crowther, Bishop Samuel Ajayi (1809- 1991)

Born in Yorubaland in 1809, Crowther was captured at the age of twelve and sold to Portuguese slave traders. The ship he was being transported on was captured by a British anti-slavery patrol ship, and he was released in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In Freetown, Crowther was educated by the Church Missionary Society, and baptized in 1825. In 1841 he was chosen to accompany the Niger Expedition to establish a missionary presence in the Nigerian interior. The mission failed, and Crowther returned to the coast to work as a missionary in Badagry and Abeokuta. He was a very successful missionary, and in 1861 he was named the first African bishop of the Anglican Church, with his diocese on the river Niger. An African nationalist, Crowther believed that Africa's future should be the preserve of Africans themselves, and fought against the encroachment of British colonial rule in the late nineteenth century. He quarreled with Sir George Goldie over the activities of the Royal Niger Company, and over ideas that Christianity should be used to promote British interests in the region. In 1890 he resigned his position as Bishop on the Niger. He died the next year.

7-Fodio, Usman dan (1754- 1817)

Fulani Islamic scholar and leader of the Islamic revolution, that established the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century. Born and educated in the Hausa state of Gobir. By the eighteenth century Dan Fodio had developed a group of followers known as 'the community', who subscribed to his vociferous calls for a purification of the political and religious make-up of the region. Relations between Dan Fodio and the King of Gobir deteriorated over the latter's refusal to institute sweeping Islamic reforms, and in 1804 Dan Fodio fled from Gobir after an attempt had been made on his life. His followers went with him and organized a revolution against the king. Later in the year Dan Fodio declared a Jihad, or holy war, against the heretical Hausa rulers. Over the next decade Dan Fodio's followers toppled the Hausa dynasties in most states in northern Nigeria and replaced them with Fulani emirs, thus bringing into existence the mighty Sokoto Caliphate, which ruled the region for the next century. In 1812 Dan Fodio divided the administration of the territories under his control between his brother Abdullahi and his son Muhammadu Bello, and retired from public life. He died in 1817.

8-Goldie, Sir George (1846- 1925)

British shipping mogul and largest shareholder in the Royal Niger company, which became one of the tools through which British colonial rule was imposed upon Nigeria. Goldie was given a royal Charter in 1886 to allow his company to negotiate with local rulers

in the territories around the river Niger to administer the territories in the interests of free trade. The RNC quickly eroded the sovereignty of the local rulers with whom it had treaty relationships, however, and became a monopolistic company, completely controlling trade on the Niger for over fifteen years. In 1900 Goldie's charter was revoked and the territories controlled by the company came under the direct control of the British government.

9-JaJa -King of Opobo (1821- 91)

One of the most famous resisters of the British colonial takeover of Nigeria. Born in the Amaigbo village group in southern Nigeria, Ja Ja was sold as a slave at the age of twelve to a chief in the coastal trading state of Bonny. Through his prowess as a trader, particularly in palm oil, Ja Ja rose to become the head of the Anna Pepple house, an extremely wealthy and powerful house in Bonny, in 1863. His success as a trader roused the ire and competition of other houses, particularly the Manilla Pepple house, headed by Oko Jumbo. In 1869 war broke out between the two houses, with the result that Ja Ja fled inland, establishing a new trading state, which he named Opobo. From the hinterland Ja Ja cut off Bonny's access to palm oil markets, and, over time, he returned Opobo into a wealthy trading state of its town. In 1884 Ja Ja signed a treaty of protection with the British guaranteeing them free trade in his realm. Not intending to live up to an agreement that would erode his competitive advantage, Ja Ja quickly abrogated the terms of the treaty, provoking the anger of the British. In 1887 the acting British consul, Harry Johnston, tricked Ja Ja on board a gunboat, ostensibly to negotiate a peaceful end to hostilities. Once on board, however, Ja Ja was arrested and taken to Accra, whence he was banished to the West Indies. He was allowed to return to Opobo in 1891, but died on the voyage home. His body was returned home and buried in Opobo.

10-Lugard, Sir Frederick (1858- 1945)

British colonial administrator, he worked as an army officer in Nyasaland (Malawi), Kenya, and Uganda before taking up employment in the royal Niger Company in 1894. In 1897 he organized the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) for the British to secure the western border of the British sphere of influence in northern Nigeria against French encroachment. In 1900 Lugard became the first high commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria after the dissolution of the RNC. He then undertook the military conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate, which was completed in 1903. As high commissioner of the northern Protectorate, Lugard developed the administrative system that he called "indirect rule", by which the British ruled colonial territories through existing local rulers. Lugard left Nigeria in 1906, but returned in 1912 to oversee the amalgamation of the Nigerian Protectorates into a single administrative unit, becoming the first governor general of a unified Nigeria. As governor general he extended his form of indirect rule to southern Nigeria, before retiring from public service in 1919. In 1922 he published *The dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, in which he outlined in great detail his philosophy of colonial rule as a system that ought both to benefit the economy of the colonizing country and help to bring indigenous races to a higher level of "civilization". Indirect rule and the Dual Mandate became common ideologies of British colonial rule throughout Africa.

Source: Toyin Falola and Matthew M.Heaton, op.cit, p.xix

Appendix 2

Berlin West Africa Conference

Berlin West Africa conference, also called the Berlin Conference, meeting of representatives of 14 European countries and the United States between 1884 and 1885, to deal with matters relating to European trade and territorial claims in Africa. At the conference, which was convened in Berlin, Germany, these powers reached agreement on who would possess lands around the Congo River and established ground rules and justification for further takeover.

The conference was brought about by European rivalries in Africa and concerns over the European colonial balance of power. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, King Leopold II of Belgium had been trying to further personal interests by employing Anglo-American explorer Henry Morton Stanley to stake claims for him along the lower Congo River, an area where Portugal already had claims. On the basis of treaties negotiated by French explorer, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza in 1880, France claimed land along the river as well. Meanwhile, on the lower Niger river, Britain and France were potential competitors over river trade.

Merchants across Europe urged their governments to protect their African trade interests from European rivals. Under such pressure, in mid.1884 German chancellor Otto Von Bismarck announced German claims to three African colonies – Togoland, Cameroon, and south-West-Africa- This increasingly frantic seizing of African territory, dubbed the Scramble for Africa, threatened to bring European nations to conflict.

Bismarck, with France, called for a conference to settle European rivalries. Half of the countries represented, including the United States, had no colonial stake in Africa. However, they were invited to help sort out rival claims and to put the stamp of unbiased international approval on the territorial acquisition to come.

The conference convened, in Berlin in November 1884, negotiations concerning claims to the Congo River area outside the conference, in London, Paris, and Brussels, and held up matters for two months. At its conclusion in February 1885, the conference recognized Leopold's sovereignty over an area occupying most of the Congo basin that would become the massive Congo Free State. It also acknowledged French claims along the east bank of the Congo that would become French Congo. Portugal was left with only a small territory at the mouth of the Congo. The conference also recognized the German claims to Togoland, Cameroon, and South-West-Africa. In a final General Act of Berlin, the representatives agreed to free trade in the Congo basin and free navigation along the Niger. In addition, they agreed to rules for further claiming of African territory: each country was to notify the others of its claims, and each claim was to be followed with "effective occupation" of the claimed area. Conference participants stated lofty goals for their African territories, which included ending the slave trade and extending civilization, commerce, and Christianity to the African People.

Many myths could the legacy of the Berlin conference. Many people believe that the representatives of European nations parceled out African land among themselves, as they sat around a table in Berlin. Actually, European taking of African land had been underway for

some years before, and the Berlin Conference resulted only in recognition of claims along the Congo and the Germany's colonies. Further, the rules set out for claiming territory were largely meaningless and unenforceable. Yet, the Berlin Conference holds symbolic importance. Its occurrence in an European capital, thousands of miles from Africa, without a single African present, represents European's unquestioned attitude of superiority, an attitude that underlay the Scramble and the early periods of colonial rule. Although most of Africa remained in African possession immediately following the conference, the Berlin West Africa conference served as the first public indication that European countries were poised to take over the continent, which they would accomplish over the next 25 years.¹

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Appendix 3

In a letter written to Sir Frederik Lugard in March 1902, the Caliph of Sokoto said :

« In the name of God.

The Governor Lugard. To continue, know that we did not invite you to put right (affairs in) Bauchi or anywhere else, not to speak of your interference in putting (the affairs of) the country and districts in order. We do not request help from anyone but from God. You have your religion and we have our religion. God is our sufficiency and our excellent agent. There is neither might nor strength except in God, the Exalted, the almighty. This and peace. »

Source : O Ikime ., op.cit ., p.201.

Appendix 4

In a letter to the newly appointed Emir of Sokoto 'Mahammed Attihuru II', Lugard wrote in 21 March, 1903 :« The old treaties are dead, you have killed them. Now these are the words which I, the High Commissioner have to say for the future. The Fulani in old times under Dan Fodio conquered this country .They took the right to rule over it, to levy taxes, to depose Kings and to create Kings.They in turn by defeat lost their rule which has come into the hands of the British All these things which I have said the Fulani by conquest took the right to do now pass to the British. Every Sultan and Emir and the principal officers of State will be appointed by the High Commissioner throughout all this country. The High Commissioner would be guided by the usual laws of succession and the wishes of the people and chiefs but will set them aside if he desires for good cause to do so.The Emirs and Chiefs who are appointed would rule over the people as of old time and take such taxes as are approved by the High Commissioner, but they will obey the laws of the Governor and will act in accordance with the advice of the Resident. Buying and selling slaves and enslaving people are forbidden... All men are free to worship God as they please. Mosques and prayer places will be treated by respect by us...It is the earnest desire of the King of England that this country shall prosper and grow rich in peace and in contentment, that the population shall increase and the ruined towns which abound everywhere shall be built up,and that war and trouble shall cease.Henceforth no Emir or Chief shall levy war or fight, but his case will be settled by law, and if force is necessary Government will employ it...You need have no fear regarding British rule , it is our wish to learn your customs and fashion ,just as you must learn ours.I have little fear that we shall agree, for you have always heard that British rule is just and fair,and people under our King are satisfied. You must not fear to tell the Resident everything and he will help and advise you. ».

Source : M. Crowder ., op.cit , p.185.

Glossary

Abolition: abolishing or being abolished means ending the existence of an institution, a custom...etc.

Bourgeoisie: a social class between the lower and upper classes: middle class. In Marxist theory, this Social group opposed the proletariat in the class struggle.

Capitalism: a theory or system in which property and investment in the means of production and distribution depends chiefly upon corporations and private individuals.

Culture: is a way of life. It might be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools which characterize a given group of people in a given period. It is a repertoire of socially transmitted and intra generationally generated ideas about how to live, to think and to behave.

Ethnic nationalism: is the type of nationalism that defines the nation in terms of ethnicity, which always includes some elements of descent from previous generation. It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of a group, with common ancestors and language. Membership of the nation is hereditary in this type of nationalism, and also the state derives political legitimacy from its status as homeland of the ethnic group, and from its duty to protect the national group and facilitate its family and social life, as a group.

Imperialism: a policy of extending a nation's authority by territorial acquisition or by the establishment of economic and political hegemony over other nations. It has two forms: direct domination (colonialism) and indirect domination (neo-colonialism).

Nationalism: is a term generally used to describe two phenomena: First the attitude which members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and second the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to sustain self-determination. It is a patriotic feeling which brings an oppressed, but related people together to demand for their independence. It is often found rooted and promoted by the presence of another superior power.

Pan-Africanism: the doctrine or advocacy of alliance or cooperation among all African states.

Radicals /Extremists: group of persons with radical opinions and extreme views favouring political or social reforms.

Status Quo: the class relationships determined by the base and reflected in the superstructure of a society. The ideologies of a culture work to keep those relationships.

Slaves: persons, who are the property of others and are forced to work for them.

Slavery: condition of being a slave.

Vernacular: language of a dialect spoken in a particular country or region as compared with a formal or written.

Colonialism: is a policy whereby a political power acquires or retains control over people in territories other than its own and it has often used subterfuges to justify its expansionist behavior all over the world.