

EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON NIGERIAN CULTURE

by

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B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1955

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History, Government and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1957

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PREFACE

Any discussion of the European influence on the Nigerian culture must be centered on the reason behind European penetration into this part of West Africa since the fifteenth century. The purpose of this study is to analyze the nature and character of the Nigerian social, economic, and political systems before the penetration of the Europeans and after the British government had consolidated its colonial rule in Nigeria.

The main sources from which much information has been drawn are the books written by Sir Alan Burns, Onwuka Dike, W. D. Bittinger, and A. A. Nwafor Orizu. Sir Burns and Bittinger have lived and worked extensively in Nigeria, as a colonial administrative officer and Christian missionary, respectively. These books are the best current studies of the impact of the European culture on the Nigerian society.

The Nigerian Year Book and the British Colonial office publications provided excellent source materials especially pertaining to economic statistics and political constitutional development. Despite these valuable aids, the scarcity of any written materials on West Africa, and the initial stages of research studies on Nigeria, have considerably complicated the writing of this thesis. It is hoped that this study will contribute in some small way toward crystallizing the role of Western impact upon Nigeria during the past two centuries.

CHAPTER I. GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL
CONDITIONS BEFORE 1900

There are four British possessions on the West Coast of Africa. These consist of the colony and protectorate of Nigeria, Gambia, the Gold Coast including Ashanti and the Northern territories, and Sierra Leone. Parts of Togoland and the Cameroons are also included as mandated territories. The remaining parts of West Africa, excluding the Republic of Liberia, fall within the French sphere of influence. French West African territories include the Guinea Coast, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, and the Western Sudan. The following study will confine itself to Nigeria.

Nigeria is situated $4^{\circ}15'$ north of the equator on the Atlantic Coast, extending 14° northward between $2^{\circ}40'$ and $14^{\circ}30'$ east longitude. On the northern border is the French Niger territory, on the east the French Cameroon trusteeship, on the west Dahomey, and on the south the Atlantic Ocean.¹

Comparatively, the total area of Nigeria is over four times the size of the United Kingdom. To bring the comparison nearer home to an American reader, the Nigerian land-mass, if superimposed on the surface of the United States, would cover the States of California, Colorado, Oregon, and South Carolina. The Nigerian Survey Department has given the area of Nigeria as 374,000 square miles.

¹Nwafor Orizu, Without Bitterness, Western Nations in Post-War Africa, Creative Age Press, Inc., New York, N. Y. (1944), p. 72.

Nigeria is situated within the tropics. It has only two seasons: cool and dry, and hot and wet.² The cool and dry season begins in November and ends by mid-March and the hot and wet season starts by mid-March and ends in October.

In Southern Nigeria the average mean Fahrenheit temperature is roughly 80 degrees and the average maximum is roughly 86 degrees. The relative humidity reaches as high as 88 per cent. Even though these ranges are appreciably high, the daily variation seldom exceeds 20 degrees.³ The daily range in the Harmattan season may be as high as 40 degrees. As a result of this high daily range, there are really hot days and comparatively cool nights.

In the north of Nigeria, which is wholly under the tropical savanna climate, the average mean temperature is about 81° F, and the average maximum is 91° F, while the average humidity is 56 per cent.⁴ The daily variation lies within a reasonable limit.

There are groups of highlands - plateaux - all over the North, with the highest peak between 2,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level. Some sections of this area are appreciably cooler. These cool regions of the North are used as recuperation resorts during the southern hot and wet season.

²Nwankwo Chukuemeka, African Dependencies: A Challenge to Western Democracy, 313 West 35th Street, New York 1, N.Y., 1950, p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 15.

The southern Nigerian land-mass rises gradually from sea level to about 600 feet. Some of the Nigerian towns that are situated in this area are Degema, Opobo, and Victoria. The amount of rainfall in this belt from the coast exceeds 80 inches. The area includes a luxuriant growth of valuable tropical trees and a thick struggling undergrowth. It covers a width of 50 to 100 miles. Beyond this region, the rainfall decreases gradually to below 30 inches in the northern border of Nigeria. The general elevation rises gradually beyond the 600-foot level until the 2,000-foot mark at Bauchi in the north central part of Nigeria. Some of the towns in this area are Zaria, Kano, and Yola. The elevation generally exceeds 2,000 feet above sea level in the vicinity of Sokoto, Katsina, and Maiduguri. The highest point in Nigeria lies to the southeast in the Cameroons where the Cameroon Mountain rises to a height of about 13,350 feet above sea level.⁵

Nigeria is well watered. The country takes its name from its main big river, Niger, whose total length is 2,600 miles with an estimated river basin of 500,000 square miles. There are two main rivers in Nigeria, the Niger and the Benue. The river Niger rises from the Futa Jalon highlands in Sierra Leone and flows first in a northeasterly direction and then in a southwesterly direction before entering Nigeria. The Benue rises from the Adamawa Highlands in Nigeria-Cameroon border. These two rivers

⁵Sir Alan Cuthbert Burns, *History of Nigeria*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948, p. 17.

join right in the center of the country at Lokoja and then flow southwards to enter the Atlantic Ocean at the Gulf of Guinea.

At the northeasterly border of Nigeria lies the biggest of Nigeria's inland lakes, Lake Chad. On the whole, Nigeria has considerable water potential that could be utilized for hydro-electric power for lighting and industry. Because Nigeria is well watered and has no climatic extremes, it is comparatively densely populated for a tropical country.

The people of Nigeria consist of many tribal communities. These tribes are generally an aggregate of political communities or national states with a fairly common traditional outlook on life and a common language.⁶ The tribal units provide a well knit organization of kinship among millions of peoples within a geographical area. The Ibo tribe, the biggest in eastern Nigeria, has a population of ten million.

Other major tribes in Nigeria are Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Fulani, Kanuri, Ibibio, Tiv, Edo, Nupe, and Ijaw. It is misleading, however, to still use the term tribe to designate these communities in present Nigeria. These tribal groups encompass large areas of territory. The Hausa tribe occupies an area larger than that of Belgium and is more populous than Palestine. The Nigerian population is therefore a hodgepodge in which three tribes predominate. These tribes are the Hausas in the north and the Ibos and the Yorubas in the south of Nigeria.

The official reports on the population of Nigeria have dif-

⁶Chukuemeka, African Dependencies, p. 15.

ferred for quite some time. The census taken in 1930 resulted in some confusion because the system of reckoning population was based on the head tax collected from each head chief of a village. Since there was a remarkable degree of tax evasion the official estimate of the state of the Nigerian population was far from correct. However, the last government census taken in 1954, still based on the old method, gave the total population as thirty-two million. Professor J. A. Hobson speculates that the total population could lie within 28 and 43 million.⁷ Even with Nigeria's population at 32 million, Nigeria is more populous than Texas, New York, and Pennsylvania combined.⁸

As Nigeria is characterized by tribal groups and organizations, it is rather difficult to depict a uniform Nigerian social system because of variations in social behavior between the tribes of Nigeria. Diversity in tribal legislation and beliefs accounts for these various patterns of social behavior. Laws regarding marriage and divorce, regulation of industry, interpretation of felony and misdemeanor differ from one tribe to another. Before the advent of the British in Nigeria, the stratification of the social system was based on heritage, birth, age, title or military achievement, and not necessarily on wealth. Although wealthy groups sometimes tried to impress their will on the community, the different tribal groups had not accepted wealth as a mode of classification. If a man is in the low class or outcast

⁷J. A. Hobson, Imperialism, A Study, Allen and Unwin, Third Revision, London.

⁸James Linen, "Sunrise on the Gold Coast," Time, LXI, February 9, 1953, p. 24.

group and had the money, this did not regain his acceptance into the upper class to which he never belonged.⁹

In some tribes, it is implicitly accepted that men are not born equal, but each individual enjoys equal opportunities. Politics is taken as being inseparable from ethics and religion. The family, not the individual, is the chief object in human society. With the above principles in mind, the Nigerian social classes, before the advent of the Western philosophy of life, can be classified as follows: kings, warriors and nobles, commoners, strangers, slaves, and outcasts who committed some abominable social acts.

The role of the women is accepted by all tribes to be primarily to raise the children, to supervise the household, and to manage domestic affairs. With Western influence playing an increasingly large part in social norms, these customs are being gradually relegated to the background. In 1947, a Nigerian Nationalist movement sent a delegation to London to confer with the then British Colonial Minister about the future of Nigeria. Among this delegation was a Nigerian Yoruba woman who had received a college degree from a British university.

Since the impact of Western civilization on the people, the social strata have changed. The social classes are now classified on the basis of their importance, as follows: chiefs, the educated class, the illiterates, strangers, and outcasts.

The educated class particularly is asserting its will and

⁹Orizu, Without Bitterness, p. 81.

influence on the rest of the classes. The effect of this assertion by this class on the whole social pattern cannot be predicted because the chiefs and the elders are continually fighting for the maintenance of the former status quo. This struggle of old Nigeria to maintain the old way of things is doomed to suffer a natural death under the impact of rapid westernization of Nigeria.

Before the advent of the Europeans, circa 1480, Nigeria was composed of many autonomous states within the various tribal groupings. Each state was ruled by a king who had various titles. Some of these titles are still retained today. In the Yoruba tribe, the head of the Ife kindred is known as the Oni. In Oyo, the head of the Oyo people has the title of Alafin. The Alafin of Oyo is in effect called the supreme chieftain of Oyo territory. In the Hausa tribe, the chiefs or kings are known as Emirs. In the Ibo country, the heads of ruling houses are known as Obi, Igwe, and Eze. These kings once had complete control of their dominions and also maintained close relations with other autonomous states.

The British administration in Nigeria has greatly curtailed the power and influence of these former kings. King Jaja of Opobo of Eastern Nigeria, an uncompromising foe of the British government, had to be exiled from his domain and forced to spend the rest of his life in the Ascension island in order to make way for the British control of his domain. The prestige and power that were wielded by King Jaja at the zenith of his rule cannot be attained by the present ruling chiefs whose powers

have been reduced greatly.

After the chiefs and their coterie come the commoners. The commoners constitute the masses who make up the laboring classes. The commoner believed in the inherent inequality between the citizens. This belief, in turn, was given a religious sanction, and as a result these less privileged people lost their ambition and did nothing to better their status in life. This apathy of the commoner is aptly portrayed by the following saying in the Ibo language.

Otu onye di, chi ya dere ya.

"The position of a man in society is ordained by his God."¹⁰

The form of marriage is mainly monogamous. However, polygamy is practiced by the wealthy. Polygamy and monogamy are accepted as legal forms of marriage. Polygamy is permitted in some tribes, especially along the coastal regions. Polygamy also has a religious sanction among the Moslems.

In the South, the numerical strength of the family has considerable bearing on the determination of agricultural productivity. Monogamy is discouraged, even by the women, and the first wife frequently encourages the husband to have more wives, for by so doing the family will multiply and her share of the labor burden is decreased. The larger the family the greater the increase in farm production because there are more hands working on the farms, and hence more wealth and better recognition

¹⁰Ibid., p. 81.

in society.¹¹ This system of marriage is fast dying out among the Christian population of Nigeria.

In Iboland, the kings possessed absolute political power. At the same time, they acted as tribal high priests and representatives of the gods on earth. The religious life of the Ibos before the influx of western ideas into Nigeria was strictly interwoven with the political life of the tribal community.

This dual union of politics and religion in the neolithic Ibo state is shown by current Ibo usages: Chi, Chineke, Ala, Ofo, and Ndichie. Chineke means god, the creator. This animistic nature of Ibo theology is shown by the worship of gods who were brought down to earth and associated with the daily observable phenomenon of the universe. They were the sun god, river worship or thunder god, and a host of other gods. Of all the gods, Chineke, the creator, was regarded as the supreme god and the maker and keeper of the universe. The Ibo word for king is Eze, and Chineke, the creator, was regarded as Eze-Elu, or the king of the Heavens.

From this association, the political and religious status of the Ibo king originated. He ruled on earth and represented the king of the Heavens on earth. The king as a divine right ruler was the only intermediary between man and the supreme god.

Since the old society was built on lack of scientific knowledge as it is known in the West, the whole attitudes, behaviors, and norms of the people were controlled by nature. This kind of

¹¹Pilkington, "Nigeria Medley," Contemporary Review, 168, August, 1945, p. 99.

nature worship, in turn, brought in several types of superstitious beliefs. In many provincial districts and villages there was a noticeable preponderance of fetish and animistic worship. This kind of worship may be called "juju" worship. There were remarkable contrasts and conflicts between this practice of juju worship and the church doctrine which the Christian missionaries wanted to use as a medium of destroying the fetish beliefs of the old society. The church did a tremendous work in reducing juju worship. However, in many nooks and corners of the rural and provincial areas, the old people may be seen still practicing juju worship.¹²

The Ofo, a branch of the *Detanum Senegalense* tree, is regarded as a sacred symbol of truth. The authority of the family head, village head, and the king of a constituted tribal domain is symbolized and authenticated by the possession of the family Ofo, the village Ofo, and the national tribal Ofo. The king as the spiritual and political leader possessed the "Oke-Ofo", super-Ofo, as a mark of the superiority of the king over all other possessors of the little Ofo.

When a priest presented his Ofo in an offering, it symbolized the presence of the particular god connected with that special offering. It had been an indispensable medium through which the priest invoked the presence of the god. During the ritual observances, various animals were killed, the type of animal sacrificed depending on the god. The blood of the animal,

¹²Pilkington, "Nigeria Medley," p. 99.

when killed, was smeared on the Ofo as the priest repeated relevant memorized words which had been handed down through a generation of priests.

This dependence of the people on the priests and the native chieftains gave the chieftains and the priests final authority in religious matters and in the observance of the native laws and customs. Before the advent of the British in Nigeria, the Nigerian system of laws was based on the principle such as the laws of the Medes and Persians, according to Hammurabi's code. This code called for an instant and reciprocal retaliation, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".

As the king was the arbiter of the state, all assaults and crimes had to be reported to him. The guilty person was punished according to the unwritten laws of the land. The severest punishment was for murder.¹³

The individual was subordinated to the society. This society was, in turn, controlled by the existing animistic religions. The king was regarded as the god's appointed caretaker of the citizens of the tribe. To aid the king in his work, a team of nobles and elders (Ndi-Nze), who constituted the upper class, was elected by the people.

It can therefore be seen that the character of Nigerian people was directly influenced by geographical and climatic conditions. These conditions, in turn, affected their social, economic, and political behavior. The people associated their daily

¹³Orizu, Without Bitterness, p. 117.

activities with the natural environment. The idea of the creator which they held was molded by this natural surrounding. In the next chapter will be shown how the mode of economic exchange and the early economic background were also controlled by the physical environment and characteristics of the tribal community.

CHAPTER II. NIGERIA--
ECONOMIC HISTORY PRIOR TO 1900

Before the impact of the West the economic way of life of the Nigerian people was mainly communal. The daily life of the tribal groups was patterned upon primitive communalism also. There was a joint and collective operation in farming, harvesting, eating, and most social engagements. The people held common ownership of property even though the tribal chieftain was regarded as the sole keeper of this tribal property.

When different tribal groups entered into an economic transaction which necessitated the exchange or transfer of land, it was carried out through a barter process. Such exchange of land could only be carried out with the consent of the tribal elders and chiefs.

Communal ownership of land was the only thing generally common to all Nigerian tribal communities. Before the advent of the British in Nigeria, individual private ownership of land was unknown. Native law and custom affecting landed property determined how a piece of land was used. Land could be transferred and also inherited. However, this involved only use of the land, not direct ownership. The chiefs acted as trustees of the tribal community. They had the sole power to revoke the grant of a piece of land. They were also regarded as the caretaker of all the communal land.¹

¹Burns, History of Nigeria, p. 246.

Among the Yorubas of Southern Nigeria the land was held as a family property. The individual members of a family were allowed the use of a portion of the family landed estate. Since the family land reverted to the tribe in the event of extinction or outlawry of the family, it was in effect communal property.

Each head of a family was entitled to the enjoyment of sufficient land within the limits of the village or other community to which he belongs for the support of his household. If the land he has occupied exhausted, he was entitled to permission to occupy fresh land. If he has no land, for instance, when he grows up and has a family of his own, he is entitled to permission to cultivate a new piece of land.²

The use of such land was conditioned by chiefs or elders of the tribe upon the good behavior of the grantee. This land could be taken from the grantee if he failed to perform his duty to the tribal community. His principal responsibility was to defend the tribal community. This was the grantee's feudal duty to the tribal organization. As long as he met his obligations, there was little danger that he might be dispossessed.

According to native law and custom, land was inalienable under any circumstances. The sale of land was regarded as a crime against the tribal community. Any transaction which was undertaken by a chief with strangers in the form of treaties which alienated the communal land, was regarded according to native law and custom, and therefore was not binding.

The principal occupation of the people was agriculture. Therefore one of the big problems of native Nigerians was how to maintain the fertility and conservation of the land. There were

²Ibid., p. 246.

large tracts of land which were not under cultivation. As a result of the availability of these large tracts of uncultivated land, the Nigerian farmer was prone to resort to "shifting cultivation". The farmer first of all cleared a piece of land. The plants and bushes were left to dry and then were fired. After this, the land was ready for ploughing. The native hoe was the implement used in the process of building ridges. When the job of ridge-making was completed, the farmer then sowed the seeds of whatever plant he intended to sow. The most important crops planted were the yams, cassava, and other tuberous vegetables, which go to form the food crops of the people. This method of farming is still practiced in many parts of Nigeria today.

Generally, the farmers did not use manure on the farms. They depended on the already stored up manure or humus which was left on the soil during the time the particular piece of land was lying fallow. However, household remains and garbage were used as the principal source of manure for the gardens behind the native homes in the village. The farms were usually a few miles from the village proper.

When a particular farm was exhausted, the farm was abandoned and another clearing was made. The plough was not used, but the farmers had some idea of the advantage to be gained by the rotation of crops.

The communal lands which lay fallow included miles and miles of palm trees. The great heat and abundant moisture which is characteristic of the Nigerian tropical belt gave the palm trees

an incredible luxuriance. It was from these palm trees that the native Nigerians got one of the most important sources of their vegetable oil. The palm oil and the kernels were of great communal value and were sold in the market place by native merchants, who served as middlemen between the farmers and the foreign commercial companies.³

Among other agricultural products were bananas, peanuts, benniseed, cotton lint and seed, coffee, ginger, pepper, copra, which is secured from coco-nuts, cola, gum Arabic, kapok, piassava, rubber, shea-nuts, timber, and cocoa and its allied products.

The food of the people of Nigeria consisted of what they grew on the farms. The staple food consisted of yams, beans, cassava and its allied products, corn, millet, African oil bean, bananas, peanuts, beverages, coco-nuts, cola-nuts, meat, fish, and many kinds of vegetables. The palm oil is used incessantly when cooking. Many of these crops and their combinations are used in preparing different kinds of food.

In the agricultural fields which were not under corn or millet or under cultivation, could be seen large flocks of sheep and goats. Stock raising was carried out in different parts of Nigeria. However, the Northern part of Nigeria which lay within the Sudan, maintained an extensive stock-raising industry. Except for the dwarf cattle, which appeared to be immune from the bites of the tse-tse flies, the herds suffered considerably from

³Ibid., p. 269.

this dangerous fly. Several breeds of horses, sheep, swine, and goats were also raised. Camels, oxen, and the small native donkeys were used as pack animals. Nigerian poultry is generally small and tough. Eggs were not generally consumed except on festive occasions.

The farmers, during their period of leisure, engaged in other kinds of economic production. In certain areas, there were professional weavers who made cloth from the cotton produced on the farms. The weaving industry was a thriving one too. In other localities, there were iron smelters and wood carvers. The Nigerian economy before the coming of the European was largely based on the making of cloth, the fashioning of garments, and the welding of iron. The artistic skill of these artisans was such that their work, primitive as it was, influenced modern art.⁴

Weaving was carried out with simple tools, calling for great skill, and resulted in cloth artistically beautiful. Many skilled wood craftsmen specialized in the making of fetishes, drums, and figures which required individual initiative and originality. These carvers made such things as combs, stools, wooden spoons, metal spoons, wooden plates, calabashes, doors, sticks, staves of office, canoes, wari boards, knives, mortars, drums, ivory tusks, pots, pipes, weights and scales, metal work of every description, walls, temples and dwellings, and textiles

⁴W. E. Burghardt Dubois, The World and Africa, Viking Press, New York, 1947, p. 151.

of every kind.⁵

Before the advent of the Europeans in Nigeria, there was little manufacturing on a commercial scale. The weavers, iron workers, and carvers tried to produce locally needed items during their off-farm employment. However, when need for farm implements was created, many of these people began to work continuously in order to meet the demand of the tribal community.⁶

In certain parts of the country, leather was worked. There were locally made utensils of calabash, brass, and earthenware which were used for cooking, storing water, containers, and receptacles. Most of the utensils which were made were crude, and decorated, as a rule, with geometrical designs. The native Nigerians worked the local iron into weapons and agricultural implements.

Cloth was woven on narrow hand looms from the locally grown cotton. In Nigeria, the chief center for cloth production was at Kano in the northern part of the country. The producers worked independently of their family and household weaving schemes. However, the cloth which was produced by several independent units swelled the market stalls, since the agents bought up the cloth from several producers in the area where weaving was carried out.

Ornamental leather work, one of the great crafts of Kano, was known as Morocco leather. This special design of leather

⁵Ibid., p. 151.

⁶Burns, History of Nigeria, p. 274.

work was carried to North Africa across the Sahara desert from Nigeria during centuries of contact between Northern Nigeria and the North African civilization.⁷

The main problem of Nigerian farmers was how to carry their wares, farm produce, and artifacts to the markets. The markets usually were erected in the central square of each tribal community, and natives from other nearby tribal communities attended them. In many cases important markets were so situated that all the people of a particular tribe could trade there. They could find there the much needed agricultural implements, wares, cloth, food, and vegetables that were not available in the nearby markets.

Until the exploration of the Gulf of Guinea by the Portuguese navigators in the fifteenth century, the only communication between Nigeria and the then known world was through the Sahara desert. For many centuries, it had been the task of the Hausa and Fulani traders to carry the products of Hausaland and Bornu northwards to Tripoli and Tunis across the sea of sand which lay between. The principal export of those days was slaves.

Before the advent of the British in Nigeria, railroads, modern roads, and telegraph lines never existed. The connections between communities was by wide, open trails and foot paths. In those days it was risky to travel from one area to another with a large distance of open space between. Long distance travel was undertaken only by able-bodied men who traveled in teams for

⁷Ibid., p. 274.

security reasons. This mode of travel was adopted since slave raiders always harassed unprotected travelers.

For centuries the natives had used the rivers Niger and Benue for transport of their goods in canoes. There were rivers which were navigable even in the dry season. These rivers were connected in their lower reaches, one with another, by a network of creeks and lagoons which did afford the inhabitants an ideal and comparatively safe way of carrying their produce to the main markets.

In the extreme north of Nigeria, camels and donkeys were used as beasts of burden, but further south, owing to the prevalence of the tse-tse fly, animal transport was out of the question. In areas where canoes could not be used, everything was usually carried on the heads of men.

Since there was no wheeled traffic, bush paths and narrow tracks, which could not take two men walking abreast, were sufficient substitute for roads. All villages, tribal communities, and farms were connected by these paths which traversed the thickest forests and the densest bush.

It is remarkable to note here that Nigeria, at the time of the cession of Lagos to the British government in 1861, had no roads, modern mines, factories, or railroads. The country could not boast of having possessed a permanent capital before 1860, at which time effective penetration of Europeans began.

There were countless obstacles to Nigeria's economic development. Obstacles included deadly enemies such as disease and lack of scientific knowledge and education. But the main reason

was the fact that the native civilization had been relatively of a low degree. There was no accumulated body of scientific knowledge of Nigerian extraction. Scientific technology as it had been in industrial Great Britain was unknown in Nigeria in 1861.⁸ This retarded the economic growth of Nigeria before the penetration of the country by several Western European powers.

⁸T. W. Wallbank, Contemporary Africa, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 1956, p. 43.

CHAPTER III. NIGERIA--EUROPEAN
PENETRATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL CONTROL

The Western notion that before the coming of the Europeans the peoples of Africa were all simply "primitive" and "barbarous" in culture because of their economic underdevelopment, and that the civilized African was only a by-product of European penetration, definitely lacked historical foundation. It is of importance to note that during European Dark Ages, the Empires of Songhai, Mali, and Ghana, with Moslem culture, flourished in what is now French West Africa.¹ Timbuktu, the capital of the Mali Kingdom, was built between 1326 and 1468. The city had grown as a result of the fall of the town of Walata, the seat of government of the Ghana Empire. The prosperity of Timbuktu was the ruin of Walata. By 1591, the City of Timbuktu changed hands from the Songhai Empire to the Moslem, Moroccan Empire. By the fifteenth century, this city was the home of the great Moslem University of Timbuktu, which was one of the foremost centers of learning of all of West Africa.

An English historian paid Mansa Musa, the Emperor of Mali African Empire in the Sudan, a remarkable tribute:

Mansa Musa had left behind him an Empire which in the history of purely African states was as remarkable for its size as for its wealth and which provided a striking example of the capacity of the Negro for political organization.²

¹Thomas Hodgkin, "National Movements in West Africa," Highway, February, 1952, p. 169.

²E. W. Bovil, Caravans of the Old Sahara, Oxford University Press, London, 1933, p. 74.

The people of Ashanti in the Gold Coast, and Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, possessed a highly organized and complex civilization long before their territories were drawn into either the French or British colonial orbit. The state of the West African polity before the advent of Europeans into the Guinea Coast was portrayed by Sir Hugh Clifford. He pointed out that the most notable achievement of the West African culture was the invention of a democratic system of government and State Socialism. The African society was such that even though communal ownership of property existed, there was still complete freedom of action, initiative, and choice in most social, economic, and political activities. It was on this basis that the West Africans founded their tribal polity. However, European penetration tended seriously to undermine these cultural traits of the West African social and political system.

The earliest accounts of African cultures to reach Europe can be traced to Egyptians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. It was in 600 B. C. that Pharaoh Necho II, of Egypt, commissioned some Phoenicians to attempt to circumnavigate the continent. The Hanno expedition completed the exploration in three years and returned back to Egypt by way of the Mediterranean Sea after sailing through the Strait of Gibraltar.³

It has not been clear as to which of the European nations first came to West Africa. However, shortly after 1364, the French town of Dieppe, in Normandy, began an ivory carving

³J. C. de-Graft Johnson, African Glory, the Story of Vanished Negro Civilization, Praeger, New York, 1954, p. 120.

industry. The ivory must have been brought from an ivory producing country, and the indications were that it was brought from West Africa by North African Arab traders. It is known that the Portuguese reached or explored the Gold Coast around 1471. Ten years later, the Portuguese began effective settlement which had remained for the next one hundred sixty years.

There was no doubt as to the reason for the penetration of the West Coast of Africa by the early Europeans. The main motivation was trade and commerce. Adventurers and explorers greatly enlarged Europe's knowledge of the unknown continent. They were aided by European rulers who were curious to know what was beyond their territories.⁴

The history of the past centuries of West Africa was almost exclusively centered around trade with European nations. There were two phases or periods in this trade relationship. The first period extended from the advent of the Portuguese in 1471, to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. The second period fell between the abolition of the slave trade and the Berlin African Conference of 1885. This conference drew up the pattern of systematic partition of Africa by European powers.

The expansion of metropolitan Europe into the Americas created European settlements there. As the European colonization of the West Indies grew, so did the need for slave labor from the West Coast of Africa. However, the slave trade did not take a dramatic upsurge until the introduction and development of the

⁴Ibid., p. 122.

plantation method of sugar cultivation in the years 1640-50.⁵ The sugar plantations were later followed by cotton and tobacco estates which needed more and more slave labor in their operation.

The early dominance of Portuguese influence in the West African trade and commerce was due to the Papal Bull of 1493. This Bull divided the underdeveloped parts of the world between Spain and Portugal. Through this division Africa fell within the Portuguese sphere of influence. By 1485 John Alfonso d'Alveiro, a Portuguese trader, started trading with the Kingdom of Benin in Nigeria. He reported that the citizens of Benin were skilled in artistic iron and wood carving.

Alveiro wanted to establish the Roman Catholic religion in the Kingdom of Benin. His request was granted by the king of Benin on the condition that d'Alveiro would provide a Portuguese maid for him as his bride. Alveiro met the demand of the king of Benin. He was then able to establish a nucleus of a Catholic church in the kingdom of Benin. Some of the later southern chiefs in Benin and Yoruba kingdoms claimed descent from the early African-Portuguese marriage; but the early Portuguese church in Benin ended in a failure after a short while because of lack of spiritual leadership.⁶

The Portuguese were not content with mere control of the

⁵Onwuka Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1956, p. 2.

⁶Bittinger, Black and White in the Sudan, p. 104.

coastal areas. They explored extensively the zone separating the coast and the Sudan. Such expeditions had been able to cross the Sudan in 1470. These Portuguese traders were credited with having introduced from India and South America the pineapple, groundnut, sweet potato, maize, oranges, limes, sugar cane, tomatoes, onions, guavas, and papaya; they also brought the pigs, ducks, and turkeys.⁷

The Portuguese quietly stimulated trade. The new crops and animals which they introduced into West Africa followed the channels of trade and gradually worked their way northward. Some of the trade from Kano and Timbuktu and other Sudanese towns were deflected southward toward Lagos and the Guinea Coast.

West Africa, from Cape Verde to the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra, had become by 1530 the scene of European enterprise and rivalry. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Portuguese trade monopoly of the West African commerce collapsed when challenged by the superior naval might of England and France.

In the scramble to control the African slave trade that ensued, such small European states as Denmark, Sweden, and Brandenburg sought unsuccessfully to share in the spoils of trade. During these centuries the trade in human beings proved to be more lucrative than trade in such commodities as gold, ivory, and Benin pepper, which previously had constituted the main bulk of trade

⁷Ibid., p. 106.

before the zenith of the slave traffic.⁸

It had been estimated that between 1450-1850 this traffic in human beings reached almost ten million, although a more conservative estimate placed the figure between five to six million. The mass exportation of West African population reached its utmost in the eighteenth century and averaged between 70,000 to 80,000 annually.⁹

The slave trade itself disrupted many African communities. The part that the African middleman played in the slave trade cannot be adequately evaluated. However, the traffic in African slaves as a major base of commerce between 1481-1807 created a general disruption and disorganization in the political, social, and economic structure of the African principalities. The period of transition, 1807 to 1833, and onwards, when slavery was abolished in several countries that participated in it, brought a period of return to other general articles of trade.

At this period, the chiefs of the African coastal towns were still distrustful of the intentions of the Europeans. The Portuguese, in order to maintain their trade contact and peaceful relations, resorted to Christian evangelism like that adopted by d'Alveiro in the kingdom of Benin.

Since the chiefs, by native law and custom, could not alienate the communal land which was regarded as the property of the

⁸Dike, Trade and Politics, p. 2.

⁹Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the U.S.A., Viking Press, New York, 1904, p. 151.

entire tribe, the Europeans could gain land and bases of operation only through leases. Some of the native chieftains signed treaties which made these territories European crown colonies because the chiefs did not realize the full significance of these treaties. A case in point was the treaty of 1861 which was concluded in Lagos, Nigeria, between King Dosumu and the representatives of Queen Victoria of Great Britain. By this treaty, the island of Lagos and the adjoining Lagos mainland were created a crown colony and as a result were subjected to direct colonial office rule, for it had fallen within the administration of Dominion areas of the British Empire.

When King Dosumu realized the character of the treaty of 1861, he was not pacified until he received from the British government an annual remuneration of 1,200 bags of cowries,¹⁰ equal at that time to about 1,030 pounds.¹¹ He withdrew his opposition only when it was pointed out to him that private rights to property had not been affected by the area's crown colony status.

The illiterate coastal chieftains were constantly suspicious of the motives of the European traders. They discouraged efforts by the merchants to penetrate into the interior by passage through their tribal territories. These coastal chiefs feared that they might lose their lucrative trade to the chiefs of the

¹⁰Small shells (cypraca moneta), about half an inch in length, fastened together, as a rule, in strings of 40 or 100 each. These shells were imported from the West Indies.

¹¹Dosumu's pension was continued after his death, in 1885, to his successors as an act of grace.

hinterland. The freedom and sovereignty of the African states were not impaired by the pressure of the European traders until the middle of the nineteenth century. Until that time the political power of the African chiefs remained supreme over aliens and natives.

Trade and commerce as it existed between European traders and the West African peoples during 1481-1807 did not in any way alter the political contours of West Africa. The colonizing activity of the Western powers which had accompanied nineteenth century trade expansion was of recent origin. It had been less than a century old in several parts of West Africa.¹² The abolition of the slave trade in 1807 brought a rapid change and transformation in the economic and political planes of West Africa. The old African political system which had been built on slavery for the past four hundred years began to decline and finally collapsed in the 1880's.

Great Britain underwent remarkable changes at the time of the abolition of the slave trade. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Liverpool which formerly had been a citadel of slave traffic, was diverted to a new type of trade--the cotton trade with the Americas. The inventions in the cotton industry followed each other in rapid succession. Industrialized Lancaster now received the majority of the economic investments of capitalists and powerful interests.¹³

¹²Dike, op. cit., p. 8.

¹³Ibid., p. 12.

As the industrial revolution gathered momentum, the industrialists began to realize that they were producing excess cotton goods which could not be sold in the local British markets and in the Americas. The desire to find new markets for the surplus industrial produce of the fast industrializing European powers stimulated a renewed interest in imperialism. Africa, lying practically within the tropics, was the logical place for the surplus cotton produce of the cotton factories of Europe. The industrialists, in their search for new overseas markets for their products, indirectly encouraged and assisted explorers to penetrate the interior of Africa.

By 1795-1803, Mungo Park explored the River Niger and was able to reach Busa in Northwest Nigeria in 1803. In the 1830's the Lander brothers, Richard and John, followed up the trail of River Niger from the point where Mungo Park had left it. They finally traced the course of the Niger down into the Bights of Benin and Biafra on the Guinea Coast.

With the interior of West Africa now open, the course of trade in other commodities began in earnest. Among the commodities were gold, cocoa, timber, palm oil and palm kernel, pepper, ivory, and a host of other products. The native chiefs were given in exchange manufactured cotton goods, firearms, machinery, dishes, and several other goods.

By 1834 the British Bonny trade totalled 500,000 pounds. The British traders, having invested large sums of capital in their area of influence and trade dominance, began to take more and more interest in the political authority of the area in order

to protect their economic interests.¹⁴ This association between economic and political factors was exemplified by the state of Bonny that soon became deeply involved with the British traders in the palm oil trade. The British traders, having invested a considerable capital in the territory of the King of Bonny, soon began to interfere in Bonny domestic politics as well.

The trade and politics of the city-state of Bonny soon became intertwined. When a nation invested large capital and equipment in the territory of another, sooner or later, directly or otherwise, the capital investor became involved in the politics of the other country for reasons of self interest. As a result, Britain challenged "the exercise of King Pepple's just prerogative" over the State of Bonny. In issues that involved great economic investments, legalistic arguments and questions of right and wrong frequently did not avail in the realms of international relations and diplomacy.

This systematic encroachment and eventual engulfment of areas of economic and political spheres of influence were used not only in the city-state of Bonny, but also in several city-states which were brought under British control. Similar methods were followed also by other European powers trading in Africa to carve out areas of interest for themselves.

In 1849, Mr. John Beecroft was chosen as the first British consul on the Bights of Benin and Biafra with his headquarters

¹⁴Ibid., p. 80.

at Fernando Po.¹⁵ Before his assumption of his consular post, the British intervention in Nigerian politics was indeed desultory. It was not until 1849 that John Beecroft, with the approval of Lord Palmerston, entered into a bold intervention in the internal politics of the city-states of Southern Nigeria.¹⁶

The period of 1849-54, the era of Beecroft's consulship, signaled the end of noninterference and the creation of a policy of empire building in Nigeria. Before the problem of the partition of Africa was brought up in European capitals, John Beecroft had already consolidated British consular jurisdiction over the native states of the oil Rivers Protectorate.¹⁷ The Africans in effect began to look at the British Consul at Fernando Po as the de facto governor of the Bights of Benin and Biafra. This pioneering empire building activity of John Beecroft and his successors greatly strengthened British demands for control of Nigeria as a protecting power, before the Berlin West African Conference of 1885 had legalized that status in international diplomacy.¹⁸

¹⁵Fernando Po is a Spanish Island territory in the Atlantic, Guinea Coast, and southeast of Nigeria. With the consent of the Spanish government, the British assumed administration of the island in 1827 and established a naval station for the British ships engaged in the suppression of the slave trade. In 1844, Spain reclaimed the island, but the British base was allowed to remain.

¹⁶Dike, op cit., p. 128.

¹⁷This is the administrative name given to the city-states of Southern Nigeria which had been incorporated into the British area of dominance.

¹⁸Dike, op cit., p. 128.

The job of the British consul who came to Nigeria after the departure of John Beecroft was to push further penetration into the interior with a consolidation of the areas already drawn into the British sphere of influence. The Berlin Conference which had recognized the "sphere of influence" in Africa of the European powers interested, was in a way the birthplace of the modern country of Nigeria.

The British suzerainty over Nigeria had been attained through direct trade and imperialistic colonialism. The industrialized nations of Europe were in need of supplies of raw materials and food to meet the demand in their home bases. Therefore Europe was impelled to the development of Africa primarily by the necessities of her people and not by the greed of the capitalists.

The Royal Niger Company, a chartered British company, was the instrument for the British control of Northern Nigeria. This company "was empowered to govern, to keep in order, and protect the territories of the chiefs with whom it had concluded sovereign right treaties and subject to the sanction of the secretary of state for the colonies, to acquire new territories".¹⁹

The Royal Niger Company levied custom duties in order to secure sufficient revenue to defray the cost of its protection of the native peoples and the property and investment of the company. Even though the company's major purpose had been trade, it was compelled to keep the peace of the area so that it could carry on effective trading. To maintain order the Royal Niger

¹⁹ Bittinger, Black and White in the Sudan, p. 131.

Company created a joint native and British constabulary force. The company was compelled at times to use this joint force against native insurgents.

The company received its greatest threat to its control of Northern Nigeria from a native kingdom, Nupe, which was a vassal of the Sultan of Sokoto. The Sultan of Sokoto, being the spiritual leader of all Northern Nigeria Moslems, had accumulated an extensive power and influence over the entire region. The Emir of Nupe, even though a vassal to the Sultan of Sokoto, possessed complete freedom of action within his kingdom. The Emir stood in the way of the English in their desire to push northward. This Emir conducted a series of slave raids and was not submissive to the company's power.²⁰

In 1897, Sir George Goldie led a party of 550 constabulary against a reported army of 30,000 men, of whom a third was mounted. The English soldiers and the Fulani horsemen stood face to face contending for suzerainty in the Sudan. The Emir of Nupe was eventually defeated. A series of treaties was entered into in which British suzerainty was recognized through the company, and slavery was abolished throughout the territories.²¹

After the establishment of peace and order, the Royal Niger Company began the job of formulating a form of government for the area. The core of the company's administration was made up of the agent-general with an executive staff. A Chief Justice and

²⁰Ibid., p. 133.

²¹Ibid., p. 132.

his judicial staff was set up with a system of courts. A constabulary force consisting of English and native police was built to give teeth to the organization.

The Royal Niger Company during the period of its administration of Northern Nigeria, concluded 235 treaties with the riverside states and sent out missions to approach the inland emperors at Kano and Sokoto. A remarkable thing about these treaties was the nature and character of their formation. A typical example was the treaty concluded between Sir Taubman Goldie for the Royal Niger Company, and the Sultan of Sokoto for Sokoto and her vassal states. The article I of this treaty stated the following:

For the mutual advantage of ourselves and people, and those Europeans trading under the name of the National African Company (Ltd.), Umoru, King of the Mussulmans of the Sudan, with the consent and advice of my council grant and transfer to the above people, or other with whom they may arrange, my entire rights to the country on both sides of the River Benue and rivers flowing into it through my dominions for such distance from its and their banks as they may desire.

In article IV, Umoru continued to promise that "these grants we make forever, and declare them to be irrevocable."

The company promised the Sultan of Sokoto an annual subsidy of 3000 bags of cowries in return for surrendering himself to perpetual servitude.²²

By another treaty in 1890, the Royal Niger Company gained complete jurisdiction over all foreigners within the Hausa kingdom within the domain of the Sultan of Sokoto. The kingdoms of

²²Ibid., p. 132.

Nupe and Illorin were incorporated by Sir George Goldie in 1897.

This expansion by the company brought international complications. France took over Dahomey in 1893 and penetrated into Western Nigeria. The Germans were in the Cameroons and sought suzerainty over Bornu. The English became alarmed at this Franco-German penetration in their area of influence. Colonel Frederick Lugard was sent in 1894 to stop the French advance into Western Nigeria. The French also dispatched an envoy to the Emir of Borgu, with the purpose of acquiring the same area. The race to Nikki, the capital of Borgu kingdom, was begun. Frederick Lugard beat the French envoy in the race. Western Sudan of Nigeria was thus incorporated within the Royal Niger Company control. An Anglo-French agreement signed in Paris in 1898 ended this rivalry and placed the Western and Northern boundaries within the English sphere of influence and recognized French control in the Sudan.

By 1898, the Royal Niger Company was in firm control of the entire Northern Nigeria. At this time there was agitation in England that the Niger Company was exercising a monopoly over the entire northern region of Nigeria. As a result of this agitation the Royal Niger Company charter of incorporation of the area was revoked and the northern region of Nigeria was transferred to the British Imperial Government on January 1, 1900.²³

Colonel Lugard was appointed as the first High Commissioner of His Majesty's government for Northern Nigeria in 1900. Between

²³Ibid., p. 135.

1900 and 1907, he conquered the whole of Northern Nigeria for the British. He laid the foundation for the Dual Mandate System in which the entire country was administered indirectly through the traditional rulers.²⁴

The Northern and Southern Nigeria protectorates were soon consolidated into independent administrations. The colonial office, in order to create unity, sought the unification of the two governments. The first step in the attainment of this was the amalgamation of the colony of Lagos and the Southern Nigeria protectorate on May 1, 1906. The first governor was Sir Walter Egerton, who had been appointed to the double post of Governor of Lagos and High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria in 1904.²⁵ In 1912, Sir Frederick Lugard was appointed Governor of both Northern and Southern Nigeria protectorates even though they had independent administrations.

In 1914, the colony and protectorate of Nigeria was formally inaugurated under the authority of Royal Letters Patent and Orders in Council. The Order in Council which set up the colony and protectorate of Nigeria which went into effect in January, 1914, divided the country for purposes of administration into three main portions: the colony of Lagos, and two groups of provinces, known as the Northern and Southern Provinces. The difference between the colony and the protectorate was legal. The natives of the colony of Lagos became British subjects, whereas

²⁴Ibid., p. 135.

²⁵Burns, History of Nigeria, p. 201.

the natives of the protectorates were merely "British Protected Persons". Thus the colony of Lagos was annexed as a part of the British Empire while the protectorate was only an appendate of it.²⁶

The governor became the Commander-in-Chief. An administrator was placed in immediate control of the colony, and the Northern and Southern Provinces were placed under the control of Lieutenant Governors. These officers were responsible to the Governor.

The most important event in the history of Nigeria up to 1914 was the emergence of Nigeria as a political unit. The British government, by 1914, had consolidated its power and control of the colony of Lagos and the protected provinces of Nigeria. A new and colonial government under Sir Frederick Lugard as commander-in-chief began its administration. The Lugard government immediately started to extend the railroads, highways, and telegraph communications from the coastal regions into the hinterland. The aim of the government was to achieve initial mobility in its political administration. In the course of time, the entire country was politically divided. The new colonial administrators were stationed in the interior provinces and districts. This group of officers was the main instrument through which the indirect rule system was to be put into operation.

With political control established, the problem that confronted the administrators was how best to approach the native

²⁶Ibid., p. 204.

peoples. The indirect rule system and the dual mandate policy were the methods adopted in pushing through British hegemony over the country. In due time, the impact of the British influence on the social, political, and economic system of old Nigeria started to appear. The course which this impact of British influence took on Nigerian polity was very remarkable.

CHAPTER IV. WESTERN IMPACT ON
NIGERIAN SOCIAL STATUS

Following the consolidation of the British sphere of influence in Nigeria, the English were confronted with the problem of devising the best method of governing the Nigerian territories. What was needed was the formulation of a native policy which could be integrated into the framework of the British colonial administration.¹

There were three schools of thought concerning the methods through which an assimilation process could be attempted. The first school tried earnestly to destroy the local culture, root and stock, and substitute in its place a foreign culture. This process was very difficult since the native peoples almost invariably opposed any spontaneous transformation in their cultural pattern.

The second method ignored the local culture in its present form much as the man who took an apple tree into the tropics ignored the climate. The colonial overlords brought their culture and their educational methods and tried to plant them. If they failed to grow, the primitive people were branded as inferior mentally and morally.

The third approach was a middle-of-the-road solution of the problem of colonial government. The colonial policy makers tried to appreciate the culture of the primitive people. They joined

¹A. D. Helser, Education of Primitive People, Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1934, p. 11.

hands with the local groups in seeking the way to a richer and fuller life.²

The British colonial office chose the third method in its administration of the British colonies and protected territories in West Africa. There was a great emphasis on government by cooperation and partial delegation of power to the traditional chiefs and native authorities. The future colonial administrators were given a preview of West African sociology at the London University's school of Economics and Political Science prior to their departure to take up administrative positions in West African colonies and protected territories. The administrator, when assuming his colonial assignment, invariably was trained to take into consideration the local and existing sociological conditions prevalent in the various territories.

At the start, the policy makers thought that the best way to rule the people was through their own traditional rulers. The military and the police controls originally held by the native chiefs and Emirs were transferred to a new colonial army. This force became known in West Africa as the Royal West African Frontier Force. A new police system was also created, with the Governor, representing the crown, as the commander-in-chief. The military and police were in effect a British force with West African manpower. These forces were commanded by British nationals.

In the field of administration of justice, the colonial

²Ibid., p. 11.

power had to recognize the existing native law and custom except under certain conditions. For instance, in marriages registration is carried out only when church marriages are conducted. When people marry in the rural areas they use the native law and custom which called for no registration of the marriage.

There was a clear marked division in jurisdiction with much of the control in the hands of Europeans, but most of the execution of policy decision was retained by the natives. European and native lawyers handled cases in the high courts. In the native courts, native jurymen versed in native law and custom handled cases which in turn were reviewed periodically by the district administrative officers. In these native courts most of the cases handled concerned land disputes. When cases could not be resolved by existing statutes in the lower courts, they were transferred to the high court with the approval of the parties to the dispute. If the cases were still unresolved satisfactorily, they subsequently were reviewed by the associated Supreme Court justices who were the final arbiter in most cases. However, some cases of high order were transferred to the West African Court of Appeals, and thence to the privy council of the House of Lords which gave the final verdict in any dispute of a high order.³

There was a need of new powers of legislation which could be delegated to the native chiefs. The dignity and pride of many native rulers had been greatly reduced. Native rulers were

³Nigeria Handbook, "Law, Justice, Police, and Prisons," p. 43-100.

not permitted to raise and control armed forces, nor to grant permission to carry arms. The sole right to impose taxation in any form was reserved to the suzerain power. The right to legislate was reserved.

European education on the part of the native peoples was indispensable for without it this kind of cooperative association would break down because the Europeans would not be in the position to handle all functions of the local administration. The government immediately realized the need of encouraging and assisting native education. The main problem that cropped up at the start was the form the education of the native peoples should take.

In the period between 1860 and 1920, the British policy makers advocated an educational policy whose chief objective concerned the training of clerical employees.⁴ The type of training provided the Nigerians with little responsibility except as clerical employees of the colonial administration. Its object was to completely denationalize the African for he now merely acquired a superficial education without a firm root in the society to which he belonged. The earlier trained employees had their training rushed through in a short period. They constituted a separate group in that they now possessed a position which was higher than that of the illiterate masses. On the other hand, they could not aspire to be classed with the top administrative officers.

⁴Westermann, The African Today, Oxford University Press, London, 1934, p. 212.

The system of education that was followed in the beginning failed to create an all-round educated Nigerian. Instead of giving the people education for citizenship, they were trained to be apart from the greater part of the Nigerian community. It was immediately realized that like every other activity of the white man, the school had introduced a destructive effect on native social cohesion.⁵ There was a certain unenlightened character in the British conception of African education. The native peoples were looked upon as tools to be fashioned rather than as a new partner in the age-long process of bringing the world out of darkness into light.⁶

This form of public education produced a negative effect instead of the positive one which had been the main object of progressive education. The impact of this education system had as a result destroyed the native social forms, attitudes, and values in which the traditional behavior, outlook, feeling, and beliefs of individual men and women were originally shaped and had meaning to them.⁷

Even though the British occupation of Nigeria brought with it the establishment of peace and security by the termination of tribal wars and slave raids among the people, yet on the trail of this "peace and security" came the dislocation of the native

⁵Westerman, op.cit., p. 218.

⁶A. V. Murray, The School in the Bush, Longmans, Green and Company, London, 1929, p. 117.

⁷Calvin W. Stillman, Africa in the Modern World, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 37, 1955, p. 70.

culture. This situation brought a far more disastrous consequence than the African wars and the slave trade. The main cause of this was the type of educational system introduced by the Europeans at the beginning.⁸

It was not long until the negative effect of the early education policy was realized by the progressive elements of the colonial bureaucracy. This awareness was the main reason that motivated a bold and new policy which was championed by Colonel Frederick Lugard when he was the governor of Northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1912. Lugard maintained that a new education policy should seek:

to fit the ordinary individual to fill a useful part in his environment, with happiness to himself, and to insure that the exceptional individual shall use his abilities for the advancement of the community and not to its detriment, or to the subversion of constituted authority. It should train a generation able to achieve ideals of its own, without a slavish invitation of Europeans, capable and willing to assume its own definite sphere of public and civic work, and to shape its own future.⁹

Lord Lugard's new and bold policy was indeed revolutionary in the context of the African cultural community. As the African and Nigerian society was characterized by the prevalence of the ideal of community in which the individual receded before the group, the new policy was drawn with the aim of shaping a compact and unified society. The whole existence of the native

⁸Ibid., p. 70.

⁹Lord Frederick Lugard, Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1926, p. 425.

Nigerian, from birth to death, was originally embodied in a series of associations. Life appeared to have its full value only in these close ties. Even though there was in them a well ordered gradation between persons who command and who obey, yet the prevailing feeling was that of equality.¹⁰

The old education system created a marked distinction between the colonial bureaucracy and the subject people. The native African was produced to serve and nothing more. In a great many cases there was no genuine consciousness of a strong sense of solidarity among the native peoples. It was through this new policy that the group imposed duties on individuals and at the same time granted privileges to those individuals. The society took from its members much of their personal responsibility and also offered them its protection.

Lord Lugard's bold and progressive system, even though very much desired, created a problem of its own. A tremendous change took place in many fields of the social system of Nigeria. The traditional ties in a family were broken. The city dweller now cared little about what the elders were doing in the backwoods. The rapid absorption of a Western way of life had created a superficial way of life for the native peoples. The effects of the social revolution and transformation in Nigeria were extremely severe. It was aggravated by the fact that it occurred within a generation as compared with the many generations which

¹⁰Westermann, Africa Today and Tomorrow, Oxford University Press, New York, 1949, p. 65.

Europe had taken to achieve a parallel social transformation.¹¹

Lord Lugard's new educational policy provided certain inhabitants of a given territory with a common lingua franca, English, with which the knowledge and tools to acquire status and the prestige to fulfill their aspirations within the new social structure were attained. The people, through this new education, were able to acquire new ideas and some values by which alien rule and colonialism could be effectively attacked. It was through western education that the African encountered the scientific method and the idea of progress with their natural results, namely, an awareness of alternatives, and the conviction that man could creatively master and shape his own destiny.¹²

The new social order which was created by the new way of life showed a remarkable change in the bonds of kinship. This saw traditional bonds weakened by the impact of technology and urbanization. Formerly, the cities were nonindustrial and lacked the degree of specialization based upon the machine. However, the craft form of specialization made each individual economically dependent upon the society as a whole. The weaver depended upon the blacksmith for tools, and upon the farmer, the hunter, and the trader for his food; the blacksmith depended upon others for his food and upon the weaver for his clothing. Each of these, moreover, had to rely upon the priest, the drummer, the

¹¹Wallbank, Contemporary Africa, p. 48.

¹²James S. Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa", American Political Science Review, Vol. XLVIII, June, 1954, No. 2, p. 411.

potter, the woodcarver, and other specialists for goods and services which they could not provide for themselves.¹³

The problem created by urbanization had been remarkable. There was a concentration of relatively large numbers of Africans in urban centers to meet the labor demands of European enterprise. This urban concentration had loosened kinship ties. It had also accelerated social communication between "detrribalized" ethnic groups, and, in general, contributed to "national integration".¹⁴

In the realms of Christian evangelism, the conscious Europeanization of the people, as pursued by the Christian missionaries, was a frontal assault upon people's traditional religious systems and moral sanctions. The multiplicity of Christian missionary societies which pursued divergent courses had always been a source of confusion among the supposedly native converts. Moreover, the Christian doctrine of equality and human brotherhood challenged the ethical assumptions of colonialism and imperialism.

There were about twenty Christian missionary groups working in Nigeria. In a given area there were sometimes as many as five missionary groups. These Christian missionary groups had one central objective--making converts to the Christian beliefs and causing these converts to adopt the Christian way of life in a

¹³William Bascom, "Urbanization Among the Yoruba," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LX, No. 5 (March, 1955), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, p. 450.

¹⁴Colemann, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," p. 411.

democratic society. There was no coordination of Christian missionary policy into one central organization in the fields of administration and philosophy. The populace, which in many cases was overwhelmingly illiterate, found it difficult to comprehend the difference in philosophy of the several church groups that worked among them. This situation created certain misgivings and misunderstanding among the converts who, after awhile, sometimes fell back between the old traditional way of life and the new Christian practice.

In a great many cases the Western educated were neglected and refused employment by the colonial bureaucracy. This group knew much about the Christian social doctrine and the influence of this in the evolution of a free and democratic society and could have been a strong force for progress. Those who lacked adequate employment remained outside the colonial administration. As a result, they became frustrated. The social and economic uncertainty of these groups pushed them toward a passionate quest for equality, modernity, and self government.¹⁵

¹⁵Ibid., p. 412.

CHAPTER V. WESTERN IMPACT ON
NIGERIAN ECONOMY

Initially there was little systematic planning of the economic development of the colonies. This lack of order and planning in the over-all development of the British colonial dependencies set some thoughtful colonial administrators thinking about what could be done to bring order and planning to the economic development of the colonies. Prior to World War II, the British colonial economic policy was mainly based on the theory that the colonies were made as bases for surplus manufactured goods of the United Kingdom and also as suppliers of the various raw materials needed in the British industrial establishments. The immediate over-all welfare and the vital economic needs of the colonies were neglected. This neglect of the colonial welfare and development did not survive the World War II years.

Lord Hailey, one of the most experienced British colonial administrators, made many invaluable suggestions on how best to pursue the economic development of the colonies.¹ He based his thesis on the need for a sound colonial economy with emphasis on human welfare of the colonials. He gave three stages through which a colonial economic development could be carried in order to achieve an all-round development.

The first objective was to maintain the peace in order to achieve sufficient stability to allow the inhabitants of the

¹Lord Hailey, "The Colonies and the Atlantic Charter," Royal Central Asian Journal, Vol. 30, September, 1943, p. 233-245.

colonial territory to take adequate steps to secure their own material welfare and advancement.²

During the second stage measures were to be taken to prevent the exploitation of the inhabitants of the colonies by private interests, and to safeguard them from the abuse of authority.

The final stage to the fulfillment of the British protection and care of its dependencies would be tested through the character and measure to which Great Britain had afforded them opportunities for the management of their own affairs. These British colonial dependencies would evaluate their relationship with Great Britain by the degree and extent to which they were admitted to partake of self-government institutions. It was to be the duty of the British government to concentrate on the improvement of the physical health and social standards of the colonial peoples. However, he felt that to build up political liberties on dwarfed bodies or stunted intelligence would create a great unbalance between the political and economic development of the colonies.³

Despite these suggestions there was little economic planning for general welfare of the colonial peoples between 1914 and 1939. Such developments as were carried on were made to serve the immediate needs of the colonial government and the British industries.

As a rejoinder to Lord Hailey's philosophy for economic

²A. Nnamdi, Economic Reconstruction of Nigeria, African Book Company Ltd., Yaba Estate Lagos, 1943, p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 5.

development of the colonies, Colonel Stanley, who was once a British Colonial Secretary of State, explained in the House of Commons that the British objective in colonial empire was:

to make the colonies self supporting and at the same time give a reasonable standard of life.⁴

To the student of colonial administration, it would be self evident that the formulation of an administrative policy had never gone hand-in-hand with the practical operation of the policies which had been formulated.

In order to adequately assess the British impact on the Nigerian economy since its incorporation into the British sphere of influence, it will be necessary first to evaluate the various measures and policies adopted in respect to the different spheres of the Nigerian economy. It was the aim of the British colonial administration in Nigeria to support the African idea of land tenure. The unlimited ownership of land by the tribe as against any form of free hold was preserved. The opening of the country to the influx of Europeans with their capital and ideas would, without government control, undoubtedly have resulted in the rapid acquisition of land by capitalists and speculators, both foreign and domestic.

Free hold property existed only in the colony of Lagos. Grants of land were made by King Dosumu of Lagos before its cession in 1861, and these had been authenticated by the stamp of the British consul. After the cession of Lagos to the crown,

⁴Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1942-43, Volume 391, July 13, 1943, Columns 63-64.

these grants were replaced by crown grants which gave title to the land. Lands in the colony of Lagos, which were not included in the crown grants, were held in communal tenure.⁵

In northern Nigeria, a law was passed which vested the ownership of all the land in the governor, as trustee for the people.⁶ The governor had the right of leasing such land to any non-native for a definite length of time, or to any native Nigerian for an indefinite period. Through this law some land was alienated to foreign investors for the purpose of mineral speculation and mining. It was also possible for foreign corporations to obtain land for rubber and palm oil industries. However, these cases were the exception and practically all the land still remained in the hands of the native owners.⁷

In the realm of public finance there was a general reorganization of the native treasuries. In many places new systems of taxation were introduced alongside the old. A new principle of gradually improved budgeting was in the making. The government opened up new avenues for the exploitation of the natural resources of the territories. In this process, European capital and business men erected pools and monopolies to achieve a maximum exploitation of the areas of influence.

The Fulanis in northern Nigeria had a typical taxation system. They had tax on corn and on other crops, a tax on cattle,

⁵Burns, History of Nigeria, p. 248.

⁶Ibid., p. 248.

⁷Through Sovereign Right Treaties between Lord Lugard and the Sultan of Sokoto between 1897-1900.

a tax or levy by the suzerain upon all the subordinates, an accession tax paid by all who assumed office, a tax on handicrafts, and a tax on traders, which included tolls. In addition, there were death duties, court fines and bribes, and countless special taxes.

It may be noted here that there had been no appreciable difference between the old taxation system in southern and northern Nigeria. With the inception of the British in Nigeria, a new taxation system was evolved. In the Moslem areas, where the Sultan and the Emirs controlled, the British administrators developed a system, unique in Africa, known as the lump-sum assessment.

The Resident, an administrative officer controlling a province, or, more usually, one of his junior officers, studied the productivity of a certain community, taking into consideration every factor such as the quality of the soil, the accessibility to market, the amount of industry, the agriculture, and stock. He estimated a person's general income from the above data. He then assessed the amount due from them according to the percentage of the tax and announced this sum to the village head and his council in the presence of the district head. It was the duty of the village head to divide this sum again among the councilors who represented groups or hamlets. The councilors, in turn, divided their amount among the family heads in their area and each family head was responsible in seeing that a final computation was made as to what a taxable male within the family household

would pay.⁸

The Nigerian trade and industry grew quite extensively since the British came to Nigeria to rule and administer. The early beginnings of trade between Europe and Nigeria in historical times were in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the Portuguese and the English mariners visited Benin and exchanged the products of their countries for pepper, elephant teeth, and palm oil.

This trade was soon supplanted by the exchange of slaves for firearms, spirits, ammunitions, and other products of civilized Europe. When the slave trade was declared illegal for British subjects at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British merchants resorted exclusively to the palm oil trade. In 1806, 150 tons of palm oil were exported from the Oil Rivers Protectorate to Liverpool. By 1839 the export of this commodity rose to 13,600 tons. In 1946 about 100,000 tons of palm oil valued at 2,050,000 pounds were exported from Nigeria, in addition to a large quantity consumed locally, since the palm oil is the most common vegetable oil used in cooking. Also, a large quantity of palm kernel, 277,000 tons valued at 4,160,000 pounds, was shipped in 1946.⁹

The next agricultural commodity of importance was the peanut. In 1910 Nigerian farmers were paid 8,733 pounds for producing

⁸M. Perham, Native Administration in Nigeria, Oxford University Press, London, 1937, p. 54.

⁹Ibid., p. 269.

995 tons, of which 873 tons were exported to Great Britain for 7,650 pounds. In 1920 they were paid 1,119,688 pounds for 45,409 tons, of which 40,108 tons were exported to Britain for 1,009,444 pounds.¹⁰ In 1930 the farmers were paid 2,195,756 pounds for 146,371 tons, of which 24,465 tons were exported to Britain for 382,981 pounds.¹¹

The same story applied for cocoa, benniseed, cotton lint, cotton seed, palm kernels, palm oil, rubber, etc. Mahogany and rubber were also exported in large quantities. An indication of the large flocks and herds in Nigeria was afforded by the export of hides and skins, of which over 13 million pounds in weight were shipped to Britain in 1946.¹² Large quantities of bananas and plantain were grown for export and local consumption.

Tin mining, which used a considerable amount of machinery and required huge British investments, was conducted almost exclusively by British companies with native labor. The total value of domestic exports from Nigeria in the year 1900 was 1,858,000 pounds as against 16,538,000 pounds in 1926 and 9,461,000 pounds in 1938. The value of export of tin totalled 23,693,000 pounds.¹³

In 1954 Nigeria's total exports were valued at 149,000,000 pounds, including cocoa for 39,000,000 pounds, palm oil and kernel for 36,000,000 pounds, peanuts and peanut oil for

¹⁰A. Nnamdi, Economic Reconstruction of Nigeria, p. 12.

¹¹Ibid., p. 12.

¹²Burnes, History of Nigeria, p. 270.

¹³Azikiwe, Economic Reconstruction of Nigeria, p. 271.

34,000,000 pounds, cotton for 7,000,000 pounds, and tin for 5,000,000 pounds.¹⁴

Foreign companies and combinations dominated the export of Nigerian agricultural produce for quite a long time. The United Africa Company Ltd. and its subsidiaries, together with other powerful firms, for years had a virtual trade monopoly. The African farmer sold his agricultural produce to an African businessman who acted as a middleman between the farmer and the foreign firms.

For a long time, the foreign agents in the field of trade and commerce neglected the necessity of strengthening the economic position and morale of the producers in relation to the buyers, both European and African. The recognition of the legitimate interests of both the African community and the shipper was imperative, but this had been very much neglected. It would have been to the best interest of all concerned if there had been a system of government supervision of the sale and purchase of the agricultural produce of the African peasants.¹⁵ This government supervision could have assured the farmer a fair deal in the marketing of his produce. After World War II, government supervised marketing boards were formed to help the farmers sell their produce.

The farmers required a good system of railroads, roads, and

¹⁴The Face of Nigeria, Facts and Figures about Nigeria, British Information Services, 903, National Press Building, Washington 4, D. C., 1956, p. 2.

¹⁵George Padmore, Africa, British Third Empire, Dennis Dobson Ltd, 12 Park Place, St. James, London, S.W. 1., p. 86.

seaways in order to carry their agricultural produce to the marketing centers. The government was the chief promoter of these vital channels of trade and commerce. From the onset, there was a small seaborne traffic, but this grew rapidly as the slave trade developed. Vessels sailed from European ports to the estuaries of the rivers between Lagos and the Cameroons, loaded there with slaves for America or the West Indies, and returned thence to the home ports loaded with sugar or other products of the Western hemisphere.

In 1852 Mr. Macgregor Laird formed the African Steamship Company which received a charter, and operated a regular service between England and the Guinea Coast. There was established a regular and reliable service by comfortable, well-equipped steamers. Unfortunately, most of the Nigerian ports were situated on rivers at the mouths of which were shifting sandbars. There were two principal ports--Lagos and Port Harcourt in the East. The Lagos harbor consisted of two long moles, one on either side of the entrance to the harbor, and training banks within the control of the souring currents. Several powerful dredgers were employed on the bar and in maintaining the channels within the harbor.

At Apapa on the mainland, opposite Lagos, there was a railway wharf accessible to vessels drawing up to 26 feet. Other wharves were on Iddo Island and Lagos Island itself. In 1946, 402 ocean-going vessels, of 1,528,000 tons net, entered the port of Lagos.¹⁶ The other ports of Nigeria were situated at Burutu,

¹⁶Ibid., p. 265.

Forcados, Warri, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Bonny, Brass, Opobo, Akassa, and Degema. During the early penetration of Europeans into the interior, these ports were very important, but they were displaced and overshadowed by the ports of Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Victoria in the east of Nigeria. Until the completion of the railway from Lagos to Kano in 1911, the Niger and Benue waterways formed the principal means of communication to the interior. British merchants were able to open up trade with the interior by 1854.

The first Nigerian railroad to the hinterland from Lagos was begun in 1896. By 1900, this line was open for traffic as far as Ibadan which was situated at a distance of 120 miles from Lagos. This line was extended to Jebba by 1901. In 1907 another line was started from Baro, 130 miles below Jebba on the River Niger, to Kano. This Baro-Kano line met the Jebba-Lagos-Kano line at Minna, which was situated 462 miles from Lagos. The entire western division of the Nigerian Railway from Lagos to Kano was 700 miles. The eastern division of the railway from Port Harcourt to Kaduna was 569 miles long. There were several branch lines from these lines. The total mileage of the Nigerian Railway system was 1,904 miles.¹⁷

Motor roads, as feeders to the railway, were being constructed in all directions, and considerable progress was made recently in this respect. Motor traffic was on the increase. The central government maintained 971 miles of macadamized roads, 6,024 miles

¹⁷Ibid., p. 267.

of all-season, gravel or earth, and 677 miles of gravel or earth roads passable only during the dry season.¹⁸

The native administrations maintained 42.5 miles of macadamized roads, 12,557.5 miles of gravel or earth and all-season roads, and 7,174 miles of dry-season, gravel, or earth roads. The townships' government maintained 99.75 miles of macadamized roads and 211.75 miles gravel roads.¹⁹

There were several airfields constructed in Nigeria before 1939. Most of these airfields were renovated to handle heavier traffic during the period of World War II. By the end of the war, there were 30 airfields in operation and more were constructed since then. The most important of the airfields were at Lagos, Enugu, Ilorin, Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Oshogbo, Port Harcourt, and Yola. An internal air service on regular schedule connected these and other stations.²⁰

The British Overseas Airways Corporation maintained a regular service between West Africa and Great Britain. Some Nigerian airfields handled planes from Europe, French colonies, and the Bengian Congo. The West African Air Transport Authority, which was constituted in 1946, consisted of the governors of the four British West African territories--Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia. The governor of Nigeria who became the chairman of the West African Transport Authority, was also the

¹⁸Nigeria Year Book, "Communications," Crown Agents, 4 Millbank, London, S.W. 1, 1953, p. 91.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 91.

²⁰Burns, History of Nigeria, p. 267.

chief secretary of the West African Council of Governors of British West Africa. The West African Air Transport Authority established a corporation known as the West African Airways Corporation to develop air services within the four territories. Since the creation of the WAAC in 1947, it has made a phenomenal progress which was proven by the 66,834.4 total ton-miles flown in 1948-49 fiscal year, compared to the 1,105,396 total ton-miles flown in 1950-51 fiscal year, in British West Africa.²¹

Before the advent of the British in Nigeria, telegraphic communication was unknown. Since 1900, every important station in Nigeria has been in telegraphic communication with Lagos. There were in all over 14,000 miles of wire open for traffic. The Nigerian telegraph system was connected by land lines with the telegraphic system of Dahomey and the French sphere of the Cameroons. Cables from Lagos and Bonny connected Nigeria with the rest of the world. A wireless station was built in Lagos and at many other important centers throughout the country.²²

The Nigerian economy has passed through a remarkable change since the advent of the British in Nigeria. Within a short period, Nigeria saw a rapid change from a subsistence to a money economy. This change was actively encouraged by colonial government and European enterprises in order to increase the export of primary products, to introduce the cash nexus and stimulate

²¹"Air Travel in West Africa," Nigeria, A Quarterly Magazine of General Interest, No. 38, 1952, p. 96.

²²Burns, History of Nigeria, p. 268.

economic individualism. It altered the pattern of land tenure. It furthered the growth of capital accumulation. In general, it widened the area of both individual prosperity and insecurity.²³

There was a substantial growth of wage labor. This resulted in the proletarianization of substantial numbers of Africans and the weakening of native communal and family responsibility, which in turn rendered those concerned more vulnerable to economic exploitation and grievances because of lack of personal security.

Furthermore, a new middle class rose as a result of this economic transformation. The phenomenon of laissez faire economics and African enterprise coupled with opportunities for university and professional education were the factors contributing to the growth of a middle class. It is this new middle class which provided the leadership for the rise of Nigeria to a modern nation. The Nigerian educated class entered into all the professions. They are now assuming leadership and initiative in all works of life. The Nigerian labor organizations, cooperatives, professional unions, most of the educational agencies, the national political leadership, and the white collar class jobs in Nigeria are open to Nigerians with ability and resourcefulness.

Since 1954, economic controls by the Nigerian government are exercised by nine ministers of state responsible for the supervision of various phases of the economy. Nigeria maintains one

²³Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," p. 411.

central government commissioner in London. There are also three commissioners representing the three regions of Nigeria respectively, resident in London. The central and regional legislatures are controlled by the new Nigerian middle class. The Christian missions in Nigeria have integrated Nigerians into the top executive leadership of the various organs of control within the different Christian missionary organizations. Nigerians now occupy positions of strategic importance in the social, economic, and political structure of Nigeria. This Nigerian assertiveness and progressive tide unleashed by the new Nigerian middle class cannot be stopped without a fierce opposition from all levels of Nigerian society.

The effect of Western modernism on the Nigerian economy has directly and profoundly affected the political transformation of Nigeria. As a result of the McPherson Constitution, the federal legislature of Nigeria and the various regional legislatures have been given extensive powers of control and legislation on the different aspects of the Nigerian economy.

CHAPTER VI. WESTERN IMPACT ON NIGERIAN POLITICS

After the establishment of British hegemony over Nigeria, the colonial office was confronted by the problem of how best to govern the colony of Lagos and the Nigerian protected territories. The colonial administrators knew from the onset that before the good will of the native Nigerians could be won for Britain, any governing process introduced would have to recognize the traditions, behaviors, and the general social and political mores of the Nigerian people. As a result of this, the political officers were compelled to pursue with caution their political reorganization of Nigeria. This caution was necessary because there was a need of a general pacification of the entire area before revolutionary political measures could be undertaken in the best interest of the people.

The areas under British dominance in the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra were classified as protected territories and colonies. The island of Lagos and its adjoining territories were annexed to Great Britain through a treaty of annexation between the King of Lagos, Dosumu, and the British consular agent to Lagos, in 1861. The entire Nigerian mainland was incorporated by Great Britain as her area of influence by virtue of the recognition of such British suzerainty over Nigeria by the great powers during the Berlin West African Conference of 1885.

At first, the island of Lagos and Nigeria proper were administered under the crown colony system. This situation, the attempt to jointly administer Lagos and the rest of Nigeria, created

a political anomaly. The island of Lagos was ceded to Britain in 1861. The rest of the Nigerian mainland was not. To have administered the two territories jointly under the colonial regulations for colonies in effect made both areas colonies. But the entire Nigerian mainland was not ceded to Great Britain. The chiefs merely accepted the British protection. However, Lagos and Nigeria were administered jointly. All Nigerians resident in Lagos were classed as British subjects since Lagos was regarded as a part of Great Britain by virtue of the 1861 treaty of cession of the island to Great Britain. All Nigerians residing on the entire protected territory of Nigeria also were classed as British subjects because the same administrative laws which affected Lagos were in operation throughout Nigeria.

The administration of a crown colony was built on a pyramidal power structure. The governor of the colony was the chief representative of the crown in the crown colony. Every dependency was administered by a governor who was assisted by an executive council and a legislative council. In the legislative the governor had the right to appoint certain high administrative officers to seats in the legislative council. Also he hand-picked certain Nigerian nationals to whom he assigned seats in the legislative council.

The constitution of the colony also provided a clause which would grant the right of election of Nigerians to the legislative council. Regardless of the situation, the governor always had a sufficient majority in order to push across any legislation or desired policy.

In the British West Africa, the crown colony system went hand-in-hand with "Indirect Rule" because the power of the native rulers could not be entirely wiped out without any disastrous opposition to the rule of the colonial administrators. Such "Indirect Rule" system was introduced first in northern Nigeria where the Emirs¹ of the North had traditional authority. These Northern chiefs were in effect allowed to continue their rule subject to the over-all supervision and inspection of the British administrators.

The advantage of indirect rule was that the desirable features of the Nigerian social and political process could be maintained. The main thesis of this system was that change should be introduced and that Western ideas should be grafted on the framework of the traditional tribal political administration. Consequently, "Indirect Rule" provided a school for self government to educate the native officialdom of the Emirates and protected territories in the responsibilities of government.

Underlying this system was the basic philosophy that the function of British rule was not to destroy the traditional culture and institutions of the African. Rather there was a desire to conserve their positive elements which would be blended with whatever could be used along with western culture.² The desire was then to evolve a new African social and political system

¹T. Walter Wallbank, Contemporary Africa, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 1956, p. 56.

²Loc. cit.

unique to Nigeria and embracing some of the best aspects of the original culture as well as most of the desirable features of western governmental procedure. This eclectic approach was especially pertinent because it prevented any precipitate crisis which could have resulted if the early administrators had attempted an immediate transformation of the old cultural pattern and replaced it with a strikingly new pattern. The native peoples were given time during which a quiet assimilation and eventual merger of the two cultures could take place without overt disorganization.

With the passage of time, some native Nigerians were given western education in Nigeria as well as in Great Britain. Some of these people were absorbed into the colonial administration and many more were left to chart their own course in the colonial society.

As a result of this constant penetration of western culture since 1861 and the incessant diffusion of western cultural traits into the new African society which was evolving, the western educated African became restless. He wanted to play a larger part in the planning and development projects taking place in Africa. This greater native participation in actual administration was furthered by the newly western educated. These men trained and educated in the West were anxious to realize the social and political concepts instituted in their various regional governments as well as at the national sphere.

The governing colonial bureaucracy wanted to institute some change. The western educated African wanted to know what kind of

change and how soon the change would be effected. The colonial rulers and administrators desired a piecemeal, gradual, and evolutionary process in the granting of self government, but the western educated African frowned at this policy. The western trained leaders admired the ideas of a progressive change in the African society, but they wanted such a change to be systematic with short-term and long-range coordinated planning. These leaders suggested to the colonial administrators that if the social and political transformation of the African society was to gain fruitful results, then it was imperative that the African be included in such social and political planning as was being promoted.³

In order that the colonial rulers would gain a mass African support in their rule, some measure of political autonomy had to be granted the Africans. The British government was quick to realize the necessity of the African demand. Any discussion of the degree of political development in Nigeria would necessarily involve a consideration of the forces behind the speeding up of political evolution of Nigeria.

The westernization process had created such a progressive impact on the Nigerian social and political system that the administrative officers saw almost immediately the handwriting on the wall, for these changes brought forth a demand for more and more progress in the political evolution of Nigeria. Failure to do so might result in possible native revolt. The first political

³A. Nnamdi, Political Blueprint of Nigeria, African Book Company Limited, 34, Commercial Avenue, Lagos, 1934, p. 10.

impact of westernization of Nigeria had been the eclipse of traditional authorities. The European superstructure and forces of modernity had tended to weaken the traditional powers of indigenous authorities, and thereby had rendered less meaningful pre-colonial socio-political units as objects of loyalty and attachment.⁴ The acquisition of the Nigerian youth of western education and a consequent command over wealth, authority, and influence occurred to the younger and socially more independent men at the expense of the traditional chiefs and elders.⁵

The chiefs and elders had realized this decline in their power and influence, and they had always tried to give a last-minute struggle to maintain the status quo. The western educated intelligentsia which would take over political control at the demise of British hegemony had consoled the chiefs and elders by confining them to the "Houses of Chiefs" within the political framework of the regional governments. These "Houses of Chiefs" had no control over legislation in the regions. A "House of Chief" was merely a nominal body with no legislative authority. This body could give suggestions concerning what might be done in conformity to the political pattern within their respective regions. Any such suggestion would be subject to veto of the regional executive and parliament which were being controlled by the westernized Nigerians.

The second political impact of westernization was the forging

⁴Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," p. 412.

⁵Ibid., p. 412.

of new "national" symbols. The "territORIZATION" of Nigeria by the British administrators was a step in the creation of a new Nigerian state,

not only through the creation of a national boundary within which the intensity of social communication and economic interchange had become greater than across territorial borders; but also as a consequence of the imposition of common administrative superstructure, a common legal system, and in some instances common political institutions which had become symbols of territorial individuality.⁶

The next political impact involved the factor of nationalism which was the result of the acquisition by Nigerians of a high degree of acculturation. The factor of acculturation was of course aided by the absence or presence of alien settlers in Nigeria. Nationalism was a fruit of British liberal colonial policy which had in it such features as the eventual attainment of self government, emphasis on territorial individuality, laissez faire, attitude towards education and freedom of missionary activity on the part of foreign Christian Missions.

Amidst this rapid change and transformation would be found certain disunities which were created by forced conformity and uniformity. The difficulty in reconciling the traditional pre-colonial way of life with the new western modernism brought with it a remarkable cultural incompatibility. The struggle for power and dominance among several factions and sections coupled with unevenness in development between different areas of Nigeria, created tensions between different opposing forces within the country. Such differences and their consequent tensions, which

⁶ Ibid., p. 412.

sometimes precipitated open tribal clashes, were suggested by the colonial administrators as a strong weakness which could retard the speeding up of the constitutional process in order to usher in self government.

However, the degree of disunity was exaggerated by colonial officials. The general public opinion stood for more and more political progress and complete emancipation from the yoke of colonialism and imperialism. The leaders of political thought and opinion were committed to this idea several years ago. They took this stand because, during the last war, several promises were made to the colonial peoples through the Atlantic Charter in order to receive their support during the war, but no sooner had the war ceased than those promises were repudiated by the British wartime Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, in a policy statement before the House of Commons.⁷

The Atlantic Charter to which the government of the United Kingdom was a signatory nation, promised any nation, large or small, a greater assurance of stable peace, greater opportunity for the realization of its aspirations for freedom, and greater facilities for material advancement.⁸ This pledge of the Atlantic Charter was welcomed by many colonial peoples. The leaders began preparations in several spheres which would usher in national liberation. As the war was nearing its end, the hopes which were raised by the Atlantic Charter with respect to the

⁷A. Nnamdi, Political Blueprint of Nigeria, p. 78.

⁸Ibid., p. 78.

self determination for dependent peoples, became completely dashed to the ground by the lack of willingness on the part of the Tory government in Great Britain to implement the promise made through the Charter. In fact, Mr. Winston Churchill when questioned in Parliament about what effect the Atlantic Charter would have on the granting of self government to British colonial dependencies:

distinguished between the application of the Atlantic Charter as designed 'primarily for the restoration of the sovereignty, self government and national life of states and nations of Europe now under Nazi yoke' and the 'separate problem' of the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown.⁹

After this declaration, Nigerian political leaders had two courses open to them. These two courses were continued political servitude under the British hegemony, or a more vocal, vibrant, and incessant demand for political autonomy. The logical desire of the leaders was a more and fiercer demand for self determination for Nigeria.¹⁰ The forces which created discontent and fanned grievances among the Africans against their colonial status were the reckless promises which were made to the colonial peoples during the war. The effect of this war was made worse by the decline of the prestige of the colonial overlords because of their defeat by Japan in Asia. To this would be added the loss of power in material and spiritual leadership in the days of

⁹Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 3.

appeasement, initial reverses at the hands of the Axis powers, inflation at home and abroad, and wartime shortages.¹¹

To the surprise of the British colonial administrators resident in Nigeria, they discovered a new desire, hope, and unity among the Nigerian leaders. The Nigerian political leaders knew that they could realize their demand for self government for Nigeria only through esprit de corps and united efforts. They immediately formed a coalition in order to achieve the goal of self determination for Nigeria.

In order to achieve unity and common purpose, the most experienced and determined of the Nigerian nationalist leaders had to exploit all existing nativistic and religious tensions and economic grievances among the traditional bound masses, as well as the grievances and aspirations of the urbanized clerks and artisans, and channel the energies thus unleashed into the support of the nationalistic drive. The leaders, then, made nationalism and self government an integrating symbol in their drive towards more autonomy for Nigeria. Only in this way could all political and national thoughts be geared toward the extraction of independence from Britain.

The British government was very liberal in listening to the political cry for liberation which was being spear-headed by Nigerian nationalism. However, the policy makers at the colonial office in London favored cautious and the evolutionary approach in the rewriting of colonial constitutions. While the British

¹¹Wallbank, Contemporary Africa, p. 52.

colonial office was reappraising its policy with respect to the granting of self government to the British dependencies, the West African Student Union,¹² which met in London in 1934, demanded dominion status for Nigeria from the colonial office.

This demand by the WASU was immediately pressed forward by the 1943 African Press Delegation to Great Britain under Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, of Nigeria. The West African delegation supported their case by citing clause III of the Atlantic Charter that the signatories thereto "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they may live".¹³

They demanded the following:

1. Immediate abrogation of the "crown colony" system of government and administration in the colonies of British West Africa.
2. The substitution thereto with representative government --internal self government--for a period of ten years.
3. The introduction of full responsible government for a period of five years.¹⁴

It was after this declaration that Nigeria witnessed a remarkable progress in its constitutional development. To understand the constitutional development of Nigeria, it is necessary to trace earlier developments. The first Nigerian constitution

¹²The WASU--The West African Students Union is a student organization embracing all African students studying in the United Kingdom and Ireland. This organization follows a nationalistic approach in most issues affecting the destiny of African peoples.

¹³A. Nnamdi, Political Blueprint of Nigeria, p. 83.

¹⁴Ibid.

was introduced in 1861 with the cession of Lagos to Great Britain. The colonial governor had supreme power as the commander-in-chief. He was a military governor who was given full powers to consolidate the British control of the territory.

From 1900 to 1912 the northern region of Nigeria was administered from Zungeru in northern Nigeria. Its governor was Sir Frederick Lugard who had been instrumental in the subjugation of the area. At the same time, southern Nigeria was controlled and administered from Lagos. During this period, the two sections of Nigeria were still under a sort of military administration.

It was not until 1914 that the northern and southern provinces of Nigeria were amalgamated. A governor resident in Lagos was the commander-in-chief of the entire country. He ruled the territories with the aid of a legislative council which consisted of officers in the upper ranks of the colonial administration. However, a step forward was reached in 1922 when Nigeria had its first elected Africans to the legislative council. The governor still had the power to appoint certain administrative officers to seats in the legislative council. Through this process, the governor was able to have an official member majority with which he pushed through the policies of the colonial government. This situation could not endure because between 1920 and the 1930's, there was resurgent nationalist movement and agitation for more and more participation of Nigerians in the political administration of Nigeria.

It was after the declaration of the West African Student Union and the subsequent demand of the West African Press

delegation to London in 1943 that Nigeria saw its next constitutional advance in the Richard's constitution of 1946. The Richard's constitution had three purposes: to achieve the unity of Nigeria, the protection of diverse cultures and traditions of Nigerian nationalities, and set a pace for the advance of the country towards further self government.

The constitution created Regional Councils which were to form the basis and nuclei of regional parliaments. Each of the regions was to have its own legislative council where subjects peculiar to each region were discussed and then linked with the Nigerian central legislature. The traditional and native authorities, especially northern Nigerian Emirs, were prominently represented in the central legislature. The colonial administrators who dominated the previous Nigerian legislatures were on the way out. It became possible to elect Nigerians to the legislature.¹⁵ However, the governor possessed reserve powers which he could use to override any opposition.

The Richard's Constitution marked a further advance toward self government, for it contained a legislature with an unofficial member majority, whereas the constitution before it had official member majority. The official members were colonial administrative officers who were appointed to seats by the governor to the legislative council. However, in the nationalistic viewpoint, it did not go far enough. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and other southern

¹⁵"Territorial Divisions," Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, London, 1951.

Nigeria leaders boycotted the legislature at its inception, but went in later in order to torpedo it. Many of the traditional chiefs and Emirs who were nominated to the central legislature or received their seats because of their influence in their respective districts, lacked knowledge about modern parliamentary procedure and what was best for modern Nigeria.

The Richard's Constitution of 1946 was supplanted in 1952 by the Sir John McPherson constitution which brought Nigeria to the verge of self government. It increased regional autonomy. The new Federation of Nigeria consisted of the three regional governments, the government of the colony of Lagos, and the government of the British Cameroons. The northern region which totalled 50 per cent of the total Nigerian population, was given a 50 per cent representation in the central parliament of 136 members. The allocation of revenue was fixed on a per capita basis. The suffrage was granted to all adult taxpayers regardless of sex except in the northern region where women could not vote.¹⁶ The McPherson constitution ushered in a new and bold experiment in Democracy without the basis of a large literate electorate.

Unfortunately, the McPherson constitution, because it granted regional autonomy, created rivalry between regional heads. There was a remarkable opposition, on the regional and national levels, between Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Premier of the eastern region, and Mr. Awolowo, the Premier of the western region.

¹⁶Nigeria Handbook, "Constitution and Machinery of Government," p. 49.

Dr. Azikiwe was the titular political head of the National Council Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons, and Mr. Awolowo headed the Nigerian National Action Group Party. The differences and the sectional disagreements created factionalism and political strife.

The westernized southern Nigeria was most of the time aligned against the conservative and Moslem northern Nigeria. The northern region by possessing a 50 per cent representation in the central parliament, was able to deter any progressive legislation which the southern block wanted to push through in the Parliament. The North opposed the South for the southerners were more westernized. The southerners swamped all labor channels in the railways, telephone, communications, and other skilled employments. The gulf between the conservative North and the progressive South was widened when Dr. Azikiwe demanded a general revision of the McPherson constitution in order to usher in independence in 1956. The leaders of the conservative North maintained that the North was not ready for full autonomy, but they would go along with any constitutional framework which would promote and maintain the unity of Nigeria.¹⁷ These demands brought about a general revision of the constitution in 1954.

The 1954 constitution, which could be called the second McPherson Constitution, created a federal legislature. This legislature was to be unicameral and was to consist of one member per 170,000 inhabitants, with a total of 184 elected members. The

¹⁷Wallbank, Contemporary Africa, p. 65.

northern region was to send 92 elected members, whereas the eastern and western regions sent 42 members respectively. The colony of Lagos was to have two members, and the British Cameroons six members.¹⁸

The central executive of the Federation was called the Council of Ministers which consisted of the Governor-General as chairman, nine departmental ministers, three from each region and holding portfolios other than Finance, Judicial, and Foreign Affairs. These Ministries were occupied by British representatives. Ministers were appointed from the body of the federal legislature with consultation of the leaders of the majority parties represented in the national parliament.¹⁹

The national leaders of Nigeria are agreed that the Nigerian political goal would be the eventual attainment of national freedom and independence from Great Britain. The southern Nigerian leaders are bent on taking a moderate policy in order to keep the North and maintain Nigeria's unity and strength. The South demanded national autonomy for Algeria in 1956, but the northern region wanted self government in 1959. What the general character of the forthcoming 1957 constitution will be is subject to considerable speculation.

¹⁸1954 Nigeria Constitution, "Report of the Constitutional Conference," Her Majesty's stationary office, August, 1953, Cmd 8934 Colonial Office, London, p. 5.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER VII. CONCLUSION.

Modern Nigerian culture will probably never become a strict replica of Western civilization. Nigeria initially was built on a different cultural base. The course open to Nigeria is to abstract from both East and West. By eliminating most of the undesirable Western customs and practices and abstracting the best of their culture, Nigeria will create a synthesis of a new social and cultural order. The character of this new cultural synthesis will eventually determine the approach of Nigerian leaders toward the conduct of foreign policy and external relations.

The state of the Nigerian culture during this cultural synthesis, since 1861, is now at a higher level than it was when effective British colonial rule began. The transition of Nigerian culture from an African culture to a comparatively advanced culture profoundly influenced by Western civilization has been indeed phenomenal. Before the European penetration the Nigerian tribal groups were confined to their immediate environment. There were no modern roads, railroads, telegraph communication, wireless, television, industrial technology, or modern gadgets in the Nigeria of 1861. It would have been considered a utopian dream to have visualized such technological advance for Nigeria, yet all these amenities exist in the Nigeria of today.

Under the guidance of the West, Nigeria has begun to acquire modern schools and universities. The school population had grown since 1929. In 1929 there were 146,598 children in primary schools, whereas the secondary schools enrolled 634 students--

boys and girls. In 1950 the number of children in primary schools increased to 970,199. The secondary schools had 29,151 students in the same year. By 1951 the primary schools enrolled 1,002,533 children. The secondary schools enrolled 31,425 students.¹ This rate of progress in the Nigerian cultural pattern is not confined to the Nigerian education system alone. There are many other comparable rates of growth in the Nigerian culture and economy.

Between 1885 and 1914, substantial, if not spectacular progress, was made in building railroads, opening up mines, and starting plantations. The tempo quickened in the 1920's. By mid-1930's about five billion dollars were invested in African enterprise, and about one-third of this sum was put in railroad development.² A considerable amount of this sum was spent in Nigeria.

Despite Nigeria's rapid development, the rate of progress in this field is held back because of the backward technique in agriculture and the lack of entrepreneurship. Despite extensive investments, Nigeria lacks abundance of capital. In order to launch this new economic expansion and development the Nigerian regional and federal governments may be compelled to adopt a new and progressive system of economic planning. Such planning may involve an intensive mineral exploration and exploitation to bolster the Nigerian economy. Since the amount of money needed for such a projected capital development is lacking, an extensive

¹Nigeria Handbook, "Education," p. 115-121.

²Wallbank, Contemporary Africa, p. 43.

importation of foreign capital and aid should be welcomed by the Nigerian governments. However, the capital and aid must be received on a basis achieving mutual and reciprocal benefits to all concerned.³

The medium of economic control in the past was through the different chambers of commerce, associations of merchants in shipping, trading, and mining interests. Since Nigeria in the main still lacks a managerial class, foreign combines may continue to control some part of the Nigerian economy with an overall Nigerian government supervision in order to assure the people of Nigeria the existence of fair production and distribution.⁴

The Nigerian economy should be geared towards production for the general welfare of the masses of the people residing within Nigeria. An economic program would be based on the general welfare and sufficiency in most of the vital economic needs of the Nigerian people. Such an economy would provide work for the part of the Nigerian population able to work. The various Nigerian governments may be compelled to enter business in such areas of the Nigerian economy where the public lacks the economic resource and investment capital to produce such economic needs which are of vital importance to the people. Such a trend in the Nigerian economy will be desirable because Nigeria in the past depended on imported manufactured goods, machinery, and

³C. W. Stillman, Africa in the Modern World, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 37, 1955, p. 297.

⁴A. Nnamdi, Economic Reconstruction of Nigeria, p. 61.

dairy products which failed to reach the general mass of the population. The rich and the wealthy were in such a position to satisfy most of their economic needs.

The task of the economic planner in the Nigerian agriculture is to develop farming systems which will permit higher yields per unit of land and per man-hour without adverse effects on the soil, and to devise effective channels of rapid transmission down to the grassroots of the lessons learned in the research stations.⁵

It is generally accepted that those who control the national economy eventually also attain control of its political machinery. In order, then, to attain economic dominance in a political unit, it is of importance to achieve political suzerainty over the same area. Nigeria's interest will best be served if the Nigerian political leaders work toward the realization of Nigerian independence from external control. It is through the attainment of this that Nigeria will be able to exercise her full sovereign rights both nationally and internationally.

The British colonial administration evolved a typical colonial policy. This policy hinged on evolutionary process with eventual independence. The former colonial areas that assumed independent status had the option of remaining within the British Commonwealth of Nations. In this, the British evolved a more realistic and liberal policy than most colonial powers.

Nigeria, being a British colony and protected territory

⁵Haines, Africa Today, p. 415.

where there is freedom of nationalist activity, is approaching national independence on an evolutionary and constitutional basis. When independence is completely won, the task of government will revert entirely to native Nigerians. Unfortunately, the speed at which the Nigerian desire for independence is attained is not fast enough to satisfy the Nigerian nationalist movement. Since the Nigerian nationalism has Nigerian popular support, the nationalist leaders are demanding self government for Nigeria now.

Progress toward self government and independence has been irrevocable because the colonial office policy makers saw no other alternative course of action except to review periodically the Nigerian constitutions in order to pacify Nigerian nationalism.⁶ In line with this policy, the 1954 Nigerian constitution which set up a federal system of government will be due for review during the early part of 1957.

It is doubtful now to predict the character the forthcoming constitution will take. There is a disagreement between the Northern Nigerian politicians and the Southern Nigerian leaders as to the date for eventual independence for Nigeria. The South believes that Nigeria is ripe for full autonomy now, whereas the North maintains that Nigeria is not ripe for full autonomy. The Northern leaders have demanded autonomy for Northern Nigeria in 1959. There are possible lines of action that could be followed

⁶Mbonu Ojike, "Modern Africa," Harpers, 190, January, 1945, p. 159.

in order to assure the unity of Nigeria. The Northern region may be granted local and full autonomy by 1959. This is the wish of the Northern leaders.

Both Western and Eastern regions may achieve self government by 1957. The Northern Nigerian leaders, seeing that the Northern Nigeria is more underdeveloped than Southern Nigeria, have opposed any call for immediate independence on the part of Southern Nigeria. The most feasible solution would be to vote a federal system of government that would retain most of the residual powers as well as control of the civil service, foreign affairs, Army, police, Navy, and Air Force. The Federal government may retain an overriding power which will be used to put down any irresponsible action on the part of any regional government.

Nigeria being a colony as well as a protected territory has within it some of the symptoms that precipitate a social revolution. The approach which the Western educated Nigerians take in gaining political autonomy for Nigeria will eventually determine the condition through which independence will be attained. To avert bloodshed and general destruction through active resistance to the colonial status, the Nigerian nationalism is committed to a policy of nonviolence and passive resistance.

A central problem that is characteristic of an underdeveloped area emerging into statehood is that most intellectuals aspire to the position of national leadership. This is the case with Nigeria. It is through good leadership and experienced and trained followership that Nigerians will achieve relative peace and order in an emerging democratic Nigerian state. When this is

attained, Nigerians and the greater African community will be able to absorb and digest Western civilization without bursting up into incessant and recurrent revolutions and civil disturbances. The educated class leaders may have to follow a middle course so as to placate the illiterate masses which still have not acquired the basic principles underlying democratic idealism.

The Nigerian nationalists have blamed the poverty in the midst of plenty and the ignorance of the country on the gross mistakes of the colonial bureaucracy. Consequently the Nigerian nationalists have been trying to assert their demand for unconditional transfer of political power from the colonial rulers to the indigenous peoples of the territory.⁷ The Nigerian national leadership believes that Nigeria will be more satisfied with Nigerian misrule than a misrule of the colonial administrators who represent another national government many thousands of miles from the home base.

The legitimacy of this Nigerian nationalist demand cannot be gainsaid. No nation can consider itself free or independent when its nationals are not in firm control of its territorial borders and its complete administration. There may be some degree of development, but an over-all national planning and development cannot be achieved under a colonial regime whose policy is based on the old and outworn mercantile system that has outlived its colonial usefulness.

⁷Julian Huxley, "A Lesson of the Niger," New Republic, 112, February, 1945, p. 249.

To state the desire of the new Nigeria, it may be necessary to quote a prominent Nigerian leader, Mazi Mbonu Ojike, an alumnus of the University of Chicago:

Political freedom is the only status that could enable Nigeria to face realistically her crucial problems of education, agriculture, industry, and expansion of foreign trade. Political freedom is sine qua non to Nigerian National growth.⁸

With the growth of African-Asian nationalism the question of Nigerian independence has come within the focus of world attention. The massive weight of world opinion against colonialism and imperialism would to a certain extent promote speedier attainment of independence by the colonial and dependent territories of the world. The international concern over the colonial question and international accountability for colonial actions of various colonial powers necessitated the discussion of Nigeria's economic and political progress in international congresses and assemblies.

Despite Nigeria's colonial position, many new innovations have been brought to bear on the Nigerian society. The incessant flow of western and eastern ideas, knowledge, and methods invariably create several reactions in the behavioral pattern of different groups of Nigerian people. The impact of these innovations on the social behavior of the people have created certain problems. Socially, Nigeria is beset by many questions of health, education, labor and employment, land hunger and social

⁸Mbonu Ojike, "Freedom for Nigeria," New Republic, Vol. 3, October, 1944, p. 462.

disorganization, displacement, social erosion and famine, shortage of personnel and leadership. Such problems comprise the inescapable responsibilities that educated Nigerians inherit today, and they have a task of finding solutions to these difficulties because the fate of Nigeria is in their hands. However, the British government has contributed a lot toward the eradication of Nigeria's social ills.

One of the great problems facing Nigeria today is the need to insure that the new institutions created by European impact be built on firm foundation. These institutions should reflect the common interest of most people within Nigeria. The mutual benefit of all elements in the new Nigerian society will be a prime objective.

The dominant characteristics of this new Nigerian society have brought increasingly greater division of labor, an increase in contractual labor, and a remarkable decline in community and family orientation. Nigeria has seen a greater class differentiation based on qualifications of schooling and wealth rather than upon birth, and the recognized importance of associations such as professional groups, trade unions, student organizations, cooperatives, churches, and the state.

The trend towards impersonality in community relationships, especially in the urban areas, had been noticed in social interaction. This situation extended even into the rural communities where familiarity rather than intimacy or customary obligations became the dominant characteristics of social relationships. There is also a greater dependence for the control of behavior

on codified law and the state rather than upon customs and public censure. The growing tendency of the reconstruction of the economy is away from self sufficiency and toward greater participation in national and international social and economic cooperation. Finally, the Nigerian people have been awakened by their needs to create a strong sense of unity which binds the entire Nigerian society together. This unity is symbolized in the Federal State of Nigeria.⁹

For Nigeria to really absorb all it can from the West she must be ready to handle the disorganizing effect of some of the new methods of doing things introduced into Nigeria. Only if Nigeria is ready at all times to handle any political emergency regardless of its nature will Nigeria show its maturity toward nationhood. Nigeria by achieving this will have satisfied the colonial administrators who will have no doubt that Nigeria's graduation into a self-governing state will not jeopardize her unity, strength, power, and external relations.

Such factors as the communist threat, colonialism, imperialism, international cooperation, economic underdevelopment, and international accountability of colonial powers have brought Nigeria into the cross current of international politics. The smoothness with which Nigeria handles all these vital problems may determine the course of future Nigerian foreign policy and external relations. The Nigerian people have awakened and are beginning to throw off the chains which have bound them for years.

⁹Haines, Africa Today, p. 88.

It may not be a long duration from now when Nigeria will emerge into the field of international politics as a sovereign state.

It may be noted that the desire and the goals of peoples everywhere are controlled by certain common factors. The goals of the United Nations organization are centered on the solution of three main objectives: the establishment of social justice; eradication of racial prejudice; and the establishment of world peace. These are among the main ideals of our time. The people of Nigeria earnestly subscribe and support the goals of the United Nations. If it is accepted, then, as a truism that the Nigerian demand for social justice, mutual cooperation among world peoples, and a relatively peaceful world in which progress and prosperity will be a reality, is genuine and proper, then it stands to reason that Nigeria has a great duty toward Nigerian peoples and the world at large in trying to attain these universal ideals. The path which Nigeria follows in the realization of these ideals may be reflected in Nigeria's social, economic, and political development. The nature and character of this development has been created by the Western impact on the Nigerian culture.

On the assumption of independent status as a full sovereign state, Nigeria may channel its foreign policy along several practical courses. It may choose to align itself with the African-Asian nations, the Western block of nations, a close relation with the Soviet Union, or neutrality. Any close alignment with the Soviet Union which may constitute an entanglement will hereby be discounted because Nigeria will not accept such a relationship.

Nigeria may establish normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union on the principles of equality and reciprocity according to the law of nations, diplomatic usage, and custom.

Nigeria cannot be neutral in vital issues that confront the United Nations organization. Such social and political problems as maintenance of peace, security, social equilibrium, social justice, racial hatred, free international trade and commerce, and the removal of unnecessary barriers to free exchange of world wealth are among the vital issues to which Nigeria will subscribe its close cooperation to well-meaning nations in order to achieve peaceful relations, amity, and prosperity in the world.

However, a modern, free and independent Nigerian state upon the assumption of nationhood will probably align itself with the British Commonwealth of Nations, but only on the basis of full-fledged and equal membership. Nigeria could then maintain cordial and friendly relations with most nations of the world on the basis of equality and reciprocity. Nigeria cannot be neutral in matters affecting the integrity and destiny of the African states as free nations.

Nigeria may well emerge into international and world politics through a close alignment with the Western block whose political and economic systems have provided the basis of a new and modern Nigerian state. In this way, Nigeria can contribute its part toward the maintenance of peace and equilibrium within the African-Asian geopolitical area.

Nigeria will be vitally interested in all problems pertaining to the maritime protection of the South Atlantic and the

Guinea Coastal waters within its immediate jurisdiction. It will be to the best interest of Nigeria if it gives her cooperation to nations interested in building a strong South Atlantic Defense System in a South Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The approach which Nigeria adopts in locating and subsequently solving these problems that confront a modern state may inevitably determine the character of her future political machinery and probable external relations. Although an idealistic and seemingly utopian analysis with respect to the role Nigeria may likely play in world politics has been given, the realization of some of these goals cannot be doubted.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Indebtedness is expressed to Professor Fred L. Parrish, the librarians and library services of the Kansas State College, in Manhattan, Kansas, and the University of Kansas, at Lawrence, Kansas, for the opportunity to consult sources not otherwise available. Warm and deep gratitude is acknowledged to Professor W. H. Barth, major supervisor, for his kindly and helpful guidance and direction.

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EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON NIGERIAN CULTURE

by

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B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1955

AN ABSTRACT OF
A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History, Government and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1957

With the demise of the Middle Ages, there emerged in Europe an intensive pursuit of exploration and discovery. The ardent desire of the Europeans to know what lay beyond their immediate environment brought them into political, economic, and religious contact with West Africa.

The main purpose of this survey is to trace the course of the European and especially British penetration into Nigeria. At the onset, the explorers charted the Nigerian coast line on the Guinea Coast. They opened the Nigerian inland waterway by proving that the River Niger emptied itself in the Atlantic Ocean. This discovery immediately promoted trade and commerce in the Niger Delta and the Oil Rivers Protectorate.

The merchant adventurers concentrated their effort in the palm oil trade. This commodity was replaced in the main by the trade in slaves between 1800 and 1833, when slavery was finally abolished in the British Empire. The merchants from 1833 onward began effective trade in palm produce--palm oil and kernel --and other commodities which were exchanged for European manufactured goods.

The Christian missionaries centered their effort on evangelization and early education of the native Nigerians. The missionary organizations, amongst them the church missionary society, the Roman Catholic church organizations, and the British Methodist Foundation, were the forerunners of the Nigerian education movement.

The appointment of Mr. John Beecroft as the British political and liaison officer to the Bights of Benin and Biafra in

1849, marked a turning point in Nigeria-British relations. Mr. Beecroft began a political consolidation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate because that was the only means through which the British trade and commerce could be safeguarded. By 1861, the treaty of cession of the Island of Lagos and its adjoining territories was signed between King Dosumu, of Lagos, and the representatives of the British Crown. This treaty strengthened British influence and effective penetration in Nigeria. However, the British sphere of influence was not recognized by other European powers until after the Berlin African Conference of 1885. This conference drew a pattern for a systematic partition of Africa by the European interested powers.

The British introduced a colonial administration backed by a strong constabulary force which was used to pacify and consolidate the entire territory through a big stick and gun boat diplomacy. With the attainment of peace and general pacification of the territories, the task of effective trade, commerce, and political administration was begun within the framework of the British colonial administration.

Under the British political guidance, Nigeria emerged from a heterogeneous tribal community which engaged invariably in tribal warfare into a unified Federal state. Nigeria experienced a transformation in its social, economic, and political institutions which were given European orientation.

The westernization of Nigeria within a space of 95 years from 1861 to 1956 brought several changes to Nigeria's trade, commerce, agriculture, communications, education, transportation,

and social and political life. With European modernization of Nigerian society and the subsequent education of Nigerians in high institutions of learning in Nigeria and overseas, came the resurgent Nigerian nationalism. The goal of the Nigerian nationalist movement had been an eventual attainment of self government for Nigeria.

The British government was committed to a policy of training Nigerians in the art of the British parliamentary system of government with a view to a final transfer of political power through an evolutionary and constitutional procedure. The problem that confronts Nigerian politicians is the duration of this period of tutelage. Nigerian politicians are skeptical about the British time-table for complete independence for Nigeria. However, in the attainment of self government, Nigerian leaders are committed to nonviolence. The British promises of independence to any of the Nigerian regional governments that desired it by 1957, have raised hopes that the Nigerian nationalist aspiration will be realized shortly. However, before Nigeria can be truly independent it faces enormous problems of adjustment on the domestic and external planes.