

THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL AWARENESS IN NIGERIA

by

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Abstract

Prior to 1945, neither the majority of British nor Africans were convinced that Western parliamentary forms of government could be transferred successfully to Nigeria. Generally it was considered that the Nigerian society would evolve from traditional forms of organization to something typically African which would prepare Africans for their eventual full participation in the world society. After 1945 under the stimulation of nationalism this concept of evolvement was completely abandoned in favour of complete adoption of Western institutions. It is to be expected that after independence the conservative forces of African traditionalism will revive and that a painful process of modification of Western institutions will begin. It would seem however, that modifications are not likely to be too fundamental if one can judge by the success with which Nigerians have handled these institutions and by the material advantages which political leaders have been able to bring to the people through them.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter one is a condensation of much research. It is intended to provide the background to the main body of the work. It describes the tribal, religious and economic differences in Nigeria which have been forces in Nigerian politics since 1920. It discusses the African reaction to the British penetration of the interior after 1885. It briefly outlines the British sponsored economic development which resulted in greater urbanization and the growth of an educated middle class which was the author and supporter of the movement to turn from traditional African forms to Western institutions. With little detail the chapter points out the mixing of various tribes in this new class and the complications which resulted. The Ibo tribe has been used as an example. It shows how this educated class maintained its contact and

influence with the people of the villages by means of tribal associations which ultimately became the most significant carriers and popularizers of Western political thought. The chapter ends showing the various ideas which this class were absorbing and the effect which the doctrine of trusteeship, the Commonwealth, the British Labour Government, the United Nations and Indian independence had on them.

Chapter two traces the demand for parliamentary institutions and attempts to show how the British constructively began to abdicate their power. Some of the early expressions of this demand are indicated for the period from 1885 to 1920. In the year 1920, the first political movement was organized. It was a West African Movement embracing all four British West African colonies; Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. By 1922 this movement had collapsed but successors to it grew in each colony. In Nigeria, from 1922 to 1938 political activity was confined to Lagos. From 1938 to 1945 Lagos politicians were spreading their organizations and ideas throughout the hinterland. At the close of the Second World War an almost country wide agitation began to unite the people to press the British to set up government institutions modelled after those of the United Kingdom. By 1951 this had been done and the elective principle had been widely applied. Thus the first stage of the struggle was over. By 1951 Nigerians were convinced that the British were determined to leave the country as soon as a workable constitution was in force. Chapter two ends at this point where African energies are turned from from concentrating on persuading the British to leave and chapter three begins where these energies are being devoted to working out the problems of adjustment in the government machinery to suit the Nigerian situation.

Chapter three deals with the divisive forces within the country which began to show once the unified opposition to the British was no longer necessary. The National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons which had led the national front against the British began to decline and break up. Regional parties based largely on local loyalties began to emerge. The elections of 1951 indicated how far this trend towards regionalisation had actually gone. Federalism appeared to hold the answer to Nigerian unity, but while it may have been the only expedient open to the Nigerians, many saw in regionalisation the sure break up of the country. The conflict between the regionalists and closer unionists came to a climax in the Kano Disturbances of 1953. Following this, in 1954 a constitution was drawn up in which the federal principle was fully acknowledged by all parties. By 1954 the broad outlines of the constitutional pattern had emerged. Nigeria was to be a federal state. However, the final form had not by any means been settled. The constitution of 1954 was based on the assumption that Nigeria was a land of three dominant tribes; the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Hausas. Even before 1954 and increasingly after, the minor ethnic groups began to press for separate states to free them from the partly imaginary fear of major tribe domination.

Nigeria is quite certain to emerge as a major African power because of its population, area and natural resources. It is likely to be an influential power because of its semi-Moslem and semi-Christian character. It straddles that line in Africa which divides the Moslem North from the Christian-influenced South. Such a position and character will give it influence, north as well as south of the Sahara. Nigeria's constitutional development is unique in that it is the first federal state to emerge

in Africa. Because Nigeria is possibly the most polygot tribal nation in Africa its solution to the tribal problem will make a profound impression upon other African leaders.

Actually, little has been written on the topic of Africa's evolution towards modern nation-states. This thesis attempts to contribute to that neglected area of study. It is also an attempt to see this process of evolution from an unbiased Nigerian point of view.

This point of view will be indicated by the large amount of source material which is strictly Nigerian in its origin. African sources have as far as possible been relied upon. Much of the source material has as far as can be ascertained, never before been used.

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James B. Webster.

Chapter I

Background

The great expansion of European empires had ceased by 1919. Almost all the inhabited areas of the world were either directly or indirectly under the control of one or other of the Western nations. This movement of expansion was hardly over before it came to be challenged both by liberals in the dominant Western countries and by the intellectual elite in the subject nations of Asia and Africa.

In the British Empire the expansion of British control which began after 1880, into new areas in Asia and Africa ran counter to the trend of more and more autonomy which was such a fixed feature of the history of the older colonies; Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. By 1920 these white colonies were preparing for complete equality in status with the Mother country. India and the colonies of darker skinned people became more and more restive and desirous of emulating these older white dominions.

In Africa the British colonies of the West Coast took the lead in the movement to emulate the older dominions. British West Africa was free of a minority European population; land and natural resources were still largely in African hands and West Coast Africans cherished traditions of efficient political organization from the pre-British era. By 1920 there were political movements in all British West African colonies aiming towards emancipation from the empire and an honoured place in the emerging Commonwealth.

Nigeria is the largest British West African colony, being four times the size of the United Kingdom and the most populous black nation in the world, having a population of thirty-two million. Nigeria is located on the west coast of Africa and faces south on the Gulf of Guinea. It is divided into

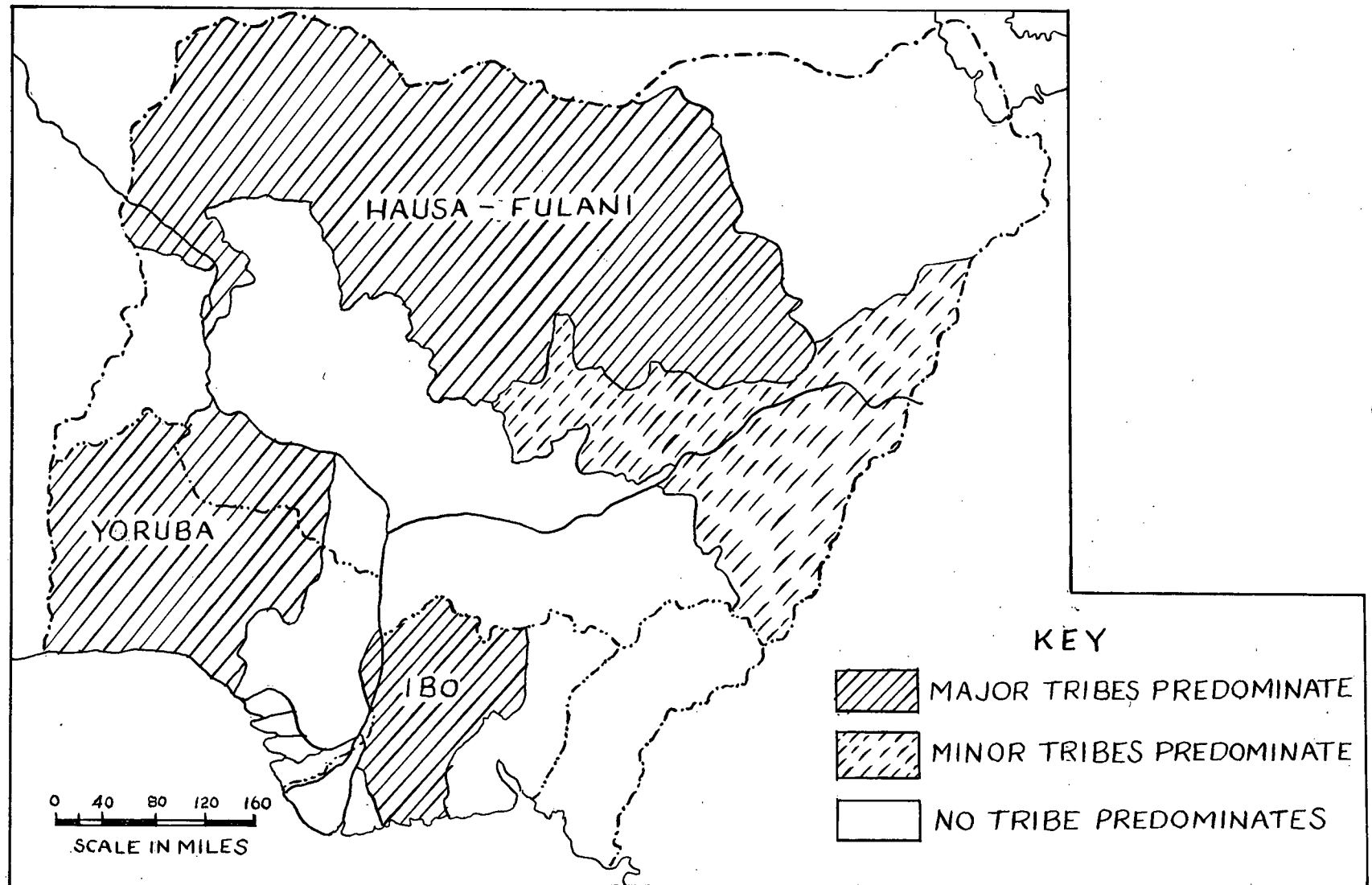
three regions which hold an equivalent status to the provinces of Canada. Each region is divided into provinces which are administrative units only.

The Northern region contains over half of the population and area of Nigeria. The Hausa-Fulani tribes form fifty per cent of the population of the region. They predominate in five of the twelve provinces of the region. In four provinces other tribes predominate; Ilorin (Yoruba 69%), Benue (Tiv 52%), Bornu (Kanuri 47%) and Niger (Nupe 30%). In the three provinces of Adamawa, Plateau and Kabba, no single group forms as much as twenty per cent of the population. Of the sixteen and a half million people of the Northern region, eleven and a half million are Moslems, four and a half million are animists and a half million are Christians. The Hausa-Fulani are Moslems and therefore the five provinces listed above are Moslem plus Kanuri-Bornu and Yoruba-Ilorin. The five provinces in which other tribes predominate are mostly animist.² Thus in tribal groupings and in religion the Northern region is divided between the Moslem Hausa-Fulani far north and the animist mixed tribes of the Middle Belt. Economic factors have reinforced this division. For numerous reasons historical and geographical the Kano core in the far north has become the richest area owing to the development of export crops, urbanization and intensive agriculture. Accumulated wealth has been able to supply such amenities as railways, roads and electricity to this area in sharp contrast to the poorer Middle Belt provinces. The division lines between the 'have' and 'have not' provinces are much the same as the religious and racial division lines.

I The five provinces with their Hausa-Fulani population percentages are, Kano 90%, Sokoto 80%, Katsina 77%, Bauchi 59% and Zaria 55%.

2 Nigeria, Department of Statistics, Population Census of the Northern Region of Nigeria, Lagos, Government Printer, 1952.

TRIBAL DIVISIONS OF NIGERIA



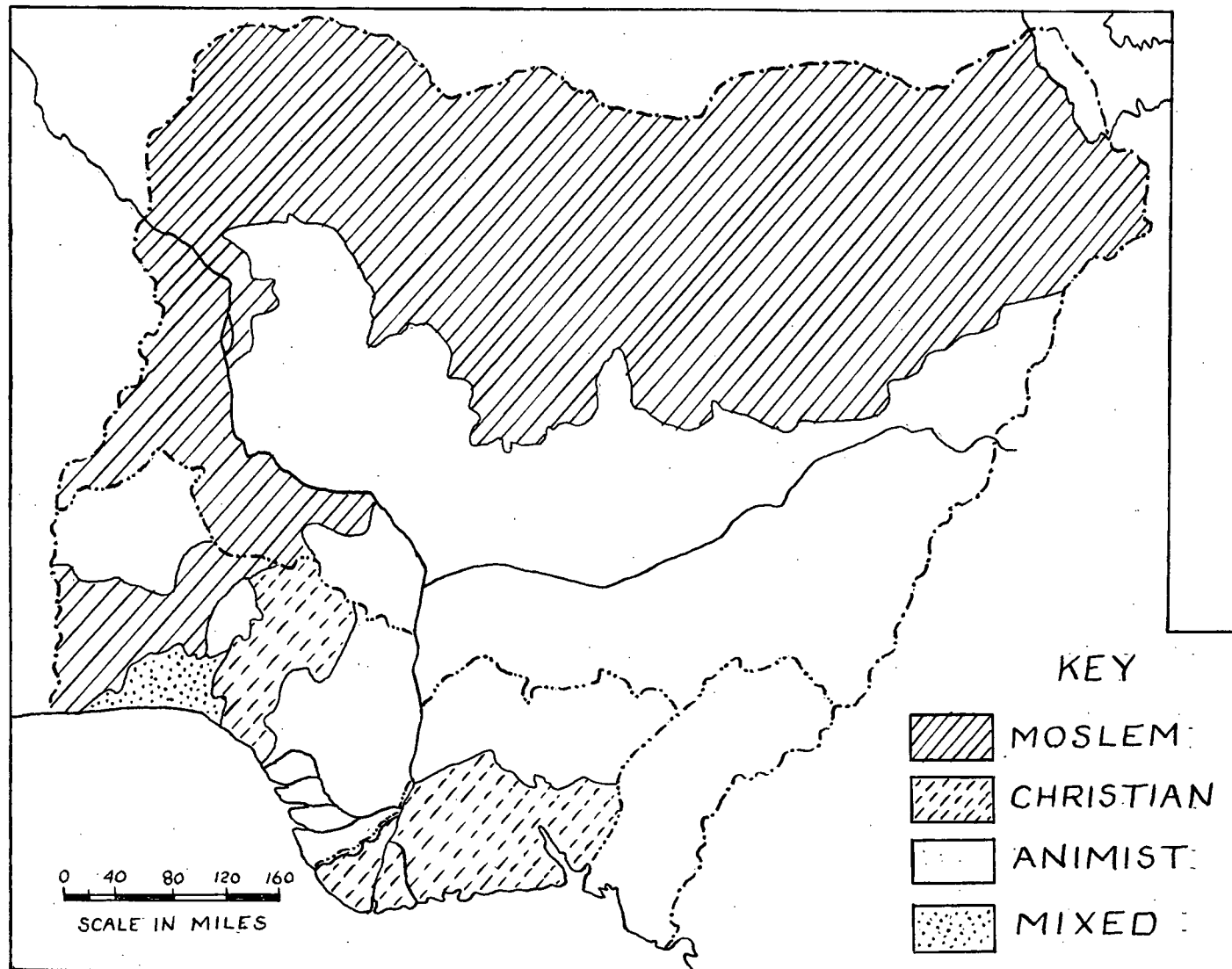
Southern Nigeria is divided into two regions by the Niger River. The Western Region has a population of six and a quarter million of which seventy per cent belong to the Yoruba tribe. The Yorubas are concentrated in six provinces.³ In the two remaining provinces a number of smaller tribes are located. In Benin, the Edo-speaking people account for forty-seven per cent of the people and in Delta the Urhobos constitute forty-two per cent. The Yoruba people are almost evenly divided between the Moslem and Christian faiths while the majority of people of Benin and Delta are animists. The Western Region like the North is divided between a major tribe inhabiting the largest area with the largest population and a mixture of smaller tribes in another smaller area. Again like the North there is a prosperous economic core. This core is situated around the cocoa crop area of Ibadan and thus roughly speaking, the minor tribes inhabit 'have-not' provinces.⁴ These provinces of Benin and Delta are termed the Mid-West provinces. Their problems are somewhat similar to those of the Middle Belt provinces of the North.

East of the Niger River lies the Eastern Region containing a population of seven million people and divided into five provinces. The Ibo tribe constitutes sixty-one per cent of the people of the region. The Ibos are concentrated in Onitsha and Owerri provinces (98%). They also make up sixty-seven per cent of the population of Ogoja and forty-one per cent of Rivers province. The forty per cent of non-Ibos are concentrated in the Calabar,

3 The six provinces with their Yoruba population percentages are Ibadan 98%, Oyo 96%, Ijebu 96%, Abeokuta 91%, Ondo 89% and Colony 73%.

4 In 1955-56 the revenue of the 'have-not' Mid-West provinces was £12,440,000 and expenditure by the regional government on behalf of this area was £14,299,000. (Reported in the Western House of Assembly and printed in The Daily Times, 21 Dec. 1957, p.8.)

RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS OF NIGERIA



to follow page 3

Ogoja and Rivers provinces, an area commonly termed the COR area. The Eastern Region is evenly divided between the Christian faith and animism. These religious variations cut across tribal groups and do not add to group solidarity as in the other regions. However, like both other regions the prosperous economic core lies in the Onitsha-Port Harcourt Ibo area and again the minor tribes inhabit the 'have-not' COR area.

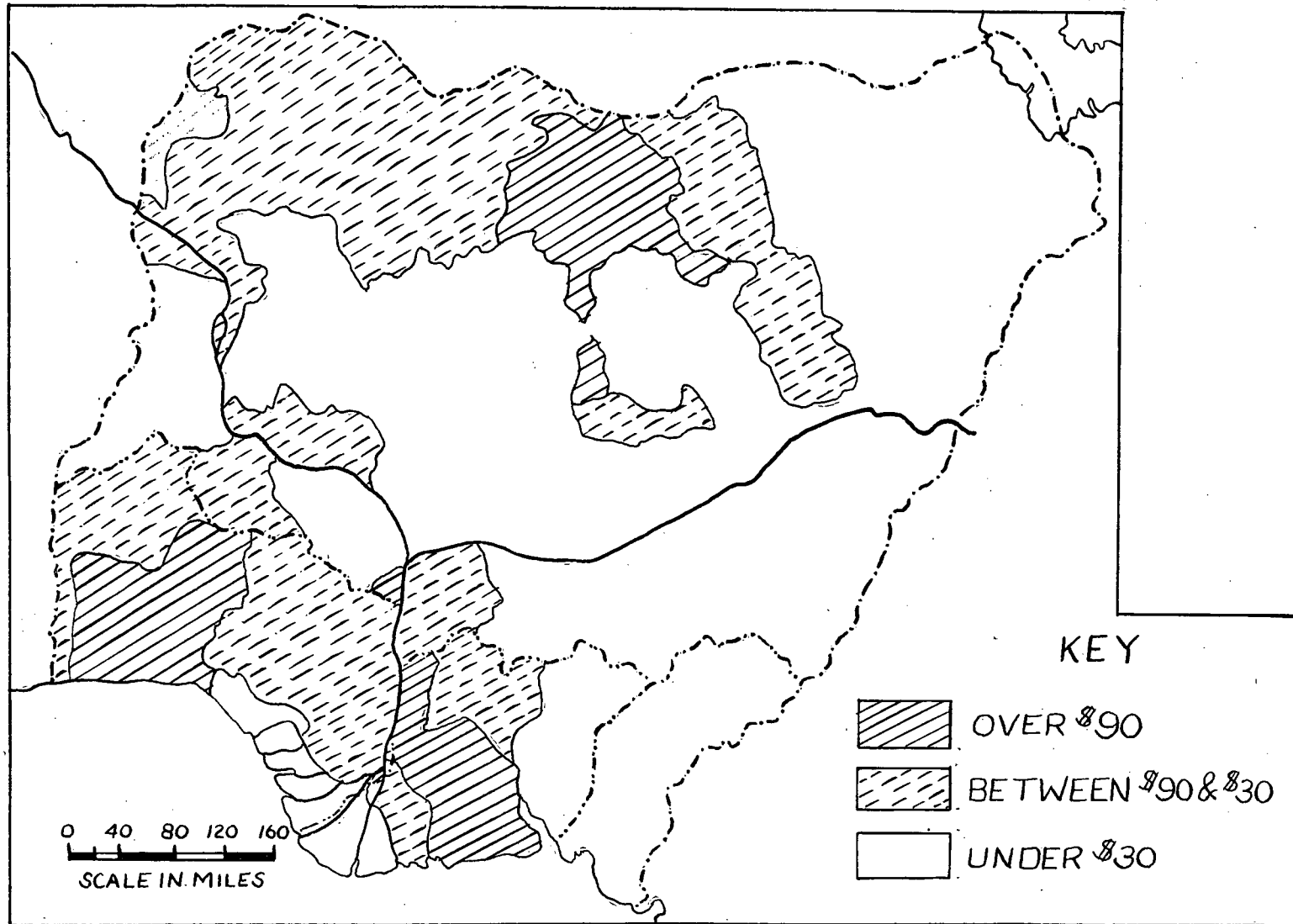
All three regions of Nigeria exhibit a similar duality, a major dominant tribe often reinforced by religion and economic advantages, and a group of minor tribes who suffer from an inferior position and fear domination⁵ by the larger group.

Contact between the coastal tribes and Europeans had gone back to the Portuguese era but this contact had been limited to trade. In 1861 in order to stop the slave trade along the Nigerian coast the British had seized the village of Lagos. During the height of Mid-Victorian little Englandism numerous suggestions had been made that the British should withdraw from their Lagos base.

During the eighteen eighties, owing to the industrial challenge of Europe and the fear of markets and sources of raw materials being alienated for the exclusive use of other European powers, plus home expansion of population and accumulation of surplus wealth, Britain began to take a new interest in the expansion of her colonial areas. Sir Alfred Moloney, governor of Lagos 1886-1891 expressed the new mood of commercial England in regard to colonial expansion.

⁵ The election figures of 1956 bear out this fact. In the Western Region 80% of the non-Yoruba seats are held by the Opposition party. In the Eastern Region 96% of the government seats represent Ibo areas. In the Northern Region the Opposition parties draw their strength almost exclusively from the non-Hausa areas.

GOVERNMENT REVENUE PER SQUARE MILE IN NIGERIA



to follow page 4

AFTER K.M.BUCHANAN AND J.C.PUGH, LAND AND PEOPLE OF NIGERIA, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON PRESS.

The Commercial world are insatiable; they say, 'We want territorial expansion, open roads and interior markets for our wares, ... They seem no longer satisfied with the sandbeach policy of past years.⁶

The attitude in Lagos to the British policy of clinging to the sandbeaches along the west coast of Africa and refusing to penetrate the hinterland was a mixed reaction. The educated Africans of Lagos were dependent on trade and as anxious that trade develop as were the British merchants. Like the British they feared that Lagos and the other British coastal towns would be economically crippled by lack of a hinterland.

We are fully aware that England does not wish to increase her responsibilities in Africa, but without such a course being adopted, her littoral possessions would be literally worthless, and her subjects along the whole coast line remain in perpetual suffrage through defective colonization.⁷

During the period from 1880 to 1890 the interior tribes in the Lagos hinterland were engaged in a ruinous war among themselves and with the Fulani Emir of Ilorin. This stopped the Lagos trade. The flow of goods from the interior ceased and Lagos experienced a severe depression.

The cry of hard times coupled with commercial depression has of late been perpetually dinning in our ears ... Commerce upon which she (Lagos) lays her basis, is fast declining and her progress tethered by the destructive influences of this damnable and wretched warfare.⁸

Lagosians therefore pressed the British to mediate in the interior tribal warfare. They pointed out to the British that they were not carrying

6 Lagos Times, 8 August, 1891, Vol.IV, No.108, p.3.

7 Lagos Observer, 19 Feb., 1887, Vol.VI, No.2, p.2.

8 Lagos Observer, 15 & 22, May, 1886, Vol.V, No.8, p.2.

out the obligations of the treaty by which Lagos had been ceded to the British crown. By the treaty the British promised to put an end to the destructive interior wars.⁹ The Lagosians appeared to favour a system whereby the interior tribes would govern themselves in domestic issues but where the British would manage their external affairs.

Another grievance of the Lagosians was the trade and administrative charter granted to the Royal Niger Company in 1886. They attacked the "absolute administrative powers" granted by the charter.¹⁰ They also attacked the trade monopoly of the Company, and claimed that Lagos traders were suffering as a result of their exclusion from the Niger basin. When George Taubman Goldie the head of the Royal Niger Company, stated that the Niger basin would prove "of immense importance to the working classes of Great Britain," the Lagos press retorted that "if the rights of West African are worth anything, nothing can equal their claims on the Niger."¹¹ This attitude soon led the Lagosians to organize a meeting of traders which presented a memorial to the governor of Lagos which pointed out that Lagos was the natural entrepot of the oil rivers and that the colony's extension along the coast was "daily becoming more desirable." They ended by asking the government "to take immediate steps with a view to the annexation of the whole of the oil rivers."¹²

Meanwhile the Congress of Berlin had gone about its pleasurable task of dividing up Africa among the European powers. The Lagos Times commented that,

9 Lagos Observer, 12 May, 1888, Vol.VII, No.7, p.2.

10 Lagos Observer, 9 & 16 Feb., 1889, Vol.VIII, No.I, p.2.

11 Loc. cit.

12 Lagos Observer, 26 May, 1888, Vol.VIII, No.8, p.3.

"a forcible possession of our land has taken the place of a forcible possession of our persons."^{I3} The Lagosians began to feel that their race might share the fate of the aboriginals of America and Australia.

The Berlin Conference has concluded its pleasant labours of sharing the spoils ... the world has perhaps never seen until now such high-handed robbery on so large a scale. Africa is helpless to prevent it, therefore it is in the interest of that incomprehensible (but very convenient) thing "civilization" that the blackman is a mistake on the part of the creator and must be blotted out.^{I4}

However much Lagosians might resent what had happened at Berlin they had to face the unhappy fact that Africa was being carved up and divided among the European empires. The French were trading in the neighbouring town of Porto Novo and in 1888 they concluded a trade treaty with the Egbas of Abeokuta. The object of the treaty was to divert from Lagos the large trade from the interior.^{I5} This French activity was not welcomed in Lagos. The Africans, when forced to decide between the French or British empire, were not slow to make their choice.

To the praise of the Frenchmen, be it said, that to treat with him on British soil, a Negro can hardly find a better and more courteous superior amongst the other nations on the continent of Europe. But once master of the situation, the lamb is suddenly transformed, and the incarceration of the Negro..... becomes the standing order. We love and respect the Frenchman, although we earnestly pray for the day to speedily arrive, when both he and the Negro will settle in Africa under the benign influence of British rule.^{I6}

I3 "The Scramble for Africa," Lagos Times, 20 June, 1891, Vol.4, No. 101, p.2.

I4 Lagos Observer, 19 Feb. 1885, Vol.IV, No.2, p.4.

I5 Reprint from the "Liverpool Courier" 26 July, 1888, Lagos Observer, 25 August & 1 Sept. 1888, Vol.VII, No.14, p.2.

I6 Reprint from the "Sierra Leone Times" Lagos Weekly Record, 10 June, 1893, Vol.III, No.41, p.2.

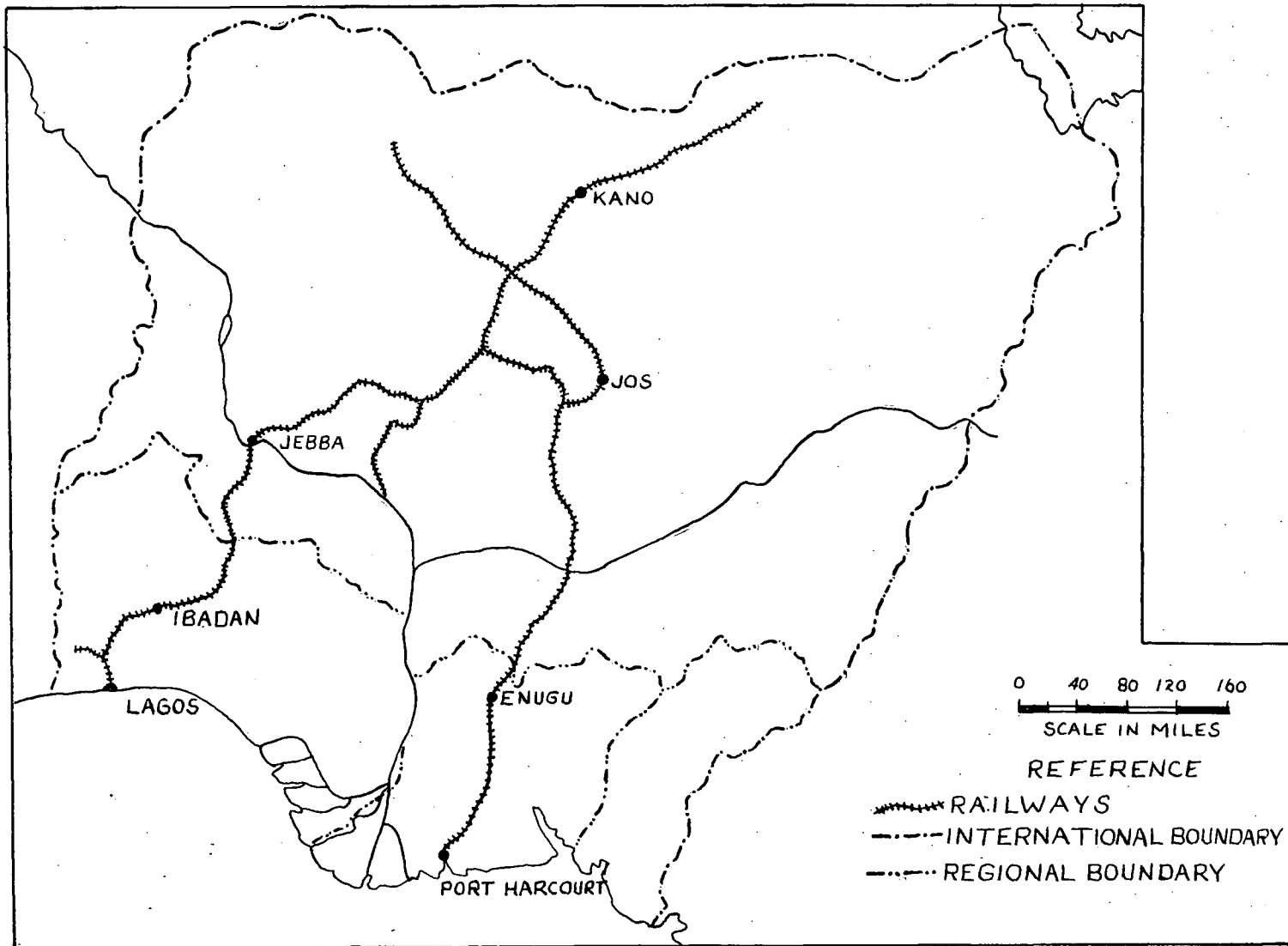
Thus the Africans in Lagos although preferring less forceful methods, finally came to advise and push the British towards expansion into the interior. This attitude arose from their exclusion from the Niger basin by the Royal Niger Company, the stopping of the Lagos trade by the interior wars and French activity in Dahomey. When the British did begin to move into the hinterland they moved slowly and cautiously. Pacification of the whole of Nigeria was not complete until 1906 and amalgamation of the country did not take place until 1914.

Joseph Chamberlain became colonial secretary in 1895. He liked to think of the colonies as the undeveloped estates of Britain. To stimulate development in these undeveloped estates he allowed colonies to make loans which the British government would back. In Nigeria these loans were used mainly for railway construction and harbour improvement. The Nigerian railway was begun in 1896 at Ebute Metta near Lagos. In 1900 it reached Ibadan; in 1909 Jebba; and in 1911 Kano. The Lagos bar was deepened in 1907 and again in 1909. The effect of this linking of the interior with the coast resulted in greater exports and imports. In 1894 exports totalled £ 800,000, in 1920 £ 17,000,000. In 1906 imports equalled £ 3,000,000 and in 1920 £ 21,000,000. Cocoa, introduced around 1900 grew steadily in volume from three thousand tons in 1910 to seventeen thousand tons in 1920. Ground-nut culture was introduced in the North about the same time and by 1920 had reached an export total of 45,000 tons.

Sir Walter Egerton, governor of Nigeria from 1904 to 1912 announced when he arrived in Nigeria that his policy would be to make roads and more roads.¹⁷ A railroad feeder system of roads was begun in 1905 and the palm

¹⁷ Lagos Standard, 8 Nov., 1905, Vol.XIII, No.8, p.4.

THE MAIN RAILWAY SYSTEM OF NIGERIA



to follow page 8

oil and kernel areas were tapped. Palm oil increased from just over a thousand tons in 1900 to 85,000 tons in 1920. Palm kernels increased from 86,000 tons in 1900 to 207,000 tons in 1920.

In 1909 coal was discovered at Udi near Enugu in the Eastern Region. In 1912 the new harbour site of Port Harcourt was chosen. A rail line reached Enugu from Port Harcourt in 1916. By 1940 the Udi mines were producing 700,000 tons of coal. In 1903 tin mining began in the plateau region near Jos. In 1920 the railway reached the mines and in 1926 the eastern and western railway systems were connected.

From this development in transportation and the subsequent development of export crops and mineral production, specialization and a money economy resulted. Large urban centres began to emerge as transport depots, administrative centres and in the vicinity of mines and embryonic manufacturing. Greater opportunities, greater personal freedom and more amenities drew the rural population into the cities. The new cities bred a completely new class of people. This class could afford to send its children to school; it was under the influence of modern forms of propaganda, the cinema, and radio. It kept informed of government policy and work. It owned and read the newspapers and it came in touch with world thought. The people of the new cities were introduced to the "boom and bust" of world economics; they began to know what unemployment and wage exploitation meant. They came into closer contact with the Europeans and they became critical of European behavior; they resented their higher living standards; they resented their control of the economics and the government of the country; and they resented urban "aphartheid," the "sabons," ghettos and reservations. They saw in them a correlation between

race and economic status. Black was associated with poverty, white with wealth. This class not only became critical of Europeans but also of the traditional native authorities and they began an agitation for European type municipal councils. By 1920 this class was well established in Lagos and it was here that municipal elections began, and political parties formed which looked beyond the local government to the national government. Other cities arrived at this point around the early nineteen forties under the increasing urbanization caused by the war.

An important characteristic of this new urban population was that it was not drawn entirely or even substantially from the tribe in the immediate environs of the city. In these new cities all tribes mixed and learned to get along or, as sometimes happened, learned to hate each other. Every large city in Nigeria had its stranger quarters where people from various tribes built homes and governed themselves. In certain cities this stranger quarter has grown larger than the original town and its economic activities have overshadowed the original town.

The existence of these autonomous units has naturally caused resentment among the Emirs, not only because, with few exceptions, "foreigners," are by this means excluded from the control, but because the more liberal and efficient administration of these excised urban areas has attracted much of the trade away from the towns near to which they are located.¹⁸

Modern cities require a literate working force to carry on modern business and administration. Thus the literate were the ones who flocked to the towns. The most striking example of this fact was the mining town of

¹⁸ Joan Wheare, The Nigerian Legislative Council, London, Faber and Faber, 1950, p.10.

Jos which was eighty-five per cent literate. Jos is in Northern Nigeria which has an average literacy rate of two per cent in English, and five per cent in Arabic. Owing to the fact that the literacy rate is highest among the Ibos, Yorubas and Ibibios, these tribes have predominated in the new towns regardless of where these towns have been located. The Ibos have fared particularly well because added to their qualifications in literacy they are particularly ambitious; have firmly grasped the aims and goals of Western civilization and are not reluctant to leave their tribal area. In 1921 there were only 2,666 Ibos in the Northern Region. In 1952 this figure had risen to 186,000 or ninety per cent of the total stranger element in the Northern Region. Lagos, a Yoruba town showed a similar trend; in 1911 the Ibos formed two per cent of the total stranger element, and in 1950 they formed forty-eight per cent.

An evil arising from this situation is that the indigenous people have come to see these strangers as obstacles to their progress. Because the Ibo have spread the farthest they have received the greatest criticism. But the Yorubas and Ibibios have also had their share of criticism. These strangers hold the best jobs and draw the best salaries in government and business.

... Undoubtedly it is the Southerner who has the power in the North. They have control of the railway stations; of the post offices; of government hospitals; of the canteens; the majority employed in the Public Works Department are all Southerners.^{I9}

The urban population has been the spearhead and propaganda vehicle of

I9 "Editorial", Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 18 Feb., 1950, p.2.

the national movement. As a class they were well prepared for such a task. They were literate; they followed the newspapers; they were mostly directly concerned with public affairs and government policy. They had funds and could be organized into associations. They had freed themselves from tribal authority and most of all they had influence in their home villages. The most important aspect of these people was that regardless of how long they had been urbanized - two or three generations - they still remained influential members of their native village.

In order to preserve their tribal identity, to compensate for the weakening of the traditional system of social security which was lacking in the multi-tribal towns and to recover that sense of common purpose lost in the new urban life, the various tribes grouped themselves in new associations commonly referred to as tribal unions. These unions began as mutual aid and protection societies, football clubs, social or womens' clubs. They prevented detribalization because they were based on traditional social groupings; they provided the link between these "sons-abroad" and the "sons-at-home" in the village; they eased the transition from village life to urban life and cushioned the impact of Western ideas and culture. Frequently they were led by the young educated men who gained experience in modern forms of administration. They strengthened the hands of these young men against

20 In 1950 the Ibos agitated through their tribal union against indignities suffered by Ibos in Calabar province and against excessive discriminatory taxation of Ibos in Bornu province. See "Annual Report of the Ibo State Union," Eastern Nigerian Guardian, 25 Mar., Vol.XI, No.222I, p.2.

21 The Egba Womens' Union led by Mrs. Fummilayo Ransome-Kuti in Abeokuta had a paid membership in 1948 of 80,000. The Union was instrumental in the expulsion of the Alake (traditional ruler) in 1948.

22 In the first elected assemblies in Nigeria in 1951 the majority of the elected members in both the Eastern and Western Houses had previously been executive officers of a tribal union.

the older traditional authority.

23

The tribal unions did good work in education by financing colleges and providing scholarships for overseas study. They were active in encouraging social reform²⁴ in their home villages; they settled disputes between members out of the courts and they kept alive interest in the traditional culture of their tribe-dances, history, language and moral beliefs. Occasionally these urban unions promoted the organization of a parent union in the home village and then acted as pressure groups for local improvement schemes and were especially influential in the democratization of the native authority councils. Sometimes leaders of the union were sought out by the illiterate traditional authorities for advice as to the solution of problems peculiar to modern day society which they felt ill-equipped to handle.

The Unions abroad were held in high esteem by the Unions at home. The Unions abroad were educated and provided the funds for improvement in the villages. Nationalist ideas flowed from the cities to the villages in this network of interlocking unions which was the only means of communication entirely under African control. While at first the British could say that nationalism only ran wild in the larger cities and could dismiss national agitators as a disgruntled minority they soon came to hear familiar nationalist arguments in the most remote villages - villages which had never seen

23 Both the Ibibio State College and the Ibo National College were set up by tribal unions.

24 The Afikpo Town Welfare Association was instrumental in the abolition of female nudity in Afikpo division.

a motor road, newspaper or radio. In the nineteen forties most tribal unions formed a national executive and attempted to control and direct policy from the top. This development was never too successful for the locals remained the spokesmen of the "grass roots" and the most important factors in the union structure. These unions were the obvious nuclei of a national political organization and it was because of this that the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons could claim sixty branch affiliates after only a few months existence.

The British policy of providing transportation facilities created an export crop and a money economy. This in turn led to the rise of modern cities and a literate salaried middle class who adopted western ideas of national feeling and western forms of government and explained and popularized these ideas with the common people, the farmers and traders. At the same time the middle class preserved much of the African way of life and prevented the complete loss of social and moral standards so common in de-tribalized societies. It must not, however, be forgotten that this same middle class prevented the melting of the various tribal nationalities into a Nigerian nationality and in fact increased the barriers between tribes. When the British finally conceded power the middle class found itself lacking a Nigerian outlook and in order to gain power fanned the flames of inter-tribal jealousy and dislike among the common people.

It is important to take a look at some of the ideas that this middle class were absorbing in the years after 1920. The concept of trusteeship emerged from the war with its logical sequence of self determination. Within the empire itself the white dominions were pressing forward their claims

to self determination which resulted in the Statute of Westminster... There were stirrings in India which resulted in the extension of representative government and limited fiscal autonomy. Young Nigerians could not long be expected to absorb from their school books the constitutional struggle of the United Kingdom and the evolutionary process of the Commonwealth without drawing logical conclusions.

They (Africans) understand what prompted the drafting of the Magna Carta, the Petition of Right, the Bill of Rights, and the other great documents of British constitutional history.²⁵

Nigerians were soon asking if the darker races were "to assume that dominion status is reserved exclusively for the fairer races of the British Commonwealth."²⁶ The British attitude appeared to assume that it was so reserved.

Parliamentary government, evolved by Englishmen for their own use and to suit their own peculiar temperament, is not necessarily the best form of government for Africans.²⁷

Some writers felt that in the years between the wars Britain lost much of her earlier idealism and that the British "began to doubt the efficacy of freedom as a means of binding men and communities together."²⁸ Fortunately for the British they did not officially say so, for world events were rapidly favouring the rising nationalism of the black and brown races.

25 Nnamdi Azikiwe, Renascent Africa, Lagos, by the author, 1937, p.79.

26 The West African Pilot, 6 April, 1940, Vol.III, No.728, p.4.

27 Sir Alan Burns (Governor of the Gold Coast 1941-1947) History of Nigeria, London, Allen and Unwin, 1942, p.308.

28 Paul Knaplund, Britain, Commonwealth and Empire 1901-1955, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1956, p.63.

The Second World War found Britain again emphasizing the right of self-determination for small peoples and at least the Labour party applied this equally to the Nigerians as to the Poles and Czechs.²⁹ In 1940 Clement Attlee stated that if Britons wanted a world free from imperialist domination they must free themselves from the taint of it.³⁰ Colonial peoples were not only inspired by the Colonial policy of the Labour party³¹ but they had an instinctive sympathy for their domestic platforms.³² The Labour government began its term of office in 1945 with the almost unanimous good-will of Nigerians. The Labour victory spurred Nigerian nationalists to greater efforts to win the support of the Nigerian people and the British government.

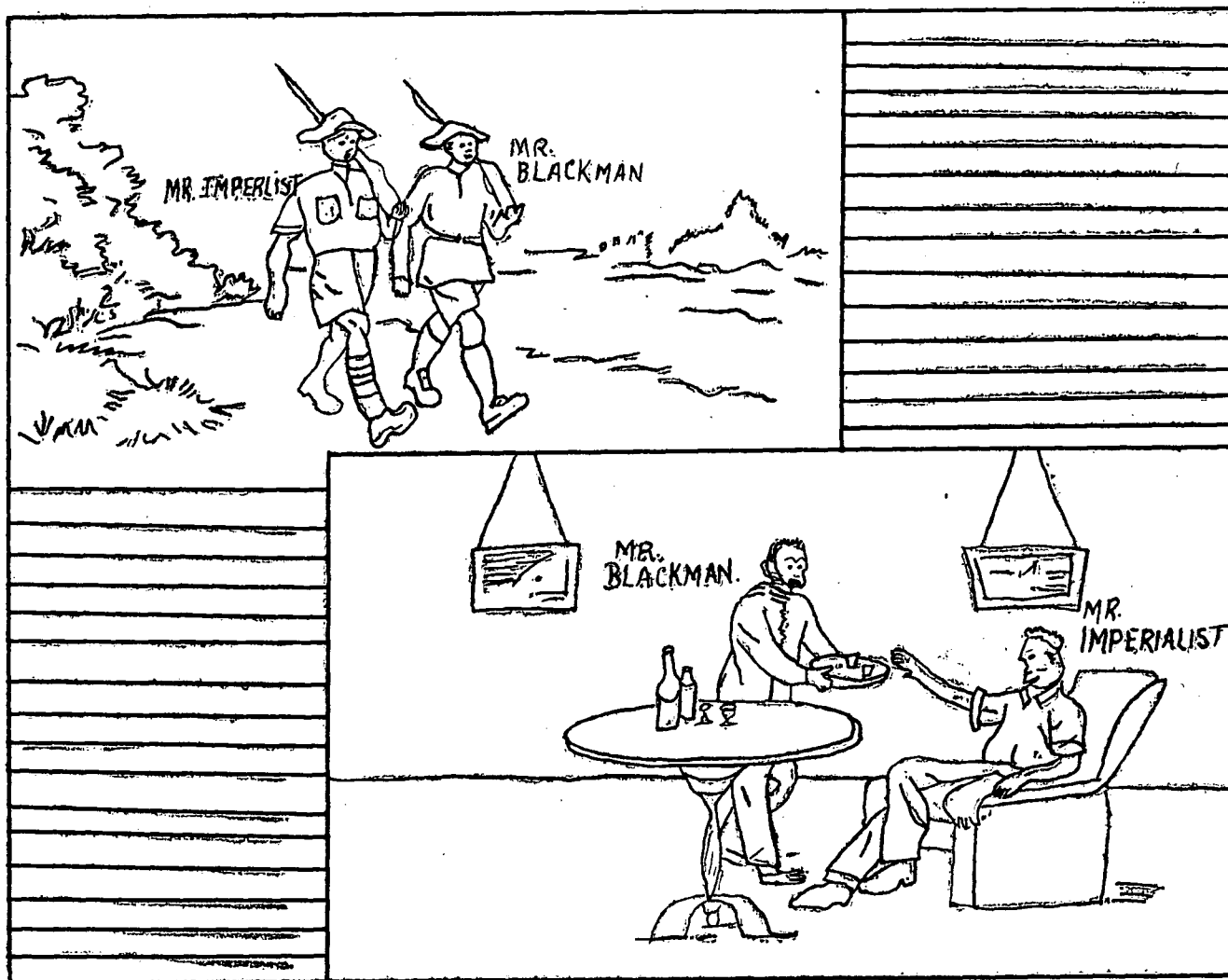
The wartime Japanese victories were not hailed in Nigeria but these victories did prove that the coloured peoples of the world could prove themselves in the modern world. Nigerians were sorry that Japan used her new strength in the cause which she espoused. The war had another effect. Thousands of Nigerian soldiers went Overseas, particularly to Asia and from there after contact with Asian nationalists they returned with hopes for a new world in which they would have some concrete part.

²⁹ Clement Attlee in an address to the professors and students of London School of Economics, The West African Pilot, 5 April, 1940, Vol.III, No.727, p.I.

³⁰ Clement Attlee in a broadcast to the British people, The West African Pilot, 13 March, 1940, Vol.III, No.710, p.I.

³¹ In 1940 the Labour Party advocated the internationalization of the British colonies as a step to satisfy the 'have-not' nations and so remove one of the causes of war. This policy did not recommend itself to Nigerians.

³² "We who know penury should appreciate Labour's programme," Nnamdi Azikiwe, The West African Pilot, 2 June, 1945, Vol.VIII, No.2298, p.2.



COMRADE IN WAR VASSAL IN PEACE

West African Pilot, 8 Nov, 1949.

Nigeria had always been one of the most "loyal" colonies of the empire and in the war it proved this loyalty once again but when the war was over, Nigerians like people everywhere were enthusiastic to build a new world. With the Labour party victory in Britain the outlook for the future looked bright indeed.

After the war events moved rapidly to prove British willingness to apply the principle of self-determination. India, Pakistan and Ceylon became independent inside the Commonwealth. Burma and ~~Eire~~ severed their connections with the Commonwealth. Indian independence was a particularly important event.³³ India's struggle was felt to be the general struggle³⁴ of all colonial peoples.

India is the hero of the subject countries. Her struggles for self-government are keenly and sympathetically watched by the colonial peoples.³⁵

Indian independence proved that the British were in earnest and re-affirmed Nigerian faith in British promises. It showed how, by means of voting symbols, mass education, cinema vans and new broadcasting techniques, a non-reading public could handle the franchise. It showed Nigerians the techniques that could be used to constitutionally rush the pace of self-government such as congress movements, student activities, national fronts, strikes, boycotts and means short of violence to which the British would react. It also warned the Nigerians against pakistanistic tendencies in

33 India became the model for the coloured empire just as previously Canada had been the model and pioneer of the white empire.

34 Nnamdi Azikiwe, The West African Pilot, 13 Jan., 1945, Vol.VIII, No.2183, p.2.

35 Obafemi Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom, London, Faber and Faber, 1947, p.25.

multiple societies.

Indian independence also inspired the British and made them more willing to attempt nation building elsewhere. It proved to the British that nations could be built without the usually accepted conditions such as common culture, language and traditions, by skilful manipulation of the federal principle. It also proved to the British that self-government was better than good government and even that self-government could be good government.

The United Nations sought to promote the progressive development towards self-government in the colonies. Both great world powers, the United States and Russia although they disagreed on most other matters could agree on a general attack upon the colonial system. Both nations have sought by supporting colonial demands and posing as the champion of the colonial peoples, to be the leaders of the states emerging from the British,³⁶ French and Dutch empires. They have found ample applause for their efforts within the United Nations.³⁷ This world pressure has stirred Nigerians to accelerate the tempo of the British withdrawal and has stirred the British to keep steadfastly to their policy of withdrawal.

This introductory chapter has attempted to show the general background of how the British came to be in Nigeria; what kind of country Nigeria was; how the introduction of the country to the world economy laid the basis of

³⁶ Sir Alan Burns, (United Kingdom permanent representative on the Trustee Council of the United Nations), In Defence of Colonies, London, Allen and Unwin, 1957, p.16.

³⁷ In the United Nations (1956-57) the total membership was eighty member countries. Of these, at least fifty-seven could be considered as generally 'anti-colonial.' Burns, Colonies, p.8.

an expanding middle class which nurtured the ideas of nationalism and self-determination. It shows how the middle class organized the common people to work for self-government. It also attempts briefly to show the ideas current in the world which this middle class were absorbing. The following two chapters will attempt to trace in greater detail the internal political developments in Nigeria between 1920 and 1954.

Chapter II

The Demand for Parliamentary Democracy with Constructive Abdication of Power
The Unification of British Administration 1862-1920.

In 1862, in order to further their efforts to stop slave raiding along the West Coast of Africa, the British captured Lagos. In the following year it was brought under the jurisdiction of the British Colonial office administered by a Governor and a nominated Council. The Governor acted as Consul for the Bight of Benin area until 1867 when a separate Consul was appointed residing at Fernando Po who became responsible for the coast between Lagos and the Cameroons. In 1866 Lagos was included in the West African settlements under a Governor-in-Chief residing at Sierra Leone. Lagos was directly under an Administrator and an Advisory Council. In 1874 it was united with the Gold Coast under a Governor with a Lieutenant Governor at Lagos. In 1886 Lagos became a separate colony and has remained so ever since.

Meanwhile to the east in the Bights of Benin and Biafara the British had been busy making treaties with the coastal and riverain chiefs as part of the general European scramble for Africa going on in this period. In 1885 the Oil Rivers Protectorate - a protectorate on paper only - was set up under the British foreign office. In 1891 this Paper Protectorate became more substantial with the appointment of a Commissioner, Consul-General at Calabar and deputy Commissioners and vice-consuls at Benin, Bonny, Brass, Forcados, Warri, and Sapele. In 1885 the Royal Niger Company was given a charter to trade and administer the middle and upper Niger regions. In 1893 the Oil Rivers Protectorate was expanded and renamed the Niger Coast Protectorate and its administration taken more seriously.

In 1900 the charter of the Royal Niger Company was revoked, the company giving up its administration duties and continuing solely as a commercial

firm. The Colonial Office then declared a protectorate over Northern Nigeria although it was not completely pacified until 1906.

During the eighteen nineties British protection had been extended inland from Lagos over the Yoruba tribes. In 1900 the Niger Coast Protectorate and Yorubaland, but not Lagos colony, were united under the name of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria; administration was handed over to the Colonial office from the Foreign office. Thus by 1900 both protectorates and the colony which make up Nigeria today were under the Colonial office.

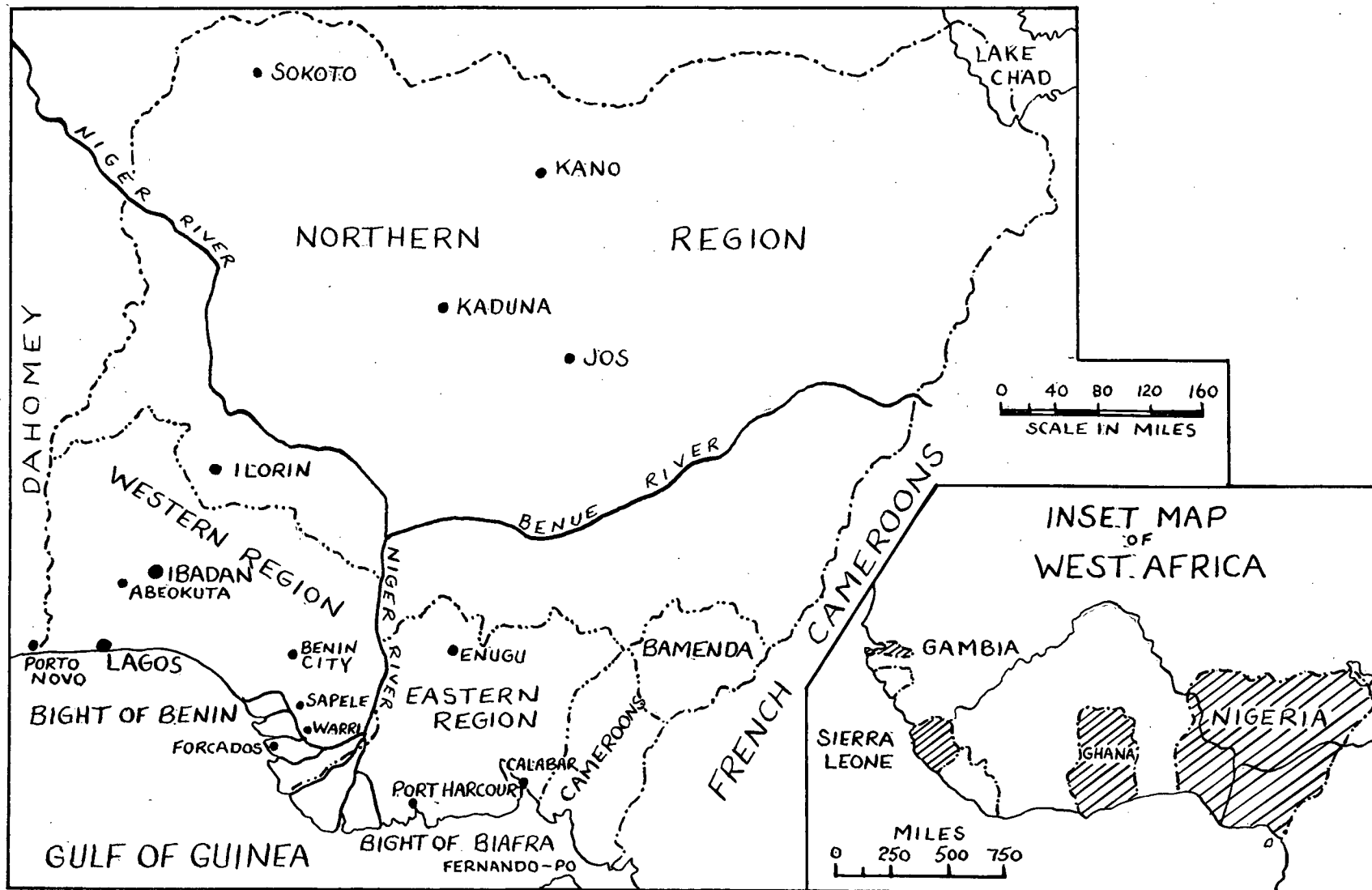
In 1906, Lagos was united with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria under a Governor, Sir Walter Egerton. A Legislative Council nominated and advisory, could debate issues regarding Southern Nigeria.^I This Council consisted of six official and four unofficial (two Nigerian) members. For administrative purposes the country was divided into three provinces under provincial commissioners; Western province with capital at Lagos, Central province with capital at Warri and the Eastern province with capital at Calabar.

In 1912 Lord Lugard was appointed Governor of both the Northern and Southern protectorates to effect their amalgamation which was accomplished in 1914. A lieutenant governor was placed over the North and South provinces.

In this period Nigeria was passing through a process of unification but it is well to remember what kind of unification this was. It was imposed by the British. It did not arise from a desire of the people. While taking

^I Raymond Leslie Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, New York, Macmillan Co., 1928, Vol.II, p.734.

MAP OF PLACE NAMES IN NIGERIA



shape the form of a federal system became apparent. Departments of government which administered the entire area frequently pursued differing policies for North and South. Some areas and peoples had far greater local autonomy than others and this autonomy in different areas took different forms. Many Nigerians today look back upon pre-1945 Nigeria as a unitary state but this is far from true. Any country as diverse as Nigeria, could not but expect that powers from the central government would be transmitted to local bodies. With the awakening of the political consciousness of the people federative tendencies were bound to be accelerated.

Under Lugard's amalgamation in 1914 two nominated advisory councils were established; the Nigerian council consisting of thirty British and six Nigerian members, the Legislative council composed of nine British and two Nigerian official members.

Of the total thirty-six members in the Nigerian council, twenty-four² were officials, the Governor's executive council, all first class residents, political secretaries and the secretaries of the North and South provinces. The six unofficial members were representatives of commercial interests. The Nigerians were made up of the most important chiefs from the North and South and representatives of the educated element of Lagos and Calabar.

The Lagos Legislative Council was a retrograde step because its sphere of activity was confined rigidly to Lagos whereas the old Legislative Council had to be consulted on matters affecting all Southern Nigeria. The Nigerian

² Each region was divided into provinces. First class residents were the heads of the administrations of the provinces and were responsible to the lieutenant governor of the region. A province consisted of a number of local traditional authorities. The larger local authorities such as the Kano emirate (population - three million) were advised by second class residents and smaller local authorities by divisional officers, both of which were directly responsible to the first class residents.

Council was designed to express public opinion and provide policy makers an³ opportunity to give a summary of matters of interest and explain policy, but it had no powers over legislation or finance. Neither government officials nor council members took these bodies seriously. The Governor did not even grace the Lagos Council with his presence and the Chiefs seldom attended sessions of the Nigerian Council. The Nigerian Council's main purpose was to debate but it was reluctant to do even that and one British member finally asked that it should either be made a serious factor in government or be⁴ abolished.

Early Expressions of the Demand for Parliamentary Institutions 1885-1920.

In these years the colony and Lagos were being ruled directly and the educated Nigerians felt that some attention or appreciation should be shown to traditional customs which the British tended to brand as savage. At the same time Nigerians looked forward to the gradual introduction of the parliamentary system as had been the practice elsewhere in the Empire - nominated members on the Legislative Council followed by a partially elected and partially nominated Assembly; a gradual increase of the elected members and decrease of the nominated with greater and greater powers in due time being extended to this body.

Frequently the British pleaded the lack of qualified men to hold such positions but the Nigerian press replied,

³ Sir Alan Burns, History of Nigeria, London, Allen and Unwin, 1955, p.II4.

⁴ Nigeria, "Address of the Governor," Legislative Council Debates, 6 Feb., 1925, p.II.

Prior to the amalgamation with the Gold Coast (1874) the Legislative Council of this colony comprised Europeans and native unofficial members. If there could be found men in those days sufficiently qualified to occupy seats in the Legislative Council... how much more at the present time.⁵

When Lagos was set up as a separate colony in 1886, educated Nigerians fully expected that they would be represented.

Among the first fruits of the separation will doubtless be the laying of the foundation of our Administrative Independence in the formation of a Legislative Council...so composed of Europeans and natives that the interests of all classes shall be fairly represented... It is to be hoped that the appointments necessitated thereby will not be confined to a coteria of European officials only, but an opportunity will be afforded natives of talent to stand side by side with their more favoured brethren.⁶

Later the same source asked, "How long will we tamely submit to taxation without representation?"⁷

Although the elective principle had not yet been seriously mentioned, by 1898 newspapers were talking of the "peoples' choice."

We cannot be in sympathy with an administrative system which entirely excludes and discountenances the choice of the people in the matter of selection of their representatives in the Legislature.⁸

After 1900 the press was still fighting the charge of inability of Nigerians but were now asking for a limited elective element.

5 Lagos Observer, 7 August, 1886, Vol.V, No.I3, p.2.

6 Lagos Observer, 20 March, 1886, Vol.V, No.4, p.2.

7 Lagos Observer, 17 and 24 July, 1886, Vol.V, No.I2, p.2.

8 Lagos Observer, 31 October, 1898, Vol.I, No.8, p.2.

A community that has produced native bishops, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, merchant princes and men distinguished in almost every walk in life, cannot be considered too young to be entrusted with the rights and duties of citizenship. A partly representative system, such as obtains in some of the British West Indies, where the members of the Legislative Council are partly elected by the people, and partly appointed by the Governor would, while constituting a step in the right direction, not be beyond the capacity or deserts of the people.⁹

The Union of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to Lagos in 1906 modified this attitude but did not change it. Obviously it would slow down the pace of the advance envisioned by the educated elements, because of the now large population included in the administration, who were largely untouched by western ideas and would have to be more slowly introduced to parliamentary democracy. The Bush native, "although he is black, he is human, and will be as fully sensible in time as any Briton ever was to the inviolable right of controlling his own affairs."¹⁰

By the early nineteen twenties Nigerians were being assisted in their demands for elected representation by the demands of other parts of the Colonial Empire and by the increasingly noticeable difference between their own position and that of the self-governing white Dominions.^{II} After reviewing Constitutional unrest in Jamaica, Ceylon, West Africa and East Africa the Lagos Weekly Record summed up by saying, "an almost universal cry has gone up in almost all subject dependencies for an increased share of political responsibility."¹²

⁹ "The Crown Colony System," Lagos Standard, 20 September, 1905, Vol.XII, No.I, p.5.

¹⁰ Lagos Weekly Record, 30 January, 1904, Vol.XV, No.I5, p.5.

^{II} "The National Congress of British West Africa" Lagos Weekly Record, 10 July, 1920, Vol.XXX, No.61, p.5.

¹² Lagos Weekly Record, 24 April, 1920, Vol.XIX, No.50, p.5, quoting The African World, London.

With the spirit of nationalism and the desire for a larger share of political responsibility rampant throughout the length and breadth of the whole world, it is difficult to understand...how the moderate aspirations of intelligent and progressive African natives for some form of representative government can be conveniently discouraged.^{I3}

The Nigerian press felt that since the government contained no element possessing local ties and local interests, it was its special province to^{I4} "exercise watch and ward for the people" and while the press found it necessary to criticize the Administration of the government of the colony in no case could it be shown that it had ever "wavered in its loyalty to the Crown"^{I5}

In 1903 Sir William MacGregor, Governor of Lagos introduced an ordinance which required newspaper owners to post a bond of five hundred pounds with the government in order to guard against newspapers being unable to meet the financial demands of libel cases. In the Council the Governor defended the bill on the ground that press criticisms, "did a great deal of harm to young officers, and proved at times embarrassing to the government."^{I6} The press felt that such criticism was its right.

In these days when young and inexperienced European officers are being placed over large districts in the Protectorate of the Colonies on the West Coast of Africa and armed with powers such as are calculated to turn a man's head, how necessary that there should be a public press to expose any out-of-the-way actions of which the young and inexperienced aspirants may be guilty. The very thought that there is a vigilant press to criticize their actions, cannot but act as a check on them.^{I7}

^{I3} Lagos Weekly Record, 24 April, 1920, Vol.XIX, No.50, p.5, quoting The African World, London.

^{I4} Lagos Standard, 12 August, 1903, Vol.IX, No.48, p.3, quoting The African Review, London.

^{I5} Lagos Standard, 24 June, 1903, Vol.IX, No.41, p.3.

^{I6} Lagos Standard, 5 August, 1903, Vol.IX, No.47, p.3.

^{I7} Lagos Standard, 15 July, 1903, Vol.IX, No.44, p.4.

Two Lagos newspapers circulated a petition which was sent to the Colonial secretary asking him to withhold his assent from the ordinance. The British press took a stand against the ordinance and comments from English newspapers were liberally quoted by the Lagos press in defence of their stand.

The Colony, I may mention, boasts of two weekly papers, very capably edited by natives, and it is the suppression of these journals, the Lagos Standard and the Lagos Weekly Record, which is aimed at in the bill, as they have an uncomfortable way of speaking plainly about any abuses in the government of the Colony.¹⁸

The European Chamber of Commerce in Lagos, in the absence of representatives of some of the largest commercial firms passed a resolution, "that this meeting strongly deprecates the tone adopted within the last few months, by the native press of Lagos, particularly with regard to matters concerning the government of the Colony and European government officials."¹⁹

The newspaper ordinance however, received the Colonial secretary's assent but only after the amount of the bond to be posted was reduced to two hundred, fifty pounds. The effect of the ordinance was to make the Lagos press feel that it was not quite as free as it might be and that the government was seeking to curb its activity. However, it could be consoled that its editorials were not being ignored by the government.

The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 served to make the attainment of parliamentary government even more difficult and slowed the gradual process to a standstill.

The British, who until 1914 appeared to favour this gradual approach, although probably favouring a slower pace than the educated Nigerian, began to change their attitude. Much of this change of attitude was due to the

¹⁸ Lagos Standard, 12 August, 1903, Vol.IX, No.48, p.3, quoting Reynolds Newspaper, England.

¹⁹ Lagos Standard, 28 June, 1905, Vol.XI, No.39, p.3.

successful working of Lord Lugard's indirect rule principles in Northern Nigeria. When Lugard was sent to effect the amalgamation it was to be expected that the Northern Nigerian policy of ruling through native institutions would be carried out in the South. The educated Nigerians also favoured this system but expected that gradually the autocratic features of the traditional system would be curtailed. The British limited this curtailing to abolition of slavery and human sacrifice. This was not at all sufficient in the eyes of the educated who felt that British justice and parliamentary procedure were two of the great advantages of citizenship in the British Empire. After amalgamation Northern Nigeria remained as before and Southern Nigeria was made to bend in the direction of autocracy, the outcry from the educated knew no bounds and did not diminish with time.

Sir Frederick Lugard in mapping out his Northern Nigerian policy never made any allowance for the element of progress. Infected with the dangerous microbe of race prejudice which subsequently developed into an incurable mania for 'white prestige' and taking advantage of the gross mental darkness that everywhere pervaded the land, Sir Frederick thought it best to perpetuate this state of blissful ignorance by preserving the people in watertight compartments of idolized ignorance and studiously excluding all liberalizing influences whether of external or internal origin; and, to crown it all he purposely introduced the rule of force as a condition precedent for maintaining the white man's prestige at all costs. He never for a moment contemplated the possible fusion of Northern and Southern Nigeria and the subsequent clash of ideals that it would entail - the clash of the liberal policy of the Southern provinces with the military rule of the Northern provinces.²⁰

The difference in attitude between the educated and the British, to indigenous institutions seemed to be that while the educated felt that indigenous institutions would grow, with British pressure, into elected local governments and parliamentary representation on the Westminster model the

20 Lagos Weekly Record, 1 October, 1921, Vol.XXXI, No.109, p.2.

British firmly felt that the Westminster model was not suitable for Africa.

The Nigerian position was stated in the press.

If the advocates of indirect rule wish to be taken seriously they must include in their programme the introduction of liberal institutions... and the modelling of native courts to conform to British standards of justice.²¹

The British appeared to be more anxious about present than ultimate results and this drifting led to the growth of an autocratic system for that was the general trend of the traditional institutions when the safeguards which the British had branded as incompatible with human justice, were removed. No new safeguards, such as the elective principle were put in their place. In this regard, Sir Donald Cameron said that, "he detected a tendency to drift into thinking that a feudal autocracy was the be-all and end-all of indirect administration."²²

This nation cannot remain stationary under its ancient laws and customs though not repugnant to civilisation. This, as is well known, is contrary to the law of progress. Not to advance is to retrograde - a relapse into the darkness of barbarianism.²³

The dangers of stagnation were indirectly alluded to later by the Governor, Sir Donald Cameron, when he referred to the Southern provinces native administrations, "which are reactionary and repressive in their tendency, in some instances depending for their authority on fetish and superstition for most part,"²⁴ and again,

²¹ Lagos Weekly Record, 17 July, 1920, Vol.XXX, No.62, p.3.

²² Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Colonial Problem, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, p.259.

²³ Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 20-27 April, 1915, No.67-68, p.4.

²⁴ Nigerian Daily Times, Lagos, 17 March, 1933, Vol.VII, No.2228, p.8.

If there is an attempt to keep the people back and the native administration is consequently not so framed and constituted as to progress on modern lines alongside the central government of which it is but a part... then naturally, the natives will... eventually refuse to 'stay put' and the edifice will crumble to the ground.²⁵

Much of the difficulty can be attributed to the sacredness which surrounded the theory of indirect rule. Criticism was considered almost treasonous. Empiricism, usually considered the strong forte of British colonial rule was abandoned. Probably due to the paucity of British colonial theories and the stature of its promulgator, Lugard's theory was jealously guarded.

Indirect rule... has for many years had such a halo cast over it that it had come to be regarded as a heresy in official circles in Nigeria to offer even the slightest criticism of the institution.²⁶

At no time before and no time afterwards, until 1949, did the Lagos press exhibit such bitterness of feelings as during Lugard's administration. Although Lugard quite successfully confined the "seditious influence" of the "alien educated"²⁷ to Lagos, yet there the newspapers carried on a rigorous campaign against the "nefarious Lugardian regime," going so far as to say that Lugard's measures were so entirely un-British like, that one could hardly conceive where to draw the line of distinction "between the system of rule²⁸ of our Governor-General and the system of German colonial rule in Africa."

The Legislative Council came in for a good share of criticism as a retrograde step, one which carried the country backward more than fifty years.²⁹ It was criticized because the Governor took no part in its deliberations, it

25 Nigeria, "Address by Sir Donald Cameron," Supplement to Extraordinary Gazette, 6 March, 1933, p.15.

26 Nigerian Daily Times, Lagos, 8 March, 1933, Vol.VII, No.2220, p.6.

27 Lugard's own words.

28 Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 25 August-September 15, 1914, No.34-37, p.4.

29 Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 2-16 February, 1915, No.57-58, p.4.

could not exercise any powers of rejection, alteration or amendment in respect to legislation. It was deprived of the most important of its functions - the control of taxation. The right of criticism, of scrutiny and of free discussion of the annual estimates was taken away from it.³⁰

Much later critics have pointed out the longer term effect of the narrow restriction of this council both in respect of membership and jurisdiction. Had the earlier official liberalism been consistently pursued over the inter-war years there would have been in existence in each colony (of British West Africa) a formidable team of African executives able and experienced enough to sustain the grandiose edifice of the recent ministerial government.³¹

The educated in Lagos felt that the restricted composition of the council was intended to isolate the Lagosians.

The point of this arrangement is to restrain and confine our energies, and to neutralize the civilizing influence of Lagos which under the present administration, has been misrepresented as an administration "storm centre."³²

The educated in Lagos were confined not only in the sphere of politics but were asked to sign a declaration, before being granted any leasehold or occupancy rights, making themselves amenable to the native courts and thereby practically divesting themselves of their rights as British subjects.³³

Not only were the educated confined to Lagos physically but also spiritually, in the sense that the British usurped the position of the educated as the spokesman of the aims and aspirations of the protectorate people. The British claimed that the educated were detribalized and had lost all touch

30 Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 2-16 February, 1915, No.57-58, p.4.

31 Dr. T.O.Elias, "Political Advance and the Rule of Law in British West Africa," Occasional Paper on Nigerian Affairs, No.2, the Nigerian Society 1955, p.II.

32 Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 2-16 February, 1915, No.57-58, p.4.

33 Lagos Weekly Record, 18-25 August, 1923, Vol.XXXIII, No.I9, p.9.

with the masses of the people. The same accusation, with justification, has been laid at the door of the British themselves. They have been segregated on their reservations not knowing how the people live. While the complaint against the educated element of Lagos can rightly be called detribalization, the complaint against the British of tribalism is just as valid. Although both have grounds for the accusations, the British knowledge might be described as superficial but more general, while the educated Nigerian's knowledge is more concentrated but less diffuse.

The measure which caused the greatest and most persistent outcry was the Provincial Courts Ordinance of 1914 (abolished 1934) which provided that the district officers (those British officials charged with administration) should become magistrates and that the Governor should review all appeal cases. The ordinance also forbade counsel to appear before the magistrates.

Lord Lugard justified the ordinance on the basis that it was the only system which Nigerian revenues could afford. He also reported to the British governments that all residents reported that the district officer courts were popular.³⁴

However, Nigerians were quick to point out that it was British justice which had made British rule popular in Nigeria.³⁵ Sir Kitoyi Ajasa said that "he had the privilege of being a member of the Aba Commission and the cry of the people everywhere that commission sat was, 'give us back the courts of the old days.'³⁶" Sir Ernest Ikoli said of Calabar that, "as far as the provincial courts are concerned, they are, after almost seven years experiment, just as

³⁴ Great Britain, Parliament, Cmd.468, Sir Frederick Lugard, Report of the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration 1912-1919, (hereafter referred to as Amalgamation), Appendix 4, p.80.

³⁵ Nigeria, Legislative Council Debates, 4 April, 1927, p.19.

³⁶ Nigeria Daily Times, Lagos, 13 March, 1933, Vol.VII, No.2224, p.5, quoting the Legislative Council Debates, 1933.

unpopular today among the people as when they were first inaugurated."³⁷

While W.Ormsby-Gore, in his report following his mission in Nigeria in 1926, favoured the Provincial Courts system,³⁸ Judge Stoker (in the Gold Coast) referred to them as, "a set back to a condition of things resembling the barbarous ages."³⁹

Although considerable criticism was directed at the union of the executive and judicial functions or the dual capacity of political officers, and the inexperience of these officers,⁴⁰ the greatest of all complaints was levelled at the prohibition of counsel.

The British argument against Nigerian lawyers was that they fomented litigation, particularly in land cases, or any cases where a large fee could be exacted, and many examples of this type of extortion have been cited as evidence in support of their prohibition;⁴¹ one such case being the Jamat Mosque dispute in Lagos.⁴² Lugard himself complained that the majority of the barristers were native foreigners (Africans from other British West African colonies) who were in Nigeria to make a huge amount of money to take back to their homes in other colonies.⁴³ Barristers were accused of being more con-

37 E.S.Ikoli, "Three Months in the Southern Provinces," African Messenger, Lagos, 1 June, 1922, Vol.II, No.65, p.4.

38 Great Britain, Parliament, Cmd.2744, Ormsby-Gore, Report on Visit to West Africa, 1926, p.II8.

39 Lagos Daily News, 3 November, 1928, Vol.III, No.234, p.I.

40 "The Judicial System in West Africa. We Ask for Reform," Lagos Daily News, 22 January, 1931, Vol.VI, No.18, pp.I-2.

41 Burns, Nigeria, p.269, also Nigeria, Acting Lieutenant Governor of the Southern Provinces, Legislative Council Debates, 2 November, 1933, pp. 107-108.

42 Raymond Leslie Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, New York, Macmillan, 1928, Vol.I, p.666.

43 Cmd. 467, Lugard, Amalgamation, p.80.

cerned with land cases than with murder cases which would pay far less. ⁴⁴

However, the ordinance was not amended to allow counsel to appear in capital punishment cases, and the number of executions steadily rose in Southern Nigeria; fifty six in 1911 before the ordinance, one hundred twenty six in 1916 and one hundred seventy three in 1917, after the ordinance was passed. ⁴⁵

The prohibition of counsel from appearing on behalf of accused is inexplicable when we take into consideration the fact that innocent natives, ignorant of the law may thus be convicted simply because they are denied the right of defence. ⁴⁶

The British defended their position by pointing out that in the judicial agreement between the Egba and the Oyo kingdom and the British government in 1904, both the native kings declared, "that it is their strong desire that barristers and solicitors should not be allowed to practice" in courts authorized in the agreements. ⁴⁷ Also the Yoruba kings again during World War I denounced in no uncertain terms the idea of lawyers practicing in the courts. ⁴⁸

It may be quite true that this ordinance struck at the vested interest of a large number of politically valuable people. But it must be remembered that because educated Nigerians (holding overseas university degrees) were either unable to find employment in the Civil Service, or, if they did, were placed on a low salary scale and deprived of hope of advancement, those who did go overseas chose the only profession open to them - law. Thus many of the educated leaders were barristers and the Provincial Courts Ordinance

⁴⁴ Buell, op. cit. p. 651.

⁴⁵ Sir Nevill M. Geary, "Justice in Nigeria," Lagos Weekly Times, 3 April, 1920, Vol. XXX, No. 47, p.6.

⁴⁶ Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 29 December, 1914, No.52, p.3.

⁴⁷ Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, p.651.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

which deprived litigants of counsel struck at the very base of their livelihood and at the sole remaining decently remunerative occupation open to professionally-trained people.

This complete barring of counsel made it appear that it was a crime to⁴⁹ become a barrister in Nigeria, and that the British government feared to place lawyers in courts presided over by an inexperienced district officer.

Why does the Provincial Court, which boasts itself also as a British Court of Justice... live in such eternal dread of the barrister?⁵⁰

To the charge that the district officers were inexperienced Lord Lugard⁵¹ said that the best training was on the bench. However, the Nigerian press never gave up the fight against the Provincial Courts Ordinance until it was abolished in 1934 and never before had it been so bitter in its denunciations of any act of the government.

The Congress Movement 1920-1922

Until the end of the First World War there had been no movements which could rightly be called political. In some crises a group of men would band together to persuade the government to act in a certain manner but as soon as the crises passed the "party" formed, would disintegrate. However, after the session of hostilities 1918 a group of men did band together and draw up a political platform, and although this movement died in a few years its political programme became the platform of genuine political parties which arose in all the British West African colonies. Because sea transportation

⁴⁹ Nigeria, Legislative Council Debates, 29 November, 1938, p.79.

⁵⁰ Lagos Weekly Record, 20 January, 1923, Vol.XXXIII, No.2, p.II.

⁵¹ Cmd. 467, Lugard, Amalgamation, p.80.

was so much more developed and rapid than land transportation and because the educated Africans were concentrated in the coastal cities it is not surprising that the first such organization found its members in Lagos, Accra, Freetown and Bathurst rather than in the coastal and inland cities of any one colony.

The immediate issue which brought these men together was the fate of the former German colonies in Africa. In their first conference they condemned the partitioning of Togoland and the handing over to the French government of the Cameroons without consulting the people, and they desired an assurance from the British government, "that under no circumstance will it be a consenting party to the integrity of any of the four British West African colonies being disturbed."⁵² Correspondence on this topic passed between Mr. Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast and Dr. A. Savage of Lagos.

In 1919 a Lagos committee of the British West African Conference was organized with Dr. J. Randle, Dr. A. Savage, Patriarch Campbell and Korimu Kotun as the executive. Branches were formed in Ebute Metta, Ibadan, Calabar, Buguma and Lokoja. These branches were never very active.

Representatives from Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia met at Accra in 1920 and drew up an extensive programme. The aim of the Conference was to aid development of political institutions so that British West Africa could take her place beside the sister nations in the Empire, while maintaining inviolate their connection with the British Crown.⁵³

⁵² "Resolutions of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa," Lagos Weekly Record, 17 July, 1920, Vol.XXX, No.62, p.7.

⁵³ "National Congress of British West Africa," African Messenger, Lagos, 29 October, 1925, Vol.IV, No.240, p.4.

In regard to the Legislative branch of the various governments they asked that the Executive Council remain as at present but the Legislative Council be one half nominated by the Crown and the other half by the people, "through local groups as may be found convenient" by an electorate of property and educational qualifications.⁵⁴ The House of Assembly should contain the members of the Legislative Council plus other elected representatives and should have control over the levying of taxation.

In regard to education they asked that it be given "as far as practical a more national tone," and that a university be established, "to preserve in the students a sense of African nationality."⁵⁵

In regard to citizenship they stated that the inhabitants of British West Africa are not foreign one to another - this was in reference to the native foreigners - and that discriminatory ordinances against these people be removed. Also that the Colonial office should be approached with a view to considering whether the Syrians were not undesirable and a menace to the good government of the land and consequently should not be repatriated from the West African colonies.⁵⁶

The Conference asked that municipal councils be established for major cities, four fifths elected and one fifth nominated and that civil service appointments be by merit not colour.⁵⁷

The Conference sent a delegation to London in 1920 to present their

54 Weekly Record, op. cit., p.6.

55 Loc. cit.

56 Loc. cit.

57 Loc. cit.

requests to the Colonial office. While there they discussed West African affairs with the British League of Nations Union.

Although the requests of the Conference appear mild today they certainly did not appear so in 1920. The Governor Sir Hugh Clifford attacked the composition of the Conference.

The people of the British West African colonies and protectorates have no more pretensions to a common nationality than have, for example, the peoples of Europe.⁵⁸

The Conference definitely neglected the indirect rule system and decidedly came out in favour of parliamentary democracy, although the native administration system was not openly challenged. Sir Hugh reiterated the British policy stand in this regard and referred to these delegates as gentlemen, "whose eyes are fixed, not upon African native history or tradition or policy nor upon their own tribal obligations and the duties to their natural rulers ... but upon political theories evolved by Europeans to fit a wholly different set of circumstances."⁵⁹ To back this statement Governor Clifford quoted a letter to himself from a Nigerian chief.

The chiefs as a whole (my friend is writing of the chiefs of a group of tribes which occupy a particular area and speak similar dialects) are watching to see to what extent our government intends to recognize this monstrous institution.⁶⁰

Regarding the reception which the delegation received in London he said; "Certain well meaning and philanthropically disposed, though obviously ill-informed persons in Great Britain" have shown a disposition to treat "the

58 Nigeria, "Address by the Governor Sir Hugh Clifford," Nigerian Council Debates, 29 December, 1920, p.18.

59 Ibid., p. 20.

60 Ibid., p. 20.

so-called 'movement' as though it were in a measure representative of Nigerian interests and aspirations."⁶¹ He then went on to say that the National Conference of British West Africa had been "formally repudiated by the wiser and more cultivated representatives of African opinion in Lagos."⁶² The Lagos press asked, "who are the so-called wiser and more cultivated representatives?"⁶³ Sir Hugh ended by stating British policy emphatically,

National government by Natural Rulers through indigenous institutions and in accordance with local laws and customs.⁶⁴

Because of disputes between Dr. Randle and Dr. Savage the Congress was left to Gold Coastians and it never did last long as a serious factor in Lagos politics.

Whether Governor Clifford approved of the conference or not, the Constitution which he instituted for Nigeria in 1922 gave at least some quarter to the requests for parliamentary government. In the Clifford Constitution the Legislative Council consisted of forty-six members, four elected, three from Lagos and one from Calabar; five nominated Africans, which by 1938 had been increased to ten, to represent various areas and commercial members representing the Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Mines, banking and shipping interests (all white) and thirty-two official white members. While all legislation had to be passed by this body the overwhelming government official vote ensured that the Council was powerless for the government could, if it so desired, compel the official members to vote for its legislation.

⁶¹ Nigeria, "Address by the Governor Sir Hugh Clifford," Nigerian Council Debates, 29 December, 1920, p.19.

⁶² Loc. cit.

⁶³ Buell, Native Problem I, p.832.

⁶⁴ Nigeria, Nigerian Council Debates, 29 December, 1920, p.23.

Although the new constitution fell far short of the Conference requests nevertheless it was the first to acknowledge the elective principle in British tropical Africa.⁶⁵

Criticisms of the new constitution were many. While doling out the franchise gingerly, the government was extending the native administration system rapidly in the Eastern Provinces where the government could find few indigenous institutions which would suit modern conditions. Here in the East was an opportunity to experiment with a limited franchise. Instead, so-called indigenous institutions which were not indigenous, were introduced which resulted in the Aba Riots in 1929. Indirect rule had truly become a fetish, even though Governor Clifford warned against making it one.⁶⁶

The representation was criticized. The Northern Region was not represented except by chiefs, and the Council was heavily weighted in favour of the Western Region against the Eastern.⁶⁷ The elective principle was not extended to other cosmopolitan cities such as Ibadan, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Jos, Kano and Abeokuta. Thus political parties did not develop outside Lagos and Calabar. There were other anomalies such as the nomination of S.B. Rhodes, a Yoruba for the Rivers division, a non-Yoruba division. The most stultifying factor of all was the overwhelming government bloc vote and its constant use, which will be discussed in detail further on.

There were however, advantages to the new constitution. The franchise, no matter how limited, had been introduced. Some experience was gained by a

⁶⁵ French Africans (Senegalese) received the franchise in the seven-
teen nineties as a result of the French Revolution. In 1914, 8200 Senegal-
ese possessed the right to vote.

⁶⁶ Nigeria, "The Address of the Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford,"
Legislative Council Debates, 6 February, 1925, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁷ Nigeria, Legislative Council Debates, 7 March, 1939, p.149.

few Africans and political parties were formed. There were some signs of liberalizing tendencies in the Governor's appointments. The Onitsha native administration nominated the Ibo member and the Ibibio League, the Ibibio member after 1938. The Governor chose the Egba member after consultation with the Alake of Abeokuta and the Oyo member after consultation with the Alafin of Oyo.⁶⁸ Governor Bourdillon claimed in 1943,⁶⁹ that only once had he refused the nomination of a native administration. But at best, with the exception of the Ibibio League, these nominations if not British were controlled by the chiefs.

The Executive Council remained British. Not until 1942 was an African allowed into the "charmed circle" of the Governor's Executive Council.

The Lagos Sphere 1922-1938

The Clifford Constitution provided for three elected members to represent Lagos in the Legislative Council. Political parties began to form representing different opinions and to put forth candidates to contest these seats. Although a number of parties, the Reform Club, the Peoples' Union, Young Nigerians and the Committee of Democracy were formed, it was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (N.N.D.P.) that dominated Lagos politics from 1923 to 1938. The executive of the N.N.D.P. consisted of J.Egerton-Shyngle, H.Macaulay, Bagan Benjamin, the white cap chiefs,⁷⁰ the Moslem leaders and

⁶⁸ Buell, Native Problem I, p. 741.

⁶⁹ Joan Wheare, The Nigerian Legislative Council, London, published under the auspices of the Nuffield College by Faber and Faber, 1950, p.72.

⁷⁰ The white cap chiefs total thirty-two. There were twelve first class chiefs who came to Lagos from Benin with the original House of Docemo (the founder of Lagos), eleven second class chiefs who represented the original landowners of Lagos, five third class chiefs (the Ifa priests) who were the religious heads and four, fifth class chiefs, the kingmakers.

the native district heads. The party was affiliated with the National Conference of British West Africa and, although this affiliation was more illusory than real, the party manifesto followed closely that of the National Congress with the addition of purely local aspects.

The manifesto promised that the N.N.D.P. would be "constitutional to the letter" and that it appreciated and endorsed whole heartedly the goal of the British Empire as a "Commonwealth of free nations linked by the common sentiment of loyalty to the King-Emperor."⁷¹ Whilst paying a glowing tribute to the success of British Imperialism in Africa, it had not the slightest patience with "'prestige politics'... or the foolhardy policy of 'trusting to the man on the spot'"⁷² In regard to the Civil Service the manifesto stated that,

There is no such thing as race superiority... equality of opportunity is the acid test of fitness for social expansion. Higher plums of the Service should, on the principle of equality of opportunity be made available⁷³ to all without any distinction of race, creed or colour.

The party promised to begin a crusade for the "downfall and obliteration of the provincial courts system," appointment of experienced and well qualified native barristers to junior posts on the bench and for the setting up of a court of appeal in civil and criminal cases for the whole of British West Africa.

It promised to campaign for a "full-blown municipality" where municipal revenue and expenditure were under the definite and entire control of the ratepayers.

⁷¹ "Egbe Ibu Agbajo to Nigeria" (the National Democratic Party), Lagos Weekly Record, 2 June, 1923, Vol.XXXIII, No.10, p.9.

⁷² Loc. cit.

⁷³ Loc. cit.

The first candidates for the N.N.D.P. were J.Egerton-Shyngle, C.C. Adenyi-Jones and Eric O.Moore, two barristers and one medical practitioner, all native foreigners.

No other political party stated its views as capably, possessed the support of so many of the educated Lagosians, nor had as powerful a press support. The most consistent opposition came from a body of opinion led by Sir Kitoyi Ajasa and his newspaper the Nigerian Pioneer.

Sir Kitoyi Ajasa was first nominated to the Legislative Council in 1908 then was nominated to the Nigerian Council in 1914 and sat as a member of the new Legislative Council in 1923 until 1933 as representative for the colony. He was awarded the O.B.E. in 1924. He was described by an independent source as "strongly conservative and very adverse to change."⁷⁴ Sir Kitoyi disapproved of the franchise. The N.N.D.P. accused him of having a vested interest in the old system.

We quite understood the anxiety of the editor of the Pioneer (Ajasa) who having got into the habit of regarding seats in the Legislative or Nigerian Council as specially and perennially reserved for himself, his friends, satellites and adherents, now finds his little nest in danger.⁷⁵

Sir Kitoyi, in reference to the franchise replied that "we are not ripe for it. We are going too fast... at the first election to this Council... not a single native of the country put up for election."⁷⁶

At the Anglican synod attended by delegates from Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan and Ijebu-ode, Mr. Ajasa seconded a motion put by the bishop of Lagos "condemnatory to the granting of the partial franchise." The motion was greeted by groans. It failed in the vote.

⁷⁴ African Messenger, Lagos, 12 June, 1924, Vol.IV, No.171, p.7.

⁷⁵ African Messenger, Lagos, 2 March, 1922, Vol.I, No.52, p.4.

⁷⁶ Nigeria, Sir Kitoyi Ajasa, Legislative Council Debates, 23 August, 1927, p.54.

Next to the issue of the franchise the most hotly debated question was that of loyalty. The Nigerian Pioneer accused the N.N.D.P. of sedition.

Under the guise of politics they pursue a campaign of scarcely veiled sedition for which performance an ignorant populace acclaims them as fighters of the people's cause and as national heroes.⁷⁷

The N.N.D.P. replied,

There has sprung up of late in this country a most reactionary oligarchy with the Nigerian Pioneer as its guardian angel, who see nothing but harm, disloyalty and law breaking in any effort at advancement by the people.⁷⁸

Parliamentary democracy versus development of indigenous institutions was also fought out among the groups.

British West Africa in her history has never been anti-imperialist... but in this or that colony there are those whose words belie their actions, who inspired or rather deceived by new fangled ideas and theories from across the seas, fall headlong into a veritable new heaven and new earth cleverly conjured up.⁷⁹

The N.N.D.P. accused Mr. Ajasa of being the white man's friend and one whose policy was always to support the government in everything. They also claimed that he had a formidable hold upon European opinion and that he was regarded by bureaucracy as "the one straight negro in Nigeria - always on the side of the government."⁸⁰
⁸¹

The N.N.D.P. won handily all three seats in the 1923 election, won a by-election and three seats in the municipal election of 1926 and all three

77 African Messenger, Lagos, 30 April, 1925, Vol.IV, No.214, p.6.

78 African Messenger, Lagos, 12 May, 1921, Vol.I, No.10, p.3.

79 Nigerian Pioneer, Lagos, 5 June, 1925, p.8.

80 Nigerian Daily Times, Lagos, 10 March, 1933, Vol.VII, No.2222, p.I.

81 African Messenger, Lagos, 24 November, 1921, Vol.I, No.38, p.5.

seats in the Legislative Council elections of 1928 and 1933. In 1938 it was completely thrown from power as a result of having lost its own dynamism and because it was for the first time facing a coherent and unified opposition.

The reason behind the long domination of Lagos politics by the N.N.D.P. is probably not so much because of its popular programme, because this it failed to implement, and in the 1928 elections this programme was almost laid aside, but rather because of the lack of organized opposition, and most of all because of the outstanding career of its leader after 1926, Herbert Macaulay.

Herbert Macaulay was already well known by the time of the first election because of his involvement in the Eleko question and the Apapa Land case.

The Eleko question actually began in 1861 when the British captured Lagos and it was not settled until the Privy Council decision of 1931. It is one of the anomalies of Nigerian history that the British who relied upon native instruments to maintain their rule in the protectorate of Nigeria and were so fiercely attacked because of this by the educated of Lagos, should so stubbornly refuse to have anything to do with native administration in Lagos and that the educated should here reverse themselves and ally with the chiefs to embarrass the government. In the protectorate the British nurtured the most highly developed native governments in Africa, while in Lagos they ignored them.

The treaty with Lagos in 1861 stated that Docemo, the king of Lagos, be permitted the use of the title king in its usual African significance and would be allowed to decide disputes between natives of Lagos, with their

consent, subject to appeal to British laws. In 1904 a Native Central Council, composed of the White Cap Chiefs and the Eleko (king) met to discuss native affairs with the government. After 1912 this council met only irregularly. In 1915 the government imposed semi-political obligations on the Eleko by requiring him to give his support to the government in the water-rate agitation. The Eleko also had the power to appoint chiefs and headmen on government approval.

In 1919 the Eleko appointed certain moslem headmen without notifying the Acting-Governor. Upon the advice of thirteen prominent Africans, the Governor suspended the Eleko for his action. A general meeting of Lagosians protested this action and informed the Governor that he had been improperly advised by the thirteen Africans. The Governor re-instated the Eleko on condition that the moslem appointments be cancelled. The government then issued a statement that the treaty of 1861 granted Docemo the title of king and certain judicial powers, but only personal to Docemo and not to his successors.⁸³ This meant that the present Eleko had no power, no duties, no responsibilities and very little prestige.

In 1920 Herbert Macaulay and the White Cap Chief, Oluwa, went to Britain to appeal to the Privy Council against the remuneration offered by the Lagos government for land in Apapa. Herbert Macaulay, unknown to the Nigerian government had in his possession the Eleko's staff of office, which under African law made him the official spokesman for the Eleko.

82 Burns, Nigeria, p.305.

83 Nigeria, Gazette Extraordinary, 8 December, 1920, p.22.

While in Britain Macaulay spoke in favour of a more kingly position for the Eleko and referred to Eshugbayi (the Eleko) as "King of Lagos, ac-⁸⁴claimed as such by the seventeen million people of Nigeria. The Governor either purposely or mistakenly interpreted this in the Nigerian Council as "the Eleko was acclaimed by all Nigeria and by sixteen million Africans as⁸⁵ their king." The Governor persisted in this misinterpretation after it had been pointed out to him. He asked the Eleko to repudiate Macaulay publicly and telegraph for the return of his staff of office. This Eshugbayi refused to do. This episode suddenly made Macaulay famous and he became even more so when the Privy Council ruled in his favour in the Apapa Land case.

Upon the Eleko's refusal to repudiate Herbert Macaulay as his spokes-
man in London, the government ceased to recognize Eshugbayi and deported him⁸⁶ to the interior. The press pointed out that this ceasing to recognize the Eleko was shallow, as the government had consistently ignored him anyway.

After a mass meeting a petition was circulated signed by seventeen thousand Nigerians requesting that Eshugbayi be re-instated. The Governor referred to it as "an utterly worthless document,"⁸⁷ and refused to consider re-instatement.

It was in this atmosphere that the first elections were held in Lagos with the N.N.D.P. (Herbert Macaulay an executive member) supporting the de-

⁸⁴ Daily Mail, London, 8 July, 1920, quoted in Buell, Native Problem I p.663.

⁸⁵ Nigeria, Address by the Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, Nigerian Council Debates, 29 December, 1920, p.48.

⁸⁶ Nigeria, Gazette, 8 December, 1920, p.21.

⁸⁷ Nigeria, Legislative Council Debates, 1923, p.32, quoted in Buell, Native Problem I, p.664.

ported Eleko. The largest percentage of the Lagos electorate ever to exercise the franchise turned out to sweep the N.N.D.P. into office.

The government decided that the position of Eleko in Lagos could not be ignored by leaving it vacant. The authorities persuaded the Docemo family to concur in the deposition of Eshugbayi and elect a new man to the position of Eleko. This, the Docemo family did. The action received prompt government sanction and the new incumbent was given an annual pension of three hundred pounds.

Part of the House of Docemo refused to recognize the new Eleko. The majority of Lagos appeared to support this stand. Only one White Cap Chief of the total forty-nine attended the ceremonial leave-taking of Sir Hugh Clifford in 1925 and the new Eleko was hissed and booed when he went to meet the succeeding Governor, Sir Graeme Thomson.

The N.N.D.P. now asked the Supreme Court to set aside the deportation order but this they refused to do. The Lagos Weekly Record accused the judges of being dominated by the executive. For this, editor Jackson was jailed for two months. The N.N.D.P. then carried the case to the Privy Council which decided in favour of the Eleko, and clearly supported the charge⁸⁸ that the Supreme Court judges had been dominated by the Executive Council.

Sir Donald Cameron, the new Governor, allowed the Eleko to return to Lagos with a pension of two hundred and forty pounds, but clearly stated that the administration would be direct. While preparations were going forward to receive the Eleko from Oyo The Lagos Daily News published a report that plans were afoot to assassinate Eshugbayi. Macaulay was jailed and Caulerick fined (co-editors of The News) for publishing news liable to incite

⁸⁸ Nigeria, Law Journal, 1928.

89 riots. This little episode was known as the Gunpowder Plot.

The long drawn out dispute from 1919 to 1931 over The Eleko Question, Apapa Lands Case, Gunpowder Plot and Moslem troubles kept Herbert Macaulay's name constantly before the public as the man of the masses, fighting against the government. His success in the Eleko question and the Apapa Lands case raised his prestige⁹⁰ and in the moslem troubles he gained the support of the majority party while the government was left supporting the minority⁹¹ and even his term in jail contributed a bit of martyrdom to his position. He became the Wizard of Kirsten Hall, the Doyen of Nigerian politics, and later the Father of Nigerian Nationalism in the minds of the people. He became a great force in the country and could claim a respectable following among the educated elements of Lagos and the masses of the people in South-⁹²ern Nigeria. Today his portrait is the symbol of nationalism in many Nigerian homes.⁹³ As the guiding light of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (N.N.D.P.) the party shared the fame and success of Herbert Macaulay.

Herbert Macaulay's paternal grandfather had been born in Oyo, enslaved and later freed in Sierra Leone. His maternal grandfather was Samuel Crowther, also enslaved and freed in Sierra Leone, who later became the first Black Bishop of West Africa. His father, Reverend T.B. Macaulay, had been the founder and principal of the Lagos Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.)

89 Lagos Daily News, 8 August, 1928, Vol.III, No.164, p.3.

90 Ten thousand turned out at Lagos docks to see Macaulay and the White Cap Chief Oluwa on their return from Britain after the Apapa Lands case.

91 Akand Tugbiyele, The Emergence of Nationalism and Federalism, Techno Literary Works, Lagos, 1954, p.15.

92 African Messenger, Lagos, 22 September, 1921, Vol.I, No.29, p.4.

93 Lagos Daily News, 5 March, 1929, Vol.IV, No.54, p.1.

Grammar School in Lagos.

Herbert Macaulay was born in Lagos in 1864, educated at the Parish School of St. Paul's Breadfruit, the C.M.S. Faji day school and grammar school. In 1881 he obtained a "European post" in the Civil Service Lands Division. From 1890 to 1893 he spent in Great Britain in the Plymouth Engineering Department on Nigerian government scholarship.

He was a man of wide interests. He was an associate member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a member of the London Architectural Association, a member of the Society of Arts, and a fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute. From 1893-1898 he worked as a surveyor of crown lands for Lagos colony and in 1898 he went into private business.

Macaulay was a controversial figure, and his enemies hated him as much as his friends loved him. He was accused by government agents of being a trouble maker,⁹⁴ and by Nigerian conservatives of "swindling poor market women of their pennies"⁹⁵ to finance his political activities. The African Messenger an independent organ refused correspondence from Macaulay on the grounds that he was using the paper for personal grudges. In the political arena his past was raked up, on more than one occasion; he had been fined for perjury and imprisoned for unlawful conversion and appropriation of money.⁹⁶

Macaulay however, was a man of broad vision, the last of the Black

⁹⁴ Thomas, Isaac B., Life History of Herbert Macaulay C.E. Lagos, Akede Eko, Third edition, 1947, ? p.93.

⁹⁵ Lagos Daily News, 13 September, 1928, Vol.III, No.I95, P.I.

⁹⁶ Nigeria, Gazette, II June, 1913, p.710-II also Gazette, 17 September, 1913, pp. 1422-23.

Victorians, a man who struggled for the uplifting and recognition of his race, devoted to the imperial federation principles of the nineteenth century but caught in a century where Commonwealth nationalism seemed the only way to achieve what he passionately desired for his people. He is one of the few Nigerians to rise above his tribe and achieve the true Nigerian feeling. Macaulay was content to remain the mind behind the party, "the whispering member."⁹⁷ He was content to sit behind doors and direct policy.

After 1931 he dropped from view, and Dr. Azikiwe, who may be called his disciple, said he was shocked at the people's neglect of Macaulay on his eightieth birthday.⁹⁸ Dr. Azikiwe revived Macaulay's reputation in the nineteen forties by persuading him to join in the National Movement. Macaulay proved his old magic. Throngs of Nigerians of all tribes, paid Macaulay high tribute: "E ki Macaulay O, Oyinbo - Alawo, dudu," (We salute Macaulay, the Black whiteman). Before his death, Macaulay publicly dropped his mantle on Azikiwe's shoulders. He referred to Azikiwe as "my son Zik" and told him to keep "the flag (of Nationalism) flying."⁹⁹

The apparent lack of interest in the franchise in Lagos was used as an argument against its extension. Of the three thousand eligible voters in 1923, thirteen hundred cast ballots for the winning candidates. This had dropped to five hundred in 1938. Government officials were prone to say that the franchise was "of foreign manufacture and interest in it soon waned." The Governor complained that the franchise was not used advantage-

97 Frank Gray, My Two African Journeys, London, Methuen, 1928, p.16.

98 Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Political Reminiscences (3)" appearing in Southern Nigeria Defender, Ibadan, 16 July, 1948, Vol.V, No.12,129, p.2.

99 Thomas, Macaulay, p.63.

I00 eously and that a false leadership had developed over the Eleko question. IOI
 This reference to a false leadership was in regard to Macaulay's leadership in the Eleko question. Certainly the fact that Macaulay retired from active politics after 1931 helped to explain why the fire and vitality had been removed from Lagos politics. No one else, appeared able to catch the people's imagination and inspire them as Macaulay had been able to do.

However, supporters point out that the personal registration system might have had something to do with it. In French Senegal in 1920, three years before the three thousand Lagosians were enfranchised, sixteen thousand black Frenchmen had the vote and nine thousand used it. In the Senegal, registration was automatic.

After the first election in Lagos and Calabar the Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, claimed that the more extreme and less trustworthy had been elect-
 I02 ed to office and that personally he was "not enamoured of the people's
 I03 choice." Nevertheless the elected members were extremely sedulous in their
 I04 legislative duties, but these duties and their results were not of a spectacular nature and unlikely to attract people to the polls. The elected members were unable to implement even one objective of the programmes they drew up before the elections. This tended to make the people feel that nothing could be gained by the franchise and that their elected represent-

I00 Nigeria, "Address of the Governor," Legislative Council Debates, 16 March, 1942, p.58.

I01 Buell, Native Problem I, p.741.

I02 Ibid., p.742.

I03 Herbert Macaulay, "Swing of the Nigerian Pendulum," in Lagos Weekly Record, 2 May, 1925, Vol.XXXV, No.10, p.13.

I04 Buell, Native Problem I, p.742.

atives were merely "figure-heads, vainglorious show-men or stooges." ^{I05} The government took a patronizing attitude towards the elected members. On one occasion when they were asking innumerable questions on the budget, the financial secretary retorted that he and his colleagues had been in the ^{I06} business for a long time and that "you really must trust us."

The overwhelming official vote was the elected members' worst enemy. The government attitude on compelling an official vote was that when the government had decided on a policy it should present a united front; ^{I07} the function of a government was to govern, ^{I08} and if it was a government bill ^{I09} officials must support it. Between the years 1926-1931, under the Governorship of Sir Graeme Thomson, four free votes were allowed out of twenty five divisions. Sir Hugh Clifford and Sir Donald Cameron said that under the pressure of a solid unofficial opposition a bill would be withdrawn and reconsidered. Only twice however, between 1924 and 1943, was the government induced to change its policy by a solid unofficial vote, the Income Tax Ordinance of 1932 and 1942. Other reasons might be suggested for this withdrawal in view of the fact that the government had more than once faced riots over direct taxation measures.

An analysis of the voting of the period 1924-1943 reveals that the government was keeping a heavy hand on its official members. One third of the resolutions came to a formal division. There were fifty-five divisions,

I05 Elias, Occasional Paper No.I, Nigeria Society, Oct., 1954, p.9.

I06 Nigeria, Chief Secretary, Council Debates, 19 Feb., 1926, p.II9.

I07 Nigeria, Sessional Paper, No.I4, 1933, p.35.

I08 Nigeria, Chief Secretary, Council Debates, 5 February, 1927, p.I08.

I09 Nigeria, Sir Alan Burns, Acting Governor, Council Debates, 24 March 1942, p.I74.

in forty of which the majority of the unofficial Nigerian vote was defeated by government bloc voting. In fourteen of these, unofficial Nigerian votes were unanimous. In ten of these fourteen, the commercial unofficials(White) were unanimous with the Nigerians. Only two of these, as mentioned above, were withdrawn. Twenty-one of the fifty-five resolutions were moved by unofficial Nigerian members, twenty of which met defeat by government vote, in eighteen of which the government voted solidly.

In view of the above record it is little wonder that the elected members were unable to muster support from the electorate and that often they felt, "drowned in official noes."^{II0}

We have heard from the daily press that the eyes of Nigeria are on the Unofficial Members but we have just had an instance of how perfectly hopeless Unofficial Members are, when it is a question of our coming up against the official vote.^{III}

One writer has summed up this Legislative Council most adequately,

About this Council there was a certain unchanging stability, which some might call stolidity, and a moderation strangely out of tune with the impression of Nigerian politics, which, ^{II2} at least in recent years, has been reaching the outside world.

The Nigerian press began to attack more frequently the moderation of the elected representatives. Politically conscious people began to look around for other means to achieve their ends. The Lagos Daily News ran for several weeks, a one-third page notice headed in large dark print, "We want a Commission of Inquiry." Listed beneath were nine points recommended for the Commission to investigate. Of these, the Provincial Courts Ordinance, Nigerian Criminal Code and union of the judiciary and executive, held prom-

II0 Lagos Daily News, 16 October, 1928, Vol.III, No.219, p.I.

III Nigeria, Council Debates, 2 February, 1931, p.89.

II2 Wheare, Nigerian Legislative Council, p.167.

inent places. Also included were such issues as the Gunpowder Plot and the expulsion of Herbert Macaulay from Oyo designed to clear Macaulay's name. II3

The Governor's reply to this demand was discouraging.

I, as its president, shall strenuously resist any attempt that may be made to encroach upon its (Legislative Council) functions in the manner which the appointment of such a commission would involve. II4

Reasons other than the government bloc vote held back the Legislative Council. The question, whether progress was to be on British parliamentary or Nigerian institutional lines was not yet solved. The majority of questions in the Council were concerned with the Native administration, and discussion on these questions showed the dilemma both British and Nigerians faced. Some Nigerians favoured the system, and some felt that it had been invented for backward people but was not intended to perpetuate their backwardness. Even Henry Carr long considered the white man's friend was outspoken on artificially bolstering up the position of the chiefs. II5 II6

II3 Herbert Macaulay, while surveying land in the Ibadan district, had been expelled from Oyo province because as the government said, he was attempting to stir up trouble. The N.N.D.P. wanted the government to prove or withdraw this charge.

II4 Nigeria, "Address by the Governor Sir Hugh Clifford," Council Debates, II February, 1924, p.4.

II5 Henry Carr was one of the finest examples of the Victorian African who felt that the hope of Africa lay in total acceptance of westernization. Mr. Carr's policy became more difficult to implement as whitemen in the twentieth century began to relegate blacks to an inferior position. He died during the nineteen forties when the blacks were beginning to reciprocate by an attitude of hostility towards the whites. His position at his death had become almost intolerable. He died rejected (almost as a quisling) by his own people. During his lifetime he rose higher in the Nigerian Civil Service than had any Nigerian prior to 1945. He served as assistant and director of education in the early years of this century. Between 1918 and 1924 he filled the high European post of first class resident of Lagos Colony and between 1934 and 1941 he sat as nominated member in the Governor's council representing the rural areas of Lagos Colony. His papers provide a fruitful source of information on the British administration. Possibly future generations of Nigerians may give him credit for the able manner in which he attempted to influence British policy towards the betterment of his own people.

II6 Nigeria, Council Debates, 8 March, 1939, p.173.

Then there were the differences of background of the various Nigerian unofficial members. The nominated members came from a political climate different than Lagos and the nominated members representing the Native Administrative Councils came from the upper not the lower class and reflected their views.^{II7} What leadership there was came from the European unofficial members.

The European unofficial members representing the commercial interests did not take a vigorous part, not being anxious to mix in politics. They did not appear to push big business interests. But suspicion by Nigerians of these vested interests prevented united action. Nigerians in the Council accused the government of being so interested in big combines that they had forgotten the Nigerian traders.^{II8} Henry Carr claimed that the big companies would soon be guilty of the exploitation of native labour.^{II9} Nigerian minds remembered that the merchants had been the empire builders, and formidable factors in government policy.^{I20}

This was not so in Senegal where the French white commercial members and black unofficials usually united against the government which was supported by the chiefs. The agitation in the years 1922-25 sponsored by white and black unofficials forced the government to decrease the strength of the chiefs and increase that of the unofficials.

In Nigeria there was certain appreciation of the commercial members as not representing interests but as advisors,^{I21} and when the Nigerians were

II7 Nigeria, Jibril Martin, Council Debates, 22 March, 1945, p.527.

II8 Nigeria, H.S.A.Thomas, Council Debates, 6 March, p.I29, also see the Election Manifesto of T.A.Doherty, Lagos Daily News, 20 September, 1928, Vol.III, No.201, p.3.

II9 Nigeria, Council Debates, 7 March, 1940, p.I91.

I20 Nigerian Daily Telegraph, Lagos, 6 June, 1931, Vol.IV, No.I53, p.4.

I21 Nigeria, E.Ikoli, Council Debates, 22 March, 1945, p.505.

drawing up their own constitution in 1950 it was pointed out that as the commercial firms were the largest taxpayers, they should be represented.^{I22}

Occasionally commercial members came out strong for Nigerian interests such as at the time of the Imperial preferences set up by the Ottawa Conference.

We are going to ask the native of Nigeria to continue his standard of living on the scale which we have encouraged and buy goods from Lancashire, without insisting that Lancashire shall take Nigerian products at a price which will enable the Nigerian to pay for such goods.^{I23}

The purpose of the Council was not to set policy but to air grievances, and to criticize. This the Nigerians did extremely well, but this alone was not sufficient to keep alive a dynamic political party. Once the crises of the Eleko question and all its attendant issues calmed, the N.N.D.P. tended to stagnate in the hands of a small oligarchy.

The Enlarged Sphere 1938-1945

The place of student and student organizations in illiterate areas is very prominent, and the university students overseas have an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. The position of the overseas student was related to the nation in much the same fashion as the sons abroad were related to the bush village. Both provided that outside contact and stimulus for change, both held the respect of the people at home.

The West African Students Union (W.A.S.U.) formed in London in 1925 was modelled along the same lines as the Indian Student Union. This organization kept in close touch with problems of West Africa, watched colonial policy carefully, approached British leaders in regard to policy, provided

^{I22} Nigeria, Proceedings of the General Conference on Review of the Constitution, January 1950, London, Government Printer, 1950, p.130 and p.195.

^{I23} Nigeria, Council Debates, 12 June, 1934, p.66.

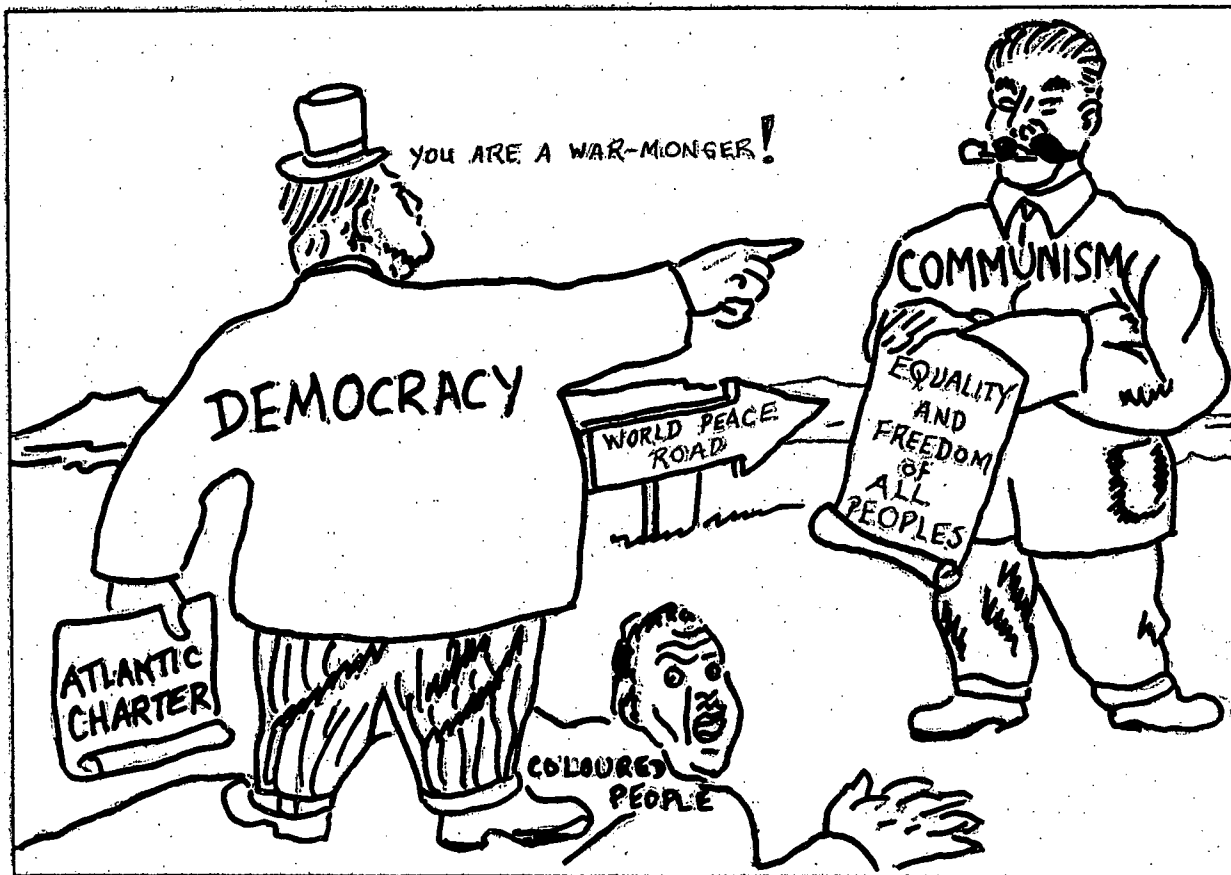
training and experience for young Africans, many of whom later entered politics in West Africa, and probably most important ~~of all~~, provided a place where African politicians could speak in London and place their problems and policies before the people of England.

Frequently W.A.S.U. had its own policies and pressed them in London. They urged British politicians to extend the Atlantic Charter to West Africa and in 1942 issued a statement calling for immediate internal self-government and complete self-government in five years for the West African colonies.^{I24}

During and immediately after the war most West African students in the United Kingdom and United States were engaged in nationalist activity,^{I25} and there is no doubt about their contributions to nationalism in their respective countries. When African leaders, many of whom had been members of W.A.S.U. at some time, were emerging on the spot in West Africa, the overseas students criticised them for their policy. Local leaders could brand them as idealists far from the local circumstances. This, coupled with the fact that more and more policy was being decided in Lagos, Accra and Freetown rather than London, also helped to lessen W.A.S.U. influence after 1954. However, as leaders of public opinion the overseas students are still powerful and most Nigerian and Ghanaian leaders try to win their support for their policies.

I24 Tugbiyele, Emergence, p.21.

I25 It is interesting to note in this regard that the Graduates General Conference in the Sudan actually turned itself into a political party. For this reason, until 1956 the Belgians made a policy not to send Congolese overseas for education. Not one Congolese had entered a Belgian university until 1956.



DEMOCRACY VERSUS COMMUNISM.
West African Pilot, 11 July, 1949.

Returning to the Nigerian scene, we have seen that the N.N.D.P. after 1933 seemed to lose its dynamism. First, it had become insular giving the impression that it existed for election purposes only. Between elections it became more an exclusive club for professional people. Second, it had never branched out from Lagos. "Lagos was Nigeria for all practical purposes." It was however, difficult to extend into the interior as the N.N.D.P. in Lagos was firmly allied with the chiefs, and this was impossible in the interior where the British had the firm support of the chiefs because they guaranteed their positions. It was also highly unlikely that as an anti-chief party they would have received much support, for although the British are now blamed for bolstering up the chiefs' position, there is no Nigerian politician today who will come openly into conflict with the chiefs. Third, the leaders of the party had lost their reforming zeal and had become respectable conservatives. Men who were rebels in the nineteen twenties had become government friends in the nineteen thirties.

Later writers have accused the N.N.D.P. of tribalism, of being a Yoruba party, but this is hardly fair, as Lagos in the nineteen twenties was distinctly a Yoruba town, and all parties were dominated in leadership and mem-

I26 Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Contemporary Nigerian Politics (2)," The West African Pilot, Lagos, 2 December, 1947, No.3021, p.3.

I27 Thomas Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, London, Frederick Muller, 1956, p.140.

I28 Azikiwe, op.cit., p.3.

I29 During the Ethiopian crises Macaulay, Adeniyi-Jones and Doherty, the leader of the N.N.D.P. were prominent by their absence.

I30 In 1920 the Governor refused to attend any function at which a member of the Macaulay family would be present. In 1935 the Governor was himself entertaining Herbert Macaulay.

I31 Tugbiyele, Emergence, p.21.

bership by Yorubas. The great influx of Ibos and other tribes to Lagos had scarcely begun.

In the early nineteen thirties other organizations, political and non-political were established. The Nigerian Youth League was founded in 1932 by Professor Eyo Ita who had just returned from the United States. The Youth League established the Calabar National Institute, later the West African Peoples' Institute, to prepare African youths to be employable and self-supporting. The Youth League was charged with Efik parochialism and found little support among the Yorubas of Lagos.

In 1934 a group of Nigerian civil servants met to draw up a memorandum to present to the government expressing disapproval of the Yaba Higher College Scheme. The intention of the College proposals was that the government would set up a college of post-high school calibre but not of university standards which would issue diplomas tenable only in Nigeria. The group of civil servants felt that this was setting up standards for Africans different from those for Europeans, and that if higher training was to be offered it should be on the university level.

I32

The N.N.D.P. with the exception of Eric Moore favoured the Yaba Scheme, and so the new group came into opposition to the N.N.D.P. and soon converted itself into a political party, the Lagos Youth Movement, and published its platform - the Youth Charter. The N.N.D.P. although it placed obstacles in the way of the Youth Movement did not take it seriously as a political opponent. The smugness of the N.N.D.P. and its practical certainty of the

I32 Eric O. Moore was a Sierra Leonian barrister. He sat as a nominated member of the Governor's council 1917-1923, and between 1923-1938 he was elected to the Legislative Council. He was one of the old guard of the N.N.D.P. but not one of its foundation members. After the N.Y.M. threw the N.N.D.P. from power Mr. Moore became a nominated member of the Legislative Council, 1942-1944.

elected seats in the council and municipality was evident in its comment on the formation of the Lagos Youth Movement. "The N.N.D.P. was watching with humorous smile, the youthful political impetuosity" of the new organization.

The political aims of the Youth Movement were embodied in their Charter. Complete autonomy within the British Empire and economic opportunity for Nigerians equal to those enjoyed by foreigners. These aims differed little from those expressed earlier by the N.N.D.P. with one notable exception. Some of the problems of unity were becoming more apparent in 1932 than they had been in 1922, and the Charter stressed the Movement's aim to create a sense of common nationality, the development of a united nation out of the conglomeration of people who inhabit Nigeria and a pledge to combat all tendencies that would jeopardise this unifying process.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe has called the formation of the movement a "revolt of the youthful in mind against conservatism." The personalities in the new movement from their family backgrounds and previous affiliations appeared to represent an even more conservative element than the N.N.D.P.: J.C. Vaughan, first president; S. Akinsanya, first secretary; Dr. K. Abayomi, first vice-president; Jibril Martins, vice-president of the Ahmadiyya Society; S.B. Rhodes, nominated member for Rivers Division 1939-43; Ernest Ikoli and Dr. Maja, both later presidents; O.Alakija, H.S.A. Thomas and D. Mohamed Ali. These men appeared to be in revolt more against the stagnation of the N.N.D.P.

I33 Lagos Daily News, 7 May, 1934, Vol.IX, No.I06, p.I.

I34 Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Contemporary Nigerian Politics (4)," (hereafter referred to as C,N,P.) West African Pilot, Lagos, 4 December, 1947, Vol.XI, No.3023, p.2.

I35 Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Political Reminiscences (10)" (hereafter referred to as P.R.), Southern Nigerian Defender, Ibadan, 26 July, 1948, Vol.V, No. I2I37, p.2.

than against its conservation.

Only one year after its formation the Lagos Youth Movement took a new and significant step. To protect the national railways from increasing lorry transport competition the government decided to raise transport licenses for all trucks using roads competitive to the railways. The Youth Movement called a meeting of transport owners to discuss the intended bill. Representatives of Nigerians and Syrians attended from Ilesha, Ijebu-ode, Abeokuta as well as Lagos. The meeting passed a unanimous resolution to be sent to the government against the intended restriction of the motor transport industry.

This action of the Lagos Youth Movement was important for three reasons: First, it got away from the charge that all parties had to face, that its political activities were motivated by the personal ambitions of its members - not a single member of the Movement was a lorry owner. Second, it proved how a political party could benefit the people in a practical manner. Third, it was the beginning of the getting away from the parish pump of Lagos politics and the tapping of the interior cities.^{I36} In the following year the Movement signified its new intentions by changing its name to Nigerian Youth Movement (N.Y.M.)^{I37} and by setting up branches throughout Nigeria. Its strength was greatly augmented by the affiliation of the Yoruba Patriotic Union. Ernest Ikoli, who became president of the party in 1942 helped to maintain the party's Nigerian outlook and refute the "Lagos only" charge, by his wide travels and contacts. By 1938, when the N.Y.M. made its first bid for the

I36 Nigerian Daily Telegraph, Lagos, 19 August, 1935, No.248, p.4.

I37 The Northern Region was represented by Southerners living in the North.

seats in the Legislative Council, it had ten thousand members.

The N.Y.M. had moved into the political arena cautiously, not even calling itself a party, but it became more political and so dynamic that many consider 1934^{I38} the year of the birth of nationalism in Nigeria. Soon the N.Y.M. began to discuss government scholarships and Africanization of the Civil Service.

The demand for constitutional change was becoming insistent, but even with N.Y.M. branch nuclei in the larger cities, the government could still^{I39} denounce this demand as the machinations of a vocal minority.

In 1937 Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe returned to Nigeria from Accra where he had been editor of a nationalist morning paper. This was an important event, for he was the man who was ultimately so to organize this vocal minority that it captured the imagination of the people. Dr. Azikiwe's major contribution was that he made nationalism a vital force among the majority of the people rather than the feeling of a small educated group.

Dr. Azikiwe was born of Onitsha-Ibo parents, in 1904 at Zungeru Nigeria. His early education was received in the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar, and the Wesleyan Boys' High School, Lagos. In 1925 he went to the United States for further training and took his first degree from Lincoln University in political science in 1931. He received his Master of Arts from Lincoln in 1932 and Master of Science (government and anthropology) from University of Pennsylvania in 1933. In 1934 he returned to West Africa and became the editor of the African Morning Post, a nationalist paper in Accra. In 1937 he returned to Nigeria and set up the West African Pilot which he edited until 1947.

I38 Tugbiyele, Emergence, p.21.

I39 Biobaku, Dr. Saburi, Occasional Paper No.I, Nigeria Society, Oct., 1954, p.33.

The first political act of the Pilot was a series of attacks on Herbert Macaulay and the N.N.D.P. Through the Pilot's support in 1938 the N.Y.M. defeated the Democratic party which had hitherto dominated Lagos politics
 140
 for fifteen years.

Although the Pilot supported the N.Y.M. in the election, Azikiwe published campaign speeches of both parties and as a result the vice-president of the N.N.D.P. withdrew his bond from the Pilot and the N.Y.M. decided that it should have its own official organ and converted the Service, a quarterly into the Daily Service after the election in 1938. This action embittered Azikiwe and was the beginning of a press dispute between the Pilot and Service and was one of the reasons why Azikiwe deserted the N.Y.M. shortly after the 1938 election. This placed him in a neutral position during most of the war years.

The war years and the increased tempo of wartime economic development increased all those conditions which favoured greater political consciousness among the people. Development of transport and communication permitted more widespread diffusion of propaganda, closer communication between branches of political parties and opportunities for political leaders to meet the people more frequently.

Outside factors such as the anti-imperialist propaganda of the Allies directed at the subject peoples of the German, Italian and Japanese Empires, the weakening of imperial authority in Asia and that by a coloured race, and the indoctrination consciously or unconsciously of Nigerian servicemen, all tended towards the new type of thinking and favoured the nationalist cause.

However, this is not to say that Nigerians did not react as the rest of the Empire in the dark days of 1940 when the Empire and Commonwealth stood alone against Naziism. Protests^{Tions} of loyalty poured from all Nigerian sources including the nationalist press.

I41

Let us put our shoulder to the wheel. Our Empire is in need.

I42

Nigerians cheerfully shouldered the white man's burden, claiming that differences must be forgotten so that Nigeria could feel at one with Britain. I43

The press expressed dissatisfaction with the limited use of Nigerian manpower and calling for recruitment of Nigerians asked the world to "watch us do our stuff and put fear into the Huns." I44

Sir Bernard Bourdillon, Governor 1935-1943, appointed Azikiwe to an advisory committee on students proceeding to the United Kingdom for higher studies and later he served on a Wartime Publicity Committee which recommended the setting up of a Public Relations Department. The government could never have employed a better man to head such a department had they vaguely realized Dr. Azikiwe's potential in this direction.

The Atlantic Charter in 1941 raised the hopes of the nationalists. The West African Students Union asked if it applied to West Africa. Churchill said, "No." Attlee said, "Yes." It was little wonder that Nigerians morally supported the Labour party, and, while they warmly appreciated Churchill's part in the war, could agree with Dr. Azikiwe that "when it comes to handling

I41 The West African Pilot (hereafter referred to as The Pilot), 10 April, 1940, Vol.III, No. 731, p.4.

I42 Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Inside Stuff - Hitler's War Aims for the Return of the Colonies," The Pilot, 3 April, 1940, Vol.III, No.725, p.4.

I43 The Pilot, 3 January, 1940, Vol.III, No. 651, p.4.

I44 The Pilot, 7 March, 1940, Vol.III, No.705, p.4.

other races and nations he (Churchill) is woefully behind the times." ^{I45}

Demands for constitutional advance were parried by the British by rallying the traditional rulers in regional conferences and by the admittance of Africans to the Executive Council. It was undesirable both for Nigerians and British that constitutional changes be made during the war, and discussion of them in the Nigerian press appeared academic and with the implicit understanding that little could be done until after the war.

It was with this kind of feeling that Dr. Azikiwe published his Political ^{I46} Blueprint for Nigeria in March 1943, which called for a ten year period during which there should be a conscious process of Nigerianization in all aspects of political and administrative life, followed by a five year period for non-Nigerians to be gradually transferred to an advisory capacity, ending with a three year 'handing over' period, the handing over to be done voluntarily ^{I47} not reluctantly.

It was distinctly felt that an organization containing most of the politically important personalities, should be formed, cutting across or even obliterating the party lines, to present a united request for constitutional change. The Nigerian Students Union founded in 1939 in Abeokuta included in its members, I.O.Ransome-Kuti, Macaulay, Maja, Ikoli and Azikiwe. In 1942 Dr. Azikiwe organized the Nigerian Reconstruction Group to do research into Nigeria's problems. It is interesting to note that of this organization's

^{I45} Oden Meeker, Report on Africa, London, Chatto and Windus, 1955, p.^{I24}.

^{I46} A series of eighteen articles in the West African Pilot which began on 25 March, and ended on 15 April, 1943.

^{I47} If Nigeria receives Commonwealth status in 1960 Azikiwe's Political Blueprint will have been completed almost to the year.

sixteen foundation members, six were Ibos; the first Ibos other than Azikiwe to figure in political organizations. Another such organization was the Nigerian Youth Circle led by H.O. Davies.

At the Ajukoro Youth Rally in November 1943, members from all the above organizations plus the N.Y.M. took a prominent part, and, following speeches by A.O. Thomas, Rotimi Williams, Davies and Azikiwe, the rally resolved to form a national front with the N.Y.M. as the political spearhead. This attempt failed due to jealousy between the leadership of the N.Y.M. and N.N.D. P.; the N.Y.M. claiming that the invitation to their president Dr. Maja was purposely withdrawn. It appears quite certain that the front collapsed over the struggle for leadership. As the object of all parties was basically the same party politics in this case and often later degenerated into personal rivalries and petty bickerings.

Dr. Azikiwe's position during these years was that of a neutral trying to jockey the two political parties into a united front. It is not exactly clear just what were his immediate reasons for his reconciliation with Herbert Macaulay. He claimed that it was over the issue of tribalism in the N.Y.M. which arose over the appointment of S.Akinsanya as the Odema of Ishara. However, his feud with H.O.Davies who was later to become the leader of the N.Y.M. may have had something to do with it.

The reconciliation of Azikiwe with Macaulay led to the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) in Lagos' historical Glover Memorial Hall on August 26, 1944. Its three main officers were Macaulay as president, Azikiwe as general secretary, and Dr. Abubakar Olorun-Nimbe as treasurer. The reconciliation and the choosing of Macaulay as pres-

ident for the new organization was a master stroke. Macaulay was the most popular Nigerian living, and although he had almost dropped from the political scene his old fame as the symbol of opposition to the government could be revived and intensified. With Azikiwe's growing popularity and his strong following among the Ibos, who had followed him into the N.Y.M. and then out of it again, he was a force to be reckoned with. This Yoruba-Ibo (Macaulay-Azikiwe) combination would certainly have a wide appeal. What was even more important, it would silence any talk of tribalism, an ever-ready criticism quickly to be levelled at any political party.^{I49} Furthermore Macaulay was old and the leadership and his great prestige would soon pass on to the advantage of Dr. Azikiwe or Dr. Olorun-Nimbe.

The N.C.N.C. at its organizational meeting set its aim as "the maintenance by Nigeria, strictly and inviolate," of the connection with the British Empire, while the citizens of Nigeria enjoy unreservedly every right of free citizenship of the Empire^{I50} and adopted as its programme Dr. Azikiwe's Political Blueprint.

Almost from the moment of its inception, the N.C.N.C. took the leadership away from the N.Y.M. who had held it from 1934 to 1944. The N.C.N.C. was not a political party as such an organization is generally thought of, but a congress which did not outline policies of government but set a goal and program in order to gain a wide acceptance and prove to the British that it had the power and mandate to speak for the people. As a congress it was not open to individual membership but to organizations.

^{I49} N.C.N.C. members still point to the leadership of Herbert Macaulay as proof that the party is not tribalistic.

^{I50} Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Contemporary Nigerian Politics (6)," The Pilot, 6 December, 1947, Vol.XI, No.3025, p.2.

In one year from its inception the N.C.N.C. could claim eighty-seven affiliated organizations including the N.N.D.P. and the young wing of that party, the Union of Young Democrats of Nigeria. At the height of its power in 1947 it had one hundred ninety eight affiliated organizations; thirty-seven Ibo, and forty-three Yoruba. It had no Hausa membership, the North being still represented by Southerners living in the Northern Region.

The congress type of movement was widespread in West Africa in the nineteen forties. Following the formation of the N.C.N.C. in Nigeria in 1944, the Rassemblement Democratique Africain was founded in French West Africa in 1946 and the United Gold Coast Convention in Ghana in 1947. The Graduates' General Conference had been formed in the Sudan as early as 1942.

The aim of the Congress Movement organization was to gain wide support to counteract charges that the nationalist element was a vocal minority. It also aimed to organize public opinion by means of press campaigning, extra-parliamentary techniques, such as petitions and delegations to the Imperial capital, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, and appeals to the United Nations Assembly. It aimed to co-ordinate protest activities and give them direction and a political colour and to exploit all situations and make them appear as a demand for self-government. Thus in both Nigeria and Ghana, strikes which began as demands for wages were supported by the congresses and in so doing lent political implications to the strikes.

The congresses have been described as "a loosely knit, even amorphous amalgam of local and functional organizations, grouped around a nucleus

I51 The Pilot, 17 December, 1947, Vol.XI, No.3034, p.I.

I52 Hodgkin, Nationalism, p.I46.

I53

executive or working committee." Many problems arose out of this type of organization. The Congress tended to have support more on paper than in reality. It could speak for the whole nation only in times of crises. During periods of quiescence the sheer breadth of the organizations, as regards both the geographical areas which it attempted to cover and the various sections of opinion which it attempted to include, was often a source of embarrassment. Yet this was also the Congresses' greatest strength, particularly among urban populations and the évolué class whose interests too were wide and national.

I54
I55

When the metropolitan nation began to devolve power to national politicians, these Congresses had to form definite policies, rather than their previous programmes which consisted of a demand for self-government. They found that any policy was apt to run counter to some section of their Congress. Because the Congress was simply a body of independent affiliated organizations with no sense of discipline, each one felt it had a right as well as a duty to express its opinion on each and every issue.

There was a tendency for the leadership of the Congress to become a junta. As there was no definite scheme whereby policy was brought up from below, policy was formed at the top with little reference to the member organizations who criticized the policy after it was enunciated. This destroyed the unity of the Congress.

I53 Hodgkin, Nationalism, p.I44.

I54 In Nigeria, the Ibos still almost entirely supporters of the N.C. N.C. have more to lose in terms of their emigrant communities in the North, West, Cameroons and Lagos by the rise of sectional parties with their demands for regionalization, than any other tribe.

I55 New Era Bureau, The London "Regionalization" Conference, Before and After, Lagos, Techno Literary Works, 1953, p.I2.

Congresses suffered from lack of funds having to depend upon a few wealthy backers. There is evidence to show that there was a close connection between the N.C.N.C. and the transport owners of Eastern Nigeria and the Syrians.

In the Congress organization the leader became of paramount importance, a unifying symbol, the personality which held together the diverse elements. Because of this influence he dominated party policy. A successful leader had to be a dual personality, highly sophisticated and cosmopolitan, who could combine the African and European successfully.

These leaders had the advantage of being at home in both worlds - the world of the ancestors, the dance and the market, and the world of parliamentary debate and the struggle for state power.^{I56}

The Congresses of West Africa differed mainly in "National militancy with particular reference to their position taken on various questions relating to the European connection."^{I57}

The National Front : Triumph of the Elective Principle 1945-1951

The general strike of 1945 began because of wartime price inflation and wage deflation, the same conditions as prevailed over most of the world, was probably inspired by national feeling but was certainly not its main inspiration. The National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons alone of the political and semi-political organizations of Nigeria supported the strikers.

^{I56} Examples of such leaders in West Africa include such men as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Leopold Sedar-Senghor of Senegal, Felix Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, Barteley Boganda of Ubangui-Shari and Isma'il Al-Azhari of the Sudan. Obafemi Awolowo is both chief and premier. Alhaji Ahmadu is both Sardauna and premier.

^{I57} Hodgkin, Nationalism, p.14.

^{I58} James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties," in C. Grove Haines, ed., Africa To-day, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p.250.

As a result, (N.C.N.C.) prestige gained considerably while that of the older parties, which refused to support the strike, fell proportionately. ^{I59}

An unfortunate result was that it split the trade union movement - rival organizations and leaders creating rifts and splits. ^{I60}

The Zikist press had taken a large part in maintaining the morale of the strikers. On July 8, 1945, the government banned the West African Pilot and Daily Comet on the grounds of "inciting the people against the government." ^{I62} This was exactly the type of publicity the N.C.N.C. needed to swell its number of members. ^{I63} Even the Daily Service, bitter enemy of the N.C.N.C. and Zikist press found it necessary to appeal to the Governor.

We humbly appeal to His Excellency the Governor to reconsider the matter... Their fate is our fate; and in this matter they have our whole hearted support and sympathy. ^{I64}

The ban was lifted August 16, 1945. Only a matter of hours after the lifting of the ban, the Zikist press announced an assassination attempt on Dr. Azikiwe's life. It is not known yet whether the report was true or false, but at the time most people believed it, and "Nigerians were thrilled to

I59 Elias, Occasional Paper, p.99.

I60 Nigeria, Colonial Report 1946, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, p.7.

I61 Dr. Azikiwe controls a chain of six newspapers commonly called the Zikist press. The chain began with the West African Pilot which Azikiwe opened in Lagos in 1937. He personally edited it until 1947. The Pilot has a large circulation and could be called a national paper. The other papers of the chain are more regional papers. The Eastern Nigerian Guardian was begun in Port Harcourt in 1940 and the Southern Nigeria Defender in Ibadan in 1943. In 1956 three others were added: The Daily Comet, Kaduna; The Eastern Sentinel, Enugu; and the Nigerian Spokesman, Onitsha. Dates taken from the Nigeria Year Book 1957.

I62 Under regulation No.19, 1945, Emergency Powers Defence Act, 1939/40.

I63 The Pilot, 20 August, 1945, Vol.VIII, No.233I, p.I.

I64 Daily Service, 10 July, 1945, Vol.V, No.35, p.2.

learn that the news of it went round the world." Headlines such as "Safety of Zik is now on World's Conscience," "People of African descent all over Britain are Rallying to the Cause" and "Africans in the U.S. Should Be Kept Constantly in Touch with What is Happening in Nigeria" were bringing the N.C.N.C. and its leader, Dr. Azikiwe, to the attention of the world. This was extremely helpful as a means of embarrassing the United Kingdom and providing publicity for the Nationalist Movement.

Many ardent Zikists still believe the story and the implication, although not openly stated, that the assassination was attempted at the instigation of the British. Not all in Nigeria however, believed the story.

Zik insulted the intelligence of the people. We demand an apology. True martyrdom is not faked. No man becomes a martyr by inventing for himself suffering and privations which exist nowhere outside his own imagination.^{I67}

Dr. Azikiwe was at Lagos at the time of the assassination report. He immediately sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, asking for protection. He then fled to Onitsha where the British resident offered him the protection of his home. The Governor asked that the evidence be put in his hands. This was not done and the matter dropped, probably indicating that the report was a fake or that it was a planned assassination by one of Dr. Azikiwe's own tribe.^{I68}

It would appear that a National Movement needs a martyr. Gandhi spent long terms in jail. Dr. Nkrumah and some of his cabinet colleagues were jailed and later made great capital of their "prison graduate" status, wearing caps enscribed P.G. to political campaign meetings. Nigeria missed all

^{I65} Tugbiyele, Emergence, p.27.

^{I66} Pilot, 20 Aug., 1945, Vol.VIII, No.233I, p.I.

^{I67} "Nigeria Demands an Apology," Daily Service, 27 December, 1947, Vol.XI, No.3032, p.2.

^{I68} An attempt was made on the life of Azikiwe by an Ibo in 1957.

this and the propaganda value which went with it, and so attempts to create martyrs, when the British failed to provide them ready made, have been common.^{I69}

Occasional statements reflecting this martyr complex have come from prominent people in the N.C.N.C.

And if it should be our lot to pay the supreme sacrifice in the struggle for freedom, let us not be discouraged. We shall not be the first, and we shall not be the last, to pay such a price for freedom.^{I70}

It should inspire us immensely that we belong to the same order as Oliver Cromwell, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Lenin, Gandhi, Nehru and others of the shining band who have gone forth on the creative frontier of human evolution... But they are all dangerous people, very dangerous people, capable of dangerous living, with power potent enough to lift the world from its B.C. to its A.D.^{I71}

At a reception given for Dr. Azikiwe and the editors of his various newspapers, which was sponsored by the Zikist movement and presided over by Herbert Macaulay the titles of the various addresses and the tone of the speeches indicate this martyr complex. "Exile Can Have No Sting," "The Firing Squad Cannot Crush Man's Ideals," "Concentration Camps Cannot Cramp Man's Conscience," "The Guillotine Cannot Destroy Man's Ideas," "Stone Walls Do Not a Prison Make," "The Warm Embrace of the Criminal Code," "Martyrdom de Lux."^{I72} It is hardly necessary to add that no one during the period was exiled or jailed, that there were no firing squads, concentration camps, guillotines or martyrdoms. This martyr-complex however, did alienate a section

^{I69} This attitude appears more pronounced in Dr. Azikiwe and the N.C.N.C. than in other political parties; it is almost non-existent in the Northern Region.

^{I70} Nnamdi Azikiwe, "C.N.P.(I2)" The Pilot, 15 December, 1947, Vol.XI, No.3032, p.2.

^{I71} Eyo Ita, "Basic Changes in Nigeria (2)" The Pilot, 7 September, 1949, Vol.XII, No.3552, p.2.

^{I72} Thomas, Macaulay, p.63.

of the educated and most of the conservatives. On the other hand it rallied the masses who liked colour in their politics.

The most important aim of the N.C.N.C. after its formation was to win a mandate from the people and recognition from the British government, as the spokesman of the Nigerian people. The number of affiliated organizations was one proof which the British government, badly mistaken, swept aside. The support of the general strike had won more sympathy but now the N.C.N.C. was to go after a definite mandate from the people.

The British government in 1945 had just introduced a new constitution (The Richards' Constitution) which, while it gave representative government, did not enlarge the franchise or give responsible government. The N.C.N.C. found that this Constitution fell far short of their expectancy. So it was this constitution and four ordinances before the Legislative Council at this time, that became the target of attack. The four ordinances; Public Lands Amendment Ordinance, Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Amendment Ordinance, Crown Lands Amendment Ordinance, Minerals Ordinance, were all well chosen so as, by a subtle play on words, to rouse the greatest number of persons against them.

By a careful play on the word 'Crown' they made it appear that lands were to be owned by the British rather than the Nigerian government. Any strengthening of the government's power to depose chiefs could touch a responsive chord in most of Nigeria.

It is worthy of note at this point that, as in Ghana where Dr. Nkrumah based his attack against the British policy on the cutting out of cocoa trees due to swollen shoot, then came to power and carried out even more vigorously the cutting out policy, so in Nigeria, while gaining support by defending the chiefs, the parties which formed governments after elections were introduced, steadily whittled away at the power of the chiefs.

In March 1946 the N.C.N.C. drew up a letter which was sent to the Natural Rulers (chiefs and emirs) and various organisations. One hundred fifty three communities widely scattered over the North, West, East, of Nigeria, the Cameroons and Colony, signed this letter which expressed disapproval of the Richards Constitution and the "four obnoxious Ordinances." It further stated the right of the N.C.N.C. to discuss with the British "all such other matters as shall be relevant to the welfare and progress of Nigeria."

Certainly beyond doubt the N.C.N.C. had won a mandate - the best possible, short of elections which they could not hold. Few Nigerians questioned that the mandate was valid but some did question the interpretation which the N.C.N.C. placed on the "all such other matters" clause. The N.C.N.C. claimed that they had won a mandate from the people to press for self-government.

A delegation including Macaulay, Azikiwe and Olorun-Nimbe toured the country soliciting moral and financial aid to send a delegation to the United Kingdom to press their claims on the Colonial office. They raised over thirteen hundred pounds. The tour was interrupted at Kano by the illness of Macaulay, now over seventy years of age. Macaulay was taken back to Lagos where he died.

I73

His funeral was probably the biggest event in Lagos history. The event was turned into a subtle dignified political occasion climaxed by Dr. Azikiwe's graveside oration.

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I73 Thomas, Macaulay, p.63.

I74 Ibid., p.69.

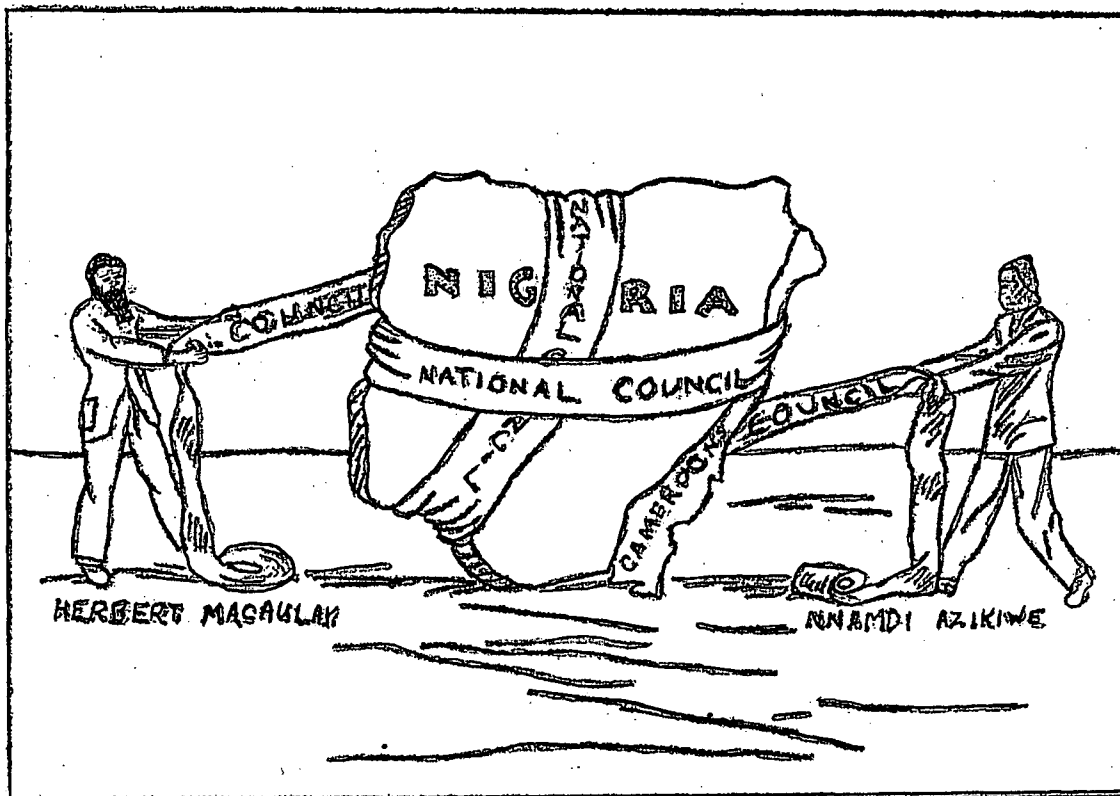
Azikiwe, having so associated himself in the minds of the masses with Macaulay, was without doubt the obvious choice for the new leader of the N.C.N.C. This is not to say that his own popularity was not considerable, but with the added prestige of Macaulay there could be little dispute over his leadership.

However, there were those especially among the Yoruba intelligentsia who felt uncomfortable with the new leadership because Azikiwe came from a tribe long considered backward. They appeared unable or at least unwilling to be led by this "upstart Ibo." There were minor leadership troubles between the remaining big three of the N.C.N.C. - president, treasurer and general secretary; Azikiwe, Olorun-Nimbe and Prince Adedoyin. Olorun-Nimbe leader of the old guard of the N.N.D.P. disputed the leadership of the N.C.N.C. with Azikiwe and also that of the Democratic party with Adedoyin who had led the young wing of that party.

In 1947 the A.N.A. machine (Azikiwe, Nimbe and Adedoyin) contested the Legislative Council elections. Azikiwe led the polling with 3,573 votes. After nine years out of office, the N.N.D.P. came back under the dynamism of the N.C.N.C.

The three members refused to take their seats in the new Council, and by so doing aimed to avoid the pitfall of the corrosive influence of office. Instead they began to organize a delegation to go to London to meet the Colonial Secretary.

The delegation was representative of the three major tribes; Yorubas, Ibos, and Hausas. Other delegates represented the Cameroons and the Efik tribe. One member was a woman and one a chief. The delegation asked for the abolition of the Richards Constitution and the four obnoxious Ordinances and immediate steps to implement self-government.



NATIONAL COUNCIL AND NIGERIAN UNITY

West African Pilot, 24 Nov. 1947

I75

Outwardly the delegation appeared to achieve nothing. The Colonial Secretary advised the delegates to go back to Nigeria and co-operate with the government. This apparent failure was a testing point. Rent by jealousy among the executive for the leadership and returning to Nigeria after having spent the people's money with nothing concrete to offer, the N.C.N.C. faced one of its first crises. That it survived was due almost entirely to the personality and correct timing of its leader, Dr. Azikiwe. The N.C.N.C. almost disappeared in the next few years and only revived after the publication of the Macpherson Constitution in 1951.

In 1949 a go-slow strike in the Enugu coal mines resulted in some disturbances which the police stopped by opening fire. The order was given by a British officer. The result was seventeen miners dead at the Iva mine. I76
Nigerians refer to this as the Enugu Shooting, Iva Mine Tragedy or Massacre. Like the general strike of 1945 the strike began as an agitation for higher wages but fell afoul of political agitators both British and Nigerian. The Fitzgerald Commission which inquired into the tragedy condemned both the opening of fire and the political use made of the tragedy. I77

Sympathy disturbances broke out at Aba, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Calabar. Again the police had to open fire, but with no loss of life. A curfew was placed on Calabar. The Governor proclaimed a state of emergency and

I75 Biobaker, Occasional Paper, p.36.

I76 Nigeria, "Proceedings of the General Conference on Review of the Constitution January, 1950" (Hereafter referred to as Ibadan Conference) London, Government Printer, 1950, p.45.

I77 It is difficult to see how in any parliamentary democracy in the world in this day and age, the killing of seventeen men striking for higher wages would not bring on a political crisis and possible upset of the government.

imposed censorship on the Eastern Region newspapers, claiming that they were aggravating the situation.

The N.C.N.C. was almost defunct and as an organization appeared to take little or no part in the events which followed. However, important members of that party spearheaded the attempt to unite the people of both political parties, the N.N.D.P. and N.Y.M., in a solid national front against the government. The N.Y.M. officially remained aloof but many of its most prominent members, Maja, Davies and Bode Thomas became members of a National Emergency Committee alongside Mbonu Ojike, Mazi Ozuomba and Ozuomba Mbadiwe of the N.C.N.C. The National Emergency Committee (N.E.C.) sent two representatives, Davies and Mbadiwe to Enugu to investigate. They sought to bring pressure on the government to have the officer who ordered the shooting brought before a court of law.

The N.E.C. dissolved as soon as the crisis had passed and no united front emerged as many had hoped. However, it had proven that the Yorubas and Ibos would co-operate in the face of a serious crisis.

It is natural that Nigerians should feel that a united front was vital to press for self-government, but it is difficult to see how this could be achieved in any society except under extreme oppression and then the front would last only as long as the oppression. It would appear more natural and beneficial if two groups presented their ideas regarding a constitution and argued them in the press in order that the electorate might be made aware of the problems and have a chance to form an opinion. This was difficult to do. First, because the formation, organization and discipline of a party is difficult if there is as yet no possibility of it fighting an election and coming

to power. Second, because under British administration the authorities take the attitude; "when you decide what you want, we will give it to you." This attitude invites attempts at a united front and what is probably more obnoxious, it has a patronizing aspect which is quite distasteful to any group of people groping towards a national awareness. The Richards' Constitution introduced in 1946 was attacked most strongly on this aspect.

The purpose of the Richards Constitution was to promote the unity of Nigeria and at the same time to provide for the country's diverse elements and to provide opportunity for greater participation by Nigerians in their government. "The Unity of Nigeria must find its basis in diversity."^{I79}

The principal defect of the Clifford Constitution of 1922 in British eyes had been the gap which it left between the Legislative Council or Central Government and the Native Administration. The new constitution was to bridge this gap by creating effective links between the Native Administration^{I80} the Regional Councils and Legislative Council. It was a compromise of the N.A. system with parliamentary democracy, formed with a desire to integrate^{I81} the N.A. into the system of national government.

Houses of Assembly were created in each of the three regions. There were no elected members in these Assemblies. The approximately one third, selected by the Native Administration, came the closest to an elected group. A House of Chiefs was created in the North, consisting of all first class chiefs and no less than ten second class chiefs. In the West, three head

^{I79} Nigeria, "Political and Constitutional Future of Nigeria," Sessional Paper No.4, 5 March, 1945, p.2.

^{I80} Wheare, Nigerian Legislative Council, p.5.

^{I81} Biobaku, Occasional Paper, p.35.

chiefs were nominated to the Assembly while in the East, chiefs were ignored. These new institutions, the Assemblies with their N.A. representation and the chiefs, were designed to be the links between the two systems of government.

The duty of the Assembly was "to consider and advise by resolution, matters placed before it by the Governor or introduced by members."^{I82} Thus while the Assemblies, there being three of them, were to reflect Nigerian diversity, they had very little real power and the unitary system of government was preserved by the concentration of power in the one Legislative Council at the centre. Actually, what was being created was the nucleus of regional governments.

The Richards' Constitution (1946) made possible larger participation in government by Nigerians. Nigerians formed the majority of members in all the Assemblies: twenty-three Nigerians to nineteen British in the North, nineteen to fourteen in the West and eighteen to fourteen in the East. The Legislative Council was formed with a majority of Nigerians; twenty-eight to seventeen British, the over all majority being unofficial.

The most widespread criticism of the new constitution was regarding its paternal aspects. Sir Arthur Richards the Governor was called a benevolent despot^{I83} and the Constitution described as the "doings of one man ratified by a legislature unrepresentative of the people."^{I84} It was decried and discredited before it saw light on this basis. The Opposition was violent and consistent.

I82 Nigeria, Nigeria's Constitutional Story 1862-1954, Lagos, Federal Information Service, 1955, p.10.

I83 Biobaku, Occasional Paper, p.35.

I84 Daily Times, "A Historic Year," Nigerian Year Book 1955, Nigerian Printing and Publishing Co., 1955, p.8.

Criticism of the Constitution itself rather than the method of drawing it up, centred on its regional aspects. There was no precedent for any type of regionalism in West Africa. At this point Nigeria diverged from the path on which Ghana was setting forth and continued to follow.^{I85} Nigeria alone of the West African colonies had the size and diversity to seriously consider a federal system. The idea was new to Nigerians and it was opposed from almost all sides. Many people saw it, as one writer says, as "Divide et impera,^{I86} traditional British colonial policy." For all the voluble criticism levelled at this aspect of the constitution, devolution of more and more power from the centre has been the main aim of leading Nigerian politicians ever since, at Ibadan in 1950, and in London in both 1954 and 1957.

A third criticism, weak immediately after the introduction of the Richards Constitution but growing more and more insistent with each passing year^{I87} was that minority groups or tribes were not adequately represented, if at all.

Sir Arthur when he chose to ignore all but three main tribes laid the foundation of everlasting confusion - Yoruba solidarity became the best slogan of the Action Group; Preservation of Ibos was not distasteful to the N.C.N.C.; One North, One People, the banner of the Northern Peoples Party.^{I88}

In 1946 the minor tribes were not politically aware and by the Richards' Constitution the country was represented on a tri-regional basis. Later

I85 In Ghana, the National Liberation Movement, the Opposition Party fought for a federal constitution as a check on the absolute power of the central government. Ghana has now a quasi-federal system.

I86 Tugbiyele, Emergence, p.26.

I87 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.73.

I88 Daily Times, Abiodun Aloba (Ebenezer Williams) "1956 - A Date With Destiny," Nigeria Year Book, Nigerian Printing and Publishing Co., 1957, p. 14.

political parties appeared each to find its support in one of the three main tribes, causing fear among the minor tribes. The minor tribes make up fifty-five per cent of the total population.

However, the minor tribes were without powerful spokesmen, the danger of major tribe domination had not yet emerged, and this criticism was drowned in the main agitation which centred around regionalism.

The Richards' Constitution was criticized for its failure to extend the elective principle, for the power which it left untouched in British hands, and for the fact that the Legislative Council still stood in its frustrated position in relationship to the Governor. It had no real power to control his policy.

There were advantages to the Richards Constitution albeit they were hard to find. It was an advance towards representative institutions in that although members were selected by the N.A. they were by and large, brought up from below and not nominated from above. It did bring many more Nigerians into the government machinery, even the Legislative Council having a majority of Africans for the first time. The door to future advance was left open.

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It was expected to last nine years. This indicated that the British did not consider it final.

Probably its greatest advantage was the effect it had on the politicians and people. Because the N.A. was the prominent factor in the selection of representatives, it forced the nationalist democrat to defend and propagandize his doctrines in the N.A. system itself. The Western educated had to go to the conservative traditionalist and win his support. This forged a link between the N.A. system and parliamentary democracy which Sir Arthur Richards did not envision.

189 It lasted about half the expected time.

This forcing of the nationalist politician into the centre of conservatism, plus the fact that a constitutional change could be anticipated in nine years, plus the blast of criticism which followed the Constitution's introduction, brought the issues before the people as they had never been brought before. The effect then of the Richards Constitution was to arouse the political consciousness of the people as no other single factor had^{I90} done.

Because opposition to the Richards Constitution had centred around the fact that the people had not been consulted, the British did not make the same mistake again. When a constitutional change was announced in 1949, Sir John Macpherson stated that, "before any change is made, it is of the utmost importance to allow adequate time for the expression of public opinion."^{I91}

One writer said that while Governor Richards had not consulted the people, the British government through Governor Macpherson swung to the other extreme and "gave us ropes to hang ourselves and we did so."^{I92} Public opinion was most thoroughly and conscientiously sounded. The British had definitely seized the lead from the political leaders and at the same time relieved the pressure of criticism on itself. Few criticized the British government. "By this Act of our government, it has in the language of Churchill, made this its finest hour."^{I93} Criticism was now more and more directed at Nigerian policy makers rather than at the British.

I90 Timothy Moka Uzo, The Pathfinder, Port Harcourt, Niger press, 1953, p.2.

I91 Nigeria, Constitutional Story, p.I2.

I92 Uzo, The Pathfinder, p.I2.

I93 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.I86.

The Legislative Council set up a select committee to consider how the public mind was to be sounded and decided on a series of conferences; village, divisional, provincial and national. The results of the provincial conferences showed that regardless of the criticism of regionalism the general trend was for greater regional autonomy.¹⁹⁴ In the Northern Region a desire was expressed in every province except Bauchi for a House of Chiefs. In the West the majority requested a House of Chiefs and in the East it was voted down.

In later years in the North where the power of the chiefs became an issue, it is interesting to note that Ilorin, the province with most Southern connections, felt that the House of Chiefs should act in an advisory capacity; others would give it the powers of the British House of Lords, while Sokoto, most northerly province, said its will should prevail in any dispute with the House of Assembly.

Ethnic groupings were favoured by five southern provinces; Calabar, Owerri, Rivers, Benin and Onitsha. Significantly enough the Ibadan National Conference paid no heed to these ethnic feelings.

The electoral college system of voting was requested by every province in the North and by the majority in the Southern Regions.

The National Conference was held at Ibadan in 1950. It decided upon increased autonomy, the regional Houses of Assembly to have legislative power over a wide range of subjects and be able to raise revenues of their own. A House of Chiefs was to be created in the West, and a federal House of Representatives was to be created in Lagos.

All adult taxpayers who were British subjects or British protected persons were to have the franchise, and the system of election, although

¹⁹⁴ Great Britain, Colonial Report, London, The Government Printer, 1949, p.4.

varying from region to region was to be basically the electoral college. While the new legislatures were to be almost entirely elected, the special interests, banking, shipping, mines, chambers of commerce, were to have a place.

The most controversial issue to come before the Ibadan Conference was that of regional representation in the federal House of Representatives. East and West favoured equal representation for the three regions, fearing domination by the North. With more than half the total population of Nigeria the North stood staunchly for representation by population, lest on major issues the East and West combine to out vote it. The Northern delegation, I95 ably led by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, employed the arguments of democracy and parliamentary government which the Southerners had used so eloquently against the British. The North won its point over heated debate and a veiled threat of session by the Western Region.

The Macpherson Constitution came into force in 1951. In Nigeria, for the first time the elective principle was widely applied, through a series of electoral colleges. The mass of the people voted in the constituencies which consisted of the Native Administrative units. The small unit ensured that the people were acquainted with the men who solicited their votes. The elected members voted for members from among themselves to represent the divisions. The men so elected then voted for members to the provincial I96 college who in turn voted for members to sit in the Regional House of Assembly.

I95 Balewa became the first Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria in August, 1957.

I96 The provincial electoral college was dispensed with in the Eastern region.

The Regional Assembly then voted to elect from their own numbers, members to the Federal House of Representatives.

The Houses of Assembly were composed almost entirely of Nigerians: in the North, ten British to ninety-five Nigerians; in the West, four to eighty and in the East, five to eighty. The Houses of Chiefs in both North and West had fifty-four seats, four of which were held by the British. Most of the British represented special interests.

Although the appointment of these members was by nomination, their numbers were few; but because of their special knowledge, their contribution to legislation was of considerable value.¹⁹⁷

The regional executives consisted of fifteen ministers; nine Nigerians and six British. The Nigerians were nominated by the Lieutenant Governor and approved by the House. The Houses of Assembly, curiously enough, acted as electoral colleges to the House of Representatives. Each constituency was to have representation in the federal House. Therefore from Lagos, for example, five members were elected to the Western House of Assembly, two of whom were to be elected by that body to the House of Representatives. The Central House had one hundred thirty six elected members, thirty-four each from West and East, sixty-eight from North and six nominated to represent special interests.

The Council of Ministers or Central Executive consisted of eighteen; twelve Nigerians and six British. The Nigerian ministers, four to be chosen from each region's representation, were to be approved by the regional houses and were therefore like the regional ministers responsible to the Houses of Assembly. The Lieutenant Governor submitted a list of recommendations, the

¹⁹⁷ Nigeria, Constitutional Story, p.12.

Governor selected his candidates, and then the Lieutenant Governor submitted these to joint Houses of Assembly and Chiefs in the North and West or to the Assembly in the East for their approval.

The Council of Ministers fell into three groups: ministers responsible exclusively, for central matters such as transport; ministers responsible for regional subjects such as education; and the ex-officio British members responsible for defence, law and finance. The House of Representatives could pass legislation on regional subjects but in case of conflict the last enactment prevailed.

The attitude to the Macpherson Constitution was mixed. The Zikist press set the slogan for the attitude adopted by the N.C.N.C. "Beware of the Greeks when they come with gifts." ¹⁹⁸ Dr. Azikiwe who called it "an imposition of the Imperialists," stated that the N.C.N.C. if they won the election would "change the Constitution and expose the fraud in the Macpherson Constitution." ¹⁹⁹ The N.C.N.C. Kano convention charged the Colonial Office with bad faith and called the Macpherson Constitution a "bogus document" but, however, decided to give it a trial. ²⁰⁰

Obafemi Awolowo, newly emerged leader of the recently formed Action Group Party, took a different view. He claimed that the Macpherson Constitution gave Nigerians an opportunity to expand social services, learn parliamentary government and demonstrate their ability. ²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Eastern Nigeria Guardian, Port Harcourt, 6 January, 1950, Vol.IX, No.20,154, p.4.

¹⁹⁹ Uzo, The Pathfinder, p.13.

²⁰⁰ National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons, London Delegation Leaflet No.3 Yaba, Zik Enterprises, 1953, p.2.

²⁰¹ Obafemi Awolowo, Charter of Freedom, Ibadan, Public Relations Office, 1952, p.3.

The N.C.N.C. at its Kano Convention altered its eighteen year tutelage plan and departed from its gradualism, a course so well summed up by Dr. Azikiwe in 1944.

The only safe and wise course in African native districts is to hand over power gradually and continuously so that native responsibility increases at about equal speed with economic and political development.²⁰²

In 1951 the N.C.N.C. substituted for this gradualism its "Freedom Charter" which called for immediate self-government.

The greatest disadvantage of the Macpherson Constitution was its complexity. The election began at the end of July and finished the first week in December. Even in the East where there was only one college system the election took two and one half months.²⁰³ Political leaders complained that the electoral college system defeated the people's choice. Because the centre was weak, being responsible to the Houses of Assembly and being ruled indefinitely by a coalition, many felt that centrifugal forces in the country endangered national unity.

The Macpherson Constitution proved unworkable. Only a small proportion²⁰⁴ of those who framed the Constitution were elected, and those elected did not give it a fair trial, but made use of its defects as a weapon of propaganda.

The Constitution did not provide for political parties. At the time the Constitution was drawn up an established and well-tries party system, did not in fact exist.²⁰⁵

202 Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Africanization of the Civil Service," Southern Nigeria Defender, Ibadan, May 1944, Vol.I, No.232, p.4.

203 The Primaries were staggered, due to difficult terrain and poor communications, to permit closer supervision.

204 Dr. Azikiwe went on a tour of Europe and America while the Constitution-building process was in progress.

205 James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties," in C.Grove Haines, ed., Africa To-day, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p.239.

This was an understatement. The defunct N.C.N.C. was revived by Azikiwe before the election. The Action Group (A.G.) Party was founded a few months before the election and the Northern Peoples Party, one month after the election had been in progress. Had these parties been in existence before 1949 their ideals and objectives could have been reflected in the Constitution.

Great numbers of men were elected owing no allegiance to any political party. The fluidity of the party system was evident in two events: first, when the election results in the West were announced both the N.C.N.C. and A.G. claimed the victory; second, when the House opened, six supposedly N.C. N.C. members, crossed the floor to the A.G.

In addition to the great advance made in the general application of the elective principle, the mobilization of public opinion through the electoral colleges was greater than under the Richards' Constitution. The electoral colleges, "forced party politicians of urban centres to carry their appeals to the N.A. councils of remote villages. The result was an unprecedented political awakening, a mobilization of groups previously untouched and inert."²⁰⁶

The old dilemma between parliamentary democracy and traditional institutions was being rapidly overcome by a definite swing to the former. Moreover the "channeling of the corrosive dynamism of nationalism through the traditional structure" and the later use by the parties of their power "to democratize the structure and undermine or reduce what remained of the power of the traditionalists... has been a sociological development indispensable for the development of a modern party system."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties" in C. Grove Haines, ed., Africa To-day, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p. 241.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 241-242.

Chapter III

Old Patterns Re-Emerge : Federalism

Divisive Forces Within Nigeria

The most acute problem facing the Nigerian nationalist government is that of the jealousy and suspicion between tribes. This suspicion limits the functioning of political parties. Parliamentary democracy however, rests firmly upon a stable and secure party system. In any parliamentary democracy it has been found extremely difficult to pass laws for one section of the country by a majority of votes wholly founded in another section. Parties should therefore attempt to base themselves upon what could almost be called universal principles, such as conservatism, liberalism or socialism. In Nigeria these underlying principles or philosophies are in only the most embryonic form of development. The Action Group is considered conservative, possibly because it places emphasis upon the traditional in Yoruba life and possibly because it encourages free enterprise and foreign capital investment. The N.C.N.C. on the other hand is known to favour the socialistic approach to the problems of national society. If this were the entire story the constitutional future might be bright indeed. Parties in Nigeria however, do not rise or fall, nor are they criticized for their legislative approach to the problems of society. The question of politics is entirely enmeshed in the question of tribe. The hope of many Nigerians is that a federal structure will disentangle the two questions by placing the majority of emotional issues on the provincial level and allow truly nationally based parties to emerge at the centre. As this federal structure emerged, many people opposed it because they thought that they could see the old pattern of Africa re-emerging, each tribe in its own area with its own administration, pursuing policies hostile to its neighbours and so destroying the nation state. The following chapter will trace the resurgence of tribalism in Nigeria and attempt to show how it

contributed to the growth of the demand for a federal constitution.

In discussing the creation of a Nigerian nation, if one must think in terms of comparison, it would be more realistic to compare the Nigerian federation with the proposed United States of Europe rather than federations such as the United States and Canada. Europeans as yet have been unable to create the kind of union contemplated and at the present time being created in Nigeria. The Austro-Hungarian Empire failed. Even India is a poor comparison, for Nigeria has many of the problems of diversity which faced that country and more, peculiar to herself.

The various tribes of Nigeria may be large units numbering eight to ten million people or small groups claiming under a million members. To those with a Canadian background the word tribe may be misleading. It would be easier and more comprehensible if the word nationality could be substituted for the word 'tribe'. The tribes are as different one from the other as the English are from the Russians. Their languages are completely dissimilar, not dialects one of the other. Yoruba and Hausa compare easily with Chinese and English. Political traditions range from forms as unlike as Czarist Russia to democratic Switzerland. In customs and traditions, marriage laws and religion, these tribes are more unlike than the various European states.

A writer must be fully aware of the dangerous area he has entered, as a white man, when he launches a discussion on Nigerian diversity. Quite rightly Nigerians become hostile and suspicious the moment an outsider begins to talk about innumerable divisions in the country.

Erroneous ideas about our differences in customs, habits, language, tradition and way of life have been widely disseminated, but it is our supreme duty to prove that that which unites Nigerians is stronger than that which disunites them.^I

I Daily Times Lagos, No.14,158, 24 May, 1957, p.8.

Too often writers discussing divisive forces have come to the conclusion that Nigeria cannot at this stage achieve national independence and therefore British tutelage is necessary for a long time. Divisions in the country are made the justification for continued colonial status. This is far from the intention of this thesis which is devoted to tracing the growth of political consciousness and ends where the framework of the political structure of the country has been laid and is functioning, - functioning as creditably as most other federal states.

The background of this chapter is intended to indicate the difficulties through which this movement has passed and how it has triumphed in spite of the diversity in the country. If anything, this background enhances the stature of Nigerian leaders and public rather than detracts from it.

Visible forces tending for unity in Nigeria are few, yet unity is triumphing. Unity springs principally from a desire for cohesion. This desire has been strong. It was the main theme of the Ibadan Conference and both London Conferences,² even though the federal principle being evolved was mistaken for disunity.

If we are paying lip service to unity when we mean disunity, let us have a federal system of government and say goodbye to Nigerian unity and solidarity.³

The partition of Nigeria is complete and the regional boundary lines have been drawn so thickly that the ideal of one Nigeria which many of us cherish has been completely destroyed.⁴

² See below p. 86

³ Nigeria, Federal Government, Proceedings of the General Conference on Review of the Constitution Jan. 1950, (hereafter referred to as Ibadan Conference) Lagos, Government Printer, 1950, p.168.

⁴ New Era Bureau, The London Regionalisation Conference, Before and After, Lagos, Techno Literary Works, 1953, p.29.

Factors of disunity were headlined in the press. But even this press emphasis of divisive factors has helped to awaken more Nigerians to the dangers of disunity and inspire them to strive for a common basis of nationality.

Although tribalism is one of the most discussed aspects of Nigerian national life few know what it is, analyze it or separate its different factors. Generally it can be described as a distrust and dislike of one group of people tied by linguistic or cultural ties for another. Most people agree that it has to be minimized and played down in national politics.

Although tribalism is usually connected with the feelings of one tribe towards another it is well to remember that there are internal differences between similar ethnic groups. Some of these differences are so sharp that one segment may prefer to side with an outside tribe rather than with the other segments of their own linguistic group.

The Ijebu-Ode men among the Yorubas and the Aros among the Ibos stand in the same relationship to their ethnic groups as the Jews do in Western society. They are accused of sharp practices in business. In Yorubaland there is still the feelings engendered by the historical rivalry between Ibadan and Ijebu-Ode. There is the resentment of the attitude of superiority of the Onitsha Ibo in Iboland of the Sokoto Hausa in Hausaland. In all sections there are fables and stories prevalent about the women of other areas, their unfaithfulness etc. which help to prevent intermarriage. In the Middle Belt certain distinctions occur between the last century slave raiders and slave ridden tribes. Among the Ibos, the Osu (slaves) are not yet allowed equal social dignity and rarely intermarry with the other Ibos.

Some steps have been taken especially by youth organizations, to correct⁵ this latter situation.

Similar conditions prevail in the minor ethnic groups. These differences have not received the attention in the press and elsewhere because they do not have as great effect on national politics as their counterparts in the major tribes. Yet in the local constituencies the political parties must cater to these prejudices. Then too in the face of the predomance of the major tribes many minor tribes have been submerging their internal differences as well as their differences with other minor tribes in order to achieve recognition for the minor tribes. If these moves are successful and more states are created consisting of a number of small tribes, it is to be expected that these differences will re-emerge in the political situations of the new states.

The Ibos, centred mainly in the Eastern Region have been termed "individuals with a touch of anarchy in their hearts."⁶ The individualism of the Ibo has been an asset in his adaptation of the democratic system to his society. The lack of chiefs with the same status as in the other regions has made it easier for the East to adopt parliamentary government. The elective principle and representation fitted more naturally into the traditional Ibo village council system. On the other hand, Ibo individualism has resulted in lack of responsibility and discipline both in the political parties and in government.

⁵ "Ibo State Union to Note," Eastern Nigerian Guardian, Vol.XI, No. 20, 191, 18 Feb. 1950, p.3.

⁶ Meeker, Oden, Report on Africa, London, Chatto and Windus, 1955, p.110.

The people of the Eastern provinces must learn if their political progress is to be assured; each man cannot, as many would desire, be his own representative, nor if he is chosen as a representative of many, can he represent his own views alone regardless of those he represents.⁷

At the Ibadan Conference it was noted that there was "quite often more disagreement between Eastern members than between West and East or West and North.⁸

It is quite possible that the traditional institution of titles which were based on wealth rather than birth as in the other regions has helped to develop individuals by fostering ambition and creating healthy rivalry within the villages. This emphasis upon wealth has fitted the Ibo for competition in modern society and has led other tribes to look upon the Ibo as unduly mercenary.⁹

"The Ibo so often described as an individual, has nevertheless a highly developed sense of his responsibilities to his countrymen or townsmen."¹⁰ This has resulted in the formation of various family, town, clan and tribal unions among the Ibos wherever they live. It would seem that these unions arise from the Ibos' basic feeling of insecurity which in turn arises from his individualism.¹¹ He is extremely conscious of the lack of cohesion in his own tribe when he faces tribes which appear to speak with one voice through their chief or politicians. This consciousness is more pronounced in the Ibos abroad and it is here in areas predominantly non-Ibo where he unites to protect himself. Other tribes are conscious of the strong tie

7 Nigeria, Legislative Council Debates, 1945, p.538.

8 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.54.

9 H. Kaney Offonry, "The Strength of the Ibo Clan Feeling," West Africa, No.I787, 26 May, 1951, p.489.

10 Lord Hailey, Native Administration in British African Territories, Part III, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951, p.I9.

11 Offonry, West Africa, No.I787, 26 May, 1951, p.467.

of the Ibos and his apparent cohesion in economic and social matters. He appears to them as a strong unassimilatable core in their society. Regardless of his individualism the Ibo is the most community minded, and co-operative construction of schools, clearing of land and building of roads is more pronounced among the Ibo than among the other tribes. Frequently these activities are the cause of secret and sometimes open admiration by members of other tribes. The combination of economic and social cohesion plus the charge of Ibo mercenary tendencies often antagonizes both Hausas and Yorubas in the Northern Region.

There is little doubt that the Ibo has been the most successful of the major tribes in his adaptation to the modern world. One writer has said the Ibos are "the most hard working and violent and progressive tribe in Nigeria."^{I2} "Progressive" may be given various interpretations but it is most often used in Nigeria in connection with the Ibo and his adaptation to the Western World's type of government and economics. The Ibos, like the Ghanaians, have less of a "cultural drag" to contend with, than the other tribes of Nigeria. So far they have acted on the precept that the Western World's system is superior to their own tradition. They have abandoned their own traditional system and thrown themselves into changing their country into a replica of a modern European or American state. As yet there is little discussion among the Ibo intellectuals of the fusion of European and African ways of life or of preserving the best in "our tradition." This matter has caused almost a stalemate in other regions in certain aspects of political life and in others it is building up to a climax. Some writers have deplored this attitude of the Ibos and called their present progress a

I2 Meeker, Africa, p.II0

"superficial success at the cost of losing all native culture," and accused them of forgetting their own culture because they feel "European knowledge gets them all the jobs."^{I3} Regardless of one's feeling in this respect one cannot but be impressed with the progress of large areas of the Ibo regions of Nigeria.

Much stress is placed upon what is called "contact" meaning contact with the European. The coastal tribes came first in contact with the Europeans during the time of the Portuguese but intimate contact with a European nation came first to the Yorubas in 1861 when the British annexed Lagos. From here British education, trade and culture spread to the Yorubas. Ibo "contact" began around the turn of the century. After World War I the Ibos slowly became aware of the lead which the Yoruba people had over them in such fields as education. Quite consciously they began then to "catch up" to the Yoruba. In 1949 Obafemi Owolowo said:

The Ibos are particularly keen and ambitious and doing all they can to overtake the Yorubas.^{I4}

By 1957 the Ibos had caught up and had possibly overtaken the Yorubas.^{I5} This rapid rise of the Ibos has led to two distinct phenomena. First, the feeling of pride in their achievement and the prospect of future domination and second, the feeling of resentment against other tribes who have failed to recognize their new status. Stated otherwise, the Ibos have a feeling of their manifest destiny and at the same time a persecution complex.

I3 Onye-Ocha, "Down with Everything Ibo," Nigeria No.23, the Nigeria Society, Lagos, 1946, p.98.

I4 Obafemi Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom, London, Faber & Faber, 1947, p.49.

I5 In 1956 the Ibos became the dominant tribe in the student body of Ibadan University.

The larger section of the Ibo tribalists are genuine untravelled stay-at-homes... They are steeped in Ibo folklore... They are fed by their daily press on the romance of Ibo scholastic prowess. In a decade they have produced intellectual giants to match and surpass the degenerate Yorubas, with their start of over half a century. They are a chosen people. Destiny has marked them out for leadership.¹⁶

The best statement from the Ibos on their feeling of manifest destiny is one by the greatest living Ibo - Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe:

A Mighty Nation shall resurrect in the west of the Sudan, with the love of freedom in its sinews; and it shall come to pass that the Ibo nation shall emerge to suffer wrong no more, and to re-write the history written by Ethiopia and Songhay. It is the voice of destiny and we must answer this call for freedom in our life time. The God of Africa has willed it. It is the handwriting on the wall. It is our manifest destiny.¹⁷

In contrast to this feeling of manifest destiny the Ibo tribe still may feel inferior to the Yoruba, a feeling encouraged by the Yoruba attitude of superiority. Especially when regionalisation began, which was, directed against the Ibo, the tribe felt persecuted. The Ibo attitude of manifest destiny was not the least of the factors which made the other tribes feel uneasy and look for a method whereby it could be checked. The talk of Ibo domination in the press and elsewhere placed the Ibos abroad in the position of a persecuted race.

¹⁶ Adegoke Adelabu, Africa in Ebullition, Ibadan, Union Printing Press, 1952, pp. 72-3.

¹⁷ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Self-Determination for the Ibo People of Nigeria," West African Pilot, Vol.XII, No.3502, 8 July, 1949, p.2.

¹⁸ Regionalisation began in the constitution of 1951 when power was devolved from the central government to the newly created regional governments. The Yorubas and Hausas led the regionalisation movement because of the fear of the Ibos who appeared to be gradually dominating the economic and administrative machinery of the country.

We are so ostracised socially, that we have become extraneous in the political institutions of Nigeria... It is needless for me to tell you that today, both in England and West Africa, the expression "Ibo" has become a target of opprobium... As a nation with a glorious tradition and historic past, the Ibo nation demands from the protecting power, freedom from persecution, freedom from ostracisation, freedom from victimisation, and freedom from discrimination.¹⁹

As has been intimated above, part of the frustration of the Ibos has
20
been the attitude of cultural superiority of the Yorubas who at least in their moments of levity, like to ignore recent progress and refer to the Ibos as "bush men, naked and savage," and even as "cannibals."
21
The Yorubas constantly bolster their weakening position by pointing to their superior traditional institutions and their long record of Western education. Their attitude has been summed up best by Adegoke Adelabu, leader of the opposition of the Western House of Assembly.

The Action Group (representing the Yorubas) sees in the Ibo tribe, a comparative late comer in the race for the acquirements of the outward veneer of culture and the external paraphernalia of civilization, a dangerous rival and a harmful competitor. Under the shallow pretext of preserving Oduduwan culture, safeguarding Yoruba superiority (which is no more than accidental advantage) and protecting the Yoruba way of life, it (the Action Group) sets up a standard of revolt... its real aim the consolidation and preservation of Yoruba hegemony, supremacy and paramountcy in the West. It sees in everything the National phantasmagorical Ibo domination scare.²²

The Action Group began as an anti-Ibo organization and did not attempt to conceal the fact. It advocated a federal system in order to preserve the Yoruba cultural initial advantage.

¹⁹ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Self-Determination for the Ibo People of Nigeria," *West African Pilot*, Vol.XII, No.3500, 6 July, 1949, p.2. and Vol.XII, No. 3502, 8 July, 1949, p.2.

²⁰ Olorun-Nimbe (Yoruba) re-Nnamdi Azikiwe (Ibo) "Ten barbarians of his kind are not my equal culturally speaking." Reported by Azikiwe in his "Political Reminiscences" *Southern Nigeria Defender*, Vol.V, No.12,130, 17 July, 1949, p.2.

²¹ The term "cannibals" was used by a Yoruba politician in reference to Ibos in a speech in 1956 in Lagos.

²² Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, p.49.

I still feel, that the Yoruba people are more advanced politically and culturally, than the other ethnical groups, and that owing to the anomalous system of our government, they have been held back to mark time while the other peoples make haste to develop and catch up.²³

In the tribalistic disputes and controversy the Hausas generally stand apart. The Southerner looks upon the Hausa and the North in general as backward and primitive. In the course of his occupation, if a Southerner is required to go North, frequently he feels as if he is becoming a pioneer, and once there tends to long for the bright lights of civilization. The Hausa on the other hand, is so certain of his superior culture and his own superiority as a man and as a soldier proven by pre-British period history that he rarely feels it necessary to assert himself. In his walk and bearing he indicates his feelings of pity towards the Southerner. Adelabu describes the Hausa attitude as exemplified by the Northern Peoples Party.

It is impregnable entrenched behind centuries of Islamic culture and Mohammedan conservative way of life. It thrives luxuriously in the North where, unlike the South, religion is not treated as one of the activities of life but as the life... It seems in the bumptious South, East or West, a satanic civilization, a mob of infidels, a gawdy crowd of Europeanized apes, a people gone frantically chaotic and orgiastic over the scramble for imported ideas, religion and wares... His military instinct is aroused. But for the all-powerful White Man he would overrun these degenerate feminine pagans and dip his Koran in the sea.²⁴

The Northern Region has been described as conservative, a term which appears to mean that they refuse first to accept Western imported ideas if these ideas clash or destroy their traditional system. This, the Southerners see as a policy to exclude all liberal influences emanating from South-

23 Obafemi Awolowo, "An Open Letter to Sir Arthur Richards," Daily Service, Vol.VI, No.274, 1 May, 1945, p.2.

24 Adelabu, ebullition, p.73.

ern Nigeria. The Southerners accused the Northerners of encouraging the "closed door policy of the government as regards the North."²⁵ The respect and affection which Northerners show for their chiefs is another characteristic which is quite incomprehensible to the Southerner. The Southerner shows particular surprise and unbelief when these attitudes appear strongest in the western-educated Hausas.

We in the North are rather cautious of sudden changes. We do not want to be made to follow the changes which are foreign to our desires, manners and customs when we become a federal state in the self governing Nigerian Union.²⁶

In comparing the North with the East the Chief Commissioner of the Eastern Provinces, F.B. Carr had this to say:

The individualism and the craving to paddle their own canoes, which distinguishes the people of the Eastern Provinces, finds no counterpart in the disciplined and conservative North where respect and affection for their chiefs is a very real factor.²⁷

Among the minor tribes similar attitudes prevail towards the major tribes and towards each other. In the proposed Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State (C.O.R.) the Efiks feel superior to the Ibibios and Ogojans because of their longer "contact", and in the Delta province the Istekiris hold a similar attitude to the Urhobos and both are contemptuous of the Ijaws. On the national scene the minor tribes may yet prove of great assistance to Nigerian unity. If the Yorubas will not follow an Ibo and vice versa, both may in time be persuaded to be led by a Benis, Urhobo, Ijaw or Efik.

25 Arthur E. Prest, *Nigeria, Ibadan Conference*, p.73.

26 Nigeria, Honourable Sulemanu, Emir of Abuja, *Ibadan Conference*, p.172.

27 Nigeria, "Political and Constitutional Future of Nigeria," *Sessional Paper*, No.4, 5 March, 1945, p.8.

Most Nigerians feel that tribalism is a curse of the early nineteen fifties but this is not quite true although it probably reached its highest intensity at that time. Inter-tribal wars left a legacy and tradition of tribal animosity. The slave trade period of nearly four hundred years left behind the tradition of slave and slaver. The Fulani conquest created an aristocracy, and peasant class divided largely upon race. The British maintained many of the differences particularly between North and South by their separate systems of administration interrupted by the attempt to bring in the native administration system in the South. Their policy of developing indigenous institutions did not foresee an ultimate unified country of Nigeria.

During the eighteen eighties, when the British were administering Lagos and the Yoruba kingdoms were at war both among themselves and with the Fulani Emir of Ilorin, representatives of the various tribes in Lagos were sending arms to their respective kingdoms in the interior. An interior chief said to a representative seeking peace, "If you want peace here, you must start in Lagos."²⁸

In 1924, the slogan was raised in Benin, "Benin for the Benis"²⁹ and there are other examples of this kind of tribalism. In 1925, at the Durbar held for the Prince of Wales it was the first time the crowned heads of Yorubaland had seen each other face to face; and in the North the Sultan of Sokoto saw for the first time his old rival the Shehu of Bornu.

²⁸ Lagos Observer, Vol.IV, No.7, 7 May, 1885, p.2.

²⁹ African Messenger, Lagos, Vol.III, No.I50, 17 Jan., 1924, p.3.

One writer in commenting on tribalism says Nigerians ought to be able to understand the whiteman's colour prejudice for in Nigeria the more advanced tribes make the less progressive, the butt of ridicule.³⁰

One of the excuses which the British used against Nigerianisation, and it was a valid one, was the reluctance of one tribe to accept an officer or civil servant from another tribe.

The blackman is his own enemy, even in our midst today in Nigeria, we have no other enemy but ourselves. It is the blackman against the blackman all the time. And, what fools do we look in the eyes of the few whitemen among us.³¹

It was to be expected that tribal, regional and sectional differences would be uncovered and sharpened with the devolution of power from the British to local statesmen.³² In 1945 Azikiwe could refer to the imaginary differences between North and South,³³ but by 1954 he was referring to a permanent breach between North and South.

So long as the British umbrella gave both parties protection, so long they appeared to be able to live together. Now, on the eve of British departure, certain forces are at work to create a permanent breach in the relations of North and South.³⁴

Obafemi Awolowo in 1945 saw more clearly into the situation, and it was on the basis of this tribal difference that he called for a federal system. He was one of the few to praise Sir Arthur Richards on the federal aspects of the Constitution of 1945.

30 Nigerian Daily Telegraph, Lagos, Vol.IV, No.I36, 7 May, 1931, p.4.

31 Nigerian Pioneer, Lagos, 23 April, 1926, p.7.

32 James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties" in C.Grove Haines, ed., Africa Today, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p.236.

33 Pilot, Vol.VIII, No.2184, 15 Jan., 1945, p.2.

34 Nnamdi Azikiwe, a speech to an N.C.N.C. Rally, Lagos, 4 Dec., 1954, "Come Let Us Build One Nation," reproduced in F. Chidozie Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, p.25.

The Yorubas, Hausas and Ibos have nothing in common. The only common factor to all of them is British overlordship. The venter of Western learning and civilization and the common interest in demanding political freedom have tended to make it appear that there is some unity among the educated Yorubas and the educated Ibos. However much the average educated Yorubas and Ibos may pretend to the contrary that they are Nigerians first and Yorubas and Ibos next, in their heart of hearts they remain first and last Yoruba and Ibo... By now setting us on the road to a federal state of Nigeria, you have made it possible for each ethnical group to develop their native souls, in full realization that it is in the common interest to do so.³⁵

At the Ibadan Constitution-Building Conference in 1950 this fear of domination centred around two issues; that of representation and that of revenue distribution. The Northern Region, with over fifty per cent of the population, demanded representation on a population basis.

We have begun to learn the idea of democracy from Europeans. Its most important principle we learn is the importance of majority.. Nigeria as a whole is now running fast towards self-government and nobody will expect us to keep quiet and allow other regions to develop at the expense of the Northern Region.³⁶

In this proposal the South could see its eternal domination by the North and gave a veiled threat that it might consider breaking the federation.

In a Legislative Council of one hundred whatever the North desires would become law... The West and East will have to accept every legislative proposal from the North... But if the worst comes to the worst the West will decide to stand on its own feet.³⁷

The Southern Regions proposed equal representation for each region which would give the South double representation for its population. In this proposal the North could see nothing but its enslavement.

35 Awolowo, "An Open Letter," Daily Service, Vol.VI, No.274, 1 May, 1945, p.2.

36 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.167.

37 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.24.

38 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.46.

If equal representation is given to each region, it seems that the South is to dictate to the North.³⁸

We shall escape from the domination of the whiteman only to be enslaved by the blackman.³⁹

When the Southern parties lost their bid for equal representation for each region in the constitution of 1951 they began to formulate a policy to divide the North by supporting the demands of the Middle Belt for a separate state at the London Regionalization Conference in 1954.⁴⁰

The Southern parties' press had built up a fictitious strength to the separatist movements in the North and blamed the election system and coercion for their poor showing at the polls.

The Southern parties' fear of the North increased even more as separatist movements grew in their own regions in the South. Both Southern governing parties have stated they will not see their own regions broken up unless the Northern Region is split.

On the issue of tax allotment, the North desired taxes to be disbursed with some attention to need or roughly even distribution to each region which on a per capita basis would give the North half as much as each Southern Region.

Remember, you Southerners, you say you want unity with us, and we agree but, if it were really friendly unity you want, you would not object to sharing things equally with us.⁴¹

39 Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 8 Feb., 1950, quoted in Report of the Kano Disturbances, by the Northern Nigerian Government Secretariat, Kaduna, Government Printer, 1953, p.41.

40 New Era Bureau, The London Regionalization Conference Before & After, Lagos, Techno Literary Works, 1953, p.30.

41 Nigeria, Alhaji Abdulmaliki Igbirra, Ibadan Conference, p.96.

However, the West did not look favourably upon any scheme which invited dilution of its higher per capita income.⁴² The position of the East had not been too clearly defined. Six months before the Ibadan Conference Dr. Azikiwe said that, "Any practice which encourages the disbursement of taxes for the improvement of other areas, to the detriment of the Ibo nation, must be vigorously opposed."⁴³ However, when it gradually became known that the Eastern Region would benefit under a policy of disbursement according to need the N.C.N.C., the governing party in Eastern Nigeria, adopted this policy. Apparently Dr. Azikiwe was not averse to spending Yoruba tax money in the Ibo areas.

Growth of Regional Parties.

In all West Africa, both French and British areas, upon the devolution of power to local bodies, the broad loosely knit Nationalist Coalitions began to disintegrate into religious, tribal and socio-economic parties.⁴⁴ Fear has played a dominant role in this development. In Republique de Togo, the Cameroons and Dahomey⁴⁵ the basis of the split has been the same as in Nigeria, "namely the sharp cultural cleavage between the more conservative Moslems of the North and the more adaptable and modernist Southerners."⁴⁶

⁴² James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties" in C. Grove Haines, ed., Africa Today, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p.237.

⁴³ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Farewell Message at the First Assembly of the Ibo State Union," Pilot, Vol.XII, No.3502, 8 July, 1949, p.2.

⁴⁴ In Sierra Leone the Peoples Party formed due to fear of the historically dominant Freetonians or Creoles. In Haute Volta the Union Voltaique formed because of fear of the traditionally dominant Mossi people of East Haute Volta.

⁴⁵ Dahomey - The Parti Republicain Dahomeen represents the people of the South and The Groupement Ethnique du Nord the people of the North.

⁴⁶ James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties" in C. Grove Haines, ed., Africa Today, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p. 249.

In Nigeria the Northern Peoples' Congress (N.P.C.) has found a common bond in the Moslem religion, Islamic Hausa culture and the fear of the more advanced Southerners. The Action Group (A.G.) found its unity in the Ibo domination scare, and the N.C.N.C. has tended more and more to cater to Ibo self-consciousness rallying around the personality of Azikiwe. In Nigeria disintegration and fragmentation has continued with the "progressive awakening of ethnic and religious communities."⁴⁷

The three major parties vary in their attitude to the British from extreme pro-British feeling in the N.P.C. to extreme anti-British feeling in the N.C.N.C. In the North the British are praised for saving Islamic Hausa culture from disintegration and are clung to, as a defence against the encroaching Southerner.

We were conquered by the whiteman but he did not enslave us, and now those who did not conquer us (Southerners) will enslave us.⁴⁸

In the West the attitude is the same only somewhat more moderate. Chief Awolowo is sometimes accused by his opponents of flattering the British into granting self-government. He could make the following statement without risking criticism from his party.

To many of us, Britain is a second home. Coming here (London) therefore is not like being in the midst of strangers. Indeed we are here among people with whom we have had long and close cultural, political and business associations...(it will be) the pride and happiness of the people of Nigeria to continue this association.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties," in C.Grove Haines, ed., Africa Today, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, p. 237

⁴⁸ Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 8 Feb., 1950, p.2.

⁴⁹ Awolowo to the 1956 London Conference, Daily Times, No.14,158, 24 May, 1957, p.3.

Dr. Azikiwe the spokesman of the N.C.N.C. came the closest to praising the British when he returned from the London Regionalisation Conference in 1954 and remarked that self-government was being handed to Nigeria on a platter of gold. However, the N.C.N.C. is the only party which have threatened to lead Nigeria out of the Commonwealth, and the Party's general attitude is better summed up by Dr. Azikiwe's quote from Bernard Shaw:

There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find Englishmen doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles.⁵⁰

Ever since Sir Arthur Richards introduced the 1945 Constitution which attempted to express the diversity of Nigeria in a Unitary state, the N.C.N.C. have accused Britain of attempting to pakistanise the country as she is accused of doing in the case of India, Israel and Ireland.⁵¹

So let Nigeria be pakistanised if that is the wish of the British government and if Northerners choose to allow themselves to be misled by such gas bags as Balewa and Makaman Bida.⁵²

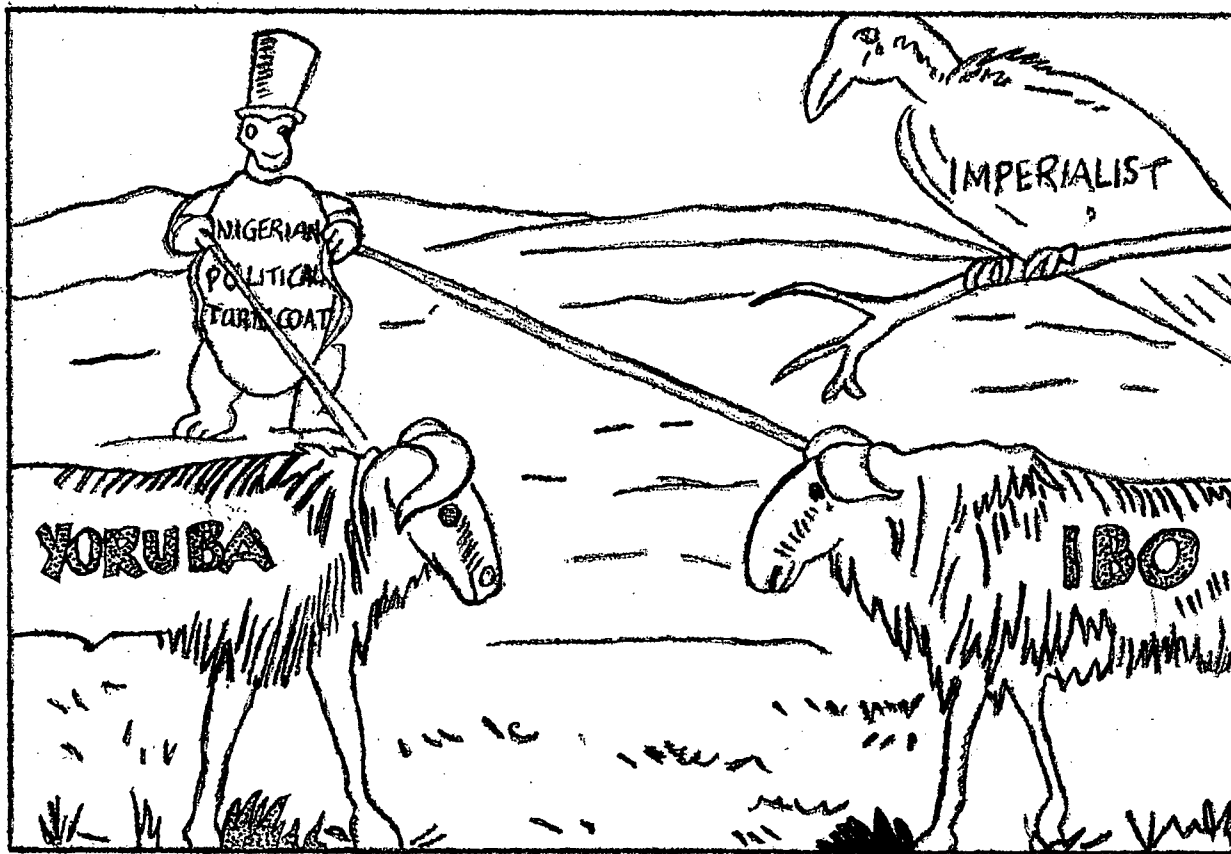
The N.C.N.C. constantly fought the federal principle, calling it pakistanisation and maintained that the British were supporting and even instrumental in the creation of the N.P.C. and A.G. who supported federalism and claiming that only Dr. Azikiwe and the N.C.N.C. "stood between British pakistanisation of Nigeria and Nigerian unity."⁵³

⁵⁰ Nigeria, Eastern Region, Constitutional Dispute, Statement made in the Eastern House of Assembly by Dr. the Hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of the Eastern Region, 19 April, 1955, Enugu, Gov't Printer, p.5.

⁵¹ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "British Pakistanisation of Nigerian Territory," Pilot, Vol.XII, No.3540, 24 Aug., 1949, p.2.

⁵² N. Azikiwe, "British Pakistanisation of Nigeria," Pilot, Vol.XII, No.3504, 11 July, 1949, p.2.

⁵³ Adelabu, ebullition, p.23.



THANK YOU, GOOD OLD FRIEND, GOAD THEM TO FIGHT TO DEATH, SO I CAN FEED FAT ON THEIR CARCASSES

WEST AFRICAN PILOT, 22 OCT. 1949.

The North's attitude was not to deny that they were relying on the British for advice but to defend that policy.

This Southern newspaper (Pilot) says that we in the North have no independent judgment, have no views of our own but those put in our mouths by Europeans... Because of that as we are Africans if we take our advice from a European are we to be reproached? Should we take it from an African even though we see its obvious unreliability?⁵⁴

While attacking British pakistanisation of Nigeria the N.C.N.C. along with the federalist parties A.G. and N.P.C. were rushing towards a federalism with more and more powers centred in the regions. A former N.C.N.C. member commented sarcastically on the N.C.N.C. attitude at the London Regionalisation Conference.

To sit back and watch those who formerly criticised him (Lyttleton) when he suggested a loose centre now asking him to give them an even looser centre than he probably had in mind must have tickled him immensely... And so Awolowo can keep the West, Sardauna the North, Azikiwe the East, Lyttleton the centre.⁵⁵

However, Dr. Azikiwe as early as 1949 had definitely set the pattern for a federal state and it would appear that the N.C.N.C. found it politically expedient to talk about the unity of Nigeria while at the same time actually working for a federal system.

We (Ibo nation) should exist as an internally autonomous state within the framework of a federated Commonwealth of Nigeria and the Cameroons.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ "Editorial" Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 3 Oct., 1951, p.2. quoted in the Report of the Kano Disturbances, p.44.

⁵⁵ New Era Bureau, The London 'Regionalisation' Conference Before & After, Lagos, Techno Literary Works, 1953, p.29.

⁵⁶ N. Azikiwe, "Self-Determination for the Ibo People of Nigeria," Pilot, Vol.XII, No.3501, 7 July, 1949, p.2.

The British countered the charge of pakistanisation with a number of quite definite statements. Sir Arthur Richards said, "Britain is not going to repeat in Nigeria the mistakes she has committed in India."⁵⁷

The British government in a statement to Azikiwe said, "His Majesty's Government's policy was to maintain the unity of Nigeria."⁵⁸ Again in 1947 the Acting Governor, George Beresford Stooke said in his New Years message:

We cannot afford to dissipate our energies in inter-tribal, inter-communal or inter-racial quarrels and least of all can we afford such a mis-direction of efforts at the present time.⁵⁹

During 1948 in what is known as the "Press war" the government threatened that "should the controversy be continued in a form likely to exacerbate inter-tribal feelings, government may be compelled to seek powers to exercise a measure of control over the press."⁶⁰ And again in 1953 after the Kano Riots Governor Macpherson said, "the measure of the blow that has been dealt to the unity of Nigeria is still to be assessed."⁶¹ It could be argued that through the period 1948 to 1954 the unity which Nigeria had, was preserved by the British.

⁵⁷ Timothy Moka Uzo, The Pathfinder, Port Harcourt, Niger Press, 1953, p.3.

⁵⁸ Loc. cit.

⁵⁹ Nigeria, Federal Information Service, Nigeria's Constitutional Story 1867-1954, Lagos, the Service, 1955, p.18.

⁶⁰ Nigerian Citizen, Vol.I, No.6, 15 Oct., 1948, p.2.

⁶¹ Charles U. Uwanaka, New Nigeria, Lagos, Pacific Printing and Publishing, 1953, p.25.

The gap between the North and South widened with each passing year until it resulted in the Kano Disturbances in 1953. One of the factors contributing to this widening breach was the desire of the South to move too fast in constitutional changes.

Honestly speaking, gentlemen, the North is afraid of making this rapid, and if I may call it, artificial advance at this stage... We like to have power, but only when we have come to the stage where we can hold that power.⁶²

Another factor contributing to distrust between North and South was the general Southern attack upon the North led by the Southern press. This attack was centred on four points, first that the N.P.C., the governing party in the North, did not represent the people.

The thing which surprises me most is that all the newspapers which are owned by Southerners say the same thing. They contain nothing but abuse for the Northern representatives. If they continue to miscall the North because it does not subscribe to their views, they are promoting the disunity of Nigeria. We the spokesmen of the North are fully behind our representatives in just the same way as the Southerners are behind theirs.⁶³

Secondly, the Southern press accorded the Northern Elements Progressive Union (N.E.P.U.) an importance which it did not possess. Thirdly, the press supported any individual or group of Northern origin whose policy was to undermine the established administration. Fourthly, the South maintained that the Northerners echoed the British voice. An editorial entitled "His Masters Voice" appeared in the West African Pilot.

The Sultan of Sokoto who has apparently been silent on the issue of self-government, has been credited with a statement on Mau Mau terrorism. The Sultan has every right to admonish his co-religionists but it is necessary to ask whether the fears expressed in the release are all his or whether they are mixed up⁶⁴ with the fears of British administrative officers as well....

62 Nigeria, Tafawa Balewa, Ibadan Conference, p.63 and 68.

63 Gaskiya Ta Fi Gwabo, II Feb., 1950, p.2.

64 "His Masters Voice," West African Pilot, 15 April, 1953 in Northern Nigeria, Kano Disturbances, p.5.

Probably the strongest statement of a Southerner was by Chief Bode Thomas who said, "We refuse to associate ourselves with Africans who have not the guts to speak their mind."⁶⁵

In 1953 when the Northern representatives to the Federal parliament refused to approve a resolution asking for self-government in 1956 they were mobbed outside the buildings by hooligans heckling them with such slogans as, "His Masters Voice," "Government party thieves," "Kolanut chiefs," "No minds of their own," "Slaves of whitemen," and "Stupid Hausa."

A most unpleasant feature of our last three days in Lagos was the band of hooligans who were organized by unscrupulous politicians to abuse anyone seen to be wearing Northern dress.⁶⁶

It would appear that the influence of the Southern press was behind the Lagos mobs and that Dr. Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo had also been deluded by their own press for they immediately set out on a missionary journey to the North to rouse the people against the N.P.C. They fully expected to be received by cheering multitudes for their respective newspapers apparently printing their stories ahead of time were already headlining their triumphant reception. "The North regarded these self-imposed missionary activities as being nothing more or less than an attempt to secure, by organising confusion in the North, its domination by the South."⁶⁷

Resentment rose fast in the North as a result of the insults to Northern leaders in Lagos and the non-stop hostile press campaign. The proposed tour of the North was too much.

⁶⁵ Charles U. Uwanaka, New Nigeria, Lagos, Pacific Publishing, 1953, p.25.

⁶⁶ The Sardauna of Sokoto, Northern Nigeria, Kano Disturbances, p.4.

⁶⁷ Loc. cit.

Having abused us in the South these very Southerners have decided to come over to the North to abuse us, but we have determined to retaliate the treatment given us in the South.⁶⁸

Rioting broke out, directed against the Southerners living in the Sabon Gari, when Chief Awolowo arrived at Kano. Turbulence reigned for three days. Fourteen Northerners and twenty-one Southerners were killed and a total of 241 injured. The police refrained from using guns. There was serious danger of riots in other Northern centres such as Jos, Kaduna, and other towns with substantial Southern populations.

In the report published by the Northern government the blame was placed in the first instance on the lawless elements of Kano, and in the second, on the Southern press.

The blame for starting the disorders, therefore, clearly lies with the lawless elements of Kano, and no amount of provocation, short term or long term, can in any sense, justify their behaviour.⁷⁰

The riots in Kano increased the tendencies towards pakistanisation and now for the first time the North began to discuss seriously the setting up of a separate state.

At the moment, all the people I have spoken to say, "divide the country," I explain the hardships, but they still say, "divide the country."⁷¹

We, on reflection, consider that a mistake was made in 1914 when the North and South were joined together. Now after thirty-six years, if it is decided to divide Nigeria, both the North and South will suffer.⁷²

⁶⁸ Northern Nigeria, Kano Disturbances, p.46.

⁶⁹ The literal translation is stranger's town. The majority of Southerners living in the North reside in these towns where they are allowed municipal institutions and where they live much as they would in Southern Nigeria.

⁷⁰ Northern Nigeria, Kano Disturbances, p.38.

⁷¹ Alhaji Ahmandu, Sardauna of Sokoto, Premier of the Northern Region, reported in Nigerian Citizen, Vol.I, No.77, 17 Feb., 1950, p.1.

⁷² "Editorial," Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 11 Feb., 1950.

The Northerners, always conscious of their dependence on the South for an outlet to the sea began to talk recklessly of co-operating with the French for a railway to the ocean or any scheme which would loosen the hold the South held over them by its possession of all the Nigerian ports.

We do not want Nigeria to be partitioned, but if in a unified Nigeria we see falsehood, harm, enslavement and oppression, then let us insist upon separation. Look at Pakistan, although experiencing difficulty, she is rejoicing in her freedom.⁷³

The ultimate result of the Kano Disturbances was a new policy statement by the N.P.C. drawn up in May, 1953, commonly called the North's Eight Point Plan which demanded for the North complete legislative and executive autonomy except external affairs, defence, customs and research which would be placed under a non-political central agency. There was to be no central legislature or executive for the whole of Nigeria. Railways, airways, posts and telegraphs, electricity and coal mining would be placed under public corporations. Customs revenue should be decided according to the imports region of destination. Upon the publication of the Eight Point Plan, the break between North and South was complete.

At this point it might be well to look at the Nigerian press. In the years between 1885 and 1940 the press took as its duty that of "watch dog on the government and officials." This task it performed moderately and well. It was scholarly and catered to an elite. From 1945 to 1951 the larger section of the Nigerian press led by the Zikist group of five, changed its sights and aimed at the mass circulation - the semi-literate. By so doing its standards went down in terms of language and unfortunately

73 Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 11 Feb., 1950, p.2.

in terms of veracity.⁷⁴ The insults to the English during this period are scarcely believable. The racial antagonism engendered deteriorated race relations as the press exploited every point of discontent. Both in the general strike of 1945 and the Enugu Shooting⁷⁵ it attempted to⁷⁶ rouse the people to greater resistance.

The press roused the demand for self-government, and on this it has justified its disregard for truth. The British would withdraw many thousands of miles away after independence and little permanent harm would be done.

From 1951 on, when the press felt fairly certain that the British were going, they turned their attacks upon their fellow Nigerians. In so doing they were creating deep rifts and bitter memories which only years of patient labour would undo.

Since a section of the Nigerian people have taken upon themselves to advocate for immediate self-government, and condemned and pilloried every sane leader who thinks otherwise, what monstrosities in the name of patriotism have been committed, what chaos has ensued, what moral and spiritual losses have been sustained, you yourselves are my witness.⁷⁷

In the light of this it appeared almost comic-opera that Dr. Azikiwe and his newspapers should press unceasing attacks upon The Times and The Economist. The most blatant example was when Dr. Azikiwe (who was then charging the British with pakistanisation policies in Nigeria and at the

74 Northern Nigeria, Kano Disturbances, Appendix C, pp. 47-49.

75 In 1949, twenty-nine striking miners were shot at the Iva mine near Enugu on the orders of a British officer.

76 The Fitzgerald Commission accused the press of turning the Enugu Shooting, an industrial dispute, into a political dispute, and I might add, a racial dispute.

77 Rev. O. Efiong, Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.81.

same time describing the Eastern Region of Nigeria as the Ibo nation) attacked The Times for an editorial in which it warned of the dangers of pakistanisation.

One writer has said, "It is likely... that the people will learn that sturdy disrespect for journalism that older states know."⁷⁸ It is probably this learning which is turning many people to The Daily Times, a politically independent, London controlled newspaper, so that now it has a larger subscription than The Daily Service and The West African Pilot combined. In the past, too much emphasis in Nigeria has been placed on press freedom by the newspapers and not enough on press responsibility.

Many Nigerian leaders have been strongly impressed with the need for transcending tribalism and regionalism. In 1947 Mbonu Ojike asked every-one to boycott the use of the word "tribe"⁷⁹ Dr. Azikiwe has over and over again eschewed tribalism.

As the chosen leader of the representatives of a great majority of fourteen million inhabitants of the South, I appeal to the Premier of the Northern Region to have faith that it is not the intention of Southerners to dominate the North or to desecrate their religious traditions.⁸⁰

Both the executive leaders and executive committee of the N.C.N.C.⁸¹ are quite representative of Southern Nigeria. The A.G. committee is not as representative as the N.C.N.C. but for a so-called, all Yoruba

⁷⁸ Oden Meeker, Report on Africa, London, Chatto & Windus, 1955, p.112.

⁷⁹ Mbonu Ojike, "Weekend Catechism," Pilot, Vol.X, No.2920, 2 Aug., 1947, p.2.

⁸⁰ N. Azikiwe, "Come Let Us Build One Nation," F. Chidozie Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, p.91.

⁸¹ Executive Leaders(1956), four Yorubas, one Ibo, one Istekiri, one Ghanaian, one Sierra Leonian. Executive committee(1956), thirteen Yorubas, ten Ibos, two Efiks, two Ibibios, four Cameroonians, one Middle Belter, one Fulani.

party, it has a fair number of non-Yoruba members, although they were
⁸²
 until 1957 all westerners. The A.G. began as a Yoruba organisation
 but although it is not very old it has been making conscious efforts to
 undo the apparent parochialism with which it was associated at its initial
⁸³
 stage. Rotimi Williams once declared in the press, "we are only begin-
⁸⁴
 ning from the West," and this statement has later been proven true as the
 A.G. has extended itself into both the Northern and Eastern Regions. Chief
 Awolowo was statesman enough to call upon the Yorubas to emulate the Ibos'
⁸⁵
 example of self-help and self-sacrifice.

In the North there are positive signs that the N.P.C. has moved away
 from its Eight Point Program and has surrendered to Southern demands for
 self-government in 1960. The Northern newspaper Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo during
 the Press war began a self-imposed censorship and refused to publish or
⁸⁶
 write inflammatory material which would set one group against the other.

A large body of opinion in Nigeria would agree with Alvin Ikoku, leader
 of the opposition in the Eastern House of Assembly, in probably the
 finest speech on Nigerian unity.

Just as I believe it would be a poor Nigeria if we lost the
 sense of discipline and solidarity of the North, it would be
 a poor Nigeria if we lost the grandeur and respect for other
 peoples' feeling of the West and the frankness and respect

⁸² Executive Leaders(1956), nine Yorubas, one Benis, one Ibo. Executive Committee(1956), eleven Yorubas, one Benis, one Istekiri, one Ibo, one Urhobo.

⁸³ New Era Bureau, The London "Regionalisation" Conference, Before & After, Lagos, Techno Literary Works, 1953, p.13.

⁸⁴ Loc. cit.

⁸⁵ Obafemi Awolowo, The Price of Progress, Ibadan, Public Relations Department, 1953, p.20.

⁸⁶ Northern Nigeria, Kano Disturbances, p.39.

for the rights of the individual of the East, so it would be a poor Nigeria if we lost the specialised knowledge of people who are not of our colour, but who are happily of our school of thought.⁸⁷

Decline of the N.C.N.C.

The N.C.N.C. at the height of its power was able to hold together many diverse elements by virtue of the one bond of common aim - opposition to the British. When the British began to relinquish power under the Macpherson constitution, the N.C.N.C. had difficulty in seizing that power and at the same time keeping itself free to criticise the government of which it was now a part. Dr. Azikiwe left the country just before the Ibadan Conference, one of the most important conferences in Nigerian history, and went on a tour of Europe and America. The Ibadan Conference largely shaped the Macpherson constitution and criticism of the constitution must therefore be directed at Nigerians, often N.C.N.C. supporters, and not at the British. By going to Europe and so remaining aloof from the proceedings Dr. Azikiwe was able to criticise the decisions upon his return. The difficulty of seizing power and criticising at the same time was one of the reasons for the constitutional crisis in Eastern Nigeria in 1953, the break in the ranks of the N.C.N.C. and the emergence of a new party. The N.C.N.C. party executive, important elements of which failed to gain election, wished to break the constitution while the parliamentary wing, who were enjoying power wished to make the constitution work.

For this reason unity within the N.C.N.C. decreased in proportion to the withdrawal of British rule. The party did not have a set of principles to distinguish it as a party. Each affiliated organisation felt free to

⁸⁷ Alvin Ikoku, Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.56.

criticise its policy and the strength of its united front began to wane.

In the early period, the N.C.N.C. had shown tendencies towards marxism, socialism, racism, messianism, violence and independence outside the Commonwealth. These were only tendencies, not policies, but the lack of discipline made it possible for all kinds and conditions of small men to make speeches indicating these tendencies. Conservative opinion began to fear the party, judging it upon many of these lesser men. The Nigerian Youth Movement (N.Y.M.) still continued in existence, its strength almost nil as the people showed little enthusiasm for conservative opinion in the years from 1945 to 1950. When it became plain that colonial rule was departing, the emphasis shifted from opposition to colonialism to policies of governing. Here conservative opinion could bid for recognition. Opposition to the N.C.N.C. extremist tactics and tendencies came from the North and from the Yorubas.

The N.C.N.C. following in the North had never been large, confined mainly to the Southerners living in the North. However, a section of Northern opinion had looked favourably upon the policies of the N.C.N.C. The extremist tactics set heavy conservative opinion in action in the North and alienated the majority of favourable opinion away from the N.C.N.C.

Nobody likes changes more than we do... changes are the law of nature, but we want natural changes and not radical ones which will result in nothing else but failure.⁸⁹

Many Yoruba leaders felt that the N.C.N.C. was going too fast. At the same time they felt the British were moving too slowly.

⁸⁸ Dr. Azikiwe in announcing a dramatic purge of the party used these words, "I am convinced that a drastic control of the N.C.N.C., even in a totalitarian manner, has become necessary." Daily Times, 29 Oct., 1957, p.8.

⁸⁹ Makaman Bida quoted in Ogbalu, Dr. Azik of Africa, p.58.

As far as I know, no right thinking Nigerian has ever seriously doubted the sincerity of British protestations that the ultimate goal for colonial dependencies is self-government. The all important question is: when? The British government moves all too slowly in the direction of this goal, so slowly in fact, that when they say they are in motion, they make no perceptible progress. In the result the colonial peoples impatient of indefinite subjugation often react violently and demand to be 'rocketed' to the goal of immediate self-government, reckless of the fact that they may be blown to bits when the rocket crashes at the other end.⁹⁰

Others felt that the anti-British attitude of the N.C.N.C. was causing the British to be stubborn and attributed the party's failure to that cause.⁹¹ Still others attacked the N.C.N.C. for exceeding the mandate given to it by the people. The letter to the National leaders which asked them to endorse the N.C.N.C. as their spokesman over the four obnoxious ordinances had not specifically mentioned self-government but only mentioned "other matters relevant to the welfare and progress of Nigeria." Critics accused the party of doing what Sir Arthur Richards had done; drawing up a constitution without consulting the people. Dr. Azikiwe defended his party's action:

Certainly, the demand for self-government and the drafting of a constitution by the N.C.N.C. delegates are other matters.... relevant to the welfare and progress of Nigeria.⁹²

Because the object of all groups and parties was the same, policies often degenerated into personal rivalries and petty bickerings. The loose organization of the N.C.N.C. meant that much dirty linen was washed in public with resultant disillusionment and loss of idealism of many people.

⁹⁰ Awolowo, "An Open Letter," Daily Service, Vol.I, No.274, 1 May, 1945, p.2.

⁹¹ Azikiwe, "Political Reminiscences(7)" Southern Nigeria Defender, Vol.V, No.I2,I34, 22 July, 1947, p.2.

⁹² Loc. cit.

As previously mentioned the position of the leader in this loose organization was important. The over-exalted and near deified position of Dr. Azikiwe in the party alienated many who felt that he was a great man but at the same time human with human weaknesses. Criticism of Dr. Azikiwe almost led to expulsion from the party.

Both inside and outside the N.C.N.C. anybody who appeared to be a threat to Azikiwe's sole reign was mowed down like grass.⁹³

The opposition criticised the ways in which the thirteen thousand pounds collected by the N.C.N.C. on their tour of the country, was spent. Voices were raised asking for an accounting. Dr. Azikiwe subtly blamed this on Herbert Macaulay who was dead, by saying that "providentially the 'grand old man' died and I did not have to question him."⁹⁴ In the mad scramble for wealth and power many people saw the less patriotic side of the nationalist movement and wished for a more idealistic approach to self-government.

"The N.C.N.C. foundered on the rock of tribalism."⁹⁵ This is a large statement with at least some truth in it. After Macaulay's death the dual leadership, Yoruba-Ibo, Macaulay-Azikiwe, disappeared. No Yoruba leader grew up under Azikiwe who could hold the Yorubas in the party, the most brilliant and colourful Yorubas having broken from the party. However, there were sufficient Yorubas in the party in 1957 that the N.C.N.C. had considerable Yoruba following.

⁹³ Action Group, Forward to Freedom, Ibadan, Bureau of Information, 1954, p.2.

⁹⁴ Azikiwe, "Political Reminiscences(3)," Southern Nigeria Defender, Vol.V, No.I2,I29, 16 July, 1948, p.4.

⁹⁵ Thomas Hodgkins, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, London, Frederick Muller, 1956, p.I51.

Very early a number of professional men of Yoruba origin who held important positions in the N.C.N.C. had been attacking it as an Ibo organisation and complaining that Dr. Azikiwe was favouring fellow Ibos with the most important posts in the party.⁹⁶ Olorun-Nimbe accused Dr. Azikiwe of turning the Northern Tour into an Ibo affair.⁹⁷ As the years passed the N.C.N.C. became more and more an Ibo party, largely because of the rise of other parties on a tribal basis but also due to the over-emphasis upon the Ibo in the N.C.N.C.

Dr. Azikiwe as leader of the party must share in the failures as well as the successes of the N.C.N.C. There is no doubt that Dr. Azikiwe was largely the focal point and embodiment of the new Nigerian pride, self-confidence and hope⁹⁸ which characterized Nigeria in the immediate post war years. He was the first to "awaken the public into national awareness and the desperate desire for freedom."⁹⁹ He was one of the first to arouse racial consciousness in the Nigerian. I believe that like Nkrumah his early preaching of racialism and his policy of creating racial antagonism "was merely a technique for coalescing the nationalism of his people in readiness for the overthrow of colonialism."¹⁰⁰ Basically he was not anti-British.

So long as Great Britain sympathises with our political aspirations and encourages our growth towards an independent national existence as a state, so long shall we seek to bind ourselves closer to the ties of allegiance to the Crown.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Desmond Buckle, "Nigeria's Road to Independence" Africa South, Vol.I, No.I, Oct.-Dec. 1956, p.99.

⁹⁷ Azikiwe, "Political Reminiscences(4)" Southern Nigeria Defender, Vol.V, No.I2, I30, 17 July, 1948, p.I.

⁹⁸ W.T. Fox, Zik As I See Him, Lagos, by the writer, 1947, p.9.

⁹⁹ Akande Tugbiyele, The Emergence of Nationalism and Federalism, p.23.

¹⁰⁰ Sir Alan Burns, History of Nigeria, London, Allen & Unwin, 1955, p.296.

¹⁰¹ Azikiwe, "Address on the Occasion of the Revision of the Macpherson Constitution 1953," quoted in Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, p.47.

However, he has never understood how to handle the British and frequently has clashed with them. He has preferred to blame his own mistakes on the British government and this has not helped to convince the British of his ability to govern. There are more statements of his which are anti-British than otherwise, and in this it would appear as if he were catering more to the Eastern people who tend to be more critical of the British than the Western or Northern people.

Ibo writers have idolized him. "God made him without blemish." ^{I02}
An Ibo-dominated national church has conferred sainthood on him. Azikiwe's acceptance of these honours has made many non-Ibos feel he is vain and carried away with his own importance. This may be the explanation of Dr. Azikiwe's martyr complex. Certainly his influence has thrived on the suspicion that he is being persecuted, that the British are out to ruin him. Thus in any difficulty with the British regardless of the rights or the wrongs of the case the suggestion has always been that it is another move of the British Government to discredit him.

Even non-Ibos were convinced of Azikiwe's sincerity and his personal integrity. ^{I03} One Civil servant writing of him says, "every man in the provinces who was questioned confirmed without any hesitation that he and his people had complete and almost blind confidence in Zik's personal honesty and integrity." ^{I04} Dr. Azikiwe more than any other Nigerian has attempted to transcend the boundaries of tribalism.

I02 Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, p.25.

I03 This conviction has been shaken by the Foster-Sutton Commission investigating the affairs of the Continental Bank. Azikiwe was found guilty of using government money to prevent the bankruptcy of a bank in which he and his family held controlling shares.

I04 Fox, Zik As I See Him, p.II.

He regards himself and behaves as a Nigerian knowing nothing of tribal boundary.^{I05}

Herbert Macaulay was certain he was a Nigerian first and last and attempted to still the mounting criticism of Zik as an Ibo.

Some people say he hates Yorubas. I don't believe them... He is a Nigerian, an Ibo, a Yoruba, an Hausa, a Kroo, anything.^{I06}

Besides these statements should be placed his Ibo State Union Address^{I07} of 1949 from which excerpts have been quoted. This address is probably the most straight forward and undisguised statement supporting tribalism ever recorded in Nigeria with its lusty references to the Ibo nation and its manifest destiny to recreate the empires of the past.

Dr. Azikiwe's main popularity and support come through his writings. His book, Renascent Africa, has been termed the Bible of African nationalist movements. It was in the field of journalism, however, where the real power of his pen became apparent. His readers and admirers were "thirsting for reading matter of almost any kind" but especially for any writing which appealed to their newly awakened political consciousness and supported their "growing self-confidence and racial pride."^{I08} Copies of The West African Pilot between 1947 and 1949 were often sold and resold; some editorials being committed to memory.

Zik's journalism caused much indignation in certain quarters, particularly in government circles and among the conservative Nigerians because he was "trained in the American school which is regarded as shockingly

^{I05} Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, p.25.

^{I06} Isaac B. Thomas, Life History of Herbert Macaulay C.E., Lagos, Ahede Eko, 1947, p.61.

^{I07} See below p.99.

^{I08} Fox, Zik As I See Him, p.3.

direct, offensive and crude" by British and British educated readers.

The Rise of the Action Group

Under the chairmanship of Sir Adeyemo Alakiya an all-Yoruba national movement known as the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Association of the children of Oduduwa) was inaugurated in November, 1947. The idea of a Yoruba cultural association had first been suggested by Obafemi Awolowo in London a couple of years earlier. The members included Sir Adeyemo and Dr. K. Abayomi, both known for conservative pro-British views, Dr. Maja, president of the Nigerian Youth Movement and for a number of years elected member for Lagos in the House of Assembly. Awolowo was then a relatively unknown personality.

The new organization emphasised the differences rather than the similarities of the various tribes in Nigeria. It aimed to foster a spirit of unity among Yorubas by discouraging inter-tribal prejudice and aimed at the creation of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland.

Its second aim was to co-ordinate educational and cultural programmes among the Yorubas which it called a heterogenous people. It implied a cultural superiority for the Yoruba people. It whipped up Yoruba nationalism by extolling the ancient glory that once belonged to the Yorubas and the superiority of Yoruba adaptation to western living and thinking. Its emphasis on education may have been an attempt to maintain the Yoruba lead over the Ibos in this field.

The third aim of the Egbe Omo Odudwa was to preserve the monarchical form of government in Western Nigeria by acknowledging the leadership of the obas and plan for their enlightenment and democratisation.

I09 Fox, Zik As I See Him, p.3.

I10 The aims of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa were stated by Dr. K. Abayomi, Pilot, Vol.XI, No.3022, 3 Dec. 1947, p.2.

III The Yoruba word for "chief."

It rapidly gained ground. It attracted the obas, because of its monarchical tendencies especially since under the Richards Constitution, although a House of Chiefs had been created in the North, there had been no such provision for the Yoruba West. The Egbe Omo Oduduwa was plainly determined to work towards such official recognition.

I should have thought that these Western potentates of ours are sagacious and worthy enough to be entrusted with the functions of a separate House of Chiefs.^{II2}

The new society by its non-political nature and moderate approach
II3
won over the obas as allies. They became very valuable allies when the Egbe Omo Oduduwa turned political. Besides the obas, conservative Yoruba groups, the educated, business and the professional classes found the new society congenial.

Until 1951, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa remained a reply to the Ibo State Union, catering for the social and cultural progress of the Yoruba. It was however, unlike the Ibo State Union in that it was created as a central organization which intended to set up local branches while the Ibo State Union was created to unite and direct the many local Ibo unions which had formed locally for a great variety of reasons.

In 1951, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa formed an Action Committee, later called the Action Group (A.G.) as its political wing. This committee was under the chairmanship of Obafemi Awolowo. The Action Group immediately began to establish local branches. Shortly after its formation the A.G. realising the political disadvantage of its parental organisation attempted unsuccessfully to dissociate itself from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Nevertheless Yoruba energy was channelled into the A.G. The parent organisation had ceased to exist by 1956.

II2 Awolowo, "An Open Letter(4)," Daily Service, Vol.VI, No.276, 4 May, 1945, p.2.

II3 Bamishe O. Agunbiade, The Case for the Action Group - Party of the Masses, Ibadan, African Press, 1954, p.12.

The A.G. appeared as a revitalised and national version of the N.Y.M. Many N.Y.M. members became A.G. supporters. The Daily Service press, the creation of the N.Y.M., became the official organ of the A.G. The N.Y.M. remained a Lagos municipal party now in alliance with the A.G.

Although the Egbe Omo Oduduwa had ceased to exist, the A.G. continued to represent the sentiments of its parent body. Its policy was a political expression of the cultural attitudes of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, and as such directed and fed on Yoruba nationalism. It confined its operation to the Western Region preaching the "solidarity of the parts and the unity of all."^{II4} Owing to this policy it firmly believed in a federal system and from its inception quite definitely and precisely stated its policy on federalism, a suggested ten states organised with a view to cultural and ethnical differences, regionalisation of the judiciary and civil service, and residual powers lying in the regions. Such a policy laid the foundation of a provincial rights party of the future.

In outlook it reflected those who largely supported it, the conservatives. It eschewed radical socialism, racialism, and all forms of violence. It set out to build a system modelled on British parliamentary procedure and Canadian and Australian federalism. Its aim was to prove to the British Nigerians' ability to rule and rule well, and when it had to employ pressure it did so by "gentlemanly means." By so doing it won the hearty support and loyalty of its British civil servants who privately became its strongest supporters. This led to the Opposition's complaint that it was a creation of the British and that it was privately encouraged by the British government. More credence has been given to this theory by the Action Group's success at conferences where, because of its clear-cut policy and

II4 "Political Parties in Nigeria," Nigeria Year Book 1956, Lagos, Nigerian Printing and Publishing Co., 1956, p.105.

well thought out arguments, it has been able more than any other party to express its will in evolving the Nigerian Constitution. While the N.C.N.C. has been busy opposing most measures, and then finally backing down and accepting them, the A.G. has been able to follow a positive constructive policy.

The N.C.N.C. plan for Nigeria had originally been a unitary state and thus the regional pattern introduced by the Richards Constitution was bitterly attacked. The A.G. arose to support and even further this system. Bitterness between the parties mounted rapidly. When it was admitted that a unitary state was impossible, due to the attitude of both the North and West, the N.C.N.C. changed to favour a federal system with a strong centre. To accomplish this they recommended a number of states, eight or nine in order that no state could possibly dominate the central government. For the same reason they opposed the regionalisation of the judiciary and civil service.^{II5}

The determining factors in creating such states were to be linguistic, cultural, geographic and financial. The proposed states in this semi-federal plan were, Benin-Delta, Calabar, Ibo (Ogoja, a dual tribe province, to decide where it wished to be placed), Rivers State (East and West Ijaws),^{II6} Bornu, Cameroons, Hausa State, and the Middle Belt (one or two states).

As early as the Ibadan Conference 1950 which decided against linguistic divisions, Mbonu Ojike and Eyo Ita both N.C.N.C. members submitted a minority report in which they supported the "grouping of Nigeria along

II5 N.C.N.C. Battle for Unity and Freedom, Yaba, Zik Enterprise, 1954, pp.41-42.

II6 Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, p.78.

ethnic and linguistic units" which would seem to remove the "problem of boundaries, minority and pakistanistic dangers now threatening the unity of Nigeria."^{II7}

The Action Group began as a party devoted to the federal principle. They maintained that federations were held together by a backbone of national feeling and not necessarily by a constitution with a strong central government. On the other hand too much stress on the central element had caused federations to fall apart.^{II8}

The argument of the A.G. which carried the heaviest political weight was that under a unitary system the Yorubas would be held back. This they were determined was not to happen. The Yoruba cultural lead was to be maintained.

While I believe, and still believe that the Ibo people can be relied upon to run very fast, as in fact they are doing already, and catch up with the Yorubas without considerable loss of time and subsequent frustration to the political aspirations of the Yorubas, I was convinced that the Hausas under the existing system might be a perpetual drag.^{II9}

The Northern Region agreed with these sentiments:

The North, gentlemen, would very much like to march with the rest of Nigeria, but at a reasonable speed, not at an impossible speed for the North, and it is with this in mind that the Northern Region has recommended a federal system of government in this country...

II7 Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.244.

II8 Nigeria, Fed. Gov't, Report on the Commission on Revenue Allocation, Investigation by J.R. Hisks, Lagos, Gov't Printer, 1951, p.47.

II9 Awolowo, "An Open Letter(I) Daily Service, Vol.VI, No.274, 1 May, 1945, p.2.

The North does not wish, and has never had the intention of retarding the political advance of any Region.^{I20}

It was because of the Northern support of the West for a federal system that it was guaranteed that it would emerge, with or without the consent of the N.C.N.C.

The A.G. favoured the regionalisation of the judiciary, civil service and police because they feared that the Ibos were gradually coming to dominate these features of the government and they saw in the N.C.N.C. policy of non-regionalisation an attempt to perpetuate this Ibo dominance.^{I21}

The conflict between the N.C.N.C. and A.G. over a strong versus a loose federation focused on the question of where the residual powers should lie; the N.C.N.C. favouring residual powers at the centre, the A.G. in the regions.

The A.G. marked a new departure in political organisation. It maintained an efficient party machine, local branches leading up to the national executive, rules, dues, full time organisers and a technique of gaining and maintaining popular support. It was an example of a closely knit, well disciplined party modelled on British parties in contrast to the loose, amorphous N.C.N.C. The future lies with this new model organisation rather than the N.C.N.C. older congress type.^{I22} The A.G. concentrated its action in the west. It "bit off just enough chunk of polit-

^{I20} Ogbalu, Dr. Zik of Africa, pp. 88-9.

^{I21} Ibos constitute over sixty per cent of the Nigerian police force.

^{I22} F. Gros Clark, Henry Collins, Thomas Hodgkins, Amanke Okafor, The New West Africa, London, Allen & Unwin, 1953, p.66.

ical sphere as it could conveniently chew and digest," while the N.C.N.C. ^{I23} was handicapped by its initial attempt at country-wide ramifications.

The position of the leader in the A.G. showed a marked change from the N.C.N.C. Chief Obafemi Awolowo had been the chief architect and guiding light of the A.G. His doctrine of federalism as set down in his book, Path to Nigerian Freedom, and his Open Letter to Sir Arthur Richards, laid down the principles which the A.G. consistently followed. Awolowo has been extremely important to the party but he does not hold the near-sacred position of Dr. Azikiwe. Awolowo is not considered irreplaceable, and the party need not necessarily break up when his services are no longer needed. The N.C.N.C. can hardly expect to avoid a disastrous leadership struggle following the demise of Azikiwe.

Obafemi Awolowo was born of Ijebu-Ode Yoruba parents in 1909. He was educated mainly in Anglican and Methodist schools. He was the first Nigerian to complete the Bachelor of Commerce degree externally from London University. He was called to the bar from Inner Temple, London. He was the first general secretary of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in 1948. He stood and was elected to represent Ijebu-Remo division in the first general election in 1951. Formerly Awolowo had been active in union work and was a co-founder of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria. He has had a number of honorary traditional Nigerian titles conferred on him by Ijeun, Ikenne, Ijebu-Remo, Oshogbo, Ado-Ekiti and Ile-Ife. Chief Awolowo has never been able to woo the Ibadan Yorubas because of his Ijebu-Ode background. The Ibadans are still influenced by their traditional dislike and suspicion of the people of Ijebu-Ode.

The most serious charge made against the A.G. is that it began on a wave of tribalistic sentiment, and although it later modified its policy it had the effect of intensifying tribalistic feelings in other tribes. There is no question that the Action Group was the first to openly proclaim the doctrine of tribalism. This doctrine was presented to the people in the form of arousing fear of Ibo domination. The N.C.N.C. was charged as being an Ibo organisation. The creeping Ibo menace in the police, the professions and business was pointed out with telling effect. This attack upon the Ibos and the N.C.N.C. was vigorously countered by Dr. Azikiwe.

Henceforth, the cry must be one of battle against the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, its leaders at home and abroad, up hill and down dale in the streets of Nigeria and in the residences of its advocates ...it is the enemy of Nigeria; it must be crushed to the earth ...there is no going back, until the Fascist organisation of Sir Adeyemo has been dismembered.^{I24}

Because it was the same party which originated in a wave of tribalism and at the same time advocated a federal system, the two ideas became almost identical in the minds of the people. Many people felt that the Action Group was aiming at the secession of the Western Region from the Federation.

The third charge against the Action Group was that it was pro-British. Sometimes it has been hinted that the British even assisted in its formation.^{I25} These charges were based on a number of circumstances. The splitting of the sub-continent of India into two nations had certainly a mark-

I24 Tugbiyele, The Emergence of Nationalism and Federalism, p.29.

I25 "It is at least widely believed that, particularly in the more politically backward regions... parties representing the standpoint of the conservative nobility... have received official encouragement." Hodgkins, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, p.157.

ed effect on certain Nigerian leaders who blamed Great Britain for attempting to extend imperial rule by this technique. When the Action Group arose as a tribalistic party pursuing objects likely to lead to the partition of the country, its connection with the British was plausible.

Added weight was supplied by the fact that the A.G. tended to be more conservative and less revolutionary than the N.C.N.C. This was attributed to British support. Furthermore, the top ranking men of the A.G., Awolowo, Rotimi Williams, Doherty, O. Balogun and Rosiji, were educated in the United Kingdom while those of the N.C.N.C., Azikiwe, Mbadiwe, Ojike and Ita were educated in the United States. It was thought that the A.G. organisation with its strict discipline was modelled upon that of British parties while the N.C.N.C. with its factions and looser organisation more nearly resembled that of American parties. The N.C.N.C. had always leaned towards the United States while the A.G. did not apparently find its support from that quarter, even though as a federalist party it might have done so. Not only the leadership of the A.G. was British educated but many of the rank and file were well known loyalists. Awolowo's tact in dealing with the British also lent credence to the idea that he was in some sense beholden to the British.

Today we hear less of attacks on 'British imperialism' than we do of intelligent discussion of the various aspects of our economic problems.^{I26}

A number of rather minor incidences, insignificant in themselves but rather imposing taken in total, made the Ibos feel that the British pre-

^{I26} Obafemi Awolowo, Address to Lagos Chamber of Commerce, Ibadan, Gov't Printer, 1955, p.1.

ference for the A.G. was showing itself by British attempts to discredit Dr. Azikiwe and the N.C.N.C. before the Nigerian public and the world.

Rise of the Northern Peoples' Congress

The A.G. found a powerful and important ally in the cause of federalism in the Northern Peoples Congress (N.P.C.). Like the A.G., the N.P.C. developed out of a cultural organisation. In July 1949 the Jami'yyar Mutanen Arewa held its organisational meeting in Kaduna, capital of Northern Nigeria. Delegates represented most of the Northern cities and a few of the large southern cities. The delegates from the South represented the Hausa communities in Lagos, Onitsha and Abeokuta. Thus in the beginnings the N.P.C. had as much nation wide representation as either of the southern parties who were represented in the North by Southerners.

Immediately from its inception the Jam'yyar Mutanen Arewa had political overtones. In its statement of aims, besides its cultural activities it proposed certain "suggestions." The inaugural meeting suggested that there should be no separate House of Chiefs but that the Chiefs should sit in the legislative assembly as nominated members. Mallam Ibrahim of Bornu^{I27} even strongly opposed the idea of Chiefs having seats at all as^{I28} they were regarded as government officials. The lack of unanimity on this question of chiefs before the application of southern pressure on the North, and before the North solidified against this pressure, is interesting. This is not to indicate that the North was anti-chiefs, for

I27 Later president of Bornu Youth Movement and first Opposition leader in the Northern House of Assembly.

I28 Nigerian Citizen, Vol.I, No.43, I July, 1949, p.II.

the resolution for their inclusion in the Assembly was overwhelmingly supported.^{I29} It was further suggested that the common people should choose representatives for village, district, provincial and regional councils. In 1950, vice-presidents were elected for each region in the federation and a local branch was formed in the United Kingdom.

I30

On October 1, 1951, half way through the election the Jami'yyar Mutanen Arewa declared itself a political party. The president Dr. R. B. Dikko resigned as he was a civil servant and Alhaji Ahmandu, Sardauna of Sokoto and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa joined. It was announced that the Congress had sixty-five branches and over six-thousand members.

In its manifesto the N.P.C. stated its federalism but did not elaborate or overstress it. The manifesto called for regional autonomy within a united Nigeria and ended with what was later to almost become its slogan,^{I31} "one North, one people, irrespective of religion tribe or rank." In this policy was the germ of a new approach. While the N.C.N.C. had attempted a wide organization covering all regions and the Cameroons, the A.G. had concentrated upon one tribe, the Yorubas, the N.P.C. strove for the unity of one region, a region extremely diverse in its religions, races, tribes, customs and standard of living.

Upon examination of the manifesto one gets the feeling that the federal aspect was not paramount. Other aims appear to occupy more space and consideration. The manifesto called for local government reform within a progressive emirate system and the elimination of bribery and corruption,

I29 Telegrams of best wishes were sent to the inaugural meeting of the Jam'yyar by the Sultan of Sokoto, Emir of Kano and members were entertained by the Emir of Zaria.

I30 The election lasted from the end of July to the first week in December.

I31 Nigerian Citizen, Vol.III, No.I62, 4 Oct. 1951, p.I.

"in every sphere of life." It also called for a drive for education but an education "retaining and increasing the cultural influence" of the North.

The emphasis regarding the Emirs had been on a "progressive Emirate system." The present system of appointment of Emirs was to be retained but with the stipulation that there be wide representation on the electoral committee. Most sweeping democratic move of all was that the "voice of the people was to be heard in all the councils of the North."

The Manifesto rang with the same feelings and under-currents as similar policy statements in the South; progress, education with an African flavour, people's representatives and local government reform. Only in one particular did it show a conservatism unlike the Southern parties. The Manifesto asked for "eventual self-government for Nigeria within the British Commonwealth." On the word "eventual" it separated from its southern contemporaries, and it was on this point that the southern parties pressed the attack which led to the Kano Riots of 1953, and the change of emphasis of the N.P.C. from progress and democracy to solidarity under the slogan, "One North, One People."

The N.P.C. rose to power, formed its policies and has maintained itself in power under the guidance of Alhaji Amadu, Sardauna of Sokoto,^{I32} and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. The Sardauna is of aristocratic birth and prestige, while Tafawa Balewa is a commoner, clear thinking and forceful. The Sardauna and Balewa constituted a leadership team reflecting the present position of the North, the old and the new welded together, the one guaranteeing that the Emirs and aristocracy shall find their place in the new order and the other guaranteeing that the new educated element and idealistic youth shall have its views expressed and acted upon.

I32 Sardauna is the Fulani word for prime minister or chief advisor to the Sultan.

Alhaji Ahmadu, Sardauna of Sokoto C.B.E. was born in 1909 in Sokoto province. He is the great grandson of Shehu Othman Dan Fodio, the spiritual leader of the Fulani Jihad of 1800, a national hero to Northern Moslems and one of the outstanding men of Nigerian history. The Sardauna is the first cousin of the present Sultan of Sokoto, paramount spiritual leader of Nigerian Moslems. The Sardauna inherits the racial prestige of the Sokoto Fulani and the religious prestige of his very august ancestor.^{I33} The Sardauna was educated at Sokoto provincial school and Katsina Training College. From 1931 to 1934 he taught English and Mathematics at Sokoto Middle School. In 1934 he was appointed District Chief of Rabah, a position he held until 1938 when he became Sardauna of Sokoto and a member of the Native Authority Council. In 1949 he first sat as a member of the Northern House of Assembly. In the same year he was appointed a member of the Nigeria Coal Board and Northern Region Development Board. In 1952 he was re-elected to the House of Representatives in the Central government. The same year he became Northern Region Minister of Works and the following year took over the portfolio for Local Government and Community Development. After the 1954 election, when premierships were provided for by the constitution, the Sardauna became the first premier of the North and formed the first Nigerian cabinet in Northern Nigeria. He has held this position ever since. He has given sound, stable leadership, balancing delicately the Emirs demand for more personal power against the pressure from those who wish a more thorough application of the elective principle. While his peers in the Southern Regions are often referred to as clever politicians, the Sardauna is never

I33 The Sokoto Fulani is of the highest social rank in Northern Nigeria. The Fulani are the aristocracy of the North. Sokoto is the spiritual capital of Nigerian Moslems.

so-called, some southerners even conceding that he has been one of the few Nigerian statesmen of the past fifteen years.

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa O.B.E., C.B.E., was born in 1912 in Bauchi province.^{I34} He was educated in Tafawa Balewa rural school, Banebi Provincial school, and, like the Sardauna, in Katsina Training College. He furthered his training in London University Institute of Education. Balewa rose from an ordinary teacher to an education officer, and was president of the Northern Teachers' Association before he left the teaching profession. Again like the Sardauna, he sat in the House of Assembly created by the Richards Constitution and went to the House of Representatives under the Macpherson Constitution. He served on a number of committees and boards; the Finance Committee, both regional and federal, the Northern Region Production Board, Board of Control, Gaskiya Corporation and the drafting committee under the Richards Constitution. He has been prominent in the conferences; Kaduna, Ibadan, London and Lagos which evolved the Nigerian Constitution. The silver tongue of Balewa became famous as the voice of the North, generally moderate, occasionally forceful but always persuasive. His lack of educational qualifications so greatly prized in Southern Nigeria has not prevented him from earning the grudging respect of Southern Nigerians. Although the chief spokesman of the North's policy, and a highly unpopular policy it has been outside of the North, Balewa has managed to escape the bitter personal attacks directed towards other men of his prominence. In 1957 he became the first Nigerian Prime Minister by forming a National cabinet supported by the three main political parties of Nigeria.^{I35}

^{I34} Hausa last names are almost invariably taken from the name of their native village or town. Aminu Kano, leader of NEPU, a native of Kano city is another example.

^{I35} Thus was fulfilled, figuratively at least, Balewa's prophetic statement of 1953 that if the British left Nigeria "the North would continue its interrupted march to the sea."

The Election of 1951

The election year 1951 was an extremely important year. It was the first in which Nigerians, excepting the few thousand in Lagos and Calabar, had ever voted. In 1951, representatives were to be chosen by the whole adult population (with the exception of women in the Northern Region).

The most significant development arising as a result of this enfranchisement was the formation of political parties. Both the A.G. and N.P.C. were organized in 1951. The N.C.N.C., formerly a Congress of organisations, took the first step at its Kano Convention in converting itself into a political party by opening its membership to private individuals.

Beside the big three political parties at the 1951 election there was one other party operating in the North, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). The NEPU was led by Aminu Kano, a Fulani of aristocratic background, and one of the foundation members of the Jam'yyar Mutanen Arewa. It was a liberal party with rather radical and messianic tendencies. The NEPU won twelve of the twenty-six places in the Kano city primaries, elected four to the intermediate Kano College, but failed to seat any candidates in the final. The NEPU initial success backed as it was by Southerners in Kano and surrounded by rather irresponsible followers who made radical statements regarding what NEPU would do to the Emirs and Islam, frightened the conservative and aristocratic elements. A high powered rather disgraceful propaganda campaign was launched against it which succeeded in destroying its election chances in Kano province. The NEPU platform called for a root and branch democracy in the North. It commonly received the sympathy of observers from the United Kingdom. It failed to realize in 1951, that the carrying out of such a programme was impossible without

bloodshed. It has greatly modified its aims since, but its connection
^{I36}
 with the Southerners has discredited the party in Northern eyes, particularly after the Kano Riots. To its credit, it has maintained a highly unpopular policy; the equal treatment of Southerners living in the North. It was however, unable to form even the official opposition in the Northern House of Assembly after the 1951 election.

By completion of the election in December 1951, the parties stood more or less as follows: the N.C.N.C. major party in the South, practically unopposed in the East, the A.G. strongly opposed in the West by the N.C.N.C., the N.P.C. opposed in the North by very small parties, the NEPU and Bornu Youth Movement.

Along with the introduction or refinement of institutions and procedures, such as the electoral system, which made it technically possible for parties to seek power constitutionally and so promote their growth, was another factor important in political parties' development; the devolution by the imperial government of a sufficiently meaningful and attractive measure of power to induce or provoke nationalist leaders to convert
^{I37}
 their movements into political parties.

Although parties were formed and organized, their organization was as yet weak. They lacked propaganda avenues to reach those beyond the influence of the press. Many localities had no committees to conduct local campaigns. Strong leaders had not yet emerged except in the N.C.N.C. Often platforms were not clearly defined or understood. Party loyalties and

I36 The NEPU is in formal alliance with the N.C.N.C.

I37 James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties" in C.Grove Haines, ed., Africa To-day, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955, pp.234-5.

accompanying discipline were weak. Because of this, in all three regions the majority of members elected were independents who declared for a party after their election. The results were an overwhelming majority for the N.P.C. in the North and the N.C.N.C. in the East. It was the West which most clearly indicated this fluidity of the party system, due to lack of loyalty and discipline. In the West both the N.C.N.C. and A.G. for days after the polls closed claimed a majority. The majority of elected members used Dr. Azikiwe's prestige to good advantage in their campaigning which gave the impression they were N.C.N.C. supporters. Had they maintained this attitude the N.C.N.C. would certainly have formed the government at Ibadan. Many of these elected members after their election declared for the A.G. and others in the first session of the new parliament dramatically crossed the floor from the N.C.N.C. to the A.G.

In 1952, when the situation had clarified, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Chief Awolowo and Eyo Ita became leaders of government business, embryonic premiers, in their respective regions. Dr. Azikiwe had stood in a Lagos constituency and was elected to the Western Region Assembly. Had the N.C. won the election presumably Dr. Azikiwe would have become the leader of government business in the Western Region.

The Regional Houses formed electoral colleges for the federal parliament, the House of Representatives. Dr. Azikiwe could still be elected to that body and press towards the position of Prime Minister of the Federation.

Dr. Azikiwe failed to win election to the House of Representatives. Five members were elected from Lagos to the Western House of Assembly, two of whom would be elected by that body to represent Lagos in the federal

government. Because all five seats had been won by the N.C.N.C. it would appear almost certain that Dr. Azikiwe would go to the centre. Again, due to the lack of party discipline and to the fact that Dr. Azikiwe's leadership was not fully accepted, three N.C.N.C. members, Dr. Azikiwe, Dr. Olorun-Nimbe and Prince Adedoyin all stood for election to the centre. The A. G. who held a majority of seats in the Assembly were determined that Dr. Azikiwe should not get to the centre and so voted for Olorun-Nimbe and Adedoyin, which left Azikiwe as unofficial opposition leader in the West.

Azikiwe's failure to get to the centre was only the beginning of a series of crises which wrecked the Macpherson Constitution and brought its downfall within two years.

Towards the end of 1952 the A.G. in the West were having difficulty with the Governor, who they accused of putting obstacles in the path of the Western government administration by delaying approval of a Local Government Bill. The party at its Benin Conference in December decided that "all members of the party shall henceforth adopt an attitude of non-fraternization with Sir John Macpherson until such time as there is clear evidence to the satisfaction of the party of his change of attitude." ¹³⁸ The non-fraternization policy was a gentleman's way of handling British reluctance to pass over control, and while it caused a short, abrupt crisis it passed when the Governor gave his approval to the Local Government Bill and the A.G. called off the social boycott.

A crisis of much greater magnitude was precipitated in the Eastern Region. This episode was known as the "sit-tight crises." It resulted from

¹³⁸ "The London Conference, Daily Times, Nigeria Year Book 1954, Lagos, Nigerian Printing and Publishing Co., 1954, p.6.

a combination of three or four factors. First, the Macpherson Constitution precipitated the rise of political parties but it did not provide for them. Whether Nigerians and Britons should have foreseen this development is a question outside this essay. The fact was that the constitution was outmoded by the time the Regional Houses of Assembly first were called. As a result of each region giving a majority to different political parties, the Council of Ministers (Federal Cabinet) consisted of an equal number of A.G., N.C.N.C. and N.P.C. ministers. Customary Cabinet government was impossible. As the Constitution worked out, this Council was responsible not to the federal House of Representatives but to the Regional Assemblies who had elected the members of the House of Representatives. Thus the House of Representatives was responsible to the Regions, and any case of government change in the Regions would cause a section of the federal house to be unrepresentative of its region. A change of government in a regional house would be bound to have paralyzing repercussions in the centre, and no provision had been made for separate regional elections.

The second factor in the crises was the decision of the N.C.N.C. at its Jos Convention to give no further trial to the Macpherson Constitution. The previously mentioned fluidity of the party situation had a most peculiar result on the N.C.N.C. The Eastern Region in the 1951 election had returned a large N.C.N.C. majority. There was no real opposition, certainly not party opposition. Elections in many constituencies had consisted of a fight between a number of N.C.N.C. candidates. The most disquieting result as far as the N.C.N.C. executive was concerned was that a number of prominent persons from the executive, the old vanguard which had worked for years fighting imperialism, were rejected by the electorate and found themselves outside the Houses

of Assembly. Entirely new men, practical unknowns, were coming to the top and now holding cabinet positions in the East under Eyo Ita, while the old vanguard looked on from the cold outside. Mbonu Ojike, national vice-president and Kola Balogun, national secretary of the N.C.N.C. had both suffered defeat. Coupled with this was the ignominious failure of Dr. Azikiwe to either head the Western government or go to the centre. He was forced to assume almost the role of a private member in the Western House. The Jos Convention of the party, led by the old vanguard, decided to rectify this condition by breaking the Constitution in order to hold another election in the East.

Differences of opinion fostered largely by the party executive developed between the Central Ministers and Eastern Ministers led by Eyo Ita and the old vanguard who were able to swing the majority of the parliamentary members to their point of view. The Cabinet Ministers, both regional and central, wished to make the constitution work, to give it a fair trial, while the old vanguard wished to destroy it in order to place themselves in power which they felt they could do if Dr. Azikiwe resigned his seat in the West and led the party in an Eastern election. The three central ministers were expelled at the Jos Convention, "for life and ignominy" for not toeing the party line. These ministers Messrs Nwapa, Arikpo and Njoku hoped for support from the federal parliamentary wing of the party and also felt they could count on the majority support of the Eastern parliamentary wing who had originally elected them. This support they failed to get. The Eastern parliament went into opposition and Eyo Ita's executive council was unable to pass any legislation including the budget.

The Eastern Governor then complicated the already incredibly muddled situation by advising the Eastern ministers to sit-tight even after a non-

confidence vote had been carried against them, sixty to thirteen, on the perfectly legal but highly impractical grounds that it was impossible for one regional House to be dissolved independently of the other regional legislatures. An emendment was finally adopted which allowed a regional election.

The crises had two outstanding effects besides the amendment of the constitution. One was the exodus of the "brains" from the N.C.N.C. led by Eyo Ita, the Cabinet Ministers and some of those who had supported them. Eyo Ita then organised the National Independence Party as a rival party to the N.C.N.C. Another effect was the outburst of anti-British feeling which swept Iboland as the N.C.N.C. blamed the entire disruption of the government on the Governor in order to cover the division within the party.

While the N.C.N.C. was proceeding to upset the Constitution, working from the region, the A.G. decided to accomplish the same purpose but from the centre.

We therefore fixed 1956 as the year of Nigerian independence, and we staged the March Constitutional crisis which broke the Macpherson Constitution.¹³⁹

The N.P.C. alone of the three major political parties would never
¹⁴⁰
 join in breaking the Constitution without giving it a fair trial. The 1953 March Constitutional Crisis, "staged" by the A.G., was both clever and tragic. Clever, in that the real aims of the parties concerned could be camouflaged, while the British could be made to appear as if standing in the way of self-government; tragic in that it alienated the North, sent them into isolation and drove them to the British for advice and protection.

¹³⁹ Agunbiade, The Case for the Action Group, p.12.

¹⁴⁰ Daily Times, Nigerian Year Book 1954, p.7.

In March 1953, Anthony Enahoro, assistant secretary of the A.G. and member of the House of Representatives gave notice of a motion asking that self-government in 1956 be set as an objective for the people and government of Nigeria. In private discussions between the Ministers of the Council, the N.P.C. held to the policy that it was not yet ready to set a date for independence. The A.G. eager to hold the lead over the N.C.N.C. as the most verile and active nationalist party, which Enahoro's motion had given them, were determined to press the issue. By a majority vote in the Council, the official members voting with the N.P.C., it was decided that the Ministers would not debate the motion when it came before the House.

On the morning on which Enahoro's motion was to be debated, the four A.G. Ministers resigned; the Oni of Ife (Minister without portfolio), Chief Arthur Prest (Minister of Communication), Chief Bode Thomas (Minister of Transport) and S.L. Akintola (Minister of Labour). In their resignation they said that the Governor was trying to run the Council of Ministers by blackmail and depending on the Northern majority in the House of Representatives and official votes in the Council of Ministers to silence the nationalists.^{I4I} The Governor retaliated in a radio broadcast when he accused the A.G. of breaking cabinet secrecy.

The previously signed Alliance between the A.G. and the N.P.C. based on a common desire for federalism was now a scrap of paper due to these parties' differences over the time factor in relation to self-government.

The A.G. who were "not appointed as Imperial Ministers"^{I42} had now seized the lead, and an unsigned alliance, sealed by the embrace of Awolowo and

I4I Daily Times, Nigerian Year Book 1954, p.8.

I42 Uwanaka, New Nigeria, p.25.

Azikiwe on the steps of the House of Representatives while the crowd cheered, was concluded with their bitterest enemies, the N.C.N.C. Although the alliance was short lived, the North saw in that embrace of two Southern politicians the future lines of division in important Nigerian policy. The North was isolated. The spectre of Southern domination, hitherto a theory was now a reality.

Large crowds gathered outside the Lagos House of Representatives, crowds organized by the Southern parties to vent their ill will on the Northern representatives and to give physical form to the fear of Southern domination. These scenes in Lagos were a prelude to the Kano Riots and the almost secessionist plans of the North outlined in their Eight Point Programme.

The Kano Riots for all the harm they caused to the cause of Nigerian unity had at least one constructive result. They had a sobering effect upon the Southern politicians who slowly came to realize that the N.P.C. had a strong following in the North and that compromise with N.P.C. leaders was advisable.

The Riots' most disastrous results to the Southern parties themselves were, that regardless of how little or how much support the N.P.C. had in the North before Enahoro's motion, it is certain that the subsequent events solidified Northern opinion behind the N.P.C. and seriously weakened the NEPU (in alliance with the N.C.N.C.) whose aims for the North were more in line with Southern policy and who stood for fair treatment of Southerners in the North. Whatever latent admiration prevailed among Northerners for Southern politics and way of life, was stilled and Southerners in the North were to find their position more and more precarious.

The Northern ministers refused to accept the four A.G. ministers back into the Council. The Governor suggested that Messrs Awokoyo, Ighodaro and

Enahoro replace the resigned ministers. The joint session of the Assembly and Chiefs of the Western Region refused to consider these new appointments and voted back their support of the four original men. The North was finally persuaded to drop its objections, and the A.G. ministers returned to the Council.

In defence of the North's opposition to independence it can be said that the turbulence and series of crises of the first elected parliaments in Nigeria did not inspire confidence in the ability of Nigerians to govern themselves.

The London Regionalization Conference

After a hurried trip to the United Kingdom Sir John Macpherson issued an invitation to a conference to be held in London, (1) to consider what difficulties there were in the present constitution which prevented it from working satisfactorily, (2) to consider what changes therefore in the present constitution should be made, and (3) to consider what steps should be taken to ensure that these changes are put into effect. ^{I43} Following the acceptance by Nigerian leaders of this invitation a conference was convened in London which came to be called the London Regionalisation Conference.

Both the N.C.N.C. and A.G. delegations included two Northern delegates. These delegates plus the delegate allowed from the NEPU, meant that the minute opposition in the North had more representatives at the conference than the official government party, the N.P.C. The Northern delegates of the N.C.N.C. and A.G. function was obviously "to put across to Whitehall the other

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side of the Northern story." They had the effect of intensifying Northern belief and fears that the Southerners were doing everything in their power to undermine the North, to spread fear and confusion and so gain domination, not only in the central government but even in the region.

All three major parties were now ready for more power to be placed at the disposal of the regions, the N.C.N.C. because of the sit-tight crisis, the A.G. because of its fear of Ibo domination and traditional policy of federalism and the N.P.C. because of the fear of the South and the incidents from Enahoro's motion to the Kano disturbances. For these reasons co-operation came much easier than might have been expected from the tense political atmosphere of the preceding months. The Conference settled down to forming a real federal constitution especially since the British government almost immediately settled what was considered to be the main contention, the issue of self-government:

Her Majesty's government was not prepared to fix a dateline for self-government for Nigeria, the more so as the Northern delegation representing over half of the population was not able to depart from its policy. But in 1956, Her Majesty's government would be prepared to grant to those regions which desired it, full self-government in respect of all matters within their competence.^{I45}

There was no particular reason for the choice of 1956 as the year in which the British government should prove willing to discuss self-government for the whole of Nigeria. The date was thrown into the party battle as a tactical move. It was not known at the time, nor was it argued, whether by this year the regional governments would be working successfully or whether - much more important - a strong federal government could emerge with popular backing in all parts of the country. The fixing of a date,

I44 New Era Bureau, London Regionalisation Conference, p.10

I45 Daily Times, Nigerian Year Book 1954, p.II.

however, had the advantage of removing the British government from the field of conflict. This statement of the British, although attacked in the South as pandering to the North, and as a method of breaking up the country, was actually placing the full burden of responsibility on the Northern government as to when Nigeria should be a self-governing nation. The federation could not be self-governing if one region still retained imperial control. Southern pressure was now bound to increase upon the North. The various methods of applying pressure will be discussed later.

The most important constitutional change resulting from the London Regionalisation Conference was the separation of the Federal House of Representatives from the Regional House of Assembly. Hereafter there was to be a unicameral legislature at the centre with a membership of 184; North - 92, East - 42, West - 42, Cameroons - 6, Lagos federal territory - 2, ex-officio members - 3 (the Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary and Attorney-General). Election to the House of Representatives was to be direct, although the electoral procedure need not necessarily be uniform. No member of the Regional House was to be a member of the Federal House. By these conditions the Regional Assemblies were completely separated from the House of Representatives.

Another change was that the number of Ministers at the centre was to be reduced from twelve to ten, six of whom were to hold portfolios, three each from North, West, and East and one from the Cameroons. These ministers were to be appointed by the Governor, now styled Governor-General, and were to be responsible to the House of Representatives only.

A trailer conference was held in Lagos early in 1954, but it broke no new ground, and only put final touches to the London discussions.

I46 Fabian Society, Venture, Socialists and the Colonies, Special Nigerian Number, London, Journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, Vol.VIII, No.3, July 1956, p.I.

Criticism of the Constitution of 1954 ~~were~~ directed mainly at the rigid regionalisation aspects; so much power centred in the regions at the expense of the National government, tended to destroy unity. Many felt that this regionalisation attacked the fundamental rights of common nationality in such aspects as the regionalisation of the judiciary and Civil Service.

Regardless of the criticism there was a noticeable tendency among the major parties in the country to keep the power they were exercising in their respective regions. Not one gave any indication that it would accept any fundamental changes in 1956. The three major parties could by 1954 be considered as satisfied parties.

There were increasing signs that both the N.P.C. and A.G. were moving away from their earlier isolationist and secessionist tendencies. The N.P.C. accepted a stronger centre than that proposed by their Eight Point Programme. The results of the first federal election were gratifying. The N.C.N.C. won a majority of seats in both East and West, and the N.P.C. won the North. The N.C.N.C. and N.P.C. formed the government at the centre with the A.G. in opposition. The solid front of the South against the North had now dissolved and the N.P.C. found itself in the familiar position of alliance with one Southern party and in opposition to the other even though now the friends and enemies were reversed.

The A.G. too, was having second thoughts on the advisability of a too strict regionalisation in view of the interpretation the North had been giving to that doctrine. The A.G. began more consciously to undo the apparent parochialism with which it had been associated at its initial stage. Mr. Rotimi Williams, an executive member of the A.G. once declared in the press, "we are only starting from the West," and by 1956 the A.G. had won

a few seats in the Northern House and in 1957 succeeded in forming the official Opposition in the Eastern House. This gave the party a more national and less regional outlook.

The A.G. could harmonise this new approach with their old, by claiming that it was in line with their policy of advocating "the unity of each tribe first and the unity of the whole next."^{I48} Mr. Awolowo made the fundamental change in policy. "In order to have a unified Nigeria, we must have leaders who are acceptable all over the country."^{I49}

The year 1953 proved that the most vital issue of Nigerian politics was the relationship between the North and the South. Due to the stricter regionalisation and separation of powers in the 1954 constitution many of the emotional issues and even the explosive issue of self-government were regionalised at least temporarily. The North retreated from Balewa's statement that if the British were removed, "the North would continue its interrupted march to the sea." Dr. Azikiwe appeared ready to pick up the challenge.

Possibly the North can fight us and find asylum in another country, as has been done before. Eight out of ten Nigerian soldiers are located in the North. The solution would be to divide the army, and put 3,000 soldiers in each region. This would preclude the possibility of invasion.^{I50} Otherwise the South is not safe if they insist on freedom. I warn you, the North may be schooled by certain forces against freedom, and there may be trouble, The South will not allow a corridor to the sea if the North shows no sign of agreement.^{I51}

I48 Daily Service, Vol.X, No.I402, 9 Nov., 1949, p.3.

I49 Awolowo, "Address to Washington Chapter of A.A.S.U.A." African Newsletter, Washington, D.C., Vol.III, No.6, Mar., 1956, p.8.

I50 The vast majority of the army are Northerners.

I51 Azikiwe, "Address to Washington Chapter of A.A.S.U.A." African Newsletter, Vol.III, No.2, Nov., 1955, p.6.

Saner opinion however, prevailed in the South in response to the North's gestures of conciliation. Chief Awolowo's statement of attitude was the policy actually followed.

Our policy is one of diplomacy - to persuade the North to see the beauty of self-government and the advantages that would accrue.¹⁵²

The policy of diplomacy and persuasion was effective, so much so that the North not only came to accept the policy of self-government in 1960 but actually took the lead in 1957 calling for Nigerian unity in the request for self-government.

The greatest point of conflict between North and South, following their agreement on the date of self-government, was the Northernisation policy of the Kaduna government in regard to the regional Civil Service. The Northern government has stated its policy in appointing civil servants. It prefers to hire Northerners, Englishmen or Nationals from other Commonwealth countries, British African territories, and Southern Nigerians in that order of preference. Southern Nigerians who constitute the largest group of civil servants, holding positions immediately under the British have found their positions insecure, appointments are no longer possible, promotions have been slowed down and in some cases stopped altogether.

This Northern policy has been based upon a number of important considerations. First, the North maintained that European civil servants could be hired on contract and could be dropped when their position was necessary for a Northern appointee, while the Southerners if promoted to these posts considered that as nationals of Nigeria an injustice was done if they were replaced by Northerners. Second, the North maintained that generally Southerners did not become citizens of the North but remained entirely loyal to their

¹⁵² Awolowo, "Address to A.A.U.A." African Newsletter, Vol.III, No.6, March 1956, p.7.

Southern home. In any dispute between North and South they favoured the South. The North has asked over and over again for a loyal Civil Service and they feel that Southern Nigerians are the least loyal group. Third, the North has no desire to replace White Imperialism with Black Imperialism and they feel that this is exactly what is happening. They contend that neither Southern Region would stand for a Civil Service which was eighty-five per cent drawn from the peoples of another region. Nigerianisation, so strong in the South is a dead policy in the North. The North is anxious to reduce the percentage of Southerners in the Civil Service. Even outside the political implications, the Northernisation policy is practical politics, for the North has not the highly trained personnel to replace the Europeans but they are training large numbers to take over the next highest positions on the Civil Service rung and these positions are held by Southerners.

Awakening of the Minor Ethnic Groups

From 1950 to 1954 the move for the creation of a federal form of government revolved around the idea of regionalisation. Regionalisation was a movement of the major tribes. By 1954 regionalisation was complete. After 1954 agitation shifted to the minor tribes centred around the concept of separatism or separate states along linguistic and ethnic lines. The following section will briefly survey the separatist movement; its early expressions prior to 1954, the attitude of the leaders of the major tribes to it, and finally a brief summary of the headway the various separatist movements have made in the regions.

It has been recorded that both Azikiwe and Awolowo in the late nineteen forties had advocated states or regions built upon linguistic and ethnic

I53 The Western Region Government advertises civil servant positions for "people of western origin."

lines. The motivation in each case had been different. The N.C.N.C. saw that with all hope disappearing for a unitary government the best alternative would be numerous states, no one strong enough to dominate the central government. The A.G. advocated states as part of their plan of federalism with a relatively weaker central government.

As early as the Ibadan Conference of 1950 a number of provincial conferences had suggested states built on ethnic lines and their case was pleaded by Mr. Ejaife, a member of one of the minor tribes of the Western Region, Urhobo.

A tribe is a tribe, no matter how small, and should be given a minimum of concessions in matters of scholarships and schools, to save it from extinction and non-representation in the central legislature.¹⁵⁴

Mbonu Ojike and Eyo Ita submitted a minority report at the Ibadan Conference in which they advocated ethnic groupings.

Grouping of Nigeria along ethnic and linguistic lines would serve to remove the problem of boundaries, minority and pak-istanic dangers now threatening the unity of Nigeria.¹⁵⁵

When the N.C.N.C. and A.G. became fully established in their respective regions, their ardour cooled towards the breaking up of their own regions, while they supported whole heartedly the break up of their opponents' regions. The A.G. formed an alliance with the Kamerun National Congress (K.N.C.) who advocated a separate region apart from the East. The N.C.N.C. on the other hand identified itself with the demand for a Mid-West state in Benin and Delta provinces of Western Nigeria and has held the majority of seats in this area as a result (sixteen out of a total of twenty),

¹⁵⁴ Nigeria, Ibadan Conference, p.62.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.244.

The A.G. in 1957 made a serious bid for power in the East on the issue of a separate state for the non-Ibo people of the East. They won thirteen seats out of a total of thirty-four non-Ibo constituencies. By an amalgamation with the U.N.I.P. a party also supporting a non-Ibo state the A.G. increased its seats to eighteen.

The reasons, other than political, for the rise of awareness in the minor ethnic groups, have been suggested elsewhere but two political reasons might be noticed. The A.G. by the very doctrine upon which it rose to power invited other tribes to imitate it. By the advocacy of a tribalistic approach and the policy of tribal superiority it antagonised minor tribes, caused them to fear the superior Yorubas and showed politicians how a political party could quickly be built. If the A.G. could rise so rapidly by making use of the weapon of fear of Ibo domination, could not minor tribes in the East use the same weapon and minor tribes in the West raise the cry of Yoruba domination. This approach, plus the rather heavy handed and clumsy use of power possibly arising from inexperience in the early years of practical self-government, caused alienation of many minor ethnic groups in the South.

The situation was and has continued to be quite different in the North. Regardless of the separatist movements there it is probably true to say that no serious situation even mildly comparable to the South has arisen in the North.

So far the following circumstances have combined against tribal leaders receiving widespread support in the North. In opposition to the centralist

I56 See chapter I.

I57 Fabian Society, Venture, Socialists and the Colonies, Special Nigerian Number, London, Journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, Vol.III, No.3, July, 1956, p.2.

tendencies going on in the South, the North was rapidly providing for a semi-federal provincial system within its own region. More power was being devolved from Kaduna to the local native administrations and to provincial councils. More emphasis was being laid on local responsibility for matters such as law, roads, and education. Such men as might have formed the core of tribal resistance found their ambitions cared for either in local, provincial or even at the regional level. The North needed every available qualified person to man even the bare essentials of the governmental machine which was passing into their hands not because of their own demands but because of the attempt of almost all parties, British, Northerners and Southerners to keep the North in step with the South.

Second, the A.G. doctrine, so potent in the South, might have had a large following in the North had it not been for the emotions aroused by the Kano disturbances. Those Northerners who might uphold ideas contrary to the N.P.C. could almost be shouted down as treasonous for their advocacy of Southern ideas. Closely connected with this was the fact that the Northern government stood by its policy of Northernisation and from its inception had held to the concept of "One North, One People," in contrast to the South where the Ibadan and Enugu governments were all too closely allied with Yorubas and Ibos respectively. Kaduna may have been as closely allied with the Hausa-Fulani, but this kind of criticism coming from the South fell on unresponsive Northern ears. In fact it would not be too far wrong to say that the Southern press was the greatest ally the N.P.C. possessed, for the more it railed at the North the more Northerners hesitated to ally themselves with the South in criticising their government.

In comparing the various areas demanding separate states at least on the basis of parliamentary seats it would appear that the Mid-West state

is the most vocal and united, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers area the next, with a bare majority of seats held in the hands of separatists, while in the Middle Belt at the moment a minor group has the basis for expanded support, and in Bornu the separatists are barely articulate.

The Southern leaders were both early advocates of ethnic groupings and even yet both pay lip service to this ideal. Already fearful of the larger North they do not enjoy the prospect of the East and West being split while the North remains intact. Both Awolowo and Azikiwe have stated they would only agree to states being formed in their respective region if the North agrees to its own partition. Like the self-government issue, the onus for this solution has been put upon the North. It is not likely the North of its own volition will seriously consider ethnic groupings until an effective demand arises in the North for them. The North has more at stake in this issue, in that ethnic groupings if carried out logically would split the North into numerous states and have a much more drastic effect upon the North than upon the South. The Action Group's Yoruba state, under the principle of ethnic groupings, would almost gain from the Northern region the population and area it lost in the Mid-West area.

The first concrete advance for the forces advocating separate states occurred in the Eastern Region. Under the Constitution of 1946 and 1951 the Cameroons had been a part of the Eastern Region with members sitting in the House of Assembly at Enugu. The Kamerun Peoples' Party (K.P.P.) in alliance with the N.C.N.C. supported this union. In the 1954 Eastern elections the Kamerun National Congress (K.N.C.), under the leadership of Dr. E.M. Endeley, won all the seats in the Cameroons on a platform of a separate region for the Cameroons. The K.N.C. then declared it would boycott

the Eastern House of Assembly. It was agreed that the Cameroons should have its own House of Assembly and acquire the status of a quasi-federal territory. Soon after, Chief Awolowo visited the Cameroons and formed an alliance with the K.N.C. Thus the two main parties of the Cameroons were allied with the big main Southern parties of Nigeria.

For a variety of reasons the formation of the Cameroons could not be taken as a precedent for the creation of other states. The Cameroons had never traditionally been a part of the East, and geographically it was not of the East. Furthermore, it was under United Nations trusteeship. The bedevilling question of Cameroonian politics was hereafter to be its future position, whether to join the Nigerian federation, to attempt an independent status, or to seek reunion with the French Cameroons. It was the Togoland question all over again.

The second area to draw attention to its claims for a separate state was the area known as the Mid-West consisting of the provinces of Benin and Delta lying west of the Niger and between the Yoruba and Ibo peoples. The proposed region consists of the two main tribes, the Benis and Urhobo and other minor tribes such as the Western Ibo, Ijaw and Istekiri.

Although the demand for a Mid-West state has been most insistent and organised, complete unity of purpose has not been achieved. The Istekiris do not wish to be incorporated in the proposed states. Suggestions have arisen that the Western Ibo should join the Eastern Region, that the Ijaws of the West should join those in the East to form a Rivers State, and that the ancient Benin kingdom should be revived. There is also some support
158
for remaining a part of the Western Region.

I58 Formation of "Anti-Mid-West State Movement," Daily Times, No. 14,237, 22 Aug., 1957, p.I.

The third Southern area to be involved in the states issue was the non-Ibo area of the Eastern Region centred in Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers Provinces and commonly referred to as the COR State Area. This issue is clouded by the fact that the Ibos who form large minorities consisting of majorities in some divisions in the COR State Area are violently
I59
opposed to the creation of a separate state.

After the 1951 elections in the East, the Opposition party, the United National party led by Alvan Ikoku, was drawn mainly from the non-Ibo areas of the East. After the sit-tight crisis, Eyo Ita the former premier, formed the National Independence Party from those former N.C.N.C. members who had refused to follow the N.C.N.C. in its policy as set down at the Jos Convention. This party had its majority support from Ibo areas although Eyo Ita himself was non-Ibo and Calabar born. The United National Party and the National Independence Party joined to form the United National Independence Party (UNIP). The UNIP could never wholeheartedly advocate
I60
a COR state because of its Ibo following.

In the 1957 elections in the East the A.G. entered the election contest fully supporting the demand for a COR state and in partial alliance with UNIP. The popularity of the A.G. programme almost obliterated the UNIP whose membership decreased from ten to five. The Action Group increased its membership from one to twelve. Many previous supporters of UNIP and even some of its executive went over to the A.G. - the former chairman of UNIP, Alvan Ikoku, became the leader of the A.G. opposition in the new House. In a few months the UNIP announced a merger with the A.G.

I59 The Minister of Education (Eastern Region) Hon. Ibanga Udo Akpabio, a non-Ibo N.C.N.C. member told the writer that the N.C.N.C. opposed a COR state because Ibos would be persecuted in that state if it were set up.

I60 In 1956 the UNIP executive consisted of three Ibos, one Efik, and one Ekois.

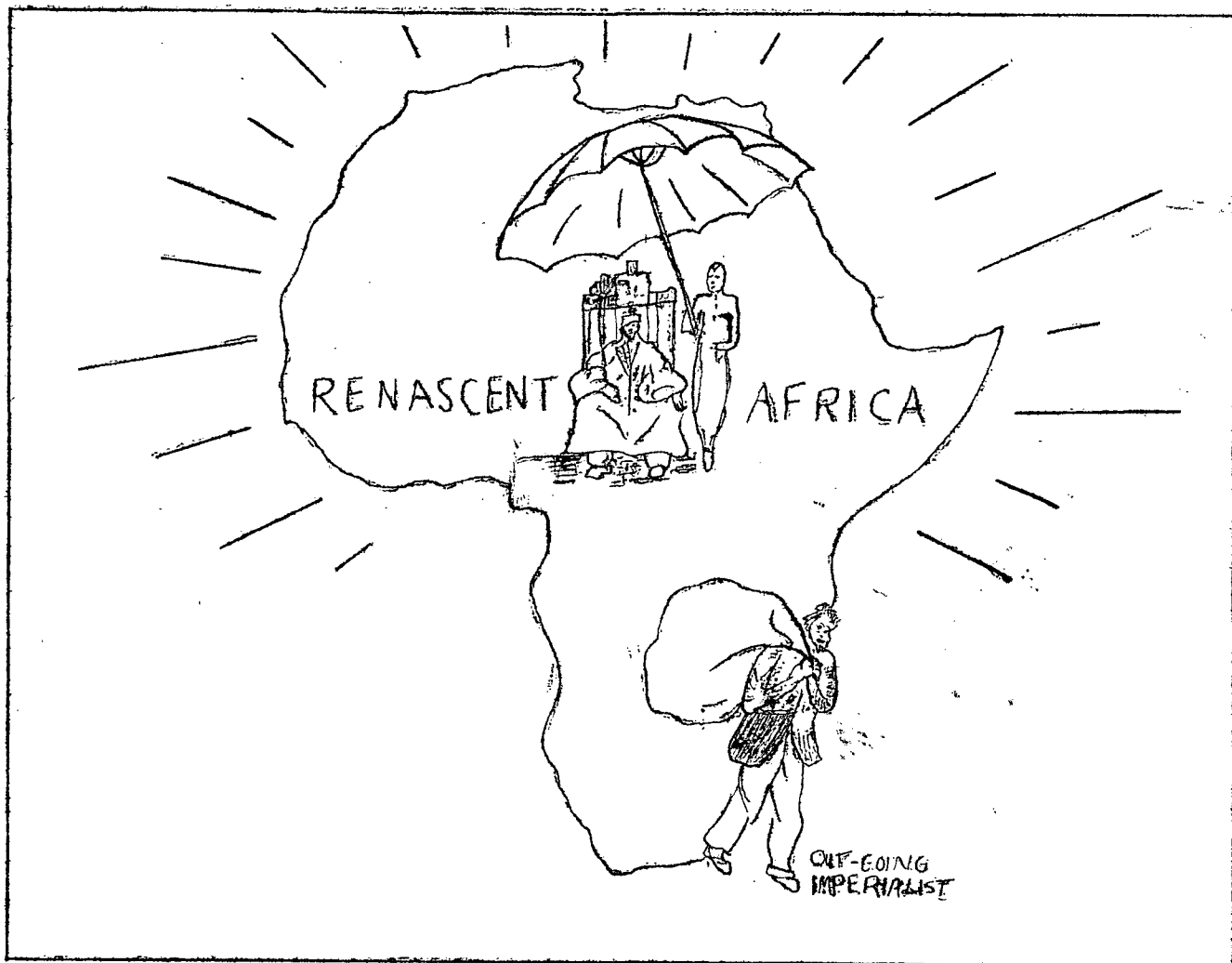
With this merger the COR state movement achieved a kind of unified voice.

In the Middle Belt the political confusion has been almost complete. The U.M.B.C., the party advocating a Middle Belt state has been almost hopelessly divided. At one time Pastor David Lot and Mr. Dokotri led a wing of the U.M.B.C. into alliance with the N.P.C. and accepted positions in the government. They returned to the opposition after the 1956 elections. Moses Rwang, another leader at one time sought an alliance with the A.G. At another time one group within the party sought an alliance with NEPU while another group turned it down. This alliance was finally concluded but has been marked by inter-party quarrelling and fighting. The U.M.B.C. in the election of 1956 won twelve seats in the Middle Belt, the N.P.C. won twenty-one.

At the London Conference in 1957 a commission was agreed upon to look into the fears of the minority groups in Nigeria. The question of minorities and the concomitant question of states is the most vexing question now facing Nigeria. States based strictly upon linguistic and ethnic groupings is impossible due to the many ethnic divisions. However, it may be found necessary to pay more attention to ethnic groupings in the formation of future states. The latest tendency has been the feeling among the minor tribes that the recent show of unity among the leaders of the big three major tribes is the result of a determination of these tribes to seek self-government first in order that they can handle the minorities in their own way. The minor tribes definitely feel that the formation of more states is of greater importance than self-government, and their major interest in the last constitutional conference was not in the advance made towards self-government but rather in the steps taken in order to promote their well being.

By 1956 Nigerians were well aware that the struggle for political self-determination was over. The British were only waiting for Nigerians to determine what final form the political structure of the country would take. By 1956 the political consciousness of the people had been thoroughly aroused by the nationalists. It was now their duty to direct this new consciousness to the many problems, social and economic which beset the new nation.

to follow page I63



AND AGAIN HISTORY SHALL VINDICATE ITSELF BY AFRICA'S SURE RESURRECTION

WEST AFRICAN Pilot 15 Nov. 1949

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This list of general works dealing with Nigeria prior to 1920 was useful mainly in gathering an impression of the white man's attitude to Nigeria and the advance of British authority in the regions of the

Niger. The nationalist outlook is almost non-existent in the English writers. One notable exception is Buell's The Native Problem in Africa which deals sympathetically with the nationalist movement in the early nineteen twenties. It is as valid today as it was when it was written. Another valuable contribution is Talbot's four volumes on The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, which is one of the earliest sources of statistical material. The Nigerian writer Adebisin Folarin in the Demise of the Independence of Egbaland is one of the first truly nationalist historians.

III General Works--1920-1958

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Generally speaking the books in this classification are written by white writers. The best books for the underlying structure of the nationalist movement is Hodgkin's, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, and McKay's Nationalism in British West Africa. One aspect of this structure is the formation of political parties. This particular aspect is well developed by James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties" in Africa Today. The book The New West Africa by Clark, Collins, Hodgkin and Okafore covers the whole field, political, economic and social, of West African development. The weakest point in this book is its unorthodox economics.

The best work on the workings of the limited representative government system under the 1921 constitution is Joan Wheare's The Nigerian Legislative Council. Isaac Thomas' Life History of Herbert Macaulay is the only available book on the nationalist whose life almost spanned the whole nationalist period. Unfortunately this biography falls short of reaching academic standards. Oged Macaulay, son of the late nationalist leader is at the present time preparing a book entitled Memoirs of Herbert Macaulay which it is hoped will throw more light on the work of this important national figure.

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The Emergence of Nationalism and Federalism and T.M.Uzo in The Pathfinder. Both of these books are unusually objective in their treatment of an extremely emotional subject. Dr. S. Biobaku's Political Evolution is a very academic treatment of the same subject. The finest treatment of the phenomena of tribalism is presented in A. Adelabu's Africa in Ebullition.

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- Azikiwe, Ben. N., "How Shall We Educate the African," African Affairs, Vol. XXXIII, No. CXXXI (April 1934), pp. 143-150.
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The periodical material has not been particularly rewarding. Possibly the best are the articles on tribal unions by Offodile, Offonry and Ottenberg. Keith Buchanan's contribution on the economic basis of tribal rivalry is the only one on this particular relationship. In this field lies an interesting and rewarding area for research. Buchanan merely suggests the lines along which such a study might proceed. His article is confined to a discussion of the Northern Region. Nnamdi Azikiwe's article on African Affairs is the earliest of his published articles (1934) and throws interesting light on his early thinking. Research in connection with Nigeria would be much facilitated if Azikiwe's and Awolowo's speeches and writings were collected in single volumes.

VII Newspapers

Daily Service, Lagos, 1945-1949.

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Lagos Daily News, 1928-1931, 1933-1954.

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Nigerian Citizen, Kaduna, 1948-1951.

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The West African Pilot, Lagos, 1940-1947, 1949.

Times of Nigeria, Lagos, 1914-15.

The chief source of information on Nigerian opinion prior to 1945 was the newspapers. Before 1937 the nationalist press was led by the Lagos Weekly Record (1891-1928) followed by the Lagos Daily News of which Herbert Macaulay was co-owner and editor. In the nineteen twenties the nationalist press was ably opposed by the conservative Hon. Sir Kitoyi Ajassa in his paper the Nigerian Pioneer. The African Messenger edited by Sir Ernest Ikoli stood between these two extremes. After 1937 The West African Pilot almost monopolized the newspaper field. It was valuable as the expression of Azikiwe's nationalists. Dr. Azikiwe edited The Pilot between 1937 and 1947. After 1947 other newspapers successfully challenged The Pilot's monopoly. These newspapers began to cater to sectional interests and parties. Under the emotionalism of the nationalist movement the African newspapers lost their independence of thought and most became partisan. This opened the way for a new development, an independent newspaper financed by English capital - the Daily Mirror group. This newspaper, The Daily Times has succeeded in combining a fervid nationalism with a sharp criticism of all the Nigerian governing parties. It is nation wide in its circulation.

The two most important contributions to the source material of this thesis was Azikiwe's "Political Blueprint of Nigeria," a series of eighteen articles appearing in The West African Pilot beginning in March, 1943 and "Post War Nigerian Economics," an economic blueprint, a series of forty-four articles beginning in April of 1943 of The Pilot. These articles outline the policy and beliefs of Azikiwe which the N.C. N.C. was later to adopt as their platform. These "Blueprints" outline Azikiwe's policy just as Path to Nigerian Freedom outlined Awolowo's later policy.

VIII Cartoons by Lash.
Maps by H. Ivanisko.