

The book cover features a vibrant red and green mosaic pattern. The top half is a solid dark red background. The middle section is a grid of white lines on a dark background, creating a perspective effect. The bottom section is a mosaic of red and green tiles with intricate patterns.

The Contexts
of
NON-LINEAR
HISTORY

Essays in honour of
Tekena Tamuno

Edited by
Dele Layiwola
Olawale Albert
& Bernard Muller



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PREFACE

The present book of essays in Tekena Tamuno's honour was conceived as one of the succession of tributes to him soon after he attained the age of seventy and was honoured as the Patron of the Association of Nigerian Authors in Oyo State. He thereafter became the President of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL), the apex body that superintends the professional discipline of the humanities in Nigeria. At that time, a tome was instantly published in TNT's honour. It was edited by the classicist and monarch, Professor Egbe Ifie, now of blessed memory. We subsequently made contacts with his friends and colleagues among whom were Chief Aigboje Higo, the renowned publisher, scholar, and Chairman of Heinemann Nigeria. He received the project with enthusiasm and offered useful insights. Ditto for Professors Emeriti Ade Ajayi, E.A. Ayandele, Ayo Banjo and J.P. Clark. This collection was not meant to be omnibus; it is selective but not exclusivist.

Professors Obaro Ikime, G.O. Oguntomisin, Folarin Shyllon and Olufunmilayo Oloruntimehin were also extremely generous with their enthusiasm and made good their promise to contribute to the volume.

If for reasons of camaraderie and collegiality the contributions of Dr. G.A. Akinola, Dr. Olutayo Adesina, Dr Kemi Rotimi of Obafemi Awolowo University, Professor Egbose Osaghae, Professor O.B. Lawuyi, and Dr Laurent Fourchard of Bourdeux University were apt, their patience became a legendary asset to the wheel of the project. This has become worthy of mention on account of the delay the project

endured when we had to attend to illnesses and bereavement which threatened family and group solidarity. We realise that in accepting to be mortals, we have had to contend with occasional stoical resolves and resolutions, but we also need the moral worthiness of our friends and benefactors as we struggle through. We can bear witness that there were night skies occasionally bereft of stars and they could only have been navigated by providential intuition and succour. To be human, to cope, frustration and despair have sometimes been worthy companions. Without being sentimental, we pay tribute to all who have trod this road ahead of the rest of us and pointed the way.

Professor Cornelius Adepegba, now also of blessed memory, a longstanding colleague of our revered celebrant at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, courageously proofread his paper even between bouts of fatigue and illness. We appreciate the commitment and respect accorded thereby. May he find perfect balance in the higher realms.

We are happy to say that we derived immense moral support and encouragement from Mrs Olufunmilayo G. Tamuno, TNT's companion and friend. We are also grateful to Bernard and Jacomjin Muller of Rue du Four, Saint Michel, Paris.

In wishing TNT life and grace to navigate land and creek, we say similar prayers for his colleagues and all he may have mentored.

To our various friends and colleagues, intellectual creditors and mentors too numerous to mention here, to our esteemed

publisher, Mr Modupe Oduyoye, and to Ayo Adeduntan, able editorial assistant, we are eternally grateful as we cheerfully clink our glasses to seventy-five hearty cheers.

Christmas, 2006
Ibadan.

Dele Layiwola
Olawale Albert
Bernard Muller

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

by

Dele Layiwola

In compiling a book on non-linear history we are aware that the traditional concept of history has radically modified itself and has undergone a paradigm shift during the twentieth century and that the erstwhile margins between disciplines continue to shift and to align with the history of mankind to present the ever mercurial but logical aspirations of philosophy, intellectual history and of scientific scholarship in the modern world.

We also feel that in line with developments in a rapidly globalizing world, citizens and scholars of post-colonial nation states and civilizations have a peculiar responsibility. This includes various rearguard attempts to understand the atavism called slavery and the history of underdevelopment. Developing economies equally have to make conscious and pronounced attempts to study, re-search, dis-member and re-member their societies to enhance the understanding of that movement within time and space that is distinctly historical. They owe themselves and their pedigree a fundamental understanding of the dynamics of their institutions and society, the wellsprings of their cultural renewal and their evolution. This is in a bid to understanding the quirky and epigenetic force which is a-historical, accidental and yet moves the templates of historical expressions and historical affirmation. That epi-genesis or auto-generation which helps the progress of nations and societies is based on inertia or the inert quality of the sum total of their civilizing germ and potential. This is what, according to Plato and, more recently, Fukuyama, is called

the *thymotic* basis of societies and their institutions [Plato, 1968; Fukuyama, 1992]. It is more than the struggle for recognition, for as we have the fundamental struggle for recognition among the microcosmic nations of America or even the Soviet Union, we have always had corresponding macrocosmic struggles in the larger body of world nations, including that fortunate blend of neo-industrial nations termed the Asian tigers. We, therefore, encompass and appropriate the true recognition as well as apprehension to that axiomatic expression posed by Fukuyama that 'a universal history of mankind is not the same thing as a history of the universe' [1992:55].

The relevant point that grows out of this is that any attempt at a universal history of mankind or world civilization and development tends, naturally, to aggregate events and seeks a measure of consistency and affinity across time. Even when the so-called yardsticks and parameters are not consistent, the fundamental aspirations are seen to concur. For example, it would be incongruous to compare the intentions of slavery and colonialism with those of the invention of the printing machine and the skyscraper but the appropriation of cheap labour complements the development of wealth, exploitation and the growth of capital. Hence, in more than an ordinary sense, the universal history of mankind as here proposed by Fukuyama or Fontenelle must be an acceptable aggregation of all those events which are found to constitute a consistent index in the course of human history.

A good cultivated mind contains, so to speak, all the minds of preceding centuries; it is but a single identical mind which has been developing and improving itself all the time [1688].

This illuminating point is a landmark assertion because it incorporates the likelihood of heroic efforts in successive generations attempting a reconstruction of what it sees across its shoulders as an authentic history of the age. It will, however, be authentic only in so far as it efficiently aligns and aggregates the consistent and noble events of its preceding ages. This is consistent with what a postcolonial laureate affirmed in the first quarter of the last century. Compare the thoughts of Yeats, though particular and localized, with those of Fontenelle, when he affirms the need for an Irish history and tradition synthesized from all imaginative literature and:

Set before Irishmen for special manual an Irish literature which, though made by many minds, would seem the work of a single mind, and turn our places of beauty or legendary association into holy symbols. [1926:337]

The idea of a proposed universal history, no matter how seminal, will not be complete without a mention of Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay, "An Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View". One thing to be learned from Kant as a methodologist is the fact that human history consisted of successive civilizations each on the heel or the head of the other but that as one destroyed and took over, it preserved relics from the past over which it then built. His reference to the historical evolution of the Greeks, later the Romans and then the Barbarians before our times, is apt and well known. Kant's argument for the evolution of a liberal society is one that will bring men together by way of a contradiction termed 'asocial sociability' whereby men will abandon all wars and antagonisms and seek peace by coming together in civil societies.

It is under civil dispensations that arts and sciences can flourish and competitiveness amongst societies will then give rise to the kind of wholesome creativity that leads to human development. The kind of conflict generated by rivalry and competition leads to resolutions of value and the building of talents. Both the Hegelian as well as the Marxian concept of dialectics follows logically from this understanding of Immanuel Kant as figments of the same genealogy. But perhaps we can carry the heurism further back as Fukuyama has suggested that their real roots will be found in the Socratic dialogues where discussions are resolved on the basis of contradiction:

Such discussions are resolved on the basis of the principle of contradiction: that is, the less self-contradictory side wins, or, if both are found in the course of the conversation to be self-contradictory, then a third position emerges free of the contradictions of the initial two. But this third position may itself contain new, unforeseen contradictions, thereby giving rise to yet another conversation and another resolution. [1992:61]

From the viewpoint of developing economies, it can be argued that the period of slavery and empire reached its peak at that point where human rights and universal legal equality was demanded of all nations of the world. It then collapsed on account of its internal contradictions giving way to the era of colonialism and forced, or imposed, identities. The elaboration of those internal contradictions is outside the scope of the present essay. Beyond this epoch, however, the tripod was complete with the era which calls for the internal drafting of constitutions within

nations, and agreements and treaties among the various nations of the globe. We have no apologies for believing that the elaboration of universal history and the development of mind through Hegel, Marx, Alexandre Kojève, and, more recently, Francis Fukuyama and sundry philosophers of the western world constitute a continuum, be they idealist or materialist. One point on which we must set our gaze is that if, in the western world, liberal humanism constitutes the 'end of history', can we say the same for developing societies of Africa, given the slow progress they have made under liberal democracy? Can we transpose the historicist lessons of the West to Africa and its ancient institutions?

We cannot gainsay the fact that liberal democracy has engendered freedom for the majority in Africa and that there is hope for liberty and equality if nations prosper and are stable. Because Africa arrived on the world historical scene straggling and carrying with her denizens the burden of historical distortions, there is much to gain and much to desire from that history. At the very least, we desire passionately the understanding of the logic of why and how we arrived where we have found ourselves. This phenomenon of self-understanding, I believe, is the same historical stage Chinua Achebe remarks in the phrase 'where the rain began to beat us'.

It is true that the irruptions of military dictatorships within African nations of the 1960s and 70s may constitute a stage in the evolution of post colonies; it has made it difficult to predict the real evolution of traditional societies, having obfuscated the lines between growth as opposed to development. We may conjecture that the evolution of city states among the Greeks and Romans entailed a high dosage and degree of militarism and that a lot of

material progress attended those embattled epochs. But the evolution of social and human sciences in the West since Kant or Hegel would seem to have rendered history directional in the sense of a space ship or a vector. In fact, this is intriguing because the traditional societies from which liberal democracy has evolved seemed to have abrogated value-laden concepts. In other words, colonialism did not give room for the fact that African nations might choose to evolve along completely different lines from those of the metropolises. In this regard, the French nations fared worse because *assimilation* took it for granted that subject persons were endowed with minds that might be epigenetic in their goals for self determination. There was then the intuitive problem of a double jeopardy which seems to hypothetically say, 'By all means ape the West, and, if you must do, ape her accurately even if your ingenuity and environment dictate otherwise.' From that perspective, growth was ensured but development became a proleptic enterprise. The child was asked to walk before it could crawl; it had to sing before it could speak and without reference to its innate abilities. This is how far we have evolved in our avowed march towards liberal democracy and the principle of equality before the law.

The present project lays no pretense to a study of universals and we dare say that it has cunningly avoided the stigma of ethnocentricity. It seeks rather to study institutions and events of a relative historical period and clime because the subjects of celebration has interest in the study of institutions and structures. Hence it seeks to build a lasting bridge between the human and the social sciences. It is this study of colonial and postcolonial institutions that has put Tekena Tamuno in the confluence of the

human and the social sciences. In this regard, he was a pioneer. A number of his colleagues and students have followed the trail he blazed. Tamuno has written extensively on the public service, the police, the railway, peace, conflict and security in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria. The present attempt invented a broad, conceptual dragnet and trawler around the concept of history and the not-so-historical. By so doing, we hoped to garner a fairly representative tapestry and frame by which we could pay tribute to a vintage scholar and administrator.

The fifteen chapters speak for themselves and the scholars wrote in a context astride of directional and non-directional subjects of history. It is hoped that this will inspire and spur new works in the area of a history that can be universal in Africa as Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee have done for their communities at a critical period in human evolution and history.

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OF LEADERSHIP OLD AND NEW: The Akassa War Re-Visited

by

Obaro Ikime

The neglect of our history has led to many avoidable mistakes in our development thus far. As President of the Historical Society of Nigeria in the mid – 1980s, I led delegations to President Shehu Shagari and to the Federal Minister of Education to plead that our people be taught their history. Nothing came of those delegations. It is thus, for me, a thing of great joy that President Olusegun Obasanjo has directed that Nigerian history be taught in our schools. I believe the Historical Society of Nigeria is even now seeking to influence the syllabus that is to be taught to our children. I salute Mr. President for what could be one of his greatest services to Nigeria.

A people need to know their history because, as someone has written, “It is the events recorded in history that have generated all the emotions, the values, the ideals that make life meaningful, that have given men something to live for, struggle over, die for. Historical events have created all the basic human groupings – countries, religions, classes – and all the loyalties that attach to these (R.V. Daniels, 1972, p. 6). Admittedly, history has to do with a study of the past. That past, however, is not a dead past. It is a past that constantly impinges on the present, as both Alagoa and Tamuno make

abundantly clear. "Great history", E.H. Carr wrote four decades ago, "is written precisely when the historian's vision of the past is illuminated by insights into the problems of the present (Carr, p. 30). In other words, we study the past so that we can better understand the present. The lessons from the past ought to challenge us as we deal with the present and plan for the future. That, I believe, was the point of the voice from the dead with which Tamuno concluded his king Koko Memorial Lecture last year. The voice from the past was challenging the actors in the present.

PRELUDE TO THE AKASSA WAR

Although the place and role of Nembe (Brass) in the trade of the Niger Delta have been well chronicled by Alagoa and other scholars who in the process examine developments in the 19th century, no discussion of the Akassa War can be meaningfully undertaken without some comment on these developments. For the Niger Delta, the 19th century was markedly different from earlier ones. In that century the trans-Atlantic slave trade that had been for some three centuries a major factor in the fortunes of the Niger Delta states was gradually suppressed by the British, such that by the 1840s it had been replaced by the trade in palm produce. Secondly, that century witnessed a fundamental change in the attitude of Europe to Africa. That change it was which resulted in the political occupation of Africa by Europe by the end of the 19th century. The Akassa War was Nembe's reaction to this new development. As it happened, however, the war did not stop British occupation: it had the unintended result of hastening it. This will become clearer later.

From the general we now proceed to the particular. Speaking here in Nembe, it is hardly necessary for me to state that Nembe is farther from the Atlantic coastline than Bonny and Kalabari. This meant that Bonny and Kalabari were more involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade than was Nembe. For the same reason, it was easier for the British to stamp out the overseas slave trade in Bonny and Kalabari than in Nembe. All the British had to do was to blockade the rivers leading to Bonny and Kalabari. It was not that easy to blockade the Brass River! This meant that in the 19th century, the Nembe were able to continue in the overseas slave trade much longer than Bonny and Kalabari. Indeed the Nembe were still doing a profitable overseas trade in slaves up to the 1860s. Their geographical location made this possible.

If geographical location favoured the Nembe with regard to the overseas trade in slaves, other developments in the 19th century began to undermine their economic and political well-being. Because the main outlines are known, you will permit me not to go into too much detail here. It is well known that in the trade of the Niger Delta and the lower Niger, Nembe and Aboh built up a trade alliance which was mutually beneficial. Her location made it possible for Aboh to obtain local products from farther inland and also from the Asaba "sand bank" market which she exchanged for European goods with the delta states, especially with the Nembe. Alagoa indicates that King Boy Amain who ruled from 1832-46 had some 100 retainers who lived in Aboh and did business for him. He also married from the royal family of Aboh to cement the trade alliance between the two states. At some point, the same king had as many as eighteen large canoes (each big

enough to carry forty men) doing business at Aboh. We provide these details to make a point: the trade alliance with Aboh was of great value to the Nembe state.

The value of that alliance began to be adversely affected as European explorers moved into the hinterland in the 19th century. By the 1860s, the Europeans had established a trading station at Aboh. This meant that Aboh was no longer as dependent on Nembe (Brass) as she had earlier been for European manufactured goods. European trading stations were also established in Onitsha and Lokoja, meaning that the purely African trade network began to be radically altered. Aboh herself felt the impact of these new developments. The farther European traders penetrated beyond Aboh, the less trade Aboh was able to do with her own hinterland. In 1862 and again in 1885 Aboh attacked and plundered the European trading station in protest against this development. As was to be expected, this was followed with sharp reprisals which ultimately saw the fall of Aboh, Nembe's one-time trading partner, as an independent polity. We tell this story to provide part of the background to the Akassa War.

For the Nembe, among the unfavourable developments of the 19th century was the gradual undermining of the trade alliance between Aboh and Nembe which had been a major pillar of that state's prosperity earlier in the century. As I wrote in 1977: "...Brass suddenly found that the Aboh market was lost to her. Most of her markets between the Brass River and Onitsha began to be less profitable because of the new competition from European traders. By 1876 the rulers of Brass were pleading that European traders should leave their markets to them. The plea fell on deaf ears." The build-up

that was to end in the Akassa War had begun.

I do not consider it necessary for me to dwell at any length on the various treaties which Nembe signed with the British in the 19th century. Last year's lecture touched on those treaties, and full details are available in Alagoa's works. Only a few observations are called for. The anti-slave trade treaty signed by the Nembe in 1834 was like that signed by the other delta states. Despite it, trading in slaves went on till the 1850s though the volume progressively declined. When Consul Hewelt offered a "treaty of protection" to Nembe in 1884, the rulers of Nembe were unwilling to sign it. This was because by 1879, George Tubman Goldie had established the National African Company by buying up many of the smaller British firms that had been operating in the Niger Delta. This amalgamation meant that the delta states could no longer play one firm against another. It also meant that the new company, the National African Company (NAC), was in a much stronger position to impose her own terms on the rulers of the delta states. Indeed, by 1884 when Nembe was required to sign a treaty of protection with the British, the NAC was already making things difficult for her. Operating up the Nun River, the company was seeking to stop the Nembe traders, and even other European firms doing business in the Brass River, from their traditional markets which could only be reached through the Nun River. Clearly, a new factor had been introduced into the commercial equation of the Niger Delta, and the Nembe were badly hit by it. For that reason, the Nembe were rightly suspicious of the British and so unwilling to come under their so-called protection. Hence they signed the treaty only for six months in 1884. When in 1885 the Nembe were again

persuaded to renew the treaty, the British promised that they would persuade the NAC to allow the Nembe to do business with their traditional markets. Against this background, the Nembe signed the protection treaty for another six months only. The six months expired on 1 August, 1885. This means that after 1 August, 1885, Britain had no legal rights to claim that Nembe was part of their protectorate.

As I have argued elsewhere, in the last two decades of the 19th century, Afro-British relations in what is now Nigeria were not governed by strict legality but by superior fire power. Even so, it is important to stress that the rulers of Nembe were sufficiently aware of what was happening to seek to legally protect their rights and interests. Although a number of the other delta trading states questioned one or other of the clauses of the protection treaties, no other state, within my knowledge, signed the protection treaties for only two brief periods, totaling only one year, as did the Nembe. The stand they took did not, in the end, save them from being overrun by the British. It nevertheless proves that they were conscious of the threat to their sovereignty, including their economic interests, which the treaty-signing exercise represented. They sought to defend that sovereignty and those interests by refusing to sign a treaty which bound them for all time. This was dedicated leadership. This was statesmanship, the product of the rulers' commitment to the real needs of their people.

THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY AND THE NEMBE PEOPLE

The intention under this sub-head is not merely to re-state well known facts. Rather our aim is to draw attention to the dire straits to which the Nembe and their rulers were reduced before they chose the path of war as the only path of honour left to them. The National African Company became a chartered company known as the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.) in 1886.

A chartered company was different from an ordinary company in two important ways. One, it had powers of governance in the area covered by its charter. Within that area, it could make laws and regulations and enforce same. Two, following from the above, it was allowed to raise a force which it could use to enforce the laws and regulations it made.

As earlier indicated, the activities of the National African Company in the pre-1886 period already posed a threat to the economic well-being of the Nembe people. In the post - 1886 period, the situation was made worse because the R.N.C. was able, because it had the military might, to build up a monopoly of trade in its area of jurisdiction. This area of jurisdiction included most of Nembe's traditional markets, Aboh included. Nembe itself, however, lay not in R.N.C. territory but in the territory of what was known as the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885 and as the Niger Coast Protectorate from 1891. This was a most unfortunate development for the Nembe: the R.N.C. could claim that whatever it did within its territories was within the charter that established it, while the

administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate (N.C.P.) that was supposed to "protect" the interests of the Nembe people was unable to stop the R.N.C. from its oppressive regulations. This need not surprise anyone. The R.N.C. and the Niger Coast Protectorate had a common interest to promote British commerce and empire in what became Nigeria. This being so, the N.C.P. might oppose the R.N.C. on paper; it could take no action that would undermine over-all British interest in the area. This was why the N.C.P. visited the Nembe with such reprisals after the Akassa War.

In his various writings on this subject, Alagoa has indicated how the Nembe people constantly complained about the injustice to which they were subjected, first by the N.A.C. and then by the R.N.C. As early as 1889 a British Royal Commissioner confirmed that the Nembe had indeed been excluded from their traditional markets by the R.N.C. In 1891 when a new British administration was established in the Oil Rivers, a vice-consulate was established in Nembe territory (at Twon) purportedly to protect Nembe interests. As it turned out, however, the vice-consul stationed in Twon was unable to stop the R.N.C. from its oppressive acts against the Nembe. In the years between 1890 and 1893 the Nembe had allies in the Liverpool traders in the Niger Delta who were not part of the R.N.C. and who, in Britain, protested against the trade monopoly that the R.N.C. had established within its territory, a monopoly which adversely affected groups outside the territory but whose markets lay within it. These Liverpool traders naturally allied with the Nembe. In 1893, however, the R.N.C. succeeded in buying off the Liverpool merchants. Thereafter the Nembe were alone and isolated in their protests

against the R.N.C.'s activities. Naturally, the Nembe continued to appeal to Britain to cause the R.N.C. to dismantle its monopoly. Nothing came of these appeals. The head of the British Niger Coast Protectorate government, with its headquarters in Calabar, stated in 1894 that there was nothing he could do about the activities of the R.N.C. In other words, he told the Nembe that they were on their own. Since they were on the own, the Nembe eventually decided to take their own action to Nembe to protect their own interest. The Akassa War was the action.

That it may be clear to all why the Nembe took the action they took, we here summarize the R.N.C. measures which crippled Nembe trade and threatened to reduce them to "eating dust". Nembe traders who desired to trade in R.N.C. territory had to:

- obtain a licence to trade for the sum of 50 pounds.
- pay a sum of 10 pounds yearly for every station at which they traded.
- pay a sum of 100 pounds if they intended to trade in spirits (i.e., alcoholic drinks).
- pay a duty of two shillings per gallon of spirit which they bought.
- pay 20% of the value of all palm produce sold as export duty.

It is important to stress that trade in the Niger Delta was virtually impossible without spirits. To impose such a high annual duty on spirits was to cripple the trade of the Nembe people. Also the R.N.C. imposed an export duty on the Nembe

at a time when the British government of the Niger Coast Protectorate did not levy any export duty within its territory, and the Nembe were within that territory.

No Nembe trader could afford to pay the exactions of the R.N.C. Therefore the Nembe resorted to smuggling. Up to 1893 they found allies in the Liverpool merchants who were willing to do business with them. After the R.N.C. bought off the Liverpool traders, the Nembe suffered even more at the hands of the R.N.C. which stationed along the rivers boats that fired at Nembe canoes seeking to do business in R.N.C. territory. The attacks on Nembe canoes were not limited to canoes carrying palm produce or imported goods. Even canoes carrying foodstuff were fired at. It would never be known how many Nembe lives were lost through these R.N.C. attacks. The truth is that the Nembe people were literally driven to the wall. It was against this background that their leaders decided on war: it was better to die fighting than to die of starvation.

THE AKASSA WAR

The Akassa War was planned and executed by King Koko of Ogbolomabiri. As Alagoa points out, the Nembe metropolis is divided into two: Ogbolomabiri and Basambiri. Each of these had its own *amayanabo*, and the evidence suggests that each of these rulers was independent of the other. These two settlements naturally constituted the core of the Nembe state. But there were other towns, including Okpoama and Twon. Alagoa lists twelve other towns that were part of Nembe. In the Akassa War, it was Ogbolomabiri, Bassambiri, Okpoama and Twon, the port of Nembe, that furnished the war canoes and the fighting men.

Koko became king in 1889, at a time when the R.N.C. was already putting the squeeze on the Nembe state. The king before Koko, Ockiya, died in 1879. After him Chief Igbeta became regent and served in that capacity till his death in 1888. Elected king by the chiefs and the high priest of the state, Igbeta refused to accept the office. It is not clear why he took that decision. We can ask whether he saw that the times were changing and was not sure if he could provide the leadership needed in those changing times. That no king was elected for the nine years of his regency suggests to me that he was highly regarded. Indeed he played a leading role in the various representations which the Nembe made to the British government against the oppressive policies of the R.N.C. Be that as it may, when he died in 1888, Koko was elected king.

Koko became king when the times were out of joint. Alagoa suggests he was between thirty and forty years old when he became king. The photograph of him that appears in every published work on Nembe history confirms that he was in the prime of life. It is customary in the delta states for those who became kings to have proved themselves in trade and politics. Often they first served as heads of houses before they became kings. King Koko was never the head of any of the houses. He saw service in the trading canoes of Igbeta who was his uncle. If he was forty in 1889, that would mean that he was born about 1849, in the dying days of the slave trade. His service in his uncle's trading canoes would thus have been in the days of the trade in palm produce. He would thus have felt keenly the difficulties and the vexations caused to his people by the N.A.C. and R.N.C. It could be that, although there were older and more experienced persons in the state,

Koko was chosen to be king because the people saw in him certain qualities which they thought would enable him lead his people effectively in the heady days in which he ruled. The fact that he had not been head of any of the houses thus became an advantage in the sense that he could be seen as committed to the Nembe state and not to any particular group within it (Alagoa, 1967, p. 70).

It was in Koko's sixth year as king that the Akassa War took place. As has already been indicated, the Nembe had sought through diplomatic channels to get the R.N.C. to allow them trade with their traditional markets. Every effort failed. And the man who established a vice-consulate in Twon himself confessed that there was nothing he could do about the R.N.C. In the circumstances, the Nembe had either to do something drastic about their situation or face starvation. King Koko decided on war. It must remain a moot question whether he thought through the immediate and ultimate consequences of an attack on the R.N.C. Even if he successfully sacked the headquarters of the R.N.C., would he be left by the British to enjoy the spoils of war? Was the situation so critical that the urge to act blunted logical reasoning? The truth is that the same questions can be asked concerning all the leaders of our peoples who went to war against the British in defence of their and our sovereignty. Even when they knew that the British had smashed their neighbours, they nevertheless chose to go down fighting. It is the sacrifice of their lives that we celebrate on occasions such as this. Their heroic stand against the British it is that gives us something to celebrate. When Koko decided to go to war, he joined the many in human history who, in the face of oppression and exploitation, put their lives on the line

in an effort to free their people from man's inhumanity to man.

It was one thing for King Koko to decide that war was the only option open to him. It was quite another to persuade his people to go to war. The evidence suggests that Basambiri, under *Amayanabo* Ebifa, was opposed to war. Alagoa suggests that Koko respected Ebifa's stand and bided his time. Ebifa died in 1894. Okpoama was apparently not too comfortable about going to war. Koko had to go there personally to persuade *Amayanabo* Obu to be part of the war effort. Okpoama's reluctance to go to war had to do with the fact that she was little involved in the overseas trade, though, of course, she needed the foodstuff from the delta hinterland. That Obu's war canoe joined Koko's "armada" is evidence that he was won over to the war effort. Twon too eventually joined the war, though there were individuals there who stayed away from actual participation while contributing men and materials. The point of emphasis is that King Koko succeeded in getting all the main Nembe towns to be part of the war effort. It was a major achievement, one hardly paralleled elsewhere in the delta. Having mobilized the Nembe "nation", the king himself led his people forth into war.

The actual preparations were undertaken in great secrecy. Surprise was to be a major factor in the attack on Akassa. Indeed Alagoa says that King Koko had to make the general public believe that all of the preparations were for the deepening of a narrow and shallow creek which was to serve as an alternative route to the interior markets, since their traditional routes were blocked by the gunboats of the R.N.C. So, with such and other subterfuges, the preparations were

concluded. Once the war canoes were manned and assembled at agreed points, the king was able to announce the true destination of the “armada” – Akassa. Some will call that a master stroke.

The final preparation for was in the spirit realm. It was usual, in that age, to commit such major undertakings to the gods and ancestors, and to ask them to grant success. The testimony of the catholic priest who was King Koko’s guest at the time of the war reveals that the king’s own final personal preparation was ritualistic. King Koko who had earlier embraced the Christian faith had renounced that faith and returned to the religion of his ancestors so that he could enter fully into the office of king. As it turned out, both the king and his people could claim that their gods granted them success, for they achieved the object of their mission. Akassa, the headquarters of the R.N.C. was taken. The white personnel managed to escape. Their black workers were either killed or taken captive. Goods in the store of the company became war loot, carried away by the Nembe people. The records of their company in their offices were destroyed. The god of Nembe had granted his people victory.

The details of the action against Akassa need not delay us here. Alagoa’s published works have them. The only point that must be stated for emphasis is that the successful execution of the war was no mean feat. First, the size of the attacking force was considerable. Alagoa’s list of war canoes totals thirty-one. King Koko’s canoe alone carried some sixty persons. The total force has been estimated at about 1,500. From Nembe to Akassa was a considerable distance for canoes powered by paddles to cover.

The force left Nembe on Monday, 28 January. The canoes passed by Twon at night that day unobserved by the officials of the vice-consulate there. The attack on Akassa began at 4.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 29 January, 1895. The Nembe operated on familiar terrain. They knew the creeks well. They knew all about the tides by day and by night. The planning was thorough, the execution excellent. Admittedly, the R.N.C. failed to prepare adequately against the Nembe attack, even after they got a warning from the vice-consul at Twon who received an anonymous letter informing him of King Koko's plan. The reaction of Joseph Flint, the agent-general of the R.N.C. at Akassa, was that there was always talk about such attacks. In other words, he did not think the Nembe were capable of doing what they did. He did not realize that in King Koko the Nembe had a leader who could motivate his people and personally lead them against an enemy whose policies and actions threatened their very existence.

Alagoa tells us that for the Nembe, the Akassa War (*Akassa Youmi*) was not just the attack on Akassa in January 1895 but also the British revenge mission against Nembe and Okpoama in February. The Nembe did their utmost to convince Sir Claude Macdonald, the head of the British administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, that their grievances were not against his administration but against the R.N.C., and that they had no ill-will against Macdonald's government. The Nembe could well have saved their breath. Legally, there was indeed a distinction between the R.N.C. and the Niger Coast Protectorate. But it was the same British government in London which set up the Niger Coast Protectorate administration that gave R.N.C. a charter which

enables it to put in place the oppressive policies that provoked the attack on Akassa. For Macdonald, the issue was not that of the rights and wrongs of the matter. The issue was that a British company had been attacked by an African force with a success that was unusual, a success which was from the viewpoint of the British an affront on Her Britannic Majesty! That affront had to be avenged. This was the general attitude of the British in the years of empire-building in Africa.

Only the year before (1894), the British had gone to war against Chief Nana of Ebrohimi in Itsekiriland, whom they accused of building up a monopoly of trade in the Urhobo hinterland, the very offence with which the Nembe charged the Royal Niger Company! In Itsekiriland, the British allegedly went to war against Nana for monopolizing the trade of the hinterland. In Nembe, the British went to war against the Nembe in defence of a British company that had established a monopoly of trade within its area of jurisdiction. Clearly, the much-talked-about British justice was not in evidence here. I repeat that in the days of European empire-building in Africa, Britain did not allow fine points of law to stand in her way as she toppled the sovereignty of African peoples. You don't make omelettes without breaking eggs!

Permit me here to briefly take issue with Professor Tamuno over his comment about Nana in his lecture here last year. According to Tamuno, the British consul (it was the same Macdonald) compelled Nana's collapse, trial and subsequent deportation "because Nana's attempts to monopolize trade went too far too fast"! My respected senior colleague also stated: "After his death, in 1916, Nana was remembered more as a "merchant prince" on the Benin River than as a valiant

Freedom Fighter (sic)" (Tamuno, 2001, p.7). I published a full blown biography of Nana entitled *Merchant Prince of the Niger Delta* as far back as 1968, and I am therefore amazed that Professor Tamuno reached the conclusions he did despite the facts as stated in my biography of Nana. Tamuno's conclusions as contained in the lecture are essentially the same as those in an article he published in 1965. I took issues with those conclusions in my biography of Nana (Ikime, 1968, pp. 135-136). Consideration of time and space makes it impossible for me to repeat the arguments here. But I can state, on the basis of the evidence available to me and as contained in my *Merchant Prince...*, that Nana the merchant prince was also indeed Nana the valiant freedom fighter, albeit, like the Nembe, one who fought on a more limited geographical plane than Africa's freedom fighters of the twentieth century.

Let us return to the Nembe. The British began to prepare their counter-attack as from 5 February, 1895. It was not until 26 February that the final shots were fired. The Nembe were not taken by surprise. They prepared as well as they knew how against the British counter-offensive. As Nana did the previous year, they built a stockade across the creek through which the British would pass on their way to Nembe. The British had to blast away this stockade as they did to Nana's. Thoughts of a naval bombardment were given up because the Nembe guns were well-positioned to wreak havoc on approaching boats. In the end the British chose to land troops and to do house-to-house fighting, King Koko and the Nembe chiefs of Ogbolomabiri, Basambiri (these two constituting the Nembe metropolis) and Okpoama being the main targets. Alagoa's studies make it quite clear that the Nembe gave an

1. It was the only instance in which a delta state led an offensive against a British chartered company with a force of its own and succeeded in sacking the headquarters of the company! Indeed, it was the only instance in the period of British conquest and Nigerian resistance, the subject of my *The Fall of Nigeria*. In virtually every other case, the British took the offensive and Nigerian groups fought a defensive war which they invariably lost. Although Nembe victory against the British company led to reprisals by the British which ended with Nembe losing her sovereignty to the British, the Akassa War remains a proud reference point for all Nembe people even today. Each year as you gather at these memorial lectures, you will be reminded of the deeds of those who went before you. While you celebrate the audacity of King Koko and his "armada", ask yourself whether in your own time Nembe interests are as much your concern as they were of those who shed their blood for the sake of your dignity.
2. The Akassa War was the only instance in the Niger Delta in which a whole state, made up of its various component units (some of these with their own *amayanabo*) went to war against a British power in the age of the scramble for Africa. Opobo did not, in the end, fight a war against the British. Jaja was tricked aboard a British man-of-war and carried off into exile. In the western delta, when Nana Olomu of Ebrohimi took on the British in 1894, the year before the Akassa War, the entire Itsekiri Kingdom did not

excellent account of themselves: they defended each house with all their resources, suffering casualties which the British put at some 300. Even before the British began their house-to-house attacks, the chiefs had evacuated their belongings (including their women and children) to remote villages farther from the coast. And when it became clear that British superior fire power would win the day, the Nembe took their king to a safe place where the British could not reach him. It speaks volume for the loyalty of the Nembe to King Koko that, although the king lived until 1898 in the secret place to which he was taken, no one betrayed him to the British. King Koko for his part refused to surrender to the British or to attend any meetings with the British consular officials. In taking this step, he must have been guided by what happened to those before him (in Bonny, Opobo and Itsekiriland) who, having surrendered to the British in the belief that justice would be done, ended in exile. Thus when the king died in 1898, he died as the hero of his people, one who gave his life in the fight against oppression, the fight for the rights and interest of his people.

In his lecture last year, Tamuno listed "three key determinants of History (sic)", namely, "Time, Circumstance and Leadership (sic)". We may here apply these to the events we have been talking about. The Akassa War was fought in the period of European scramble for territories in Africa. In that period, European nations were interested in staking claims for themselves in Africa at minimum cost to their metropolitan treasuries. One way of cutting costs was to let a chartered company undertake the task of governance in return for support for the activities of the company. It is in this light that

we must see the activities of the Royal Niger Company which provoked the ire of the Nembe and resulted in the attack on Akassa. It is also in this light that we must see the British counter-offensive against the Nembe.

The Nembe lived and operated in circumstances in which not to trade was to face starvation. Unable to produce enough food for themselves because of the terrain in which they lived, trade with their more hinterland, food-producing neighbours was crucial for their survival. It was because the activities of the Royal Niger Company increasingly made trade with their neighbours difficult that the Nembe were frustrated into war.

Without a shadow of doubt, the coming of Frederick William Koko to the Nembe throne in 1889 influenced the trend of events in that delta state in terms of Nembe-British relations. Earlier rulers of the 19th century had protested against the oppressive measures of the N.A.C., later R.N.C., without going to war. The coming to the throne of the youngish Koko whose age mates constituted the leaders of the still able-bodied male population was a definite factor in the events that led to the Akassa War. His ability to secure a consensus among the Nembe and to muster the "naval" force he put together, together with his readiness to be part of the action – all of this must have fired the martial ardour of the Nembe people and played a part in the success which attended the attack on Akassa. Yes, indeed. Time, circumstance and leadership do affect the history of a people.

A PECULIAR WAR

In the annals of the Niger Delta in the 19th century, the Akassa War was peculiar in a number of ways.

back him. Rather, it was Nana and his retainers who fought against the British, even though the issues at stake affected all of Itsekiriland. In that case, the British found allies in rival Itsekiri traders led by Omadoghogbone Numa ("Dore Numa") whose assistance played no small part in the fall of Nana and Ebrohimi. Nana was not the *Olu* – the king – of Itsekiriland, although he was the recognized leader of the Itsekiri. King Koko was king, and in his war against the R.N.C. he did not have to worry about Nembe collaborators with the British, for there were none. Even individuals who, for reason of their relations with the company, could not themselves physically be part of the war, set their war canoes and fighting men as part of the Nembe force. There was a oneness of purpose in the Akassa War that was absent from similar wars of that century. That oneness of purpose was the consequence of the build-up to the war as earlier analysed. No other delta state fought as one man against the British as Nembe did.

3. In the Akassa War, King Koko was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the Nembe state. He led his people to the war himself. It is easy to imagine how the presence of the *amayanabo* himself would have served to infuse enthusiasm in the fighting forces. I know of no other such case in the confrontation between the British and our peoples in the Niger delta in the last two decades of the 19th century.
4. Some may be tempted to argue that the Akassa War

was fought not against the British government in the Niger Coast Protectorate but against a British company. True enough. However, when the Niger Coast Protectorate decided to avenge the defeat of the Royal Niger Company by going to war against Nembe in February 1895, there was the same unity of spirit. The people fought gallantly until superior fire power ensured victory for the British. In February as in January, there were no Nembe collaborators. How much unity of purpose is there today in the Nembe kingdom as you seek to pursue your interests in Bayelsa State and the Nigerian nation? Shall we say to the leaders of today: "Go to King Koko, learn his ways and be wise"? But, of course, his circumstances were different from yours. We will address that reality presently. Even so, however, there are principles that can be learnt and applied to the changed circumstances of the twenty-first century.

5. Having won the Akassa War and lost the revenge war which followed, King Koko refused to surrender to the British. He would not so much as parley with them. He was not prepared to suffer the fate of Jaja of Opobo and Nana of Ebrohimi, both of whom were sent into exile by the British. Both Alagoa and Tamuno have drawn attention to King Koko's determined posture in this regard, and so I can afford to be content with just the mention of it. It has been suggested that at the end the king might have reduced his people to eating dust. That is the stuff of which real leaders are made.

6. King Koko wrote to rulers of other delta states to join him in the Akassa War. Unfortunately, his letters got into the hands of British consular officials and so the delta rulers could not receive them till the war was over. Even though the coalition sought did not materialize, it is striking that King Koko thought of building such a coalition. He must have thought that the policies of the Royal Niger Company were as obnoxious to the other delta states as they were to the Nembe. What the reactions of these other states would have been must remain a moot question. It is the idea of building a coalition that we here regard as significant. And it is that idea that we laud here.

LEADERSHIP OLD AND NEW

Given the formulation of the title of this lecture, you may have thought that I would speak about leadership before re-visiting the Akassa War. As you can observe, I have done the opposite. This is deliberate. The discussion of leadership into which I am about to go will make more sense and have more meaning against the background of what I have already said about the Akassa War. I titled the lecture the way I have done because I do want you, my listeners, both now as you listen to me and long after you have left this hall to focus your minds on leadership as a crucially important element in the fortunes of a people. And when I speak of leadership, I mean leadership at various levels.

What then is leadership? "Leadership is that which moves persons and organizations toward the fulfillment of their goals." "The chief objective of leadership", according to

another writer, "is the creation of a human community held together by the bond a common purpose." A leader is thus "one who leads others to the accomplishment of a common goal". There is a particular definition of leadership which I consider very apt. It is by John Edmun Haggai of the famous Haggai Institute. According to him, *Leadership is the discipline of deliberately exerting special influence within a group to move it towards goals of beneficial permanence that fulfil the group's real needs.* It is important that we understand what that definition says. The leader is made, not born! In other words, even though in certain instances a son may succeed his father in a leadership position, that very fact does not make him a leader. The leader has to work at being a leader. Hence the word *discipline*.

The leaders exert special influence. By this I understand that true leaders are those who elicit profound trust from their followers. There has to be something in the leader that the people respect. This "something" convinces the people that under that leader they can achieve results that would not otherwise be possible. Leadership is invariably exercised within a group. That group has to have a certain "sameness" – something that holds them together, something common to them. This could be origin, language, nationality, education, profession, etc. Beyond these, however, the group must have a sameness of purpose or a unity of purpose. Part of a leader's challenge is that of promoting that unity of purpose. Leaders must have goals. But goals grow out of the leader's vision – what he wants the group to be or to do. The goals must be of *beneficial permanence* – enduring results that are beneficial to the group.

Then there is the concept of the group's real needs. Real needs as used here to contrast with perceived needs. Permit me to explain my meaning from the Holy Bible. In Acts 3 there is the story of a man who was born lame, and who sat every day at the gate of the temple begging for alms. One day this lame man saw Peter and John coming into the temple. He, as usual, begged them for alms – money which he could use to buy food, etc. For the lame man, his perceived need was money. But he had a real need which he did not think could be met by Peter and John. That real need was that he should be healed so that he could move about and earn a living for himself and so beg for alms no more. He sought to meet his perceived need by begging for alms. Peter and John saw his real need and asked the Lord Jesus to provide that real need. The lame man was healed. His real need was met.

Today in the Niger Delta there may be many who are chasing perceived needs, leaving the real needs unmet. The true leader is he who can identify the real needs of his group, his people, and meet these needs. A few million naira doled out to traditional rulers or youth groups may meet perceived needs. The real need of permanent development remains unmet. The leadership that we in the Niger Delta must seek for is leadership that meets real needs.

WAS KING KOKO A LEADER?

In the light of what we have said above, was King Koko a leader? To answer that question, we must ask others. Did he deliberately exert special influence within his group, the Nembe people? Did he seek to move his group towards goals of beneficial permanence? Did he seek to meet the real needs

of his people? From all that we have come to know of King Koko, it would appear that he did exert special influence over not just the ordinary people but also over the elite group – the chiefs and heads of houses in Nembe. That influence derived from the fact that they could see that he had a vision for his people, and he worked at getting his people to accept that vision and to run with it. So we claim that he met that criterion of leadership.

What was the real need of the Nembe people? Free trade with their traditional customers. Here we need to remind ourselves that the delta states were often referred to as trading states. Admittedly all states, all peoples, engage in trade. What then is the significance in the delta states being referred to as trading states? For the delta states their very existence depended on slaves and later palm produce of their hinterland neighbours. Without this exchange, the delta states could not survive. So then, part of the real need of the Nembe state was trade with their hinterland neighbours. It was this trade that the Royal Niger Company strangled. It was against this strangulation that King Koko's predecessors petitioned the British again and again. It was the failure of the British authorities both in the Niger Delta and Britain to get the Royal Niger Company to change its policy that ultimately led King Koko to resort to war.

Did the Akassa War bring about a situation in which the real need of the Nembe people was met? Here opinion may differ. It is easy enough to argue that the victory at Akassa was shortlived, that the revenge of the British in February 1895 which ended with the Nembe paying a fine of 500 pounds sterling, returning war captives who had not been sacrificed

to the gods, and handing over some twenty war canoes as well as their guns negated the gains of the Akassa War. It can also be argued that following the Akassa War, the British rapidly dismantled whatever was left of Nembe sovereignty. Consequently, it can be argued that the Akassa War did not end in the real need of Nembe being met. Yet, in a paradoxical manner, the Akassa War was a factor – admittedly just one factor – which led the British to abrogate the charter of the Royal Niger Company and so once more throw the traditional markets of the Nembe open to them, albeit in a new setting in which the British colonial government in what became Southern Nigeria was the ultimate authority. Seen in this latter context, the Akassa War ensured that the Nembe state survived as one of the units in colonial Nigeria. To that extent, King Koko did meet the real needs of the Nembe people and so was, indeed, a leader of his people. It is in recognition of that leadership that these annual lectures have been instituted.

LEADERSHIP IN THE NIGER DELTA

Because the Niger delta states were trading states, leadership in these states was in the hands of those who were considered capable of promoting the trading interests of the states. Thus although the *amayabo* was usually chosen from the founding lineage, the person chosen was usually one who had proven his ability as a trader and a warrior – trader and warrior because the rivalry for trade was such that successful traders not only owned many trade canoes, they also had to own war canoes to convoy and protect the trade canoes. The same was true for heads of Houses in each state. They too had to be tried and successful traders. It was the *amayabo* and the

Heads of Houses that constituted the leadership of the eastern delta states. Their responsibility was to protect the trading interests of the states. To do this was also to protect their personal interests. This point is, in my view, of crucial importance. There was conjunction between the interests of the ruling class and the interests of the people. That was why King Koko could mobilize his people for the Akassa War. The king was not seeking to promote his personal interests; he did not seek to go to war for personal aggrandizement. The Akassa War was fought to defend the real needs of the Nembe state. Those needs, those interests, were identifiable; they were known. The success or failure of rulership was measured in terms of the degree to which the known interests of the state, and so of the people, were met. This must remain the acid test of leadership even now.

Leadership in the Niger Delta in pre-colonial times was played out within each individual state. Thus King Koko operated in the context of the Nembe state. The history of the larger Niger Delta up to the establishment of formal British colonial rule was one of fierce inter-state commercial rivalry which, from time to time, erupted into war. The interests of each of the delta states was paramount in the thinking and actions of the respective rulers. The history of our peoples in the Niger Delta did not, therefore, leave us with a heritage of inter-state solidarity and co-operation on which the leadership of the colonial and post-colonial periods could build. We turn now to those two periods.

THE NIGER DELTA IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

For the peoples of the Niger Delta the emergence of the colonial state of Nigeria signified the end of a glorious era. Until then, these states were the great middlemen traders between the European merchants and the hinterland producers. It was with these states that European firms dealt. It was these states that were known in Europe. Because they acquired firearms from their European customers, these states tended to over-awe and dominate their hinterland neighbours both in the days of the slave trade and those of the trade in palm produce. Colonial rule brought an end to this domination.

As roads were built, linking the coastal areas to the hinterland, the middleman role of these states was gradually destroyed. Since in terms of population the hinterland was more thickly populated than the delta states, the delta peoples soon found that in the political arrangement of Nigeria's colonial period, they were minorities. In the Eastern Region of old, the delta peoples also constituted part of the minority groups. How do leaders of minority groups ensure that the interests of their people are met? That was the challenge of the colonial period. That remains the challenge of leadership in the post-colonial period.

As I have demonstrated in my study of Itsekiri-Urhobo relations published as *Niger Delta Rivalry* (1969), the colonial period enabled certain individuals from the coastal states to play important roles in the hinterland as political agents of the British. However, although in terms of coast-hinterland relations, the roles played by these political agents, warrant chiefs or paramount chiefs became proud reference points

for the coastal peoples, these agents of the British can hardly be described as leaders of the coastal states who conferred any permanent benefits on their various states. Certainly, they were not the *amayabos* nor were they always heads of Houses. Indeed they were a new class of leaders who did not feel that they owed any duty to their respective states, even if they unwittingly served certain interests of those states. This group of people did not fulfil the requirements of true leadership as earlier defined.

With these brief comments, please permit me to move on to the situation today so that I can begin to draw this lecture to an end.

LEADERSHIP IN THE NIGER DELTA TODAY

There exist today different tiers of leadership in the Delta region as elsewhere in the country. Here in Bayelsa State, for example, we have the state government, the local governments, the Council of Chiefs, the traditional rulers in their respective domains, the chiefs who work with them and the youth groups. Over and above all these is the federal government which controls the exploitation of the mineral oil within the bowels of this state. "The chief object of leadership is the creation of a human community held together by the work bond for a common purpose." The question arises: which of these tiers of leadership is identifying the common purpose of the human community in Bayelsa State? If a leader is "one who leads others to the accomplishment of a common goal", what are the common goals to which these various leaders desire to lead the people of Bayelsa State? Who is the goal-setter? Which of these leaders is identifying "goals of

beneficial permanence”? Who is ensuring that the “real needs” of the Bayelsa people are being met? What these questions reveal is that, given the existence of the Nigerian nation state and its component units, the challenge of leadership today is of a very different order from what it was in the days of King Koko in whose honour we are gathered today.

King Koko was the ruler of his people. As we have demonstrated, he could identify the real interests, the real needs, of his people and pursue them. Today Nembe is not an independent entity as it was in the days of Koko. In the days of King Koko the king was crucial to the economic well being of his people because he was involved in regulating the trade of the state which was the source of the people’s well-being. Today, the economic well-being of the Nembe people is tied up with the economic well-being of Bayelsa State and Nigeria and very few, if any, Nembe people are looking up to their *amayanabo* for this. In days gone by, the leaders were chosen for their proven abilities in commerce, the source of livelihood of the state. The leaders who emerged were thus known personalities. Today a Nembe man or woman who has spent most of his/her life away from home can return home to contest election to the local government or the State House of Assembly or the governorship. If he/she has the resources, he/she can win the election and become part of the leadership. His/her election victory does not depend on proven service state any more. The control which Nembe people at grassroots have over him/her is minimal. His/her salary and other perquisites are not provided directly by the Nembe people. Although Nembe people by their votes have helped to make him/her one of the leaders, they have little or no control over

him/her. How does such a person lead Nembe people to the accomplishment of common goals? Who sets the goals in today's situation?

Today, our traditional rulers remain relevant in as far as they will exert influence over the peoples at grassroots level. They also exert influence over local governments and even state governments to whom they can take the needs of their people and press that they be met. But they cannot themselves ensure that such needs are met. What is more, their personal well-being is in the hands of the state government that provides them with their stipend. This means that although they exert influence over their people, although they exercise a measure of rulership over their people, they are nevertheless made independent of these same people in terms of their salaries, etc. Our traditional rulers thus do not satisfy fully the demands of leadership as defined.

What about local government leaders – chairmen and councilors? They are the ones now constitutionally charged with grassroot development. In the Niger Delta region, however, these local governments can only meet limited needs of their people because of the nature of the terrain and the degradation of the ecosystem through the exploitation of mineral oil. Because at no time have all the stake holders in the delta met, brainstormed and developed a blueprint for the development of the region, local governments hardly implement any planned development. They hardly confer with the people of their areas to agree on real needs which should be addressed. Sectionalism, corruption and greed conspire to ensure that more money goes into the pockets of these local government functionaries than goes into developmental

projects. The people who voted them into power look on helplessly. No goals are set, let alone met. At any rate, the local governments depend on the state government for financial allocations which constitute the better part of the annual budgets. If funds do not come from the state governments, even limited goals cannot be met.

Youth Groups

Perhaps this is the place to talk about the youth groups that have surfaced all over the Delta region to fight for the right of their people. By their acts of vandalization of the installations of oil companies or seizure of their staff on whose heads they place a ransom, these youth organizations have succeeded in getting oil companies to pay out millions of naira from time to time. Their actions have certainly had the result of drawing attention to the massive neglect which the delta region has suffered at the hands of successive governments. To that extent they have served a useful purpose in a nation in which, unfortunately, government hardly takes note of any peaceful representations and protests, but waits to be jolted into action by strikes and violent outbursts. However, in the context of leadership, the leaders of the youth groups cannot be said to have articulated clear goals which they are consistently seeking to pursue. Nor can they be said to have identified the real needs of their people – needs which they mobilize the people to meet. So they too fail to meet the requirements of true leadership.

That leaves us with the state and federal governments. In recent times our leaders at state level have been quite outspoken in their desire that the federal government should

allocate more funds to the oil-producing states, and some degree of success has been achieved. More funds have been made available under the Obasanjo regime than was the case with other regimes. Clearly, however, our leaders at state level are not satisfied, and are demanding that they be allowed to control the resources accruing from oil exploitation. That struggle is still on. In the context of this lecture, the question arises as to whether governments of states in the delta have set goals of development that they are consistently pursuing year after year. How were the goals set? What was the input of the people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of these goals? What percentage of the goals have been achieved? What is the index of improvement in the standard of living of the ordinary delta people? In the area of health, education, environmental sanitation, access to potable water, cottage industries, are their real needs being met? Do our governors meet the requirements of true leadership?

As for the federal government, it cannot believe that the wealth of the nation lies in the bowels of the Delta minorities! Because we are minorities, the federal government has an interest in keeping us under. If the oil wealth were coming from the majority groups in the country, the federal government's attitude would have been completely different. Since the days of the Willink Commission, the federal government has done little beyond lip service so far as developing the delta is concerned. The Niger Delta Development Board, The Niger Delta River Basin Authority, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission – all of these may have gulped huge sums of money without effectively addressing the development of the delta region.

Now we have the Niger Delta Development Commission. One of its most advertised “projects” thus far has been a conference! Unless the NDDC identifies the real needs of the delta and proceeds to address them, it will not go beyond the tokenism of its predecessors. Identifying the real needs of our region must not, cannot, be done from the cosy offices of the NDDC. NDDC staff from the top to the bottom will need to get to the people, to talk to them and know their aspirations and expectations so that their real needs can be identified. Unless this is done, the NDDC will not provide acceptable leadership.

Odi

I cannot conclude this aspect of this address without reference to the Federal Government massacre at Odi. That massacre remains one of the darkest stains on Obasanjo’s administration. What happened to Odi would not have happened if Odi had been located in Hausaland, Yorubaland or Igboland. Did not the OPC kill policemen in Lagos? Was Lagos levelled by Federal government troops? But Odi was. Why? We Deltans are expendable! We don’t matter, do we? Just so long as the oil from our territory provides the nation with its wealth, we can be ignored. Ethnic clashes occur in Sagamu, Kano, Kaduna; the federal government rushes supplies to the victims. Ethnic clashes occur in the delta region; the federal government offers no assistance. Yet I am required to sing: *Arise O compatriots, Nigeria’s call obey.* Are Deltans really compatriots? In terms of its activities in the Delta region, the federal government has greatly fallen short of the requirement of true leadership.

As for the Pan-Delta organizations that have arisen, they are to be praised for seeking to create a forum where all delta groups can engage in discussing their needs and their expectations. Once again, however, the grassroots are ignored, and thus far these organizations have not come up with any blue print for the development of the delta that they wish to sell to various groups involved in the affairs of the region. Meetings, seminars and conferences have their place, but they are not enough. The people matter. They must be reached. Their views must be sought. Those who aspire to lead them must know their needs. It is early yet for these organizations. We wait to see whether they will produce a leadership that satisfies the identified requirements.

THE WAY FORWARD

It must be clear from what has been said in the immediately preceding section that the challenge of leadership in our day is infinitely more than it was for the Kokos of history. They operated within the much smaller confines of their city states. Today all our leaders have to operate within the infinitely larger Nigerian context. No *Amayanabo* can now go to war in pursuit of the real needs of his people without exposing his people to an Odi experience. Today's leaders in their various tiers hardly depend on the people's goodwill once they have been elected into office. Because our peoples are not yet sufficiently well organized to exert maximum pressure on office holders, we vote for individuals to lead us, but they become monsters who bare their fangs at us. In this situation, how can we move forward? I don't pretend to have the answers. But I dare to make the following suggestions.

1. **We must identify our needs:** Delta peoples must identify their developmental needs. The elite both within and outside the delta region itself must dialogue with our neglected, oppressed brethren who live miserable lives in our homelands. With them we must agree on projects that can improve the quality of their lives. Having agreed on such projects, a small team must be put together to sell these projects to all the available development agencies, beginning from our Development Unions, local governments, oil companies, the state governments, the NDDC and other agencies. The idea would be to press for ordered development. And there is a need to keep our people in our homelands constantly and fully briefed.
2. **We must pursue reconciliation:** Like all other groups in the country, we have divisions among us. There exist inter-ethnic tensions and hatred among us. Over the years, the politicians from the larger groups have always exploited our divisions and our conflicts to ensure that we remain disunited and underdeveloped. If we really desire lasting development, we must pursue reconciliation. We don't have to fight ourselves because our predecessors did so! Times have changed. We need to identify the areas of differences and tensions and seek a resolution of these through dialogue. I believe that if we set our minds to it, we can find men and women of integrity who are respected in their various areas who can be used to pursue this task of reconciliation. We must build bridges across our ethnic divides. We must

charge ethnic leaders to be circumspect in their utterances. When tensions lead to conflicts and destruction of life and property, there ought to be an organization within the delta, set up and funded by us, that can offer some assistance to persons adversely affected by such conflicts.

3. **We must measure the extent of environmental degradation:** There is talk of environmental degradation in the Delta region. Non-delta organizations have data on the extent of this degradation. We need to set up a body of deltans with the requisite know-how to document our environmental degradation and to speak authoritatively on our behalf whenever necessary.
4. **We must encourage cross-ethnic, cross-local government projects:** As a matter of deliberate policy, we should seek to put in place development projects that cut across groups – be these ethnic, local government or other. Joint funding of such projects could lead to earlier completion. As people work together on such projects, as such projects serve the different communities, greater understanding and respect will be generated.
5. **We must streamline Pan-Delta organizations:** Pan-Delta organizations have arisen in recent times. There is a need to streamline these and, if possible, unite them into one that be will be fully representative of all groups and all interests. Such an organization will have clear terms of reference and so be given specific

tasks. It could well become *The Voice of the Delta Peoples*, and also be our lobby group with the Presidency, the National Assembly and even with international organizations.

- 6. We must dialogue with youths:** The youths in the Delta region are both an asset and a liability. Because they think that existing leadership is not doing enough for them, they have set up various organizations which they use to pursue what they see as their group interests. Although these youths have offered some positive service in the Delta struggle, the methods they have adopted have often been violent. What is more, whatever they have gained from their actions has not so far met their real needs. Money extorted from oil companies is wasted in frivolous living. There is a need to dialogue with the youths so that they and the rest of us can act together in pursuit of our real needs.

CONCLUSION

King Koko represents the old type of leader. He ruled at a time when each delta state was a sovereign unit that sought to pursue its own interest, sometimes at the expense of the neighbouring state. We spent the larger part of this lecture on his handling of the Akassa War and its aftermath. In view of all that Alagoa has done about the history of Nembe, some may think that I should just have asked my listeners to go and read available works. I deliberately decided against that approach. Yes, Alagoa published his earlier works in the 1960s. But I wonder how many in this audience have read

The Small Brave City State. I wonder how many have read the other works. We are not a reading people. For that reason, I felt called upon to serve you a dose of Nembe history and use it to anchor our discussion on the subject: Leadership Old and New. I hope that you have found it interesting.

Every age faces new problems, new challenges. The age of King Koko had its challenges and the Kokos of that age battled with the problems that confronted them. We in the Niger Delta today face different challenges. These challenges require that while we seek to tackle them in our different entities, we should also begin to seek to act together, especially as each individual group is fairly small. It is this need that has informed my recommendations under the above section.

Within each group in the delta, there are different tiers of leadership. If each of these tiers sees itself as committed to the pursuit of the real needs of the people, if each of these tiers can identify with agreed goals and pursue same, if the leader in one tier would co-operate with leaders in the other tiers, I believe that the interests of the Delta region would be better served. And I urge such cooperation.

Faced with a “national” crisis, King Koko mobilized his people and got them ready for war. Then, as was customary, he invoked the help of the gods of his people, the gods for which he forsook the true and living God. Within his understanding, he considered that he was serving the interests of his people by doing what he did. When he accomplished his mission, he was fully persuaded that the gods and the ancestors had granted him success. So he came back to them to say “Thank You” – by sacrificing war captives to them. That was his understanding.

I wonder what is your own understanding today. Clearly,

everywhere you look, you see leadership in crisis. From traditional rulers, to local government chairmen and councillors, to governors, commissioners, members of state assemblies, to the law makers in the National Assembly, ministers, civil servants, the judiciary, the police, the Customs, etc, there is a crisis of leadership. Self-seeking leaders fritter away the resources of our nation. Mammon rules the waves. Most office holders who are in a position to steal are busy stealing. Even here in the Delta region where we cry against the injustices inflicted on us by the federal government, our own people cheat us of that which is ours. Where are the Kokos who would lay down their lives in the promotion of the interests of their people?

Last year, in a dramatic end to his lecture, Professor Tamuno brought to you the cry of the ancestors as they counselled you to identify and meet your real needs. Today, I end differently. Nembe is looking for leaders who, because they know the Lord God Almighty, will serve in fear of Him, and so refuse to touch the unclean thing. The entire Delta region is looking for men and women who, because they know and fear the Christian's God, will seek the good of their fellow men as the reason why they are in office, men and women who have accepted God's injunction to love their neighbours as themselves, men and women who know that one day they will appear before the judgment seat of God and give an account of all they have done before the Lord Jesus Christ. Are there such men and women in Nembe? Are there such men and women in the Delta region?

God calls you forth this day to serve Him through your people. Will you say Him nay? Are there some in this audience

who are saying, "Stop preaching, lecturer?" If there be, permit me to remind you that thousands of years ago there lived a man called Joseph who was sold as a slave to Egypt. The Word of God says that God was with Joseph. And because God was with him, all that he did prospered. When the king observed this, he made Joseph overseer over his entire household. Genesis 39:5 makes an important point. For Joseph's sake, Pharaoh enjoyed prosperity in all that he did. For Joseph's sake – Joseph who walked with God and received God's favour. Likewise, if our leaders will walk righteously before God, for their sakes God will prosper us. For righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34). My prayer for Nembe, my prayer for the entire Delta region and, indeed, my prayer for my country Nigeria is that God should grant us such leaders. For then and only then will it be well with us.

Mr. Chairman, respected members of the Nembe Council of Chiefs, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I thank you most sincerely for your patient attention. Thank you and God bless and keep you.

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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND HISTORY

by

Ayo Banjo

Language and history appear to be two slightly different kinds of imperatives. Language defines humanity in a way that is fundamental, and it is arguable that so does history. Just as it is inconceivable to have a society without language, so is it impossible to have a people without a sense of history which is preserved. However, in chronological terms, language comes before historical accounts.

The origins of language are a matter of speculation. Even the science of linguistics has not been able to document how language arose among human beings, though there is no shortage of theories. At the same time, religions which are concerned with creation tend to take language as given. In the Christian religion, for example, God spoke to Adam and Eve, while Adam and Eve also spoke to each other. This confirms that, in this world view, language was found necessary even when there were only two individuals inhabiting the whole world. It is an acknowledgement of the indispensability of language.

Darwinian theory of evolution may, on the other hand, attempt to relate the origins of human language to stages in human evolution, and there appears to be some convergence between this and some of the speculations by linguists. However, if linguistics has little light to throw on the origins

of human language, it is able to account convincingly for the dispersal of language over the face of the earth by setting up a network of language families. But it is significant at this stage to note that history is the key factor in setting up or validating these genetic relationships among the world's languages, just as linguistic evidence also plays no small part in pointing the historian in the right direction, particularly in non-literate societies. The symbiotic nature of the two disciplines is fully reflected in the sub-discipline of comparative linguistics which is historical in orientation.

It is obvious, however, that language predates history in the sense that a historical account is the product of thought and therefore of language. But there we have just made another assumption, namely, that language and thinking go irrevocably together. But even if all the evidence suggests that they do, can it be demonstrated that one is more fundamental than the other? Did language come about to express thoughts which were already there or was language the precursor of thinking? The first alternative seems more plausible until we realize that it is today increasingly believed that lower animals too do have language, however rudimentary and iconic, and this may lead us into wondering whether animals, after all, do think. More recently, we have even been promised the prospect of computers which, going beyond conveying messages, will be able to think.

On the other hand, the Whorfian hypothesis would seem to suggest that at least, any particular language very strongly influences the speakers' thinking and their processing of phenomena. If people are profoundly influenced by the syntax and semantics of their language, one wonders what brought

about the differences in the syntax and semantics in the first place. One possible answer to this is the environment, which renders the argument somewhat circular. At any rate, one possible scenario is that the environment determines the structure of language, which in turn determines thinking. The fact that there are universals of language and thought would then be explained by what all human communities have in common, not only in terms of the individual's *faculte de langage* but also in environmental terms.

On the other hand, it would seem even more natural to suppose that thinking is more fundamental than language – that language, from the very beginning, has been the vehicle of thought. The implication of this would be that language and thinking are, contrary to established doctrine, not the defining characteristics of human beings. What is distinctly human would be the complex elaboration of language leading to, or resulting from, the phenomenon of complex thoughts. If philosophers test the limits of human thought (necessarily resulting in their use of complex language), the literary artist, particularly in contemporary times, tests the limits of language to express complex thoughts. The preoccupation is the same in both cases – with thought and language. The difference is that while we think of the philosopher as being primarily concerned with ideas, we think of the literary artist as being primarily concerned with creating alternative words with language. But even the literary artist must start with the exploration of ideas.

With history, we enter another plane of the human condition. Although the writing of history began before the 5th century B.C., the man whose name is readily associated

with history writing is Homer. But we know that Homer had little in common with the modern historian, for his fame lies primarily in the area of literature and history merely provided the material for his literary activity. This would indeed appear to be a universal phenomenon, for history provides material which is at once entertaining and instructive for the literary artist. Thus Shakespeare relied on *The Chronicles* for his history plays while, here at home, Achebe, Soyinka and Clark-Bekederemo have all used history as source material. None of them, however, would claim to be a historian.

History writing today has become a highly complex activity, but while it shares the use of language with the literary artist, the goals are different. The literary artist, while using historical sources, reserves the right to take liberties with them, adapting them as building blocks in a creative process. The historian, on the other hand, venerates facts but is free to impose his own reasonable interpretation on them.

If thinking has to do with self-awareness- *Cogito, ergo sum* – and language with sharing that awareness with other members of one's community, history may be regarded as dealing with group self awareness. It seems possible that the three levels of awareness have always been there. We see this in the way in which the world's leading religions maintain a historical perspective. In Christianity, the Old Testament constitutes the history of the Jews as perceived by the Jews, and, of course, this history is substantially shared with Islam. Even in traditional religion, the *Ifa* corpus has embedded in it a Yoruba historical view of the Yoruba race. Given a thinking being interacting with other thinking beings in a clearly defined cultural environment, it is perhaps impossible to avoid

learning *past events*, or being curious about how the culture has been shaped through time. It may therefore be suggested that no human community exists without ideas, language and a conscious construction of its history. The trial, being basic, would seem to be in the vanguard of any meaningful human development anywhere, and it was to reduce the human worth of Africans that the English historian Trevellyan once referred to Africans as a people without a history. As we have tried to indicate, this is in fact a contradiction in terms.

What such critics want to suggest is that without a written record there can be no history. Fortunately, African historians have taken up the challenge and demonstrated the validity of oral history. Now, however, that African history is being written rather than passed from mouth to mouth, we may enquire into the language in which that history is written. Can adequate justice be done to the history of a people when it is written in a foreign language? The answer will have to be yes and no. Nothing stops an Englishman from writing a creditable history of France or Germany. But I suspect that, however hard such a historian tries, he will be accused of bias, of seeing French and German events through English eyes. The situation is, or should be, different when the historian writes, not in a foreign language but in a second language. But still, it may be difficult to use the English language while purging it entirely of English values. Gross emotional and linguistic interference may be eliminated, but not so the subtle variety deeply embedded in the language. Many national histories are a conscious celebration of the race, and some may argue that the use of an indigenous language would heighten such celebration.

In Nigeria, English is not a foreign language but a second

language. However, it must be admitted that it is an inchoate second language mastered by a very small minority of the population, and a foreign language to the vast majority. In such circumstances, it becomes difficult to write a true national history which has a maximum mobilizing and integrative effect. At this point, the solution would appear to be not to start sponsoring the writing of Nigerian history in a combination of the indigenous languages of the country (which may be a distant ideal), but rather to make English truly a second language, one which has been truly domesticated or nativized and sufficiently infused with the Nigerian world view and genius. In that way, language use would be maximally aiding the two other members of the triad in a bid for enduring national development.

**THE C.M.S. ANTI-SLAVE TRADE POLITICS
AND
BRITISH POLITICAL PRESENCE
IN THE KINGDOM OF LAGOS**

by

G.O. Oguntomisin

The Awori kingdom of Lagos on the Atlantic coast of Nigeria was plunged into a succession dispute after the death of Oba Ologun-kutere between 1800 and 1805. The dispute reached a climax in 1845 when Prince Kosoko who had been thrice excluded from the throne¹ finally seized it from Akitoye, his cousin, by means of armed rebellion. Kosoko became the king of Lagos and drove Akitoye to Abeokuta from where the latter was escorted to Badagry².

This event synchronized with the period of the abolition of the slave trade, the stepping up by the British of overseas demand for palm oil and the increasing interest of the Church Missionary Society missionaries in Yorubaland. From the early nineteenth century the British had wished to abolish the slave trade not only in Britain and in other European slave trading countries but also in West Africa which was one of the major sources of supply of slaves. In order to stamp out the trade, particularly in West Africa, the British had taken several measures including the surveillance of the coast of West Africa by anti-slave trade squadrons, the encouragement of trade in

palm oil and other African products to provide the slave suppliers with alternative sources of income and the encouragement of Christian missionaries to teach the Christian religion and enlighten the people in the slave producing areas about the inhumanity of the trade in human cargoes. The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) were among the members of the various Christian denominations which seized the opportunity of this encouragement to establish themselves in West Africa. By 1806³, they had built stations in Freetown, Sierra Leone, which was founded in 1786 for freed slaves. Between 1842 and 1845, they had established a base in Badagry from where they penetrated into the Yoruba hinterland as far as Abeokuta in 1846. This chapter examines how and why C.M.S. missionaries' involvement in the political crisis in the kingdom of Lagos paved way for the British colonial take-over of the kingdom's administration.

THE C.M.S. PROPAGANDA AND BRITISH INTERVENTION IN THE SUCCESSION DISPUTE IN LAGOS

While Akitoye who had been forcibly expelled from the throne was in exile at Badagry, he was acquainted with the C.M.S. missionaries and the palm oil merchants who probably assured him of British assistance to regain his throne provided he would abolish the slave trade and promote trade in palm oil and other African products. Consequently, Akitoye wrote a petition through the C.M.S. to John Beecroft, who had been appointed the British Consul for the Bight of Benin and Biafra in 1849, entreating the latter to re-establish him on his throne. Akitoye also urged Beecroft to take Lagos and plant the British

flag there. In return for British aid, Akitoye promised to abolish the slave trade in Lagos and carry on lawful trade especially with English merchants⁴. Akitoye's promise to abolish the slave trade appealed to the European merchants, who would benefit by the fulfillment of such promise, and the missionaries, who naturally abhorred the slave trade, in this island kingdom which had by the mid-nineteenth century, become a notorious slave port.

Lagos became a centre of overseas slave trade in the eighteenth century. A.B. Aderibigbe and J.B. Losi have ascribed the beginning of the slave trade in the kingdom to Oba Akinsemoyin (c. 1760-1775) who had settled for some period in the Popo country before his installation as king. While there, he had made contacts with Portuguese traders whom he invited to Lagos when he became king.⁵ But throughout the century, it seems that the slave trade was not as significant in Lagos as in Whydah and Porto Novo. This was because at this period, there was no large-scale slave supply to Lagos whose traders bought slaves from Ardrah, Whydah, Badagry and Porto Nove.

Up to the mid-eighteenth century, Whydah was the most important slave port exporting about twenty thousand slaves annually. Thereafter, it lost its position to Porto Novo which rose because of the open door policy of the Alaafin of Oyo vis-à-vis the royal monopoly of the king of Dahomey in Whydah. Traders avoiding the royal monopoly in Whydah shifted their commercial base to Port-Novo⁶. However, from the 1820s, Lagos became an increasingly important slave port. It began to receive increasing supplies of slaves from the hinterland owing to the political confusion and wars that

attended and followed the decline and fall of the Old Oyo Empire. By the mid-nineteenth century when Kosoko, a renowned slave trader, seized the throne, Lagos had become the chief slave port on the coast of West Africa. It took over leadership in the slave trade from Port Novo and Whydah which were closely supervised by the British anti-slave trade cruisers.

In view of the fame of Lagos as the chief slave trade port of West Africa, it is not surprising that the C.M.S. missionaries supported Akitoye and propagated the succession dispute in Lagos as a struggle between the pro-slave trade and the anti-slave trade elements. 'The Missionaries painted Kosoko as a notorious slaver who ousted Akitoye because of the latter's willingness to abolish the slave trade. They urged the British to restore Akitoye to his throne because such a step was the only way by which the British could put an end to the slave trade in Lagos. There is no doubt that the C.M.S. missionaries had misrepresented the political crisis in Lagos to the British government.' Akitoye's association with slave traders before and after his expulsion from Lagos shows that contrary to the missionaries' propaganda, the political crisis in the island kingdom was not a dispute between the pro-slave trade and the anti-slave trade elements since Akitoye himself could not be exonerated from slave trading. The Reverend Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a C.M.S. missionary, provided evidence in his journal to show that Akitoye had some Portuguese slave traders trading with him up till the time he was expelled from Lagos. On August 18, 1848, Crowther made the following entries in his journal:

It appears from all accounts that all the property

of the Portuguese slave dealers about four of whose number who traded with Akitoye was plundered by Kosoko's soldiers who scarcely left a shirt on their backs. Whether any violence was done to their persons we have not yet ascertained.⁸

Akitoye had been associated with Domingo Martinez, a well-known slave trader, before Kosoko drove him from the throne of Lagos. According to R.S. Smith (1978:11), Domingo Martinez was said to have acquired a wealth ranging from one to two million dollars from the slave trade during the reign of Oba Akitoye.⁹ There is evidence also to show that even after Akitoye's expulsion from Lagos, his association with Domingo Martinez continued. Earl Phillips (1996:122) has shown that while Akitoye was in exile, he secured Domingo's aid against Kosoko.¹⁰ For instance, in 1848, Domingo and Akitoye were said to have carried out slave raiding as part of their campaigns against Kosoko. In view of this, it can be said that Akitoye's anti-slave trading professions were a device to win the support of the C.M.S. missionaries and the British government. Akitoye wanted to use both the C.M.S. missionaries and the British to secure his lost throne. The only way by which he could secure the British aid was to identify his interest with that of the British – the abolition of the slave trade.

If Akitoye wanted to use both the C.M.S. and the British government to regain his throne, the latter were also prepared to use him to achieve their aims. Though the C.M.S. missionaries could be said to be genuinely anti-slave trade, they had their ulterior motive for pressurizing the British government to remove Kosoko from the throne of Lagos.

Kosoko did not encourage missionary activities in Lagos. He had a predilection for Muslim religion. Though he remained unconverted to Islam, he surrounded himself with Muslim slaves. Kosoko did not also encourage the settlement in Lagos of Yoruba ex-slaves from Sierra Leone through whom the Christian religion and western civilization might have spread to the kingdom. In 1839 about 265 ex-slaves had landed in Lagos from three vessels but all of them were robbed of their property.

This experience coupled with Kosoko's ill-disposition towards them and the Christian missionaries had discouraged the Sierra Leonian repatriates from coming to Lagos until 1852. Instead, they moved to Badagry from where they reached Abeokuta in the hinterland. At the request of these repatriates, Christian missionaries followed their trail to Badagry. Rev. T.B. Freeman, the Wesleyan missionary, was the first to arrive. He visited Badagry and Abeokuta in 1842. He was followed closely by the Rev. Henry Townsend of the C.M.S. who also reached Abeokuta from Badagry in 1843. These missionaries had their base in Badagry. However, at the request of Sodeke who was probably influenced by the repatriates, the C.M.S. missionaries established their station at Abeokuta in 1846.

Though the C.M.S. missionaries had a station in Abeokuta, they had to operate from their base in Badagry. However, the missionaries coveted Lagos with its better port facilities than Badagry as a more convenient base to spread Christianity to the interior of Yorubaland. It was easier to travel from Lagos to Abeokuta by canoes on the River Ogun than by road through hazardous bush paths from Badagry. Since they could not establish a base in Lagos unless Kosoko was

removed, the C.M.S. lost no time in supporting Akitoye who had expressed his willingness to abolish the slave trade.

The missionary propaganda in support of Akitoye was favourably received in London by Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary between 1846 and 1851, who was well disposed towards the abolition of the slave trade. He was willing to suppress the trade by diplomacy or by the use of force if need be. Apart from the zeal of the British government in combating the slave trade, a growing body of British opinion, especially in the foreign office under Palmerston, was looking on Lagos as a port from which commerce could be extended to the interior. Commodities such as palm oil and cotton needed in Britain for manufacturing industries could be purchased in the hinterland and exported from Lagos. Following favourable C.M.S. missionary reports about the agricultural potentialities of Abeokuta, the British desired to encourage cotton cultivation in the town. The establishment of a British base in Lagos would facilitate contact with Abeokuta. However, since Kosoko would neither agree to abolish the slave trade nor allow free flow of trade between Lagos and Abeokuta (because of the latter's hostility to Lagos), the British government yielded to the pressure of the C.M.S. missionaries and the entreaty of the Egba who took side with Akitoye, their kinsman, to drive Kosoko away from Lagos.¹¹

Early in 1850, having received a deputation from the C.M.S. and a letter from Thomas Hutton, a merchant in Badagry, both stressing the need to abolish the slave trade in Lagos, Palmerston instructed John Beecroft, the British Consul on the Bight of Benin and Biafra, to remonstrate with the king of Lagos.¹² In July 1850, Beecroft recommended that a

treaty of abolition should be signed with Akitoye who would be reinstated on his throne. It appears, however, that the British were slow to intervene in the Lagos affairs in the way recommended by the consul. Thus it took Palmerston seven months to give positive instruction to Beecroft to intervene. On 20 February 1851, Palmerston instructed Beecroft to sign a treaty of abolition with Kosoko and warn the latter of the danger of incurring the hostility of Great Britain, which was a strong power both by sea and by land. If Kosoko was recalcitrant, Beecroft was to warn him further that Lagos was near the sea and that on the sea were the ships and cannons of England and also that he did not hold his authority without a competition.¹³ These instructions implied that the British were ready to bombard Lagos and restore Akitoye to his throne if Kosoko refused to sign a treaty with Britain.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF LAGOS

Armed with the instructions, John Beecroft proceeded to Lagos on November 20, 1851 in company of 3 naval officers and appealed to Kosoko to sign a treaty of friendship with the British. Kosoko refused to sign a treaty which had been unilaterally drawn by the British. Kosoko's refusal to sign a treaty provided the British with the justification to intervene actively in the Kosoko – Akitoye dispute. Without waiting for further instruction from the British government, John Beecroft hastily attacked Lagos on November 25, 1851 but he was forced to retreat by Kosoko's soldiers. He launched a second and better-prepared attack on December 26, 1851. On December 28, 1851, he succeeded in dislodging Kosoko from Lagos. Kosoko fled to Epe, a lagoon town in Ijebu-Ode

territory, which he turned into the capital of a trading kingdom and Akitoye regained the throne of Lagos, which he had lost in 1845.¹⁴

THE BRITISH POLITICAL PRESENCE

The expulsion of Kosoko and the restoration of Akitoye by means of the British force gave the British a foothold in Lagos. On January 1, 1852, John Beecroft and Commodore Bruce, commander of the British naval squadron on the Bight of Benin and Biafra, representing the British government, signed a treaty with Akitoye, the restored king, and the chiefs of Lagos. The treaty abolished the slave trade and human sacrifices in Lagos; it gave the British and other European merchants unrestricted freedom to trade in the kingdom and stipulated that the slave traders were to be expelled and that the missionaries of all denominations were to be allowed to spread Christianity and civilization without molestation.

Six months after this treaty, Beecroft sought for a permission from the home government to transfer Louis Frazer, his vice-consul at Whydah, to Lagos as the agent of the British government. This permission was granted and in November 1852, Louis Frazer assumed office as the British vice-consul in Lagos while Beecroft remained in Fernando Po, the seat of the British Consulate of the Bight of Benin and Biafra.

In February 1853, the British government decided to appoint a permanent Consul in Lagos. It split the Consular District of the Bight of Benin and Biafra into two – the Consulate of the Bight of Benin and the Consulate of the Bight of Biafra. Benjamin Campbell, a trader and a quondam acting

Magistrate on the Isle de Lose (an Island off the Guinea Coast, north of Sierra Leone) was appointed as Consul for the Bight of Benin with his seat in Lagos. He assumed duty in Lagos in July 1853.

The Consulate can be described initially as a limited British political presence in Lagos. Though in August 1852 Lord Stanley in the Foreign Office had referred to Lagos as a 'quasi-protectorate', the British did not formally declare the kingdom as a protectorate. Thus, though Akitoye was a puppet king who owed his throne to the British, he remained nominally independent. The duty of the Consul was to see that the treaty against the slave trade was adhered to by the king and chiefs of Lagos and to watch over the lives and property of the British subjects. The Consul did not have physical force such as consular guards to enforce his authority. Consequently he had to depend on the king of Lagos for law enforcement.¹⁵

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL POLITICAL PRESENCE

The political situation mentioned above began to change as the Consuls began to settle down. By 1855, the Consulate building (called *Ile-Ajele* by the people of Lagos) had been completed. Though the Consulate had not yet possessed consular guards, a small steamer, *H.M.S. Bruce*, which was manned by 25 Krumen had been stationed inside the lagoon in December 1857 to back up the authority of the Consul.

With an office as the base of its authority and operation, the Consulate began to act as a state within the kingdom as the Consul started exercising the powers of the king. For

instance, he had a court of his own where he dispensed justice – settling disputes among traders. He assumed the post of the regulator of internal and external trade in Lagos. He also assumed the role of the protector of the kingdom as Oba Akitoye and his successor, Dosumu, had to rely increasingly on the British for protection against the menace of Kosoko from the Eastern Lagoon. The Consul therefore needed a formal British proclamation to take full political control of Lagos.

The first call for formal British control of Lagos came from Consul Brand who wrote in 1860 that the British should take control of Lagos either as a possession or by way of protectorate¹⁶. Ten months later, Russel wrote to Newcastle to seek approval for the British possession of the town and the island of Lagos. In the same month, the British Foreign Secretary instructed the Consul in Lagos to arrange for the British occupation of the town. He expressed the British government's feeling on the annexation thus:

Her Majesty's government would be most unwilling that the Establishment of British sovereignty at Lagos should be attended with injustice to Dosumu, the present chief of the Island: but they conceive that as his tenure of the Island in point of fact depends entirely upon the continuance of the protection – which has been afforded by the British naval authorities since the expulsion of Kosoko, no injustice will be inflicted upon him by changing this anomalous protectorate into avowed occupation, provided his material interests are secured.¹⁷

On July 30, 1861 McCoskry, the Acting British Consul, revealed the British intention to annex Lagos to Dosumu. Though Dosumu hesitated to give his consent, he was forced to accede to the British wish by a threat of an attack on Lagos. Consequently, on August 6, 1861, King Dosumu put his mark on the treaty formally ceding his kingdom to the British government. Lagos thus became the first British colony in Nigeria. Although he signed the treaty giving away his kingdom to the British, Dosumu, with his chiefs, felt that the cession was an unjustified assault on the sovereignty of Lagos. Dosumu and his chiefs sent a protest letter to Her Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain, stating that they had been forced to cede their kingdom to the British. However, in February 1862, they were pacified by Stanhope Freeman, the first Governor of the new colony. King Dosumu was placed on an annual pension of £1,030. His material interest was, indeed, satisfied!

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis has drawn a causal connection between the C.M.S. missionaries' involvement in the chieftaincy dispute in Lagos, 1845 – 1851, their anti-slave trade propaganda and the eventual take-over of Lagos by the British. It has been established that Britain was convinced by the missionary argument that only the imperial presence of the British in Lagos could put an end to the slave trade in the kingdom. One other motivating factor which made the British to be well disposed towards the C.M.S. missionary pressure was the desire to make Lagos a base for British penetration into the Yoruba interior.

NOTES

1. Kosoko was excluded from the throne of Lagos in 1834, 1836 and 1841. For details see G.O. Oguntomisin, "Kosoko and the Chieftaincy Disputes in Lagos 1839-1851" in *Nigeria Magazine*, No 310-311, 1980, pp. 17-26.
2. For details see J.F.A. Ajayi, "The British Occupation of Lagos 1851-1861: A Critical Review" *Nigeria Magazine*, No 69, August 1961, p. 98; G.O. Oguntomisin, "Kosoko and the Chieftaincy Disputes..." *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 310-311, pp. 17-38.
3. See Modupe Oduyoye. *The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland* (Ibadan, Daystar Press, 1969) pp.13-38.
4. C.M.S. CA/07. Akitoye's petition to Her Britanic Majesty's Consul, John Beecroft. Badagry, 6 January, 1851.
5. J.B. Losi, *History of Lagos* (Lagos Africa Education Press. 1967) p. 13 A.B. Aderigbe (ed) *Lagos: The Development of an Africa City*. (Longman, 1975). P. 11
6. A.L. Mabogunje "Lagos: a Study in Urban Geography" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1961) p.33.
7. For the C.M.S. involvement in the Kosoko-Akitoye dispute, see E.H. Phillips, "The Church Missionary Society, the imperial factor, and Yoruba Politics 1842-1873" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southern Carolina, 1966).
8. C.M.S. CA2/031. Crowther's Journal, 18 August 1845.
9. R.S. Smith, *The Lagos Consulate 1851-1861* (London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978) p. 11.
10. E.H. Phillips, *op.cit*, p. 122
11. R.J. Gavin, *Palmerston's Policy towards East and West Africa* (Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge, 1958), pp. 180-187.
12. F.O. 84/816 Palmerston to Beecroft, 25 February, 1850

13. F.O. 84/858. Palmerston to Beecroft, 20 February, 1851.
14. For details see J.F.A. Ajayi, "The British Occupation of Lagos..." *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 69; R.S. Smith, *The Lagos Consulate...* p. 25.
15. For details on the establishment of the British Consulate and Consular administration in Lagos, see R.S. Smith, *The Lagos Consulate 1851 - 1861*. See also G.O. Oguntomisin, "Hostility and Rapport: Kosoko's Changing Relation with the British, 1852-1862" in *ODU: Journal of West African Studies*, No. 24, July 1983, pp. 79-80 for Kosoko's hostility against Lagos.
16. F.O. 84/115: Brand to Russel, 9 April 1860.
17. Kenneth Dike Library: *Papers relating to the Occupation of Lagos* 1861, p. 5

HISTORICITY IN YORUBA RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

by

Cornelius O. Adepegba

Information on Yoruba religious traditions, particularly their historicalness, is found mainly in oral sources. Proverbs and maxims in day-to-day language, *oríkì* – praise songs, particularly of the deities and relevant *Ifá* divination poetry are still available in the society and have even been compiled by interested scholars. Relevant archaeological data are limited as archaeology has been undertaken only on a few sites. Where it has, its focus has not been religious information. The notable excavations of Iwo Eleru, Ile-Ife, Old Oyo, Esie and Ife-Ijumu were not for religious considerations: they were motivated either by accidental arti-factual discoveries or general historical interest.

In addition, the historicalness of the Yoruba religious traditions being examined here is based partly on the names of places associated with deities some of which are not identifiable with present-day locations. Some are names of present-day communities, while some are not identifiable with any places at all. Therefore, further limits to the usefulness and applicability of archaeology to this discussion are established.

With oral traditions as the main sources of data, reconstructing the Yoruba religious past cannot but pose some

problems. Problems of contradictions and seeming illogicality in both events and their sequence are to be expected. To begin with, there is a mix-up in the historical reality and post-deification conceptualization of the deities. In *Ejioḡbe*, the most revered of the *Ifá* divination poems, the humanity of the deities is unequivocally stressed. *Ifá*, the god of divination, is said to have emphasized that the Yoruba deities, including himself, were originally people that had extra-ordinary wisdom, skill or power.

Eni ó gbón mà lòrìsà;

Eni ó gbón ni e jé á máa bo.

He who is wise is the *òrìsà*;

He who is wise is whom we should worship

So says *Ifá* after citing examples of other deities and himself.¹ His claim therefore suggests the historicalness of the Yoruba deities.

However, this suggestion of their historicity is overridden by their super-humanity as gods. They are believed to have existed in heaven with *Olódùmarè*, the supreme God, before they were sent to the world to right wrongs and solve human problems. One of them *Obàtálá*, the god of creation, is mythically claimed to be involved in the creation of the world and is also believed to be specifically in charge of the creation of human beings. He was the god sent by God to create the earth on water but who failed as a result of drunkenness on the way. It was *Òdùduwá*, the generally accepted political father of the Yoruba, who is said to have eventually carried out God's instruction. At the same time in the realm of religion, *Obàtálá* is believed to be responsible for human creation. Hence people with deformities such as albinos, hunch-

backs and the lame are referred to as his people, *eni òrísá*. Their deformities are thought of as having resulted from the deficiencies in his creation.

The deities are also believed to have descended to the world in at least thirteen batches, each batch consisting of fifteen to seventeen deities². They descended holding on to ropes (*wón rò*) and they invariably did not die historically. In the end, they either changed to natural objects such as rivers in the case of two female deities, *Òsun* and *Yemoja*, or entered into the ground as in the case of *Òrisa oko*, the god of agricultural prosperity. *Ifá* is even said to have disappeared and ascended to heaven. The case of *Sàngó*, historically, the king of Oyo who committed suicide, is another good point. His mortality is concealed in the name *Koso*, meaning "he did not hang" by which the spot of his ignoble death is known. A common saying, *Ayé ni molè gbó sí*, meaning "it is in the world that deities live long" attests not only to their longevity but also to their eternity.

A sequence in their arrivals suggested by the batches in which they descended is negated by contradictions from other stories relating to some of the deities. Only men considered themselves as gods initially. *Òsun*, a prominent female one, was not accepted into the fold of the male deities until she was frustrating the supernatural efforts of the male ones and *Ifá*, the god of divination, advised them to be consulting her in whatever they were doing so as to prevent her from frustrating them. There is also a controversy about who *Sàngó*, the god of thunder, was. While he obviously appears to be the king of Oyo in the material culture and goods associated with him which only exist in Oyo where he is also most actively worshipped, there is also the claim that there was another

Sàngó who existed before him in Ife.³ It seems he is sometimes projected into the past to rank him in age with the other deities.

The accounts of interactions between the deities, either in divinatory consultations or marriages, also suggest they were taken to be contemporaries. Different *Ifá* poems narrate how most of the deities consulted *Ifá* for advice before they came to the world or also later when they had problems. There are also stories of marriages between some deities. *Obàtálá* married *Yemòó* and the daughter of their marriage married *Òrìsà-òkò*, the god of agricultural prosperity. *Òsun* married *Òrínmilà (Ifá)* before she divorced him to marry *Sàngó*. Similarly did *Sàngó* got *Oya* from *Ògún* and also married *Yemoja*.

However, there is a consensus on the number of the deities. They are said to be four hundred and one, though all the four hundred and one have not been listed convincingly in any of the sources. *Obàtálá* is called thirty-nine or so many other names which depend on the communities in which he is worshipped. All the deities cannot be taken as human. The earth and the *ìròkò* tree listed among them⁴ are certainly animistic.

The above argument, therefore, indicates that all the Yoruba deities cannot be included in this discussion of the historical reconstruction of Yoruba religious traditions. Only seven that appear obviously human and also had fairly widespread followership before Islam and Christianity are focused on. They are, *Ògún*, the god of iron; *Ifá*, the god of wisdom; *Obàtálá*, the god of creation; *Òrìsà-òkò*, the god of agricultural prosperity; *Òsun*, a goddess; *Sàngó*, the god of

thunder, and *Oya*, *Sàngó's* wife. The worship of *Ògún*, *Ifá* and *Obàtálá* cut across all the Yoruba sub-groups and even spread beyond Yorubaland, notably, in the case of *Ògún* and *Ifá*. *Òrìsà-oko* was actively worshipped among the Oyo, Egba and Ijebu. *Òsun* was well known among the Yagba, Igbomina, Ekiti, Ijesa while *Sàngó* and *Oya* were essentially Oyo deities.

THE PLACES, NAMES AND MATERIALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEITIES

1. *Ogun*

As Sandra Barnes rightly puts it, "Ogun is popularly known as the god of hunting, iron and warfare" and today, "the realm has expanded to include many new elements from modern technology and highway safety, "anything involving metal, danger or transportation". More simply put, he is basically the god of iron whose worship has by extension spread to professions, trades or activities that are involved in the production and use of iron implements. His appellation *Ògún, baba irin*, meaning "*Ògún*, the father of iron", emphasizes this and his other appellation "*Mògún Irè, Omo a-bu-ilè-sowó*. "*Mògún irè*, the child of the one who takes the earth to make money" especially associates him with iron smelting. Traditionally, he is not associated with any other metals. Lead and brass which the Yoruba distinguish from iron and from each other are associated with *Obàtálá* and *Òsun* respectively. Hence, he is especially revered by iron smelters, blacksmiths, hunters, warriors, scarifiers and barbers. Pieces of iron are his only worship symbols.

Generally, the Yoruba rever him for precaution of bloody hazards or even deaths that can occur from the use of metal implements (knives, hunting implements and weapons such

as cutlasses, spears and swords as well as motor vehicles). He is believed to be fierce and capable of preventing or inflicting mishaps from the use of iron implements. For this reason, people fear taking oaths or swearing by his name.

Ògún is taken to be the communal deity of some towns, notably Ire, Ondo and Ilesha. He is also said to have founded Ire, Isundurin, Iwoya and Saki. But the two places popularly, alluded to as his native towns are Ire, an Èkìtì town and Saki, an Oke-Ogun town in northwestern Yorubaland. These allusions are controversial.

Ògún is usually referred to as *Ògún Onírè*, a title which can be interpreted in two ways: *Ogun*, the traditional ruler of Ire or *Ogun*, the deity of the ruler of Ire. There is the counter claim that Saki was *Ògún*'s home. Apparently, the difference between the rival claims is in the sequence of the deity's residence in the two towns. According to Samuel Ojo, the deity was a member of *Oduduwa*'s immigrant party which first entered Yorubaland from Saki⁶. As a regent to *Oduduwa* in his old age, he is said to have settled in Saki before he visited Ire. Traditional reference to Saki as "*Ògún kò ro' kin; àgbède kò ro bàbá*" meaning "*Ògún* did not smith ivory; the hunter did not smith copper" also emphasized *Ògún*'s connection with iron working. Thus it is not impossible that *Ògún*, as referred to in the traditions, was not one and the same person or even *Ògún* the deity.

Most Yoruba names are full sentences which can be shortened to either their subjects or predicates. That was how *Ògúndáhùnsi*, the name of the founder of Ire, was shortened to *Ogun*.⁷ Since *Ògún* exists among other peoples in West Africa, a Yoruba origin

of the deity is hard to establish. It is not unlikely that references to *Ògún* in connection with Ire and Saki are to different devotees of the deity and not to the deity himself.

The oldest human remains in West Africa were found in Iwo Eleru in Yorubaland. But the oldest iron working site in West Africa, Nok, is outside Yorubaland. The worship of *Ògún* might have been introduced with iron-working from outside Yorubaland. In support of this view is the use of the dog as the deity's sacrificial animal. The dog is used mainly for hunting; its use as the main sacrificial animal suggests the introduction of *Ògún*'s worship into Yorubaland at a hunting stage of civilization. This is more so as farmers who are greater in number than hunters and who consume more iron in their tools than hunters are not strongly identified with the deity. The clothes of the deity which is said to be palm fronds also suggest a time earlier than the introduction of cotton textiles into Yorubaland. Speaking about the spread of the *Ìjálá* chants as *Ògún*'s art form, Babalola stresses the itinerant character of *Ògún*'s life.⁸ It is not unlikely that the worship of the deity predated urbanization in Yorubaland and the places associated with him might not have existed at the time the deity was introduced.

2. *Ifa (Orunmila)*

The divinity of *Ifá* is not ambiguous. He is an omniscient deity: he knows the past, the present and the future and can therefore advise on any life situation. Hence, he is the god of wisdom and divination.

Information abounds on him in oral traditions. His physique, complexion as well as the places he sojourned in are indicated, particularly in his praise names. He was short and black and he lived in some quarters of Ile Ife. He is called *Okùnrin kúkúrú*

Edo and Ebira call it similar names and, though it has not been cross-checked from Egyptologists, the word is said to mean wisdom in ancient Egyptian.¹⁰ Therefore *Ifá* divination might have been introduced from outside like iron working and the time of the first *Ifá* diviner in Yorubaland might not be very far from the time of *Ogun*.

3. *Obatala*

Obàtálá appears to be the foremost of the Yoruba gods. His other names, *Òrìsà-Nlá* and *Òrìsà-Àlà* include *òrìsà*, the Yoruba word for gods. He is also referred to as *oba* (king). As indicated earlier, he is the god of creation, believed to be the creator of man who even helped God in creating other deities in the beginning. Although he is capable of solving most human welfare problems, he is especially associated with child-giving.

He is said to be the king of Iranje and is also traced to Ife. He is said to have married *Yemòó* who is worshipped jointly with him by his priests in the same shrine and after whom *Ìta Yemòó*, a quarter in Ile-Ife, is still called. He did not just found Iranje; he also watched it grow into a town and also went to found Iranje-oko (the rural Iranje). However, the site of Iranje has not been ascertained. It seems to be one of the settlements that eventually grew together to become Ife. Most Yoruba towns grew from groups of isolated villages. They were originally small settlements before coalescing into single bigger towns. Ife was not an exception.

Ifè was the “centre of the universe”, the first urban centre in Yorubaland where the Yoruba monarchy was first established. That he is referred to as king indicates that he

must have founded a kind of monarchy. This is most likely the case in the claim that he was the first deity sent by God to create the world. His failure to do so because he got drunk on the way seems to imply that he did not complete building Ife into a city state before another ruler (*Òdùduwá*) or his dynasty took over from his own. His time therefore might have marked the beginning of urbanization in Yorubaland. The fact that he is worshipped as the titular deity, though under different names, of many later towns also signifies the importance of his worship symbols in the establishment of towns.

His devotees wear white clothes and lead bangles, all of which are said to have originated from him. That woven white cloth had been woven in his time is alluded to in the following lines from his praises:

Obàtálá ní aso nílé
O rìn ihòhò wo balùwè.
Ó ní aso, ó da àkísà bo ara.
Eni ti kò bá ní aso funfun
Kí ó ma ba wa dé ojùbo Orifá.
Nítórí pé aso tí ó bá funfun
Ni àwa fī í sogo ní ilé wa.
Aso funfun kì í tí láé-láé.

Obatala had clothes at home
He wore nothing to the bath place.
He had clothes but covered himself with rags.
He who does not have white clothes
Should not follow us to the shrine of *Òrìsà*,
Because white clothes

Is what we are proud of in our house.
White clothes never fade.¹¹

The association of white clothes with *Òrìsà-Àlà* puts his time in a more advanced technological stage of Yoruba culture than those of *Ògún* and *Ifá* who are associated with palm fronds. Divination with cowries is traditionally traced to *Òsun* who is said to have been taught by her first husband, *Ifa* or *Òrúnmìlà*. But more realistically it seems *Obàtálá* initiated it. This is not only because he is given the cognomen, *Obatala Efurú, Ari-owo-eyo-mu-se-awo* "One who uses cowries for divination" but also because divination with cowries itself is called *òrìsà*.

4. *Òrìsà-oko*

Òrìsà-oko is the god of agricultural prosperity or wealth. Another name of his is *Ajangele*. He and *Obàtálá* (otherwise known as *Òrìsà-nlá, Òrìsà-ògì yán, Òrìsà Olúfón* etc) are the Yoruba deities with names that include the word *orisa*, the Yoruba word for gods or deities. The various second parts of the names are invariably qualifiers of the first: *Orisa-oko* which simply means "the farm god" or "provincial god". To the Yoruba, their towns are home and any place outside is farm. The name shows that the Yoruba had then been differentiating between their urban and rural abodes. The same point should be noted in the case of *Obatala* who is said to have founded two *Iranjes*, one of the home, *Iranje-ile (Ode Iranje)* and the other "that of the farm or province" (*Iranje oko*).

Òrìsà oko is said to have started his life in Ife-Ooye.¹² He is

said to be a hunter and fisherman who one day rescued and consequently married a drowning daughter of *Obatala* and *Yemòó*. After his marriage to *Obatala*'s daughter, he and his wife were affluent and the people of *Ife* started to defame *orisa oko* that he had no resource of his own but was living on his parents-in-law. Nothing seems to have aptly summarized the slander as these lines in his praise:

Òrìsà oko kò gbin bàrà ti o fì n je egusi:

Olá àna rè ní n je.

A je osinsin má ro gbèsè

Orisa oko does not plant melon, yet he eats *egusi*.

He lives on his parent-in-law's fortune.

He that eats the delicious soup of *ègúsf* without thinking of debt.

Ègúsf stew is constant in the sacrifice to him and, according to the story, when *Orisa-oko* heard of the slander, he was not happy but wanted what he could do to be able to stand on his own. He consulted *Ifa* for advice and was asked to leave the town for a place where he would see a sign of certain birds. He left and went until he got to the present *Irawo* where he saw the signs. He settled there, became prosperous and famous, was being worshipped and had a large follower-ship. It was there that he eventually entered into the ground. "*Òrìsà oko wo ilè ní Ìràwò* (*Òrìsà oko* entered into the ground in *Irawo*). This is a common saying about the *òrìsà*.

Another town with which he is associated is *Iwere*. He is praised as "*Ará Ìwéré Ajangele, àgbalàgbà òrìsà-Ìràwò*". *Iwere* and *Irawo* are small towns in the Upper *Oogun* areas in

north-western Yorubaland. No archaeological expedition has taken place in both; neither have the Yoruba considered them to be of great historical significance.

His symbols include chalk and cowries like *Obàtálá*. But while *Obàtálá*'s cowries are of divinatory significance and not strung together, those of *Orisa oko*, *arere* or *alarere*, are strung together as a necklace that is worn by his male devotees. Cowries are used here for adornment and not for divination.

The taboos of *Òrìsà-oko* include new yams. His devotees must not eat new yams until during his annual festival when yams are fairly old. Like those of *Obàtálá* his devotees should also not wear a mask as stated in this *Ijala* chant:

Èmi kò tètè mò pé Obàtálá kì í ru èkú.

(It was late before I knew that Obatala did not wear masks)

Egúngún Ijaola bu sí yààrá Òrìsà-oko.

(The masquerade costume of Ijaola got mouldy in *Orisa oko*'s room).¹³

That the two deities did not wear masks can be understood in the light of how the Igbo used to pester the lives of early Ife people masked in costumes of straw before Moremi discovered their trick. The Igbo used to camouflage as spirits to scare the people of early Ife before Moremi, a beautiful woman of Ife, voluntarily gave herself as a captive, married their king, discovered their trick and then ran back to reveal their trick to her people. Masquerades were associated with spirits. Not wearing masks therefore stresses the desire of *Òrìsà oko* and *Obàtálá* to remain human.

5. *Òsun*

Òsun was the first woman to be deified. The *Ifá* divination poem in which her late deification is stated is *Òsé-Túrá*.¹⁴ It was when her lieutenants (*Boribori awo*, the mystery maker of Iragbeji; *Egba awo*, the mystery maker of Ilukan; *Ese awo*, the mystery maker in Ijebu Epe, and *Atonu*, and mystery maker of Ikire Ile) were being sent by her to inflict punishments on her offenders and the offenders could be helped by the other deities that God through *Ifá* advised the other deities to reckon with *Òsun*'s power if they wanted to succeed in helping people to overcome their problems.

Òsun first married *Ifá* (*Òrúnmilà*) and it was during their marriage that *Òrúnmilà* gave her sixteen cowries (*eéríndínlógún*) for divination. But she did not have any child for *Òrúnmilà* and it was because of this disappointment that she divorced *Òrúnmilà* to marry *Sàngó*.

Though she was barren at first, she is a deity that is very much associated with child-giving. After reluctantly consulting *Òrúnmilà* and making the prescribed sacrifice, she did not only have a child of hers but also brought children to other barren women. She later helped other women to take care of their children whenever they fell ill.

Today, some communities such as Osogbo and Ipole are referred to as "owning *Osun*". But the communities are most likely the places where she has been actively worshipped after her deification. According to the tradition of origin of Osogbo town, Laaro, the founder of the town happened to fell a tree into the river that flows by the town and he heard a woman's voice groaning that her dye-pots had been broken. The woman came out of the river. Since then the people of the town have

taken her as their titular deity.

A reference to her as *Ijésá* in her praise somehow associates her with Ipole. But the only place with which she might have been historically connected is Ijumu which is not a town but a district in north-eastern Yorubaland. Archaeology has proved continuous settlement there since the late stone age. Archaeological reconnaissance and excavations have taken place at the rock shelters at Itaakpa and Oluwaju and at the stone axe factory at Okedagba as well as the iron working site of Addo. From the archaeological evidence from the sites, it has been concluded that settlement continued in the area from about 300 B.C. to recent times when the villages there were abandoned.¹⁵

Very important among her symbols of worship are brass bangles, brass fans referred to in Yoruba as her *edan*, a pot for water storage and carved combs. A carved comb interpreted as hers has been found in the archaeological excavations in Esie, also in north-eastern Yorubaland. Esie is just a stone's throw to *Oro* and Abimbola is said to have explained its name as having derived from the description of the crowded nature of *Osun's* house. The statement, as related by Onabajo (personal communication, 1999) is *Òró l'a ró ní 'lé Òsun: Ilé Òsun kò gbèniyàn* meaning "People could only stand in *Osun's* house, *Osun's* house could not contain people." Like Obatala, she is associated with white clothes which is not only part of her shrine but is also the usual clothing of her devotees.

6. *Sàngó*

Sàngó is the god of thunder and lightning. The objects associated with his shrine and worship show that he was a king of old Oyo. The leather wallet, *làbà* and the gourd rattle, *sééré*, in his shrine

are Oyo Yoruba products. The *gbègìrì* stew with which he is worshipped is eaten only among the Oyo Yoruba. His drum, *bàtá* is also unique to the Oyo Yoruba. However, his symbol of worship, *edun*, a new stone age axe, and *orógbó* that is cut and cast before him might not belong to his time and domain.

The stone axe is said to be the thunder bolt with which he killed people. After any death by thunder, the victims are not buried until the chief priest of *Sàngó* has unearthed the stone axe in a lavish ceremony paid for by the relatives of the victim. It is believed that the death and the unearthing of the stone axe occur mysteriously. It is not unlikely that the power to attract thunder to kill people was used by someone before *Sàngó* and that person is probably the person people now confuse with him. The *orógbó* nut is grown in the forest belt of the south. But since it is marketed northwards together with kola-nuts that are also grown in the forest south, it must have been an article of trade in the Oyo area.

Sàngó was a strong medicine man. Hence he is praised as *Ewélérè* (herbs are profitable) and *Ewégbèmi* (herbs have profited me).¹⁶ He is said to be wicked and his wickedness was what led to his defeat by one of his lieutenants and his eventual suicide. Another praise name of his is *Arèkújayé* (*aru èku j'ayé*), meaning "he who carries a mask to enjoy life." Incidentally *egúngún* masquerading is also an Oyo phenomenon.

7. *Oya*

The tradition about *Oya*, a goddess popularly taken to be *Sango's* wife, and the reason for her deification are far from clear.¹⁷ She is said to have married *Ògún* right from heaven

and her name then was *Araka*. But she was leaving home from time to time to secretly meet the members of the group (*egbé*) she belonged to in heaven. When *Ogun* could no longer stand her absence from home, he beat her and she consequently went to marry *Sàngó*. Her interest in her group still continued and her desire to be able to meet with her group made her to eventually decide to separate from *Sàngó*.

Another version of her story is that she remarried after separating from *Sango*. Her husband is said to be a hunter, *Olukosi Epe*, who during a hunting expedition found her in a masquerade costume made of buffalo horns which she used to wear any time she wanted to sneak out to meet her heavenly peers. Her usual practice was to put aside the costume before meeting her peers and it was at this time that the hunter saw her, took away the costume and went home. Following the hunter's footprints *Oya* traced the hunter to his home and eventually married him. But one day when her husband was not at home, she was angered by the senior wife of the hunter who insulted her: "*Máa je; máa mu; àwò re n be l'áká*, meaning, "eat and drink, your (true) colour is in the granary". The saying is still used today as an insult. She collected her costume and killed the other woman. She even attempted to kill her husband but failed. Commanding her children to consult and worship her through buffalo horns, she disappeared. The place where she disappeared is popularly said to be *Ira*, an Iboló town in northern Yorubaland.

The difference between the stories notwithstanding, she is still popularly associated with *Sango* and her symbols (buffalo horns, white stone axes and cloth wallet referred to as *làbà*, like the leather wallet in *Sango*) are kept in the same shrine with *Sàngó's* symbols. The beads tied round the neck by her devotees

are also called *kele* like those of the *Sango* priests.

Also notable is her association with masquerading – like *Sango*.

HISTORICAL DEDUCTIONS

From the stories and attributes of the seven deities, Yoruba religious traditions can be divided into three periods based on their relationship to the places and objects associated with them as well as what the deities are popularly noted for.

The powers on which deification is based are as follows:

- (a) itineration and outside skills
- (b) sedentary welfare provision

and (c) intimidation and cowing.

The deifications of *Ògún* and *Ifá* seems to have fallen into the first period. Those of *Obàtálá*, *Òrìsà Oko* and *Òsun* fall into the second period while those of *Sàngó* and *Oya* fall in the third.

The deification of *Ògún* and *Ifá* belongs to an age when outside ideas, skills or knowledge were introduced into Yorubaland. The two deities were itinerant, providing their skills from place to place. Since the West African neighbours of the Yoruba have the same deities, it is most likely that the first persons who introduced iron working and divination to the Yoruba were the people deified and given the names of the deities they brought with their trades or skills.

Since iron working had started in Nok on the plateau of northern Nigeria in the 2nd century A.D., the spread of it to Yorubaland could not be much later than that time. A date of the 9th century A.D. has even been obtained from an iron-

working site at Ijumu in north-eastern Yorubaland.¹⁸ *Ògún* worship must have begun among the Yoruba before urbanization. The association of *Ògún* with any present-day towns therefore must have been after his deification.

The use of the dog as *Ogun*'s sacrificial animal strongly indicates that his deification took place at a hunting stage of life. That he and *Ifá* are associated with palm or raffia fronds shows them as having existed at a time when the Yoruba lacked rudimentary skills. West Africans weave broad and narrow cloths. The narrow strip cloths are more recent than the broad were cloths. Up till today in the Congo area, broad weave cloths are still woven in raffia. Hence Sieber is of the view that West Africans, too, might have woven raffia broad weave cloths before cotton. Akinwumi (personal communication, 1999) confirms this to be true among the Yoruba. The use of palm or raffia fronds as clothes must have preceded any form of weaving by the people. Iron-working must have been a technological leap in an over-whelming environment of forests and dangerous animals while divination, if only temporarily, solved problems of anxiety. While *Ogun* was adored more for protection, *Ifá* was adored more for welfare.

Then came the period in which the deities were deified more for general welfare than any fears. This was the period of *Obàtálá*, *Òrìsà-òkò* and *Òsun*. *Òrìsà-nlá* is noted more for child-giving than any other benevolence. He appears to have been deified for child-giving, and production of wholesome children.

In the Ifa divination poem, *Òbàrà Òfún* when *Obàtálá* started turning out deformed people such as cripples,

hunchbacks and albinos, he inquired what was wrong and what he was told to do was as follows:

Mo mo òbàrà, mo mo ofin,

Bèè ni kò yé mi-

Àwon l'ó dá ifá fún Òrìsà

Tí n s'onà ti kò gún mó.

Wón ní ebo ni kí ó se.

Njé ta l'ó wá se onà omo mi fún mi

Òrìsà l'ó se onà t'onà gún.

Osasona, omo mi.

I know *Òbàrà* as well as *òfin*

Yet I do not understand:

Thus goes the prediction for *Òrìsà Obàtálá*

Who was sad at turning out unpleasing forms.

He was asked to sacrifice and he did.

Who then created my child for me?

It was *Òrìsà* who created the pleasing form

Òsásonà, my child.¹⁹

Today the poem is still appropriate for people who have difficulty having children. The child born after such difficulty is named *Òsásonà*. The second part of the poem consists of the praise of the creator god. The deity, therefore, ensures perfect children.

Orisa oko is a deity of agricultural plenty. The names of his follower often start with *Oso* or *So* which is the word for the medicine or supernatural means of inducing plenty. To have *oso* of anything, be it a crop or even money, is to have the medicine to induce riches in it. His devotees now pray him for other blessings but the power for which he must have been deified strongly related to his power in the provision of plenty.

Òsun in her own case appears noted for child-giving and children's health services. According to Ogundasee, a relevant *Ifá* divination poem, *Òsun* was barren in her early life even up to the time she got married to *Sàngó*, her second husband. She was not happy and had to shamefully return to *Ifá*, her first husband, for divinatory consultation. *Ifá* told her she could not have a child unless in the company of other barren women. She had to perform some sacrifice and take a sign to God in heaven. Thus she went and came back to have a child at the same time with other barren women. As the other women's children were later falling sick, they went to *Ifa* for advice. They were told to be grateful to *Òsun* for having children and to ask her for the medicines for the ailments of their children.

The poem is as follows:

Olakaka fí aporo

A difa fun aridegbe

Tí ì se omo Esemowe,

Arí ide wéré wéré re omo

L'ójó tí kò sí omo tuntun

Tí Òsun wá be Òrínmilà

Tí Ifá so fún Òsun pé
Kò le dá omo tiè bí
Olódùmarè yóó dá òpò omo weere
Sí àgbáyé fún òpòlopò àgàn.
Òsun wa n ké pé
Bí orí kan bá sunwòn
A ran igba orí.
Kí orí olúsunwòn ki o ran oun.
Òsun kàà sàì bímo sí ayé
Orí olúsunwòn yóó ran Òsun

He who theatrically hangs his bag
Who divined for Aridegbe
The child of Esemowe –
He that has brass bangles to please children
When there was no new child.
When Òsun went to beg Òrúnmilà
And Ifá told Òsun
That she could not have her child alone
God would send many babies
To the world for many barren women.
Òsun was then crying:
If a head (person) becomes fortunate

The fortune spreads to hundreds of people.

Let the fortunate head spread to her.

Òsun would be blessed with children in life.

The head of the fortunate would spread to *Òsun*.²⁰

Sores are still common ailments of children. Up till today the brass bangle, the symbol of *Òsun* is still rubbed with the juice of a leaf as a medicine for sores.²¹

Divination is more or less the diagnostic aspect of traditional medicine. *Obàtálá* and *Osun*, two of these three deities that are noted for welfare provision, are associated with cowries divination, *òrìsà* or *èrìndínlógún*. It is done with simplified divinatory poems of *Ifá*. It seems to be an attempt to indigenize the exotic versions. The welfare service of these deities to the people of their times do not seem to have been hawked about. The deities seem to have been sedentary: they stayed in their places for people to consult them for help. *Obàtálá* is referred to as *A jòkò má ní ipèkun, ipèkun ni ipèkun òrìsà*, meaning "he that sits without a limit, his limit is that of a god". *Òrìsà oko* is strictly attached to *Ìràwò* while the crowdedness of *Òsun*'s house as described in the full meaning of the name of *Òró* town is an indication of how people used to consult *Òsun*.

Although the three deities are associated with cowries which are not West African in origin, cowries cannot be used for dating the gods. There were two sources of cowries to West Africa, the earlier one through North Africa from the Indian ocean,²² and the later one through the West African coast after the contact of West Africa with the Europeans.

However, brass which is associated with *Osun* could be contemporaneous with the metal sculpture of Ife which has been dated to between the thirteenth and sixteenth century A.D.

Old Oyo, where *Sàngó* was the third Alaafin, was established around 15th century A.D. This means that he reigned in the 16th century or after the episode of *Òsun*. *Sàngó* was a fearful ruler; and, although he himself did not seem to have decreed that he should be deified, his supporters forced his deification after his death. It was *Oya*, his wife herself, who decreed it to her children before she departed that she should be deified. Although the devotees of the two of them now appease them for all sorts of blessings and general protection, their powers seem to be more for coercion and intimidation than for anything else. Incidentally the two of them are associated with masquerades which are essentially for camouflaging as spirits. Their times seem to have ushered in the worship of masquerades in Yoruba religious tradition. It must have been from Oyo that masquerading spread to other Yoruba subsections. This is more so as the use of masquerading for camouflaging was disastrously dealt with in the early history of *Ife* as contained in the *Moremi* tradition.

In early *Ife*, masquerading seemed to be an anti-social behaviour. The religious behaviour of the Yoruba from their early urbanization to the time of *Òsun* was primarily based on the welfare of the people. It is in this light that we can understand the non-acceptance of any deity with *Sàngó's* attributes, if even, as believed in certain quarters, he existed in that period of Yoruba religious history.

CONCLUSION

From the life and post-deification attributes of the seven deities discussed, there is certainly no doubt about the historicity of Yoruba religious traditions. To a certain extent, their life attributes are reflected in the powers that are still expected of them as deities. Hence such powers are essential in the understanding of the other deities. However, the problems in reconstructing the Yoruba religious past abounds in the uncertainties concerning the humanity of many deities, particularly the animistic ones who could have been deified at different times when people came in contact with them or settled near them. They might have existed even before the three peoples of the Yoruba religious history indicated above.

NOTES

1. Fela Sowande (ed), *Awon Asayan Odu mimo Ifa: Akojopo Kinni* (Ibadan, ARSADA, 1965).
2. C.L. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba* (Ibadan, Evans Brothers, 1985), pp. 29-35.
3. Adeoye, 1985, pp. 287 and 289.
4. Adeoye, 1985, pp. 356-360 and 404-408.
5. Sandra Barnes, 1989, "Introduction: The Many Faces of Ogun" in Sandra Barnes (ed.), *Africa's Ogun, Old World and New* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press), p. 2.
6. S.O. Bada, *History of Saki*, p. 7.
7. Barnes, 1988, p. 8.
8. Adeboye Babalola, "A Portrait of Ogun as Reflected in Ijala Chants," in Sandra Barnes, ed., *Africa's Ogun Old World and*

New, p. 149.

9. Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos, C.M.S. 1921), pp. 26-30.
10. Adeoye, 1985, p. 174.
11. Adeoye, 1985, p. 113.
12. Adeoye, 1985, p. 271.
13. Adeoye, 1985, p. 274.
14. Adeoye, 1985, pp. 203-245.
15. Philip A. Oyelaran, "Early Settlements and Archaeological Sequence of Northeast Yorubaland" in *African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 65-79.
16. Adeoye, 1985, pp. 28 and 302.
17. Adeoye, 1985, pp. 303-306.
18. Oyelaran, 1998, pp. 65-79.
19. Cornelius O. Adepegba, "Ona: the Concept of Art Among the Yoruba", *The Nigerian Field*, 1992, pp. 1-6.
20. Adeoye, 1985, pp. 207 and 208.
21. I have mentioned this in the chapter, "Osun and Brass" in *Osun Across Waters* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press)
22. Ekpo Eyo, *Nigeria and the Evolution of Money* (Lagos, Central Bank of Nigeria, 1979) pp 42 and 43.



NEWSPAPERS TO THE RESCUE
RECONSTRUCTING ASPECTS OF
NIGERIAN POST-COLONIAL HISTORY

by

Kemi Rotimi

It is an elementary fact that there are three main sources for the reconstruction of history: oral evidence, archaeology and written records. It is with the records that I am concerned in this paper. In our age, written records are not only the most readily available sources of information; they are the most reliable. But what is the state of Nigeria's archives, the repository of these written records? How readily are records of governmental activities available in the archives? And how much have newspapers been useful as remedies?

I shall comment on the state of Nigeria's archives by sharing my observations and experiences in the course of research into aspects of the history of the police and policing, in Nigeria from quite early in colonial times to the end of the Second Republic. Between 1983 and 1990, I worked on a comprehensive history of the defunct Native Authority/Local Government Police Forces.¹ The forces had existed in the old Northern and Western regions of Nigeria from quite early in colonial times until about 1970 when they were abolished by the first military governments of General J.T. Aguiyi-Ironsi (January-July 1966) and Lt. Col. (later General) Yakubu

Gowon. I searched for written records on the forces in the branches of the National Archives in Kaduna, and Ibadan. I also consulted documents in the Arewa House Archives² of the Ahmadu Bello University in Kaduna, the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. Let me hasten to add that I am aware of the difference between a library and an archive. To borrow from L.C. Gwam, the late Director of the Nigerian National Archives, a library is 'an archive of books' while an archive is a 'library of documents.'³

Gwam may have stretched the point too far when he claimed that man, even in the 'Primitive Age', was engaged in archival documentation through cave paintings; but there can be little argument over his claim that 'one of the earliest and most primitive instincts of man was to preserve his own memory on earth'⁴. Gwam noted that in the 'Classical Age', that instinct witnessed the invention, development and preservation of the written word. In modern times, it influenced the establishment of the first archive institution—the National Archives of Paris established by a decree of 12 September, 1790. Gwam gave three probable reasons for the establishment of the archives.⁵ In the first place, there was the realization that the successful administration of a modern welfare state rested on a foundation of governmental efficiency. The efficiency could only result from a government's stocktaking of its own activities at various times – this at short notice. Such an appraisal would be difficult or impossible except the important records which reflected the policies, the principles and the obligations of a government had been properly catalogued and preserved in a place where

they could be effectively managed by those who were specially trained to do so. Secondly, there was the awareness that public archives ranked with monuments, books and art treasures as the principal instruments by which the progress of a people and a nation is adjudged. Third, the leaders of the French Revolution recognised the importance of records as vital instruments for social and economic growth.

Commenting on developments in Nigeria, Gwam listed the achievements, as at 1964, of the National Archives.⁶ One, the Archives had assembled and rationalised the principal documentary evidence of Nigeria's history. By that activity, the Archives had rescued and recreated a past that was in danger of complete extinction. Two, the Archives had made a positive contribution to the development of learning by inventing a Nigerian system of archives administration. Three, the archivists had established the institution as a centre of information and research.

At the time when Gwam spoke, national history writing had just begun. Since then, a lot more has been done. The quantum of works that have been produced with information collected from the branches of the National Archives in Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu attest to the value and relevance of the archive institution. The institution will continue to be relevant for as long as Nigerians seek to know more about their past. But the two problems of acquisition of new materials and the preservation of those already acquired will have to be tackled.

When I searched for materials in the National Archives, Ibadan in the late 1980s, I confronted the problem that non-accession of documents posed. The scope of my doctoral

research topic was 1900-1970. But the archives did not have documents on government departments in the Western Region for the years after 1958. In other words, the 'Simple Lists' (which are the researcher's guide to available documents) contained entries only up to 1958. When I enquired from the administrators, I was told that the problem arose from the unwillingness of the regional government (in the years before 1967) to release government files to the Archives for accessioning, storage and management. The archive administrators did not also enjoy the cooperation of the Western State government (between 1967 and February 1976). The splitting of that state first into three (Ogun, Ondo and Oyo in 1976) and later into five (Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo in 1996) has further compounded the archive administrators' problems. Officials of the various ministries in Ibadan where, as the capital of the defunct Western Region/State, most of the files were at the time of my research often anchored their non-cooperation on the fact that the creation of states had warranted the movement of files to the newer state capitals of Akure (Ondo State) and Abeokuta (Ogun State).

When I realised that the archive holdings were not adequate for my needs, I had to make contacts with the ministry in Oyo State that was most likely to be in possession of the relevant documents. That was the then Ministry of Information, Social Development, Youth, Sports and Culture. I could confirm that some records on my topic were available but they could not be used as they were. There was no systematic arrangement of the files. Some had simply been dumped in a mound in a room while others were in bales

bulging out of cupboards in a so-called library. Only a most desperate researcher could have endured the ordeal that combing through the dumpsites would entail before getting at relevant files. I had neither the time nor the resources (human and material) to undertake such an exercise. I had to rely, for information on the post 1958 years, on contemporaneous newspaper accounts and oral interviews. I will comment on newspaper collection and preservation in the latter half of this paper.

At the National Archives, Kaduna I observed that there was a better collection of documents. The 'Simple Lists' listed documents up to the early 1970s. Some of the documents were, however, not yet open to searchers because of the twenty-five year rule. The rule imposes time-ban on access to government records. The Arewa House archives, also in Kaduna, had some documents on the old Northern Region up to 1966. The fact that the latter Archives had no professional archivist on its staff was reflected in the uncoordinated assemblage of the documents and the lack of any guide to the holdings.

The libraries that I used also kept some government documents (commission) reports, Hansards of legislative houses, annual reports on government departments and agencies, etc). I observed then that the manner of ordering the index cards in the documents section of the libraries made it difficult to appreciate their holdings. The unguided searcher would not be able to trace available documents readily.

In all of these repositories, but especially in the National Archives, the problems of preservation of documents call for urgent and sustained attention. A major problem is that of

accommodation. At the time of my research, there had been no addition to the buildings erected in the 1950s. The repositories had therefore had to accommodate many more files than originally planned. Because of poor accommodation, the destructive activities of the natural agencies such as insects, rodents, and weather conditions, many document had become brittle. Most of the file jackets containing them had fallen off or were hanging loose. I observed in the course of casual visits to the archives in Ibadan and Kaduna in 1995 that there had been some improvement in physical facilities with the addition of newer blocks of buildings. New file jackets had also been provided for the documents.

Needless to say, users have a responsibility for the preservation of documents. Some users pay little attention to the state of the documents. They exhibit their carelessness by placing their notes on other documents when copying from some. They thus deface those upon which their notes are placed. There are the criminally-minded searchers who steal documents. Those who have been caught have been punished but those who have got away with it have robbed generations unborn of vital documents on the nation's past. Greater vigilance on the part of the staff of the archives will check the tendency on the part of those who might intend similar mischief.

Sourcing for Materials for Conducting Research into The History of the Police in Nigeria

To date, my major work has been an in-depth enquiry into the origins, administration, role and demise of the Native

Administration Police Forces in Nigeria. The forces were established early in the colonial period in the old Northern and Western regions. They existed parallel to the federal government-controlled Nigeria Police Force which had a pan-Nigerian mandate. The Native administration Police Forces were abolished by the military government following the collapse of the First Republic in 1966.

For the prosecution of the study, I relied on the analysis of primary and secondary source materials. Among the primary sources used were archival documents, official reports, newspapers and oral interviews with policemen, politicians, judicial officers, civil servants and ordinary members of the public. These were supplemented by secondary source materials such as journal articles and works by historians, sociologists, and political scientists on the subjects of policing, governance and politics.

The study shows that the emergence of the forces was part of the efforts to secure colonial rule at the local government level. It also shows that at independence, the Western and Northern regional governments which inherited the forces used them for the consolidation of political power and the maintenance of law and order. The work of the police was essentially that of rule-enforcement, the goal of which was to impose upon sections of the population order and regularity as defined by those who controlled political power. As agents of government, the police owed primary loyalty not to the public but to their employers.

The study further shows that the manipulation of the police by the power elite brought them into conflict with the members of the public who bore the brunt of police

harassment, brutality and corruption. The resulting hostility of the public to the forces and the need to harmonise the different police forces in the country under a single organization, the Nigeria Police Force, brought about the abolition of the Native Administration Police Forces in 1970.

THE VALUE OF NEWSPAPERS FOR THE RESEARCH

The value of newspaper reports for the reconstruction of aspects of Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial history is enormous. My research endeavours into the history of the police and policing in Nigeria touch intimately on the relationship between groups of people in society: the police, their administrative and political bosses and the mass of the citizenry. I have found newspaper reports extremely useful in respect of the relationship between the police and the ordinary members of the public. Newspaper reports have helped to ameliorate the problems that the displacement of victims of police action could have posed. Indeed, some glimpse into elements of police administration is provided in some newspaper reports thus obviating the gap that the absence of official documents would have created

Whether the police were enforcing administrative laws, helping politicians in power to prop their authority or playing mischief, the bulk of their victims was from the ordinary citizenry. But most of the particular victims could no longer be found at the scene (town, village, farm, road, etc) of incident because they had since relocated or were dead. Some of the policemen's actions were 'newsworthy' enough to be recorded

by journalists who heard of, or witnessed, them. Some of the reports were based on court (customary, magistrate, alkali, high court) proceedings in cases involving the police and the citizens. As records of lower grades of court up to the Chief Magistrate's were not systematically kept in the archives newspaper highlights of the proceedings and/or judgements constituted the readiest and most reliable references to them. Many of the newspaper reports provided much useful background for the oral interviews that I later conducted.

The newspapers that I consulted are *Nigerian Daily Telegraph*, *Nigerian Citizen*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Daily Times*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Comet*, *West African Pilot*, *Daily Sketch*, *Southern Nigerian Defender* and the magazine *West Africa*. These papers were found in the National Archives in Ibadan and Kaduna; the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife; the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan and the Arewa House Archives, Ahmadu Bello University at Kaduna. Except for *West Africa* which was published in London, the others were published in Nigeria. Of these others, only the *Nigerian Citizen* and the *Daily Comet* were published in the North (Zaria and Kano respectively). The others were published either in Lagos or Ibadan. The problem of bias or exaggerations, especially in reports that touched on the involvement of the police in politics, is acknowledged. But it was not insurmountable. Versions of reports were cross-referenced among the papers, or cross-checked with some archival documents or oral interviews.

Apart from the *Daily Times*, there was no other newspaper that was free of political bias. *The Nigerian Tribune* (founded

by the leader of the Action Group party in the West, Obafemi Awolowo), harboured for all time pro-Action Group sympathies and was between 1963 and 1966 very critical of the conduct of the N.A. police in Western Nigeria during the Premiership of Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola. The *Southern Nigeria Defender*, *West African Pilot* and *Daily Comet* belonged in the Zik group of newspapers and harboured pro-NCNC sympathies. They were very critical of the conduct of the N.A. police in the Western and Northern regions from 1952 to 1966. *The Daily Sketch* was established by the Akintola government in the West in 1964. It often tried to show that it was members of the opposition that were creating law and order problems, requiring action by the N.A. police. It also tried to project the federal government-controlled Nigeria Police Force as undermining the efforts of the N.A. police to contain the lawlessness of the opposition parties. *The Nigerian Citizen* was owned by the Northern regional government which was controlled by the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). It is fair to remark that until the early 1960s, the paper gave a fair coverage to complaints about the harassment of members of the opposition parties by the N.A. police. *The Morning Post* which was owned by the federal government did not carry many useful reports on the N.A. police.

The value of pro-government newspapers is two-fold. One, their reports at times confirmed, even while defending the N.A. police, some allegations carried by opposition newspapers. Two, their reports of official reactions to issues are as good as the original government documents, many of which could not be traced at the relevant repositories.

SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE VALUE OF NEWSPAPERS

A. Appointing Leaders for the N.A. Police Forces in the North

Apart from reports on the conduct of the police for which newspapers accounts were significantly useful, the newspapers also carried reports that were useful in respect of the administration of the forces. I shall cite the cases of the appointment of Chiefs of Police in the Kano and Adamawa emirates in the North in 1957 and 1958.

The appointment of these Chiefs of Police hark back to the princely-liaison officer scheme inaugurated in 1928 to boost the transformation from the *dogarai* to the *yan doka* phase of policing.⁷ Under the scheme children of the royalty were encouraged to hold leadership positions in the N.A. police forces in their domains. The cases confirm that the hopes on the scheme, which included the enhancement of the prestige of the Emir, the upholding of his authority and the exciting of the interest of more respectable citizens in police work, had been realised. The appointees were not just beneficiaries of the patronage system that was associated with the governmental system in the emirates. They were also members of the royalty, just like their predecessors in office. Indeed, one of them became the Emir of Kano five years later. None of them had, however, been in the force before their appointment.

On 28 February 1956, the Kano Chief of Police, Alhaji Kabiru, was suspended for some wrongdoing and was eventually relieved of his post.⁸ He was Emir Sanusi's brother.

He later bagged the post of District Head, a choice appointment by contemporary emirate standards. The post of Chief of Police was then offered to Kabiru's immediate junior brother, Ado Bayero, who at the time was an elected NPC member of the regional House of Assembly. He did not immediately accept it.

Ado Bayero had won his seat in a bye-election in the general elections of 1956, having defeated Mallam Baba Dan'agundi of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) – the major opposition party in Northern Nigeria in the era of party politics which was led by Aminu Kano and with its headquarters in Kano – and his own friend, Mallam Ali Abdullahi who stood as an independent candidate.⁹ He had made a name for himself in the House by his outspokenness. He must have been among the most educated members, having just passed out of the Institute of Administration, Zaria and he was probably the youngest at 26. His initial demur therefore might not be unconnected with the allure of parliamentary life in the circumstances.

He, however, yielded to pressure and consented to sacrifice his active political career saying that 'it is good to make sacrifices some time, and this is the first time in my life that I have made [a] sacrifice'.¹⁰ But he did not vacate his seat until after his installation which was on 12 April, 1957 at an impressive ceremony witnessed by a large concourse of people who came from all over Kano.¹¹ He emphasised the importance of his new office – which was common knowledge – in a later letter of resignation to the President of the House of Assembly.¹² It was one that carried heavy responsibility but he neglected to add that it also carried enormous powers

and inestimable perquisites!

His appointment was quite popular, even with the opposition NEPU. It was reported that Aminu Kano described it as "a good gesture and a good omen for the future of Kano".¹³ He hoped that his youthfulness, firmness and broadmindedness would reflect well on the NAPF. He saw his resignation from the house and politics as "the manifestation of his sincerity."

In what smacked of compensation for his lost seat in the legislature, Bayero was later rewarded with a board appointment.¹⁴ The official reason for putting him on the board of the Northern Regional Broadcasting Corporation was that he had "experience and knowledge of Local Government affairs"! Ado Bayero was in office until 1961 when he was made Nigeria's ambassador to Senegal. From there he was later recalled to become the Emir in 1963 after the deposition of Sanusi and the death of his immediate successor.

A year after the appointment of Ado Bayero in Kano, a similar appointment was made in the Adamawa emirate. Again, much of the information about the appointment was carried in the *Nigerian Citizen*, the Northern regional government's newspaper. The royal exclusivity of the post of Chief of Police is also emphasised in this example. Here too, it was not uncommon for holders of the post to graduate to the Lamidship (*Lamido* is the Fulani title for Emir and that is what is used in that emirate). The headquarters of the emirate was Yola, which also served as the headquarters of the Yola province

Mallam Adamu Bawuro was the son of a late Lamido of Adamawa, Mallam Musdafa¹⁵. Born in 1925, he was educated

at the Yola Elementary School and the Yola Middle School. He joined the NA service in 1945 as a Central Office scribe (an upwardly-mobile post) and later served in various capacities. His last administrative post was Assistant Council Secretary. All that while, his father was the Lamido and his elder brother, Aliyu Musdafa, was the Chief of Police with the title of Walin Adamawa.

Their father died in 1958 and Aliyu had to ascend the throne. To fill the vacant position of Chief of Police, Adamu was selected and sent to the Northern Police College, Kaduna for a six-month course. He was subsequently appointed, with the title of Makaman Doka.

His installation had every touch of a royal coronation. It was reported that “the Lamido of Adamawa, Mallam Aliyu Musdafa, has *conferred* the title of Makaman Doka on Mallam Adamu Bawuro Musdafa”¹⁶ (Emphasis added). So it was like a chieftaincy title which was the privilege of the king to bestow on any worthy subject of his! And the scene was described thus:

The *turbanning ceremony* was watched by many people. He was *escorted* home by a large crowd of people in cars, on horses and on foot.¹⁷ (Emphasis added)

The same newspaper also provided very useful information on the loss of office in Zaria by a beneficiary of this royal preferment in 1957. Mallam Mamman Sule had been appointed Chief of Zaria NA police force in 1955. Between 1955 and 1957 when he lost office, Sule was a thorn in the flesh of all the NPF advisers (four of them) who worked with the Zaria NAPF. He was incompetent, corrupt and

unamenable to correction, not to talk of discipline. But all the complaints by the NPF advisers were ignored by the Native Authority because of Sule's royal connections.¹⁸ When his men were on the verge of a mutiny in early 1957, Sule was suspended from office.¹⁹ At the inquiry set up by the NA, the following charges were preferred against him:

- (i) that he received £42.17s.6d from Lance-Corporal Tanko Dangata in order to promote him to the rank of Corporal;
- (ii) that he was given £8 by Alhaji Dangora from Lance-Corporal Tanko;
- (iii) that he received 7s. from ex-Constable Sarkin Zagin Galadima; and
- (iv) that he received a sum of money from Corporal Danladi Birnin Gwari.²⁰

Not unexpectedly, he denied the allegations after he had sworn on the Holy Qur'an 'four times'. He was, however, found guilty and consequently dismissed from office in July.²¹

His successor, Malam Nuhu Yahaya, had served in various NA departments since 1938. He was in the police force where he rose to the rank of Sergeant in 1950. At the time of his appointment, he was a cashier in the NA service. But he was also the Treasurer of the NPC, Zaria branch.²²

The case of Mallam Sule's relationship with NPF advisers to NAPF is symptomatic of the general trend in the North; that is, whereas the NPF officers had enormous responsibilities to the NAPFs in terms of training and management, they lacked the authority to discipline erring NA police officers and men. The contrary was the case in the West. There, from the mid-1930s, the NAPFs had in every significant respect

been subordinated to the officers of the NPF who were detailed to work with them. Indeed, their nomenclature, 'Officer-in-Charge', attested to the superordinate/subordinate relationship.²³ But as it will be shown presently, the Action Group government of Western Nigeria decided early in the immediate post-independence years to change the order and bring it at par with what obtained in the North. The government's action generated a lot of furore by the opposition in the regional and federal legislative houses. Again, the significant point here is that much of the information on the row was obtained from newspaper reports which I corroborated with records of parliamentary debates and oral interviews.

DEBATING NAPF-NPF RELATIONSHIP IN THE WEST

While the Northern regional government was endeavouring to increase its control over the NAPFs in the post-independence years, the Western regional government was struggling to assert its control over the forces. The process got the government entangled with the NPF and other vested interests. The crisis centred round the leadership of the LGPFs and the degree of influence that could be exercised by the NPF vis-à-vis that of the regional government. For a better understanding of the issues it is necessary to go back, in time, to the provincialisation scheme of 1938 (in Oyo province)²⁴ and 1955 (in the wider region)²⁵ even if briefly.

The 1938 scheme in Oyo province set the pattern in the subordination of the NAPFs in Western Nigeria to the NPF. The 1955 Local Government Police Law not only widened

the scope of provincialisation, it also reiterated the fact of the subordination. The law provided for the appointment of superior NPF officers as Chief Officers at the provincial level and as Superintendent-General at the regional level. All this was evidence of good liaison between the two forces. But in the changed, and constantly changing, political circumstances of the region from late 1959 the continued subordination of one to the other was clearly unacceptable. The Akintola government harboured the fear of sabotage by these NPF officers, especially the Superintendent-General. They had a double loyalty: one to the regional government and the other to the NPF whose political head was the Prime Minister. At that time Akintola's AG party was the major opposition party to the NPC/NCNC coalition federal government. To free itself from the encumbrance that the arrangement constituted, the Akintola government effected a change in the position of Superintendent-General in 1961. Not unexpectedly, it met with considerable opposition.

Apparently the plan to whittle down the influence of the NPF had begun in 1960. In that year, the government promoted some LGP officers to the rank of Assistant Chief Officer.²⁶ These officers were expected to understudy the NPF officers serving as Chief Officers with the hope to take over later. The change of personnel in the Superintendent-General's post can therefore be regarded as advancement in the government's plan. By that year, three NPF officers – Pallet, Swain and Marsden – had occupied that position.²⁷ With the full knowledge and consent of the NPF regional authorities and even of the Prime Minister's office, the government appointed one Chief E.A. Oluwole who had retired from the NPF as

Senior Superintendent of Police in January 1961 to the post, on contract with effect from 13 February 1961.²⁸ If the Akintola government felt more comfortable having somebody who had no extra-regional loyalties in the post of Superintendent-General, the NCNC opposition in the West, the NPC-NCNC coalition federal government and even the NPF felt bad. They expressed their disquiet not only in parliament but also in the law court.

The constitutionality of Oluwole's appointment was queried on the floor of the House of Representatives in a motion by the Prime Minister on 29 August, 1961.²⁹ It was part of his reaction to the strident cry by the NCNC, for some time then, that law and order had broken down in the West.³⁰

The comments of those who supported the motion can be summarised. One, the appointment was in violation of section 98, subsections 4, 7 and 8 of the 1960 Constitution which related to the establishment and territorial jurisdiction of police forces in Nigeria. Two, by appointing an officer with region-wide powers the government had created a Regional Police Force and this was considered a backdoor approach to achieving a goal it had sought unsuccessfully during the pre-independence constitutional conferences. Three, the appointee was a crony of Akintola's who could not be expected to do justice to all manner of men without affection or ill-will. Four, since his appointment, it had been impossible for the NPF to cooperate with the LGPFs. Five, the LGP Law of 1955 under which the government purported to have acted was *ultra vires* the 1960 Constitution and should therefore be set aside. Six, the 'new' order in the West was not in line with the management procedure of NAPFs in the North. Seven, the

government's action had interfered with the executive authority of the federal government³¹.

The only speaker against the motion was Anthony Enahoro of the AG. He was eminently qualified to speak on it because it was during his tenure as the Minister of Home Affairs in the Western region (he held the post from 1955 to 1959 when he moved to the federal house), that the re-organisation of the old NAPFs, which included the change in nomenclature and creation of the controversial post, took place in 1955. He made eight points. One, the post was not new; it had been in existence for six years and had been held by three superior expatriate NPF officers. Indeed, the first one, Mr. Pallet, had been the same officer who had arrested him for sedition some years previously but they enjoyed working together. Two, the new officer, Oluwole, held the same rank, before his retirement from the NPF, as the previous holders of the post. Three, there was no Regional Police Force but rather there were local Government Police Forces organised on provincial basis within the region. Hence, the title of the regional coordinator was the 'Superintendent-General of Local Government Police Forces' and not 'Superintendent-General of Local Government Police Force'. Four, the operational control of individual Provincial LGPFs was vested in the Chief Officer appointed by the Provincial Joint Committee, itself established by the component local government authorities. Five, the Superintendent-General was an agent of government, appointed by the Governor, to ensure that the regional government's financial contributions to the recurrent cost of maintaining the forces and for training were properly expended. Furthermore, he provided expert advice to the

various authorities, including the regional executive council, so as to promote efficiency and to achieve some degree of uniformity in all the forces. Six, there was nothing in the management of the NAPFs in the North that made that style superior to that adopted in the West. After all, there were complaints of interference by politicians in the management of the forces there too. Seven, it could not be true that the regional NPF authorities who had endorsed Oluwole's appointment would turn round to complain of lack of cooperation from the man. Eight, the appropriate place to resolve a constitutional question was the Supreme Court, not the floor of Parliament.³²

In the end, supporters of the motion won. It was resolved that,

this House views with grave concern the appointment by the Government of Western Nigeria of a Superintendent-General of Local Government Police since such appointment interferes with the executive authority of the Federation.³³

The Prime Minister must least have expected that Premier Akintola would react the way he did. The latter took his government's case to the press by publishing the correspondence that were exchanged between his office and that of the Prime Minister before Oluwole was appointed.³⁴ One of the letters was an apology from the Cabinet Office to retract an earlier accusation that the Western regional government had breached the agreement on when Oluwole should have assumed duty. In his press statement, the Premier disclosed that he would only allow the NPF to resume control of the LGPFs if the NAPFs in the North were similarly treated.

He declared that,

Under no circumstances will I accept an inferior status either in degree of authority or standard of efficiency for the Local Government Police Forces of Western Nigeria.³⁵

The controversial appointment and the general question of the maintenance of law and order in Western Nigeria formed the agenda at a special meeting of the Police Council held in Kaduna on 16 September 1961.³⁶ It is clear even from the minutes of that meeting that the grouse of the Prime Minister (and that of his political associates) was more over the fact that 'a non-serving Nigerian Police Officer' was appointed than that the appointment was unconstitutional. The Eastern Nigerian delegation called for the scrapping of the post. The LGP should either be brought under the NPF or be run along the lines of the North. The Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, promised to make available to his Western Region counterpart a note on the system of NAPFs and their relationship with the NPF. Premier Akintola welcomed the move and promised to amend the relevant law, where necessary, after due consultation with the opposition. The truce was hailed by a section of the press which adjudged the Northern system the better and called on the Western Nigerian government to borrow a leaf from it.³⁷ But the note prepared by the Northern regional government could only have strengthened the Western regional government's resolve to keep the influence of the NPF at a minimal level. NPF officers in the North were 'advisers' to NAs on police affairs: they were not 'controllers'.³⁸

Even before the appointment was debated on the floor of

the House of Representatives, its constitutionality had been challenged in a Grade 'A' customary court in Ilesa. The criminal case in which the Superintendent-General was the prosecutor involved an NCNC supporter, Seidu Olajire. The defence counsel was Babatunji Olowofoyeku, an NCNC member of the House of Assembly.³⁹ Quoting sections of the 1960 constitution on the establishment of police forces, the counsel held the view that the regional police law that created the office was *ultra vires* the constitution. He applied to the customary court judge to refer the matter to the regional high court for determination.

The question did go before the high court and was decided by Justice O. Somolu in November 1961. The constitutionality of the appointment was affirmed and the case was remitted back to the customary court for hearing.⁴⁰ Oluwole eventually lost the office but it was during the Emergency (May-December 1962) when Dr. M.A. Majekodunmi served as the Administrator.⁴¹ While the Emergency lasted, the LGPFs were put under the operational control of the NPF but there was nobody appointed to the office of Superintendent-General.

The office was restored in 1963 when the second government headed by Akintola under the UPP/NCNC coalition was inaugurated. But Akintola had to bow to the pressures of his NCNC partners in the coalition to pick a serving NPF officer, Joseph Adeola, at the time an Assistant Commissioner of Police.⁴² The choice of Adeola was influenced by the following considerations. One, it was in deference to the wishes of the NCNC coalition partners one of whose members, Adeoye Adisa, was the Minister of Home Affairs. The NCNC had always held the view that some

supervision by the NPF was necessary to check the tendency by politicians in power to misuse men of the LGPFs. Premier Akintola agreed to the request because he had yet to consolidate his hold on power. Two, Adeola was a popular choice. He had acquired fame as a keen sportsman, and politicians on both sides of the coalition could vouch for his integrity. Although he was from the Mid-West region, he was well known in social circles in Lagos and Ibadan, circles to which many of the men in power also belonged.⁴³

The birth of the NNDP in 1964 meant the exit of some ministers from the government. The Minister of Home Affairs, Adeoye Adisa, was one of those who left. The crisis of legitimacy and the concomitant fear of insecurity confronted by the government did not abate. The fear of sabotage by the NPF, despite the NNDP's romance with the Prime Minister's party, the NPC, also did not abate. Things came to a head on 5 July 1964, when the NPF anti-riot squad (the Police Mobile Force) had a violent clash with some men, suspected to be thugs, in the entourage of the Deputy Premier, R.A. Fani-Kayode at a spot on the Ife-Ibadan road.⁴⁴ One Lateef Makinde, in the Deputy Premier's entourage, eventually died from injuries sustained during the clash. The regional government set up a coroner's inquest headed by acting Chief Magistrate A.O. Adeyemi⁴⁵ The coroner indicted the PMF for behaving discourteously to the Deputy Premier and for 'rash, furious and unreasonable conduct' because they had way-laid a peaceful convoy. He ordered that further investigations be conducted into Makinde's death to identify the killer for possible prosecution.⁴⁶ The government was prevailed upon by the Prime Minister to stay action on aspects of the coroner's

report.⁴⁷

The incident was held by the regional government as a positive proof of its long-held charge that the NPF were disloyal and were undermining the security of the government. The immediate exit of the expatriate Commissioner of Police, J.S. Bell and his deputy, E.C.P. Glaisher, who was the acting Commissioner at the time of the incident, was most probably part of the political solution to the crisis.⁴⁸ In the reorganization of the regional security apparatus that followed, Adeola lost his place as Superintendent-General of the LGPFs. He was succeeded in late July by a Chief Officer of the LGPFs, Solomon Adebayo Olujobi.⁴⁹ His appointment from the ranks of the LGPFs marked the final break with the over-arching influence of the NPF over the LGPFs. In the NPF, Odofin Bello was appointed Commissioner in August.⁵⁰ While both men merited their appointments, there were political considerations that influence their choices.⁵¹ It need be remarked that these changes in the leadership of the two forces did not guarantee, especially in respect of the NPF, the loyalty of the rank and file for the regional government. The cry of sabotage persisted to the end of the regime.

C. The Police and the Conduct of Politics

Perhaps the greatest value of newspaper reports for the research was in providing useful data for assessing the involvement of the police in the conduct of politics from the decolonisation period through the post-independence years, that is, from 1951-1966. I had in my analysis posed two questions. One, why did politicians in power use the police

to harass their opponents? Two, why were policemen amenable to misuse by politicians?

Politicians in power were inclined to use the police, first, because of the socialization processes that the successor-elite had undergone under colonial rule. The colonial state was an authoritarian one, largely intolerant of opposition. Second, it was necessary for mediating the intra-elite struggle for political power and economic privilege by the political class. Third, it was necessary for the protection of the ethnic power bases of the ruling elite from intrusion by other ethnically-based political parties. Fourth, it was used to show off power to the supporters of the opposition parties. They were made aware of the powerlessness of their mentors vis-à-vis the capability of the power-holders who could utilise such an important state agency for good or evil. Fifth, it was useful to guarantee for the bodyguards or thugs of the power-holders immunity from the long arm of the law whenever they committed illegal acts. Sixth, it was ultimately vital for the perpetuation of the governing elite in power.

The amenability of policemen to use by politicians was influenced by conformity with their general duty of maintaining law and order, the operational control of the police, the desire of opportunistic policemen to advance or secure their careers, and the offer of immediate material rewards by politicians. These could be in form of cash, unsecured bank loans, cars, etc. Add to these the sympathy of the individual policemen for the ideals of the party in power or for individuals in the party hierarchy to whom they might be related by blood.

The congruence of the two sets of factors impacted upon

the strategies or forms of control exercised by the police. The policemen served variously as spies, controllers of rally or party meeting permits, *agents provocateurs*, terrorists and active party members. Not unexpectedly, the activities of the police drew reactions from a section of the citizenry. Opposition party leaders enlisted the service of thugs and bodyguards for their personal protection. Supporters of the opposition parties countered police harassment with violence on the police and other agencies of government. Some among the policemen were unwilling to be governmental agents of tyranny. Their inaction was construed to mean sabotage and those who were caught, or so accused, were punished through denial of promotion or loss of jobs.

It is necessary to reiterate that in the context of this study, the focus is on the relationship between the government elite and the opposition in the Northern and Western regions, the two regions where the NA police which form the object of study existed. In the North, the governing party was the Northern Peoples' Congress, NPC. Significant opposition to the party came from the Northern Elements Progressive Union, NEPU, the United Middle Belt Congress, UMBC and the Borno Youth Movement, BYM.⁵² In the West, from 1951 and until May 1962, the Action Group, AG, controlled the government. Opposition was from the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (from 1961, National Council of Nigerian Citizens), NCNC.⁵³ Following the AG crisis, an Emergency was declared by the Federal Government during which an Administrator ruled the Western Region. When constitutional government was restored in January 1963, a faction of the old AG which had regrouped as the United

People's Party, UPP, led by the old AG Premier, S.L. Akintola, formed a coalition government with the NCNC. By 1964, a faction of the NCNC teamed up with the UPP to form the Nigerian National Democratic Party, NNDP. The opposition during these years comprised the old AG between 1963 and 1964, and from 1964, a faction of the NCNC with the old AG.⁵⁴

Politics and government in the pre-and post-independence years were characterised by alliances and coalitions. In the North, the NEPU allied with the NCNC while the UMBC and the BYM allied with the AG. In the West, the NPC, from 1963 allied with the UPP/NCNC coalition and their successor, the UNDP. At the federal level, the NPC formed a coalition government with the NCNC between 1959 and 1964. The coalition government took in elements from the Western NNDP from January 1965. Two grand coalitions emerged on the eve of the 1964 federal elections. One that comprised mainly the NCNC, the AG, the UMBC and the NEPU was called the United Progressive Grand Alliance, UPGA. The other that comprised mainly the NPC and the NNDP was named the Nigerian National Alliance, NNA.

I shall not, in this paper, go into the details of the factors that predisposed politicians in power to misuse the police and those that made the police amenable to misuse. Such details are provided in the larger study. Rather, I shall dwell on the methods of use or the manner of involvement of the police in party politics because the activities of the policemen were very well reported in the press. The reactions of members of the public to the policemen's activities were also equally well documented by the newspapers.

The police in active partisan politics

Until the 1958 Order⁵⁵ that banned NA policemen in the North from being partisan politicians was made there was no legal restraint on them. Indeed, in the early years of party politics they were encouraged, along with other NA employees, to have a stake in the survival of the system by combining their NA job with membership of the government-approved political party, the NPC.

There was the case of the Chief of Police, Zaria NA, Muhammadu Sanni Maigamo who was an NPC member of the House of Assembly from 1952-1954. The NPF adviser complained that Maigamo's inability to supervise his men effectively was affecting their discipline. He also complained that as a politician he would not be able to discharge his duties 'without fear or favour'. He therefore, requested that the officer be replaced.⁵⁶

In his reaction, the Resident argued that while it was in principle undesirable for a Chief of Police to have any political affiliations, any Northerner sufficiently responsible to be appointed to that post would 'be bound to have pro-N.P.C. sympathies even if he were not a 'card-carrying' member.'⁵⁷ The officer's membership of the House did not materially interfere with his police duties because meetings 'occupy an average of not more than three weeks in a year.' The Resident had to leak the official government policy that no attempt should be made by 'the Administration to limit the political activities of Senior officials in native authority service.'

In the same year, 1954, the Chief of Police, Bida NA, Ndakpako, was caught speaking at a public meeting of the

NPC at Lema near Bida. The Commissioner of Police, Kaduna made a report of it to the government.⁵⁸ Apparently because of the official government policy referred to above, Ndakpako's action drew no sanction.

There is evidence that even after the promulgation of the 1958 Order, NA policemen continued to participate in politics but it was all right if the allegiance was to the NPC. But where they were known or suspected to be sympathetic to the opposition they incurred the government's wrath.

In 1959, the same Bida NA Chief of Police mentioned above was arraigned before the Etsu Nupe's court on the allegation by the NPC that he was actively engaged in partisan politics. He was fined £10 but allowed to continue in his post.⁵⁹ A year before then the NPC had called for his removal for allegedly engaging in 'subversive activities against the Native Authority.'⁶⁰ The government-owned newspaper, *Nigerian Citizen*, queried the 1959 political trial of Ndakpako.⁶¹ His accusers were the witnesses and the judges (the Etsu Nupe was away in Kaduna when the man was tried though the trial was with his consent). In the paper's opinion, if the man had fallen foul of the relevant law he should have been appropriately disciplined administratively, not by conviction with a fine.

It is not unlikely that Ndakpako's offence was his unwillingness to encourage the tyrannizing of NEPU members by the policemen under his command. The political configuration of Bida at the time was such that the NPC was actively led by the Etsu Nupe whose cousin, Abubakar Zukogi, was the NEPU Secretary-General. The Chief of Police was also of royal descent. His disinclination to being used by one

faction of the royal family to victimise supporters of another might have earned him the reprimand. His royal links also explained why he could not be removed from office.

The police and rule manipulation

B.J. Dudley has remarked that the opportunities for legitimate political action open to any opposition party depend largely on the system of rules and the rule-enforcement agencies current in the society. Whereas a particular rule or law may in itself not be overtly discriminatory, its implementation may work to the disadvantage of specific groups. In the same vein, a rule may not be restrictive but its enforcement or non-enforcement may nevertheless be such as to confer advantages on some groups while putting others at a disadvantage.⁶² That was the case with the NA police and the issuance of permits to political parties for rallies in Northern Nigeria.

The Native Authority Law of 1954 conferred on the native authorities the power to make rules and issue orders. Section 37, sub-section 44 of the law provided that native authorities might make orders 'prohibiting any act or conduct which in the opinion of the native authority might cause a riot or a disturbance or breach of the peace'. The native authorities could make orders regulating the holding of public meetings, processions and the like. Permission to hold a public meeting had to be obtained from the native authority which required that a twenty-four hour notice should be given. The native authority's power in this regard was delegated to the NA police. While the NPC often had no problem securing such permits, the opposition parties often encountered a lot of problems. They often gave a much longer notice and yet they

might not secure the necessary permit. Should they proceed to hold their rally it was the same police that had delayed or refused the necessary permission that would arrest them. They were often convicted in the Alkali court and were either fined or imprisoned.

Policemen were often detailed to cover rallies but it was not always for the purpose of maintaining law and order. They could be out to spy on and later arrest speakers for slanderous remarks on native administration or government officials.

There was the case in Ilorin in early 1959 when the general secretary of the ITP-AG alliance, Raimi Akande, was convicted in a magistrate court on the charge that he had abused the Emir of Ilorin at a campaign rally.⁶³ He had by his action contravened the conditions stated in the permit issued to the party. Two NA policemen and a Nigerian policeman gave evidence for the prosecution. Not even the fact that one of the NA policemen who had officially been detailed to cover the meeting contradicted the evidence of the two other policemen could save Akande who was fined £5 or one month in prison. He paid the fine. He was defended by two AG lawyers, Akerele and Obisesan from Ibadan.

In the post-independence years, opposition parties continued to suffer from the denial of permits for rallies. But in addition, there were other aspects of rule manipulation to the greater disadvantage of the opposition parties. There was the sacrosanctity of the names of the Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello and the ruling party, NPC. Unlawful assembly acquired a very broad interpretation: it ranged from the gathering of two or more people in private (opposition members' residences to the presence of two or more opposition members

in a moving vehicle! There was also the discriminatory arrest of political activists following any clash between supporters of the NPC and those of an opposition party. Usually, trial was in an Alkali or Emir's court and it most often ended in conviction. The process of appeal to the Provincial Court or from there to the High Court was so tortuous that the convict would have completed his term before the hearing of the appeal.

Sometime in April 1961 the High Court, sitting in Kano, allowed the appeal of 13 NEPU supporters who had in September 1960 been sentenced to one year imprisonment each by the Emir of Kano's court. The men had been convicted for unlawful assembly because they were alleged to have been present at the scene of a clash between supporters of the NPC and the NEPU. Their counsel successfully argued their four grounds of appeal. One, the appellants were arrested at various places after the crowd had dispersed. Two, there was no evidence to connect them with taking part in the alleged unlawful assembly. Three, the record of evidence taken at the Emir's court did not support the findings made by the court and upon which findings the appellants were convicted under the Penal Code when the code had not yet come into force.⁶⁴

When it eventually did, the NA police and the Alkali seemed to have been particularly interested in two of its sections. Section 114 stated that:

Whoever does any act with intent to cause or which is likely to cause a breach of the peace or disturb the public peace shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine or both.

Section 399 provided that:

Whoever intentionally insults and thereby gives provocation to any person, intending or knowing it to be likely that such provocation will cause him to break the public peace or to commit any other offence shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both.

Section 399 was not popular with the NA police and the Alkali because the NPC leaders alleged to be abused were never aware of the abuse and therefore no offence was created under the section. They therefore regarded section 114 as an omnibus provision designed to forestall criticism of political leaders where necessary. So any spoken words either in the individual's privacy or in public which might be distasteful to any member of the ruling elite could earn the speaker arrest and imprisonment under the section. Once an NPC supporter went up to the NA police station and complained that a NEPU supporter abused the leaders of the NPC, the NEPU member would be arrested and detained.⁶⁵

On 15 September 1964, an Alkali court in Gusau presided over by Mallam Alu sentenced the NEPU leader in Sokoto, Mallam Abubakar Tambawal, to two years' imprisonment. He was alleged to have used abusive and uncomplimentary language against the NPC leader, Alhaji A. Bello, at a public lecture at the Gusau motor park on 14 September, 1964. He was promptly arrested, tried and convicted the next day.⁶⁶ One Abdullahi Adam who was a NEPU candidate in Kano for the

1964 federal election was arrested on October 1964 for abusing NPC leaders. He was arrested in his house by the NA police at the instance of an NPC informer. He was detained in Kano prison on the orders of an Alkali for three days before he was granted bail on application to the high court. Another accused, Alhaji Shehu was not so lucky because while his application for bail was still pending he was convicted and sentenced to nine months' in prison with hard labour.⁶⁷ So concerned were some members of the NPC about the sacredness of the Premier's name that one Alhaji Sanda Mai Barewa in Kano took the title of *Sarkin Yakin Sardauna* (Chief of the Sardauna's army). He and his 'boys', acting under cover of the NA, police, committed atrocities against those who used the Premier's name in a profane manner.⁶⁸

Until 1964, the LG police in Western Nigeria was not involved in the issuance of permits for rallies. Under the Public Order Law, Cap. 107 of 1957, that duty was assigned to a superior NPF officer. But in 1964, the law was amended to make provision for the Minister to whom responsibility for public order was assigned to regulate the holding of public meetings and public processions. The delegation of such authority, especially at the local level, would involve the LG police to a degree that made members of the opposition parties uncomfortable. The bill, therefore, generated a lot of debate when it was laid before the House of Assembly in September 1964.⁶⁹ Eventually it was passed. It is safe to suggest that the Western regional government's action was informed by knowledge of the position in the North. Amid protests in the opposition press about the 'aping' of the Northern practice,⁷⁰ a government order in the gazette stated that applications for permits to hold public meetings and processions should thenceforth be made to the Chief Officer, LGPF or Secretary

of the council area. In Ibadan, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Akure, Oyo and Mushin, Chief Officers of the LGPFs would be responsible for issuing such permits in their areas of authority. In the other council areas, the responsibility would devolve on the council secretaries.⁷¹

Soon after, Mrs. H.I.D. Awolowo, wife of the jailed leader of the AG, Chief O. Awolowo, fell victim to the rule manipulation. The LG police in Otta, Abeokuta province, stopped her from holding a rally in the town. She was eventually allowed to hold the rally on the intervention of the superior NPF officer in the area, Mr. G. Effiong.⁷² Three days before the incident, the Premier of the East, Dr. M.I. Okpara, had been prevented by the LG police from entering and campaigning in Ogbomoso, the home town of the Premier of the West.⁷³

On 18 December 1964, one Barnabas Elujobade set out to submit nomination papers on behalf of the UPGA candidate for Ife South constituency, Mr. A. Pedro. He never got to the electoral office because he was arrested by the LG police. Within thirty minutes of his arrest he had been sentenced to three months in prison by an Ife Grade 'C' customary court for a sanitation offence. An hour later, the LG police dragged the same man before the magistrate's court, charged with tearing NNPP party flags at Ifetedo his home town. The magistrate ordered that he be remanded in custody till 31 December, 1964.⁷⁴

When some time in June 1965 the LG police banned all rallies in Ibadan they drew a lot of flak from the opposition press. They were described as some 'bullying local policemen' who stood as a wedge between the UPGA and the electorate

both of whom looked forward to a change of government in the planned regional election.⁷⁵ The LG policemen were likened to their Northern counterparts who 'appear more zealous than contesting politicians during election periods'. But they were warned that the NNDP for which they worked was not as entrenched as the NPC for which their Northern counterparts worked. So they might not continue to enjoy the protection that the NNDP offered.

The police as agents provocateurs

There were cases of NA/LG police baiting members of opposition parties into committing unlawful acts, at times where they had been peacefully and lawfully gathered. They also provoked ordinary members of the public into riotous acts when, at times, they accompanied tax officials or sanitary inspectors on political missions.

Some time in mid-1957, the Borno Youth Movement (BYM)-NEPU alliance got the necessary approval for a rally in Maiduguri. While the rally was in progress one Sergeant-Major Umaru Tubali of the Borno NAPF pulled down their flag.⁷⁶ This led to a fight between the supporters of the alliance and those of the NPC. Order was later restored with the intervention of the NPF adviser to the NAPF and the SDO. But the Secretary of the alliance, Mr. B.A. Ajenifuja, was later prosecuted in an Alkali court and fined ten pounds or three months in jail in default. He paid the fine. This man was later repatriated, under NA police escort, first from Borno province into Ilorin. From there he was expelled under NA police escort to Ibadan, the capital of the Western region.⁷⁷

While his party, the NCNC, constituted the opposition in the West, Chief (later Sir) Odeleye Fadahunsi of Ilesa suffered some harassment at the hands of the LG police. On 29 March 1962, a team of LG and Nigerian policemen raided his house in the evening. They were allegedly looking for some thugs and dangerous weapons being harboured in the man's compound.⁷⁸ They found nothing incriminating. In a later reaction, Fadahunsi lamented the way the AG government was misusing LG police to arrest councilors in Ilesa 'in order to give the party an easy win.'⁷⁹

Fadahunsi became Governor of the region from January 1963 when the UPP/NCNC coalition government was formed. He remained in office after the birth of the NNDP in 1964, and indeed until the coup of January 1966. While Fadahunsi belonged in the ruling elite, the LG police in Ilesa did not stop harassing politicians in opposing parties in the same way as he was in 1962. Early in August 1964 the house of the AG leader in Ilesa, Mr. Lawrence Omole, was ransacked for arms and thugs.⁸⁰ But for the fact that he had got previous knowledge of the search he most probably would have been incriminated through the planting of arms in his compound by the search party.⁸¹ Omole was eventually pressured into declaring for the NNDP when his business was to be crippled.⁸²

There was a riot in a motor park in Ibadan, the West regional capital, on 10 June 1964 when LG policemen tried to assist tax officials of the Ibadan City council to collect tax. The indiscriminate arrest of passengers who were in transit and motor park touts sparked the riot. Some of those at the scene claimed that the tax officials were out to sell NNDP membership cards rather than collect tax.⁸³ The official reaction by the Ministry of Home Affairs was that the LG

policemen were at the motor park 'to carry out the usual raids of undesirables, consequent upon incessant reports of theft from prospective passengers' and the tax officials were simultaneously there 'to carry out a tax raid on defaulters.'⁸⁴ The NCNC had cause to protest against the activities of the LG police, acting in league with tax collectors, in Ibadan. It decried the police practice of demanding up to four or five years' tax receipts and questioning people about party affiliation in the streets and motor parks.⁸⁵

Early in September 1965, there was a mass protest of market women in Ibadan. They were protesting against the constant harassment by officials of the Ibadan city council who often came in company of LG policemen. The immediate cause of the protest was a raid on 30 August 1965 by a combined team of LG policemen and council officials along Lebanon and New Court roads. The women traders were served with notices to quit their stalls within seven days.⁸⁶ A large number of the protesters were arrested by the Nigerian police, along with seven LG police and eight council officials.⁸⁷ Subsequently 77 of the women traders were charged to a magistrate's court for an unlawful procession, assaulting a council official and five LG policemen. Eventually none was convicted because the prosecution could not prove any of the charges.⁸⁸

Protecting party thugs or engaging in acts of thuggery

It is a little difficult to make a distinction between NA policemen providing cover for party thugs and when they engaged in thuggery themselves. The overlap in some of the examples that are cited may therefore be excused.

It is strongly suspected that the NA police killed a NEPU councilor in Kano, Tsalha Tela, in late 1958.⁸⁹ There was an

election into the Kano City council at which the NEPU had a majority win. Tela was one of the victorious candidates. While the NEPU were celebrating their victory, some members of the Jamiyya Mahaukata (the Society of Madmen), a kind of youth wing to the NPC but really made up of thugs, decided to spoil the fun for the NEPU. There was a fight. Tela happened to be in the crowd and he was attacked by some NA policemen who were on the side of the Jamiyyar Mahaukata. He clearly recognised two of them, Sgt. Mai Bauchi and Cpl. Baba Banufe. He eventually died of brain haemorrhage. Because of the general outcry against the extreme act of brutality, the government ordered a coroner's inquest. It did not identify Tela's killers but acknowledged that death resulted from 'a blow on the head' which it contended was probably 'caused by a fall from a bicycle.'⁹⁰

In their efforts to serve the interests of their employers well in the two crucial election years of 1964 (federal) and 1965 (West regional), the NA/LG police engaged in a lot of activities that cut for them a very bad public image. Post and Vickers and Dudley have examined in some depth the issues at stake in the two elections and have highlighted the role of these policemen.⁹¹ The following details therefore complement the highlights.

The legitimacy crisis that the Western regional government had faced since January 1963 when the UPP-NCNC coalition took power did not abate with the formation of the NNDP in 1964. To find a basis of legitimacy and to strike deep roots among the electorate, the NNDP relied increasingly on coercive control measures than on persuasion. Opponents were terrorised and intimidated. The NNDP used the weapons available to it as the

ruling party so brutally that it alienated large numbers of people, even those who had minimal interest in politics.

Shortly after the formation of the NNDP, supporters of the NCNC and the AG in Oshun division had to cry out against the reign of terror which NNDP agents had unleashed in the area. These included the active connivance of the LG police with sanitary inspectors, tax officials and thugs to tyrannise the opponents of the party.⁹² In July, the opposition press publicized an alleged plan by the NNDP to inject some 200 party thugs into the LGPF!⁹³ The AG at the same time alerted the regional Commissioner of Police, NPF, to a grand plan by the NNDP to infiltrate the LGPF with thugs whose primary responsibility would be the elimination of some AG leaders and some NPF officers who had been too harsh on NNDP thugs.⁹⁴ There were also reports of LG police or men in LG police uniform being arrested by the Nigerian police in their efforts to check thuggery.⁹⁵ Not unexpectedly, these allegations and reports were denied by the LGPF authorities and the supervisory Ministry of Home Affairs.⁹⁶

Just while the denials were being made, the LG police carried out a raid on the regional headquarters of the NCNC in Ibadan, damaging property and injuring the secretariat staff.⁹⁷ The raid was sequel to an attack on 12 August on Chief Saka Layonu, Minister of Chieftaincy Affairs, while on his way home from work. His attackers were suspected to be thugs of the AG and the NCNC.⁹⁸ The attempt by the NPF to step into the matter was resisted by the LG police who thought it was their duty to exact the necessary reprisal for the assault on the Minister.⁹⁹ The AG, in a note to the federal Prime Minister, deplored the raid on the NCNC secretariat and warned that unless the activities of the LG police were

checked, 'a guerrilla warfare' might break out in the region since the NPF seemed to have been marginalised in the protection of civil liberties.¹⁰⁰

Apparently worried at the increasing association of the LG police with acts of thuggery, the NPF issued sometime in September a release requesting the media and party officials to always be specific in their references to 'the police'.¹⁰¹ The campaigns for the December 1964 elections were at the peak then and allegations that the LG police were obstructing the conduct of campaigns by the opposition were rife. Indeed, soon after the NPF release was issued, the men of the Police Mobile Force clashed with the LG police at Osogbo. The wife of the Eastern Nigerian Premier, Mrs. Okpara, was addressing a rally which the LG police attempted to stop. They were challenged by the Mobile policemen who were in Mrs. Okpara's entourage. Some of the LG policemen, including their Chief Officer, Mr. J.L. Alao, were arrested and detained at the NPF station in Osogbo. But they were later released on the intervention of the Commissioner of Police.¹⁰²

In the North, the run-up to the 1964 federal election saw the NA police at their worst in their treatment of members of parties opposed to the NPC. They, the Alkali courts and thugs combined to make campaigning virtually impossible in parts of the North for the UPGA parties. So serious was police harassment that supporters, and even candidates, of the opposition parties emigrated from their homes to other towns, districts or provinces. Even then, some were tracked down to such hide-outs and on, the pain of death, renounced their party allegiance.

The NA police in Kano was embroiled in a scandal over

the death of a NEPU detainee in the Jakara station in November. The deceased, Mallam Aminu, had been allegedly beaten by four NPC supporters under the supervision of an NA policeman. He was later detained at the police station. When he complained of being ill he was ignored. Subsequently he died. The NEPU protested to the NPF zonal commander for Kano and Katsina provinces, Mallam Baba Jimeta. Jimeta responded with a claim that a post-mortem examination showed that the deceased had had pneumonia in the past.¹⁰³

Twice in the same month, the NEPU headquarters in Kano was raided by a combined team of the NA and Nigerian police. Among those arrested during the second raid on 16 November, 89 were arraigned before the Kano Mixed Court presided over by Mallam Adamu Tassawa. They were charged with disturbing the public peace, obstructing police officers in the execution of their lawful duties and for being idle and disorderly persons.¹⁰⁴ They were kept in police custody while their trial lasted. The defence of some of the accused is worthy of note. One of them, Mohammadu Gumel, claimed that he ran from home after a group of NPC thugs and NA police had beaten his brother brutally. They had actually come for him but pounced on his brother when he could not be found. Asked why he did not report the threat on his life to the NPF in Kano he replied that he saw no difference between the Nigerian and the NA police! Another victim, Usman Komai Da Ruwanka, stated that he managed to escape after he had been beaten by NPC agents and NA police on the orders of the district head of Karaye. Balarabe Dan Kare Dalawa alleged that the NA police and NPC thugs were going from village to village beating up NEPU supporters. Saidu Gumel, who was

a NEPU leader in Argungu, Sokoto province, alleged that he fled after the district head had ordered that he be beaten up. The latter had unsuccessfully appealed to him to renounce his party allegiance.¹⁰⁵ At the end of the trial, 59 of the accused persons were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from six to twelve months.¹⁰⁶

Early in December, the UPGA leader in Gusau, Sokoto province, Mr. Obed Boardman, who ran a chemist shop and had lived in the town for many years, was arrested by the NA police and detained in police cell bound hand and foot. When he took ill, he was taken to hospital with the chains on his hands. They were removed at the insistence of the doctor who attended to him.¹⁰⁷ He was eventually tried and jailed for two and a half years by the Alkali at Gusau on the charge of obstructing NA police officers in the execution of their lawful duties.¹⁰⁸ His appeal to the Provincial court was dismissed. He took his fight for justice to the High Court but his application for bail pending the determination of his appeal was refused.

He then took an application to the Supreme Court for leave to appeal from the order of the High court refusing bail. The leave to appeal was granted.¹⁰⁹ He eventually won his appeal against the judgement of the Alkali court at the High court on 20 June 1965.¹¹⁰ Boardman, however, enjoyed very brief freedom because he was re-arrested almost immediately. By 25 June 1965 he had bagged another one year jail term for an alleged injurious falsehood.¹¹¹

Post and Vickers have observed that the process of selecting candidates in the Southern regions for the 1964 federal election might have been characterised by 'confusion,

nilvary, and chicanery' but at least the official process of nomination proceeded relatively smoothly. The situation, they contend, was quite different in the North. There, the most extreme pressure was exerted to force prospective UPGA candidates to drop out of the race. All the forces of thuggery, obstruction and punitive control were exerted against the UPGA to prevent it making nominations. Local NPC leaders, 'with the Sardauna and the other members of the political elite group turning a blind eye', employed such tactics as kidnapping and murder to eliminate potential opponents. Such strategies helped the NPC to have many of their candidates returned unopposed.¹¹²

Against the background of the foregoing analysis the probability of NA police involvement in some of the cases cited below can be measured. They are selected from a catalogue by the UPGA in a release titled "The Truth about those NNA 'unopposed' Candidates!"¹¹³

In Bauchi South West constituency, the UPGA candidate was one Azi Nyako. On 16 December, his nominator, Jiri Arum was arrested by the NA police right in front of the electoral office as he came to file the nomination papers. On the 18th (the closing date), a second attempt was made by two other nominators. Again both of them were seized and carried away by NA police and NPC thugs right in front of the electoral office. One Samuel Okafor was immediately sent to Tafawa Balewa town for two other nominators. He was kidnapped and detained in police cell till 20 December.

In Sokoto province the UPGA candidate for Gwandu North, Usman Batulu could not file his nomination papers because the vehicle carrying the nominators and UPGA lawyers were detained by the NA police. The candidate for

Gwadabawa North, Sahabi Mallam Bawa, was first refused entry into the town by NA policemen. He was subsequently killed.

In Kano province, the candidate for Gumel West, Kasimu Gumel, was arrested on 20 October for objecting to a minor's name appearing on the preliminary voters list. His nominators were refused access to the prison to obtain his signature despite the Kano provincial electoral officer's instruction that the candidate be allowed to sign. The candidate for Gaya South, Mallam Sabo Mohammed, was validly nominated. But on 22 December while he was hiding from house to house he was kidnapped by the NA police, acting in league with his NPC opponent. He was taken back to Gaya where he was forced to declare for the NPC. The following oath was sworn to by an opposition member while renouncing his allegiance and declaring for the NPC. It was administered in Hausa.

I...

I have resigned from the... I have come back to the NPC with one heart. I have agreed that if I am seen at the lecture or meeting of the ... I agree that I should be prosecuted. Again if I do not cast my vote for the NPC may I meet the displeasure or anger of Allah.

Signature.¹¹⁴

In Borno province, the nominators of the candidate for Borno North, Samaila Dambazo, were kidnapped by NPC thugs assisted by NA police. They had not been found as at the end of December. The first set of nominators for Husaini

Anpanima, candidate for Borsari/Damaturu, withdrew because they were assaulted and threatened with imprisonment by NPC thugs aided and abetted by NA police. The electoral officer refused to accept the nomination papers from the second set of nominators and he declined to give any reasons for his action.

In Katsina province, an UPGA candidate, Dan Yusifu Kaura Abdu Sani (constituency not stated) made four unsuccessful attempts to file his papers. In his third attempt, one of his nominators was arrested in the presence of the electoral officer and locked in prison. When he made the fourth attempt on the 18th of December he discovered that the electoral officer had packed out of the town!

The general UPGA reaction to the disabilities of their members and the fall-outs from the election have been addressed in some other studies.¹¹⁵ Only a summary is necessary here. The UPGA decided to boycott the election but the NNA went ahead with it. The boycott by the UPGA turned out to be incomplete. In the end, the UPGA conceded victory to the NNA by default. A constitutional crisis ensued when the President refused to appoint the deputy leader of the NNA, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, as Prime Minister. Members of the judiciary led by the Chief Justice of Nigeria stepped in to effect a compromise. A broad-based government of members of the UPGA and the NNA was formed in January 1965.

Another opportunity to test strengths between the two grand coalitions was provided by the West regional election of October 1965. But in the run-up to the election, contestants attempted to eliminate some members of opposing coalitions.

The UPGA's attempt to eliminate the NNDP was countered by the NNA's attempt to remove the AG as a competitor. Their actions led to an escalation of violence whose first phase covered the period between August and October 1965. The mobilization of the agencies of government, especially the LG police in that period, is the relevant issue here. Some reported cases of harassment of UPGA candidates or supporters by the LG police will serve as illustration.

There was the case of one Samuel Akinloye, a federal UPGA parliamentarian from Ejigbo, whose family was much harassed in August. He was arrested in Ejigbo early in August for allegedly going about armed with cutlasses. After a search had been conducted in his house, he was detained at the Ogbomoso LG police zonal headquarters.¹¹⁶ He and his driver, Lawani Raji, were later charged before a magistrate in Ogbomoso for being

armed with one cutlass, one iron rod and one dangerous 'juju' walking stick in the public without lawful occasion in such manner as to cause terror to the members of the public and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 73 of the Criminal Code, Cap. 28, Vol. 1 Laws of Western Nigeria, 1959.¹¹⁷

The verdict in the case is not known but Akinloye's father and his lawyer shared in his ordeal. The father's house was raided by LG policemen from Ogbomoso while his case was pending in court. The police found four cutlasses of which the older Akinloye was said to be in unlawful possession. Apparently to avoid the delay that trial in a magistrate's court

entailed, the man was tried in a customary court at Ogbomoso where he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison.¹¹⁸

Incidents of harassment of the opposition in the Ogbomoso constituency attracted a lot of attention by the opposition press because it was the home of the regional Premier, Chief S.L. Akintola. So apart from the cases involving the Akinloyes there were others. But the most notable was the ordeal of Dr. C. Adeoye and Mr. S. Oyewo, two UPGA candidates for Ogbomoso. The two men who had fled from Ogbomoso were arrested on 25 September, 1965 when they attempted to submit their nomination papers. The police claimed that they were wanted persons.¹¹⁹ They were detained in Ilesa prison and it was while they were there that the regional electoral commission announced that Oyewo, who was the Premier's opponent, had withdrawn from contesting the election.¹²⁰

Other cases of LG police harassment were reported in other parts of the region. Ajibade village in the Ibadan environ was reportedly sacked by a combined team of LG policemen and NNDP thugs.¹²¹ A senior officer of the force who allegedly led the attack on the village was prosecuted in a magistrate's court in 1966 but he was discharged and acquitted because the prosecution could not prove its case.¹²²

Apparently in response to a charge of sabotage levelled against the NPF in the West by the NNDP government their NPC partner tried to shore up their control capacity by assisting with contingents of the NPF from the North.¹²³ The policemen came under opposition attack for colluding with the LG police to harass UPGA candidates and supporters.¹²⁴

There were later reports that, in the course of voting on election day, some LG policemen were found with ballot papers. Others were said to have colluded with NNDP thugs to chase away UPGA supporters who wanted to cast their votes. At the Idikan polling booth in Ibadan, a LG policeman was found to have been 'pregnant' with ballot papers. They fell off him when he tried to intervene in an argument between party agents. In another ward in Ibadan, the LG policemen on duty reportedly scared away voters. At Ede, NNDP thugs and LG policemen drove away UPGA agents and voters. At Iseyin, 18 people were allegedly arrested for impersonation while other voters were arrested for not having the current year's tax receipt.¹²⁵

The LG policemen were implicated in the violence that ensued from the massively rigged election.¹²⁶ Two cases will be cited. They were in the combined team of Nigerian and LG policemen that invaded the campus of the University of Ibadan on 14 October, 1965. The students were protesting against the conduct and outcome of the elections within the campus when they were invaded by the police. When the students' resistance proved abortive, they retreated into their halls. In the students' own words,

It was at this juncture that the Police broke loose and chased the students right into the halls of residence.

There then ensued an act of barbarity that is almost incredible.

The Policemen embarked upon an indiscriminate arrest of students – men and women sleeping in their rooms and others at

studies.

Those arrested were brutally handled and packed into waiting Police vans. This arrest was accompanied by a vandalistic destruction of university and students' property.¹²⁷

The students' account is corroborated in the reaction of the university authorities.¹²⁸

In September 1966, a top officer of the LGPF, Alhaji S.A. Elekuru, stood trial at an Ibadan High Court presided over by Justice E. Eso on a ten-count charge of arson. He was said to have conspired with some other persons on 7 November, 1965 to commit arson at the premises of the African Press Limited contrary to certain sections of the Criminal Code.¹²⁹ The African Press Limited were the publishers of the *Nigerian Tribune*, the most strident opposition newspaper in the West then. The arson involved damage to some machines, the building and some cars parked within the premises. Elekuru could not be convicted because of the muddle created by the investigating NPF officers but the judge doubted his innocence. On the veracity of Elekuru's evidence and that of his lone witness, Amusa Afolabi, the judge remarked that:

Neither the accused nor his witness impressed me as truthful. I, in fact, convicted the witness summarily for perjury. There is some suspicion surrounding the movement of the accused about that time. I do not believe him when he said he came to Ibadan to service his car nor do I believe his witness when he said the accused was in his house throughout the night

of incident. There is a grave suspicion surrounding the activities of the accused.¹³⁰

He concluded his judgement by noting that:

If only the police would pay more attention to the investigation of crime a lot of headache would be saved the court! In this case the movements of the accused have been most suspicious yet I am bound to give him the benefit of the doubt which I have and find him not guilty on all the counts. He is accordingly acquitted and discharged.¹³¹

The activities of the police generated reactions from members of the opposition, or ordinary members of the public, who fell victim. Some of these reactions will now be considered. Again, it is important to stress that the bulk of the information was obtained from newspaper accounts that were cross-checked with oral interviews.

Reactions to harassment by the NA/LG police

Members or sympathisers of opposition parties against whom the police were set did not always acquiesce in their ordeal. Those who could afford it among the party chieftains engaged the services of thugs who countered police violence with occasional assaults on the police. More commonly, there was mob counter-violence.

A riotous mob did considerable damage to NA property which included administrative and police building in Jos sometime in March, 1958.¹³² It all began with the arrest and detention of six NEPU members on the charge that they had beaten up the orderly, Abdulkarim Alo and the driver, Aliyu

Zaria, of the Premier of the Northern region. The crowd that invaded the NA police charge office was estimated at over 1,000. They were eventually dispersed with batons and tear gas but not before they had done some damage to property and wounded two NA policemen.

A similar incident occurred in Zaria in April.¹³³ There, the mob protested against the conviction at a Mixed Court of some NEPU members who were charged for assaulting police officers in the execution of their duties. As soon as the presiding Alkali passed a sentence of three months' imprisonment on each of the accused, the crowd outside became rowdy and in the ensuing melee, stones and bottles were thrown at the police some of whom sustained injuries. There was, later, a mass arrest of 127 persons who were tried in a Magistrate's court for 'unlawful assembly'. Many were fined sums of money, ranging from 10s to £5. One of the convicts, Mamman Gusau, was asked by the Magistrate, P.J. Schofield, to go to his hometown, Gusau in Sokoto province, because he was one of those the magistrate 'did not want to see in Zaria.'¹³⁴

It is perhaps best to focus on reactions to harassment by the LG police in the West in the period after the 1965 regional elections. That was when the accumulated rage of the citizenry against the aggravated assaults by the governments headed, since 1964, by Premier Akintola was unleashed on the agencies of coercion. Whatever sporadic encounters the LG police might have had with opposition party thugs before the 1965 elections paled into insignificance in the riots that ensued after the elections.

Many LG police stations were burnt. The reported cases

included that of Mushin, said to have been burnt after the three constables on duty had been beaten and chased away. This was on 2 November.¹³⁵ Early in December, the Enu-Owa LG police post in Ile-Ife was burnt and one of the constables on duty O. Raji was shot and wounded.¹³⁶ Later in the month, the Ago-Are LG police station near Oyo was also burnt.¹³⁷ Towards the end of that month, the Obafemi LG police barracks in Abeokuta division was invaded by rioters who first looted the buildings before setting them ablaze.¹³⁸

There were numerous cases of murder of the LG policemen. On 4 November, constable Emmanuel Akinlade was murdered at Akomologbon village, Ile-Iddo near Ibadan. Six men were later charged at a magistrate's court in Ibadan with the murder.¹³⁹ There is evidence that as at June 1966 the case was still being heard but it had been transferred to the High court with Justice Atanda Fatayi-Williams (later Chief Justice of Nigeria, 1979-83) as the trial judge. Only one of the six persons initially charged was still standing trial.¹⁴⁰

On 3 December 1965, 27 persons from Apomu in Oshun division appeared in a Magistrate's court at Osogbo charged with the murder of a LG police constable, Raufu Alabi at Apomu on 21 November.¹⁴¹ In a later account, the officer who led the LG policemen to Apomu on that day claimed that they had gone there to restore peace following an attack on muslim worshippers at the Friday service by some UPGA thugs. They arrived at Apomu late and ran into an ambush laid by the thugs. In the fight that ensued, he received three gun shot wounds.¹⁴² Apart from the constable that was killed, another was axed in the head. He admitted killing three of the thugs with his revolver. Eventually the case against those who

were docked was withdrawn in 1966.

Perhaps the worst case of reprisals against the LG police was the disappearance of seven LG policemen sent from Abeokuta to Iro village in the Egba east II constituency on 10 December to arrest some UPGA supporters who were alleged to be threatening the peace in the village. Only the officer who led the team, Inspector Joseph Bankole, escaped but with grave injuries. The missing policemen were Sunday Osho, James Oguntade, Isaiah Oduroye, Mufutau Shobayo, Samuel Shoyola, Shittu Sangogbayi and Zacchaeus Olukuloye.

The regional Commissioner of Police, NPF, Chief Odofoin Bello, led a search party to the area a day after the incident, but there was no trace of the missing men.¹⁴³ Three days later, the corpse of one of them, Mufutau Shobayo, was found on the bank of the Ogun river near the village.¹⁴⁴ An opposition newspaper later speculated that 22 members of the Abeokuta LGPF had resigned their appointments, apparently to avoid being sent on such risky missions.¹⁴⁵ As will be shown presently, it was not an unfounded speculation.

The plight of LG policemen in the region attracted comments from the members of the government, party stalwarts and sympathizers. A common call was that the government should provide arms for the LG policemen so that they could defend themselves better.¹⁴⁶ At the only sitting of the new House of Assembly on 9 December, attended by NNDP members only, the members praised the LG policemen for the good work they did before, during and after the elections. They decried the attacks on the policemen and urged the government to provide them with arms and ammunition.¹⁴⁷

The show of concern for the misfortune of some of the

policemen by the legislators, government functionaries and members of the public was of little avail. The attacks on them continued and many devised various means of avoiding high-risk duties. As the following telegram dispatched by the Superintendent-General of the LGPFs to all Chief Officers in the region on 8 January, 1966 shows, the policemen were increasingly getting disenchanted. He noted in a telegram, with Rev. No. EP. 423/Vol.2/168 that:

SICK REPORT X IT HAS COME TO MY
NOTICE THAT LOGOVPOL PERSONNEL
COMMITTED TO EMERGENCY DUTIES
FREQUENTLY REPORT SICK TO EVADE
DUTIES X THIS IS AN ACT OF
DISLOYALTY AND DISSERVICE TO THE
NATION AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED
X ANY CONSTABLE WHO PRETENDS TO
BE SICK AND IS HOSPITALISED BY
FRAUD AND THEREFORE ABSENTS
HIMSELF FROM DUTY WILL BE
DISMISSED OUTRIGHT X¹⁴⁸

The military coup of 15 January 1966 that ended the First Republic must have brought much relief to those LG policemen who had been confronted with making a choice between staying alive but jobless by ignoring this warning or risking probable death in the course of duty.

CONCLUSION

The dearth of governmental records of administration in

Nigeria after the mid-1950s is a history researcher's dilemma. But it is not an insurmountable problem. I was able to overcome the problem through a resort to the use of contemporary newspapers published in the period covered by my research project. I augmented the accounts contained in the newspapers with oral interviews and information from secondary sources.

It would appear that the political and civil service elites that emerged in the run-up to independence did not care much for the systematic collection of records of governmental business nor did they bother with the transfer of the records to the archives. And since independence, there has been no significant change in the disposition of the governing elite—civilian or military—to the preservation of vital documents in the archives.

I have endeavoured in this paper to show the value of contemporary newspapers to the reconstruction of the history of the defunct Native Authority Police Forces in Nigeria in the years up to 1970. The preponderance of references to newspaper reports in the notes to the paper bears testimony to their value. Conscious of the ownership of the newspapers, I was able to tackle the problems of bias and exaggeration in some reports by cross-referencing versions of reports in different papers, cross-checking with some archival documents or published secondary source materials, and in the course of oral interviews.

NOTES

1. My doctoral thesis is entitled "A History of Native Administration Police Forces in Nigeria, 1900-1970", Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Ife, 1990, 531 pp.
2. The materials there originated from the activities of the former Northern Historical Research Scheme.
3. L.C. Gwam, "Archives and Local Councils", a paper read at a symposium organised for Western Nigerian Local Council Librarians at the Arts Theatre of the University of Ibadan on 25 July 1964, p. 1.
4. L.C. Gwam, "The Raison d'être of Archive Institution", Ibadan, National Archives of Nigeria, p. 5.
5. Gwam, pp. 10-11.
6. Gwam, p. 14.
7. For details about this scheme, see E.O. Rotimi, *A History of Native Administration Police Forces*, Chapter II
8. *Nigerian Citizen*, 23 February, 1957. News item carried in a column on Kano affairs by 'Maigani'. The reason for Kabiru's loss of office was not stated. But in the course of research, I got some details which are in the text of the thesis.
9. *Nigerian Citizen*, 17 April, 1957. Banner headline titled, "Police Chief for Kano NA is Appointed".
10. *Nigerian Citizen*, 17 April, 1957.
11. *Nigerian Citizen*, 17 April, 1957.
12. *Nigerian Citizen*, 5 June, 1957. Banner headline titled, "Police Chief of Kano NA resigns from Assembly".
13. *Nigerian Citizen*, 24 April, 1957.
14. *Nigerian Citizen*, 26 October, 1957.
15. *Nigerian Citizen*, 15 October, 1958. News item titled, 'Adamawa's Makaman Doka named.'
16. *Nigerian Citizen*, 15 October, 1958.
17. *Nigerian Citizen*, 15 October, 1958.
18. On the relationship between officers of the NPF and the NAPFs in the North, see Kemi Rotimi, "Responsibility without

authority: the Experience of Nigeria Police Force Officers in the Management of the Native Administration Police Force in Northern Nigeria, 1919 – 1966”, *Journal of the Police History Society*, U.K. No. 8, 1993, pp. 44-63.

19. *Nigerian Citizen*, 27 February, 1957. News item titled “Zaria NA Chief of Police is suspended”.
20. *Nigerian Citizen*, 10 April, 1957. News item titled “Police Chief denies four allegations”.
21. *Nigerian Citizen*, 21 September 1957. News item titled, “New Police Chief for Zaria NA”.
22. *Nigerian Citizen*, 21 September 1957.
23. For details concerning the relationship between the NPF and the NAPFs in the West, see E. O. Rotimi, *A History of Native Administration Police Forces*, Chapter II, III, IV.
24. See E. O., Rotimi *A History of Native Administration Police Forces*, Chapter II, for details.
25. See E. O., Rotimi *A History of Native Administration Police Forces*, Chapter II for details.
26. One of the LGPFs officers whom I interviewed, Daniel Ajagbe, was one of those appointed then. The other appointees were S.A. Olujobi, J. L. Alao and J.A. Oloyede. These latter three had died at the time of my research.
27. House of Representatives Debates, 29 August 1961, column 2461. Chief Anthony Enahoro under whom these officers worked when he was the regional Minister of Home Affairs mentioned them while contributing to the debate on the controversial appointment of Chief E.A. Oluwole as Superintendent-General that year.
28. *Daily Times*, 1 September 1961. Premier Akintola’s correspondence with the office of the Prime Minister and the replies on the subject of Oluwole’s appointment earlier in the year were published in this issue of the paper. They were released to the press by the Premier in reaction to the Prime Minister’s comments on the floor of the House of Representatives on 29 August. See also *Western Nigeria Gazette*, vol. 10, No. 14, 23 March 1961. In an

interview with Chief Oluwole, he saw the controversy as mere politicking.

29. House of Representatives Debates, 29 August 1961, columns 2437-2471 for the comments of members for and against the motion.
30. *Daily Times*, 4, 5, 11, 12 & 14 August 1961 In an interview with Chief R.A. Fani-Kayode, he said that NCNC members and supporters were being victimised by the ruling AG party. Another NCNC member of the House with whom I spoke is Chief B. Olowofoyeku, [72, 74A Adetokunbo Ademola St. Victoria Island, Lagos, 28 June 1989]. He made the same point. Both men later served under Premier Akintola from 1963 to 1966 as Ministers. Chief Fani-Kayode bagged the unique post of Deputy-Premier.
31. Those whose comments have been summarised here included the Primer Minister, Hon. A.T. Balewa (NPC); Hon. D.B. Abii (NCNC), Hon. Muhtar, Sarkin Bai (NPC); Hon. M. Amechi (NCNC).
32. House of Representatives Debates, 29 August 1961, columns 2461-7.
33. House of Representatives Debates, 29 August 1961, columns 2461.
34. *Daily Times*, 1 September, 1961.
35. *Daily Times*, 1 September, 1961.
36. NAK. MIA 702 S.I., "Minutes of the meeting of the Police Council", 16 September, 1961.
37. *Daily Times*, 19 September, 1961, editorial comment.
38. NAK. MIA 702 S.I., "The System of the Northern Nigeria Native Authority Police Forces and their relationship with the Nigeria Police Force".
39. *Daily Times*, 25 August, 1961.
40. 1961 WNLR 286. Olowofoyeku later served as Minister of Education (1963) and Minister of Justice and Attorney-General (1964-66) under Premier Akintola. In the interview already cited, he could not initially recall the case. But as it turned out, his 'memory-failure' was a result of his deliberate effort to shut the events of those

Zaria, 1 July 1954.

57. NAK. ZarProf. C. 42, Resident, Zaria to CP, NPF, Kaduna, 9 August 1954.
58. NAK, MIA 712, CP, NPF, Kaduna to Civil Secretary Kaduna, 28 November 1954.
59. *Nigerian Citizen*, 23 September, 1959.
60. *Nigerian Citizen*, 17 September, 1958.
61. *Nigerian Citizen*, 23 September, 1959.
62. Dudley, *Parties and Politics*, 185-6.
63. *Nigerian Citizen*, 17 January & 4 February, 1959.
64. *Daily Comet*, 18 April, 1961.
65. I have adopted the arguments of Barrister G.O. Oyudo, an UPGA lawyer, in his protest letter to the regional Attorney-General. See *Daily Comet*, 25 November, 1964. The arguments approximated closely to the truth.
66. *Daily Comet*, 23 September, 1964.
67. *Daily Comet*, 25 November, 1964 for both stories.
68. Interviews with Tanko Yakasai and B.M. Wali, already cited. Wali, who was the Chief of Police then, however denied that the NA police gave the man cover. He described him as an NPC thug.
69. Western Region House of Assembly Debates, 29 September 1964, columns 755-772.
70. *Nigerian Tribune*, 1 October, 1964 (editorial comment)
71. *Nigerian Tribune*, 24 October, 1964.
72. *Nigerian Tribune*, 30 October, 1964.
73. *Nigerian Tribune*, 30 October, 1964. On 8 November, Okpara's wife was refused permission to hold a meeting in the Ilesa town hall. See *West African Pilot*, 3 December, 1964.
74. *Nigerian Tribune*, 19 December, 1964.
75. *Daily Comet*, 23 June, 1965.
76. *Nigerian Citizen*, 19 June, 1957. Alh. Z.L. Mamdi, already cited, recalled how tough things were for the opposition in the Borno NA in those days. He was in the secondary school then. Opposition parties had been sufficiently

chastened by the time he enlisted in the NAPF in 1961 as a Cadet Sub-Inspector. He did admit, however, that the NA police still harassed members of the opposition even then.

77. *Nigerian Citizen*, 4 January, 1958.
78. *West African Pilot*, 30 March, 1962. Alh. S.A. Famuyide, already cited, recalled this raid on his uncle's (Fadahunsi's) house. He stated that the activities of the LG Police in Ilesa between 1961 and 1962 created problem for Michael Ademola who was in charge. The NCNC members felt he was indifferent to their plight just because he wanted to please the Akintola government in Ibadan. Ademola was expected to see himself more as a 'naturalised' Ijesa, with much to be grateful for, than as an agent of government. The man had to walk a tightrope until the AG schism of 1962. He continued in office during the Emergency and up to 1964, when the NNDP government transferred him from Ilesa to Oyo because he could not be relied on any longer. Similar views about Ademola were expressed by Chief S.O. Akinbolagbe and Elder S.O. Bewaji, already cited.
79. *West African Pilot*, 13 April, 1962.
80. *Nigerian Tribune*, 3 August, 1964.
81. Interview with E.O. Awominure, already cited. He was an UPGA sympathizer in the force and often leaked plans by the police to incriminate members of the opposition to those concerned. Chief Akinbolagbe recalled that Awominure was very helpful to the UPGA in Ilesa. His boss then, S.A. Ayansola, was well aware of Awominure's activities and credited the man with the skill to manoeuvre with the NNDP-dominated Ijesa Divisional Management committee. The committee thought Awominure was a useful ally until Ayansola exposed him in 1965. He was consequently transferred to Osogbo.
82. Chief Olowofoyeku, a Minister in the NNDP government and friend of Omole's, gave me some details of how Omole was

- blackmailed into declaring for the NNDP. But Omole could not just fit into the NNDP, so he backed out after he has saved his business.
83. *Nigerian Tribune*, 11 June, 1964; *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 13 July, 1964.
 84. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 15 June, 1964.
 85. *Nigerian Tribune*, 19 June, 1964.
 86. *Nigerian Tribune*, 31 August, 1965.
 87. *Nigerian Tribune*, 6 September, 1965. The Superintendent-General later denied that any LG policeman was arrested. See *Nigerian Tribune*, 7 September, 1965.
 88. *Nigerian Tribune*, 14, 16 & 18 September, 1965.
 89. The analysis here is based on a report in the *Nigerian Citizen*, 2 September, 1959 and the oral interview with Tanko Yakasai, NEPU official then, already cited.
 90. *Nigerian Citizen*, 2 September, 1959.
 91. Post and Vickers, *Structure and Conflict*, Chapter 6, 7 & 10; Dudley, *Instability and Political Order*, Chapter 4
 92. *Nigerian Tribune*, 4 May, 1964 carried a catalogue of opposition parties' complaints.
 93. *Nigerian Tribune*, 11 July, 1964.
 94. *Nigerian Tribune*, 11 July, 1964. Chief J.A.O. Odebiyi recounted his encounter with some of the thugs at Obada Market, Afon, Egbado division. The thugs came from Abeokuta. Odebiyi survived the encounter because he was himself very well armed and had his 'strong boys' with him. The later reaction to the encounter by the Chief Officer, Abeokuta province, D.A. Ajagbe, when the thugs lodged a report made Odebiyi suspect that the LGPF authorities might have been privy to the thugs' mission. Ajagbe ordered Odebiyi's arrest but it could not be effected.
 95. *Nigerian Tribune*, 18 July, 1964, 11 August, 1964. Interviews with Chief E.A. Oke and Mr. T.T. Oketunji, NPF officers, then, confirmed that the Nigerian police at times clashed with the Local Government police in the NPF's efforts to check thuggery.

96. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 18 August, 1964.
97. *Nigerian Tribune*, 14 August, 1964.
98. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 13 August, 1964.
99. In the interview with Alh. S.A. Elekuru who led the LG police on the raid, he recalled that he had a slanging match with one ASP Hassan of the NPF when he later intervened. When Elekuru was promoted Assistant Chief Officer in October that year, Minister Layonu wrote to congratulate him. Layonu remarked that "Your promotion is well merited (sic) in view of your meritorious services to the community. It is my earnest hope that you will continue to be of great use in our effort to establish a community free from fear and crime." Indeed, Elekuru continued to be of great 'use' to the power holders, so much so that he almost lost his life in October 1965 at Apomu and risked jail in 1966 for an alleged arson committed in November, 1965. An informant in Ibadan (a retired judge) was surprised to know that he was allowed to convert into the NPF after the LGPFs had been scrapped. He thought he was dismissed!
100. *Nigerian Tribune*, 15 August, 1964.
101. *Nigerian Tribune*, 4 September, 1964.
102. *Nigerian Tribune*, 9 September, 1964. In an interview with the NNDP leader in Osogbo at the time, Chief Deji Olugunna, 58; 6, Abija Square, Osogbo, 19 July, 1989, he recalled that he never had a cordial relationship with the NPF officers who headed the Oyo/Ilesa NPF Police Province with headquarters at Osogbo, between 1963 and 1966. He specifically named E.A. Oke and S.A. Oshodi. These officers, especially Oke, refused to acknowledge that politicians in power were "on top" while the police were "on tap". Those "on top" could always "tap" the brains and brawn of the police who should comply! Chief Oke, already cited, recalled this encounter of the Nigerian police with the LG police on the occasion of Mrs. Okpara's visit but he could not

remember if the LGP Chief Officer, Alao, was among those arrested. He also recalled the mutual antipathy between himself and Olugunna.

103. *Daily Comet*, 13 & 14 November, 1964.
104. *Daily Comet*, 18 November, 1964.
105. *Daily Comet*, 3 December, 1964.
106. *Daily Comet*, 4 December, 1964.
107. *Daily Comet*, 7 & 8 December, 1964. The latter edition carried an editorial on the ordeal of Boardman.
108. *Daily Comet*, 11 December, 1964.
109. 1965, NMLR 329.
110. *Daily Comet*, 21 & 22 June 1965. The latter edition carried an editorial comment praising the judgement of the High Court.
111. *Daily Comet*, 28 June, 1965.
112. Post and Vickers, *Structure and Conflict*, 170-1.
113. *Nigerian Tribune*, 30 December, 1964.
114. This English translation and the Hausa version were published in the *Nigerian Tribune*, 30 December 1964. In the course of the interview with Tanko Yakasai in Kano, two of his guests recalled that they had to go to jail in 1964 for refusing to subscribe to the oath. Tijani OC (pronounced as written) bagged three years while Haliru Makwalla went in for six months.
115. Post and Vickers, *Structure and Conflict*, 170-185 & Chapter 9.
116. *Nigerian Tribune*, 2 August, 1965.
117. *Nigerian Tribune*, 11 August, 1965.
118. *Nigerian Tribune*, 27 August, 1965.
119. *Nigerian Tribune*, 27 September, 1965. An accompanying photograph showed Oyewo in a distressful mood; he was surrounded by LG policemen who seemed determined not to let go of him. Alhaji S.A. Elekuru who was the ACO in charge of the LGPFs in the Ogbomoso division claimed, in the interview with me, that Oyewo was a suspect in a murder case. But he was not quite coherent in his account of murder case and

blamed his incoherence on loss of memory. On the ordeal of the Akinloyes at Ejigbo, he denied knowledge of it all. He argued that only his subordinate in charge of the Ejigbo detachment, Sgt. F. Oyediran, could explain why the two men were harassed.

120. *Nigerian Tribune*, 20 October, 1965.
121. *Nigerian Tribune*, 24 September, 1965.
122. *Nigerian Tribune*, 12 April, 1966; 9 & 14 July, 1966 and 1 September, 1966. These editions carried reports on the proceedings of the case. The officer, W. Ajani, claimed in the interview with me, already cited, that the Nigerian police framed the charge against him out of envy. He did not deny visiting the village but he averred that it was to quell a disturbance between rival parties. Ajani was one of those LG police officers who retired from service at the point of conversion into the NPF because they were offered ranks lower than they had hoped for. He, however, claimed that he retired because he did not like to serve in the NPF!
123. KDLI. *Daily Comet*, 17 September, 1965. This report put the total number at 150.
124. HOLI. *Nigerian Tribune*, 8 September, 1965; 20 October, 1965. The first edition carried a protest note by the Chairman of the University of Ibadan Students branch of the AG, Mr. Akin Omoboriowo, while the second edition carried a similar protest by Mr. Bisi Onabanjo, AG member of the Federal House of Representatives
125. *Nigerian Tribune*, 12 October, 1965 for a catalogue.
126. A top member of the party and the government then, in an interview with me in August 1989, described what they did then as "roguing" to emphasise the scale of it. "Rigging", he considered, was a euphemism!
127. *Nigerian Tribune*, 19 October, 1965. Extract from the statement by the UI Students' Union on the invasion of their campus between 14 and 16 October, 1965.
128. *Nigerian Tribune*, 25 October, 1965.

129. Alhaji Elekuru gave me a copy of the charge sheet and another of the unreported judgement in the Suit No. 1/20C/66, The State vs. Salawu Alao Elekuru.
130. Text of the judgement, dated 4 November, 1966, p. 5.
131. Text of the judgement, p. 7.
132. *Nigerian Citizen*, 12 March, 1958. I was told by some informants in Jos and environ in September, 1988 that, but for the peculiar circumstances of this case, the police rarely got involved in political controversy in Jos. It was a NEPU stronghold. The NPC was in the minority and knew well the implications of provoking a fight. Interviews with Messrs. S. Udu; P.M. Tiyi; T. Pam; P. Dokotri, already cited.
133. *Nigerian Citizen*, 2 April, 1958.
134. *Nigerian Citizen*, 5 April, 1958.
135. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 3 November, 1965.
136. *Daily Times*, 9 December, 1965.
137. *Daily Times*, 15 December, 1965.
138. *Daily Times*, 28 December, 1965.
139. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 10 November, 1965.
140. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 18 June, 1966.
141. *Nigerian Daily Sketch*, 4 December, 1965.
142. Interview with Alhaji S.A. Elekuru. The scars of the gun shots are still very visible, one on the left shoulder blade, another at the back ridge of the neck and the third on his left thigh.
143. *Daily Times*, 14 December, 1965. Report was corroborated in interviews with Chief D.A. Ajagbe, Chief Officer, Abeokuta LGPFs then; and Mr. N.A.B. Kotoye, Minister from the area.
144. *Daily Times*, 15 December, 1965.
145. *Daily Comet*, 20 December, 1965.
146. See editions of the *Nigerian Daily Sketch* for 26 November; 2, 6, 10, 13, & 21 December, 1965.
147. Western Region House of Assembly Debates, 9 December, 1965.
148. Courtesy of Chief D.A. Ajagbe, Chief Officer, Abeokuta LGPFs.



AFRICAN URBAN HISTORY: PAST AND PRESENT PERSPECTIVE

by

Laurent Fourchard

After more than twenty years of existence, urban history written by professional historians is a relatively new sub-field of historical research in Africa. Effective, since the 1980s, historians and anthropologists have written synthesis, scrutinised the contributions of social scientists, raised central questions over the discipline and pointed out neglected issues (Peel, 1980; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1989; Georg, 1994; Anderson and Rathbone, 2000; Burton 2002). This paper wishes to contribute to this current debate on the process of urbanisation in Africa and most especially on the way historians have analysed this process.

Because production of knowledge on African urban history has really increased in the past twenty years, one has to note that this essay is not an exhaustive study but a contribution to issues that have given African urban history a wider audience in the academic community¹. If references mention cities all over Africa, we have tried, as far as possible, to select most of our examples from West Africa. West Africa has one of the longer and richer ancient urban histories in Africa (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1993: 59-71, 116-217, 238-286). Chandler and Fow show that the areas of urban development in tropical Africa between 1200 and 1800 were mainly in West

Africa along the southern edge of the Sahara, in the West African forest of the lower Niger River, on the middle Nile in the Sudan and in the Ethiopian mountains (Chandler and Fox, 1974:50-56, Connah, 2001:12). Focusing on a West African perspective rather than on a continental dimension will permit us to distinguish some common features of the process of urbanisation of the continent that colonial inheritance has partly erased. Moreover, a general history of urbanisation is almost always continental (Hull, 1976; O' Connor, 1983; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1988 and 1993; Taver, 1994; Anderson and Rathbone, 2000) or colonial (King, 1976 and 1990; Ross and Telkamp, 1985; Poinso et al, 1989; Home, 1997) whereas regional approaches are historically poor (see, for instance, Little, 1965; Gugler and Flanogan, 1978). Consequently, presenting some of the works that have been done on English – and French – speaking countries in West Africa should allow us to raise more general questions both on African urbanisation and West African history.

AFRICAN URBAN HISTORY

Most historians recognise the fact that African urban history was not an issue considered by professional historians before the end of the 1970s. Two reasons explain this: (1) the recent birth of urban history as an autonomous field in Western history and (2) the lack of interest in urban history among historians involved in African studies.

Two major books written in 1961 and 1964 have given birth to two traditions of urban history in the United Kingdom and the United States; *Victorian Suburb: a Study of the Growth of Camberwell* by James H. Dyos who became the first

professor of urban history in England and *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* written by Stephan Thernstrom, founder of the 'New Urban History' in the United States (Pinol, 2000: 38-39). Dyos changed the academic approach to the city, considering it as subject fit for study:

"Urban history is the degree to which it is concerned directly and generically with cities themselves, and not with the historical events that have been purely incidental to them ... It is the study of the ways in which their components fitted together or impinged upon other things, that distinguishes urban historians from those who may be said to be passing through their territory."²

Whereas these two 'schools' have produced several studies on North American and European cities during the 1960s and the 1970s, this field of research did not yet interest historians of Africa. Actually, the historiographic debate involving Africa was oriented towards other topics that neglected almost totally the urban factor. From the 1950s to the 1970s, three main research orientations involved most of the historians: the colonial inheritance which led to an a-historical approach, was declining slowly; the nationalist approach was growing quickly and the dependency theory was flourishing temporarily. Let us summarize these traditions which are well-established nowadays.³

From the 19th century to the mid 20th century, military officers, missionaries, colonial administrators, ethnographers and ethnologists dominated the history of Africa. A lot has been said on the way this history was written. A strong

Eurocentric vision based on a few commonplaces has been widely popularised before, during and sometimes after the colonial period: Africa had no history and African societies have never produced anything important in the past; social change was ignored. This common view was based on the fact that history in Europe has a long historiographic tradition built hardly exclusively on written sources. Consequently, this approach was emphasizing mainly the process of colonisation, i.e. the effort made by colonisers to bring civilisation to Africa. Cities and urban culture in the administrative literature appeared as a new phenomenon and most of the time precolonial settlements were considered as villages. Simultaneously, ethnographic societies such as the *International Africa Institute of African Languages and Cultures*, established in London in 1926 or the *Societe des Africanistes* set up in Paris in 1930 were constituted by colonial administrators, missionaries and ethnologists to study scientifically African societies generally in order to improve colonial policies (Benoit de l'Etoile, 1997: 19-42). The ethnic bias, the emphasis on rural societies, the formulation of monographs of ethnic groups, the strong focus of family structure and religious life left us little information on the transformation of African societies, especially on the change that could have occurred within African cities. Consequently, earlier anthropologists tended to oppose a traditional countryside to a modern urbanisation (Coquery-Vidrovich, 1991) and Africa was a continent 'where colonial cities were seen as foreign implants distinct from the wider indigenous environment' (Parker, 2000:xxi). Some anthropological works on the Yoruba urban civilisation in the 1960s belong to this

non-historical approach (Krapf-Askari, 1969).

This scientific bias has led to a vigorous reaction from the first professional historians in the 1950s. African history written by historians emerged simultaneously at the University of London and in the British university colleges set up in tropical Africa in the late 1940s' at Ibadan, Legon and Makerere (Oliver, 1995:13). Among the first generation of African historians at the University College, Ibadan, Kenneth Onwuka Dike symbolises the repudiation of the theory of static African societies (Ade Ajayi, 1995:95-97). In his thesis on *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885*, defended in 1950, he focused much more "on peoples (...) as prime actors of their own history and not merely as objects impacted on by European activities" (Ade Ajayi, 1995:97).

This first dissertation has given birth to a large historical production dominated during these two decades by a nationalist perspective – the use of history in the service of the nation – which focused mainly on pre-colonial history and resistance to colonialism in Africa (Neale, 1987:9). This historiography is the representation of the elite interests as well as a counter-discourse used for attacking European representations of Africa (Falola, 2001:224). The emergence of the Ibadan School is, for instance, a successful example of nationalist historiography well illustrated by the Ibadan History Series (ibid: 228, 239). The priority was then to build a national history for the new independent countries and to recover the historical dignity of Africa denied by decades of colonial history and ethnography. Simultaneously, another historical perspective adopted by African historians was stressing a non-occidental antiquity focusing on the prehistory

of Africa seen as the birthplace of mankind and on Pharaonic Egypt which was seen as the first African civilisation (Diouf, 1999:1-12). Cheik Anta Diop with *Nations Negres et Cultures* (1959) launched a long, controversial and still raging debate on the black origin of Ancient Egypt and on the spread of Egyptian civilisation across sub-Saharan Africa. In this approach, however, precolonial political history was privileged; urban history and social history were generally neglected.

The third orientation came out in Europe mainly and most especially in France. An important Marxist analysis was developed in the framework of the dependency theory (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1993:28-30). Many works have overemphasised the notion of centre and periphery in the capitalist world and have conceptualised the process of transition to capitalism and the features of African mode of production. (See, for West Africa, Amin, 1971; Meillassoux, 1971, Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1969).

So because priority was given to theories of dependency and to political history and nationalism, historians were not dealing with urban history. Most of the time, historians were generally passing through the town, without being concerned with urbanism and urbanisation (Anderson and Rathbone, 2000:11). However, many monographs, not necessarily written by historians, have also been produced since the 1960s both on the Francophone side (Bonnardel, 1992; Camara, 1968; Delcourt, 1983, Gouellain, 1975; Seck, 1970; Skinner, 1974) and on the Anglophone side (Aderibigbe, 1975; Alagoa, 1964; Barkindo, 1983; Echeruo, 1977; Ekechi, 1989; Llyod et al., 1967; Ocho, 1997; Onokerhoraye, 1991; Usman, 1977). These

works participate in the production of knowledge on the African urban past because they are generally the first books produced on the history of various West African cities. However, a specific *problématique* – i.e., an object of study – and a comparative perspective are generally missing.

Finally, the more innovative work was done by social scientists: the well-known *Sociologie des Brazzaville noires*, written by Georges Balandier and based on primary colonial records, gave a first view of the cultural and social change that occurred in the slum areas of Brazzaville (French Congo). The Nigerian geographer, Akin Mabogunje, was one of the first to demonstrate the long historical process of urbanisation that took place in Nigeria. The author was able to synthesize both secondary and primary sources in twelve chapters of meaningful historical insights (Mabogunje, 1968). Similarly, the French geographer, Jean Dresch, gave one of the first comprehensive views – in 1950! – on the recent history of the cities in French West Africa (Dresch, 1950:200-230).

THE BIRTH AND RISE OF AFRICAN URBAN HISTORY

Despite these notable experiences, the real start of African urban history made by historians can be dated back only to the late 1970s (Peel, 1980:269-277). It is partly as a consequence of the rise of the 'new' social history that urban Africa was 'discovered' by historians (Anderson and Rathbone, 2000:11). This history examines the ways in which Africans shaped the patterns of urbanisation and how urbanisation influenced African social practices. Gradually, the previous holistic perspective of African cities was no more

possible even if this approach did not disappear totally. A more accurate and specialised approach, dealing either with a specific community, a specific theme, or a specific part of the city could be the only way to improve our understanding of urban life in Africa. This trend is not peculiar to Africa but parallels a similar trend in European and American history, which changed a systemic approach to a narrower focus on community or identity (Lepetit, 1995:173-207).

In West Africa, the transformation of social and political identities by the mixing of new and old elements of urban culture has been a fruitful starting point. Lubeck (1986) explained for Kano the decisive role played by Islam in consolidating a working-class consciousness. Johnson has examined for the four Senegalese Communes (Saint-Louis, Dakar, Goree, Rufisque) how an African elite in the 1920s gave birth to an early indigenous political life (Johnson, 1991). Albert (1994, 1996, 1999) examined how the policy of ethnic residential segregation in Ibadan and Kano has reinforced religious and tribal identities and the feeling of exclusiveness among the migrants. Mann (1977, 1985) studied the formation, between the 19th and the 20th centuries of a new African elite in Lagos Colony, considering especially the Saro and Afro-Brazilians whereas, more recently, Parker (2000) shows the way Ga political action shaped Accra's transition from a precolonial city-state to a colonial city. This period of transition – 1860 to 1920 – witnessed the striking continuity of precolonial forms, the active role played by Ga people, in (re) making the colonial city and the reconfiguration of old urban identities and institutions. As we mentioned earlier, many cities in the region are precolonial and it is particularly relevant

to study the period of transition and their apparent political ruptures to understand better the links between process of urbanisation and process of domestication of foreign culture by the urban dwellers. The recent insights on leisure and festival activities should be included in this interrogation of the shaping of new urban identities (Georg, 1999 and 2002; Gondola, 1996; Martin, 1995).

It is, however, the history of urban workers that interrogated deeply African experience that has been central in this new approach. A historical approach was developed on the emergence and the definition of a working class in colonial and post-colonial cities (Cooper, 1983; Copans et al., 1987) and the living standard of urban dwellers (Fetter, 1976; Olukaju, 1996b, 2000). For a new set of Anglophone researchers, the urban environment such as housing, neighbourhood, leisure, new forms of social life, was at least as important as the working conditions for which many studies were already written. Among the various studies available some are determinant because they were able to identify the interactions between the formation of a social group (migrants, working class, petty staff, colonial intermediaries, prostitutes), its immediate urban environment (places of work, leisure and residence) and the development of new urban identities (Cooper, 1987; Fetter, 1976; van Onselen, 1982; White, 1990).

Actually, over the past three decades, historians of Africa have progressively shifted their focus down the social scale: from white rulers to black rulers, from a black elite to the petty bourgeoisie, workers and peasants. In a very well-known book, John Iliffe (1987) has examined the nature of poverty in Africa. At the turn of the 19th century, urban poverty took

new forms dominated by unemployment, proletarianisation, prostitution and delinquency and supplemented older forms of incapacitation, servitude, and hunger. Towns pioneered the transition of the nature of poverty in Africa and interestingly, the late nineteenth-century Lagos provided a starting point for this analysis (Illife, 19767:164). However, despite this pioneering work, one notices that studies on marginals (beggars, delinquents, bandits, robbers) and on the lower social group within a profession are just only attracting the attention of a few historians, particularly for large cities such as Dakar, Dar-es-Salam, Ibadan or Johannesburg (Burton, 2001; Glaser, 2001; Heap, 1997; Thioub, 1993).

Whereas the focus was going down the social scale, the analysis became more accurate concerning the various spaces used by the urban dwellers within the city. The history of urban space deals with various scales – from the compound to the street, from the neighbourhood to the city – and with various notions of space – real, architectural, imaginary. While urban historians of North America and Europe have long regarded the built environment as a valuable source, the form of towns is only beginning to emerge as a topic of serious consideration in the African context. If the making of colonial towns in West Africa has been widely studied in the past decade in Europe (Fourchard, 2001; Gales, 1981, George, 1997; Home, 1997; Sinou, 1993, Wright, 1987), a lot remains to be written on precolonial urbanism. Interestingly, French historians are among the first to have proposed a renewed analysis of urban societies in European cities. Streets, neighbourhood, layouts, outskirts, suburbs and even bridges and rivers have been studied as specific social space to be understood in a wider

environment (Bakrouche, 2000; Gribaudi, 1987; Farge, 1977; Fourcaut, 1996; Crouzet-Pavan, 1992).

Turning back to Africa, a social and political analysis of urban space has been proposed by Laurent Fourchard's study focusing on two ancient precolonial cities in the Savannah zone (Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso) during the colonial period (Fourchard, 2001). For most urban dwellers, the creation of new layouts for migrants, the power of aristocratic lineages in the old city, the development of nightlife neighbourhoods, and the Christian and muslim representations of space were more relevant than the classical division of the colonial city, i.e. European centre versus indigenous town. A more focused analysis on the political uses of streets, places, markets and compounds shows also that streets were generally better controlled by the administration than the compounds where both illegal economic activities and strong political militancy took place. Finally, it is the combination of social, political and religious scales that informs the way urban societies change identities and territories.

Examples of urban history embedded in political history have also demonstrated the interest to include urban studies in a more general framework. For Jonathon Glassman, Achille Mbembe, Richard Joseph or Florence Bernault, to mention but a few, studying rebellion and revolts in Africa establishes direct connections between towns and countryside, between rulers and common people, and between external and internal factors. The urban riots which took place in Swahili towns along the East Africa coast in 1888, in Douala in 1945 and Libreville in 1964 could not be understood without a deep

analysis of these interactions (Joseph, 1986; Bernault, 1996; Mbembe, 1996; Glassman, 1995). Only a national or regional analysis can point out the significance of an urban event. Looking at the problematic of resistance to the colonial and postcolonial state, Frederick Cooper states that the culture of politics and the politics of culture should be analysed from the more specific to the more general, i.e. from villages or towns to the national and international contexts (Cooper, 1999:473). Eventually, these scholars are not only 'passing through the city' as the former historians did: cities are places where political debates are negotiated and where national struggles could take place.

The history of urban management and municipal institutions led automatically to the study of interactions between the local and the national level in order to understand better the nature of urban autonomy, the change of urban policies and urban investment or the role played by the local elite in the national struggle (Dulucq et Georg, 1989; Dulucq, 1997; Georg, 1997; Olukoju, 1993 and 2001; Johnson, 1991; Dioufm 1997; Benga, 1995). Logically, geographers and town planners did much more than historians in urban management, administration, finance and infrastructure (for a first analyst see, for instance, Stren and White, 1993; Dubresson and Jaglin, 1993; Onibokun and Faniran, 1995). Consequently, for this last field of research is probably missing a long-term period analysis which could enhance the continuity and change of urban policies and institutions since the mid 19th century or even before.

Similarly, economic history imbedded for two decades in the dependency theory has later on focused on the

penetration of colonial interests from the port cities to the internal towns (Banwo, 1998: 129-146; Latham, 1973; Olukoju, 1992, 1996; Lakroum, 1983, 1987; Jewsiewicki, 1978). However, this field of history is probably more familiar with a national and a global perspective rather than with a local approach which explains the scarcity of economic studies focusing especially on cities.

Despite these gaps, it is obvious that more works on urban history in Africa have been produced in the two last decades than during the century before. Part of the academic agenda proposed by scholars twenty years ago has been completed. In 1980, Peel suggested looking at the political initiatives of the urban dwellers, most especially in West Africa, whereas Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch's approach combined urban environment and an anthropological perspective more attentive to the complexity of African societies (Peel, 1980; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1989). We have to note, however, that a comparative analysis of the diverse urban experiences is still missing. According to Anderson and Rathbone, 'Many studies remains [sic] encompassed in a local approach' (Anderson and Rathbone, 2000:11) even if a few scholars have done some comparative works on French and British Africa (Georg, 1997) or within a country (Fourchard, 2001; Kipre, 1985; Sinou, 1993). Since the 1980s, the general development of historical studies on African cities led to the adoption of new sources and new methodological issues.

NEW SOURCES AND NEW METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

A starting point for a reflection on African sources and methods used by professional historians could be dated back to the three conferences organised in 1953, 1957 and 1961 by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London (Oliver, 1995:13-39). A critical approach of oral sources, of colonial archives and a better use of archaeological and linguistic materials were for the first time discussed in academic circles. If the critical use of oral history can be dated back to the 1950s the method of collecting the historical traditions of the people was first presented exhaustively by Jan Vansina in 1961. Since this decade, oral history became a specificity of African history all over the world. However, oral traditions, collected in the 1960s, emphasised generally political, institutional, military and diplomatic issues but say hardly anything about urban life. Life stories, which began to be used in the 1970s are more concerned with the everyday life of the people. Over the last ten years, social historians of twentieth-century Africa, interested in historical actors at the margins – of rural dwellers, migrant workers and especially women – have increasingly focused on individuals' "life histories" in order to give "voice to people subjected to the colonial project" (White et al., 2001:8). If in the 1960s, African history was hardly concerned with African lives, in the 1990s, life history had become an unproblematic and much practised mode of historical scholarship (ibid: 2). Thus, if oral history became so important to recover the precolonial past of Africa, "it was also by the late 1980s and early 1990s a way to access a truer, more

accurate, and more authentic colonial experience than that which could be teased out of the writings of white male administrators and their official reports” (White et al, 2001:15). The social history of groups as diverse as militaries, prostitutes, *chefs de quartier* came out mainly with a more extensive use of life stories (White, 1991; Fourchard, 2001; Lawler, 1996).

If oral sources became so important in Africa, most of the historians agree on the necessity to complete them with written sources – either indigenous or European. Among them, private sources and especially missionary sources are still neglected by urban historians despite the accurate point of view given by their daily diaries (Raison-Jourde, 1991). Local chronicles written by first Christian elites constitute another interesting approach of African town history.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a series of educated Yoruba have produced the first written histories of Nigerian towns: I.B. Akinyele for Ibadan in 1911, M.C. Adeyemi for Oyo in 1914, S. Ojo Bada for Ilorin who published it in 1957 (Falola, 1999:31, 55, 99, 159). For Falola these contributions cannot be considered only as sources “but as a distinct and viable body of autonomous and respectable knowledge that deserves to be celebrated in its own right” (Falola, 1999:279). Almost simultaneously, African newspapers, such as the *Daily Times* and the *West African Pilot* since the 1930s in Nigeria, or the catholic Francophone *Afrique Nouvelle* since the 1940s present a valuable account on the colonial management of the city viewed by the new educated elites. An exhaustive analysis of the changing perception of the city by the African elites could be traced back to the beginning of the century.

Finally public archives and colonial records – still largely unexploited – remain a considerable source for writing urban history. This is not the place to give an overview of public records kept in Africa or Europe but it is more appropriate to highlight a few types of sources neglected by historians but promising for Africa's urban past. Whereas a few historians and many geographers consider urban property as one of the central objects of urban studies (Maire Vigeur, 1995:248, Rakodi, 1997:371-410; Durand-Lasserve, 1986; Piermay, 1993) the history of urban property and residence in Africa is still scarce despite a few recent historical studies (Berry, 2001:63-102; Eckert, 1996:187-201; Fourchard, 2001:115-190; Mann, 1991:85-108). The analysis of property records requires new methodological tools borrowed from sociology, geography, economic history and micro history such as quantitative analysis or geographic information system. This field seems particularly relevant for West Africa where access to urban property was easier than in any other parts of the continent. Actually, the story of African landowners tells us the way they shaped the urban landscape of the colony and the role of property in the definition of a social group (Fourchard, 2003 a). It eventually informs us about land disputes which became one of the most relevant features of African cities after Second World War, most especially in Nigeria (Fourchard, 2003 b).

Finally, archives coming from various agencies of the state (prison, police, justice) have generally raised some national issues not specifically urban-oriented but which have changed our comprehension of the urban past. The pioneering work of Tekena Tamuno on the colonial police in 1970 and

on peace and violence in Nigeria (1991) has been followed by European and American research on the colonial police in the British Empire and the history of justice and prison in Africa (Anderson and Killingray, 1991a, 1991b; Roberts and Mann, 1991; Bernault, 1999). Despite these works, we hardly know anything about the history of urban crime and delinquency, the apprehension of this phenomenon by the courts and by the penitential administration whereas social scientists have largely dealt with these issues in the last twenty years. In this respect, police and judicial sources, which constitute one of the bigger unexplored archival materials in the main deposit of National Archives in West Africa (Dakar, Ibadan) have still to be exploited for a better understanding of what we call 'indigenous culture' and its criminalisation by colonial and postcolonial laws. Such an approach requires a familiarisation with crime records, judicial procedures and legal codes from various origins as well as a quantitative approach of justice sources.

CONCLUSION

There has been a big change since the mid 20th century in the ways of writing African history. First, there is a shift between the 1960s and the 1990s from precolonial to colonial history, especially in America (White et al, 2001:2). Second, historians have explored within this period various types of oral and written sources, mainly limited to oral traditions and administrative records in the 1950s, extending nowadays to life stories and other aspects of archival materials. Recent books on practices in oral history recognised that oral reconstruction of lives must be supplemented by archival

records and careful interpretation (White et al., 2001:9). The issue is not to privilege one kind of source over another but to build historical object without excluding *a priori* any kind of sources – either written or oral, material and archaeological or more recently photographs and audiovisual materials.

Scholars need to agree on the fact that West African history should lay emphasis on comparative studies in a long-term historical perspective. These recommendations led to some more general problems faced by research in Africa. Whereas West Africa has an obvious common historical background the existence of different research networks, the language barriers, the lack of transmission have divided the region into almost two parts: the Anglophone and the Francophone. Generally, Nigerian scholars know better the study of Southern and Eastern Anglophone Africa than the works of their Francophone counterparts and vice versa. Consequently the transmission of knowledge between the Anglophone and the Francophone academic world is still very limited despite the recent effort made by some regional institutions.⁴ Moreover, there is a scarcity of general studies concerned with the archaeology of precolonial cities in tropical Africa. These results are part of the relatively limited amount of excavation and other field research that has been carried out and from its uneven geographical distribution (Connah, 1987, 2001:8-12). Consequently and despite the progress done since the 1980s, a general history of West African cities is still to be written.

Notes

1. For this reason, the works quoted in this contribution are generally books and articles in refereed journals and not Ph.D. dissertations. Similarly, the reader will excuse the author for articles published in local journals which have been difficult to access.
2. Quoted in Anderson and Rathbone, 2000:12
3. African historiography is largely discussed in Jewsiewicki, 1986; Neale, 1987; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1993: 19-41; Diouf, 1999:5-35. Of course, these orientations are only huge
4. CODESRIA at Dakar, IFRA at Ibadan and LASDEL at Niamey to mention but a few.

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LAND AND THE CULTURAL SUB-SOIL IN THE MYTHIC AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF NIGERIANS

by

Dele Layiwola

This paper has set out to conceptualize land tenure, land reforms and policy ecology seen as an indivisible whole. It is therefore a cultural reaction to a topic that has always positioned itself squarely in the realm of agricultural economics and agrarian reforms.

What is the land within the structure of man and society? How is land conceived in the network of customary land tenure systems? How does the land as an eternal assert itself in human affairs? As much as possible, I will dwell almost totally within the borders of Nigeria.

The land or the earth is an organic extension of society by which man/woman relates to the rest of the universe. It is given to man to cultivate and to tend as a medium of reproduction and continuity. This organicist tendency forbids abuse and desecration of the land. For this reason it sustains society in so far as it is held in trust by the collectivity. In highly centralised societies, the trust is ceded to the monarch, not for the purpose of profit but in purely usufructuary terms. That is, the right to use this property is kept in trust without diminishing, impairing or wasting the substance of it. As rightly indicated in Udo (1992:11) any land which is no longer

in use by an individual usually reverts to the community.

Under customary land tenure systems, outright sale of land for profit is prohibited but land may be pledged for particular purposes. It is therefore clear that whilst the dead may lose their leasehold, the living and the unborn maintain their title to the land in perpetuity. It is clear from the above that the concept of the *latifundio* in Africa is a more contemporary attitude to the land as a piece of merchandise, a prized item or a ware. This is the attitude of an elite which profits by usury. A faithful conception, interpretation and execution of the land use decree of 1978 would therefore seem on the surface to be in conformity with age-old traditions and customs.

In 1902, after the defeat of the Fulani rulers in parts of Northern Nigeria, Lord Lugard declared that all lands which the Fulani had taken through conquest from the original owners were henceforth vested in the British monarch and his descendants. In order to attain a uniform land tenure system, Lugard extended the same policy to the whole of the then Northern Nigeria Protectorate even though a vast area of the North was never part of the Fulani Empire. Lugard's thinking was beneficial to the extent that he genuinely believed that government had a duty to regulate land tenure and acquisition so that it was equally available to all. Besides, he genuinely believed that government should hold land in trust and not as property. Unlike emirs and monarchs he felt that no rent should be charged by government on land.

In 1906, Lord Lugard resigned as the Governor of Northern Nigeria and was succeeded by Percy Girouard who then set up the Northern Nigeria Lands Committee of 1908 to

understudy the existing land tenure system and make recommendations on its improvement and its administration. The observation of the committee on the customary land tenure system is interesting:

the use by the inhabitants throughout the protectorate could be, and was by custom transferred and inherited, but that it was the use of the land, and not the land itself, which was thus dealt with.

This is interesting and germane in that it upholds that customary title to land is purely usufructuary; and that the entrepreneurial attachment to the sale and hoarding of land is a development of a different political, economic and ideological tradition. It is equally interesting that Governor Girouard immediately equated that customary tradition of land tenure to mean the nationalisation of all lands in the Protectorate. On 31st December, 1910, therefore, a law was enacted called the Land and Native Rights Proclamation No. 9 of 1910 which declared all lands in the protectorate to be Native (i.e. national) lands. Sir Charles Orr (1965) and R.K. Udo (1992) have observed that Governor Girouard thereby arrogated to himself the role hitherto played by emir and chiefs as the supreme landlord of all lands in the protectorate. This truly appeared so because that legislation upheld that:

- i. title to land other than crown lands and public lands was not valid without the consent of the governor;
- ii. annual rents were charged on native lands;
- iii. no occupier could sell, mortgage or transfer his occupancy without the consent of the governor.

This law was later replaced by the Land Native Rights No. 1 of 1916 and, much later, by the Northern Nigeria Land Tenure Law of 1962.

II

In the southern states of the Nigerian Federation, the land tenure systems were much more varied. Though most areas claim, ostensibly, to practice customary land tenure, where the title to land is purely usufructuary, the situation was often more complex. There had developed a less uniform polity where individual ownership of land was greatly encouraged. This granted freedom akin to the spirit of democracy. It is also true that trade with foreigners and Europeans was bringing other forms of development. Land was also becoming a form of stable merchandise. In some parts of the Eastern states, where land was scarce and the population became land hungry, individual ownership of land was something of an economic imperative. Traditional rulers and authorities who were supposed to be custodians of customary land tenure systems were rendered helpless as the tide of modern development swept along. Rather than sit on the fence, many of them joined in the acquisition and sale of communal and family lands. Basically, however, the family still remained the acknowledged land owners and they were often consulted on land matters. Even after the promulgation of the Land Use Decree of 1978, the family still remained the land-owning units.

The mode of land inheritance is also established within family units with each person having equal access to the land of a forebear or lineage head. This tradition is slightly different

among the Bini of the present Edo State where inheritance often devolves to the eldest son in a family. In addition, because of the vestige of imperial power which had been established since the sixteenth century, the king behaved as the crown or monarch and had jurisdiction over all lands. This remains so in theory since he is the custodian of customary laws in the kingdom.

Apart from chieftaincy lands, as it obtained not only in Benin but also in other places where kingship or chiefdoms are fairly established, a problematic form of customary land tenure is that of customary tenancy. Customary tenancy is popular in places where internecine wars or natural catastrophies have precipitated migrations, exodus and mass movements. When populations were displaced during the Yoruba civil wars of the 19th century, for instance, immigrants from northern Yorubaland came to settle in the southern forest zones and the savannah fringes. The host communities thereby took them on as customary tenants.

A customary tenant is granted the right to cultivate, inhabit or fish on a given, usually extensive parcel of land. The tenant pays a tithe or tribute in return for the rights granted. Among the Yoruba the tribute is known as *isákólè* and among the Bini as *akorhore*. The status and rights of the tenant are very similar to those in the Northern Nigeria Land Tenure Law of 1962 and the Land use Decree of 1978; except that in the former the landlord is the host community or family whilst in the latter, the landlord is the state or government. This form of tenancy is beset with tension and violence, sometimes extensive emergencies as to threaten state security.

It is necessary to paraphrase the two cases which R.K. Udo discusses in his very authoritative book on the subject. He remarks that in 1977 when the Land Use Panel was touring the country to ascertain the views of Nigerians over land issues, the panel found

that considerable tension existed between the host communities of Ile-Ife and Itsekiri of Warri, on the one hand and their respective tenant communities of Modakeke and Agbassa Urhobo on the other. These two communities have been tenants in their own homes for over a century and still continue to be strangers without places of origin. Their rebellion and refusal to pay any further vassalage to the host communities have been a constant source of friction. Though the majority report of the Land use Panel of 1977 rejected the nationalisation of all land in Nigeria, it advocated the immediate abolition of this form of tenancy. The troubles have become insoluble, as they often are in the other parts of the world where such situation occurs. The example I have in mind here is in Northern Ireland where there is abiding tension between Unionists and Nationalists.

In an issue of *The Nigerian Tribune*, and in the wake of renewed crisis, a former governor of Oyo State proffered a solution:

The Ife must accept that the Modakeke have lived sufficiently long among them that they can rightly call Ife home. Therefore they should treat Modakeke with respect and brotherly affection. Second, the people of Modakeke must acknowledge that the Ife are the original owners of the land which was parceled out to them, and they should stop waving the land use decree of 1978 in the face of Ife people.

[Ige, 2000:5]

The situation is similar for the Agbassa Urhobo and the Itsekiri of Warri.

PUBLIC LAND

In getting to the crux of this paper it will be necessary to say that a greater bone of contention is the relationship of the state as a power agency to the community or individual in the transaction over land. It is this that I wish to examine by discussing the other category of land called State or Public land.

State lands are those lands held by any of the governments in Nigeria for public use. These include lands in government housing estates and those on which public schools, hospitals and other government institutions are cited or located. Occasionally, government acquires lands in rural areas for the construction of dams or agricultural projects over which it is to pay compensation after having re-settled the original owners. This was the case with the acquisition of the Federal Capital Territory. A sensational case, however, was the compulsory acquisition of a rural parcel of land in Bakolori, Sokoto State in 1980 when the civilian government of President Shehu Shagari forcibly ejected peasants from their homelands for the purpose of an irrigation dam project without having re-settled them. The farmers put up a violent protest and they were shot at and scores of them killed.

Tenure on state lands is usually acquired by an elite of middle-class persons and by government officials. It is a form of derived privilege since such lands are usually developed with state funds. They are usually equipped with infrastructure such as roads and pipe-borne water; and are always planned as housing or industrial estates. It is therefore clear that access to state lands is largely by middle-class elements and the business class. This is obviously a form of patronage or state privilege as persons in the lower classes are never able to afford the costs or mortgage associated with property on state

lands. The relative expense over state lands made them competitive and consequently attracted legislation that no single individual should own more than one plot of state land.

In Southern Nigeria, because land belongs to individual families and the speculative values were quite high, it posed a problem to government on the cost of acquisition for state or public purposes. Because of the virtual nationalisation of land in the Northern parts, acquisition was relatively cheaper and easier. Government was, however, anxious to harmonise this disparity to give room for its drive to acquire more lands for public purposes at comparative cost in the southern parts. This is largely responsible for the Land Use Decree which sought to nationalise all lands in Nigeria. This would then make government the ultimate landlord and individual acquisition would be subject to government approval.

Lord Lugard had found that, unlike in Northern Nigeria, the South had a different land tenure system, where individual and family ownership made it possible to transfer or purchase and directly from owners without government interference. Lugard felt that it was better to leave this so. As we therefore moved from traditional to modern times, the idea of free enterprise accorded land more speculative value and traders saw the business sense in land trade and barter. It is, therefore, no surprise to see why a flourishing southern elite corps vigorously resisted the nationalisation of land as contained in the Land Use Decree of 1978. This influential coterie was not deterred by the Head of State's claim that "many do not possess land except for the purpose of having rights over its use" and that it will give equal access to the poor. People affirmed their claims over their right to own lands purchased

or inherited from primordial forebears. The attachment to land is so emotional and so visceral as to make it the basis of trust in oath taking and in religious sanctity.

It is, of course, clear from the Head of State's broadcast that he was trying to invoke the customary land tenure system where the title to land was purely usufructuary without taking the following facts into particular consideration:

- (a) That the Nigerian state has moved to a modern era where the various nationalities do not see themselves as native to the same traditions.
- (b) Though Udo (1992:25) argues that the Land Use Decree sought to resolve access to farmland, it would appear that its concern is predominant on the side of the urban poor rather than the rural peasant.

and

- (c) Finally, the government was deceived into believing that the process of massive industrialisation was around the corner and that government housing and industrial estates would henceforth spring up in all the corners of the country. This, unfortunately, has so far turned out to be merely speculative, and a proleptic vision.

These are the reasons why the full intention of the Land Use Decree has remained unfulfilled till the present time; and might remain so for a very long time to come. It is, in fact, a glimpse of Utopia, a forensic ideal.

III

There is no way I can conclude this paper without making deserved reference to the plight of the farmers and fishermen in the Delta region of Nigeria. This also concerns the issue of compensation for land expropriation. In January, 1999, an environmental and Human Rights campaign body called Human Rights Watch published its survey on Nigeria's oil producing communities. The basis of land acquisition by multinational oil companies or by the Nigerian government is the Land Use Act which we earlier cited. This will give an indication of what people-oriented policy ecology should be for the people who collectively own the wealth on which the whole country so resplendently sits.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) observes that according to Shell internal documentation, the oil company first notifies the Nigerian government of the intention and purpose of a proposed acquisition. The oil company identifies the owners or occupiers of the land, notifies them of its intention and agrees on a date for assessment of the property. Compensation varies according to the farmland, fishponds or assets on the land. Valuations are approved by the Divisional Land Board. Once a one-off payment is made to the occupiers for surface rights, permit is issued to the oil company to take possession. Since the Land Use Act makes government the ultimate landlord, both government agencies and oil companies are able to ignore customary land laws in the oil areas. Hence:

Decisions relating to the use of land are completely taken out of the hands of those who have lived on and used it for centuries.

[1999:78]

HRW observes further that even when compensation has been agreed in principle over oil spillage, payments fall far short of the true value of the loss of the local community. This is corroborated in a 1995 World Bank report which estimated that the value of forest products was at least fifty times the government rate for compensation.

In cases of sabotage, in accordance with Nigerian law, the oil companies don't pay compensation for spills. It is claimed that to pay compensation creates an incentive to damage oil installation which harms the environment! It is further claimed that in many cases of sabotage, there are indications that sabotage is precipitated by contractors who get paid to clean up the spillage, at times with the connivance of oil company staff. In an interview, a government official confirmed that sabotage is orchestrated by indigenes or chiefs who are likely to be paid rather than by those who would suffer the hazards of the spillage. This was borne out in the case of Pastor P.N. Orji and four others belonging to the same landholder's family. They were arrested on suspicion of sabotage. When it was argued that the spillage damaged their land and crops without the prospect of any benefits whatsoever, they were held overnight at Akabuka police station. On second thought on the logicity of their plea, they were released without charge but only after payment of N1,000,000 for each person. These instances speak for themselves and merely confirm the fears of those who are wary of the implication of the Land Use Act of 1978.

I indicated at the beginning of this paper that mine is a purely cultural foray into land policy – to be able to illuminate how land and occupations derived from it impinge on people's

lives, consciousness and memory. This way it is possible to see why people are so attached to their land such that within the same century, it remains a constant factor in the lives of the peasantry and all attached to land. For instance, in a pre-colonial period, the colonial police shot and killed a group of mine-workers in Enugu in what is referred to as the Iva valley massacre in 1949. Thirty-one years later (1980) in North-Western Nigeria, the Nigeria police of the post-colonial period shot and killed a group of farmers in Bakolori who were protesting the compulsory acquisition of their farmland. These two events, though separated in time and space, affirm a certain emotional, even organic attachment to the land as an occupational as well as livelihood symbol. Farming, mining or fishing have not always been mere occupations but ways and patterns of living. As Howard Gregor (1970:72) puts it for the lives of immigrant farmers:

That an occupation represents the reaction of the individual to the demands of existence, but also that the type and success of this reaction is heavily influenced by such non-economic forces as race, nationality, religion and psychology has long been acknowledged.

The compilation of Human Rights Watch which we earlier cited pointed to an obvious fact that the comprador nature of the Nigerian State will always inform the lopsided expropriation of land and its resources in ways that would ease benefits for a privileged few. Those youths from the Delta region of Nigeria who consider that their land and livelihood is endangered by oil expropriation and by multinational groups and indigenous governments often feel that the more others

profit from the resources of their own land, the less assured is their own future and welfare. It is thus a zero sum game. Their lives are reflected in the survival of the land and the environment. They would wish to inherit the technology which others use to their detriment but the nature of a neo-colonial state is such that state compradors are not interested in initiatives and technocracy. They are content to be mid-way beneficiaries in trade and resource exploitation. As Terisa Turner observes, the officials of the comprador state merges with the local commercial class who are content with idle exploitation rather than creative cultural practice (1981:217). This class, according to P.T. Bauer (1954) would rather strengthen foreign monopoly to displace indigenous entrepreneurship and initiative.

Having made this statement, it more than begs the points to call for a revision of land and environmental policy for the benefit of a more enduring nation. After all the land on which we live, which spans our very existence is a material base for much of what creates our minds and the embargo of our collective consciousness.

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**THE PROBLEM OF
A SINGLE POLICE FORCE
IN A FEDERAL SYSTEM**

by

Folarin Shyllon*

Today the Nigeria Police Force is the only police authority in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This, however, has not always been the position. From 1943 until 1966, there were local police forces maintained by some local and native authorities in the Northern and Western regions under the Native Authority Ordinance of 1943. At the constitutional conference of 1954 which ushered in the federal system of government into Nigeria in 1954, it was agreed that the Nigeria Police Force should remain the only police authority and the local and native authority police forces should be dissolved wherever they existed, and absorbed, if possible, into the Nigeria Police Force.¹ The dissolution was, however, never carried out in spite of the coming into operation of the 1954 Constitution which introduced the federal system of government into Nigeria.

When in 1956 and 1959 the Western and Northern regions attained self-government, the local and native authority police forces received a new lease of life. Following the January 1966 coup the new Federal Military Government decreed that all local police forces and native authority police forces shall

be placed under the overall command of the Inspector-General of Police.² The absorption of the local police forces into the Nigeria Police Force first proposed in 1953 took about two years, from 1967 – 1969.³

WHY A SINGLE POLICE FORCE?

A strict application of the federal principle should have led to a separate police force for each of the constituent governments of the federation for the enforcement of its laws and maintenance of order. In the run up to independence, among Nigerian politicians and political leaders, there were two opposing views about the way the police force should be organised in the federal system. There were those who favoured complete regionalisation of the force, while the other view was that it should remain a single unit under the control of the centre. The fear against regionalisation was that by the nature of our political organization which was largely tribal, there might be the temptation by the majority in government to use the police to oppress other tribes and that the arrangement might weaken the effort of the centre to move with dispatch and force against attempted destabilisation of the country resulting from a breakdown of law and order. In the end the British refused the demand for the regionalisation of the police.⁴ The British government was no doubt influenced by the report of the 1958 Minorities Commission of Enquiry⁵ headed by Sir Henry Willink, QC. The Willink Commission emphasised that a federal police force would be in a better position than a regional police force to allay the fears of the ethnic minorities.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Although the Willink Commission rejected the demand for the regionalisation of the police force as it did with regard to the creation of more states, it advised that the regional governments be given adequate say in the use and operational control of the Nigeria Police Force to enable them to discharge their part of the concurrent responsibility for maintaining law and order. It also recommended the establishment of Police Service Commission to decide questions affecting the appointment, promotion and discipline of the gazetted officers of the force.⁶ It may be noted also that while rejecting the creation of more states, the Commission recommended the incorporation of Fundamental Human Rights in the Constitution of Nigeria. The Independence Constitution had indeed enshrined in its Chapter 3 Fundamental Human Rights provisions. Similarly some provisions were contained in section 98-103 of the Constitution to carry out the suggestions of the Commission on involving the regions in the use and operational control of the Nigeria Police Force. The provisions were repeated in the 1963 Republican Constitution at section 105 to 110. The 1979 Constitution ordained by the military swept away the key elements of the 1960 and 1963 Constitutions inserted to give the regions (now states) some participation in the management of the Nigeria Police. Some analysis of the provisions is necessary.

Independence Constitution, 1960

Section 100 established the Police Council while section 102 established the Police Service Commission. The general

supervision of the organisation and administration of the force and all other matters relating thereto not being matters relating to the use and operational control of the force or the appointment, disciplinary control and dismissal of members of the force was vested in the Police Council, composed of ministers representing the central and regional governments of the federation, the chairman of the Police Service Commission, and the Inspector-General as a non-voting member. The Police Council had the power to make recommendations to the federal government with respect to any matter under its supervision. The federal government, however, was not bound to accept any such recommendations, though where it had disregarded the recommendations its reasons for so doing had to be laid before the National Assembly together with the recommendation in question. The Police Service Commission was composed of a Chairman and not less than two and not more than four members. The appointment and removal of the Inspector-General of Police was vested in the Police Service Commission. Similarly the appointment and removal of the Commissioner of Police of a Region was vested in the Commission. More importantly, before making any appointment to the office of Commissioner of Police of a Region or removing the Commissioner from office the Commission must consult the Premier of that region. Although section 99(4) provided that the Commissioner of Police of a region shall comply with the directions of the Premier of a Region or such other Minister of the government of the Region as may be authorised in that behalf by the Premier with respect to the maintaining and securing of public safety and public order within the Region, it was subject to

the proviso that before carrying out any such directions the Commissioner may request that the matter should be referred to the Prime Minister or such other Minister of the Government of the Federation as authorised in the behalf by the Prime Minister. On the other hand section 99(3) provided that the Prime Minister or such other Minister of the Government of the Federation as may be authorised in that behalf by the Prime Minister could give the Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police such directions with respect to the maintaining and securing of public safety and public order as he considered necessary and the Inspector-General must comply with such directions. Thus with regard to the maintaining and security of public order and public safety throughout the country, the Inspector-General was subject to the direction of the Prime Minister.

It is hard to see how the Premier of a region could effectively discharge his concurrent responsibility for maintaining law and order under such dispensation. If the federal principle were to be strictly applied there should be a federal police force and another police force for each region. Chief Obafemi Awolowo who as Premier of Western Region operated under the single police system for the federation considered it wrong in principle and humiliating in practice for a regional government vested with power and authority to maintain law and order to be without the means of discharging its responsibility⁷ Based on his experience as the Military Governor of Western State and later Oyo State, David Jemibewon had no doubt that the present system which tends towards over-centralisation is not in the best interest of the country.⁸

1963 Republican Constitution

The Republican Constitution of 1963 left undisturbed the single police structure and kept such checks as were contained in the 1960 Constitution.

1979 Constitution

The Constitution of 1979 promulgated by the departing Federal Military Government swept aside such grudging concessions as were made to regional autonomy by the 1960 Independence Constitution and maintained by the 1963 Republican Constitution. Section 195(1) vested the appointment and removal of the Inspector-General in the President instead of in an independent Police Service Commission as under the 1960 and 1963 Constitutions. The Police Council was jettisoned. This meant the total exclusion of the state Governors in the general supervision of the organisation and administration of the Nigeria Police. Furthermore, the Constitution failed to provide, as did the 1960 and 1963 Constitutions, that the state Governor must be consulted by the Police Service Commission on the appointment and removal of the state Commissioner of Police. This is incompatible with true federalism in needlessly undermining the authority of the Governor vis-à-vis the Police Commissioner in the maintenance of law and order in the state.⁹

1999 Constitution

The 1999 Constitution reinstated the Police Council. Section 216(2) provides that before making any appointment to the office of the Inspector-General of Police or removing him

from office the President shall consult the Nigeria Police Council. The Council comprises the President who is the Chairman, the Governor of each state of the Federation, the Chairman of the Police Service Commission and the Inspector-General of Police. It is charged with, among other things, the supervision of the organisation and administration of the Nigeria Police Force. Even though the 1999 Constitution reintroduced the Police Council, it failed to reinstate a depoliticised Inspector-General and Police Service Commission.

Following the precedent introduced by the Independence Constitution of 1960 and followed by subsequent Constitutions, section 21(3) provides that the Inspector-General must carry out lawful directions given to him by the President or a Minister designated by him for the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order. Whereas under section 216(4) where lawful directions are issued to a Commissioner of Police of a state by the Governor or a Commissioner designated by him, the Commissioner may request that the matter be referred to the President or a Minister designated by him. This provision as well as the provision vesting the appointment of the Inspector-General in the President practically nullifies the value of vesting the command of the police in a non-partisan Inspector-General. What it does is to demonstrate beyond peradventure that the ultimate control of the Nigeria Police remains with the President and the Federal Government. Several commentators have pointed out the inherent danger in this position. Nwabueze posits that

In a situation of danger to public safety and public

order in a state, liberty on the part of the Police Commissioner to comply or not to comply with the Governor's directions as he likes is incompatible with the autonomy of the state government, and is a recipe for trouble and eventual collapse of the system.¹⁰

Earlier, David Jemibewon, from his vantage point as a former Military Governor gave a rare insight into the inherent difficulties in the present arrangement.

At the moment their [Nigeria Police] over-centralisation has jeopardised the basis of speedy operation and efficiency. All matters of operation have to be referred to Lagos for clearance and approval before a state command can proceed to act. This is certainly not in the best interest of the country. Every now and again, urgent and emergency issues affecting national welfare and security must keep cropping up in the various states. They would be matters demanding immediate attention and quick on-the-spot-action. It would be detrimental to delay action while awaiting instruction from Lagos, especially in a country like Nigeria where communication is anything but efficient... Whatever is the case, I have no doubt in my mind that the present system which tends towards over-centralisation is not in the best interest of the country.¹¹

To buttress the point highlighted at the beginning of the passage just quoted, Peter Oluyede has reported that during a one hour and twenty one minutes interview on 3rd October

1984 with the then Inspector-General, Etim O. Inyang, "not less than 5 Police Commissioners telephoned him on various problems which he solved apparently with ease."¹² Jemibewon in *A Combatant in Government* had advocated the creation of zonal police commands for purposes of speedy operational efficiency and effective discipline. In 1986 the Babangida administration in its reorganisation of the Nigeria Police indeed included the creation of zonal commands in the new administrative structure but it is doubtful whether it has increased the performance of the police in the maintenance of law and order in the country.

A BRIEF COMPARATIVE SURVEY

It is useful to highlight, however very briefly, that certain other countries with a federal political structure have federal police force complementing state police forces. In Australia each of the seven states of the Commonwealth has its own police force. There is a federal police force for Canberra, the capital territory and its surroundings. The Commonwealth force enforces federal legislation. In Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police along with the provincial and city police forces constitute the three-tier system in place. In the Federal Republic of Germany, each *Land* (state) has her own independently elected state government, judiciary and police. There is also a federal investigative bureau, the *Bundeskriminalamt*, which is renowned for its sophisticated computerised system and technology. The United States has a highly decentralised system of police administration comprising an estimated 20,000 separate federal, state and local police forces. The federal system consists, inter alia, of

police officers attached to the Department of Justice (the Federal Bureau of Investigation together with United States marshals, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, etc). Each of the 50 states of the Union has its own police force and criminal investigation agencies. In addition there are some 19,000 municipal and country law enforcement agencies and approximately half of them consists of fewer than 10 police officers. Americans have always strongly opposed centralising control of police procedure and administration. The responsibility for public safety, for enforcing the law and maintaining reasonable conditions of community protection, falls upon local government. The municipal police force therefore continues to be the principal instrument for maintaining law and order.¹³

Even the British who imposed a single police force on federal Nigeria have a highly fragmented and decentralised police organisation. England, Wales and Scotland have scores of local police forces. Only Northern Ireland has a single police establishment. Summarising on the organisation of the police in Britain, Price commented:

Since the control of the police force is so diffuse, it is impossible for the Government to use them as instruments of executive policy. The policeman is thus an instrument of law, not of policy, seeking primarily to secure the observance of the law, not to enforce obedience to the Government. In securing this aim, he relies on the goodwill and the co-operation of the public rather than on physical force.¹⁴

RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT POWER

Although the police is a matter listed in the exclusive legislative list, the maintenance of public safety and public order in the country is a matter in which the state governments share concurrent responsibility with Federal Government. It is certainly incompatible with the autonomy of a state government under a federal system that the only organised coercive force on which it relies to maintain its authority and enforce its laws should be under the control of the federal government.¹⁵ It is a classic case of responsibility without power. The excerpt from Jemibewon's book graphically explains why Chief Awolowo found it humiliating having to rely on a police force not under his government's control. The practical experience of Jemibewon led him to say: "I am firmly of the conviction that for speedy operational purpose and effective discipline, the police should be state controlled."¹⁶ Writing eleven years later he was "still of the view today [1989] that for effective leadership in the Third Republic there should be state police."¹⁷ Quite recently he repeated that "overcentralisation of the police is not in the best interest of the country."¹⁸

The situation has persisted because in Nigeria we are yet to operate cooperative federalism. It may be argued that at different times in Nigeria we have practiced adversary and coercive federalism. Between 1956 and 1966 two variants of adversary federalism were practiced. First, with the introduction of self government in Western and Eastern Regions in 1956, and in the Northern Region in 1959 there was healthy competition among the regions in the provision

of education, social and health services. Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the West, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe in the East and Sir Ahmadu Bello in the North vied with each other to introduce programmes that would endear them to the entire country in order to gain the mandate to rule independent Nigeria. For example, following the successful introduction of the free primary education in the Western Region, the Eastern Region attempted to imitate the Western Region example by introducing a similar scheme but it failed owing to lack of adequate planning. After independence the old competitive spirit among the regions was overwhelmed by the ganging up of the Federal Government with the Northern and Eastern regions against the Western Region, a movement which ended in the dismemberment of the latter as a result of the creation of the Mid-West Region out of the Western Region.

The military eras of 1966-1979 and 1984-1999 were periods of coercive federalism. The various military governments of the periods called themselves Federal Military Government but they were anything but federal. The Military Governors or Administrators were on military postings and could be removed and were indeed removed at will. The country was ruled as a unitary state and measures wholly abhorrent to the federal principle were imposed on the states by successive Federal Military Governments. We are yet to practise cooperative federalism (true federalism) where the various constituent governments of the federation enter into inter-governmental cooperation ensuring formal cooperative arrangements at both the constitutional and political levels.

AN END TO RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT POWER

Although the Presidential Committee on the review of the 1999 Constitution opposed the introduction of state police, I am firmly of the view that the present single police force for the entire country cannot be supported in principle and should be replaced by a two-tier system at the federal and state levels. The arguments against state police are not sufficiently convincing to justify the continued undermining of the federal principle. It is said that state Governors could use the state police to intimidate and victimise political opponents. Is the victimization of political opponents only a peculiar characteristic of regional politicians? A learned commentator has observed that during the second republic, opposition parties alleged police partisanship on matters of law and order. The police force abandoned its proper constitutional role, renounced neutrality and donned the cap of partisanship. Indeed, so deep and blatant was the partisanship of the police that the Nigerian public came to view them as no more than the uniformed thugs for the ruling party. State Police Commissioners particularly, and even some not-so-high ranking officers, were known to have come to interpret their duties in strictly partisan terms.¹⁹ Wole Soyinka in *The Open Sore of a Continent* describes the partisanship of Mr. Sunday Adewusi, then Inspector-General of Police, who became a ready tool in the hand of the federal executive for the suppression of political opponents, the media, students and other segments of civil society.²⁰

The system whereby the Police Commissioners in charge of each state police command are directly responsible to the

Inspector-General who in turn is appointed and directly responsible to the President is a violation of the federal principle. A centralised single police force as at present is a danger to the liberty of the citizens. It may be argued, as the Presidential Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution suggested, that the effect of having parallel police at the state and federal levels could be destabilizing. On the other hand, the very fact that there is a parallel police force could induce the federal or state government to behave in a reasonable manner. Furthermore, it should be possible to craft constitutional provisions that will enable the Federal Government to federalise the police force of a state that has clearly or is about to turn her force into an instrument for the victimisation of political opponents. In the United States, President John F. Kennedy placed the Mississippi National Guard under federal authority and ordered it to patrol the campus of the University of Mississippi to enable a black student, James Meredith, to enroll. Kennedy also sent federal marshals to enforce desegregation at the University of Alabama despite the opposition of Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama.

The halfway house suggested by Jemibewon, that as an alternative to the state police force a state chief executive should be able to exercise constitutional authority over the operational use of the police within his state if he is to be held responsible for the peace and good government within his area of responsibility begs the issue.²¹ The true solution to the problem lies in each state managing and financing its own force.

CONCLUSION

The truth is that the centralised police organisation has not worked well for the country. The Nigeria Police Force remains as inefficient and corrupt as ever. This is attested to by the fact that some state government sanctioned private militia or vigilante groups like the Bakassi Boys (once featured on the CNN) in the face of the apparent helplessness of the Nigeria Police Force to cope with robberies and other violent crimes. The inadequate policing is due in part to the unreasonable number of police men and women who serve as security guards and orderlies to political functionaries at both federal, state and local levels and are therefore not available for very important police duties.

A number of issues, however, have to be clarified before the decentralisation can safely be undertaken. At the moment state boundaries are not properly delineated. This must be done to avoid jurisdictional clashes among contiguous commands. Consideration must be given to the ability of states to fund a police force. At the moment, most states commit a significant proportion of their revenue to payment of the emoluments of their employees. The implications of the additional responsibility of funding and equipping a police force have to be considered. The existence of 36 state police forces in addition to the existing one which would become a federal force may be on the high side given the size of the country. The re-organisation of Nigeria into six geo-political regions will strengthen the case for a regional force.

NOTES

- * I am grateful to my colleagues Wole Akintayo and Yemi Akinseye-George for their assistance. I am, of course, solely responsible for views expressed in this paper.
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SECURING LIFE AND PROPERTY THROUGH COOPERATION

by

Olufunmilayo Oloruntimehin

In all societies – whether developed, developing or underdeveloped—the threat to security of life and property constitutes a major social problem. In Africa since about the mid 1980s this social problem has become a critical source of concern for the peoples and governments of many nations. For example, in Nigeria armed robbery and assassination have become so widespread that foreign embassy officials have resorted to riding in bullet-proof vehicles. In some cities like Lagos and Benin City people live in constant fear of the attack of armed robbers. Many houses are protected with high walls laced with broken bottles and barbed wire and fortified with heavy burglar proof. Social life is structures significantly curtailed since people can no longer attend parties, movies, theatre performances or even visit relations and friends beyond a particular time of night.

The business tempo in such cities has been very much curtailed. People, particularly women and children, can hardly go outside their homes immediately after night fall for fear of being raped, kidnapped or attacked by armed robbers. (Rotimi, 1984: Oloruntimehin, 1992).

In some parts of Africa such as Rwanda, Liberia and

Sierra Leone, ethnic and communal conflicts have degenerated into situations of near war or total war. Such situations have been kindled by the struggle for economic and political power. In the process many lives and valuable property have been lost. In such communities the socio-economic activities of people have become considerably hindered. Indeed, majority of the people have confined their movements to certain 'safe areas' in the communities. In societies bogged down with crime and communities ridden with conflicts which have degenerated into killings and destruction of property, socio-economic development becomes a very difficult task. To achieve development the search for cooperation for the security of life and property is a necessity.

SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Security of life and property is a *sine qua non* for development. Indeed no significant socio-economic, political or cultural progress can be achieved without a peaceful environment and a feeling of individual and corporate security. For example, in communities that experience constant conflict which tend to degenerate to killing and destruction of property, economic activities generally tend to be inhibited. Where arson features glaringly as a means of destruction of property, supply of petrol is consciously controlled. This leads to artificial scarcity. This situation could lead to huge financial losses for petrol dealers. A chain reaction adversely affects transporters as well as commuters. School children may miss important examinations while others may be able to take the examinations at great financial, physical or emotional costs. In essence, the economic and educational progress of a considerable number

of citizens is being disturbed. If such a situation continues for a long period there may be a deterioration in the socio-economic welfare of society.

Furthermore, it is usual in communities 'in trouble' to declare a dusk-to-dawn curfew which is meant to restrict the movements of trouble makers. The curfew also restricts the movements of innocent citizens who could have wished to continue their legitimate activities beyond nightfall. As a result of the curfew petrol dealers, restaurant owners, local food sellers may experience substantial financial losses. Also the social life of those who enjoy night life is adversely affected.

In big cities such as Lagos, Johannesburg and Kampala where crime is widespread, many people particularly women, can hardly go out at night without being molested or attacked. People are also in danger if they go into certain areas of the cities even during the day. For example, in the business centres of central Lagos, "area boys" attack and make away with the money or goods of passers-by in broad daylight. A considerable number of victims have been traders from the hinterland for whom such loss of money or goods could mean the end of their business.

Furthermore, as a result of the fear of being victimised, many business men and women close up their stores, petrol stations, restaurant, entertainment houses around 7 o'clock in the evening. In the past, such business centres used to open until midnight or into the early hours of the morning. The losses experienced in the businesses concerned as a result of insecurity of life and property cannot be quantified.

It is common knowledge that the level of foreign

investment in Nigeria has continued to remain very much below expectation because foreign investors are particularly worried about the high level of insecurity of life and property. This situation has adversely affected the nation's economic development. The President, General Olusegun Obasanjo, had to make it a priority of his administration to visit foreign countries to solicit investment in various sectors of the nation's economy. The efforts can be successful to the extent that security of life and property is guaranteed in the country. For example, electronic media report indicated recently that Nigeria is placed third in the world as far as organized transnational crime is concerned. If this situation persists foreign investors will definitely be discouraged from coming to do business in Nigeria.

SECURITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY THROUGH COOPERATION

Security of life and property can only be successfully achieved through cooperation, whether at the family, community, national or international levels.

The Family

Inter-personal relationships among family members (whether nuclear or extended family) should be such that enhance the prevention and control of risks to the security of life and property. To this end, family members should be encouraged and motivated to avoid as much as practicable words and actions that may generate disagreements, conflicts and disturbance of the peace. Whenever there is disturbance of the peace through unresolved disagreements or conflicts, it is essential that family members unite to bring such a situation

under control. Peace meetings could be arranged to resolve the conflict among those who are involved. Reconciliation and harmonious relationships could be achieved by various means including apology, restitution and payment of compensation. Family members should be encouraged to have respect for the life and property of other people and make efforts to protect them from attacks from within and from outside the family. Therefore, families should have a reasonable knowledge of the occupation, work place, general interests, associates and friends and movements of their members. By this families can exercise the desired control on their members to ensure security of life and property. The head of the family—that is, the husband and father—should not be left alone to play the role of securing life and property for the family. He needs the full support of members of the family to succeed.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The ward or neighbourhood consists of a number of families who live on near-by streets or roads. In such areas it is unrealistic to expect every household to be absolutely responsible for the security of the life and property of its immediate members. Combined efforts of households in the same area will produce more effective results.

For example, in places like Lagos, Ibadan and Ile-Ife households in a street or road join together to achieve the goal of security of life and property. A gate is constructed at the entrance and outlet of such a street or road which is locked at a particular time of the day (e.g., 10 o'clock at night) and opened at 5 o'clock every morning. Household heads meet

together at regular intervals to review the security situation in the area. At such meetings many decisions are taken about the money to be contributed to hire night guards, to purchase some means of arming themselves against attack by armed robbers or night marauders.

The household heads may decide to form vigilante groups to conduct security patrols within their areas during the night. Rosters are made to make household heads aware of when they are expected to take their own turns. Such household heads are expected to have torchlights and whistles to alert other people in case they sight any armed robbers around their houses or in case they are actually attacked.

There is a need to develop a neighbourhood security intelligence group to collect information about the crime situation in the neighbourhood. Such a group should keep proper records of household members in their area in order to have the knowledge about who they are, their occupations, places of work, associates, etc. This neighbourhood intelligence group should also monitor movements particularly to identify strangers with whom they could interact to find out who they are and their mission in the area. It is envisaged that in the future some devices such as monitoring cameras can be put in place on the streets and roads to monitor the movements of people in the neighbourhoods, particularly the activities of criminals at night. This will save vigilante groups from exposing their lives to the danger of armed robbers.

A number of neighbourhoods make up a community. The networking of neighbourhood security intelligence groups can achieve effectively the security of life and property in the

community. Leaders of the various security intelligence groups could meet to review and discuss the safety of life and property in their different locations. Members could be assigned different roles meant to enhance such safety. Financial contributions for the purchase of relevant materials to enhance the task of security activities could be made while the problems encountered could be shared and solutions provided.

Inter-Community

From experience in Nigeria in recent times, there have been a series of inter-communal conflicts which have resulted in very serious killings and destruction of property. Disagreement, competition, struggle and conflicts about land boundaries, farmlands and grazing lands, market places, chieftaincy titles, claims for local government, location of local government headquarters have resulted in very serious clashes among some communities. Examples of such clashes are the clashes between the Ijaw and Itsekiri concerning the relocation of the South West Warri Local Government headquarters to Ogidi in March 1997, the clashes between the Ogbolomabiri and Basambiri communities of Nembe Local Government Council in August and September 1997 and the clashes between Ile-Ife and Modakeke communities which erupted in 1997 as a result of the relocation of the Ife East Local Government headquarters. The last has assumed very serious dimensions since March, 2000. These communal clashes have involved great destruction of lives and property as well as the dislocation of many people who were rendered homeless. Indeed inter-communal conflicts and clashes can have adverse effects on the whole society through migration of people from the

troubled communities into other communities with the attendant problems of unusual pressures on existing amenities like education, sanitation and water. There is also the problem of unemployment. This situation may lead in turn to social problems like juvenile delinquency, crime and epidemics.

Because of their serious and widespread implications for individuals, families and the society at large inter-communal conflicts and clashes call for a unified intervention from individuals, from groups and from government at local, state and federal levels. For example, influential individuals such as traditional rulers, politicians, religious leaders could hold peace meetings with the communities in conflict to resolve their grievances and straighten out strained relationships. Professional groups, market women, religious groups, etc. could intervene along similar lines. Such individuals should share the outcome of their intervention with the representatives of the various groups to enable the mediators appreciate what outstanding problems could be tackled together to review the level of success and assess the way forward.

With regard to the security of life and property at the inter-community level members from close communities can join together to carry out a number of anti-crime activities to the benefit of the participating communities. For example, members of the different security intelligence groups could exchange records of already identified suspects in their communities so as to make it easy to detect such individuals if they should cross over to carry out their criminal activities in other communities. Members of the different vigilante groups of such close communities should organize common vigilante groups to monitor the movements of people across

their common borders. Since such vigilante groups would need to be armed, there should be legal backing for their activities.

There must be a proper link with the national security agencies, particularly the police. This is necessary to ensure that the vigilante groups (at the neighbourhood, community and inter-community levels) do not take the law into their hands. It should also be ensured that the national security agencies do not become a clog in the wheel of the operations of vigilante groups by delaying to bring culprits to book, releasing known criminals on account of bribery and 'making life impossible' for those who might intend to serve as witnesses to ensure due arrest and prosecution of suspects as well as conviction of the guilty ones.

The government should do all that is practicable, e.g. encouragement, financial and legal support, to ensure the continuous participation of members of these informal security outfits in the process of crime prevention and control. It is believed that networking among such inter-community informal security outfits backed up by government and working hand in hand with the formal system (that is, national security agencies) could go a long way in solving the problem of crime prevention and control which exists in African nations, particularly in Nigeria. This problem cannot be solved by the formal security agencies alone.

By the same token, the prevention of unresolved conflicts among communities which tend to lead to violence cannot be achieved by the formal security agencies without the assistance of individuals and groups within the society (at local, state and national levels). Thus the role of influential individuals,

religious and professional groups in mediating among various parties in conflict and achieving reconciliation and peaceful co-existence cannot be overemphasized. For example, the national Reconciliation Committee established during the Abacha regime in Nigeria could have achieved great success if it had been properly managed and applied. It is believed that this aspect of our African cultural heritage can still be used in modern times to achieve peace among the multi-ethnic communities of African nations.

International

On the international scene, particularly in African countries, violent attacks on one country by another, deriving from disagreements on important issues such as the maltreatment of one country's nationals by another country, could be avoided or at least controlled by providing governmental efforts at reconciliation. This could involve a strong back-up with the efforts of influential individuals and some relevant groups within the communities in conflict.

As far as crime prevention and control is concerned, different countries in Africa and beyond have been brought together through the International Police Organization (Interpol). This organization, with its headquarters in Paris, exists as a crime prevention and control network among countries all over the world. It collects and collates information on the crime situation in various countries. It receives and disseminates relevant information on crime and criminals all over the world. Through the efforts of this organization criminals who have escaped from one country to another could be traced, identified, arrested and, if need be, extradited to

their home countries to be prosecuted for whatever offences they might have committed, based on sound investigation. The work of such an international organization can only succeed through proper networking and efficient communication among the various nations involved.

Without the successful efforts of Interpol, transnational crime would become widespread and difficult to control, it could stifle the businesses and the economies of many nations, particularly the developing nations. Thus various national governments should ensure that they make all the necessary contributions to enhancing the networking capabilities of Interpol as a crime prevention and control organization.

In general, it is pertinent to note that security of life and property demands the maintenance of safe homes, work places, communities, nations as well as safe interaction among nations. This situation essentially calls for a series of actions and interactions among family members, work groups, community members, nationals and members of international communities to get together at various levels to ensure the safety of their different millieux. However, in cases where violence occurs individuals and groups should be mobilized to present a common front with regard to the identification of the sources of violence and the generation of the measures of dealing with them. This could include focusing attention on those at risk and the provision of appropriate support (e.g. protection, health services, financial needs). It is necessary to note that in order to achieve sustainable safety of life and property both victims and the perpetrators of violence need to be rehabilitated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

People who reside in areas where crime is widespread and other forms of violence persist tend not to enjoy the full social and psychological conditions for proper development. The economic conditions of such areas also tend to be adversely affected.

The significance of cooperation for the achievement of security of life and property was examined at various levels – the family, the ward or neighbourhood, the community, intercommunity or national and international. At every level it was shown that the safety of life and property is dependent on the extent to which people can come together to deal with the source of threat. There must be readiness to participate in sharing ideas with others, joining with others to actually prevent violence from occurring and even sharing in the financial burden of such exercise.

The importance of using individuals and groups for mediating to prevent the occurrences of violence or breaking the cycle of violence was emphasized. At the national level the usefulness of a national reconciliation body for the resolution of conflicts, the alleviation of violence and the achievement of peace among communities was pointed out. Also, at the international level the role of the international police organization (Interpol) for the prevention and control of crime through networking among nations across the world was highlighted. On the whole the clear trend is that security of life and property is crucial to development while cooperation is key factor for the achievement of security of life and property.

Based on the foregoing conclusion the following recommendations are considered significant:

1. Government should give legal backing to the establishment of community security intelligence groups in the country.
2. Reconciliation groups should be recognized and supported as viable means of resolving conflicts at various levels of society.
3. Communication and networking among individuals and groups within national communities as well as among nations should be recognized and supported as viable means of achieving security of life and property in this age of globalization.
4. At national and international levels governments should embark on the development of technological facilities specifically geared towards the achievement of security of life and property across national boundaries.
5. All states involved in the International Police Organization (Interpol) should give the necessary support to ensure the constant and efficient performance of the organization's role as an international security outfit.

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SEPARATIST AGITATIONS IN NIGERIA, 1980-1986

by

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One of Professor Tamuno's outstanding contributions to the study of Nigerian politics is the article "Separatist Agitations in Nigeria since 1914" which was published in the *Journal of Modern African Studies* in 1970. The article represented the first major attempt to chronicle and explain a critical dimension of the country's politics. What I attempt to do in this paper is to further explore the theme of Tamuno's pioneering effort in a particular period of Nigeria's political history with a view to explaining why what must have appeared as a modest effort at the time he wrote has remained a perennial and timeless defining element of the country's complex and unstable politics.

Nigeria's history is replete with the search for a viable political arrangement to adequately accommodate the diverse ethno-linguistic, cultural and religious groups in the polity. The major element in the search has been how to manage the problem of power sharing so that every major group can be guaranteed access to the power superstructure. This power sharing process has however centred around the three major ethnic groups in the country – the Hausa/Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo – as they correspond to the former Northern, Western and Eastern regions respectively.

In 1954, the ethno-regional leaders and their colonial collaborators finally settled for a federal system as the most viable political arrangement for the country. It would, however, seem that the federal system has not adequately solved the problem because, as it is structured, it is possible for one unit to dominate the country. At various times, enormous tension has been generated by the actual or potential existence of such domination. Once such tension is generated, the groups which feel dominated or, in any case, alienated from the mainstream of central power have either threatened to secede, or have pressed for a looser political association – confederation – to diffuse the debilitating effects of domination. While these threats of secession and pressure for confederation marked a watershed in the country's search for a viable political arrangement, finally culminating in a bloody civil war which ravaged the country for thirty months, it is disturbing that they persist in spite of the several measures that have been taken to enhance the accommodation capacity of the federal system. Coming many years after the civil war was fought, such pressures certainly suggest that all is not well with Nigeria's federal system. This is what I examine in this paper by focusing in the historical tradition that underlies Professor Tamuno's works on the separatist agitations which mainly took the form of demands for confederacy in the Second Republic and the period immediately following it. This is a period that has somehow escaped the critical lenses of Nigerian political scientists and historians. Yet, as the analysis will show, the agitations of the period throw ample light on the crisis of the federal state in Nigeria.

FEDERALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF POWER SHARING

The major attraction federalism has for polities with diverse cleavages – be they ethnic, religious, cultural or racial – is that by enabling the component groups to retain some autonomy while surrendering some of their powers to a central (federal) authority, it guarantees enough room to every group in the power sharing process. It does this by the promise that the central authority would not become the exclusive preserve of one or a few units. Indeed, Mill's "law" of federal instability recognizes this: "that there should not be any one state so much more powerful than the rest as to be capable of vying in strength with many of them combined. If there be such a one and only one, it will insist on being master of the joint deliberations"¹. This law has been validated in many cases: the domination of Jamaica in the West Indian federation; of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the Rhodesia/Nyasaland federation; of Singapore in the federation of Malaysia, amongst others – all ensured the collapse of the federations. In the case of Nigeria, the domination of the former Northern region which continues to haunt the federation has threatened the survival of the federation at various times leading to separatist and secessionist threats as well as pressures for confederation.

Since democracy, especially of the multiparty variety, is said to be a cardinal principle of federalism², the problem of power sharing is best articulated in a democratic setting in which political parties freely contest for power³. The problem, however, assumes a dangerous dimension in most Third World federal situations where political parties tend to be organized

along ethnic, regional or religious lines and attempt to capture power on such exclusionary bases. This is the major thesis of the "capture theory" of ethnicity which posits that groups with exceptionally large size in terms of numbers, territory or resources or combinations of these, tend to insist on holding and monopolizing state power⁴. Such big group chauvinism has been at the roots of problems of power sharing in many states.

In the case of Nigeria, it is fairly well known that political parties tend to be organized along ethno-regional/religious lines. The major pre-independence and First Republic parties namely, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG), and National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), were respectively based on the Hausa/Fulani (Northern region), Yoruba (Western region), and Igbo (Eastern region). In the Second Republic, in spite of the elaborate constitutional provisions made to forestall the emergence of sectional parties⁵, the registered political parties turned out to be more or less resuscitations of the pre-1966 parties. The Nigeria People's Party (NPP), was Igbo-based; the Unity Party of Nigeria, (UPN), Yoruba-based, and the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) Hausa/Fulani-based. This character of parties underlies the ethnic domination syndrome on the part of the leaders of the major ethnic groups who seek, first, to retain internal (regional) autonomy and, secondly, to capture power at the centre. As long as each party retains control of its ethno-regional domain, it does not, in the final analysis, feel totally dominated, notwithstanding the measure of "alien" domination at the centre. Presumably, this is because, as long as it is able to retain control over its ethno-regional

constituency and has a home base, the party has hope of either capturing power at the centre or being part of the grand coalition through consociationalism. But when control of the home base is lost, the party feels dispossessed, dominated, and alienated and may call for confederation to at least secure the autonomy of its regional base. As the analysis in this paper shows, separatist agitations, including demands for confederation in Nigeria are largely attributable to home base loss.

But political parties have not been the only propagators of separatist agitations. Although political parties are almost, as a rule, outlawed in military regimes, the Nigerian military was sufficiently politicized and divided to engage in separatist politics. Thus, at the Aburi Summit of 1967, the ruling officers agreed on a confederation-type arrangement in which each region was to have, *inter alia*, its own army⁶. Indeed, when secession finally came, it was led by the military governor of the then Eastern region. Behaving militarily, it took a civil war to bring the country back together again. But, by and large, secessionist threats and agitations have been the stock-in-trade of politicians and political parties at times of national crisis and tension, usually after general elections, military takeover or during periods of transition. For the most part, the threats are floated to register disagreement with the political arrangement as it relates to power sharing. This way they have served as redress mechanisms employed by ethnic, regional and religious leaders to further power capture agendas.

SEPARATIST AGITATIONS IN NIGERIA: 1914-1970

The historical circumstances which led to separatist agitations in the past in Nigeria are all so familiar to the student of Nigerian politics that only a brief elaboration is necessary here. What I shall therefore do in this section is to present a summary of the pressures and their implications for subsequent political developments.

Tamuno has recorded that perhaps the first incidence of separatist agitation in Nigeria was in 1914 when the idea of amalgamating Northern and Southern Nigeria did not go down well with Northern Emirs and colonial officials⁷. Then in 1950, the Emir of Zazzau threatened that if the Northern region was not allocated 50 per cent of the seats in the central legislative house, "it would ask for separation from the rest of Nigeria on the arrangements existing (before amalgamation in) 1914"⁸. The demand for 50 per cent of the legislative seats was to forestall any possible southern domination, as the Northern leaders feared that the advance of southerners in Westernization, particularly, in education, would make them take over government once independence came⁹. The same fear led NPC leaders to propose an eight-point programme in the aftermath of disagreements over the date of independence in 1953, which in details meant that Nigeria would become a common services union or confederation¹⁰.

In 1954, the Western region also threatened to secede from the federation if the federal capital territory of Lagos was not joined to the region. Later at the 1954 resumed constitutional conference, the Western regional party – AG – strongly supported the inclusion of a secession clause in the

constitution, arguing that federalism was based on the free consent of the people. This was opposed by the NCNC whose Eastern region did not favour a break-up of the union in the pre-independence period. The Eastern position has been attributed to the fact that people from the region were forced to migrate to other regions because of land hunger and that the NCNC was perhaps the only "national party" in the country at the time¹¹.

While the ethno-regional leaders indulged in separatist agitations, minority elements demanded the creation of separate minorities' states from the regions, but wished to remain in the federation. However, some "stubborn" minorities trod the path of separatism. In 1955, a Tiv minority member of the northern regional House of Assembly threatened: "Because the Northern Peoples Congress does not want peace in that (Tiv) Division, and the only course we can take now, since we are not wanted in the North is to pull out of the North and the federation as a whole, we shall be a sovereign state."¹² In 1966, Isaac Boro, Sam Owonaro and Nottingham Dick, frustrated over the lack of development of the oil-rich Niger Delta and the non-creation of a separate Rivers State, declared the independent "Delta People's Republic" which they sought to defend militarily. The "secession" was however quickly crushed. Such isolated secessionist threats represented the most extreme strand of minority nationalism which, as already pointed out, was for separate states within the federation to mitigate the effects of domination, oppression and exploitation by the major ethnic groups in the regions.

The most dangerous height of separatist agitations was

reached in 1966 when, at the height of the crisis resulting from the January coup allegedly plotted by Igbo army officers to take over control of the federal government and a counter-coup by Northern officers, which took the form of *araba* (secession), the prevalent mood of the Northern, Eastern and Western regional leaders was for 'a pulling apart' of component units in a confederation. The regional positions were contained in the memoranda submitted to the ad hoc constitutional conference¹³. Only the Mid-West minorities' region argued for continued federation though shortly before the conference finally adjourned the Northern delegates, for reasons that had to do with the return of the region to power, turned around to argue for a strong federation and a break-up of the existing regions into states. Later at the Aburi "Summit" of Nigerian military leaders, agreements were reached on confederal arrangements. It was the differing interpretation of these agreements and the creation of twelve new states (presumably to strengthen the federation) that immediately led to Eastern secession and civil war.

These instances of secessionist threats and confederal pressures clearly reveal the nature of the problems of power-sharing in Nigeria. For the most part, they emanated from the ambitions of the three major ethnic groups and their parties to capture and dominate power in the federation. This being so, the domination of the Northern region threatened the survival of the federation as it alienated and excluded the other groups. Perhaps if the South was united matters would have been helped, but the animosities between the Eastern and Western leaders enabled the North to play divide and rule and have its way¹⁴. Or perhaps if the North could be

dismembered through the creation of states, the precarious situation could have been saved. But none of these happened and Northern domination exacerbated the separatist tendencies.

Many students of Nigerian politics agree that the civil war finally brought to an end the tensions of power sharing which emanated from Northern domination. But if this was so, why, after several years of military unitarist rule, after the breakup at the powerful regions, and their replacement by states, did Nigerians again contemplate confederacy and breakup of the federation? Was the ghost of the old problem of Northern domination still haunting the country? What exactly was the problem that provoked separatist agitations and tensions?

SEPARATIST AGITATIONS IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC AND AFTER

I argued at the beginning of this paper that political parties and politicians have been the most active propagators of the problems of power-sharing in Nigeria. In the bid to minimize the supposed destabilizing effects of regional parties and sectional domination, the country's military leaders opted for a presidential system with 'national' political parties – in place of the parliamentary system with ethno-regional parties of the First Republic. The first experiment with the new system in the Second Republic (1979-83) failed. Owing largely to the continued prevalence of the domination mentality of the majorities which military rule did not diminish, the political parties which emerged were ethno-regional and closely resembled those of the pre-1966 period. It was therefore

possible not only to continue thinking and participating (voting at least) along ethno-regional lines but also to continue fearing domination in these terms. For one thing, although there were now nineteen states in place of the former regions, the continuing familial ties amongst the states that made up the former regions¹⁵, and continued North-South socioeconomic balancing, all contributed, in the face of the emergence of regional parties, to keep ethno-regional thinking sacrosanct. This meant the resurrection of North-South, North-East-West divisions and corresponding region-based majority-minority cleavages. This was the context within which the old fears of Northern domination returned, and the confederation debate and separatist agitations that subsequently ensued even after the overthrow of the Second Republic were reactions to the confirmation of this fear.

The first call for the abrogation of the federal system and its replacement by a confederation in the Second Republic was made by Chief Olu Aboderin, the late proprietor of *The Punch*, in December, 1982. In a speech he delivered on the first anniversary celebration of the *Weekend Flight* entitled "Confederacy: Towards a Functional Solution to the Problems of Nigerian Unity"¹⁶, Aboderin lamented that "recent events in our turbulent past, and those divisive and centrifugal tendencies that forced a fratricidal war on us are still as potent as they were in pre-1966 Nigeria". Arguing that the creation of states would not (did not) solve the problem but rather exacerbated ethnic hostilities, he listed the unfortunate developments as the rise of religious fundamentalism and intolerance in the dominantly Muslim north which was occasioned by the Maitatsine riots and religious conflicts in

different parts of the region¹⁷, the re-emergence of cut-throat competition amongst the major groups for control of the centre, disagreements over census, revenue allocation, quota system and university admissions. Most of all, he alleged the existence of a Hausa/Fulani oligarchy at the centre, represented by the NPN. In the face of the tensions and fears generated by these developments, which he said indicated the inappropriateness of the federal system, he called for a confederal system which "by diffusing political power and emphasizing functional cooperation, will put an end to power struggles which have been the bane of democracy in Nigeria".

Aboderin argued that confederation is rooted in the "objective and realistic" characteristics of the country, pointing out that Nigeria is naturally divided into three parts – North, East and West – "a division perfectly made by Allah". The confederal system should therefore be based on this structure which, he believed, will remove the North-South tension, particularly in the area of uneven development, because each region will be economically viable. Aboderin concluded by warning: "This arrangement must, however, not be equated with a formula to break up the country into three. Though it recommends autonomous political and economic units, few areas such as foreign relations, defence and aviation should be handled by the union government."

Aboderin's call did not, however, generate any significant controversy presumably because all the political parties were in top gear preparations for the 1983 general elections. As it were, until the elections were concluded, the claim or fear of Northern domination remained speculative. Although the NPN won the 1979 Presidential election under controversial

circumstances, every major party was able to secure control of its ethno-regional (now "traditional") home-base which, for them, served as leverage for competing for power at the centre. There was a further reason to hope. Between 1979 and 1988, a lot of party realignments had taken place as the NPP, UPN, GNP and PRP felt united by their common cause of halting NPN domination. While these parties sought a common front in the unsuccessful Progressive Parties Alliance, PPA, Obafemi Awolowo and Nnamdi Azikiwe, leaders of the "southern" UPN and NPP respectively, felt assured of increased Northern support through the alliance. Although the PPA dream did not materialize in part because the leaders of the PRP and GNPP (who incidentally were both Northerners) dissociated themselves from the fold, leaving only the crumbs of their expelled party members who chose to remain in the alliance for picks by the UNP and NPP¹⁸, the latter were able to build new alliances with Northern splinter groups. The realignments saw massive "carpet crossings" across party lines.

These developments raised the "southern" parties hopes of giving the NPN a good fight and possibly mitigating, if not finally eliminating, Northern domination. As long as they were able to retain control of their home bases, they reckoned, they could still control the centre probably through coalition, as the NCNC did in the First Republic. These hopes were, however, completely shattered when the NPN not only secured a landslide victory in the elections, but also dispossessed the southern parties of some of the (homeland) states they controlled and threatened to capture the rest¹⁹. Indeed, the party won the gubernatorial elections in twelve of the nineteen

states, its presidential candidate came out tops or a close second in sixteen states, and it secured overwhelming majorities in the National and most state legislative assemblies²⁰. The other parties charged that the elections were a "farce" unsurpassed in electoral rigging and manipulation. In fact, many saw the election as an "awarding exercise" for the NPN. There was so much loss of faith in the electoral process that virtually every election was contested in court while in places like Ondo and Oyo states, there were violent protests. But, while all these raged on, the elections had established almost total NPN (northern) domination. This provided the impetus for the separatist agitations that soon followed as the dispossessed parties sought to retain control of their ethno-regional bases at least.

Soon after the elections, Chief T.O.S. Benson, a Yoruba-NPP leader, called for a referendum at which Nigerians would decide whether (a) to return to pre-1914 Nigeria, involving dismemberment into the North and South; (b) to have an all-party government at the centre, to keep the federation united; or (c) to have a confederation of the North, East, and West. He, however, favoured a confederal arrangement to remove actual and potential fears of domination²¹.

But by far the most popular and controversial call for confederation at this period was that made by the UPN Governor of Ogun State, Chief Olabisi Onabanjo. In his October 1st independence anniversary broadcast²², Governor Onabanjo lamented that "whatever may be the merits of the (1979) arrangements, it is clear that the underlying and deep differences within the country were not seriously considered", the situation was exploited by what he called the "cabal of

native imperialism” which has a “rapacious ambition” to lord it over other Nigerians. It becomes clear that the cabal he had in mind was the Northern ruling class:

Meanwhile, by an unprecedented rigging of the electoral processes, they have ensured that all the Northern states are under their effective control...By falsification of results and through the paramilitary police which have become armies of occupation in some states, they have effected a conquest of the majority of the southern states”.

Referring to Lt. Colonel (as he then was) Yakubu Gowon’s maiden broadcast to the nation on coming to power at the height of the national crisis in 1966, Onabanjo posited:

On another occasion, at another place... a spokesman of the Northern establishment said categorically that the basis for unity in Nigeria was not there²³. Since then the basis for Nigerian unity has been even more undermined, and it is doubtful if it is strong enough now to support the superstructure of our diverse but legitimate entitlements to equal treatment and dignity as Nigerians.

Continuing, he asserted that a unity based on the rapacious ambition of one unit to lord it over all others and one which does not guarantee autonomy and equality to the diverse groups cannot survive in the face of totalitarian fascism, of a police state and mutual hostility arising from ethnic distrust. The situation, he argued, required a pulling apart as the first step towards stronger unity. In the circumstances, the best

alternative was a confederation – “a federation (?) of autonomous states freely associated with each other, surrendering certain powers to a confederal body...” In a later defence of his position Onabanjo emphasized that his proposal did not require recourse to the former regions; rather the states as they existed should be given greater autonomy²⁴.

Onabanjo's proposal naturally generated a heated controversy. The Nigerian Television Authority, NTA's "Verdict '83" analysts who were perceived to be agents of the ruling NPN, described Onabanjo's call as a cover for the declaration of an independent Oduduwa state and the eventual secession of the Yoruba from the federation. That was enough for the UPN to dissociate itself from Onabanjo's position²⁵. The newspapers became alive with the confederation debate²⁶. Most commentaries did not favour the idea of confederation on the grounds that it was too late in the country's history for the country to break up. As Fidel Odum put it, "It would be impracticable for Nigeria to break up voluntarily and, anyway, the Nigerian ruling class, which is a homogenized Northern oligarchy, would resist any attempt at secession."²⁷

Writing in the *National Concord*, Yakubu Mohammed asked very specific and fundamental questions: was Onabanjo speaking for himself, for his party, or for the Yoruba? Would he call for confederal arrangement if, imperfect as he believed the constitution was, the UPN captured power at the centre?²⁸ The idea was predictably opposed by leading minority spokespersons who saw confederation as a call for the re-establishment of majority oppression and domination in the former regions²⁹.

The military takeover of government on 31st December 1983 summarily laid the confederation debate to rest. But early in 1985 the debate was again resurrected because it was widely believed that the Major General Mohammed Buhari's government was being controlled by the "Kaduna Mafia", "a faceless Cabal of Northern Oligarchy whose main concern was to ensure that the North maintained a leading position at all times in matters related to Nigerian politics"³⁰.

There were many grounds for this notion. First, the Supreme Military Council, the highest policy-making organ of government, was dominated by Northerners. Secondly, it was believed that in the trials and punishments of the so-called discredited politicians of the Second Republic, Northerners were given preferential treatment³¹. Thirdly, under the guise of downsizing the workforce as part of the austerity regime to salvage worsening economic conditions, and in furtherance of the federal character principle, Southerners were systematically replaced by Northerners³². These developments and many others led, first, retired Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle, the legendary "Black Scorpion" of the Nigerian civil war, to argue that "confederation is the best system of government for Nigeria; anything outside this is purposeless"³³. He was quickly followed and supported by retired Lt. General Alani Akinrinade, the Joint Chief of Defence Staff in the Second Republic³⁴. Tunji Braithwaite, leader and presidential candidate of the Nigeria Advanced Party (NAP) in the Second Republic saw the call as "significant" and "welcome"³⁵.

As before, the confederation idea was opposed by other commentators. Ola Rotimi, the celebrated playwright, argued

that confederation would worsen the political situation in the country³⁶. Professor Bolaji Akinyemi saw the demands for confederation as symptomatic of "genuine grievances which, if ignored, could lead to disaster", but warned that if by confederation the advocates meant an association of practically independent states, there would be a worse disaster. Under the prevailing circumstances, Akinyemi concluded that he would support confederacy if by it the proponents meant going back to the weak federation of the pre- 1966 period in which the regions enjoyed enormous autonomy³⁷. Chief M.K.O. Abiola opposed confederacy and advised its advocates "to make a renewed attempt to represent the entire Nigerian peoples and stop playing one group against the other³⁸. In an editorial, the *Nigerian Tribune*, a Western (regional) provincial mouthpiece, subtly supported confederacy because the debates about it indicated that "something had gone fundamentally wrong with the experiment that we have operated since 1914". Continuing, the paper argued: "There is no doubt that in a multilingual and multiethnic society, a federal set-up is the most attractive system of government. In the case of Nigeria, unfortunately, the federal arrangement has been operated contrary to all known practice and usage..." Happy that none of the advocates of confederation had called for a total break up of the country, the *Tribune* concluded: "But many Nigerians feel that there is something wrong with the arrangement we now operate, and that some other alternative should be explored."³⁹ Alarmed at the potentially volatile nature of the debates, the federal military government banned any further political debates in the country in July 1985.

WHY CONFEDERATION?

Having presented in broad outline, the circumstances of the agitations for confederation in the Second Republic and after, the question may now be asked, "Why did they arise at all?" Although some of the reasons for this have already been provided in the foregoing sections, I shall now attempt to put them into a proper perspective. But, before doing so it is interesting to note a curiously common feature of all the advocates of confederation, namely that they were all Yoruba from the former Western region.

Once in 1954, over the question of Lagos, the Western region had threatened to secede from the federation. Then in 1966, at the height of the national crisis when the prevalent mood was for confederation, the Westerners proposed an autonomous Oduduwa state and, at one point, Yoruba leaders are said to have had an undertaking with Odumegwu Ojukwu, leader of the ill-fated Republic of Biafra, that if the Eastern region seceded the West would follow suit⁴⁰. But, in the end, it did not. So why did the West feel so aggrieved once again to advance and spearhead separatist sentiments?

Two plausible reasons can be given. First the Yoruba have since the civil war come to occupy dominant positions in the bureaucratic and economic sectors of the country, a position for which the Ibos strongly competed before the civil war⁴¹. As such, the effects of increased Northern domination, particularly the Northern replacements of Southerners in top bureaucratic positions, were mostly felt by them. Secondly, many Yoruba leaders feel that the Northerners have been ungrateful for their role in crushing Eastern secession. In fact,

in advocating confederation, Chief T.O.S. Benson lamented that the Yoruba lost more soldiers than any other ethnic group in the country during the civil war. Perhaps a third factor lies in the fact that as the owners of Lagos, which was the federal capital at the time, the Yoruba saw Northern domination as amounting to the conquering of their territory.

Now, to the question why confederation? The most plausible explanation lies in the persistence of regional thinking, a situation which was engendered by the resurgence of ethno-regional parties in the Second Republic. Consequently, the fears of domination, particularly of Northern domination, were blown up. In a sense, it could be argued that the fear (or confirmation in 1983) of Northern domination is the only explanation for the calls for confederation. But although this was a "southern" fear, only Yoruba opinion leaders settled for the confederal alternative. The other southerners who responded to the situation opposing confederation (again, by some sheer coincidence, mostly Ibos) sought other alternatives. Most argued for "southern unity" especially at election times as the only viable antidote to Northern domination. As Fidel Odum (Igbo) put it, "What is needed is to stop this Northern-based cabal of oligarchic, political party",⁴² Arthur Nzeribe, Igbo NPP senator in the last days of the Second Republic, shared this view: "Let us all in the South come together, no matter our political beliefs, to confront our Northern brothers, in order to negotiate and get our equal share of national fruits and equal participation in national affairs."⁴³ Presumably, having failed in an earlier secession bid, most Igbo were not very receptive at the time to any suggestion that could possibly lead to another war. An

escalation of tensions generated by the confederation debate had the potential to do just that.

As was argued at the beginning of this paper, in a situation where ethno-regional political parties exist, as long as each party controls its ethno-regional base, the federation is "balanced". But once the UPN lost control of Oyo State, and nearly lost control of Ondo state to the NPN in 1983, as the AG lost its Western region to the NPC-NNDP coalition in 1964/65, the only way to regain control of these states, short of going to war, was to call for confederation in which the states would be guaranteed enough autonomy to 'insulate' them from capture by external forces. The UPN was not, however, alone in this predicament, as the NPP, the other major (Igbo) party, also lost control of Anambra state. In the case of the NPP, however, the harrowing experience of the civil war, as I have pointed out, was too fresh for the Igbo to engage in any serious power tussle. The PRP and GNPP, which respectively lost Kaduna and Borno and Gongola states, lacked the majority domination complex which afflicted the UPN and NPP and NPN, being minority parties.

Underlying the persistence of regional thinking was the increasingly assertive position of the states, a development which marked a return to notions of state autonomy that had been absent under the unitarist arrangements of the military regime. This development was enhanced by the multiparty system as states not controlled by the ruling NPN at the centre became more assertive of state rights. Even state branches of parties became rallying points for asserting autonomy. As one commentator put it:

Up until (the Second Republic) Lagos was the metropolis of the imperial master and state capitals the lonely headquarters of impoverished colonies. Gradually, state governments and state party wings began to demonstrate greater stubbornness than was usual with them. Local needs and local sensitivities assumed greater importance over global federal strategies⁴⁴.

State governments began to feel that it was they that bestowed power on the centre, and that they could not do this without, in the process, developing a healthy sense of their own significance in the scheme of things. In the process, states not controlled by the NPN especially became rivals of the centre. Many examples of such rivalry, which has mostly been analyzed in terms of intergovernmental conflicts⁴⁵, abound. The NPP-controlled Anambra state government stopped road construction work being undertaken by federal contractors in the state on the grounds that the road was a state road⁴⁶. Similarly, the UPN-controlled Oyo state government physically demolished federal low-cost houses being constructed in the state, claiming that the federal government was intruding into an area of state jurisdiction, and that the state government had not granted land rights to the federal government for the purpose⁴⁷. Most state governments – including those controlled by the NPN – opposed the appointment of Presidential Liaison Officers, PLOs, in their states, arguing that the President wanted to usurp their positions through the appointments.⁴⁸ Finally, many state governments frowned at the existence of a “federal” police, which they considered anathema to federal practice. In fact,

having lost confidence in the impartiality of a police force constitutionally controlled by the President, some state governments established their police forces under the guise of road safety and vigilante corps. It is instructive to note that Governor Onabanjo presented the issue of federal police as one of the grounds for advocating confederacy.

Some state governments even exhibited outright separatist behaviour. For example, the Governors of Bendel and Kano states – controlled by the UPN and PRP respectively – ordered their citizens not to turn out to welcome the President when he visited their states, thereby implying that the federal authorities could only relate to citizens through the states. In opening the Lagos state television station whose channel had been allegedly jammed by the federal authorities, the state Governor thanked his people “for the calmness with which they bore the assault on their TV. It was an act capable of provoking any community to react violently....I salute them and I assure them that this administration will never relinquish its responsibility for the protection and defence of the interests of Lagos state against all attacks from any quarter”⁴⁹. Nwabueze has interpreted this to mean that:

The people of Lagos state were being invited to regard an agency of the state government as their own and that of the federal government as completely alien to them, indeed, as an enemy institution. They were being invited to believe that a dispute between the state government and the federal government was a dispute between them and the federal government, or between them and rest of the people of Nigeria represented by the federal government⁵⁰.

The tendentious acts and statements by state governments suggest (at least theoretically) that, by insisting on their ownership of the state and their peoples, to the exclusion of the federal government, they were behaving confederally because in a confederal state, the central government can only relate to citizens through the state governments⁵¹. In the name of asserting state rights (because that is federal practice!), most parties opposed to the NPN sought to jealously guard their "empires". The unfortunate development was that in the process, states became discriminatory entities seeking only to serve their "indigenes" to the exclusion of others. To get admitted into a state-owned school, to get employed, to be treated in hospital, indeed, to enjoy any state service one had to be an indigene of a state. Such state-centredness only served to alienate other Nigerians in their own country⁵². Attempts to take this privilege from the states through their domination by those regarded as "alien forces" therefore had to be resisted. At such points, the confederal argument became expedient.

This brings me to the final point which, as a variant of class analysis, borrows a leaf from Marxian theory and underlies all the explanations already offered. Now, elites require secure home bases to belong to the nationally relevant ruling class. The larger the home base is, the more significant and powerful the elite's claim to power at the centre. This not only explains why political parties have often had majoritarian ethno-regional characters, but also accounts for why the elites are so opposed to loss of territory. It is easy to imagine, so this explanation goes, that Governor Onabanjo advocated confederation because he feared that as other states were being taken over by the NPN he stood the risk of also losing Ogun

state. Similarly, other advocates of confederation could have been searching for secure bases from which to launch their claims to membership of ruling coalitions. The demand for confederation may therefore be a "mask for class privilege" in the final analysis.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed separatist agitations in Nigeria provoked by lopsided control of state power in the Second Republic and the military government that overthrew the Republic. One point that emerges rather clearly is that, as was the case with previous agitations examined in Professor Tamuno's seminal article, the agitations of the 1980s were provoked by the fear of Northern domination. What is remarkable, however, is that no matter how strongly they felt about the unacceptable configuration of power, none of the advocates of confederation demanded the breakup of the federation. The experience of the civil war was apparently too recent to contemplate another round of secession. This was certainly so for the Igbo, leaving the Yoruba with the task of "resisting" Northern domination on behalf of the "South".

To conclude this paper, it should be stated that a confederal arrangement, particularly one that involves recourse to the former regions dominated by the major ethnic groups, is no longer a feasible option. The minorities, who have done a lot to free themselves from majority oppression, would certainly oppose such option. Which is not to say that the last has been heard of separatist agitations and confederation pressures. Indeed, since the annulment of the

presidential election of 12 June, 1993 which sort of confirmed long-held fears about the power capture agenda of core Northern elites, the country went through a prolonged regime of separatist agitations. These agitations are likely to remain for as long as ethno-regional structures and thinking and fears of domination persist. This paper has shown that political parties have been the main articulators of these tendencies. The overall challenge for the Nigerian state is how to ameliorate the divisive aspects of ethno-regional thinking and ensure that enough room exists in the power sharing process for all claimant groups.

NOTES

1. J.S. Mill, *Representative Government* (New York: Everyman's Edition, 1948), pp. 367-368.
2. For the essentials of the federal principle, see K.C. Wheare, *Federal Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 10-34. For an elucidation of the appropriate party system for federalism, see pp. 81-84.
3. This is because, as William Riker puts it, the party system "is the main variable intervening between the background social conditions and the specific nature of the federal bargain". See Riker, "Federalism" in *Governmental Institutions and Processes*, ed. by F.J. Greenstein and N.W. Polsby (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), p. 136.
4. See N. Kasfir, *The Shrinking Political Arena* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 156-158.
5. Amongst other, parties were required to have national executive committees that reflected the country's federal character, to have names and symbols that did not reflect sectionalism, and to have offices and members in at least

two-thirds of the states in the country. See Section 78(1) of the 1977 Electoral Decree and Sections 202 and 203 of the 1979 constitution.

6. See Eastern Regional Government of Nigeria, *The Verbatim Report of the Proceedings of the Supreme Military Council Meeting Held at Aburi, Ghana, 4-5 January, 1967* (Enugu, 1967)
7. Tamuno, "Separatist Agitations in Nigeria since 1914", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol 8, no. 4, 1970, p. 564. Also see Ahmadu Bello, *My Life: An Autobiography* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 135.
8. *Proceedings of the General Conference on Review of the Constitution* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1950), p. 218.
9. The Southern lead in Westernization was partly the product of a deliberate colonial policy to protect the conservative North from the "evils" of Westernization.
10. For the eight-point programme, see A. Bello, *op cit.*, p. 118.
11. See Tamuno, *Op. cit.*, p. 576.
12. Quoted in *ibid.*
13. *Memoranda Submitted by the Delegations to the Ad Hoc Conference on Constitutional Proposals for Nigeria* (Lagos: Nigerian National Press).
14. The origins and initial events of Igbo-Yoruba conflicts have been well documented by James Coleman. See his *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), chapter 16. Also see Eghosa E. Osahae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
15. The State governments of the former Northern Nigeria held regular consultative meetings in addition to common economic and social holdings like the Kaduna Polytechnic and the New Nigeria Development Corporation; the Yoruba-

speaking states were united amongst others by the O'dua investments; while the states of the former Eastern region had common institutions like the African Continental Bank. For an analysis of how these structures impacted on the political configuration of the country, see Eghosa E. Osaghae, "Do Ethnic Minorities Still Exist in Nigeria?", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1986.

16. See full text of the speech in *The Punch* 17 December, 1982. All other references to this speech are found here.
17. See J. Ibrahim, "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1991.
18. For an analysis of the 'rise' and 'fall' of the PPA, see F. Otubanjo, "The Progressive Parties Alliance in Nigeria", *Plural Societies*, vol. 16, no.2, 1986.
19. The NPN captured Oyo and Bendel states from the UPN, and only lost Ondo state to the UPN after a court ruling nullified the result of the gubernatorial elections. The NPN also won Anambra, an erstwhile NPP state.
20. For details of the election results, see *The Federal Electoral Commission's Report on the 1983 Elections* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1983).
21. See *The Guardian*, 20 September, 1983.
22. Full text of the broadcast in *The Guardian*, 5 October 1983, pp. 5 and 13. Further references are to this text.
23. As most Easterners did in 1966, Onabanjo was clearly misinterpreting Gowon's statement to suit his purposes. What Gowon actually said was that "our unitary system of government [decreed by the short-lived government of General Aguiyi-Ironsi] has been unable to stand the test of time... the basis for unity is not there...". For the full text of Gowon's address, see *The Struggle for one Nigeria* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1967).

- pp. 38-39. This, in the context of the address, did not suggest that Nigeria should break up.
24. He also said that his call was not for an eventual breakup of the federation. See *The Guardian*, 9 October, 1983.
 25. See *The Guardian*, 4 October 1983. The UPN argued that its leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was one of the most committed federalists in Nigeria.
 26. This was especially true of the Lagos- and Ibadan-based "Southern" press: *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *The Tribune*, and *The Sketch*. The Northern views were articulated and defended by the *New Nigerian*.
 27. "Inadequacies of Confederalism", *National Concord*, 28 October, 1983, p. 3.
 28. "Confederation" *National Concord*, *ibid*, p.3.
 29. See the public opinion and letters to the editor forums of most newspapers at the time.
 30. "The Kaduna Mafia" in *Sunday Concord*, 22 September, 1985, pp. 7-9. Also see A.O. Olukoshi, "Bourgeois Social Movements and the Struggle for Democracy in Nigeria: An inquiry into the "Kaduna Mafia" in M. Mamdani and E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, eds. *African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 1995).
 31. For example, while jail sentences passed on politicians of northern origin were incredulously reduced from twenty-one to between one and five years, those for southern politicians were either confirmed or reduced by only a few years. Worse still, while ex-president Shehu Shagari was kept under house arrest, his former vice president, Alex Ekwueme, a southerner, was detained at the Kirikiri maximum prison.

32. A case in point was the retirement of principals of federal government unity colleges of southern origin, and their replacement by less experienced headteachers of Northern region.
33. *The Punch*, 30 June, 1985.
34. *Ibid*, 6 July, 1985.
35. *Ibid*, 7 July, 1985.
36. *Ibid*, 23 July, 1985.
37. *The Guardian*, 23 July, 1985.
38. *National Concord*, 21 July, 1985.
39. Editorial, *Nigerian Tribune*, 24 July, 1985.
40. See J. de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972). Also see E.E. Osaghae, E. Onwudiwe and R. Suberu, eds., *The Nigerian Civil War and its Aftermath* (Ibadan, PEFS, 2002).
41. In apparent reference to this, General Olusegun Obasanjo, former head of state (1976-1979) pointed out that "The feeling persists in some quarters that there is a grand design to perpetually exclude some group from political leadership because the group to be so excluded has economic ascendancy". See his "Nigeria: Which way forward?", Keynote address at the 1985 Annual Conference of the Agricultural Society of Nigeria held in Ibadan.
42. *National Concord*, 28 October 1983.
43. Stanley Macebuh, "The Year of the States" in *The Guardian*, 22 May, 1983.
44. See, for example, R.T. Suberu, "Political Opposition and Inter-governmental Relations in the Second Nigerian Republic", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, vol. 28, no.3, 1990; and E.E. Osaghae, "Inter-State Relations in Nigeria", *Publius: The Journal of*

Federalism, vol. 24, no. 4, 1994.

45. Cited in B.O. Nwabueze, "Problems of Federalism in Nigeria", Paper presented at the Institute of African Studies Seminar, University of Ibadan, February 1982.
46. Ibid.
47. PLOs were appointed by the president to coordinate and oversee the activities of the federal government in the states. The positions were not, however, provided for in the constitution.
48. See text of the Governor's address in *Nigerian Tribune*, 19 October, 1981.
49. Nwabueze, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.
50. See K.C. Wheare, *op. cit.*
51. See E.E. Osaghae, "The Problems of Citizenship in Nigeria", *Africa*, vol. xiv, no. 4, 1990.
52. For an analysis of minorities struggles, see E.E. Osaghae, "Ethnic Minorities and Nigerian Federalism", *African Affairs*, vol. 90, 1991; and "From Accommodation to Self-Determination: Minority Nationalism and the Restructuring of the Nigerian State", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 7, no 1, 2001.

HOST-STRANGER CONFLICTS AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN NIGERIA

by

Isaac Olawale Albert

International migration is a topic that generates energetic discussions and polarizing debates in nearly all cities of the world. The polarization often revolves around issues related to race and ethnicity, perceptions of differences, and fears of the unfamiliar.¹

Population mobility across international borders has become part of the political economy and social structure of many societies around the world. More than ever before, people now leave their countries of origin to seek better living conditions abroad.

The modern international migrants can be categorized into two main groups: refugees² and migrant workers. These two types of migrants are of increasing academic interest for a number of reasons. They have the potentials of contributing to economic development of their host communities in terms of cheaper labour force and greater market for local products. The presence of a refugee population could lead to the provision of new infrastructures (roads, water, health care institutions, electricity, etc) by international organizations for a host community. In a saturated economy, the presence of migrants (whether voluntary or forced) could lead to reduced employment opportunities for citizens; it could also stimulate

higher cost of living.³ The third situation usually produces friction between the migrants and their hosts.

Africa has the highest number of international migrants in the world. In 1992, the continent had 6.7 million refugees. Latin America, North America, Europe and the Middle East all put together have the same number of refugees. Africa also had between 9.2 and 14.3 million internally displaced people during same period⁴. The problem must have worsened since then considering the recent wars in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, former Zaire, Democratic Congo Republic, etc.

As Sumner⁵ noted, contact between migrants and their hosts can produce at least four kinds of group behaviour: ingroup integration, self-regard or hyper evaluation of the ingroup, hostile relations between ingroup and outgroup, and derogatory stereotyping of outgroup characteristics. This paper intends to discuss how economic factors often produce hostility between the ingroup and outgroup in situations of international migration. The ingroup, referred to as "hosts" in this paper is the indigenous population of any given society while the outgroup (also referred to as "strangers" or "aliens") are migrant elements. The conflict between the two often revolves around social, economic and political issues. It is argued here that economic factors are usually the most important. This should not be surprising to us in view of the fact that one of the major reasons why people migrate to other place is to better their economic status. They sometimes have to do this at the expense of their host community. The relationship between the two groups is often characterised by hostility where the economic activities of the strangers are

threatening to the interests of their host population. The stranger might be socially, economically and politically excluded or even expelled from his host community as a result of this.

Writing generally on the sorry state of the outgroup in international settings, McDougal, Lasswell and Chen noted:

Aliens are commonly subjected to rigorous registration requirements and to harsh restrictions in regard to freedom of movement, both internally and transnationally. Aliens may also be arbitrarily expelled. Aliens may be hampered, for various reasons, in obtaining effective remedy for ordinary wrongs and may experience denial of justice – including subjection to arbitrary arrest and detention, denial of access to appropriate tribunals, judicial or administrative, denial of fair hearing, and subjection to arbitrary decisions. When handicapped by a different mother tongue, aliens may enjoy limited opportunities for education, and financial aid, and other assistance may be withheld.⁶

HOST-STRANGER CONFLICTS

When a person migrates from his place of origin to another, he finds himself threatened or intimidated by the dominant social, religious, political and economic characteristics of his new environment. This is largely because:

The stranger...does not share the basic assumptions of the group. He becomes essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the

approached group...To him the cultural patterns of the approached group do not have the authority of a tested system of recipes...because he does not partake in the vivid historical tradition by which it has been formed.⁷

Samir Amin pointed out that this kind of migrant has three major means of survival: assimilation, pacific coexistence or animosity.⁸ By "assimilation" is meant "the swallowing up of one culture by another. This occurs when a group or a whole society gradually adopts, or are forced into adopting, the customs, values, lifestyles and often language of the more dominant culture"⁹. Assimilation often requires acceptance of some fundamental and self-devaluing socialization. The stranger is literally "forced" to drop his original culture in favour of the superior one he is coming in contact with. Both domestic and international migrants can attain this kind of development. After a few generations of assimilation, the minority cultures in such a society gradually disappear to the level that everybody could unquestionably describe themselves as a citizen.

There is "pacific coexistence" when the migrants and their hosts reject assimilation into each other. They retain their core identities while at the same time merging into a superordinate group and to a large extent, tolerate and respect each other. Each of the interacting parties knows the limits of its powers and privileges and tries not to offend the cultural sensibilities of the other.

There is "animosity" when the interacting parties refuse to assimilate into each other but at the same time do things intolerable to the other. This often happens when the migrants

reject assimilation into their host communities by engaging in social, economic and political practices which the host community considers to be offensive. Animosity could also result from the situation where the migrant is denied assimilation into the host community. This often breeds intergroup hostility: the host fighting to eject the migrants and the latter fighting to retain their membership of the host community.

Whether a migrant population will be treated with friendship or hostility depends largely on the conditions under which they came into contact with their hosts (whether peaceful or otherwise), the relative economic and political power of the interacting parties and the dominant countenance of the host population. Most contacts start by producing "culture shock". How this problem is handled often determines the level to which the stranger is accommodated into his host community or denied assimilation by his host.

What is "culture shock"? This concept which was introduced by Oberg¹⁰ and further elaborated by other notable scholars¹¹ refers to the confusion and disorientation many migrants face when they come in contact with other cultures. For the first time, the migrant comes across new ways of doing things – behaviour, dressing, thinking, marriage etc. – all of which he is required to tolerate as a way of meriting membership of his host community.

Writing on how migrants naturally react to "culture shock", Austin noted:

Most often, when people find themselves in a "foreign" culture with which they have very little past experience, they generally – quite naturally –

behave in ways that are familiar to them. They do what they are already skilled in doing. When they discover that their behaviour – the things they say and do – and their expectations are not acceptable to the residents of the foreign culture, they first experience a sense of disconfirmation of *their expectations or hopes*. Then they are faced with a complex decision that cannot be avoided. They must decide whether to (a) continue to behave in the same ways they are used to, comfortable with, and skilled in (regardless of whether or not these ways are acceptable or tolerated in the foreign culture); (b) leave the uncomfortable foreign culture either by returning to their native culture or becoming “psychotic”); or (c) discover and adapt to the expectations of the citizens of the foreign culture – even if that means giving up, suspending or modifying previous attitudes, values and behaviours. If they choose the last option, they place themselves in the awkward and uncomfortable position of knowing little, if anything, about the new culture and having to learn *everything* about what it takes to get along there.

As a way of coping with culture shock it is always necessary for the migrants and their hosts to slightly adjust to the systems of each other. But more important, it is the migrant that has to work out the best methods of achieving peaceful coexistence with his host population. If he could accommodate new ways of doing things, members of his host community

accept him as a member of their community; if he rejects them he is seen as an outsider who should be denied the rights to citizenship or friendship. The problems of the migrant starts from this point.

One major factor that promotes affection between strangers and their hosts is cultural similarity. In a situation where the cultures of the two groups coming into contact with each other are similar, they see each other as one, easily understand the social characteristics of each other and can easily adjust to the needs of each other. To bring about this kind of social situation, strangers who seek to integrate into their host communities simply adopt the cultural practices of their hosts – their language, dressing pattern, mode of living and religious practices. In some cases, the migrant might need to establish fictive kinship with members of his host community. In most cases it works and within a few years the stranger becomes accepted by members of his host communities. There are many African examples of such ethnically incorporated societies¹².

The functional theories of interpersonal relations¹³ assume that when two groups come in contact with each other they have the opportunity of cultural exchanges, trade and other friendly social interaction and in the process have the opportunity of assimilating into each other. For example, Newcomb's theory of interpersonal attraction has a principle of propinquity which states that "Other things being equal, people are most likely to be attracted to those in closest contact with them"¹⁴.

"All other things" are, however, not always "equal" in Africa and several parts of the world playing host to strangers.

By the way they live their lives, many African immigrants often resist assimilation into their host communities. They sometimes physically segregate themselves from their host communities. They keep their original cultures, engage in endogamy and at the same time exploit the resources of their host communities in ways that could make their hosts accuse them of selfishness. They live in these communities for many years but still nurse the ambition of returning home one day with all that they have amassed from the "foreign land". A popular Yoruba adage says: "*Dídùn àjò ní k'á tà k'á kéré oko délé.*" (The joy of sojourning in a foreign land is to "sell", make profit and make remittance home). The Yoruba man, like many other ethnic migrants in Africa, do not see a foreign land as his home; the real home is his place of origin. All other places are just "farmland" (*oko*) from where one fetches food. The local hosts of these people often know this aspect of the stranger's life. It is within this context that a large percentage of immigrants in Africa are treated as "strangers" by members of their host communities. The strangers are labeled as "aliens, intruders, interlopers, foreigners, *novus homo*, immigrants, guests, outsiders, outlanders" and so on because they reject assimilation and because they are a source of threat to their hosts, most especially in communities with acute shortage of economic resources. Of all the labels that have been given to the unassimilated migrant, we shall focus our attention in this paper on the "stranger".

The Stranger

Shack and Skinner see the concept "stranger" as one of the most powerful sociological instrument for understanding the social processes of individuals and groups confronting new social orders. The concept provides the scientific platform for understanding why and how one migrant element is assimilated into his host community and the other is denied or willfully rejects assimilation; it further helps us to appreciate why migrant elements often organise themselves into ethnic associations.

Who is a stranger? According to Georg Simmel, a stranger is "the man who comes today and stays tomorrow, the potential wanderer who, although he has gone no further, has not quite got over the freedom of coming and going"¹⁵. This is actually the kind of African situation that we tried to mention above. But there are also African migrants that eventually get assimilated into their host communities. This is the kind of people that Margaret Wood referred to in her work as "a wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, or he may come today and remain with us permanently"¹⁶.

Wood's position is of interest to us here in two respects. Firstly, it alludes to the fact that the stranger could settle in a community today and decide to leave tomorrow. Secondly, that the stranger could decide to settle in the community permanently. The migrant who comes today and truly remains permanently often finds it easier to work out modalities for cordial relationships with his host community. To make him feel wanted in his new homeland, such a migrant is often inclined towards imbibing the dominant cultural systems of

his host community. He identifies with the developmental efforts of the community, chooses his wife from members of his host community and is willing to give out his own daughters to members of his host community as wives. On the other hand, the man who "comes today and goes tomorrow" retains his traditional system and idiosyncrasies in the foreign land and in the process becomes recognised as undue competitor with his host population in the social, economic, political and other spheres. The man "who comes today and goes tomorrow" could, in fact, pretend to be a permanent settler: the way he lives his life will however give him out as a stranger.

Donald Levine considers such a migrant as an "outsider": Whatever his aspirations, the appearance of an outsider is likely to arouse feelings of anxiety and at least latent antagonism. More accurately, perhaps, it could be said to arouse pronounced ambivalence: positive feelings related to the proximity, anxiety and hostile feelings related to the fact that one who should be distant is close by. The host's response will therefore be described as compulsive, reflecting the reality of a persisting ambivalence underlying all stranger relationships and the related fact that these relationships are invested with a particularly high degree of affect. It will be compulsively friendly if positive feelings predominate, compulsively antagonistic if negative ones are dominant.

That a stranger refuses to assimilate into his host community does not automatically suggest that he will be treated with hostility. Some other scholars have noted that it

is the *economic aggressiveness of the strangers more than their political or social life* that engender hostility against them¹⁷. For example, W.G Runciman noted that "...those who in general view their position in such a way as to feel a sense of relative deprivation will be more likely to express hostility to outgroups and specifically to immigrants (or strangers)"¹⁸. The hostility against migrants into some African societies can be explained from this perspective. The perspective, however, does not provide an exhaustive explanation for the problems that strangers everywhere face.

Historical Background to Migration in Africa

International migrations have been part of African history from the earliest times. Such migrations can be broken into three according to their time dimensions: the precolonial, the colonial and the post-colonial. Environmental disasters, wars, etc occasioned the pre-colonial migrations. At this period the migration was of persons involving resettlement from one place to another. Some of the migrants settled on unoccupied land while some others settled in already established communities. In the latter, recipient political leaders moderated the movement of strangers into their territories and the strangers settled under conditions dictated by their hosts.¹⁹

The history of migrations in Africa changed towards the end of the nineteenth century as contact with European capitalism and export trade stimulated migrations of labour from relatively underdeveloped areas to the better-developed ones. With the coming of European colonialism, people settled wherever they liked and got protected under the western

concepts of “freedom of trade”, “freedom of movement”, etc. Nobody was given the power of preventing any other person from settling wherever he wanted so long as such a person was not engaged in anything that could disturb the peace. The entire social and economic system established by the colonial administrators placed both the strangers and their hosts in equal positions. At worst the strangers were accorded the status of “honorary citizens” of the city in which they settled. Within this context, many African societies became involuntary hosts to different kinds of migrant elements. The paradox of this is that:

...in many countries the strangers even tried to oust the local people from purely African economic pursuits. In the Ivory Coast, the fishing industry was almost entirely in the hands of the Togolese and other strangers. In Ghana, Nigerians dominated the indigenous sector of the diamond-mining enterprise, the waterfront stores at Winneba and Fadama motor-parts market on the outskirts of Accra. About 40 percent of the female vendors in the Kumasi market were Yoruba and the Gao men from Sudan accounted for 30 percent of the yam vendors there. So important were Gao men in this latter trade that the section of the market in which yams were sold was called “the Gao market.”²⁰

The information provided above relates more to the experience of international migrants. There were also several internal migrants who economically displaced members of their host communities during the colonial period and against whom the indigenous population could take no action. The

situation changed with the demise of the colonial regimes in these African societies.

The present study is more interested in the colonial and post-colonial migrations. The two are often referred to in African history as "modern migrations". Modern international migration is academically interesting to us in two respects. The first is that it is largely motivated by capitalist tendencies. It is a migration of labour from economically disadvantaged areas to economically advantaged areas. Modern migration, in some situations, resulted from internal conflicts and natural disasters as could be seen in the case of refugee movements. People tend to run away from conflict-ridden societies or environmentally endangered terrain to more peaceful areas. This kind of migration has social, economic and political consequences on the sending and receiving societies. One of these is probably why Castles and Miller²¹ noted that: "...international migration has never been as pervasive and socioeconomically and politically significant as it is today. Never before has international migration seemed so pertinent to national security and so connected to conflict and disorder on a global scale". The scholars predicted that cities around the world would be increasingly affected by international migration, either as receiving or sending areas or both.

The status of international strangers changed in most parts of Africa between the late 1950s and early 1960s following the decolonization process. Many African nations became independent at this period²². The period witnessed unprecedented hardening of national frontiers, increased xenophobia and hostility against strangers who all these years refused to assimilate or have been denied assimilation into

their host communities. The autochthonous population who sought to put their post-colonial political sovereignty to maximal use was now prepared to withdraw the honorary citizenship conferred on strangers by the colonial administrators. At this time, the citizenship question had become so important that strangers found it no longer easy to get absorbed into their hosts societies. One was either identified as a citizen and treated with respect or singled out as a stranger and accorded a subordinate status. Unlike the situation in Western societies where immigrants are easily allowed to attain the status of citizen, immigrants in Africa are often denied citizenship and remain as aliens sometimes for the rest of their lives. Within this context, several international migrants in different parts of Africa who hitherto dominated the economy of their urban host communities were repatriated during the post-colonial era. For example, Dahomeans, Togolese and Nigerians were repatriated from Ivory Coast; some Nigerians, most especially the Yoruba, were expelled from Ghana; and the Kenyan Luo and Asians were sent out of Uganda²³.

It was, however, not so possible to expel the internal migrants resident in towns outside their places of origin within the same country. The constitution of most African countries protected the rights of such citizens to live wherever they want within their fatherland. The stranger-host relationship under such situations is usually characterised by physical violence. This partly explains urban ethnicity in modern Africa since "the attitude towards the stranger by a group also characterizes the future of the group, the stage of its development."²⁴

Three case studies are used in this paper to illustrate how

contacts between international migrants and their hosts can generate hostility between the two. The case studies are the 1969 expulsion of Nigerian "aliens" from Ghana, the 1983 expulsion of Ghanaian "illegal aliens" from Nigeria despite the ECOWAS treaty binding the two nations together and the 1994/95 hostility against Rwandese refugees in Tanzania. We have chosen these three case studies for some specific reasons. As earlier argued, there are two major kinds of migrants: refugees and workers. The Ghanaian and Nigerian cases are examples of labour induced kind of migration.

We have taken the two countries together because of the prominence of West Africa in migration studies in Africa. The sub-region is believed to have the highest concentration of migrants in Africa. As Adepaju²⁵ noted, "migrants have always considered West Africa as an economic unit where trade in goods and services flowed freely; the free movement of people was, therefore, an integral feature of prevailing economic interdependence among the nation states". Russell and others²⁶ too observed that migration in West Africa "has become largely spontaneous and includes levels of both seasonal and undocumented migration reportedly higher than elsewhere in sub-saharan Africa". Our Ghanaian and Nigerian case studies are also important in some other respects: the Nigerian expelled from Ghana in 1969 and 1970 were colonial migrants. They were hosted in Ghana by the British and were expelled following the end of British colonial rule, though not immediately after. The Ghanaian experience in Nigeria, on the other hand, had to do with post-colonial kind of migrants. They were expelled from Nigeria because they abused some sections of ECOWAS protocols on free

movement of persons across the West African sub-region. The example from Tanzania typically illustrates some of the problems faced by those who host refugees from warring communities in Africa and probably other parts of the world.

THE EXPULSION OF NIGERIAN "ALIENS" FROM GHANA IN 1969 AND 1970

Between 1969 and early 1970, several thousands of illegal African aliens living in Ghana were ejected from the country. The most affected were Nigerians. In all, over 100,000 Nigerians had to leave the country. This particular development was unbecoming of Ghana which had a very liberal policy towards strangers up to the early 1960s. What really happened? Why were so many Nigerians affected? How do the issues raised in the theoretical aspect of this paper help to explain this Ghanaian experience?

Nigerians settled in Ghana by the late 1960s could be broken into two different cultural worlds: the Islam-dominated northern Nigerians and the Christian-dominated southern Nigerians. The northern Nigerian immigrants in Ghana were Hausa dominated while the Yoruba speaking people dominated the southerners. As noted by Lovejoy²⁷, traders from Hausaland had been importing kolanut from the forests of Asante [Ghana] long before the Asante empire came to prominence in the seventeenth century. Until after 1900 when modern means of transportation was introduced, the Hausa kola traders operated donkey caravans from the middle Volta basin to major Hausa cities in present-day northern Nigeria. The traders brought to Ghana Hausa textile and leather goods

from Central Sudan. Some of these traders later settled in northern Ghana most especially at Salaga and the neighbouring communities²⁸ not only as traders but also as Islamic scholars and charm makers.

When the British tried to gain access to northern Ghana in the late 19th century, the Asante fiercely resisted them. Between 1869 and 1874, the British had to launch a military expedition as a result of which the popular Asante empire was destroyed and British colonialism became firmly established in the Gold Coast. Most of the soldiers who fought on the British side were recruited from northern Nigeria. Some of them later settled in Ghana as recruits of the Gold Coast Constabulary in the north after their retirement. As a way of reducing the huge cost of recruiting West Indians for military services in Ghana, the British decided in 1880 to recruit a permanent Hausa force in northern Gold Coast. Most of these new recruits were Hausa from Salaga. The love of the British for Hausa soldiers was borne out of their experiences during the campaign against the Asante. The Hausa soldiers were loyal to their masters beyond a mere call to military service: they fought gallantly and obeyed all instructions given to them²⁹. Most of these soldiers became traders and businessmen after their retirement. The British later supported these retired soldiers to have a separate settlement of their own in Kumasi called *Zongo* (meaning a camping place for a caravan or a lodging place for strangers). The *Zongo* is alternatively referred to as "Hausa settlement" though all the *Zongos* in Ghana are multi-ethnic in character. They consist of Mossi, Yoruba and other settler population. The *Zongo* tradition later spread to other Ghanaian towns.³⁰ Most of the northern

Ghanaian towns in which the Hausa speaking people from Nigeria were settled are Hausa-speaking. Even in the *Zongos* located in southern Ghanaian towns, Hausa is the lingua franca. This enabled the Hausa immigrants from northern Nigeria to be accorded better status than any other stranger elements in Ghana.

Added to this was the religious roles played by Hausa clerics. They served as Imams during Islamic prayer sessions attended by Ghanaians of different ethnic groups. To this end, only those Hausa immigrants from northern Nigeria who so wished were regarded as strangers. Most of them were treated as citizens, as different from their Yoruba counterparts who were treated as strangers.

The way the Yoruba speaking people came to Ghana was different from the way the Hausa came. The presence of the Yoruba in Ghana could have started since the last few decades of the nineteenth century, but it was actually during the first decade of the twentieth century that they began to be noticed in any serious number. Eades provided three reasons for this³¹. The first is the freedom of trade and movement advocated by the British colonial authority at this time. This facilitated trade from Yorubaland through Borgu to Ghana and enabled the Yoruba traders to penetrate into the nooks and corners of Ghana. The cocoa industry that developed in Ghana around this time brought much prosperity. Many Yoruba traders travelled to Ghana to have their own fair share of the cocoa money. Ghana also witnessed rapid urbanization which necessitated unprecedented importation of food-stuffs from the northern territories. This increased the volume of money in circulation. Last but not the least, this period witnessed a

decline in the Mossi cloth industry in the north of Ghana. These three factors made the population of Yoruba people in Ghana to increase dramatically in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The Yoruba traded in their traditional cloth, beads, potash and antimony from northern Nigeria. Later on, they started dealing in imported textiles and provisions. They traded along with the Hausa and Mossi.

Sooner than later, the population of the Yoruba people in Ghana became intimidating to their hosts. By the late 1960s, there was over 100,000 Yoruba migrants in Ghana. They monopolised the trade in provisions, textile and manufactured goods and could be found doing this in almost all markets in Ghanaian towns and villages. The local people were reduced to mere buyers of goods sold by "foreigners". Explaining the link between the kinship system and economic success of the Yoruba migrants in Ghana, Eades noted among many other things:

Migration developed vertically through the recruitment of junior lineage members and horizontally within networks of friends of similar age, interest and religion. The result was a very tightly knit community in which both patterns of interaction among kin and friendship networks were in many cases derived from the home town...through utilization of these links with their home towns, the Yoruba managed to successfully solve some of the perennial problems of small-scale petty traders. Their system of recruitment ensured that the young trader starting to trade on his own had at once received a sound education in trading methods, knowledge of

the best places to purchase a given commodity at the best price and the capital to exploit this knowledge. His membership of a tightly-knit town community ensured encouragement from friends and relatives who also placed a high value on success in trading, and allowed him privileged access to information on the state of the market in the south from other Yoruba who had just returned. But his acceptance and exploitation of these mechanisms for trading success would in turn only reinforce his links with his lineage and town of origin...these enabled the Yoruba to exploit vigorously trading opportunities which arose as a result of the rapid economic development of the colonial period, and resulted in a lively increase in their numbers³².

By the late 1960s, when the government of Ghana started planning to eject strangers from their midst, a substantial part of the informal economy of the country was obviously in the hands of the Yoruba and Hausa migrants from Nigeria. The factors that made the Yoruba to be particularly successful in the country – namely trade and kinship – made the hostility against them to be greater. The successful Yoruba traders literally refused to integrate into the Ghanaian society. They dressed in a unique way that communicated resistance to the local culture. They had strong town unions, which were suspected to have hidden political agenda in Ghana though these unions claimed not to be interested in “local politics”. The fact that Hausa was the lingua franca of the people in northern Ghana made the Hausa-speaking people to be better tolerated than the Yoruba. Islamic factor also made the Hausa

people to be better integrated into the Ghanaian society. When the ejection order came into full force, therefore, the bulk of those affected were Yoruba-speaking. They constituted about 80% of the total population of Nigerians ejected from Ghana in 1969 and 1970.

In November 1969, the government of Ghana promulgated a "Compliance Order" giving all non-citizens two weeks within which to regularise their stay in Ghana by obtaining residence and working permits or leave the country. The government passed the compliance order for two major reasons. The first is to increase the employment opportunities available to Ghanaians by forcing aliens to go back to their respective countries. The compliance order was also expected to reduce the chance of aliens having a say in the political affairs of Ghana. It was particularly targeted at reducing the number of "foreign Africans" in Ghana; it was not at all directed against Europeans. Foreign Africans in the context were also referred to pejoratively as "illegal aliens" – Wangara, Mossi, Lagosians (Nigerians), Ewe from the eastern and western international borders of Ghana, and the like.

When the economy of Ghana was prosperous there was enough work for everybody to do in the country. The so-called "foreign Africans" only did those "dirty jobs" (in industries and in the market places) which not too many citizens were prepared to do. They were, however, so serious-minded in all they did that they had enough resources at their disposal and started becoming envied by their hosts. As the Ghanaian economy stagnated in the 1960s largely owing to the fall in cocoa price, Ghanaian school leavers who could no longer find jobs, whether in the formal or informal sectors of the

economy, started complaining about the domineering influence of aliens. Ghanaian businessmen also blamed their dwindling fortunes, not on the multinational organisations operating in their country, but rather on the small-scale business operators – Lebanese, Indians and Nigerians most especially.

There were also some political aspects to the problems faced by the strangers. Most of them settled in Ghana under conditions specified by the colonial masters. At independence, Ghanaians found it difficult to recognize many of these people as citizens. The strangers could clearly see the dangers ahead. As a way of promoting peace with their hosts, most of the strangers abstained from political activities. They segregated themselves politically from their hosts, organised themselves into different nonpolitical societies and used these to encourage their members to abstain from politics. In 1966, the strangers were permitted to appoint recognised headmen who were formally permitted to interact with the local authorities without being accused of political activity. The Ghanaian society at this time was divided between the supporters and opponents of Kwame Nkrumah (who was removed during the 1966 coup). It was, therefore, popularly believed that the strangers in Ghana could not be as political as they claimed to be. The side to which they owed their allegiance was also difficult to say. The strangers were therefore suspected from all sides to have some parochial political interests. They were harshly criticised from all angles. The criticism against the strangers at this time therefore became intimidating to the government of Busia. He bowed to the popular public opinion and promulgated the expulsion

order³³. In all, over 100,000 Nigerians were affected by the order.

The Expulsion of Ghanaian “illegal aliens” from Nigeria in 1983

Several thousands of Ghanaians illegally resident in Nigeria were expelled from the country in 1983. It was literally a “return match” of what happened to Nigerians in Ghana in 1969/70. How did these Ghanaians get to Nigeria and why and how were they expelled?

The migration of Ghanaians to Nigeria started as early as the late nineteenth century: about the same time that Nigerians started making their presence felt in Ghana. Archival records in Ibadan show that Ghanaians were among those who introduced rubber planting and tapping techniques to the south-western parts of Nigeria³⁴. The data from Kaduna archives equally indicate that when the *Sabon Gari* (stranger settlement) was established in Kano around 1911, Ghanaians and Sierra-Leoneans were among those West African immigrants allowed to settle in the strangers’ quarters³⁵. The number of Ghanaians in the country increased with the economy boom experienced by Nigeria in the 1970s. The population of Ghanaians in the country reached the highest level in the early 1980s as a result of the ECOWAS protocols on free movement of persons within the West African sub-region. Ghana, like Nigeria, is a member state of the ECOWAS. The other member states are Benin, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Mali,

Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra-Leone, Togo and Burkina Fasso. The main objectives of the sub-regional organisation as stated on the second page of its treaty (1975) are as follows:

...accelerated and sustained economic development of their states and the creation of a homogenous society leading to the unity of the countries of West Africa, by the elimination of all types of obstacles to the free movement of goods, capital and persons.

As a first step to achieving its goal of integrating West Africans economically, industrially, politically and militarily, ECOWAS endorsed its protocol on free movement of persons, residence and establishment in 1979. The protocol was however not signed by the member states until 1980 because of the "free movement" clause. The protocol was to be implemented over a period of fifteen years in three phases. At the end of the third phase it was projected that all barriers to free movement of citizens must have been removed. The implementation of the first phase commenced in 1980. It stipulates that:

1. Any citizen of the Community who wishes to enter the territory of any other Member State shall be required to possess valid travel documents and international health certificates;
2. A citizen of the Community visiting any Member State for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days shall enter the territory of the Member State through the official entry point free of visa requirements. Such citizens shall, however, be required to obtain permission for an extension of stay from the

appropriate authority if after such entry that citizen has cause to stay for more than ninety (90) days.

The protocol forbids ECOWAS immigrants from residing permanently or engaging in commercial and industrial activities in their host states without obtaining the necessary permits.

As soon as the first phase of the protocol came into force, the more economically strong states in the sub-region witnessed an unprecedented immigration of people. Once the immigrants entered into their host countries, they never cared to regularise their stay. The ECOWAS protocol only permits the immigrant to stay in his community for a maximum of 90 days without residence permit and not beyond that.

Ghanaians topped the list of those who migrated to other West African countries. This was due to the serious decline in the economic fortunes of their country. Ghana was at its lowest ebb of economic development at this time. Their major point of migration was Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. To the Ghanaians, Nigeria was a "Small London" which every young man seeking prosperity must visit. The presence of Ghanaians was therefore noticeable in all Nigerian cities and villages. They were ready to do any job that any Nigerian rejected for whatever reason. They were therefore employed as primary and secondary school teachers, artisans, motor drivers, cobblers etc. So many were Ghanaian teachers in Nigeria up to the early 1980s that some Nigerian children started speaking English with the usual Ghanaian accents. They earned their living in the country by dint of hard work.

Until the economic crisis that attended the global glut in oil price between the late 1970s and early 1980s, Nigerians

were friendly with Ghanaians. The strangers were not seen as a threat. The situation changed thereafter owing to the economic crisis witnessed by the country. The Nigerian government started blaming some of the economic woes of the country on illegal aliens. Nobody was therefore surprised when the government eventually asked the strangers to leave.

On 8 January 1983, the Nigerian Minister of Internal Affairs, Alhaji Ali Baba, announced the expulsion of illegal aliens from Nigeria. As usual the objects of attack were those African aliens living and working in Nigeria without proper permits³⁶. The Minister gave the aliens a grace of a fortnight to pack up their belongings and leave the country. On 25 January 1983, the government issued the statement that the professionals among the aliens who are illegally employed were given up till 28 February to carefully pack their belongings ready for the homeward journey. Those aliens employed by the federal and state governments and parastatals, Cameroonians and Chadians who came to settle in Nigeria before 1963 were all excluded from the expulsion order³⁷. About three million ECOWAS citizens were affected by the order. About half a million of them were from Ghana.

By February 3, 1983, about 30,000 Ghanaians had returned home from Nigeria. They fed their kinsmen with stories of different kinds of hardships they suffered in the hands of Nigerian and Beninise law enforcement agents enroute Ghana. Over 100 of them died of hunger, dehydration, fever, cholera and exhaustion. The expulsion order was therefore condemned from different parts of Africa and also by the Western press. *Africa Research Bulletin* (January 15 – February 14 1983:6722) for example, referred to the whole

thing as a "callous process of turning up to three million aliens into scapegoats for Nigeria's mounting problems". A section of the international press also interpreted Nigeria's action as an abuse of the rights of those unfortunate foreigners. In a Kaduna Radio broadcast on February 4, 1983, Ishaya Audu, Nigeria's Minister for External Affairs, responded to the criticism against Nigeria. The government claimed that it had not violated any United Nations Human Rights provisions by expelling the aliens. It claimed that the illegal aliens were simply paying the penalty for violating Nigeria's immigration law, and thus the expulsion order was an act in defence of Nigeria's sovereignty and national interest.

THE RWANDAN "STRANGERS" IN NORTH-WESTERN TANZANIA, 1994 and 1995

There are two major ethnic groups in Rwanda; the Hutus and the Tutsis. Conflicts between these two ethnic groups date back to the colonial period in African history³⁸. The conflict assumed a crisis dimension in 1994 following the death of President Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, in a plane crash caused by a surface-to-air missile believed to have been fired by some Tutsi extremists. This led to a government-directed genocide of the Tutsis: over one million people were killed in cold blood. Several thousands of Rwandans who feared being slaughtered fled the country to the neighbouring countries of Burundi, Tanzania, Zaire and Uganda – the Great Lake Region of East and Central Africa. The country most favoured by the refugees was Tanzania. The direction of the refugees's movement in Tanzania was towards the Kagera

region of North-western Tanzania.

When the refugees started to arrive in the Kagera region in April 1994 the general posture of their hosts was that of an African community that was ready to accommodate some brothers and sisters in distress. Their sympathetic host community initially supported the refugees with free food and drinking water. This brought some joy to the officials of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], which immediately took charge of the situation. The other humanitarian agencies that quickly rushed in their staff to the area for relief measures were also pleased that the refugees were moving into a rather friendly environment. The cordial relationship between the refugees and their hosts was, however, shortlived.

The Kagera region of North-western Tanzania in which the refugees were settled consists of six administrative districts. Three of these districts were most affected by the influx of refugees from Rwanda because of their strategic locations. These were Ngara, Muleba and Karagwe.

The situation in Ngara – one of the closest Tanzania towns to the Rwanda border – is interesting and will be focused upon here. The Rwandan refugees who first arrived in Ngara between the 6th and 20th April, 1994 were 15,000. Between the 28th and 29th April, 1994 the number had increased to 170,000. As the civil disorder in Rwanda became more complex in the months of May, June and mid-July more people fled the country through Rusumo border area and this assured Ngara of an influx of at least 3,000 refugees daily. By August 1994, the refugees in Ngara alone were 348,673 against the local population of 186,105³⁹. This had adverse economic and

environmental consequences for their host community.

The first major concern of the local people was that the refugees had outnumbered them by 2 to 1. This impacted negatively on the people's standard of living. The refugees in transit, in the desperate efforts to survive, turned farmlands into camps, cut down cash crop trees for shelter and cooking fuel and polluted local streams. Some major environmental problems resulted from these: deforestation, poor soil fertility, poor cash crop yields and problem of food insecurity. Some of the refugees were not satisfied with what the local farmers provided them; they stole what they could not afford from the local farmers. The refugees also bought so much from the local people that inflation soon resulted in their host communities. Prices of bananas, potatoes and cassava went beyond the reach of the common man. The schools and hospitals in Kagera region which were turned into refugees camps, had their windows and doors badly damaged. Several local wells and springs were overused by the refugees and therefore became either polluted or dried up. The refugees also brought great pressure to bear on the means of transportation. Many overused roads became damaged. The local security agencies in Tanzania had more jobs to do at the refugee camps. Many of the refugees came into Tanzania with arms and had to be disarmed. Some of them came into the country with stolen property and had to be carefully identified and dealt with.

The above constituted an unnecessary burden on the local population. They started to regret their initial hospitality to the refugees. Why should they be made to suffer for the problems of others? The general mood of Tanzanians at this

time was rightly captured in an interview granted to Dr. Adisa⁴⁰ by a pub owner in Ngara:

The *mzungus* (white men- an obvious reference to foreign relief workers) are here to cater for refugee needs and as a consequence we suffer. *Tunawahadumia wakimobizi katika mazingira magunmuzane* [We render difficult service to the refugees]. How can anyone impress on us the need for kindness to strangers when these strangers put fire under our own houses. We now pay 20-30,000 shillings [between 33 and 50 US dollars] for rooms that used to be given free for lodgings. We see light and suffer the noise of generators used by the refugees while our houses are without light [electricity] in the night. Just as the *mzungus* are pushing up house rents by their extravagant nature, the refugees are pushing up food prices. We used to buy eggs for about 5 shillings; now a fresh egg costs 100 shillings and we pay 130 shillings for fried eggs. The refugees eat superior cow meat while we eat goat meat. How did they get the money? They rustle, steal and commit robberies. What have we gained by being nice to others except penury? Enough is enough. They should go away.

The government of Tanzania also felt intimidated by the population of the Rwandan refugees. It read political meanings to the whole development. Even before the 1994 crisis in Rwanda the government of Tanzania had always been complaining about the unbecoming attitude of the government

of the late Habyarimana towards the rehabilitation of Rwandan refugees in Tanzania. Habyarimana was believed to have taken pleasure in leaving the responsibility for its refugees to other nations. In the mid-1970s, President Habyarimana was said to have proposed to settle about a million Rwandans in the Kagera region as cheap labour for constructing a hydroelectric power plant in the area. Reflecting on this and the lukewarm attitude of the Rwandan government to issues pertaining to their refugees abroad, a top government official in Tanzania noted during an interview with Dr. Jimi Adisa:

These are funny people. How can a government be indifferent to a situation in which over three millions of its people live in exile as refugees? There is more to this than meets the eye. When you go there, ask them why. We think that from time to time they deem it necessary to generate turmoil and conflict and throw some people out to stabilize the ratio of population to land.

The Tanzanian government therefore saw the presence of over 600,000 Rwandan refugees in the Kagera region in 1995 as a consummation of Habyarimana's plan to dump some of his citizens in neighbouring countries.

The Tanzanian authority also feared that the presence of the Rwandan refugees could threaten the peace of Tanzania. The government received several reports of arms and ammunition that were shipped to the refugee camps and was also informed about the military training that took place among the Hutu extremists at night at Lumasi camp under a Belgian mercenary. By March 1995, the Tanzanian government could no longer tolerate this "nonsense" any longer. On 31st March

1995 the government had to close its borders against the refugees.⁴¹

An additional incentive to close the Tanzanian borders came from developments in the neighbouring Burundi. Some of the refugees that left Rwanda in 1994 settled in Burundi. By March 1995, Burundi herself became devastated by genocide and the Rwandans there had to seek an alternative place of refuge. Many of them would naturally have moved to Tanzania. They were disappointed as the Tanzanian government started pressing for the Rwandan refugees to go back home. The government, at this time, developed "empathy fatigue" and regarded the refugees still on their land as literally being in transit: they were simply awaiting their journey home.

CONCLUSION

The three cases we examined in this paper show that people will always migrate out of their homes once they are threatened by security (political and economic) problems. The direction of movement of these strangers is always towards a more stable society. The case studies also show that as long as the activities of the strangers do not constitute a threat to the interests of their hosts they might be tolerated. In the three cases, the strangers were originally not seen as a security risk. As African traditions require, the strangers were initially welcomed with open arms.

Host populations often become hostile to strangers in their midst when the latter start to engage in activities that indicate that they do not want to integrate into their hosts society but would rather prefer to remain a stranger population in

perpetuity. The hosts feel elated when their cultural attributes are adopted by the strangers. This readily shows the hosts that they do have a superior culture and the strangers are prepared to accept the status of an assimilated group. Where the culture of the host is rejected, the strangers are seen as interlopers who should be driven away at the least available opportunity. This probably explains why the expulsion order in Ghana did not affect as many Hausa as Yoruba immigrants.

It has to be mentioned, however, that it was not the Hausa people that imbibed the Ghanaian cultures; it was the other way round. Hausa culture was relevant to the day to day life of Northern Ghanaians. The Hausa were tolerated because they spoke Hausa language and practised Islam. The Yoruba culture was, on the other hand, a "strange" and "noticeable" one. The Yoruba people who held tenaciously to their culture and refused to integrate into their host communities when they had the opportunity during the colonial era were denied recognition as citizens when the ejection order was promulgated by the government. Several of such people who wanted to claim citizenship on account of their long stay in Ghana must have been taken to some of the local Ghanaian chiefs for identification and denied recognition and acceptance. The strangers who settled down in Ghana on terms dictated by the colonial masters and who were rejected or were denied assimilation into their host communities were literally expected, by their hosts, to have left immediately the colonial masters who brought them departed after independence.

The opinion of the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, on the floor of the Northern House of Chiefs

in 1965 clearly captures this popular sentiment. He noted: "The person who brings a stranger into the house (should expect that) when the owner of the house had gone, the stranger too should pack up and go."⁴² Sir Ahmadu Bello was referring to the southern Nigerian migrants who came to settle down in northern Nigerian cities after the British occupied the area. These strangers, as Ahmadu Bello noted, had overstayed their welcome. He expected them to have returned to their region immediately the British colonial forces that brought them left in 1960 following Nigeria's independence. Because the southerners, most especially the Igbo speaking people, refused to leave and at the same time refused to integrate into their communities, the Hausa-Fulani in Kano launched a series of physical attacks on them resulting in the loss of lives and property⁴³

Economic discomfort also plays a great role in the hostility against strangers. In the three cases that were considered, we can see clearly that the strangers were not treated with hostility until their hosts started having some economic, political and environmental problems. A popular Yoruba adage says: "If one is on fire and one's child is on fire at the same time, the most sensible thing to do first is to strive towards quenching the fire on one's body before helping the endangered child." This is probably what the three states examined in this paper did. Each of them had some economic, security or environmental problems which they found difficult to ignore at the altar of being good to strangers. No society will sacrifice its own national interest at the altar of taking care of strangers who in some cases might have even contributed to the problems faced by their hosts.

The way the strangers were expelled in the three cases, however, had some political undertones. As a way of improving their rating in the court of public opinion the political leaders found it easy to blame the stranger for the legitimacy crisis they were facing.

Did the economy of Nigeria and Ghana improve after expelling the strangers? Of course, not. Had the Ghanaian economy improved in the 1970s and 1980s, citizens of the country would not have migrated to Nigeria and be so humiliated in 1983. If the Nigerian economy had improved after the 1983 expulsion of Ghanaians, the country would not have adopted the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1986. This is not to deny the fact that overpopulation caused by the presence of strangers could actually affect an economy. The point being made is that the stranger should not have been pushed away under the inhuman conditions that we saw in Ghana between 1969 and 1970 and in Nigeria in 1983.

NOTES

1. Bonnie Bradford, "Editor's note", *The Urban Age*, vol.2, no.3, Spring 1994, p.2.
2. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNCHR) which was established in 1951 to handle the problems faced by international migrants defined a refugee as "any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, remains unwilling to accept the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the

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**“IN THEE DO I TRUST”:
A SOCIO-HISTORICAL INSIGHT INTO
SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTIONS IN NIGERIA**

by

O.B. Lawuyi

Sometime in July 2002 a new sticker symbol appeared on the screens of vehicles plying Nigerian roads. Simple in its design, elegant and attractive in appearance, this conspicuous attraction is in large or small forms, existing alone or in combination with other symbols, and is placed centre-stage or tucked, if it is small, into the corners of commercial and private vehicles' screens. The sticker is in the form of a cross. It may or may not feature the person of Jesus, the Christian icon of peace, love, liberation and salvation who, according to Biblical sources, was crucified on the cross. The Jewish tradition and history that the Bible recorded, of course, also indicated that criminals could be crucified on the cross. There is, however, no doubting where Nigerian sentiments lie.

The religious significance of the sticker is apparent. The link with insecurity of the vehicle owners or drivers is also obvious. The location of the sticker at the front or at the back of the vehicles, at the lower or at the upper edges of the screens, is indicative of a psychology of insecurity Nigerians associate with uncertainties and movements – that is, with journeys across space and time, involving a shift in body mass. The journeys permit a routinized expectation. But because they

can be structured and unstructured, differentiated and undifferentiated, marked by corners and cross roads, they raise an anxiety in owners, in drivers and even in passengers. The anxiety is about possibilities of a failed expectation, of accidents and possible death, of attacks by enemies and friends which may stop mobility. This necessitates the need for a powerful symbol that guarantees freedom from the constraints of everyday life, moreso in a context where journeys have assumed mythic proportions – encounters with ghosts and spirits, with benevolent and malevolent forces, necessitating transcendence called miracles. In a sense, the journeys have become a paradigm for ethical, political and other kinds of realities.

The first noticeable evidence of the sticker's presence was in the south west, among the Yoruba whose ideas of life as a journey are well known in anthropological literature (Drewal, 1992; Drewal and Drewal, 1983; 1987). The origin was Lagos, the financial capital of the Nigerian State which, though plural in character, is essentially a Yoruba town and parades significant Yoruba values. Two features of these values, also germane to modern development, are issues of hierarchy and mobility. In Lagos there is intense competition and rivalry for positions and resources, just as in Yoruba societies. This means that the individual is always struggling for one thing or the other which are considered essentials of success. It could be to build a house, have a chain of businesses, get an educational certificate or attain a social status. No matter what, the physical evidence of the struggle is the characteristic "Lagos rush". At this physical level, the rush creates a traffic jam, chaos, conflict, failed expectations

and personal discomfort. And at the psychological level, it manifests as a sense of expediency, of being in a hurry and of never remaining steadfast with anything, including the truth. Relationships are never steady. Of course, this is so because individuals move in and out of traffic as metaphorically they do with historical and structural time which constitute the social process in this urban community. Truth, invariably, tends to be relativized to circumstance.

Restated in another way, the drive for the realization of personal ambition is very strong and the great stress placed on symbols in establishing and maintaining particular social relations permits a relativist attitude toward questions of truth. Indeed, as Crapanzano noted, regarding the Moroccan, but no less equally true of the Nigerian, the individual "will often appear to the outsider to contradict-even to lie- as he describes a sequence of events or his goals to different interlocutors or even to the same interlocutor on different occasions" (Crapanzano, 1980:80). The dilemmas encountered in the Lagos rush, as in the possibility of the impossible, or the impossibility of the possible, permit the translation of the physical experiences of daily life into the mythical - the stuff that journeys in Nigeria is made of.

That is, the accounts of a journey are most likely to vary among eyewitnesses. An exaggeration there. A lie here. An economic rationalization here and a religious interpretation there means that the value placed on character, plot and message can significantly shift with the narration style and individuals. What may not be in doubt, however, is that the individuals are seeking an anchor on which to ground their experiences as truth. As they do so, symbols take prominence

as that which capture the essence and purpose of the events. A symbol like the cross sticker or juju invariably serves the direct and paradoxical functions mediated over time by the individual person on the trip: essentially placing great value on “dream” (expectation, hope) as on circumstance. That is, dream and circumstance become rhetorical devices, embodied in the symbol, that are vital to establishing and maintaining the relationship and the security that a journey may engineer.

Because individuals basically seek to be exempted from the history which had defined and consigned them to a particular space and position (Barber 1991), their journeys physically or metaphorically, or their narration of journeys, enable the articulation of reality and expression of fantasy as shared symbolic idiom. This allows the individual to transcend the embeddedness in immediate reality – to rationalize the circumstance and promote the hope in a better future. A popular local musician put it rather aptly:

I remember when I was nobody:
The journey was rough and tough;
I remember when I was somebody:
I never thought I was somebody.
(Osupa Adinni)

The journey into life or the journey in life or out of life is not all easy. They are full of dangers. And those who survive have one story or the other to tell. Such stories as may be told or re-told about journeys often help to maintain the faith in the juju, the talisman and the sacrifices vital to transcendence.

We must at this junction emphasize that there is nothing

unique about the July appearance of the cross-sticker. The symbol had been around for quite some time, tucked into the glove compartment, hung around the driving mirror; tied to the car key, or woven around the passenger's mirror. In July 2002, there were two departures from the previous style. First, the cross is a sticker and not a chain or rosary. Second, there is a restriction on its use. Even the northern-bound or Northerner – owned vehicles carry the sticker. Although they do so cautiously for obvious reasons: such a symbol with the connotations of Christian values and ideals is easily interpreted negatively in a Muslim community as the North, once the meaning is contextualized in a local experience, historical process or religious convention. The sticker can thus potentially create conflict and chaos. But it has not done so. And therein lies the significance of this study: there is a relative peace in the community which should excite the imaginations of social scientists not unfamiliar with religious conflicts frequently organized around religious symbols in Nigeria. (Anifowose, 1982; Falola, 1998)

In July, the cross transited into the open space. The development is part of an unfolding historical process not only about symbol construction and management but also about political leadership, social dynamics and personal security. This historic process had witnessed many dramatic heights which, as we will argue, are captured by symbolic representations. The symbols relate experience to expectations since the increasing complexity of the state of uncertainty in the country since the 1970's makes the comparison of the social development and the sense of a journey as a pilgrimage rather apt: the daily newspapers record frequent accidents on

the roads. Some of them are fatal. Some of them involve minor or major damage to the vehicles. Every accident, however, can abort a dream. It can cripple a mission. Therefore, on a journey, solitude and society cease to be antithetical and “voluntariness and obligation become united in a sort of Kantian compromise” (Crapanzano 1980:85). No matter where the passenger is headed – home, hometown, office or holiday resort in the sense of a pilgrimage – there is a figure waiting there whose reception is the climax of an exchange and whose pronouncement would authenticate the identity or sincerity of the visitor.

Can the cross be an effective antidote to uncertainties of life? This will be an issue of efficacy of the symbol that is not the primary concern here. Rather, within the social dynamics of development we have conceptualized, the extent of the personalization of the sticker testifies to a personal relationship, complex and shifting, located in different settings, intended and unintended associations, local events and privileges. What Stuart Hall said of cultural identity, which equally holds for personal identity, therefore applies here:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they (identities) undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we

give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.
(Hall, 1989:70; Narayan, 1993:676)

The cross sticker as both a cultural and a personal form of identification helps to position the individual and society in a history whose permanent thrust is the perceived concern for context: development and progress, unity and peace.

The sticker symbol evokes a history. But symbol and history are dynamic, independent, yet interpenetrating variables. One in the other provokes a deep appreciation of social process. A symbol in history, for instance, brings events and personality into sharp focus as a multidimensional experience, shaped by different levels of development and varied strata of relationships and meanings. The referents and references possible extend beyond the obvious, concrete, evidence provided by the text. Although, at the same time, they make the history real in a way familiar to (some of) the readers through an understanding of the abstract other, more or less embodied in the symbol and from whom the readers establish continuity and identity.

But there is equally a history behind every symbol, particularly of a public symbol. The history allows for a reading of the symbol as part of the immediate social world, one in which personal and social integration is achieved together. Here, in this history, we would expect to find a continuity and change that illuminate the spatial value of the symbol as well as the interests of those who identify with it. Thus it is, of course, possible that the symbol itself makes history, as, for example, being the first of its kind. But such

intellectual history is not the stuff of which daily accounts or exciting experiences are made of. Rather, the joy of history (which is also a measure of the strength of identification) is not just the remembrance it brings into being, or the experience it is able to critique, or a claim it advances; it is also the supply of interaction encounters and the bringing into focus of human motivations, capabilities and follies. It is precisely for the construction of this history that Nigerians create, seek and promote the use of stickers.

The cross sticker has a value. The value stems from and reflects a history of social process. As pragmatists, Nigerians interlocute with their social processes. They then produce a sticker which, like other symbols they had fashioned to cope with their journeys, instigate an impulse not only to locate the self in the fluid experiences of instability and change but also bind it to those who share the same experiences.

To the co-travellers on the journey there is a series of rhetorical, political, religious and economic strategies for accomplishing their set tasks. The passengers are not unaware of the dangers that travelling entails, especially on a rough, bumpy road. They are not unaware of the minimal rights and duties that are ascribed to their positions in the vehicle they have decided to use. Nevertheless, the immediacy of their experiences dictate how the social structure of the journey would be treated – eliminated or retained; simplified or complicated; particularized or universalized. Where a severe stress is experienced, a bumpy road is encountered and a crossroad turns to be an enigma, the journey may, for instance, constitute a risk. Or a sense of pilgrimage ensues: the individuals hope to have "direct experience of the sacred,

invisible or supernatural order, either in the material aspect of miraculous escape or in the immaterial aspect of inward transformation of spirit or personality" (Crapanzano 1980:85). The pilgrim's journey in such a circumstance of insecurity, threat to life and property and instability in relationship, become increasingly sacralized with every inconvenience:

Till almost every landmark and ultimately every step is condensed into a multivocal symbol capable of arousing much affect and desire. No longer is the pilgrim's sense of the sacred private; it is a matter of objectified, collective representations which become virtually his whole environment and gives him powerful motives for credence.

(Turner, 1974:198; Crapanzano, 1980:85)

This explains not only why the cross sticker is now visible, but also why it is a hegemonic representation of the dominant value of a people at a certain stage of their national development. The symbol, simply put, is the "concurrent idealization of a patterned group activity organized into a dominant symbolic framework that reigns as common sense" (Laitin, 1986:19)

RATIONAL CHOICE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The crucial questions in this essay are not, of course, about the meanings of the cross sticker; and they are not about its functionality, although both are important and are not ignored. They are about the structural reality that instigates the

development of a symbol. And why, as of now, the cross sticker is not an object of controversy. Ordinarily, as earlier stated, religious symbols in some parts of Nigeria easily provoke a divide, a passion and anger that endangers social order. But, so far, the cross sticker has not. The vehicles with the sticker travel widely unmolested. They travel to the Muslim North without being damaged and, or, the driver assaulted. What is responsible for this accommodation? What reality does the symbol problematize?

A critical examination of the symbol's currency reveals that the flexibility evident in the design, as well as in the choices made, is accommodated by rational theoretical viewpoints. Rational choice theorists like Abner Cohen would, as David Laitin (1986) noted, see the individual sticker user as a "utility maximizer" that manipulates cultural identity in order to enhance acquisition of power and wealth. To the users, history, power, belief are resources in the shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and interests. These resources provide access to what may indeed be special commodities, such as women, positions, money and influence. Although, they, at the same time, could act as limiting factors, in making access to these resources difficult. The use of symbols, basically, helps in the prioritization and strategic development of resources in order to calculatedly affect the outcome of results and, in a way, position the individual to benefit maximally from any encounter.

A different stream of rationalists, the systemists like Clifford Geertz (1983), search for the meaning in the symbolic complex that locks man into a particular frame of mind, a

certain approach to life and a view of the self. The sense, rather than the use, of symbol dominates their analytic excavations. And the implications of a symbol's presence are assessed in terms of the ramifying effect on the entire social system, especially in development, through which the systemists invariably come out with a description of the social order, the nature of human personality and social change.

In a nutshell, there are two contrastive positions in the rational theoretical viewpoints. The choice advocates are more interested in action than in human thought system. They tend to examine society from a strategic rather than from an interpretive framework. But because the strategic approach also requires an excavation of meanings, the two positions appear, then, as merely two sides of the same coin. They may be distinct, but they are not completely independent of each other. The existence of one is not a denial of the existence of the other; since, actually, each side on its own is not only capable of problematizing reality in itself but along with the other side can problematize reality to and for the observer of their unity. The individual who tries to use a symbol without a clear understanding of its meaning may, in essence, like the individual who appreciates the meaning but lacks the drive to market the potentials, see reality from a slightly distorted mirror. Their limitations stem from the ability of one side of the coin to hide the details of the other side and the fact that their potentials can be activated differentially from the position the observer stands in respect to the coin. No matter what emerges in and from such an observation, generally, meaning and function are indispensable to the course of social development because they are the activating factors of

mobilization. They are crucial to how reality is constructed, evaluated and related to.

When an observer, therefore, experiences a non-problematic reality, it would be that the reality so experienced does not hurt accepted values and meanings of the observer or of the observed. Whatever symbol features in such a reality is not considered by the parties as controversial. Should it be controversial, the reality would be problematized in one way or the other, most probably because the meaning and function do not synchronize, are contradictory or are unsteady.

THE BABA CONNECTION

The central concern of the transport entrepreneur is, of course, that of making money, becoming wealthy. Those who are not transport entrepreneurs are not exempted from the same motivation: they want money or wealth. They may not have to seek wealth in the same manner, with the same passion and to the same degree as the transport entrepreneurs. But wealth, in the context of their social relationships, is vital to making a difference, to signifying a difference and to being different. It is a measure of social worth, of the quality of social mobility and of the quality of life.

The individual who wants wealth has to be meaningfully engaged in an occupation. Otherwise the wealth is suspect. The transport industry has become a convenient choice because it is lucrative and particularly accessible to those with little education yet desirous of quick mobility into the upper classes. The industry provides jobs for mechanics, vulcanizers, battery chargers, panel beaters, car washers and vehicle drivers. The drivers, amongst them all, may be the most

prosperous because they handle greater amount of cash; and there is a steady supply of it. They are thus visible in the display of wealth, especially in lavish consumption at the eateries and in the purchase of luxuries. In addition, they have an enviable status derived from the control and authority exercised over their clients, the passengers: they pose to the clients as the "owners" whose decisions are final. That is, even when they are not. In reality there is no difference between the status of ownership and the status of drivers; for the drivers would, in any case, pose as the masters when the latter are not visible and there is a need to stamp their authority on a decision.

The vehicles are purchased with means from various sources; as wide ranging as motor dealership, cooperative society, family assistance, bank financing, self investments and personal savings. Up until recently, the major source of financing was motor dealership. The vehicles are acquired on hire purchase: the buyer takes the vehicle on a down payment of a substantial sum. Such a sum is not less than one-third of the price. He then completes the price and the accruing interest in monthly instalment. The interest rate is high. By the time the price is fully paid the amount on the vehicle would have doubled, at least. There is, hence, a great rush to complete payment not just because of the escalating cost and the fact that the "older" the vehicle, the more the mechanical problems that arise, thereby making payment difficult; but also because the defaulter is exposed to the risk that his vehicle can be retrieved or impounded (and may then be resold to another client). The defaulter will thus lose all the payments so far made. Even before the retrieval is effected,

the defaulter would be lucky to escape being harassed, intimidated or exploited by the dealer, the law enforcement agents and the touts acting on his behalf.

In the last ten years, however, the major source of financing has been the cooperative societies. These bodies are sanctioned by state laws to encourage savings and loan disbursements for investment purposes. A number of transport-related professions have set up their own cooperative societies. As would be expected, they extend loans to members for the purchase of instruments related to their area of specialization in the transport industry. Loans from the societies do not attract interest rates as high as those of the commercial banks and the motor dealers. The terms of payments are more relaxed particularly since the instruments are not repossessed as soon as the defaulter shows any sign of unwillingness to pay back. It is, therefore, a more convenient and less life-threatening source of capital.

In essence, the use of co-operative societies allows for the avoidance of the big man, the Baba of the motor sales. Should the investment be properly managed, the taxi owner is on the path to upward mobility, since the daily income, which could be as much as ₦2,000, is something which even civil servants do not earn. And a single vehicle can, within a few years, grow into a fleet, through prudent management which entails that the daily returns be properly monitored to block all avenues of corruption and theft. Otherwise handled, the investment becomes a bad debt and the possibility of negative mobility becomes real.

The first noticeable signs of a problematic reality are usually the various complaints from the driver about the

vehicle, the law enforcement agents, weather conditions, the nature of the routes and the lack of passengers. One or a combination of these factors impact on the daily returns substantially enough to cripple the business. If the signs are, therefore, not handled well, the driver may be advantaged, monetarily, at the expense of the owner. The situation quite often creates bad blood. And not infrequently is written into the stories of accidents on the roads.

The fact is that, even in the motor industry, the transition from the lower to the upper status is the hallmark of a successful completion of the rites of passage. Because of the difficulties often encountered on the journey, it is important that the individual sustains faith in the outcome of the liminal experience in which the ambiguity of his status stems from the struggle to exempt the self from historic and social-structural time. As a driver, he is in that special time of the journey that is both contemporary and constructed, at least ideally, on a transcendent and well-articulated plot. He knows that adequate preparations must be made so that the destination, that self-empowerment and social relevance, is reached not just safely and in time for the success rituals, but given the purpose which sets off the journey, in line with the expectations of significant others.

From the time of separation from the originating community to the time of reintegration into the same community, the "good" driver knows that the crucial determinant of the level of participation and of the quality of experience is the ability to meet the demands of liminality. The demands at this stage are, of course, mostly material and psychological. But getting them could be costly to health,

savings and even life. That is why the individuals engage in all kinds of tricks to survive. It is why they approach the Baba, characterized by qualities of “priority, dominance, leadership, or superior efficacy in any sphere, human or otherwise” for assistance (Peel, 2001:72). It is why the account of their journeys appears sometimes preposterous to be true. For they are free, so to say, to free play between reality and the dream of their articulated plots.

Culture, Politics and History: Profiling the *Baba*

As liminal figures, they know or are made to know by their culture the significance of identifications and symbols, since these are the vehicles of escape from the harsh realities of liminality. Both identity and symbol actually create in them the hope that sustains their performance. Both also stand to represent, in their absence or improper appreciation, the possibility of their failure. Generally, their illusions and failure are masked by these elements through which as liminals they surrender to the false sense of selfhood that they carry around in the liminal phase. Not too infrequently, therefore, they continually search for the other with whom they have to engage in meaningful interlocution.

The identifications represent a way of projecting the self into the other to discover only one self here (Crapanzano 1980:23). Nigerians search for this other and find them in the circumstances of their experiences – in politics, education, religion and economics. Muslims identify as NASFAT (Nasru-l-lahi-il-Fathi Society of Nigeria). They could also be lawyers, media consultants and doctors, to mention but a few of possible others to whom the self attempts to relate

meaningfully. Christians, aside from the professional identities mentioned for Muslims are, through the labels on their vehicles, Baptist, Pentecostals, C.A.C. (Christ Apostolic Church), Catholics or Redeemed Christians. They may equally be members of the “Miracle family”, the Clergy and the Holy Ghost Convention. In the same sense of the “family”, the educated remember their alma mater, while the less educated promote identifications with popular culture heroes and heroines – the musicians, homevideo actors/actresses and sports personalities. This is understandable. The musical, home video and sports industries are dominated by the less educated whose upward mobility helps to revise the ingrained prestige and power imbalances in the society about who is capable and able to represent whom as authentic achievers. In the contemporary flow of trade, politics, religion, mass media and recreation, *Baba* are not limited to political culture. There are so many *Baba* (and *Iya*, mothers) in the various socioeconomic sectors able to articulate and fix the nexus of authentic achievements through demarcated field of expertise and the projection of an exotic culture. They cannot be ignored. And definitely would not be ignored, because they are significant symbols of success, power and upward mobility.

On the screens of public (more than private) vehicles the labels and posters displaying the identities and identifications are posted onto the back and front screens. It is seldom the case that in the assemblage of these posters and labels there would be two different identities from the same sociopolitical sector of the body polity put together. Indeed, even having two similar professional identities featured at the same time is not common. Often, one identity or identification is posted

at a time. If there was a need to replace the existing identification or identity, then the old label or poster would be removed for the newfound source of inspiration, protection or benevolence. The labels and posters are thus more of an historical record since the conspicuous identity or identification at any time carries implicitly, if not explicitly, the dominant issue, interest or concern which the vehicle owner or driver thinks the named, pictured or symbolized person, institution or occupation articulates, champions or defends.

Our view is that the status granted the various identities and identifications reflects the implicit ontological assumptions of a journey. First, the identity is to enable others recognize the social root of the passenger. Second, it indicates their destination, in the person considered as a model. Third, it is important in making the journey safe; at least in negating any form of harassment which could slow down the speed of travel or stop it altogether. This accounts for the use of military labels. Fourth, the identifications, metaphorically, serve a symbolic interpretive function: it is for this reason we examined the social roots of the drivers and vehicle owners, to indicate the way in which transcendence comes when one discovers oneself in the other. It is also to reveal the nature of truth as a refraction of social process: as an objectification of the tension between reality and desire. Both reality and desire are, of course, noted in the local idiomatic expressions that give rise to the labels and posters. But they are not always complementary, as one can undermine the other forcing the individual to strategically re-examine his circumstance and re-position the self *vis-à-vis* the other. In this kind of situation

a man hardly needs to be pre-occupied with the formalities of social intercourse. For if a quarrel arises, he must be able to talk his way out of guilt rather than marshal the strength for a fight (so, says a Yoruba proverb). He must also expect the arbiters to share out the blames for the fight among the disputants, leaving the disputants to intuitively rather than explicitly grasp the verdict. Consequently, the individual is in constant search not only for the truth, but also for the *Baba* whose support is vital to the removal of the dangers on a journey. The search has led to the identification with the cross.

The opinions expressed by our informants, mostly commercial vehicle drivers, allude to the significance of Jesus as a Saviour. The salient feature is the power of the cross in arresting malevolent forces or even stopping their acts altogether. The cross is emblematic of the perfect truth, the reliable help, and the impregnable defence:

“The road is full of danger; I must protect myself.”

“I am a believer in Jesus Christ as a Saviour.”

“What is so special about it... I am a Christian.”

“I am confident it will help me.”

“My enemies should scatter.”

The sticker mediates knowledge of my situation and me. The interventionist power of the cross is relevant to a context of insecurity; and the ultimate desire is to use it to strengthen the self to meet with and overcome the dangers on the journeys. But the fortification of the self itself is to be done by the other (positively disposed) who faces the other (negatively disposed) to champion the desires of the self. The

identification is therefore with the superior other.

Up until the end of the 1960s the search for the superior other was less intense. For there were few vehicles, commercial or private, on Nigerian roads. Only the rich could afford the luxury. And they did not need to advertise themselves, their positions, roots or wealth. The vehicle was enough advertisement. For as soon as it makes its appearance on the road the news would have gone round about who owns it. The stickers, labels, posters were, in essence, not necessary, even for the sense of protection that would emerge in the 1970s and subsequently become the key to the creativity in the graphic industry. The point is, because the vehicles were few, their disappearance through theft were minimal and the ability of the law enforcement agencies to recover them was greatly enhanced by a public morality that rejected corruption and antisocial behaviour.

The 1970s were different. The oil boom facilitated the growth of the public and private sectors of the economy. And there was a remarkable optimism and enthusiasm for wealth and the indices of status mobility. More and more people were able to buy vehicles for personal or public use. Consequently, in time, the existing road infrastructure collapsed. It could not cope with the number of vehicles. The roads were damaged. The vehicles were forced into go slows negotiating the available paths. The traffic became a nightmare that would force people to rise from their beds by 4a.m. in order to get to their stations on time. Simply, the wealth brought about social insecurity.

Armed robbery also surfaced. Car theft became common, because the lower classes wanted to enjoy the same luxury.

The public institutions corrupted by greed, bribery and nepotism became highly inefficient. Truth became relativistic. What one could be certain of getting on merit was by the 1970s doubtful of being secured. It was an era of insecurity. To avoid the negative realities of theft, law enforcement harassment and assault on the person, the people looked for, and got, stickers from the armed forces. They also got from professional associations like the bar which could intimidate, the press which could leak secrets and the medical groups which could threaten the health of the society. In short, the era introduced the relevance of the *Baba*, although indirectly through the sense of the "family" which establishes the connection (blood, kinship) used to secure the stickers and posters thereby transiting from old style traditional identities which were still operating in the 1960s to the modern.

The old style identities include family names, *oriki orilè* (praise of community of origin), tribal marks on the face and food taboos. During the 19th century confusion of intra ethnic wars, these identities were the rallying focuses for a people in disarray, battling with hostilities from within and from without. As the people moved, usually without their property, the common source of identification was the blood link through kinship and families. It was relatively easy to recognize their own, using the identities, because they bore symbolic marks. John Peel has noted the pragmatism in this style:

These communities were...under pressure; the chaos, the danger and, for some, the opportunities presented by the wars threatened their moral foundations. In other words, issues of collective

identity (membership of lineages, cults and towns) were connected with changes of power and status within the community. Both were called into question first by historical circumstances which made them seem unviable or insufficient, then (in the usual way of social reflexivity) by many members of the society, and finally by motivated outsiders such as Muslims or Christians who offered their own alternative models of identity and conduct.

(Peel, 2000:53)

Because the military (ironically, the hunter-warrior was also the dominant figure in 19th Century Nigeria) that supplied the labels and posters in the 1970s were, in the next few decades of Nigerian development, in power, they provided the impetus for the reassessment of the old style identities.

Their methods of governance helped to shift the emphasis away from the family to the key figure, the *Baba*, as the basis of social networking, partnership and dignity. As the political leaders and rulers of the state they were able to garner enough resources not only to sustain their own image as *Baba*, but in addition expand the population of the elite (many of whom serve as fronts for their corrupt practices) in the community. With their resources and connections they ignored the artificial and legal barriers mounted by the law enforcement agencies and state policy. In some instances they even helped to dismantle them, thereby becoming a source of public pride – the model of success. The key was the

dramatic suddenness with which they rose from obscure beginnings; the apparently unlimited resources still at their disposal; the absence of ...political arrangements to check their growth; the basis of their power in naked force, at home as well as (in public)....

(Barber, 1991:34)

All these constituted the stuff of the 20th century Nigerian *Baba*, even though Barber's reflections were for the 19th century big men.

Generally, as we have noted for the transport entrepreneurs, the *Baba* were a combination of dread, provision, protection and mystique. Their character was offensive (even by normal traditional standards), because quite often it lacked a sense of restraint and appropriateness that mark people of honour. It raised a self-perception informed by an exhilarating but brutal sense of unlimited and restrained ambition. Nevertheless, (as in the 19th century situation) they are still relevant, because modern Nigeria is in a state of confusion, chaos and unpredictability.

Simply, the *Baba* syndrome captures and extends the same logic which funded the importance of the family identities in the 19th century intertribal wars because their relationship with clients has a binding quality which even those they exploited could not resist. Hence, the victims keep knocking on their doors for one favour or another. Moreover, the institution of *Baba* has a notion of hierarchy which helps to perpetuate a culture of clientilism that cannot be ignored: "that is, from finding security in association to seeking it in a

great man's clientage, the clientages soon sought to re-clothe themselves in the language of kinship" (Peel, 2000:85). Finally, the ideas of *Baba* carry a force of authority and power the individuals can, and do, use. For instance, those who survived the onslaught on freedoms of expression and movement by the military, especially in the 1980s and the 1990s, can testify to the influence of the *Baba* who negotiated their release from the claws of the military.

But it was also the same values of individuality and clientilism that undermined their mystique and relevance. By the end of the 1980s the confusion in the military camp was complicated by their political brinkmanship. Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) ran an expensive, inconclusive, melodramatic, transitional programme that bankrupted many of the *Baba*, diminished the aura of their invisibility and crippled their interventionist ability. One of them Moshood Abiola, could not, in spite of his enormous wealth and relationship with the military, claim the presidential mandate he won through a free, fair, popular election. Also when Sani Abacha (1994 – 1998) came on board, another *Baba*, Sonekan, the Head of an interim government (1985) crash-landed into irrelevance, until he was rescued by another military regime, much later. Abacha also clamped Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Yar Adua, erstwhile military leaders, into jail. Evidently dog was eating dog. The development accelerated the quest for a new definition of *Baba*. And so by the end of the 1980s the defining characteristic no longer derived from role-determined external relations, but from an internal relation to one's own individual reflexive activity. Unlike the old-style identities, the emphasis was on small, manageable community

that enables individuals to intuitively approach sociality in an egalitarian form as fellowship.

The religious organizations had expanded considerably in the late 80s and early 90s. This was so because they were well tuned to the egalitarian ideas of the people. They midwived a new identification. The thrust of the new trend in identity construction and identification styles is that a modern "family" is comprised of members of equal statuses, theoretically. Although in the secular world, they may have different statuses, once within the religious movement, they are all of equal status before the God the movement acknowledges. As they attempt to correct the irregularities of the military they, however, promoted inadvertently a constant division of the religious groups which divide and subdivide continually as they struggle towards some kind of egalitarianism. For example, the Catholic family split into the charismatic and the clergy, with different stickers. The division reflects patterns in their resource allocations, and in social accessibility of members to each other.

The Pentecostal movement benefited most. Its promises of miracles and abundant blessings resonated well with the needs of the society. For, as goods and other resources became scarce, and confusion reigned in the camp of the secular fathers, the military protégés, because of the state run I.M.F. (International Monetary fund) policies initiated in the 1980s, the search intensified for the spiritual father who could run the affairs of the family effectively, impartially and securely. Conversion into the Pentecostal movement was phenomenal. And such Pentecostal churches like the Redeemed, the Winners, and Deeper Life benefited immensely from the

conversion. So their labels were most visible on the road. To some extent their popularity is a testimony to the effective organization of their churches and to the charismatic qualities of their leadership. But it can be equally attributable to their image as miracle workers who, in that capacity, can resolve the confusion in the lives of individuals and the state. There is no doubting of their *Baba* imagery, however: they were unknown figures who rode into prominence from obscure beginnings and apparently controlled and still control enormous resources.

Not, of course, to be outdone, the "orthodox churches" followed suit. The Baptist, Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C.), Apostolic Church, Anglican and Roman Catholic all surreptitiously, but speedily, crept on to the vehicular screens with their labels of identification. Significantly, the late 1980s and mid 1990s witnessed the importance of the spiritual lords leading these organizations. And as their importance and prestige grew, the definition of a *Baba* changed. The new symbol of excellence, the spiritual father, were presumed able to resolve the contradictory impulses of order and disorder, peace and conflict, poverty and wealth.

But greed, ambition, pride and falsehood crippled their tenure, ironically short, lasting till the end of the 1990s. Thus, as the group divide and subdivide in search of an egalitarian ideal, the embodiment was no longer the spiritual fathers but God, equally known and revered as *Baba*. The new identification came into focus around 2001.

The rationale for new leadership is the need to expand the notion of power and truth. God is the better choice because He evokes in the minds of the average Nigerian the qualities

of spiritual re-birth, awesomeness of the mighty, claim to a vast estate and resources and sense of eternity. These are qualities that the spiritual fathers do not have. And may never have. So the one who has it is superior to them. Moreso because as a father presumably lacking the impulses of contradictions, He is well positioned to champion the cause of truth and ensure the demands for egalitarianism.

THE SAVIOUR, THE SAVED AND NIGERIANS

Jesus is the Son of God. He is also God, because theologically He and the father are one and the same. Thus the rise of the cross by 2002. The new identity was inevitable. It was because there were far too many spiritual fathers and suspicion had started to grow in the minds of the public about their calling. Particularly so since they enjoyed a luxury that their followers did not enjoy and claimed a power which sometimes failed to deliver on the promises made. In any case their fraternity with political powers whom they prayed for without changing their corrupt practices raise apprehensions regarding their sincerity and commitment to the poor and the marginalized that the political leadership had dispossessed.

But in Jesus, the leader and the follower are symbolically one. Both have cause to be aggrieved with the ways in which leadership reflects not only the superficial and mundane concerns of the society but also the fundamental attitudes toward and evaluation of the truth. They are equally interested in re-situating knowledge re-framing analytic categories and locating vivid particulars within a narrowly defined cultural pattern, sociological relation and historic shift. The desire is to shift the contingent forces that give advantage to the elite,

and refocus them to the benefit of the underprivileged and alienated that must be saved. Jesus can be trusted to effect this change because He cannot be corrupted.

The cross sticker, therefore, brings alive, and into the immediacy of the traveller, the authority and power of the superior, Jesus. Whether the person of Jesus is on the stickers or not does not diminish the power of the symbol and its integrity. Rather the sticker's value as a social metaphor is that the cross is symbolically the route to the expansion, integrity and efficacy of the owner's own power. It signifies the interest in a stronger unifying structure, as well as sensitivity to a disintegrating centre which, unmanaged, could destabilize the union. That disintegrating centre is the Nigerian State in which every encounter and political development brings into the fore of consciousness a dilemma emblematic of inequality and control, of making and meaning of people, of contradiction between internal and external forces, and of the tension between acquisition and reciprocity.

The centre is a generalized moral centre; one which definitely requires a reflection on the possibility of success or failure of the means – end schema and the changing nature of opportunities, on order and confusion and the instability of moral values, and on trust and betrayal and the nature of the Nigerian person. Such a centre is physically on the road because, first, there are confusing road signs which could stagnate movement. Second, there are confused and confusing drivers who could through collision with another vehicle end a journey abruptly. But whatever the source of the confusion – road signs, drunkenness, potholes – there is inequality in the ways the situation would be handled for different drivers. The

rich may get away with their criminality. The poor can also do. However, they may have to pay a high price for the freedom. Generally, as individuals struggle to control the internal and external forces shaping the making and the meaning of their person, their control over the social (and even physical) space, at any time, is never predictable.

As example, along the roads there is evidence of a problematic mind and space in the form of burnt vehicles, corpses and accidents. There is, also, the unexpected go – slow that could derail an agenda, while encounters with armed robbers could end lives. Multiple accidents at a spot on the road may be common. This is termed “dangerous spot”. At dangerous spots passengers may not survive the accidents. The dead are always liminal figures – neither here nor there, between and betwixt social stations. They are the students on holidays, the newly married couples, the travellers to and from social engagements, the overseas bound travellers, and the newly graduated professionals. “Why these people?” is the question that provokes an enquiry that ultimately leads to the value of the cross.

For a people deep in the metaphysics of a crossroad, emblematically represented in the figure of *Esu*, the trickster god that signals also the uncertainties in human relationships, every travel, just as every encounter, contains unknown possibilities. Who knows? The road may be hungry for human flesh. The witches may be thirsty for human blood. The gods may be angry with their backsliding followers. The dead may be avenging a wrongdoing. And a fellow human could have set up a trap. Moreover, the police on the road may be broke; the armed robbers may be attacking and dispossessing

travellers of their goods and money. Of the available symbolic representations of the whims and caprices ingrained in the human nature and experience, particularly in a *Baba*, the cross has the best visual authenticity. It also blends the traditional and the modern interests in personhood.

There may as well be other symbols inside the vehicle. Such devices as charms, Qur'anic verses and *tesibiu* are not uncommon. But in the cross you have an objectification of pain, suffering, casualty, cruelty, insincerity, malice and, of course, transcendence that these other symbols do not graphically convey. These experiences are encountered in the ongoing social reality of national development. They point to the necessity of making a personal choice to survive or to die – the survival or death of individuality. This is more significant than that of collectivity. The reason being that Christ was alone on the cross. And he “survived”. So can man – the man who identifies with him most especially.

The centre of the cross, the unifying concern, is also human individuality. When the individual survives, others may survive. And, if they do not, this is their own problem. The same goes for each community in the comity. Their leaders have restricted views of collective interest. The cross is the moral centre of self-initiatives and responsibilities. It is the starting point of a journey that proceeds with great sensitivity to tactics, strategies, persons and symbols, often subjectively assessed and then juxtaposed with the plans for mobility. From the local ideology of success, the individual knows that people are chosen for, or are forced to change, their social positions depending on the context and the prevailing vectors of power. Therefore, he arms the self with identities and identifications

that enable a pragmatic response to the challenges, constraints and opportunities of every situation. The references are to the alma mater, kinship, ancestral cities, professional organizations, religious institutions, and social experiences able to lift the individual above the limitations set consciously or unconsciously by the society. When the individual is lifted up into the realm of opportunities which exempt the self from problems of a class (inherited, in the case of the poor), and expand the resources, material and spiritual, in the case of the rich, the self approximates the truth of its being.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that rather than see the sticker as independent representation of an experience, we prefer a view of it as an indicator of historical process with significant history, aesthetically and ideologically. The aesthetics influence the range of choices from the designs available in the market. But the motorists' own discussions and actions indicate a cultural value and norm most evident in the location of the stickers on the front and back screens of vehicles. The sticker is tucked into the upper or the lower corners of the screens in apparent reflection of the social strata of the society, and the need to have socially secured positions. But, still reflecting on the structural mobility that stratification promotes, the cross signifies the need for a centre in the self or in the powerful force external to the self. This has enhanced the historic relevance and importance of "secular" "spiritual" and God – like fathers. Nigerians are, however, at a moment in their history when God the father reigns as the moral centre. And because no religion rejects the existence of God or the values

and power ascribed to Him, the reality of the sticker is not problematic yet, in spite of differences in religious doctrines and sensitivities.

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RELIGION AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES: A THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

by

G.A. Akinola

Because religion preaches brotherliness, rectitude and moral precepts, it is often regarded as the force that sanctifies and validates the customs and administrative institutions established for the maintenance of order and good government in human societies. When, from the late eighteenth century onwards, democracy became increasingly influential as a liberal political ideology, it was widely viewed as consonant with Christian religious principles, or at least not incompatible with them. This is probably why some political parties in Europe and Latin America describe themselves as Christian democrats.

In actual fact, religious principles have little in common with democratic values. This is not to deny the social influence of religion. For example, some faiths have produced saintly figures whose lives exemplify kindness, charity and other virtues. Most religions are also pre-occupied with the enunciation and teaching of precepts covering every aspect of life and human relations. But it is neither the pietistic nor the didactic elements in religion that define its true character. The cause of a revolutionary ideology like democracy is thus not automatically advanced by religious precepts and

teachings. Rather, it is the essence, the innate character of the world's creeds and belief systems that determines the attitude of religious authorities to democratic principles.

To be sure, religion plays so many socially useful roles that it is possible to interpret some of these as democratic. Many creeds, for example, provide the ideology that inspires the organisation of associations, brotherhoods and communities of believers, such organisations sometimes transcending local and parochial or even national or racial groupings. Indeed, religion has been known to bring warring political entities together under a common coherent administration. Admirable as these developments might be, they do not invariably lead to, or guarantee the evolution of, democratic institutions. The new political entity brought into being by religion might be more efficiently, or even justly ruled. But since this is invariably according to the doctrines and principles of the established faith, this need not, and usually does not, involve democratic values.

Another major social role played by religion is the provision of emotional stability to believers. By seeking to proffer answers to the perplexing questions of man's existence in a world full of vicissitudes, religion is a sort of balm. It is reassuring for the faithful to be told that there is somebody who cares, who watches over his life, responds to his yearnings and prayers, and is ever ready to crown his endeavours with success. Moreover, it is comforting to be told that there is a purpose in life beyond the variety of exciting experiences which life itself provides. There is a sort of insurance in being assured that death is not the end of everything, and that a modest, relatively unsuccessful or wretched existence in this

world may lead to an eternity of bliss such as can only be imagined.

Religion thus contributes to the stabilisation of society by enhancing the emotional and psychological equilibrium of its members. Similarly, it strengthens the mores by which every community, through time-honoured customary practices, seeks to maintain order and peace. Thus laws which had derived their legitimacy from tradition and the ancestors are either modified or updated in line with prevailing social circumstances, and then proclaimed to be divine injunctions from God. This is generally how religion is made the foundation of society's social order, through the precepts that are laid down for the good life and the harmonious community. The process of revising or changing the status of the customary laws of a society by religion may or may not involve a change in the authorities that enforce compliance with these laws. Either way, this executive function continues, as before, in the hands of an exclusive group answerable to only a section of society. Indeed, the membership of this exclusive group tends to become narrowed especially where religious authorities are also in charge of secular affairs.

Although religion socializes the members of society by teaching moral precepts, the good and religious citizen is not necessarily favourably disposed toward democratic values. In fact, the ultra-religious temperament is liable to be non-democratic, since it tends to favour a conservative and illiberal reading of scriptural doctrines, more so as this kind of religious believer is also prone to a negative form of individualism which is opposed to all kinds of political action. According to this attitude, material success depends on a fatalistic

commitment of everyday problems and their solutions to the supernatural. Salvation is similarly contingent on a punctilious display of rectitude calculated to win God's approval and favour, regardless of whether the believer concerned is a hypocrite who treats his fellow men with less than Christian charity.

The crucial thing about the fundamentalist believer, however, is that he is not only politically conservative, but also tends to be apathetic over public issues. Since he does not believe that the cure for at least some of the common societal problems, such as poverty or unemployment, is a function of good governance, and since he regards God as a regular factotum who exists to attend to the most trivial of his whims, there can be no need for getting involved in political action to make rulers accountable to the governed or to change the structure of power in society.

If its social role cannot be a valid basis for awarding religion democratic credentials, neither can the fact that it promotes spiritual values. Quite often the spiritually advanced person is so preoccupied with the salvation of his soul and the hereafter that he is apathetic towards worldly affairs. Obviously such people, because they take little or no interest in the happenings around them, cannot influence the course of democratic change.

But there is another kind of spiritually advanced person, conditioned, more or less, by religion to respond actively to injustice and human suffering. Men like William Wilberforce and T. Fowell Buxton of the anti-slavery movement in England during the early nineteenth century devoted their energies to seeking an end to the African slave trade. The anti-slavery

movement was, however, a humanitarian rather than a pro-democracy, organisation. It was liberal without doubt, but its members did not feature in the campaigns for political reform in Britain in the nineteenth century. Religion can thus be humanitarian without necessarily promoting democratic ideals.

Whether or not religion is primarily concerned with spiritual issues, its involvement in mundane matters, such as politics, implies that it is also about the pursuit of power. This obvious paradox is usually rationalized by arguing that religion cannot escape taking account of how people live their lives here on earth, however much it may be preoccupied with the salvation of their souls and the after-life. After all, the former is supposed to be an important preparation for the latter. Herein lies the justification on which prophets, the clergy and all those who claim to interpret the divine purpose base the right to govern the community of the faithful. Whether this pretension to temporal power is valid or not, it underscores the ambition of religious authorities in theocracies to exercise political power without having to share it with any other group, since they alone have the divine right to rule. There can therefore be no talk of widening the basis of political authority or countenancing democratic principles.

Some writers see a democratic potential in the activities of the evangelical churches in contemporary Nigeria. The Christian communities in these churches, it is pointed out, have become an alternative to the state which has practically abandoned all responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. Hence all problems, spiritual as well as material, including unemployment and ill health, are referred to the churches

where the members participate fully in the prayers, crusades and miracle sessions which are organized to provide succour to the poor and the deprived. The congregations not only exclusively deal with matters concerning their private lives, the churches, like some radical Muslim sects, have, in fact, come to constitute autonomous centres of power both in material and spiritual terms (the spiritual 'power of Jesus' from which the pastor derives his authority and performs miracles) as well as a temporal power constituted by the large following and network of relationships which the churches build up, and through which they become influential even in relation to the political authorities. The evangelical churches, therefore, ultimately represent a widening of the democratic space.¹

The notion that these churches represent an upswing in democratic participation is not only an exaggeration but an illusion. To begin with, the congregations in most of these churches have little say in their administration, which is often controlled by the founder-proprietors. And although they enjoy unlimited autonomy in dealing with the cares and wants that rack and torment their usually wretched lives, the church members are nevertheless subject to the authority of the state over whose policies they have practically no input. Yet democracy, in the end, is a function of how open and responsive the state and its structures are to the needs and wishes of the people.

THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND

The fact that there is little that can be described as democratic in the evangelical churches can be seen from a comparison

with similar sects, albeit in a different land and period. The Wesleyan or Methodist revival movement in eighteenth century and early nineteenth century England was an exemplar of democratic organisation. Its members held class meetings which were modeled upon the ideal of community established by the early Christian church. These meetings established equality among the members and practised the arts of democratic intercourse. Policy decisions were collectively arrived at general conferences. Yet each person was entitled to exercise his own judgement and submit to the decision of the collectivity only as far as his conscience allowed.

The contributions of the Methodists to democratic principles were not limited to the movement's internal structures, however. Its members were noted for political activism, and were often found among the mobs protesting the scarcity of corn, and the crowds supporting the reform of parliament. Indeed, so much was the influence of Methodist ministers, preachers and lay persons on the Chartist movement and political reform in general that Methodism came to be labeled a subversive sect "whose propaganda methods of itinerant preaching and Sunday open-air meeting... were all copied at some time or other by the political reformers"². In addition Methodists were prominent in the industrial and political wings of the labour movement.³

It is nevertheless true that the evangelical churches, like some Shiite sects, have become power groups in their own right, and that they can be critical of government authorities or constitute an opposition with sufficient weight and influence to make the government apprehensive. Quite often, however, the church leaders reach an accommodation with those in

power, from whom they accept gifts and other forms of patronage. Thus while failing to influence the power structure in any significant way, the Pentecostal churches represent another instance in which power is privatised in favour of the owner-proprietors whose life-styles often raise doubts about their accountability to their congregations. But then many of these churches do not even pretend to be concerned with social or political reform, or to place much premium on real spiritual regeneration, either for the individual or society at large. Their emphasis is prosperity, instant miracles and material success, sometimes at all costs. As to widening the space of democratic participation, the evangelical churches, through their doctrine relating to the solution of all mundane problems by miracles, actually serve to subvert the development of democratic values. Whereas they have no real or enduring answers to the complex socio-economic problems plaguing the country, they nevertheless provide a safety-valve which prevents the frustration of the people from building up to a point at which they can no longer be ignored by the rulers.⁴

The role of religion in the evolution of democracy is the subject matter of a study titled *Religion and the Rise of Democracy*⁵ in which the author, Graham Maddox, tries to show that the Judaeo-Christian tradition constitutes the central factor in the development of modern democracy. To this end, he equates Jerusalem with Athens as the cradle of the democratic ethos. Thus tribal Israel established political communities of all adult males, enacted complex legal codes, and upheld the ideal of equality. It was within the same Israel that the 'classical prophets', beginning with Amos, constituted a sort of pressure group, a form of 'political opposition', to

the political and religious establishment, preaching justice and denouncing the oppression of the poor. This prophetic tradition of democratic principles continued to the early Christian era, in which the teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the gospels, form a link with that of the classical prophets, both of them displaying the same 'impulses towards political democracy' in their attitudes to the poor, outcasts and sinners.⁶

Maddox continues his survey to the medieval period, during which the theological ideas of the Christian saints, especially Augustine, represented, according to Maddox, an advance on the Jewish prophetic tradition. For, whereas the Old Testament prophets railed against specific instances of oppression, St. Augustine regarded all earthly existence as swathed in injustice. The heavenly city, whose exemplary attributes are sketched in St. Augustine's book, *The City of God*, is, however, an ideal in terms of perfection and justice to which the earthly city can aspire.⁷

For Maddox the Reformation, with its attendant political and religious developments, represents a milestone in the evolution of democracy. From Luther, politically conservative though he was, the idea of 'the priesthood of all believers' was derived, and this subsequently promoted individualism, apart from other implicit values like liberty, equality and the imperative of the reform of authoritarian institutions. Calvinism, on its part, facilitated the development of 'oppositional politics', while the Protestant revolution in Britain influenced the works of the two major political thinkers in the seventeenth century – Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Moreover, the impetus of the political activism of the puritans was derived from religious inspiration. In England the

Levellers advocated equality, among other radical principles, while in America, the Christian communities and congregations were an important institution in the governance of the colonies. They were the precursors of the direct democracy of the town meetings as well as popular elections which did a lot to shape the evolution of democracy in America.

A major religious influence on the rise of modern democracy, according to Maddox, was the Christian evangelical revival in England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Since this has already been touched upon while assessing the democratic potential in contemporary evangelical churches in Nigeria, the role of the Wesleyan evangelical movement, as analysed by Maddox, will only be summarized here. Among other things Wesley 'fashioned a cellular structure for the Methodist Society that became the school for democracy in nineteenth century Britain and America'. He also 'introduced into British religious and political life a blend of individualism and collectivism' which became the foundation of parliamentary socialism. The society's welfare programmes for the poor was an important contribution to the idea that the social welfare of the citizenry should be one of the responsibilities of government. Above all, the Methodists were political activists, several of them being hanged as Luddites, while ministers as well as lay persons were major participants in the Chartist and trade union movements as well as in the campaign for parliamentary reform.⁹

Having reviewed Maddox's arguments, one can now examine the validity of his proposition that the foundations

of what became modern democracy are indeed religious. No one can deny that Maddox's survey does present a systematic account of the teachings of different categories of believers on the social issues of their day. It has been clearly shown that the Judaeo-Christian tradition has a reputation of relentlessly advocating certain principles of human behaviour and that these principles contain elements of what is now known as democratic values. But does this prove that the roots of the democratic ethos are religious, or that religion, with its conservative outlook, its doctrines and dogmas, can promote democracy?

Maddox takes all his illustrations from one solitary religious tradition – the Judaeo-Christian – presumably because this is one of the foundations of Western culture, and democracy is considered a basically Western institution. Nevertheless he does concede that religion is but one of the 'tributaries to the democratic stream', and, more importantly, that Christianity's record (especially of persecutions, oppressions and other forms of violence) has not always been one of benevolence. One major problem with the Maddox thesis, however, is the notion that a more or less linear history of the evolution of democracy can be constructed from the disconnected and *ad hoc* teachings and activities of men and women of different ages and climes. Modern democracy, admittedly, may, in a sense be the culmination of human struggles over the ages for principles like justice, liberty and freedom. But these struggles have been subject to gains and reverses. And although people might be inspired by the tradition of previous struggles, many campaigns for basic rights have been set in motion by spontaneous reactions

against oppression. Moreover, how far can one legitimately go beyond the ideas of the political philosophers and reformers of the seventeenth century and of the Enlightenment or beyond the men, the issues and the cataclysmic events of those times, both in Europe and America, in order to discover the origins of modern democracy? Religion was, no doubt, an important part of these issues and events, but it is extremely hazardous to see its role with respect to the rise of democracy as central.

It has already been stated that the teaching of precepts does not necessarily make religion an advocate of democracy. Indeed, all religious teachers until modern times, far from espousing popular sovereignty, have accepted the *status quo*, while merely pleading for reform and the dispensation of justice by incumbent rulers. Both St. Augustine and Martin Luther endorsed St. Paul's injunction that

Every person must submit to the authorities in power, for all authority comes from God, and the existing authorities are instituted by him. It follows that anyone who rebels against authority is resisting a divine institution...¹⁰

Even Jean Calvin regarded the state as a 'divine institution' which must therefore be obeyed by believers. Apart from an understandable fear of chaos, the theological explanation for supporting existing governments is that they are part of God's schemes for mankind. Be that as it may, the fact that religious dignitaries usually support the powers that be is an illustration of religion's inherently conservative attitude to societal structures.

It is remarkable that whenever religious reformers have ventured to challenge the *status quo* in society, they have

usually been forced to do so outside the religious establishment. The Old Testament prophets, as well as Luther, Calvin and John Wesley, could only develop and propagate their radical ideas as dissenters from the mainstream religious institutions. If these men's activities and ideas were not acceptable to the orthodox religious establishments, would it be right therefore to credit their contributions to democratic principles to religion without qualification?

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

This question is particularly pertinent for the assessment of the significance of one of the momentous issues in the Christian church in recent times. This particular issue centers around the role of the church in society, with particular reference to the problems of the poor and the oppressed in relation to the rich and powerful. By the late 1960s and early 1970s a movement of sorts had emerged among elements of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, criticising the church's conservative attitude to pressing socio-economic issues, in spite of the official Catholic doctrine of "distributive justice" and the application of Christian solutions to social problems. The church in Latin America was accused of denying democracy within its own structures, and of being "slow to criticise the material discomfiture of a dislocated and class-riven society", while advertising "the comforts of the spiritual world and the hopes of the hereafter".¹¹

The crux of the movement's ideas, which became known as liberation theology, rejected capitalism and claimed the right to project a non-communist version of socialism as an

alternative solution to the socio-economic ills of Latin America. Liberation theology also saw not only a similarity, but a certain congruence, between biblical concerns and Marxism, whose materialism it deemed "far more prophetic" and "spiritual" than is often thought. The movement therefore aspired to become an institution of social criticism, confronting injustice and making a new presence among the poor. To this end it was far more preoccupied with *liberation* than with theological niceties.¹²

Accordingly Christians were enjoined to "stand in solidarity with the oppressed in their struggle against evil", through "participation and praxis", which might involve "violent revolution and tactical cooperation with the communists". An instance of the theologians' praxis was the Ecclesial Base Community Groups, with organisations among the poor to provide spiritual succour and establish communities of mutual economic and social support. Members of these communities participated fully in the organisations, with lay persons sometimes presiding over sacraments when priests were not available. Social action, in the case of Brazil groups, also involved "resistance to landowners [and] protests against police brutality".¹³

The revolt by radical Christians against the established church in Latin America was reenacted, albeit on a smaller scale, in South Africa at the height of the struggle against apartheid. As in Latin America, the church in South Africa was at first preoccupied with reconciliation among the races, while passing resolutions against apartheid. Following the launching of the Black Consciousness movement, however, a set of radical doctrines by the name of "Black Theology"

was enunciated outside the mainstream church. Eventually the latter itself came to deny the legality of the apartheid regime, and to declare support for the liberation struggle.¹⁴

It can thus be seen that the above movements in furtherance of democratic principles in Latin America and South Africa have had to do so in spite of the Christian religious establishment. True, the latter, in several parts of the world, including Nigeria, occasionally comes out to criticise and condemn human rights abuses and injustice. But the extent to which these pious *ad hoc* interventions on political issues can advance the cause of democracy is a moot point. By and large, they are little more than another instance of the didactic role of religion discussed above. Even the activities of the dissident Christian groups in Latin America and South Africa were little more than local and ephemeral revolts. The rationale for liberation theology was, in fact, repudiated by an official Vatican release which stated that,

The first liberation, to which all others must make references, is that from sin... structures, whether they are good or bad, are the results of men's actions and so are consequences more than causes.¹⁵

Ultimately the dissidents were unable to bring about a reform of the established church or to change its character, which therefore continued to be conservative and sometimes even reactionary.

We now return to the question why religion is intrinsically out of tune with democratic values. Admittedly both are human institutions created or fashioned for the purposes of coping with individual and communal problems of everyday life. Both have overlapping principles and values, some of

which are as old as human society, and whose objectives are the maintenance of peace, harmony and the guarantee of happiness. Usually, some officials are appointed or trained to run the institutions set up to promote these values and principles, and ensure that society acts in conformity with them. Here the similarities seem to end.

Religion was originally instituted to invoke the supernatural and explain those mysteries of life that are beyond human comprehension – the vagaries and awe-inspiring features of the world in which man has found himself, the fragility and finiteness of the entity called life and the riddle and inevitability of death. Because of these origins, religion has usually developed as esoteric institutions to which people have to be initiated. Most faiths thus started as tribal cults. Thus Judaism, from which two of the so-called universal religions (Christianity and Islam) derived, regards the Jews as a people with a special relationship, a covenant, with God. And even though the proselytising religions have tried to discard this exclusive character, vestiges of same persist in such initiation rituals like baptism, the insistence that Arabic is the only authentic language of the Qur'an or the fact that a non-Italian pope is a rarity.

The origin of religion as an esoteric rather than an open institution has continued to affect its character up till today. More so since it is concerned not only with mundane problems, but because it also has to pronounce on such puzzling and arcane subjects as the Almighty and his attributes, the purpose of human existence and the hereafter. The problem of validating these pronouncements has been resolved by some religions through the claim that the answers to these mysteries

have been *revealed* to them. This is supposed to have happened through a prophet or some similar intermediary who undergoes a spiritual experience involving an encounter with a divinity or the Almighty, following which a blueprint for instituting the religious system concerned is committed to the prophet.

The idea of revelation is thus a crucial issue in the nature and attributes of religion. It enhances its esoteric and metaphysical character, making it less open and liberal, at least by the standards of everyday institutions. The authenticity of the revelation claims is not open to investigation: it has to be accepted by faith. Hence people cannot question the creeds and doctrines of the so-called revealed religions. It is remarkable, nevertheless, that these religious revelations have invariably been made to men who, since recorded history, have always controlled human society.

Men are thus, usually, the clerics and votaries that formulate and perform religious rituals, while it is women that suffer the disabilities of religious laws, and are excluded from officiating at religious worship. When religious injunctions which are discriminatory to women or which deny them basic human rights are criticized, one is told that God's laws (revealed through the agency of men) should prevail over man-made (that is, liberal) views.

If the metaphysical and mystical mode of its origins accounts, to a great extent, for the fact that religion cannot be as liberal and open as democracy generally is, the social circumstances in which it develops similarly contribute to its conservative character. In whatever social milieu it originates, religion invariably appropriates the structure of authority within that society as well as the basic elements of its culture.

Thus a Supreme Being or Almighty, usually cast in the form of a male and presiding over a band of lesser divinities, is a replication of a patriarchal political system consisting of kings, viceroys, councilors and chiefs. Moreover, religion, having borrowed the hierarchical structure in society, goes on, by implication, to legitimate that structure, thereby endowing temporal authority, plus power and its appurtenances, with divine sanction. Indeed, religion supplies the scriptural doctrines and injunctions that make up the ideology that supports the claims of monarchs to rule by divine right, while rationalising inequality and privilege. Similarly the various cultural backgrounds from which different faiths originate are in part, responsible for the competing and conflicting creeds by reason of which religion breeds intolerance and promotes persecutions and wars.

In sum, unlike democracy, religion, with its creeds, its dogmas and emphasis on faith and revelation, is, by and large, a finished business. The scriptures, for example, may be subjected to exegesis and commentaries: they cannot be modified or added to. Indeed, some faiths, such as Islam, continue to resist the kind of accommodation that Christianity, since the Renaissance and the Reformation, has been striving to make with democracy and democratic values.

Just as religion has its own special characteristics, democracy, on its part, enshrines values and principles that embody some of man's noblest attributes, including a compelling urge to be free from the oppression of power, however constituted, and to challenge the basis of inequality and privilege. Because these principles are universal human aspirations, and because they tend to liberate and widen the

basis of power, democracy as an ideology generally has no need of any esoteric mystifications or of occult organisations or institutions. Occasionally, people engaged in struggle for democratic change are forced to go underground or plan their strategies in a clandestine manner. But this is different from the secrecy of cults and institutions that hoard knowledge and exclude non-initiates so as to protect their monopoly of power. Sometimes, democracy, like all ideologies, can descend to the level of faith or become fanatical. Usually, however, it is open and tolerant. Indeed, democracy advances by challenging the *status quo*, by questioning established habits and beliefs and by entertaining new ideas.

Above all, democracy is, and probably will continue to be, an unfinished business, given the nature of its principles and values (such as justice, equality, freedom and liberty), the problem of instituting them, as well as its ideal of popular sovereignty. These are goals after which society will for ever be aspiring. It is significant that it is only when aspects of this ideal of popular sovereignty are reduced to a dogma (as elements of the Marxist views of an egalitarian society were reduced in the so-called "people's democratic republics" in Eastern Europe and the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the recent past) that democracy takes on the hue of religion and is dismissed as such.

Religion and democracy are thus, in essence, two very distinct and sometimes opposed ways of viewing life and society. The latter is, by and large, open and secular; and it recognizes no idols or fetishes. The former, by contrast, is mystical and esoteric, while reserving a special place for those things too sacred to be questioned. It is, therefore, in a sense,

somewhat nonsensical to speak of religion influencing democracy; it is equally presumptuous to think that religion may some day abandon its essence and adopt that of democracy. It has already been conceded, however, that religion plays a number of didactic and humanitarian roles in society. Instances have also been given, as in the case of liberation theology in Latin America, of Christian elements taking a stand in the vanguard of democratic struggle. In other words, religious people have been working out some kind of accommodation with democracy and democratic values. This development, it has to be stressed, has been in spite of, rather than because of, the character of the religious denominations concerned. It has not changed, nor can it alter the nature of religion as an institution intrinsically different from democracy.

NOTES

1. See Ruth Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus", *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 52, 1991, pp. 21-37.
2. Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England, 1800-1850*, London, Epworth Press, 1937, p. 216, cited in G. Maddox, *Religion and the Rise of Democracy*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 191-2.
3. The information on the Methodist Movement comes from Maddox, *op.cit.*, pp. 183-196.
4. cf. Paul Gifford, "Christian Fundamentalism and Development", *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 52, 1991, pp. 9-20.
5. See note 2 above.
6. Maddox, *op.cit.*, pp.2, 32, 34, 38 & 51.

7. Maddox, pp. 90-91.
8. Maddox, pp. 112-120, 121-143 and 144-169.
9. Maddox pp. 183-196.
10. Romans 13, 1-2, cited in Maddox, p. 65. See also Maddox, pp. 88, 102-106.
11. See Frederick C. Turner, *Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1971), p. 139; Maddox, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208; J. Painter, *Guatemala, False Hope, False Freedom*, Catholic Institute for International Relations (London, 1987), pp. 59-61.
12. Maddox, pp. 207-8.
13. H. Montefiore, *Christianity and Politics* (London, Macmillan, 1989), p. 8; Maddox, p. 208.
14. J. Cochrane, "Christian Resistance to Apartheid: Periodisation, Prognosis", in M. Prozesky (ed.), *Christianity Amidst Apartheid: Selected Perspectives on the Church in South Africa* (London, Macmillan, 1990), pp. 81-100.
15. Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

THE INDIGENE-SETTLER QUESTION IN THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA

by

Olutayo C. Adesina

Governance in Nigeria is little more than providing wealth and development for the favoured group. And this favoured group has, so far, never been a national group. It has always been a sub-national group. As it is at the national level, so it is at the state and local government levels. Our calculations are not based on the totality of the collectivity...¹

There are profound stresses that afflict Nigeria's federalism. The doctrine that formed the fundamental basis of Nigeria as a Federal State and which governed the existence of Nigerians as cultural groups or as individuals had been burdened by the overwhelming presence of the indigene-settler question.

The indigene-settler question is a historical one. It has assumed a political dimension. Its effect on socio-economic matters has become highly pronounced. It is a phenomenon that contrived to isolate the "settler" from the "indigene" or the "indigenous" from the "non-indigenous" no matter the duration of immigration and co-habitation.

The salient characteristic of this was the creation and sustenance of a dichotomy based on an increasing sense of

cultural or linguistic difference and identity – where a person's ancestors derived from rather than where that person was born or lives. This identity got sharpened whenever access to opportunities became more difficult. The frustrations and uncertainties in a complex, rapidly changing world can and do often trigger scapegoating of highly visible groups such as minorities and immigrants who become targets of irrational, hateful or extremist responses. These challenges have serious implications for societies throughout the world.²

Contemporary politics in Nigeria has exploited the deep disaffection caused by ethnic and sub-ethnic tensions. Struggles over political power and local government reforms have, for instance, revived the latent divisions between “natives” and the descendants of “native settlers”.

A salient example of this divisive tendency clearly manifested itself in the city of Ibadan during Nigeria's second republic when emphases were placed on the importance of sub-ethnic identities in contemporary politics. Political actors in Ibadan subtly used ancestral homelands to create a significant dichotomy between natives of Ibadan and native settlers, especially the Ijebu.³

It was clear therefore that the Nigerian peoples may have shared the fundamental ideals that make their nation a federal state, but in reality rather than find fulfillment in its application, the fine notions of their federal identity are largely confined to mere constitutional provisions. Contemporary inter-group relations in the country has consistently shied away from the respect for human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms and mutual respect embedded in successive federal constitutions, all of which tried to strengthen and promote

the federal principles as integrative mechanisms.

In 1954, Nigeria became a federation made up of a federal government and three regional governments each with its specific powers. However, political developments since independence in 1960 has created several contradictions in the practice of federalism.⁴ Over time the same federal principles have been used to nurture, exaggerate and perpetuate primordialism and an extreme identification with kith, kin and affines narrowly defined. It is therefore an understatement to say that today Nigeria's federalism is passing through one of the most trying periods in the march towards the evolution of a vibrant civil society. Stark poverty, massive corruption, moral decadence and the resurgence of dangerous ethnicity⁵ which preclude rational action and reflection foster local ties that inhibit the dialectic interactions necessary for social and cultural cohesion in plural society.

Using the prevailing doctrine of the "sons (and daughters) of the soil" as the tool of analysis, this paper explores the philosophy guiding the use of federally-owned infrastructure. The doctrine of the "son of the soil" is now not only in the forefront of identifications that radically distinguish between an "indigene" and a "settler" in a town, but in critical times determine access to collectively-owned infrastructure. Such infrastructure has become caught up in the emergent forms of culture that reshuffle and re-invent the web of unity. The social fabric of the nation has been re-cut to fit the changes that make both the rural and urban spaces in Nigeria dynamic and volatile.

No existing federal systems of government are identical. It is, however, still valid to assert that the major aim of most

federal constitutions remain the desire to enthrone an institutionalized balance between national unity and sub-national identity and solidarity. Federalism offers several plural societies the best option to accommodate their ethnic, linguistic, religious and racial diversities. But unlike several other constitutions, the American constitution embodied the necessary safeguards in this respect. Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the American Constitution makes this very clear: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside..."⁶

The situation in Nigeria contrasts sharply with that of the United States. The vulnerability of black Africa's most populous nation's federal constitution to disruptive centrifugal tendencies has been tremendous. A survey of the Nigerian experience in the post-colonial era will exemplify the magnitude of hostilities engendered by ethnicity and sub-ethnic considerations. But there was nothing in Nigeria's several federal constitutions to justify the social code, which affirmed the doctrines of prejudice and intolerance. The hydra-headed intra-and inter-ethnic conflicts which have forced a dichotomy and re-definition of who constitutes aboriginal inhabitants and settlers in particular localities have resulted in the disintegration of social order.⁷

The roots of the Nigerian dilemma could be traced to the interaction between the fundamental social dynamics of the nation's constituent communities and the politics of the public arena.⁸ The cause of these are examined from a perspective of constant calculation for advantage over scarce resources and opportunities.⁹ This is predicated on the belief that Nigeria's

federal structure has not encouraged the legitimate channeling of competition. Neither has it tended to foster political or social stability and harmony. This is fundamentally so because of the absence of a civic culture predicated on the principle of "unity in diversity".

Federally funded infrastructures in Nigeria are created along geo-political lines and these are in turn affected by deep social, political and economic contests. The significance of these assumes new dimensions in times of intra- and inter-ethnic clashes and conflicts. By using Federal hospitals caught in deep conflictual situations as case studies, we examine the politics of their location and their roles in times of crisis vis-à-vis victims of sub-ethnic or ethnic clashes. We also highlight the plight of personnel who work in such hospitals and the dead that must benefit from the mortuary services.

INTER-GROUP RELATIONS: THE MYTH AND THE REALITY

Nigeria is far from being a homogenous country. Apart from the three main ethnic groups of Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, the country has more than 250 other ethnic groups. Because of the amalgamation in 1914, Nigeria became a multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society in which different ethnic groups compete for access to power, resources and privileges. These imply a series of constraints on the kinds of role individuals or groups are allowed to play, and the partners they can choose for different kinds of transactions.¹⁰ This was, however, antithetical to the letters and principles of the Nigerian Constitutions. None of these Constitutions confer any legitimacy on the dichotomy between

“indigeneship” and “citizenship” and between “indigenes” and “settlers”. Nigeria’s constitutions since 1954, 1960, 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999 have included provisions which guaranteed fundamental human rights for its citizens”.¹¹ The independence constitution (1960) recognizes implicitly the right of life (section 17); freedom of movement (section 26) and freedom from discrimination (section 27). These and other rights were subsequently entrenched in latter constitutions. Nigeria’s 1963 Republican Constitution reinforced the desire of the nation to forge a viable and cohesive state. The constitution’s Section 27 guaranteed the freedom of every Nigerian to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof.¹² Section 38 of the 1979 Constitution similarly provided for and recognized that “every Nigerian citizen is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof”.

Of particular significance and importance in the 1979 Constitution was the desire to facilitate social cohesion and the guarantee of a good life. The 1979 Constitution in section 15 (2, 3 and 4), stated as follows:

(2) Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.

(3) For the purpose of promoting national integration it shall be the duty of the State to —

- (a) provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the Federation;
- (b) secure full residence rights for every citizen

- in all parts of the Federation;
 - (c) encourage intermarriage among persons from different places of origin or of different religious, ethnic or linguistic association or ties; and
 - (d) promote or encourage the formation of associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or other sectional barriers.
- (4) The state shall foster a feeling of belonging and involvement among the various peoples of the Federation, to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties.¹³

The social objectives of the 1979 Constitution similarly recognized the need to protect the fundamental human rights of all citizens when it proclaimed in Section 17 (1, 2 and 3 (a-d) as follows:

- (1) The State social order is founded on ideals of freedom, equality and justice.
- (2) In furtherance of the social order-
 - (a) every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law;
 - (b) the sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced;
 - (c) governmental actions shall be humane;
 - (d) exploitation of human or natural resources in any form whatsoever for

- reasons other than the good of the community shall be prevented; and
- (e) the independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law, and easy accessibility thereto shall be secured and maintained.
- (3) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that-
- (a) all citizens without discrimination on any ground whatsoever have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunities to secure suitable employment;
 - (b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life;
 - (c) the health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused;
 - (d) there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons;¹⁴

The constitutional prohibition of irrational discrimination embedded in Section 39 of the 1979 Constitution constituted an important provision in the area of legal protection of human rights in Nigeria. The concept of discriminatory treatment is amplified by Jadesola Akande as "affording treatment to different persons attributable wholly or in part to their respective descriptions by race, tribe, place of origin, political

opinion, sex ... whereby persons of such description are not made subject or accorded privileges which are not accorded to persons of another of such description".¹⁵

Also, Section 16(2) of the 1989 Constitution which was never promulgated into law, and which derived largely from the 1979 one avowed the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy. It is appropriate to quote this extensively:

16. – (1) The motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.

(2) Accordingly, national integration shall be actively promoted whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, circumstance of birth, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.¹⁶

(3) For the purpose of promoting national integration it shall be the duty of the State to provide adequate facilities for, and encourage, free mobility of people and services throughout the Federation; secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation; encourage inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin, or different religious, ethnic or linguistic association or ties; and (a) promote or encourage the formation of associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or other sectional barriers.

(4) The State shall foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various peoples of the Federation, to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties.

(5) The State shall eradicate all corrupt practices and abuse of power.

(6) The State shall protect and defend the liberty of the individual, enforce the rule of law and ensure the efficient functioning of government services.

Similar sentiments were expressed in the 1999 Constitution.¹⁷ But the entire calculus of nation building as envisaged by all these constitutions did not take cognizance of each ethnic or sub-ethnic group's configuration of interest. The editorial comments of *The Comet* tackled what it regarded as the strong points and the weaknesses of the Nigerian constitution. It stated inter alia:

... The problem of indigeneship within a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria is not constitutional but cultural and sociological. The Constitution confers every right available to Nigerian citizens wherever they may be anywhere in the country. Nobody, the constitution says, must be discriminated against in any part of the country on the basis of the circumstances of his or her birth. But the same constitution in another breath affirms the right of indigenous people to protection from extinction and domination.¹⁸

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AND NIGERIAN CITIZENS

In fulfilment of the federal doctrine the Nigerian State directed its policy towards ensuring the promotion of a planned and balanced social development to include the diversification and dispersal of health and hospital facilities throughout the Federation. These were in the form of federal medical centres, dispensaries, medical research institutions, university teaching hospitals and a host of others. In the pursuit of the principle of social justice, the government had pledged that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose and responsibility of government". It also promised to ensure that "there are adequate medical and health care facilities for all persons".¹⁹ But while the Federal Government has been able to multiply the number of health facilities all over the six geo-political zones of the country, it has been incapable of either "ensuring the security and welfare" or giving "adequate medical care" to people, especially in times of acute crisis.

The location of a federal hospital in a particular zone is not a guarantee that its services would be open to all comers. Behind the façade of the collectivity lies phenomena of exclusion based on culturally defined struggles. Some of the federal hospitals have in recent times become both the victims and purveyors of parochialism and particularistic values and interests.

Unhealthy Conflicts and Federal Health Facilities

In the last decades of the twentieth century and in the early twenty-first, Nigeria has been a victim of acute social

convulsion. At the root of these crises have been religion, ethnicity, politics, petroleum products pricing and supply, agitation for wage increase and a legion of other problems. These have resulted in unprecedented devastation, bloodbath, severe injuries and social dislocation. But perhaps the most virulent of these crises has been the sub-ethnic and ethnic conflicts.

The Nigerian nation has witnessed a concentration of ethnic and linguistic groups of diverse origins whose migratory activities only ended with colonialism. Such migrant groups are now caught up in deep conflict with their hosts. At the root of the disagreements between these groups are land matters, social status, chieftaincy matters and politics. Two of such conflicts are the Ife-Modakeke conflict and the ethno-religious crisis in Jos, Plateau State. In both cases, the status of the University Teaching Hospital (Federal) in the areas became defined simply as infrastructures accessible only to a particular group and thus beyond the reach of the "others".

THE IFE-MODAKEKE CONFLICT AND THE OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL COMPLEX

Not since the time of the Nigerian Civil War has its location and position in an inter-group conflict held any hospital captive as it did the OAUTHC situated in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Between 1980 and 2001 the hospital almost lost its federal status by catering only to a particular group in a conflict situation. The OAUTHC, the teaching hospital complex belonging to the Federal Government-owned Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife is situated squarely within Ife territory. Its location on

the major highway on the outskirts of the town on the Ilesa-Ife highway meant that whosoever was in need of getting service at the hospital must, of necessity, traverse the length of Ife territory. This, of course, proved disadvantageous to the Modakeke, an Oyo-speaking Yoruba group that had settled in Ile-Ife, the cradle of the Yoruba race.

The Modakeke community evolved within Ife territory as a result of the internecine warfare in nineteenth century Yorubaland. By 1884, Modakeke had evolved into a settlement with a population of between 50,000 and 60,000 inhabitants²⁰ but despite living together for years, the migrant Modakeke and their Ife hosts have consistently been at one another's throats. In 1847, the two groups engaged in a serious conflict which led to a temporary evacuation of Ile-Ife. The Ife people remained in exile until about 1854 when peace was negotiated and they were allowed to re-occupy their town. Since then, a "continuous chain of open hostilities" would be the most appropriate way of describing their relationship. In 1882 the Ife sided with the Ekitiparapo to shake off Ibadan hegemony in Yorubaland. With this decision the Ife provided the opportunity for Ibadan to attack Ile-Ife. This it did with Modakeke support. Ile-Ife was burnt down and was only rebuilt and occupied in 1894 after the cessation of hostilities.²¹ This created serious animosities between both groups and this has continued into the contemporary period.

There have been four major eruptions of the Ife-Modakeke strife between 1980 and 2001. These were caused by the desire of the Modakeke to jettison the age-old customary land tenure system which made them tenants on Ife land. Secondly, the ceaseless aspiration for a separate local

government by Modakeke chiefs and elites, which would effectively make Modakeke an autonomous town rather than an appendage of Ife, has consistently drawn the ire of the Ife. Each eruption of violence that attended these demands left the two sections devastated and prostrate. The violence resulted in the loss of lives, severe injuries for a countless number of people and the destruction of property. The intervention of the government and well-meaning persons on each occasion only managed to put in abeyance further crisis. The matters under contention were never amicably resolved.

The air of suspicion hanging over both communities remained ever so potent and the bloody clashes that have characterized their relationship were to recur again and again. Reports showed that both communities not only used sophisticated weapons to drive home their points, but also seemed to be pursuing an objective to annihilate each other.²² Each time the clashes occurred it stalled travellers' movement through Ile-Ife to the towns of Ilesa and Ado-Ekiti and through Modakeke territory to Ondo and Ore. Such hiccups were also to prove inimical to the victims of the crisis who could not be evacuated to either the OAUTHC or other hospitals in these other towns. Since the outbreak of hostilities it became virtually impossible for victims from the Modakeke side to be treated at the OAUTHC. The fear was that they would simply be slaughtered enroute to the hospital. Taking another route to that same hospital was also out of the question as a substantial number of the work-force in the hospital were suspected to be Ife people. The disagreement has become so bitter that victims being treated there would be seized by Ife mobs and killed.²³

But while there were credible threats to the victims of the Ife-Modakeke feud being treated in the hospital, at no time did the Ife issue any official statement barring the use of the hospital by the Modakeke people.²⁴ In spite of this, however, there was a general consensus of opinion on both sides that it would be foolhardy for any Modakeke victim to be evacuated to the OAUTHC for treatment at any point during any of the crisis periods. The Modakeke were contented with sending their wounded and their dead to hospitals either in Osogbo, the Osun State capital, or by a circuitous route hundreds of kilometers away to any of the other major Yoruba towns.²⁵

The communities remained sworn enemies. Members of staff of the hospital who hailed from Modakeke simply stopped going to work. Their fears were finally confirmed when a medical student of Modakeke ancestry was abducted from the precinct of the university. A national tabloid reported that: "The lingering crisis apparently assumed a new dimension on May 8 (2000), as a Part Six medical student of the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife was reportedly abducted on the campus by some unidentified persons. He was said to have been kidnapped in his car while driving inside the campus enroute the OAU Teaching Hospital Complex where medical students usually receive their lectures".²⁶ He was never seen again and his body was never recovered. That seemed to confirm the suspicion that the Ife as the landlord of the hospital had appropriated the OAUTHC.

THE JOS CRISIS AND THE JOS UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL

The Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) located in Jos, Plateau State was, like the OAUTHC, a victim of a crisis that saw host/settler communities engaged in a struggle that smacked of a desire for mutually assured destruction. The level of savagery exhibited during the crisis that took place in 2001 was terrifying. It was a conflict which manifested all the virulence of an ethnic crisis.

The Jos crisis took everyone by surprise as the city and Plateau State in general had been symbols of peace and tranquility. The cosmopolitan outlook of Jos had never been put to question until Friday, September 7, 2001²⁷. The tone for the clash was set at a press conference in Jos where the aboriginal residents of the town, the Birom, Anagutas and Afizere threatened to set the city ablaze if the settler Hausa-Fulani were not sent back to where they came from.²⁸ The crisis was precipitated by the appointment of a Jos-based Hausa-Fulani man as coordinator of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme. The "indigenes" rejected the appointment of the member of a "settler" community in preference for a "son of the soil". The Hausa-Fulani, angered by this and their age-long marginalisation in the administration of the Jos North Local Government Council capitalized on an infraction by a Christian woman, used the Friday Jumat service to vent their anger on Jos indigenes, setting houses and churches ablaze. The indigenes, predominantly Christians, retaliated by burning down mosques and houses belonging to the Hausa-Fulani.

The very history of the Jos area created the basis for multiple identities. The region contains a large number of ethnic nationalities and language groups. A major problem in the area is the "settler" problem. This is because it is tied to land ownership, religion and ethnicity. Some of these "settlers" have lived in their present locations for centuries. The "settlers" are predominantly Hausa-Fulani traders, dry season farmers and peasants who immigrated to the Middle Belt of Nigeria because of trade, the Islamic Jihad of 1804 and colonial rule. At the time of the migrations, there was plenty of land to loan out to the migrants. Over time, however, the migrants assumed control of these lands. Moreover, they also took control of markets and other administrative functions like tax collection and the collection of market rates and levies, which gave them power over the lives and economies of the "indigenous" people. The land-owning system, which is mainly communal in nature, also made it difficult to remove the divide between the "indigenous" people and those they consider the "settlers".²⁹ The location of the JUTH in Birom territory successfully helped in restoring and emphasizing this dichotomy.

The main issue in the crisis became accessibility to the Jos University Teaching Hospital. The location of this federal hospital became very central to the crisis. The advantage of the location went to the "indigenes" who quickly availed themselves of the use of both the hospital and mortuary facilities. It took the intervention of the Police and Armed Forces to remove the several corpses that littered the streets of Jos and then use the opportunity to guarantee a resting-place for dead "settlers" in the already over-filled floors and

mortuaries of JUTH. But the treatment of wounded victims of the combat still remained lopsided.

Matters came to a head when people of Hausa-Fulani ancestry rallied and wanted to burn down JUTH because they claimed "that Hausas were not being given medical treatment in the hospital."³⁰ The Nigerian Red Cross had to take over the onerous task of providing succour to the victims of the crisis.³¹ The state government also had to come out openly to set up committees designed to ameliorate the problems of the victims of this crisis. The Committees set up included the Refugee Rehabilitation and Management Committee to locate and identify displaced people and recommend to government the mode of their resettlement; the Relief Materials Management and Information and Community Relations Committee designed to receive all materials for distribution to victims and disseminate timely information on the crisis to citizens; the Search, Rescue and Environment Committee, mandated to search for missing and injured persons and clear the city of debris; and the Medical Committee, designed to identify the medical needs of injured persons and distribute necessary drugs to them.³²

It is clear from the foregoing that the government itself recognized the fact that access to medical facilities proved either horribly inadequate or "unavailable" to a section affected by the crisis.

CONCLUSION

A major question that arises from the foregoing is: "When does a "settler" become an indigene and after how many centuries of sojourning in his adopted land? The increased

violence arising from these difficult questions in Nigeria has continued to threaten the stability of the nation. One of the most important vectors of this was the indigene-settler distinction which continued to define the structure of the Nigerian State and the definition of the rights of the citizens. The most that can be achieved under the circumstances is for the Nigerian State to identify the strategic and popular interests of a particular zone and build coalitions that can advance these interests.

The susceptibility of African nations to recurrent social and economic crises and the progressive deterioration of the human condition are essentially due to structural deficiencies created by the acute competition for scarce resources.³³ The "winner-takes-all" syndrome that has characterized the political process has further exacerbated this. Until there is a mechanism to assure social justice, broad political participation and economic empowerment, the aspirations of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to live in peace and in a country devoid of a contest for power and opportunities will remain an illusion.

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ON THE VERGE OF HISTORY:**Interview with C.L.R. James**

Being text of discussions between C.L.R. James and Dele Layiwola on the 2nd September, 1988 – months before he died in 1989.

- D.L. You have had your eyes on the intellectual landscapes, indeed on the globe, for upwards of six decades now. What have the tides been like?
- C.L.R. Well, that's a difficult question. I have been working with history. I found out what history there is, what has gone before and I tried to work on that as a basis for the future. That, for me, was the fundamental principle. It is only if you are aware of history that you can carry out your day-to-day struggles in the present time in preparation for the future.
- D.L. I am aware of the fact that you met Nkrumah while he was a student. You said that at that time you realized that he was quite a brilliant young man but you felt that he was not sufficiently experienced for the politics he was going to encounter in the Gold Coast. So you sent him to George Padmore to groom him.
- C.L.R. Oh yes. He came to me and, you were right there, I sent him to Padmore. After that, things began to happen. The Gold Coast (Ghana) became

independent in 1957. I was interested in Africa's struggle for independence.

D.L. Quite right – you and the other men of your generation: George Padmore, W.E. B. Du Bois –

C.L.R. Yes, Du Bois.

D.L. Were you connected with them? Did you work hand in hand?

C.L.R. I know them well. We corresponded.

D.L. But, may I ask you what your feeling was – perhaps the feeling of the other men of your generation too – about Nkrumah and Ghana when things started to go down the hill. When Nkrumah began to lose control and he started locking people up...?

C.L.R. It was quite unfortunate. This is why I often say that people must be truly informed by a sense of history. And this is very important. People could lose sight of events if they become engrossed in day-to-day activities and have no time to check on themselves to see whether they are working within the logic of the past in relation to the future. There must be some people working and putting together this aspect of a political movement... This is what those educated leaders must tell them. There must be people who work on the side, read up what there is to read, get themselves informed on what implications these have for the future, and how the movement must progress. Unless some are doing this and the man leading takes advice from them, he is bound to lose sight of the concrete realities of politics. This is what I have always tried to do. And it is very important.

I think Nkrumah became engrossed in the day-to-day running of government so much so that he lost sight of the logic of historical events. I knew that was bound to happen.

D.L. When this became the case, did you and others say or do something to stem the tide? Were you involved in any way?

C.L.R. We discussed it. We talked about it. But, you see, that is just one aspect of the matter. One needed to be there, to be involved and to organise people. You need resources to do all of that. These we didn't do much. But we discussed it and were concerned about it.

I have said that all leaders who led their countries in the struggle for independence have only gone one stage. After that they must move beyond independence. It is not wrong to acquire independence. Among some of the greatest political leaders that I know – Lenin in the days of the Russian revolution, when everyone was saying, "What shall we do now? What is next?" Lenin sat there in the corner quietly reading and trying to understand Marx's theories.

D.L. That brings me to an important question. It would appear, and I may be wrong, that a lot of our intelligentsia in the third world who have read up political theories, particularly from Marx and Engels, have not been able to articulate them in relation to the peculiar circumstances in their own countries. When a revolution collapses, they often

hide behind a barrage of slogans, clichés and other left-overs from garbled political theories of the right or of the left. Don't you suppose this to be true?

C.L.R. This is what I mean when I say that people must learn from every situation. They cannot learn once and for all times. They must find out what the limitations have been, what the reality is like at the present and how they must apply knowledge or ideas to work on these. If they fail, they must analyse what the situation was, what went wrong, and why it went wrong. They must try to find out what they have failed to do and how to go about it for the future. If they just improvise for particular instances, they are bound to repeat those mistakes. This is what I mean by the knowledge of history – getting people to know what there is on the subject.

This is what I have tried to do in my own operations. I never depart from it. If I came to talk again, this is what I hope to tell them.

D.L. I quite note your concern for the articulation of a theory for circumstances, and the co-ordination of theory with praxis in particular events. But how would you explain the sad irony that in modern politics, the most horrendous leaders remain longer in power? Take, for instance, the case of Idi Amin. In sharp contrast to this is Amilcar Cabral or Patrice Lumumba. It does happen in the West too. This certainly is perplexing.

C.L.R. I think that people need to be mobilized and informed on what events have been, what the state

of things are and how to set about them. I believe that other educated leaders have the responsibility of informing and mobilising people against autocracy. It is important that the so-called middle classes or the educated elite in third world countries make themselves available to effect change. They must be there in the middle of it to take some blows and to give some. They must write against those who are only interested in power or who want to control money for the sake of it...

I am quite impressed by a leader like Nyerere and I say to people: "Watch out. See what he is doing." That is the kind of man to follow.

D.L. You have been concerned about the West Indies a lot in the past. I remember, for instance, your short story, "Triumph", which I thought represented the genuine, hearty and profound feeling of a man who emerged from a rigorous experience. But now that you have been settled here a long time, do you still maintain any contacts?

C.L.R. Oh yes, I am very much in touch with them. They send people to me often. They come here to ask me questions about events and things... Yes we are well in touch.

D.L. It is admirable that being a very accomplished man, and having 'made it', so to say, you still find it comfortable to live in such a humble surrounding.¹ Because it is possible to just move uptown and disappear there.

C.L.R. True. But I feel comfortable in the community here.

I used to live in town but Darcus (Howe) and the others came to me and said you must come and stay here with us. Also it is easier for all of them to reach me here.

D.L. Are you involved in the journal *Race Today*? I see their studio is just downstairs. Did you offer them the ground floor?

C.L.R. About four years ago they came and spoke to me about *Race Today* and said you must come and stay here with us. They run the place; they just asked me to pay something, and they run the place.

D.L. Now to go back to your career: you know you taught in some American universities in the past. And then later, you were banned from re-entering the country for some time. Of course all of those are over but I want you to talk to me about it.

C.L.R. When I was teaching there, the blacks used to come to ask me to give lectures and to talk. Whites too would come to listen and I get various regular invitations to talk or lecture. So some white folks kept asking their black counterparts: "When is James talking again? We want to have James give a lecture". So those whites didn't go to the blacks to ask for me; they just invited me on their own. And I honoured those invitations. In the long run the establishment would buy up those blacks who were well known. They would give them positions and money to shut them up. They tried it with me a few times, and when it didn't work, they said: "We must get rid of this one..." [laughter]

- S.L. It's quite interesting. One realises that the scope of your intellectual contributions are enormous and quite cosmopolitan. In other words, people don't see you as belonging to any ethnic group in the West.
- C.L.R. That is true, many people of various backgrounds come in here daily to discuss with me and ask me questions. They all equally belong here.
- D.L. Permit me, however, to return to the minorities question, first in relation to Britain and the United States, and then in relation to South Africa.
- C.L.R. Right.
- D.L. I have noticed that though the history and the presence of Blacks in Britain and in the United States is long, it has been virtually impossible for them to get into the mainstream of economic and social life. Look – Italians, Germans, Arabs who arrived in these countries long after the blacks had been there have made it good no sooner than they had emigrated there. Even more recently, Asian immigrants in England have generally fared better in many respects. Do you, an indigene, wish to throw more light on this phenomenon?
- C.L.R. You know that Asians came from an already established tradition in their own nations. There was something from which they took off and organized here. Blacks from the Caribbean hadn't this benefit.
- D.L. Do you not agree with my view that many black persons in the middle classes who have made it

good in those Western countries aren't doing enough to help their less privileged sisters and brothers? I realise that you and Lord Pitt have been trying hard. I have heard that Bill Cosby and a few others are trying hard in the United States but we are still talking of a minute proportion of the ethnic minorities.

C.L.R. I agree with you. Yes, America isn't doing enough. That's true.

D.L. Yes, in the present time, Americans have not done enough, even for their own citizens. My first time in Manhattan, New York, was my first confrontation with the farthest implications of poverty. Its devastating force on the psyche, its denigration of its own denizens – white, black, yellow – which has nothing to do with race. Oh, I was sick!

C.L.R. It is true that wherever there is such a concentration of people in an urban setting, there is such a slum and its poverty. I agree that it is devastating.

D.L. Is it not also true that if one nation in Africa, Asia or in Latin America makes an industrial breakthrough, this might enhance minority status in the first world?

C.L.R. Yes.

D.L. What do you consider the value of the carnival arts in West Indian culture?

C.L.R. I don't consider such things as being of any significant or lasting value.

D.L. Recently, the Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, won

the Nobel prize for literature. Do you consider this of any cultural significance?

C.L.R. I have a great admiration for the man who won the Nobel prize because of his contributions, but I think the Noble prize in itself is of no great significance. It does not change anything – nor does it contribute anything new to literature.

D.L. What is your perception of the present political and racial issues in South Africa?

C.L.R. I think the imbalance will be redressed. The black South African is among the most knowledgeable on the whole continent. For this reason those who perpetrate racial imbalance are scared of their black brothers and sisters there. The political solution will emerge in time.²

D.L. C.L.R., talking to you has been like a dialogue with history itself. Thanks for discussing these issues.

C.L.R. Thank you, and keep in touch.

Post Script, 9 September, 1988

D.L. C.L.R. what are your views on religion?

C.L.R. Well, I know that people try to give reality to the form of God, angels and order of spirits, but I don't think they are really able to. I believe that they are doing something serious but I don't know about what they are trying to achieve.

D.L. Could you expatiate on that a bit? It is quite intriguing what you have just said.

C.L.R. Take, for instance, the Pope. He is the head of the Roman Catholic church. He presides over that

beautiful cathedral, St. Peter's, in Rome. And that building is wonderful architecture. The important thing for me is that unless you understand religion, you can't understand what the Pope and his mission is about. You understand what they're trying to do by understanding the way they do it. There is a lot of literature on this but it is only meaningful in the context of what they do.

D.L. And the Medievalist?

C.L.R. Yes, many of them are extremely knowledgeable and their writings are valuable because they contain facts and information. They are very serious but to understand what they mean, you must first understand their religious views. But I don't believe what they say about God, angels and spirits.

D.L. And by implication, the Rastafarian movement?

C.L.R. Many of them are dedicated to their duties and work hard on what they believe, but I don't believe what they say about God. I know that to understand them, one must first of all understand their views. That's all I can say.

D.L. C.L.R., thanks once again.

C.L.R. Alright o.

Conclusion

A total sense of the highlights of James' life and work is meant to present a heuristic base underlying the works of a man who, from all indications, was one of the great theoreticians of our age.³ It is easy to distil in the course of the short discussion what the basis of internationalism in the works of James and Padmore did to Kwame Nkrumah's own Pan-Africanist vision. One is almost totally certain that Nkrumah's vision was much influenced by that 'Pan' event he took over from James and Padmore.

The overall implications of what this holds for the twenty-first century is yet to appear in black and white. However, the foundations of a 'Pan' concept, an international base of working class movements, quite apart from Trotsky and Pan Africanism, have already been laid.

NOTES

1. C.L.R. James used to live on 115 Railton Road, Brixton in a modest apartment on the top of a garage. A section of the apartment was also used for editorial work on the journal *Race Today*.
2. Apartheid came to an end three years later – in 1991.
3. C.L.R. James was born in 1901 and died in 1989.

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What is non-linear history? Is it cyclical? If history is that which happened once and for all in the past, is non-linear history that which happens over and over again?

For instance,

The other parties charged that the elections were a "farce" unsurpassed in electoral rigging and manipulation....There was so much loss of faith in the electoral process that virtually every election was contested.

You would think that this statement was made concerning the April-May, 2007 elections in Nigeria. In fact, it was made concerning the 1983 elections.

One of the contributors to this festschrift used the phrase "linear history" directly:

...the problem is the notion that a more or less linear history of the evolution of democracy can be constructed from the disconnected and ad hoc teachings and activities of men and women of different ages and climes...But these struggles have been subject to gains and reverses. And although people might be inspired by the tradition of previous struggles, many campaigns for basic rights have been set in motion by spontaneous reactions against oppression.

Where there is spontaneous reaction can an historical event be attributed to the influence of precedent history? If gains are along a line, what about reverses - in economic history, in political history, in ecological history?

What, then, do we make of the declaration of C.L.R. James;

"People must be truly informed by a sense of history."

Is there "a logic of historical events" (James) - "a logic of the past in relation to the future"? Was Ecclesiastes right to declare:

- (i) that everything has a *z'man*
- a *zamani*;
- (ii) that there is nothing new under the sun?