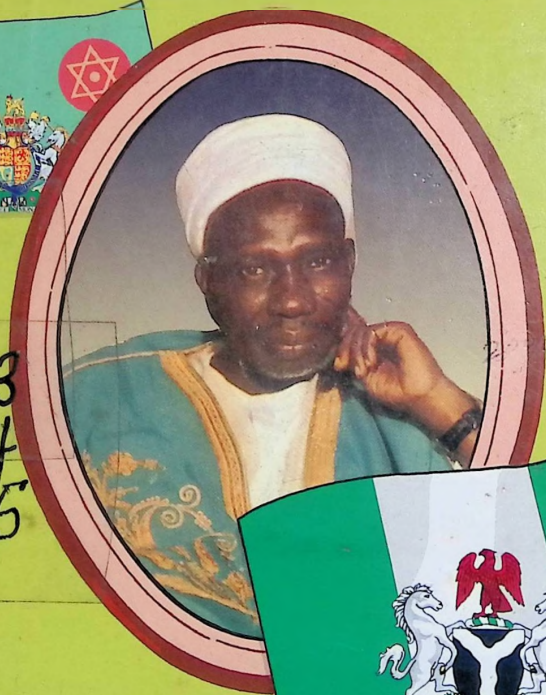


A RIGHT HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN

The life and times of Alhaji Sir
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa



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by **TREVOR CLARK**

Forewords by Lord Home and Sir Adetokunbo Ademola

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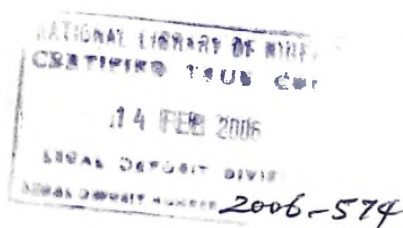
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Hudahuda Publishing Company, P.O. Box 484
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© 1991 Trevor Clark

First published in Great Britain 1991

Second impression 1991

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Clark, Trevor

A right honourable gentleman: Abubakar from the

Black Rock.

1. Title

966.9092

ISBN 0-340-56190-4

ISBN 0-340-56276-5 pbk

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Printed and bound in Great Britain for the Hudahuda Publishing Company Limited, Zaria, Nigeria.

'If you cannot understand a man, you cannot crush him. And if you do understand a man, you probably will not wish to crush him.'

[G K Chesterton]

'Honest and righteous Tafawa, / Rule over the country of Nigeria,
God has entrusted her to you wholly, / Just keep your honesty and truthfulness,
You will be triumphant over the untruthful!'

[Translation of Hausa song, ca 1960]

'The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness of its leaders to rise to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership.'

[Chinua Achebe, distinguished Nigerian writer, 1983]

This book is the first biography of Alhaji Sir
Sani Abacha Balewa, the Prime Minister of indepe
ndent Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and
times, offering insight into the twentieth century histo
ry of a populous and, some would argue, impo
rtant country. A unique story of a unique man told by
a well-known author.

FOREWORDS

By

The Right Honourable Lord Home of the Hirsel, KT

Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations 1955-60,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1960-63,
Prime Minister of Great Britain 1963-64

It was in October 1960 that Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister of the new Federal Nigeria accepted the invitation to full membership given by the United Nations Organization. It took that international assembly only a few minutes to recognise that they were listening to a speech of unusual authority, and to a man possessed of the gravitas of a statesman.

An indulgent grandmother had realized the qualities of the young man while he was still a boy, living with the family in a mud-built house in a small town in Northern Nigeria: true that he was noted as a strict practitioner of the Muslim faith, believing that God's plan for man was infallibly right, and that it was the duty of the individual to practise it; true too that he passed well through a boarding school where the themes were fitness of mind and toughness of body. But his horizons were inevitably limited. In his mind he divided Nigeria into the religious and righteous North, and the pagan South. British colonialism he regarded with a comparatively benevolent eye, inclined to give the local officials the benefit of the doubt. In that he was distinguished from many of his compatriots, partly because from Lord Lugard onwards Nigeria was served by very distinguished administrators who interpreted 'Indirect Rule' with understanding and tolerance, partly because on a post-war visit to London he recognized the merits of British democracy, in particular the consensus of so many different peoples in a united purpose. That he saw as in sharp contrast to the tribal jealousies of his native Nigeria.

While in London he wrote a thesis on Nigeria's future, in which he forecast with considerable precision that an independent Nigeria would be likely to founder on tribal differences and on corruption. He was doubtful whether the British pattern of Westminster democracy would fit the circumstances of tribal Nigeria, asking himself whether it would be possible to have English justice without English law. It was on this young man, still a novice in international society, and still maturing in experience and wisdom, that increasing obligations were to fall, first in Local Government and then at the centre in the, to him, foreign capital of Lagos.

The qualities which were to bring him to the top of his country's politics were commonsense, judgement and tolerance, and these were recognized by many of those who were his active opponents in the tribal differences, and in the

This book is the first biography of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and insight into the twentieth century Nigeria. It is a populous and, some would argue, a unique story of a unique man told well.

VIII A RIGHT HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN

North-South divide, and by those who took a less understanding view of British intentions towards Nigeria.

Reconciliation is the most sophisticated form of Government, and when it had to be forged against the heady wine of nationalism which was sweeping through the veins of Abubakar's day, the prospect was particularly daunting. The story of how this man coped with the complications, and came out on top except for the Assassins' Bullet, is a fascinating lesson in the arts of politics and statesmanship, as practised by a truly remarkable man. I am glad that somebody has written this book, and who better than a member of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service, who sought so successfully to reconcile the British Government's interests with the legitimate aspirations of the people of Nigeria. Many in Britain and in Nigeria will find interest and enjoyment in this story.

HOME

The Hon.
Chairman, Senate

And By

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR ADETOKUNBO ADEMOLA GCON CFR KBE

Chief Justice of Nigeria 1958-72,
Chairman of the Commonwealth Foundation

This book exemplifies the life of an honest and truthful man and I am highly delighted to write a preface. Nigeria is at a stage of development, peculiar to itself, when the educated Nigerian writes his own autobiography and hardly bothers about biographies of notable Nigerians. We are not prone to extol the virtues of others.

Sir Abubakar was a peace-loving man, and he accepted the Prime Ministership of Nigeria with a view of establishing peace, unity and love among the several tribes and peoples of Nigeria, and it was in pursuit of these ideals that he met his death in the hands of Assassins.

Sir Abubakar became a public figure when he and two others from the North were nominated by the then Colonial Government as representatives of the North in the Legislative Council of Nigeria. He was a schoolmaster. Young men in those days used to go to the Legislative Council Chamber in the Secretariat building in Lagos to hear 'the golden voice', as he was then called, whenever he was speaking in the Council Chamber. It is little wonder he eventually became the Prime Minister of Nigeria.

As Chief Justice of the Federation, I was introduced to this man of greatest charm and humility when he became the Prime Minister. I feel particularly proud and honoured that I knew him as a man of vision who meant so much to this Country. He spoke convincingly, meaningfully and truthfully. I remember one of his sayings to me from time to time, 'CJ, if I do anything wrong and I am brought before you, deal with me; and if necessary send me to jail . . .'

These words he repeated and emphasized when the Supreme Court gave judgment against his Government in the case *Doherty v. Sir A. Tafawa Balewa and Others*. When I saw him after the judgment had been pronounced, this is what he said: 'I am glad you have put us in our place; this is what we deserved. If I do anything wrong, do not hesitate to deal with me'.

To me, he displayed his transparent honesty, understanding and cooperation after the General Election of 1964, and the crisis which followed when he agreed and persuaded his Party to agree, to form a National Government.

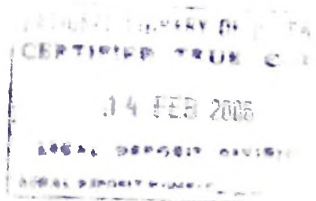
Again to refer to one of his frequent sayings to me, . . . 'If this people do not want me any more, all they need do is to give me about two hours notice, and this is enough for me to pack my few belongings here and leave'. Unfortunately, he was not given that chance: he meant everything he said.


The Author of this book has demonstrated all these qualities in Sir Abubakar which the readers who knew him will confirm; those who never knew him, including new researchers, will assess the man from all that the author has to say.

This country has every reason to thank the Author of this book for writing about Sir Abubakar, and it is hoped that he has opened the door widely for Nigerians to write more and more about this great man.

Lagos

ADETOKUNBO ADEMOLA





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Introduction

Dan hakin da ka rena, shi kan tsone maka ido

Nigeria is the world's largest black country, and, some would say, the most important country in Africa. It is three times the physical size of Britain, and its population may be more than twice as large as Britain's. Its history has often puzzled people who have never lived there. At times indeed most of its own inhabitants have been puzzled by their own diversity and its consequent problems. It may help those who wish the country well, even those who already love it, to know more of one of her finest sons.

I knew the subject of this book well during the eleven years from 1949 to 1959. No doubt the tone of Parts Two to Four echo that particular period in a way that the surrounding Parts One, Five & Six cannot, especially once Britain's 'thirty year rule' for public records begin to bite. After 1960 he and I could only exchange a few social letters. Many other British friends knew him for much longer, and more intimately. Like those many, I found my judgement progressively shifting; as a tyro administrator I was merely impressed by his sincerity, later I felt that he was a true friend, and finally I found myself admiring him as someone uniquely honest in public life and politics. His murder in 1966, perpetrated in the arrogance of ignorant brutishness, appalled and affronted me, as it did countless others, quite as much as if he had been my kin, someone very dear and close. By then my life had been removed far away from his.

When my opportunity came with the abolition of my career, not even one Nigerian had yet written purposefully about one of the great men from Africa and better men of our century. On the contrary some lesser men, academics and politicians, had effectively (if not always directly) disparaged his memory for not having achieved what they patronisingly thought he should have tried to do. It seemed a justifiable presumption to try to fill the gap. Those who knew the man personally already included too many of the dead and the forgetful, and the wings of time's chariot were beating hurriedly. It was also a stimulus to learn, after drafting about two-thirds of the script, that the Northern Nigeria History Committee was anxious that an 'outsider', free from the pressures of emotional national involvement, should embark on such a task.

I am deeply indebted to the Leverhulme Trust for a grant in 1979-81 which made my original research possible, including a journey back to Nigeria to talk to many old friends and Abubakar's contemporaries; I wish to acknowledge that without that Trust's encouragement I should never have begun to write. A former administrative colleague, moved to the world of publishing, Mr John Hare, also urged me to pursue the task, and Malam Mamman Daura and Alhaji Abdullahi Khalil very generously facilitated a second visit in 1988, when I spoke to many other surviving distinguished Nigerians who had known Abubakar well.

I am only sad that preoccupation with local government and sundry boards and committees at home delayed the completion. I had wanted to write a concise book, but soon realized that without amassing the evidence I might not convince the prejudiced. Others may now make truth succinct; but as Horace said, *brevi esse laboro, obscurus fio*.

It was reassuring that everyone whom I was able to consult both in Nigeria and in Britain was so anxious to help with memories of Abubakar, and with advice; and that none of the Nigerians whom I approached questioned my impertinence. Of course the country I knew best, and inevitably came to love, was 'The North'. The North, as I knew it, was dissolved in 1967. This cannot then pretend to be other than a European's view of a slice of Africa's story as seen, particularly until Part Three, through northern Nigerian spectacles and in the light of northern priorities of the time. Contrary Africans' versions will follow one day. I hope that they too will prefer to sift first hand knowledge rather than mere printed opinion or myth; for legends are being written and some are gaining credence in more than one country. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, of course, would merely have said that both my view, and any African's view, were simply human beings' views. That in essence is why neither British nor Nigerians could stop short at giving him respect: at the time most of those close to him gave him admiration, and some love. Countless human beings had an identical upbringing in Abubakar's environment, but his story is unique.

I have tried to avoid the historical fallacy of some social scholars – that of making judgements by standards of later times (what seemed important during those years is still important as evidence of development, however irrelevant it now seems to students of the absolute); generally to use the terms and names in common use at the time written of (except 'Ooni', 'Borno' and 'Igbo': this last word has been in longer general use for the language, but in face of limited scholarly advice I have used it for the people also in place of 'Ibo', as many others have begun to do, for sake of consistency; and while the Gold Coast becomes Ghana during the story, Southern Rhodesia never politically became Zimbabwe in Abubakar's lifetime, nor did he hear of Zaire, Burkina Faso or the republic of Benin); to reflect Abubakar's current interests and environment, which naturally include his own political party, and not to anticipate influences, societal analyses and attitudes of which neither he nor those around him were remotely conscious. Not my least important caveat, I am fully conscious of the *frissons* which words like 'tribe' and its derivatives, 'pagan', 'negro', 'civilization', 'culture', 'native', 'primitive', 'backward' and so on generate: where such terms are quoted, it is because that was the received language of the period recorded, and generally indeed as it was used quite innocently by Nigerians themselves. Not to accept that fact is to reject empathy with one's fathers.

The *Italics* show how much I have left Abubakar to speak for himself, so that primary evidence may help readers to confirm or revise their existing judgements.

This is in no way an alternative history of Africa, Nigeria or Bauchi; but there is, perhaps, enough contemporary history for any reader, who may be as unfamiliar with Bauchi and Nigeria as with Abubakar, better to appreciate the subject in perspective. Abubakar himself could not, any more than most contemporaries then or most readers now, know all the aims, failings and trends of the groups to which the individuals he lived among belonged. Historians, politicians, and ordinary people who have an interest in humanity, have different pursuits; the biography is an attempt to help them all to appreciate a

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figure who was important to Britain's last imperial days and to Africa, as well as to Nigeria, Bauchi and the north. I hope that it may also help those who are still trying to understand why Nigeria was decolonised without bloodshed or much struggle, yet why its first freedom was so short-lasting and ended so tragically: I have not offered direct answers to those two questions myself, any more than I have offered many interpretations of Abubakar's own statements – these have usually been quoted for the very reasons that their meaning is straightforward and his communications were always truthful.

I have made no effort to underplay Abubakar's relationships with various British officers, two or three in particular whose advice and modest companionship he was always forthright in acknowledging. Any study of his African contemporaries which, however understandable it may be in the light of the sources, ignores such reciprocal influences can only give a distorted picture of the end of the colonial era: many other politicians knew their own Robert Wrights, Bryan Sharwood-Smiths and Peter Stallards, whether as 'masters, leaders, partners or friends', whom their historians have chosen to ignore. It will be evident that I do not believe that a historicist's laws of necessary historical development may be discovered without any knowledge of the 'catalytic' effects of local individuals – who may not have been stereotypes.

At the back of the book are lists of the oral and literary sources. 'European' readers may regard some of the casual references in the text to persons who are well known in Nigeria as unenlightening overseas; they should accept that they will have significance to many other readers. Africans may be unwilling to accept the relevance of many of the extraneous events, or of the names of lesser expatriates, that have incidentally been recorded. I hope that both sets will be tolerant of these conflicting approaches to a man who in the end belonged to several worlds. Pedants may be irritated by what they may well define as quirky trivia: these are only used to paint a fuller picture of one man against his changing environments – a modern biographer (Churchill's, no less) has said that, 'anecdotes are a valuable source of historical truth'; and Samuel Johnson himself wrote, 40 years before Boswell's *Life*, 'The business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts to domestic privacies, to display the minute details of private life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and virtue'. In final self-justification I might quote from the scholar of China, Amaury de Riencourt, 'The essence of history does not reside in recorded facts, but in the thoughts, emotions, ideas and aspirations of the human beings who have made it. Facts are only the outer shell'. I only wish that my Nigerian friends had been less reticent about privacies, which would have highlighted our subject's prudence, but I was given many cautions about what might cause offence even after the passing of a generation. In a comparable context Alhaji Ahmed Kurfi has written, '... I am bound to gore some people's oxen; ... no malice or malignity is intended'.

I have accordingly faced a real dilemma, that has impaled the most scrupulous of booksellers and editors as much as the scurrilous. Most writers and publishers in the secularized western world, where the manifold theories that have followed on those of Marx, Darwin and Freud must be reflected even when they are transformed or rejected, have embraced the 'warts and all' approach to their most distinguished subjects: the truth and the whole naked truth have become the touchstone for authority, and personal modesty is taken for hypocritical censorship. Recent literary controversy has reminded us that such freedom of comment takes no account of the circumspection of peoples

...and who do not distinguish between the secular and the religious in public or private life. Copies of this book are likely to be read by such wary people. To them it is not simply a matter of good manners or politeness that one should speak no ill of the dead. I have not hesitated to point to human weaknesses in many of the characters portrayed, but I must also heed the convictions of those who know that the unlawful killer of one who dies in the way of God, and not through due judgement, assumes responsibility for all the dead man's sins - thereafter the deceased lives on, without lavation or further human ceremony, immaculate in the presence of his one true Lord. I trust that this will be understood by others, and that what I have nevertheless written from common knowledge about the deuteragonists will give no offence to such readers.

The many clipped references throughout the pages to concurrent events elsewhere in the world, most particularly in Africa and the commonwealth, are intended to keep the reader's awareness and judgements in a proper perspective of all the happenings of which Abubakar had to take note. His actions can only be understood if his experience is taken as a whole. Historians, politicians and sociologists, the British and the Nigerians, should all readily detect which matters of detailed record, or of personal indifference to themselves, their eyes should flicker past in a narrative that is deliberately chronological, rather than itemized in categories. I can only hope that by treating the successive substantial sections of the narrative as self-contained, the 'general reader' will always be able to see the stout oak as it is battered among the many swaying saplings in the wood. Other things apart, they are a healthy reminder of how many miseries suffered elsewhere on the globe during Abubakar's lifetime when men were spared.

I am deeply touched that another Right Honourable Prime Minister has given Abubakar the recognition (and myself the undeserved courtesy) of reading the text and writing a foreword. I am equally grateful to another Privy Counsellor, who sat on the Judicial Committee, a Nigerian lawyer and judge of world fame and honorary bencher of my own Inn of Court), for placing his own initials beside it. For agreeing to read and criticize the manuscript, I am especially grateful to Malam Mamman Daura and Professor George Thompson, and also to Alhaji Bala Abubakar, Mr Brian Barder, Mr Nigel Cooke, Judge Teodor Elian, Mr Antony Kirk-Greene, Alhaji Liman Ciroma, Sir Kenneth Macleod, Alhaji Mukhtar Tafawa Balewa, Sir Foley Newns, Malam Sadiq Yusufar, Lady Shearwood-Smith, Mr John Smith, Sir Peter Stallard, Mr Robert Knight, Alhaji Yahaya Gusau and Malam Yakubu Abubakar for reading these portions. In no way should they be saddled with any shared responsibility for what I have finally written, or for what they may have overlooked. This disclaimer applies particularly to Mr David Williams, who in the winter of a much earlier date almost undertook the task of such a biography himself, and would have drawn it from an infinitely deeper well of general knowledge, but for the generous honour of reading and criticizing the whole proceedings, both with the eyes of an editor, a stylist, a stickler for detail, and a lover of *bona fides, certum est maximum, agit pessimus omnium scriba*.

Being thus shamelessly indebted in the captions, the photographs have been printed through the generous good offices of Alhaji Baba Shettima, Federal and Permanent Secretary of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Information.

Other names, names of places and references are deliberately lacking, that may be a matter of opinion in the final chapter all the facts recorded as such have been related, and are only all Abubakar's own words, which I have left

Book is the first biography of Balewa, the Prime Minister, that goes right into the twentieth century and, some would say, a unique story of a unique man.

unedited between the ellipses; but this is not a thesis in search of a degree – the general reader will not be distracted by endless bibliographical justifications. An excess of Capital Letters has been avoided: they are necessary to lawyers, and dear to civil servants, politicians and other dignitaries concerned to draw attention to forms of address, titles and status; but the Upper Case does tend to make the printed page look like a Blue Book or a White Paper, not meant for the common reader (to take one example, every reference to a 'resident' is to The Resident, the senior colonial administrator once upon a time in charge of a Nigerian province, although not every government residential area or 'GRA' housed a Resident residing in a Residency).

Opinions and deductions are only too obviously my own, weighing clear memories of the living Abubakar against personal assessment of the sources. Where my criticisms of his contemporaries have been frank, I like to think that they have been honest and cannot seriously be transferred to any other person or group. Let any who disagree with me forgive what was throughout felt to be a labour of simple love. I have been asked whether the whole aim was not in truth a self-indulgent exercise in nostalgia. If it was (and only others can judge), it was and still is unashamed. Conceivably it is an incidental exercise in trying, against the stream of current received opinions, to suggest to younger Nigerians that the generation of British administrators of Abubakar's time cared for his country, respected its human leaders, and had an abiding affection for all its peoples from whom those leaders sprang; and to their British contemporaries that they need not, as they have been consciously educated to, regret their fathers' history.

Any author's royalties that might accrue are assigned in Nigeria to the Nigerian Society for the Blind; and elsewhere to the Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Memorial Trust Fund for Nigerian educational projects, ranging from the sponsoring of VSO teachers in Nigeria to funding of Nigerian students of richly deserving talent in schools and universities.

I should like to dedicate this book to the people of Bauchi, who gave me the happiest years of my professional life, and to the memory of the late Dr Abubakar Imam who might (so I once hoped) have made it over into a Hausa version. I wish also to thank my dear wife Hilary, as is customary and just, for her tolerance (and for typing first drafts from jigsaw scribbles – Mr Sugar made the countless rewritings under criticism physically possible).

*Ramsay Garden,
EDINBURGH, 1981-82, 88-91*

TREVOR CLARK

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Prologue

Damana mai ban samu

At the end of his formal education, a young Nigerian schoolmaster was to write the following description of his own people. This was his personal perception of the society into which he had been born, and every word is his own:

WE WILL NOW make a survey to see how rightly or wrongly the tribes or people of Nigeria have been adopting religious practices, customs, habits and modes of life of the various invading peoples who at one time or the other exercised strong influence upon them.

In the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, the history of any considerable change in the life of the people dated back as far as the 10th Century. Before that date there had been no record of invasion of the country by any foreign people. Very little or nothing was known in the country during the 13th Century when the religion of Islam was introduced from North Africa and Arabia. . . . We are definitely certain that there had been migrations of tribes from parts of Asia into Africa. Those migrations had been in small groups and this meant that they should have little influence upon the life of the people. Probably each tribe or family migrated to the new land with its own ideas of life, beliefs, customs and ceremonies; and as the newcomers mingled with the local people they might have dropped some of their own ways and adopted some of those of the people among whom they found homes. The local people would also adopt some of the strangers' ways. In this way there are always found interchange of ideas, customs and beliefs. This is true of all countries all the world over.

The religion of Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad in Arabia. Before his birth the Arabs in Arabia were practising idolatry and there were also a few who practised Christianity and Judaism. Since that time also there were some Christians in the Northern part of Africa, in Egypt and Abyssinia, but this early christian religion did not penetrate farther to the South, probably because the Sahara Desert, the Nile suds and the unfriendly tribes were found to be the great check to its spread. This was unlike the history of Islam. The new religion became very strong and as a result of this the Arabs were organised into a conquering people. . . . It is chiefly due to the Arab conquests of North Africa and Egypt that Islam crept into the Western and Central Sudan. When North Africa was invaded by the Moslem Arabs some discontented tribes migrated to the South across the Sahara to found new homes in the Sudan. . . . Naturally they tried to keep in touch with their brothers in North Africa, and this resulted in the opening up of the caravan routes across the Sahara, which was soon followed up by trade, civilization and learning – the last being chiefly derived from the teachings of Islam. . . . Some strong and fairly developed succeeding dynasties were founded in the Western and Central Sudan. . . . Such kingdoms were Ghana, Malle and Songhay. . . . The Government and the way of life of the people were changed to suit the new situation. The people adopted the art of writing in the Arabic characters and also studied the Arabic language. As time went on nearly all the states embraced Islam. Courts of justice were organised and other Government control and systems were established – such as the collection of taxes – chiefly zakat and jizya – poll tax imposed on moslem property, and

tribute-money collected from the unislamised conquered tribes, all these found their way into the native treasuries. It was at this time that the life of the people in the Western Sudan, including the moslem Emirates of Northern Nigeria, became affected. . . .

The influence of Islam and of the Eastern customs, habits and dress did not totally change very much the life of the native people, and nor were their occupations and general character very much affected. The native people remained farmers and petty traders and retained most of their old customs, traditions and general behaviour, although some of them have of course become mingled with the ones newly acquired from the East. The whole reason for this may be due to the fact that none of the moslem Emirates of Nigeria had ever been directly conquered by any Eastern people. The Eastern way of life and even the religion of Islam were voluntarily adopted by the states and people. Schools were established throughout the Emirates where men and children receive instruction on the religion. Those schools are different from the modern schools of the Western fashion that we have to-day. Discipline was very strong and the lessons were learnt under very difficult conditions. The learning was mostly done by the use of the cane. The mallams, as the learned men are called, were very greatly respected by the states and also by the general public. In fact, learned men in those days were the most influential members of the states.

The history teacher then went on to describe how community life and discipline had evolved in different parts of Nigeria, under the influence of its modern invaders and of the educators from the Christian overseas missions. Later he might well have corrected some details in the light of wider learning. The prose style remained as it would always be: the English faultless when repeating what he had learnt (and decided to accept) from others, but showing tiny lapses whenever, as so often, he confidently asserted in his own right what his faith and experience told him to be true. It is the declamatory language of a natural orator, and it reflects the patterns of his native tongue. Hausa enjoys a rich vocabulary, it believes that descriptions should be detailed, it is not afraid of using many epithets, and it allows no sentiment to wander far before the sentence must come to an end. Before more is told of the man, the history which he has started should be followed through, in so far as it broadly touches his homeland. First it is well to make plain to the reader that 'Hausa' is a language, and that whatever the practices of peoples who have other languages, cultures and social organizations when referring to themselves, 'Hausas' are not members of a 'tribe', a 'people' or an 'ethnic group' as identified by social anthropologists. Even though they may coalesce or disappear during their passage through history, many tribes which speak Hausa in Hausaland will admit to being composed of 'Hausa' individuals; this is to avoid fruitless argument with strangers, not to admit some ethnic definition.

Through the centuries, city-states arose and fell in power and importance across the plains and river courses of Hausaland and Kanem-Bornu. The indigenous people, the Habe among whom the Hausa language spread, gradually separated into distinct levels – the cream that had title to rule as kings or sub-feudal dignitaries with their hierarchy of official relatives, and the milk representing the peasantry, the craftsmen and the yeomen: in Hausa, the *sarakuna* and the *talakawa* respectively, although both gentlemen and commoners were farmers by calling. Leadership and protection came to be won as the reflections of the complementary gifts of value and contributions of labour that passed between these two classes. There were also domestic slaves and field slaves, for the most part war captives, whose treatment and standing

were not unlike those familiar to European scholars in their study of the Hellenic city-state civilization (although their proportion was not as great as it had been among the ancients). Slaves acquired titles of office, sometimes having slaves or free servants of their own while they were rising even so high (as some did in Adamawa, Borno and Bauchi) as to rank among the selectors of new emirs. Achievement had not yet given way to inheritance of high status. Even emirs were *bayin Allah* (slaves of God). It took the later outrages of the slave traders to encourage new judgements of the custom. Courtiers (*fadawa*), whether aristocratic, free commoner or slave, found that their own practical status varied with that of the man they served.

But individuals and families could also rise and fall in the churn of fortune; there were no castes to stand in the way of success or failure, and excesses in either direction might lead to corruption and decadence. Family blood blurred social distinctions by uniting poor and wealthy, ignorant and learned, weak and powerful. Since success was the gift of God, the unsuccessful might look up with admiration rather than jealousy; *biyayya*, the giving of respect or obedience to those possessed of *daraja* (rank or 'face'), need not be seen as slavish behaviour. The place of women was also clear cut – different in purpose and skills from that of men, and in many domestic or legal relationships superficially subordinate; but it was far from servile. All wives, not to number more than four, must be treated equally and fairly. Concubines had inferior status, but enjoyed protection to the extent that a husband should not take more than he could afford to support in relative decency. *Purdah* was close in rich or aristocratic households, but was in varying degrees ineffective where farms had to be worked and water to be drawn from far afield. It is a matter of speculation for modern environmentalism, when considering how these people were nourished to resist disease, that not until long after the age of Christopher Columbus did such food crops as cassava, groundnuts, maize, potatoes and tomatoes first arrive in Africa. These sources of calories, producing far more per acre than anything known before, had previously been confined in the world to America, and made possible the considerable population growths that followed among settled peoples who had abandoned nomadic pastoralism.

The *malamai* (the 'mallams' of the quotation above, or '*ulamā* in general Muslim tradition) formed the backbone of the Hausa-speaking *Habe* city-state system from the seventeenth century onwards; without them, all administration, jurisprudence and the golden threads of Maliki law would have broken apart. They won their title and respect by popular acceptance, not by appointment or examination. Very many of them were 'Fulani'. These pale-skinned nomadic people with Caucasoid features and uncertain origins had wandered along the Niger basin, carrying their cattle-centred culture from Senegal. Those of their class that abandoned animism for Islam had tended to settle in the cities, there to pursue an academic life and to staff the necessary establishment of bureaucrats and clerics in a culture where both building stone and metalwork were rare and valuable.

Gradually they intermarried and lost the unmistakable marks and speech of the herdsman. Wherever the standards of piety, austerity and probity of the Muslim *Habe* rulers sank, greed and ostentation, arrogance and pagan superstition, prevailed. Thence the likely prospect grew of puritan coups. Mali (as the teacher's 'Malle' came to be spelt) shrank in importance. Songhai expanded in its turn, only to break up under attack from Morocco; Ghana withered, and Borno alone survived as a rival to the Hausa states – but despite these states' inability to coalesce, the real threat to their survival lay within.

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Malam Usman Dan Fodiyo was a particularly learned and pious Fulani, born in Gobir (see map 1) in 1754. He led the first successful *jihad*, so-called, against the Habe Hausa kings who were allowing their own enthusiasms for the purity of Islam to falter; they had failed to pursue conversions among their own people, let alone the animist tribes who lived in the mountains that fringed their borders. They had hindered the spread of the veil or the turban, and by their own heathen example they had even preserved the practice of fetish rites and superstitious amulets. These kings, like most lines of rulers in history, had found that a loyal and contented populace was best assured by avoidance of too much zeal: the mallams (such at least as had resisted the temptations of civil power, military command and luxury) concluded, like so many apostles of change, that their faith demanded worldly reform; and that only radical revolution, however uncomfortable or sacrificial, would suffice. The Qur'an permitted Muslims to obey a ruler who was a non-believer, so long as there were no prospect of setting up a Muslim state, and provided that there were freedom of worship. The state as such was not recognized as having the right to interfere with the person, property or rights of a Muslim. But obedience to any ruler, believer or no, was due only if he ruled justly: one who left the true path of justice lost his right to require *biyayya*.

Civil insurrection came, then, to be ideologically justified as a variation on the holy war or *jihad*, through judiciously selective interpretation of the scriptural injunctions to fight back against unbelievers who invaded Muslim-ruled lands, and to rescue Muslims who had fallen captive into unbelievers' hands. Rank and file followers in arms were readily found among Fulani nomads who jibbed at paying *jangali* (cattle tax) to the Hausa kings whose pastures they cropped during the rains. Many supporters were also enlisted among those *talakawa* who thought that their *haraji* (individual taxation) was oppressive; or that the custom of opening any formal communication with an official or a feudal superior (particularly if he were an *alkali*, a court judge) by offering a present, had degenerated into no more than a competitive bid for favour; or that the dues payable in markets were unjustified in the law; or that conscription for war, if imposed by an evident unbeliever on a true Muslim, was unlawful also. In a society with restricted cash economics, and where fixed salaries for bureaucrats and lordlings were not known, such views were destabilizing but attractive.

In 1804, a year before the battle of Trafalgar, Usman dan Fodiyo was forced by persecution to migrate from Gobir, and found himself elected virtual (though not presuming to call himself the) caliph of these Muslims who were agreed that they no longer had any lawful Muslim governor. They honoured him as sheikh, or shehu, and it was under his leadership that most of the Hausa rulers lost their kingdoms and that, except in Borno and on the pagan rocks, the Fulani came to predominate among the emirs of what was to be northern Nigeria, and internecine warfare was reduced. A leader from each area received a flag at the shehu's hand. It was mostly to be a descendant from one of these new Fulani dynasties whom the British would one day recognise as a First Class Chief and Emir of the principal Muslim states, once by western reckoning the twentieth century had opened.

One Hausa king survived as a flag-bearer, in Zaria. There was one other exception to Fulani overlordship (besides those emirates like Argungu, Daura and Abuja, which would be accorded Second Class status): this was Bauchi, a city-state whose farther reaches touched on the heathen stretches to the south. By the middle of the eighteenth century some people in the area had been

proselytized by preachers from Borno and had embraced Islam, and around 1753, just before Europe's Seven Years War, there was born in a village called Tirwun, one Yakubu. Yakubu was a Bageri, or member of the tribe of Gerawa, who spoke a language akin to Bolewa but closer to Hausa, yet who were not 'Hausa'. He was sent as quite a young man to study with his contemporary, the shehu Usman dan Fodiyo; he was also in due course one of those given a flag and bidden to return to wage a righteous war in his homeland, and like his brethren to set up independent *alkalis'* judiciaries. Pitching his headquarters at Inkil in 1792, the year when the French royal family was arrested and Louis XVI tried, he obeyed this call to mighty effect, although his own Gerawa people alone refused to follow him.

Gathering fifteen feudal lieutenants and two hundred archers as his first recruits, he grew in strength and made his military presence felt as far afield as the Benue and Gongola rivers and the hills of Wurkum, pushing back the bounds of Gombe, Lere and Misau, and defeating an army from Borno. He moved his capital in 1809, when Napoleon imprisoned Pope Pius VII, building the walled town of Bauchi round Kobi hill, with defensive gates over the main roads leading outwards to Inkil, Tirwun, Ran and elsewhere. This first Yakubu died in 1843, when Britain was annexing Sind, proclaiming Natal a colony and Basutoland a protectorate, and recognising the independence of Hawaii; he was by now a very old and revered man, and was succeeded by his elderly son Ibrahim; the succession probably came too late, because many of the conquered subjects revolted successfully, and Ibrahim felt obliged to abdicate in favour of his son Usman. Usman's uncle Halilu promptly tried to usurp him, but the emir of Misau sent help and Halilu died amidst a very great slaughter and destruction in Bauchi town.

However Usman became unpopular with the people, and the days of peace under Yakubu faded into oblivion; the shehu's successor as commander of the faithful and *sarki*, or sultan, of Sokoto deposed him, and he was followed in his turn by a cousin Umaru. The pagan tribes revolted against Umaru in their due turn, while at the same time a new Muslim organizer Malam Jibrella raised a rebel force that was tough enough to face the combined armies of Gombe, Misau, Hadeija, Katagum and Bauchi. Jibrella had been expelled from Misau for 'witchcraft', but was to live on to be described by the British as 'a white-haired old man of a fine type', whose style and pluck were admired even after he had become feeble and was no longer a threat. Despite his preoccupations, Umaru remained able to attack Gwaram which was resisting his exactions, and by treachery he carried out a ghastly massacre of its inhabitants in January 1900, enslaving the survivors in defiance of Muslim law. The half-pagan excesses that had led to the shehu's holy war of a century before seemed therefore to be overshadowed by worse horrors, ostensibly committed in the name of Islam. This Gwaram holocaust, like the Ovenramwem's final human sacrifices in Benin, 'city of blood', was typical of what the British were to point to as one justification for the early 'scramble for Africa'.

The Royal Niger Company had been granted a royal charter in 1886 (Gladstone was being defeated over home rule for Ireland), giving it British political authority over those territories with which its agents had already signed treaties. Its area of effective administration was a rough circle centred on Lokoja, with Asaba and Onitsha on the southern circumference, and Bida on the northern. Its wider sphere of influence, not specifically delimited on any map, ran from 'Yola in the east, north to Barrawa, thence past Kano, Sokoto, Gwandu, and

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Argungu to Ilo and as far south as Kaiama and Ilesha in the west – in effect until resisted by the French in all surrounding directions. This covered all of present-day Nigeria, but to the north and north-west it presumed to extend further. The colony and small hinterland protectorate of Lagos overshadowed the vacant sphere of influence in the Yoruba lands of the south-west which had been torn apart by civil wars. The Oil Rivers protectorate (self-financed through customs duties and renamed Niger Coast protectorate in 1894 – the 'Oil' was palm-oil, of course, not petroleum in those days) covered the remainder of the south from Warri past Brass and Opobo to Calabar. The company's crown forces were commanded by a colonel, F D Lugard.

At the time the account has reached in the north, the Royal Niger Company had just surrendered its charter, on the first day of 1900, and the flag of a British protectorate had been raised above their headquarters at Lokoja. From there these white men began to advance with their guns, and with their zeal to pacify and to organize: what the Fulani had claimed the right to do by conquest, and what their peoples generally now took for granted as set custom – to rule, to tax, to depose and create emirs – now passed in turn by their defeat to the newcomers, whose 'residents' were duly proclaimed to have come as 'advisers and friends'. Sir Frederick Lugard, as first high commissioner, had five administrative officers and a grudging grant-in-aid of about £100,000 with which to organize a population that might be guessed at around ten millions. His senior officials could not but be aware of their leader's belief that, 'for two or three generations we can show the Negro what we are; then we shall be asked to go away. Then we shall leave the land to those it belongs to, with the feeling that they have better friends in us'. It was left to a much later generation with new *mores* and new prejudices to suggest that he was an autocratic militarist, as skilled as his journalist wife in manipulating distant public opinion.

In February 1902 Lugard's deputy, the senior resident William Wallace, marched from Ibi to 'Yola and into Borno, passing through the *'terra ignota* of Bautshi', with a detachment of the Northern Nigeria regiment of the West African Frontier Force, or 'WAFFs'. The British soldiers under a colonel Morland included thirteen officers, five NCOs (some on horseback) and three doctors, supported by 515 African troops on foot, two 75mm guns and four maxims. At this time the total of 'Europeans' (who included Canadians) in northern Nigeria scarcely exceeded two hundred, half of them civilian, half military; and of these some were always on their laborious way, trekking to or from the coastal port at which their twelve months' tour of duty began or ended. The boundaries with the French were still undefined on the ground, although an Anglo-French convention of 1898 had agreed the frontiers on a map of sorts.

The town of Bauchi, mistily identified on old maps after its founder as 'Yakoba', and the recognized centre for marketing slaves caught from the Adamawa mountains to buyers from Kano and Sokoto, was prepared for defence; but it surrendered without a shot being fired. Wallace gathered the dignitaries or fiefholders together, announced that the emir (whom he treated as an usurper) would be deposed because of his maladministration and atrocities, and asked who should succeed him. Yakubu's grandson Muhammadu was named and was duly 'appointed', following the custom in British India, on these express conditions – that he should rule justly and in accordance with the laws of the protectorate; that he should obey the high commissioner and be guided by the advice of the resident; and that any minerals discovered and any unoccupied or unclaimed waste lands should be the property of the British crown, in order to defray the costs of the protectorate administration.

Umaru fled with a few followers, and after the main column of troops had moved on, the new resident, Temple, found the townfolk and the villages all around him quickly amenable to the new régime. By June he believed the slave trade as such to be extinct (although in Adamawa to the east its sources survived for some years, despite the imposition of German rule over the 'Kameruns', which represented with Togo, far to the west of Dahomey, the Kaiser's share of the scramble for west Africa); and he was soon providing escorts for the first tin prospectors in the plateau to the west. Umaru continued to be a focus for intrigue, and by January 1903 he had been banished with a small stipend to Ilorin, his departure being marked by celebratory bonfires and dancing in the town.

Later that year a group of disaffected chiefs and religious leaders who had been driven from Sokoto joined a small Bauchi group and drove off a British-led force at Burmi near the Gongola river. The WAFF fell back on Bauchi, but an expedition from Lokoja defeated the party, which included a former sultan. This action was regarded as completing the final 'pacification' in formal terms of the north, and the fulfilment of Lugard's remit in military terms when he had taken over the Niger company.

It now remained to consolidate civilian administration, a process in which Lugard formulated and introduced the methods which he first described as 'indirect rule'. This famous term he explained in his political memoranda, more briefly than some of his successors and analysts, as 'rule through the native chiefs, who are regarded as an integral part of the machinery of government, with well defined powers and functions recognized by government and by law, and not dependent on the caprice of an executive officer'. Every African authority with any capacity for what Lugard's men could respect as 'good government' was to be preserved, to be enlisted as an agent of 'civilization', to be instructed, supervised and supported. Disciplined skills were needed to achieve such a change in rulers' attitudes, without loosening their control of their subjects. Lugard's stated purpose, believed unquestioningly at the time although disdained by scholars in years to come, was to induce African rulers to rule well, so that their ambitions should lead not to new conquests, but to the prosperity of their people, the efficiency of their services, and the consequential enlargement of their prestige by that means alone.

The British, working beside and through the native authorities, would touch justice, finance and economics with a light but firm hand, while taking the lead in introducing the novelties of western transport, education and medicine so far as revenue allowed. Geography and cultural convenience led to a formal division of the north into twelve provinces, each with its own principal administrative officer in charge, known as 'the resident' and in most cases stationed at the headquarters town of the most important emirate or chiefdom. Provinces in turn came to be subdivided into divisions, in the charge of divisional officers ('DOs', variously ranked as senior district officers, district officers and assistant district officers – or 'cadets' while still on probation). DOs, under their residents' direction, advised the lesser emirates or group of smaller native authorities that fell within their jurisdiction. Every action and position was justified by a law (or 'ordinance'). Caprice might only enter into the interpretation of such laws as were not self-evidently capable of a single clear intention.

Addressing the waziri and head men of Sokoto on 20 March 1903 after their surrender, Lugard had told them *inter alia*, 'There will be no interference with your religion nor with the position of the Sarikin Muslimin as head of your

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religion. The English government never interferes with religion; taxes, law
 and order, punishment of crime, these are matters for the government, but
 not religion. Next day, after they had chosen the new sultan, he installed
 him with ceremony and repeated, with much amplification and explanation in
 the translation. 'Government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan
 religion. All men are free to worship God as they please. Mosques and prayer
 places will be treated with respect by us'.

In the opinion of the British, the new emir of Bauchi Muhammadu was 'weak
 and inadequate', and they liked to regard him as the true successor to the title.
 However he died shortly afterwards, and Hassan, another grandson of the
 flag-bearer, was duly selected to follow him. This reign was remembered in
 part for a harsh famine in 1904-05, the opening of routes with staged rest-houses
 to east and west, and the laying of a telegraph line to Bauchi in 1905; but
 principally for the religious agitation of the spring of 1906, which ended with
 the capture of its organizer Malam Ali in Gombe emirate to the east, just as
 he was about to raise his standard of rebellion on a holy hill to which crowds,
 mainly of Fulani zealots, were making their way. It was popularly supposed that
 Ali was the harbinger of some greater preacher and that his rising was meant
 to coincide with another in Sokoto. Next another 'mahdi', El Haji Malle, was
 caught in Yola, while just as news was arriving that a rebellion by one Dan
 Miskabo had been defeated at Satiru in Sokoto, yet a further organizer, an
 Arab El Hali Isiafu, called on the Bauchi townfolk to rush the Europeans in
 the small 'government station' outside the walls. He was arrested, tried by the
 emir's court, and summarily hanged on a tree in the town square.

Bauchi remained peaceful hereafter, even during the Great War, although a
 few of the mountain people subsisting on the edge of the province continued
 for some time to need administrative and even military persuasion to accept the
 values of a peace-loving cash economy that gathered taxes as well as imposing
 law and order. Temple, still the resident, with his administrative staff of three
 or four assistant residents, proceeded to undertake a census and assessment of
 perhaps a million people, to survey the tin-yielding areas to the west, and to
 establish a native treasury system in each emirate. This last act was the key. The
 'NT' was the backbone of administration by indirect rule through the medium of
 'native authorities', whether these were emirs (subject to such traditional checks
 and balances as modern sensibilities and legalisms would tolerate) or might
 perhaps in tribal areas be councils of elders. As late as 1906 there were minor
 expeditions against 'pagan' tribes in the hills of Bauchi and other provinces,
 to punish the perpetrators of raids on caravans and other lawlessness. But
 by this time Lugard, conscious of his protectorate's precarious economy and
 of the need to save revenue when the British treasury was still reluctantly
 subsidising it with half a million pounds annually, was recommending that
 upon his retirement the governments of Northern and Southern Nigeria be
 amalgamated and be mutually supporting (the protectorate of Southern Nigeria
 had been consolidated out of the Niger Coast and the rest of the Royal Niger
 Company's sphere in 1900). Lugard departed to govern Hong Kong in 1907, and
 from 1908 his successors were redesignated as governors.

The emir Hassan died in 1908 and was succeeded by Yakubu's great-
 grandson, Yakubu II. Already there was no one prepared to challenge the
 fact that, although traditional selection processes were respected locally, the
 appointment (and any implicit veto) was that of the governor; furthermore that
 the new sultan of Sokoto had no part in it, despite his spiritual leadership as

commander of the faithful and his political predominance as heir and successor to the shehu who had given the former emirs their flags. The pattern for forty years was set. The handful of British administrators, mixed but in the main middle-class, adventuresome but not radical, inured to spartan values and believers in rough but quick justice, set to to develop a strong framework of government for which they might feel no need to admit shame. They were without external resources, and their infrastructure in Bauchi was one telegraph wire and a railhead hundreds of miles away. They had a few technical helpers, and a platoon or two of simple soldiers to help in restraining the hill tribes on the fringe. Though they did not know it, and would have blushed to hear it, many of them justified Curzon's smug conclusion in 1908 that, 'In Empire we have found not merely the key to glory and wealth, but the call to duty and the means of service to mankind' – except that wealth came to few, and ill-health to many (in these years the death rate of the physically select adult Europeans in northern Nigeria was three to four times that of the whole population in Britain, and double or more that in Lagos: figures for Nigerians were unknown, but the expectation of life for those in the north was estimated at 20 to 25 years).

One of the principal changes enforced by the Honourable Oliver Howard (a younger son of the Earl of Leicester and the next resident of Bauchi, who was to leave his bones in the 'European reservation') was the evolution of the fiefholders, the bearers of traditional titles. They had become mere hangers-on at the emir's palace court, who collected what they could from their scattered feudal lands through the mediary of *jakadas*, a kind of taxgatherers. They were now turned into institutional *hakimai*, district heads, who actually lived in their districts. There they established little palatial compounds made of mud and *zana* (straw) mats, with courtiers of their own, and tried to impose a sense of unity and self-containment on the inhabitants of an area which had been defined on a map and walked out on the ground. Although the emir still appointed the village heads at turbaning ceremonies, with the assistant resident's or district officer's tacit consent, the district head now appointed the hamlet heads, who held the lowest subdivisions of the tax registers.

One of these new district heads was Attahiru, the *ajiya*. This old title had occasionally been given to an emir's treasurer, or to the leader responsible for disposal of captives of war, but it was now confined to no such particular duty. He was bidden to settle Lere district; this had been one of the five governing centres of Bauchi before Yaƙubu I, when it had been known as Zegizegi. He set up his first district headquarters at Tafawa Balewa. One of his respected *jakadas*, who helped him with advice and in his correspondence in *ajami* (the Arabic script, somewhat squarely adapted by reed pens for Hausa), was Yaƙubu ɗan Zala by name, married to a Fulani girl, Fatima Inna, (sometimes recorded as A'isha, and also known as Inna Pelu from the village near Zull where she had been born). According to family tradition Yaƙubu ɗan Zala's father Isa had been of the ruling family in Tirwun village, well-liked and a strong favourite to succeed when the village head died; but he had been murdered in front of his family by his rival's agents. Isa's wife Fatima had got away with her infant son to Bauchi, where the madaki, another district head, took her in and afterwards settled them at the headquarters of his own district, Ganjuwa, in Kafin Madaki. When the baby was four years-old Attahiru had visited Kafin Madaki, taken an instant liking to the little boy and persuaded a reluctant madaki to let him bring him up in his own Tafawa Balewa household, where the mother Fatima also became a ward.

This book is the first biography of Alhaji Sir Lawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of independent Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and offers insight into the twentieth century history of a most populous and, some would argue, important and unique story of a unique man told by a well-known writer.

The Emir, the emir and the *ajija*, was a Bageri, a butcher to trade according to some, and earned the minor menial title of *garkuwan shamaki* (protector of the cattle), but his status was in effect that of a favoured family since his title was *garkuwan* to claim formal manumission under either Islamic or the new British law. Practical security much outweighed symbolic freedom, and any discomforts in daily life soon mattered little – except should slave and free consummate union by marriage. Attahiru was one of the best remembered of emirs. At the time he was approaching sixty years of age, and had been referred to by a friendly DO to the resident as being 'a backslider but a great character'.

In 1901 the emir decided, hearkening to the resident's advice, to contribute £100 from his own treasury to the northern Nigerian government school that had been opened at Nasarawa, hard by Kano city, in the year before (marked by the declaration of the Union of South Africa under premier Louis Botha) by Hans Wastler Vischen, a Swiss-born former Church Missionary Society (CMS) worker and government administrative officer, and now the first director of education, had taken his first instructions from Lugard: again these were quite specific, that the British officer was there to get to know the people, to introduce them to a new world and that, when the people had learnt all that could be taught, they should leave each other as friends, anxious to continue the ties of affection and respect. In the Nasarawa school, on principles tested in the Egyptian Sudan and followed in the Gold Coast and Lagos, 102 boys attended elementary classes: 97 followed the special curriculum for sons of chiefs; 50 older Muslims learnt to transfer their Arabic and *ajami* knowledge to romanised Hausa script, and to use European book-keeping and records; 31 apprentices acquired craft skills in the workshop run by G. A. J. Beaminster; and 25 boys studied surveying. For all these differences, the single prime aim of all was to gain white men's knowledge. Next year Bauchi NA, following the lead of most of the emirates, opened its official native treasury, the *bait-ul-mal*, as a public office separated from the emir's private household, and the emir began to receive a salary of £2,000 in official lieu of past customary tributes. The *alkalis* (Islamic judges') courts also ceased to rely legally for their personal upkeep on retaining a share of the fines, or of the fees exacted on division of inheritances. The railway from the distant coast reached Kano; the building of the small-gauge spur to Naraguta on Bauchi province's western plateau began; and the railway engineers finished the survey of the road down the escarpment to Bauchi. The province was renamed Central Province, and in 1912 the first motor car rattled and shook its way down the track laid by assistant resident Hastings on the line of that survey and into Bauchi town.

It might have carried newspapers with world tidings to surprise Hastings and his colleagues – the sultan of Morocco's surrender of his kingdom to the protection of the French; the proclamation of the Chinese republic in Tibet; the landing of the American marines in Cuba; the sinking of the *Titanic* – or domestic UK curiosities like coal and transport strikes; forcible feeding of suffragettes; anti-home rule riots in Ulster; or the introduction of national insurance, a Royal Flying Corps and the first Pathé news films. None of this would have meant anything to the people of Bauchi of whom the schoolmaster was thinking when, a generation later, he wrote the opening passages of this prologue. They now acknowledged a society that had recently emerged from familiarity with tyranny and cruel bloodshed, where no journeyer was sure of a safe return. Life depended on cultivation of guinea-corn, millet and – for the hill

pagans (as animists were still consistently known, inaccurately though, for they were far from irreligious) – small *acha* grains, with subsidiary crops of beans, onions, potatoes and cassava, and limited supplies of rice and maize. There was rama fibre and some cotton. Cattle, horses, donkeys and sheep multiplied. Iron was worked extensively. Markets were regular and controlled. Each craft, like each market, had its own headman recognized by the chief, originally appointed to allocate and collect fees and taxes from his calling, and now surviving to give leadership and maintain standards. As in a royal *sarauta*, the tendency grew for succession to be confined to the sons of earlier 'chiefs of the weavers, blacksmiths, market', and so forth.

For trades, boys could learn and make their livelihood from dyeing, weaving, cloth-beating, tailoring, tanning, leatherwork, blacksmithing, butchering, house-building and thatchery, barbering and portering. Gradually young men from the poorer pagan tribes took to working in the alluvial tin mines on the western plateau. The direct tax was aimed at producing the traditional one-tenth of the cash value of a hamlet's or town ward's farm produce and other incomes; cattle tax was 1s 6d a head. In this way, from its million subjects in the province, the government raised £20-30 thousands, and left the lion's share to the NTs. Unskilled labour earned sixpence a day. Otherwise cash came from exports of pepper, mats, 'silk' from the cotton tree, groundnuts, skins and hides, gums and cattle. At this time the only imports seen in markets were raw salt from Borno and Muri, European processed salt, and kolanuts, gowns and cloths from the south. Manufactured tobacco and sugar, bicycles, sewing machines, enamel bowls and watches were seldom to be seen until trade had recovered from the Great War (which was foreseen by some Europeans, but was to surprise all when it came).

This society was self-sufficient, and women's part in it was that customary in rural Islam: the peasantry could rarely afford polygamy and complete purdah, but sought respectable compromises and held fast to both cultural and sexual division of domestic duties. Discipline, both at home and judicially, tended to be physical; the new European view that the purpose of punishment was primarily reformative was suspect. Courtesy and due deference to position were natural to those who accepted secular social distinctions within the spiritual equality of Islam, which was as much the religion of worldly obedience as of surrender to the supernatural will of Almighty God. *Addinimmu addinin biyayya ne*, said Hausa-speakers: our religion is a religion of obedience. These characteristics were also inevitable where the religion enjoined consensus on society and treated rebellion against the established Muslim community as heresy. Rebellion was tantamount to abandonment of God and His way. *Biyayya* also came easily to most of the mountain animists who, once they had suffered thorough defeat at the hands of a power that was unchallengeably stronger, would usually concede its spiritual superiority and proceed to learn their own potential strength by observing its example. The natural rulers of all these people seldom had accumulated or inherited property of their own, apart from houses and control of the land, although their power gave them ample compensation: the wealthy merchants tended to align themselves with the rulers, but until later years always met a subtle barrier that hindered their admission to higher society. Most of the Edwardian British found nothing strange in all this and, provided that there was justice, it did not offend them.

This prologue has had a purpose, and a sympathetic reader ought not to treat it as tedious. Without it the reader will not fully understand the origins of the

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in a well-written and readable style.

THE LIFE OF ALHAJI ABDULLAH BALEWA

... his development in his later life. In December
... his one and only son, Yakubu Dan Jala, Alhaji Attahiru's servant, his one and
... the traditions and environment of Bauchi never ceased to colour
... the world, even as it grew ever wider around him. When a
... performed the baby boy's naming ceremony, Yakubu
... chosen from among the Prophet's family and followers,
... which he was to whisper into the baby's ear,

PART ONE

The formative years

1912–1947

Karatu!

Farkonka madaci, karshenka zuma

This book is the first biography of Alhaji Sir
Sardauna Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of indepen-
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portant nation in Africa. It is a unique story of a unique man told by
a man who knew him well.

Although the European scramble for Africa was complete before Abubakar was born, most Nigerians had as yet had little or no immediate experience of white men. Certainly they did not think of themselves as 'Nigerians', a term of which few had ever heard. Very few untravelled British people had much experience of black men either, except perhaps at second or third hand – it might have been through some adventurous extension of their family, or through acquaintances who had been protected by, or had exercised, naval and maritime mastery of the seas in their country's imperial services, missions or trading exploits. Britain's empire spread unchallengeably secure, now that politicians' magnanimity had apparently reconciled the Boers; its metropolitan citizens largely judged it on the patriotism of the self-governing white colonies, which were about to justify that faith throughout the Great War. Their opinions of the inhabitants of other colonies and protectorates, or even of India after three centuries, were based on the recognition that those remote strangers were physically different, as were their lifestyles, their beliefs and their values: ideologies might grow out of these observations, but adverse qualitative comparisons, where they did emerge, were ultimate effect, not primary cause. The United Kingdom stood at the head of western Europe's apparent world cultural and industrial hegemony, and few economists yet doubted its foundations.

German rivalry and French jealousy existed, but did not frighten the British. Those few Nigerians who knew something at first hand of their own resident white men might know a little about Germans and Frenchmen, but vicariously and by repute only. Imperial Russia and the United States were mere concepts, which might be learnt about by some of the Nigerian pupils of Christian educators; any idea they might have of China or of Japan would have something distantly in common with the British people's operetta visions of *San Toy* and *The Mikado*. Most Nigerians in 1912, had they been transported two or three hundred years backwards in a time machine, might still have found nothing strange in the environment on arrival. The British colonial officials, few in number and deprived of wherewithal, thought their charge well fulfilled if peace and justice should begin to prevail. Change and progress could only be measured in centuries. Or so it seemed.

Little more than a generation later, when Abubakar was a mature young man, this entire picture already seemed a baseless fantasy, although there yet survived individuals whose sentimentality or stubbornness allowed them to continue to fantasise. The scientific and technical inventiveness, that had allowed a few small but crowded western nations to create unprecedented wealth and to triumph politically and economically, had now been acquired by other peoples. These johnny-come-latelies could also recruit more battalions. Most of the wealth that the British had amassed had been dispersed and redistributed to other lands in two bellicose upheavals that were popularly

believed to have saved their particular tradition of freedom and tolerance from being overwhelmed by harsher, illiberal creeds. Although resources could be husbanded anew, the comparative opulence was not ever to be recovered. The moral certainties that had inspired the agents of the earlier overseas triumphs had been weakened by pervasive educational changes into a humble self-questioning; and this was less able to withstand a new opposition, raised by people who now enjoyed equivalent techniques but also a blessed freedom from doubts.

Not the least significant evolution had been the extinction of the fundamental philosophy that had inspired Lugard – the vital force in the early years – and his followers, which he came to call the ‘dual mandate’. However defined (and, like ‘indirect rule’, there were several versions), this faith maintained the fair reciprocity of the imperial relationship, weighing the material economic gains for both ruled and rulers against each other in a realistic set of scales; it also required the practical introduction of the subject beneficiaries to, and their instruction in the enjoyment of, what was popularly conceived to be international civilization. By 1946 this was studied academically and patronised as, at its best, an interesting historical phase.

Yet most of the British at home still believed that they themselves, under guidance, had been the vanguard and had led their commonwealth of nations, and thereafter the free world, to a second total victory and so to the undisputed right to one of the world authority’s five permanent seats of power. Very many Nigerians also supposed that steady progress to betterment was now guaranteed; but many still supposed that it would not be suddenly won; they did not yet think of themselves individually as Nigerians, although that term was now accepted – as an umbrella (they still shared over three hundred linguistic groups). Minorities of both peoples might think quite differently from the generality, and tend to speak unhappily of ‘complacency’ or ‘self-satisfaction’: well-informed sceptics in America and Asia were certainly convinced that the slope between 1912 and 1946 in Britain’s relations with its African dependencies was leading on to something precipitous, but those third parties who were not unfriendly were by and large content to wait and see. After all, prophecies might not always be self-fulfilling.

It is as well not to banish the long perspective from mind while considering the development during that single generation of one man living in one part of one country which was still artificial. That country was an important mass in the accelerated geological and productive process which we humanise by calling it the successive rise and decline of realms. But throughout this first part the foreground is restricted to Bauchi, and the short perspective is what is significant in one man’s early life.

1 Abu the Boy

In ka samu lamuni ga dodo, sai ka shiga ruwa lafiya

Tafawa Balewa takes its name from two corrupted Fulfulde (Fulani) words, *tafari* meaning 'rock' and *baleri*, spoken with an imploded 'B', 'black'. At some time during the eighteenth century a group of Fulani herdsmen had made a permanent settlement beside an impressive 'Black Rock', which rose seventy-four kilometres south-west of Bauchi town. This dome of granite, perhaps two hundred metres across, lies in an elbow of the Lere river. Looking further south-west over the river, the villagers (now mostly Muslim Gerawa) can see, thirty kilometres away, the mountains of the 'pagan' plateau crowned by Pankshin. Here until very recently, and even in the heart of winter, the only clothing worn by a circumcised man was a gourd or plaited grass sheath. The women by custom girdled two fresh bunches of leaves daily, to cover their secret parts and their posteriors. Although the Lere river came down from its source in those same chilly hills nearby, there was little communication between their wild inhabitants and the plains. Dry in the winter, the Lere river would rise quickly in the rains, sweep north-east to join other tributaries and curve round again to become the Gongola river beyond Gombe, and eventually to pour into the Benue. On the way to Bauchi lay the remarkable crags of Dass, administered since 1913 as an independent non-Muslim chieftaincy. But shortly before reaching Tafawa Balewa, a southern feedway of this watercourse passed the territory of another animist tribe, the Seyawa, a branch of the plain Jarawa settled round Bogoro. It was this neighbouring people that the young teacher Abubakar was remembering so clearly when one day in London he was to write the passage that follows:

In the northern provinces of Nigeria there are many pagan tribes who are still in the primitive stage. They hardly wear any clothing, they seldom leave their homes, they have very few wants and they live in very crude houses without ventilation. But in spite of all these they are very happy and quite contented with life as it is. They have their own customs and beliefs which they honour very much. Throughout their own history they had gone to war with the other pagan tribes who live in their neighbourhood. War was brought to their country very recently, in the 19th century, during the rise of the Sokoto Fulani Empire. Even to-day these pagan tribes have still held their own although the so called advanced Hausas and the Town Fulani are slowly filtering into their community to corrupt up their good preserved old qualities. They have adopted hardly anything of the more advanced people around them. The discipline of the tribes is still excellent as it was centuries ago. The authority of the elders is also still very strong. There had never been a time when they seemed to think of any change in their beliefs. Above all they are very honest because they do not yet know the modern man's many cunning ways of cheating and deceit. Although they know no laws of hygiene yet they seem to

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be healthier than their more advanced neighbours who live in towns and in fairly better houses and on better diet. You very rarely find cases of venereal diseases among them. These pagans we will take as the original people of Hausaland or of Nigeria generally. - The pagans have their own schools of their own creation where the future generations of the tribe are taught the beliefs, the rules and the way of life of their people. Here, the elders are the tutors. Usually this schooling begins seriously when the child reaches the age of nine. It is the age for the circumcision (rite) of children with the pagans. During that time all the children of the tribe of that age will be grouped together and taken into the bush, to a lonely place where they are circumcised. They are left there to look after themselves for a period of about four weeks. During this time only some carefully selected elders pay them a visit. They are tried in all sorts of things. They are made to endure pain, hunger and thirst. They are trained to be brave and hard-working. In fact it is during these weeks that the children are instructed in all the affairs and secrets of their tribe. After the four weeks of trial, it is usually a custom that a big festival is called by the affected tribe in which all the other tribes of the neighbouring villages will be invited. After this festival, the circumcised boys are then considered as equal members of the tribe. It is this time that their fathers give them freedom to cultivate their own individual farms after the work on the family communal one. The children take great pride in reaching this stage. They are presented special decorated leather aprons by their family as token of membership on the day of the festival. The children never fail to wear them on big occasions and also whenever they get the opportunity to come into the town.

For when little Abu was four years old his father's duties brought him back to live permanently in the *ajija's* compound in Tafawa Balewa. The *Seyawa* men and youths would be familiar on the town's market days and in the nearby savannah. All would be clad in goatskin aprons, tied by the rear hooves across their bellies, with the neck tucked forward for modesty between their legs and then back down over the knot, and the leather often intricately cut and decorated with indigo and lime designs. That sentimental picture of the noble savage came from childhood witness, not from Rousseau nor yet from early field anthropologists. Once weaned and until circumcised by the village barber himself, the child Abu would spend most of his own time more or less innocent of clothing, except on Fridays and feast days. He might run around the women's quarters and walls of the compound, venture out to the shady village meeting-place under the fig-trees, or go in his mother's care to the market. If he wandered by himself or with other small ones, they would always be ready to race back to security at home. He now bore the traditional cicatrice marking of his people on the left cheek. When he grew bigger he found fun in boyish wrestling and *langa*, the game of every child hopping, with one hand clasping the other foot, each trying to bump into the others in turn and send them sprawling.

The outbreak of the Great War in 1914 had meant that the soldiers were no longer regarded as a Bauchi garrison, but as a small recruiting office for the campaign against the Germans in Kamerun, the Kaiser's colony between Nigeria and the French equatorial colonies to the east and south. Men served from many parts of the province, though they were mainly 'pagan'. The 'first class' of WAFFs were among the British and French troops who took the German port of Douala in September. The 'second class' (or second wave) would be among those who first occupied the rest of the German colony, after the German forces evacuated it in 1916 for Rio Muni (Spanish Guinea, a coastal enclave into the French territories to the south), and who were then shipped

round the Cape to help clear the enemy from German east Africa. Lugard had feared some adverse effect upon the Muslim emirates if the British carried war against the Islamic Turkish empire which pretended to the inheritance of the first caliphate. There was however virtually no effect. Instead prosperity grew, in the wake of tin prices rocketing up to £400 a ton, and despite the shortage and therefore the soaring prices of imported goods. The unhindered 'war effort' also made a far greater popular mark on the people of Bauchi than had Lugard's return as governor-general, or even his amalgamation on 1 January 1914 of the two protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria with the Colony of Lagos, a process which included the absorption of the semi-independent Egba state of Abeokuta after an 'Ijemo massacre' when troops fired on demonstrating rioters.

To look forward a little, in 1919 the Milner-Simon declaration determined the boundary between those parts of German Kamerun occupied and administered by British and French forces respectively; the British area was about one-sixth, and with minor modifications formed the B class mandate conferred on the UK in 1922 under article 22 of the league of nations covenant. The southernmost part, adjacent to the Calabar, Ogoja and Benue provinces, was administered as Cameroons province, and became one of the southern provinces; for the north, a very small part was included in Benue province, and a larger territory incorporated in Borno and Adamawa provinces. In 1924 British Nigerian law superseded what remained of German law.

In 1913 a Nigerian Council had been set up as a national body to supplement the fifty-year old legislative council for Lagos colony (which had for a few years also represented the southern protectorate but was now virtually coterminous with the town council); its 36 members included six African chiefs and unofficials, and six European unofficials, and its functions were advisory and deliberative, with no legislative or financial powers. The governor-general addressed it, which he ceased to do to legco. It included no African from the north, and so in Bauchi the appointment of 'Lugga' as '*Gwamnan Ikko*' (governor at Lagos) meant little. His lieutenant-governor C L Temple, Bauchi's first resident, had power delegated as '*Gwamnan Kaduna*' (whither the northern capital had moved from Zungeru) over everything but the essential common services; apart from the posts and telegraphs, the common services scarcely touched Bauchi in any case. The day was to come when from the northern point of view the south would be subsidized by the north, but at the time of union Lugard's purpose might rightly be judged to have been quite the opposite; and yet with up to 50,000 Nigerian children at school, over 150 hospital beds, and 100,000 out-patients registered, but hardly any of these statistics coming from the north, the south might still be thought well able to afford the subsidy.

Education in the non-Muslim areas of the north was left, as in most British overseas territories, to Christian missions: however, separate spheres of influence were clearly marked out, to prevent the unseemly competition for adherents that disfigured their efforts in the south. In the emirates western education remained suspect and moved much more slowly. In 1915 the first native authority school was opened in Bauchi, in the town house of the madaki, the district head of Ganjuwa. It was staffed by former pupils of the Kano government school who had returned home in 1911. There were one or two outbreaks of 'Mahdism' during the war, but the sultan and emirs helped to subdue them. In 1916 the most famous local event was a great slaughter of elephant, permitted by a Captain Lonsdale who had been impressed by the damage done to farms in the south of the province: next year the British showed their customary disrespect for consistency by moving the resident's

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headquarters back once more to Bauchi from the tinfields of Naraguta, and by imposing the first preservation of game restrictions (including protection for elephants). In 1918, while Lugard was thinking of a railway extension through Bauchi to the north-east, the first government school for the province to offer a formal 'primary' curriculum was opened at Yalwa, just south of Bauchi towards Bule mountain. 1920 brought the opening of the first NA 'elementary' schools, in Bauchi town and in Tafawa Balewa among other places. In 1921 the soldiers abandoned Bauchi and moved the garrison to Borno. Ever since 1917 the emir had been supervising the conversion of the track from Jos into a permanent laterite motorable road, at a final cost to the native treasury by 1925 of £42 thousands. Meanwhile the Great War had ended and the troops came home, with new confidence and skills (as much of parade ground discipline as of fieldcraft and combat), but also with an awareness of the world as being wider and perhaps more intimidating than it had begun to seem after their local despotisms had come under control. A brief spell followed of prosperity and new construction. Railway transport became the key 'infrastructure' for commercial and economic development, despite its first strike in 1921, but river transport remained confined in the main to administrative travel. An interesting educational innovation in the south had its implications for a later generation: the introduction of a standard approach to the dialects of the Yoruba language meant that more and more children in Ilesha and Ijebu were taught to think of themselves as simply 'Yorubas', a name that had more popularly been confined to the subjects of the old Oyo kingdom. It was in the 1920s too that, although the life cycle of the plasmodium had been discovered in the 1890s, systematic efforts were made for the first time to impose mosquito control as a preventive measure against malaria in urban areas of west Africa.

Many an Abubakar in northern Nigeria was more familiarly known to his relatives and friends as Garba (just as Edwards became Neddies), but YaKubu dan Zala's solemn little boy was not often so nicknamed, although the other common abbreviation was used at first. And so Abu had attended a Qur'anic school from time to time like his contemporaries - squatting in a group round the bearded teacher with the chapbook and the whip, and learning the first chapter of the Qur'an and some other scriptures by heart - very much in the ancient fashion described by him in the quotation given in the prologue. Fortunately he never left home in care of one of those Qur'anic mallams who chose to make distant, educative but dangerous journeys with a bedraggled class of virtually mendicant child apprentices. Abu's full name reminded the ajaja of his own grandfather, and he increasingly enjoyed the fond care of the district head in an almost adoptive kinship. This came very close to the 'joking relationship' customary between the grandparent and grandchild in those worldwide cultures where children should be seen but not heard (and where direct parental love is also imbued with continual reminders of awe and discipline, so that the tendency is for the infant to scuttle away from daddy to avoid a scolding). Abu certainly had an undying affection for his paternal grandmother, of whom he often spoke in later times as the early source of his knowledge of folklore and local heritage, as well as tender care. She too would recall him affectionately as a child with a magic gift of thoughtfulness for those around him.

One day in 1922, a year after the buying price of groundnuts (the increasingly important cash crop in the savannah region) had fallen from £48 to £12 a ton and shattered any provincial resident's hopes of a boom, one of the early

provincial superintendents of education, Mr E L Mort, left the main track from Bauchi, en route for Pankshin on horseback. He took with him his carriers and chopboxes (as touring loads of food and cooking utensils were known from the pidgin word 'chop' that meant both 'diet' and 'consume'), to visit the Tafawa Balewa elementary school. The ajiya's own second son Zubairu had been installed as the first headmaster here for two years past. It was not always that northern aristocrats would risk their sons being spoilt in a *boko* ('foreigners') school; there had been many disappointments at the Kano class for sons of chiefs, and substitution of servants' children for the royal scions sought was not unknown. However the ajiya had also had his elder son Yusufu educated, who was later to be native treasurer in Jos, and now Zubairu had vacancies on his school register. Eric Mort found ajiya Attahiru on a mat in front of his mud gatehouse, cuddling and playing with the nine-year-old Abu, and said, 'Give me the boy for school!' The ajiya half-heartedly objected, 'He is my son! (*Dana ne*)', but nevertheless this was how the boy was enrolled.

Not many historically vital moments of sheer chance against the odds are remembered in this clear way. Contrary to one legend, Abu was certainly no substitute or changeling for a reluctant princeling; but contrary to another (which he never troubled to deny), he was not a district head's son, but well-loved son of a district head's favoured household servant. At the time many neighbours and friends would pity the boy for being chosen to undergo something so alien. None would think to assess his potential fortune against his being one of the mere three or four thousand, all boys, who attended school in northern Nigeria out of a population of ten millions. The government's British educationists in the north still did not exceed two dozen. Even in Britain the school leaving age had only been raised to 14 since the war, the first woman MP was still a wonder, and equal opportunity was as far to seek as equal fortune. Abu might have spent his days as a district head's *yaro*, or 'boy', and certainly as a farmer. Thanks to Mort's chance intervention he spent three years, learning to read, to write Hausa in the romanised script, and to do simple arithmetic: he was also introduced to formal history, basic geography, football and the elements of western physical training; and he was reminded academically of his Qur'ān lessons, and practically (bending over the school garden) of how flowers and food grew. English was not taught, nor any behaviour that might alienate him from his uneducated relatives or neighbours. He was still a village boy, who swam in the river and climbed trees: once he fell off a branch and landed hard but unbroken on a rock.

In 1923 the Nigerian council and the old 'Lagos' legislative council were replaced by a single legislative council, in which three members were elected for Lagos and one for Calabar by registered males disposing of an annual income of £100. The more sparsely educated remainder of the southern provinces was directly represented by fifteen nominated members. This encouraged Herbert Macaulay to found the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The governor still legislated directly for the northern provinces, and was supported by 31 voting officials for his southern measures. Again, the changes went unnoticed in Bauchi. The resident was moved away again for two years in 1924, to Jos, but what were of greater moment were the abolition of paid market heads and of market dues, in an attempt to stimulate internal trade in the face of the world recession which struck at even such remote places; and the heavy death rate from epidemics of cerebro-spinal meningitis and relapsing fever. Then in 1925 the old ajiya had to retire, his district was split into its component parts of Lere and Bula, and Tafawa Balewa lost status. The teacher,

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...to set up school much nearer Bauchi at Liman
...written 'common entrance' exams were
...superintendent of education's touring assistant
...and recommendation, and made a quick
...to select Abu, now twelve years old
...of the emirate's capital. This was generally known
...school, and led to the equivalent of the
...With a bundle containing his best clothes for Fridays,
...for the journey and stoic family farewells,
...across a saddle with high pommel and rising
...for the two days' ride to the city.
...Came to Kano' on HRH's African
...was still strange. It was also the year
...began to popularize
...expression 'sole native authority', used
...to distinguish a chief from some form of
...was concerned to improve
...the spread of direct taxation and responsible
...In Britain the colonial office
...which was to counsel African governments
...in preference to the creation of

...to the new school roll (less often 'Abu'
...and became a more serious business), was not
...good at arithmetic, better at games, but on
...these were the early judgements of his teacher
...He behaved well, both to his fellows and
...frivolous youngsters. He
...the school, or to listen and
...gatherings. With two other boys,
...in a mat wrapped in a cotton blanket, in a
...Ordinary school clothing was made of local
...woven in narrow strips stitched together
...with indigo stripes, and a small white knitted
...was made into a short sleeveless tunic
...a gown or longer tunic and loose trousers;

...years, although he began
...when he came under a teacher Malam
...was an undramatic period in northern
...was opened in the town in 1926
...with the southern artisans who were
...Most native administration
...former pupils of these craft schools,
...the Bauchi NA's workshop. One
...years later he identified her as an
...Margery Perham, who was investigating
...here, for her visit was not

made until 1931). In 1927 mass immunization of cattle was introduced, creating at once a new reason, besides tax checks, for officials to keep in touch with the Fulani nomads and for the nomads' suspicions of officialdom to grow. A few senior administrators were looking with some agnosticism at an Ormsby-Gore report on west Africa, recommending enlightened self-interest with regard to remote African territories as a variant on the dual mandate; economic development based on medical, educational and agricultural support for the native peoples was expected to give rise to healthy and intelligent producers of world commodities and purchasers of world consumer goods.

On Armistice Day 1927 another special year was made memorable when two RAF aeroplanes landed in Bauchi. There were not many exciting treats for schoolchildren to match this – no cinema or wireless, or magazines, only Friday mosque and the subsequent swagger through town in one's finery. There were also the annual festivals, to be sure: such as the horseback parade of district heads and NA dignitaries with their retainers, some wearing ancient chainmail, inherited booty from the Holy Land crusades, who charged with drums and flintlocks up to the emir's gatehouse on *sallah* days – the great celebration at the end of the month of fasting (sometimes entertaining small boys with the spectacle of aged *hakimai* or office-bound scribes literally held on to their mounts by their servants); or the rowdy days near the market when the emir permitted the young nomad Fulani dandies to prove their bravery to their belles in the *sharo* ritual, by exchanging mighty blows of hefty staves across their torsos without ever batting an eyelid (and staring fixedly into hand mirrors to prove it to themselves); or the new year festival on the tenth day of the first Muslim month, when everybody ate twice as much as usual and might even keep their best clothes on to go to bed afterwards.

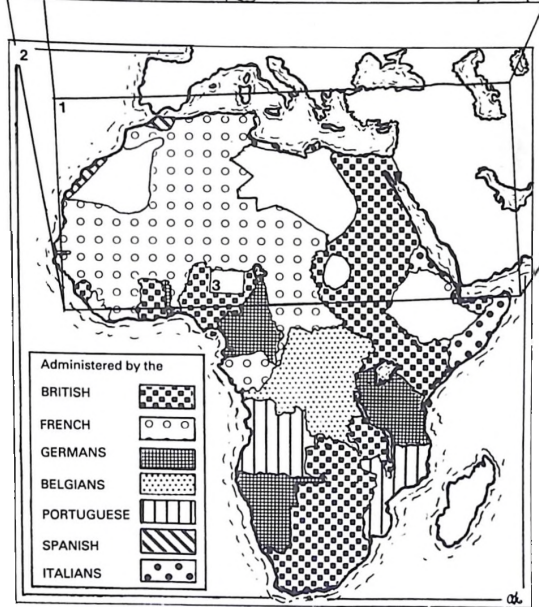
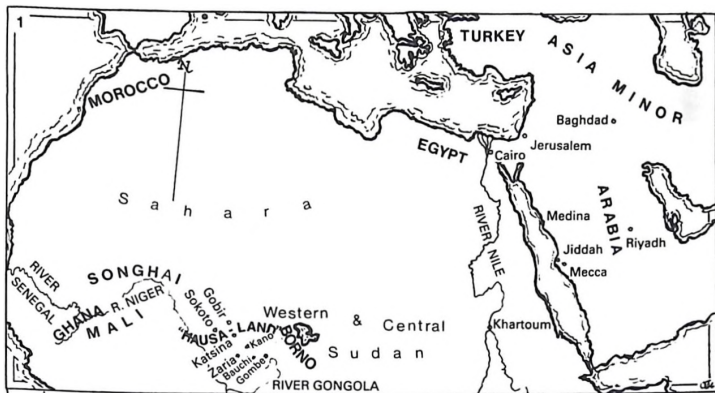
Such days of fun were the exception. Apart from school discipline (Abu was caught once with some others in town at a forbidden hour, and to make things worse, they were smoking – all were soundly whipped with the traditional thong of hippo hide, the *bulala*), the harshness of general living standards was heightened by the reality of the Ramadan fast. Until western astronomical calendar certainty became acceptable, the emir and imam had to be satisfied by reliable evidence that the new moon had indeed been seen (in some places reflected in a particular well) before ordering the drumming to mark the beginning of the ninth Muslim month; and long after clocks and watches were common, the moments of dawn and dusk, between which only the sick, the aged and the pregnant might let anything pass their lips, were still judged by the ability to tell a dark thread and a light thread apart by skylight. Although some adjustments were made to timetables, teachers and boys alike would be nodding off before classes ended. The *azumi* fast was no excuse for taking life easy.

Abu spent his holidays partly back in his father's hut in Tafawa Balewa (where he helped at harvest-time and sowing, and planted a date-palm which is still growing), and partly in the *ajiya*'s town house in Bauchi, which increasingly became his true boyhood home. In Bauchi too he would listen to the homilies of his beloved old grandmother: thirty years later he was still telling European hearers that these always ended with, 'Remember, child, when you grow up, you must kill the Fulani, or drive them out!' Here in 1929 his primary school was to be moved into the city to join up with the craft school. The northern education department had just been united with that of the colony and southern Nigeria; this change followed the decision of the new overall director of education, Hussey, to amalgamate all government primary schools and craft

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schools into the new middle schools, and to extend the grades to Middle IV. The attempt to stir trainee mallams and artisans in one comprehensive pot was unsuccessful in the more conservative areas, where chiefs who would not send their sons to craft schools withheld them also from the new hybrids. The supply of able and creative northern artisans also dried up, as the crafts curriculum was squeezed out of the middle schools. The first provincial leper camp was about to be set up, and an elementary training centre for non-Muslim NA teachers to be opened at Toro on the road to Jos. In 1931 the old school buildings at Yalwa were to be given to the government in which to build a new teachers' training centre, in exchange for the new NA hospital which the government built in Bauchi town. It should be remembered by those who blame 'Kaduna' for the north's educational backwardness that from 1929 the assistant director there had to have regard for the lieutenant-governor, but was responsible to the director of education in Lagos.

But meanwhile in 1928 Abu had taken his next important step, and despite the master's term report after the smoking incident that, 'This boy will never go far', he had improved so much in his studies as to have been selected to attend the Katsina Higher College. The boys he left behind either made their little local mark at home or remained utterly unknown. The youngsters he now joined had a privilege that it is not easy for products of decolonised Nigeria or of a welfare state to measure without bias. Whether or no the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, a large part of Africa's grandest country was shaped surely and unwittingly by the improbable version of British boarding school life created in Katsina.



Map 1: The Historical World to which the youthful Abubakar looked back.

Map 2: The Partitioned Africa into which the child Abubakar was born.

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2 Abubakar the Student

Baushe, tun yana danye a kan tausa shi, ya miƙe

Katsina Training College was opened in 1921 to train the teachers for the improved syllabus of the provincial schools. In his speech the recently arrived governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, exhorted the pupils to adhere to their religious duties, and to abide by their inherited customs and traditions, including respect for those in authority over them. Curiously, some of his DOs believed that he also wished his administration to avoid, at all costs, the impression that they were friends of the people. Had it not been for the staff shortages which the Great War had aggravated, the college might have been ready much earlier. Lugard's director of northern education, Hanns Vischer, had an eye on precedent in India. He had originally imagined its object to be 'to train the sons of chiefs, with a view to making them physically and mentally fit to assist the government in the administration of the country, to bring them into closer contact with the government, to acquire for them a better understanding of the policy pursued by the government, to acquire for them an elementary knowledge of sanitation and hygiene, and above all to open their eyes to the commercial possibilities of the country'. With so little money and so few staff, he could not conceive of any alternative to starting with the social heights and letting the effects trickle slowly down to the masses as the long years ahead unrolled. He was content to leave pedagogic initiatives in non-Muslim areas to the energetic Christian mission.

Vischer, known as 'Dan Hausa' (literally 'son of Hausa', a term of endearment applied to a very few British officials who mastered the language and its intonations, and were accepted as surrogate natives of the land), had been inviolated in 1919. His security during 1919 saw the vision through to completion in terms of teacher training rather than academic instruction of the future natural rulers. It now becomes understandable to see the college as part of a deliberate British attempt to study an artificially undemocratic system of social class structure imposed by corporate indirect rule. It seems fairer to accept that the utilitarian case what they found, treated it as they would its equivalent in their own or other similar societies, and no more thought of forcing change beyond the practical pace of natural development than of encouraging radical revolution in their commands. As for the training of the aristocracy, in later years Abubakar was often to comment that if a chief was 'advised' to send a son to Katsina, the selection process followed was for him to look out of the window and eye a chance passing child: 'Is that one of mine? He'll do, send him'. This may account for the legend related in the last chapter; its significance is also refuted by the quality of many of Katsina's output.

Katsina had traditionally been the home of learned and devout scholars in the old days before the British came, and it was a joy to Katsina's emir,

Muhammadu Dikko (known affectionately behind his back to the provincial administration as 'Mamman Dick'), to sit in his nearby holiday house and keep watch on the government's proud school and all the people in it. Not that the location was always to seem so suitable once modes of transport began to change, but at this time neither staff nor pupils yet thought it odd that they had to trek to the college: even those who might come part of the way by rail, including those from Bauchi, faced at least a five days' journey, almost into French territory, making the last 215 kilometres on foot or horseback from Kano. A boy from Borno, one Kashim, rode all the way, 640 kilometres, on horseback in 1925. The sons of the important may have had servants and even wives, others had to be self-sufficient. All received thirty shillings a month from their home native authorities to cover their subsistence and any eventuality above their travel expenses. Once they were in college all faced the same spartan environment of boarding school usage, regardless of physical maturity or social pretensions. Huts, classrooms and staff quarters, all were built of thick, cool mud with thatched roofs. The principal until 1931 was the Mr Bieneman of the original Kano craft school, and his own mud house, '*gidan* Bieneman', survived long into republican days as a virtual monument. There was no running or treated water, and electricity was unheard of except from books. At first there were no organized games, but from the beginning there was a fives court. The senior Nigerian teacher was Malam Nagwamatse from Sokoto, who administered discipline and the school stores, and oversaw the Muslim education afforded by outside mallams. He also taught Arabic and Hausa with Malam Bello Kagara, whom the British called 'the chaplain'.

The language of instruction was Hausa, in which the four British teachers taught mathematics, geography, history and the theory of education – but above all English. This subject was chiefly in the hands of Mr Gerald Power, a future director of education for The Gambia; he had also compiled a Hausa grammar but insisted on spoken English of the same 'received' quality of grammar and accent as that used by the British themselves. At first taught artificially by showing the functions of the mouth, the lips and the tongue in producing each sound, mimicry soon became second nature, assisted by lack of much previous experience of trying to speak English as a regular second language (and by ignorance of the pidgins and creoles of other parts of west Africa). Power would spend a whole hour on the short 'a', and as long on 'o'. His colleague C J Whitting was heard by some to say that perfection could only be acquired by jack-boot methods. Some of Charles Whitting's own pupils were reduced to tears by his demands, but they ended by mastering his lessons. The result was a purely British English, as heard among those pre-second world war British who made no special claim on birth, class or regional culture, but believed in the upward levelling of a 'good education'. The reward would come when the speakers, many long years later, were to outshine colleagues in international diplomacy and negotiations. At the time the teachers from overseas accepted, by and large, the privilege which the sons of northern aristocrats expected from emirate society, and took all the more pleasure in 'cutting down to size' those who fell down on school duty; equally, they took an inward pleasure, usually concealed for fear of showing favours, in the successes of the unpretentious who were moving socially upwards – so long as they did not become big-headed, a state for which the precise Hausa translation of *girman kai* reflected the British public service distrust of bumptiousness.

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By the time Abubakar arrived in 1928 as no 145 on the school admission register, without wife or servant, the college had grown beyond its original tiny patch, and now had six compounds managed like 'houses' in British public schools: Arewa (North), Kudu (South), Gabas (East), Yamma (West), Illela (Cassia Tree) and Hankaka (Crow). This year Kashim had arrived at the college. Abubakar was so embarrassed by what he considered to be the weakness of his English that he began to learn the concise Oxford dictionary by heart, fortunately he never reached the letter 'B'. Three of his classmates were Muhammad Habib from Dikwa, Haruna Bashiru from Gwandu and Aliyu from Zaria, and in other classes there were many names which will reappear with better known titles in later chapters, not least the Sokoto aristocrat Ahmed Rifa'i of Illela house and the Katsina boys Musa Yar'Adua of Arewa and Isa Kaita. There was no mealy-mouthed questioning of the purpose of the instruction by now - it was unashamedly to train 'leaders', to form 'character', and so indirectly to produce teachers who were 'true men' and would replicate themselves. Youths from all the Muslim parts of northern Nigeria were mingled together in compounds regardless of origin, and any followers were kept away from formal activities or meeting places. Slackness was not tolerated, whether at work or play, not that to many pupils the distinction was very clear - a time set for cleaning up the compound would be known as *aikin tsabta* or *datti* (work of cleanness or dirt), that for games as, it might be, *aikin kirikit* (work of cricket).

British public school attitudes to propriety were never forgotten by pupils like Abubakar. Thirty years on he still remembered the master who would awaken a boy dozing in the back row, weary during the *azumi* month of fasting, with a well-aimed piece of chalk and the injunction, 'Boy! Return that missile!' He was also one of the five who let off the hand-brake of a master's bull-nose Morris car, the first to be kept in college, which then rolled down a slope and came to rest against a tree. 'Put it back where you found it!' Four of the sweating, grunting five became ministers, the fifth who had actually released the lever only reached the level of a senior education officer; but then Abubakar was to remember, they all said at the time that he would get nowhere.

The dispensary had grown into a small hospital, and every boy had a weekly dose of quinine and salt which saved him from some of the common bodily disadvantages of African schoolchildren of the time. But not even aristocratic blood saved the naughty, the lazy or the presumptuous from physical chastisement at the hands of the school serjeant; although Abubakar escaped whipping at Katsina, others were not so lucky among the amazing list of college 'old boy' ministers, emirs and prominent party or NA leaders, the men who were to fill public life in the northern Nigeria of the 1950s, and to challenge the assumptions of the southerners who owed their early education in the 1920s to 1940s to the Christian missions. What they were all to claim in their years of fully matured nostalgia was to have arrived at college unable to string a sentence together and, in the care of teachers who did not think of themselves as unusually gifted or clever, to have acquired discipline, a work ethic and leadership - with no promise of any material reward for the duty that must be done. It sounds old-fashioned - worse, it must sound at the same time both bourgeois and lacking in worldly incentive, because none of the teachers imagined that he was instructing future statesmen. Yet it is a stubborn critic who denies that once brought together, these two alien societies, the teachers from Britain and the pupils from all over northern Nigeria, found common motives and inspiration in each other, both directly and through the

local staff. The survivors all looked back and asserted it strongly, not least the premier- and prime minister-to-be who responded to roll-call as Ahmadu Raba and Abu Bauchi.

Again as at primary school, Abubakar was often shy and withdrawn, and was not at first regarded by his classmates as particularly bright. Competition was obviously sharper, and his humble origins would not bring him easy or cheap popularity. There was little time however for brooding over status among junior boys. Early after sunrise the 'bell' (a plain metal bar) would be struck and the first prayers of the day, individual but half-formalized, would start the busy routine. At half past seven came 'physical training' under Serjeant Sale, particularly unpopular with gilded youngsters whose culture regarded short clothes after puberty as embarrassing except on the farm or when worn by labourers; but in this as in many marginal aspects of behaviour the British view of propriety again prevailed – the knee-length trousers used by the hillmen of Nepal had been readily adopted throughout the Indian and British armies serving in hot places, and by the 1930s had been taken up by European civilians generally, not least the French, for tropical work and play because they were comfortable and economical; it was the heyday for youths and sportsmen in all western countries to wear 'shorts' as a matter of course, and lads like Abubakar who resisted them for 'PT' in the African heat were curtly told not to be silly. Not that this was strenuous: these were still the days of communal Swedish drill rather than individual gymnastics, and under the sometimes sleepy eye of a duty master Sale and the boys organized themselves into an entranced ballet of movements to a chorus of '1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4', chanted in good scholarly Arabic. Then all the teachers would come in, the remaining British from the government station on horse or perhaps (after earning a salary increment or two) on a motor cycle, and lessons would start. Two periods before breakfast hour at about 9 o'clock, then more classes till lunch at half past one.

Very few in the school community did not sleep or rest after that meal, even in the cooler days of late winter when the harmattan wind blew down from the north and covered the world with the fine grey dust of the Saharan desert. On the very dry days when humidity fell to single figures and lips would crack, tempers and patience would sometimes crumble too, and a quiet withdrawal from company after a long morning was just as wise as the siesta was essential in the burning summers. Later in the afternoon there was 'prep', and from the late 1920s at last organized football, cricket, hockey or fives, in which the whole staff took part until dusk. Regular training for athletics required every boy to join in the 'Round-the-Town' cross-country run of twelve kilometres, circling Katsina's town walls and back through the town to college. Abubakar's class was once taken on foot for an 'educational visit' to a village called Durfi Takusheyi, to see the long grave of some ancient people which would one day be declared an ancient monument; the boys thought they were supposed to deduce that their ancestors had been much taller than themselves. A later class went on a more eye-opening excursion to Port Harcourt, a more foreign country than the distant local past.

Once the sun set there would be a general return to living quarters. These had certain social differences of size and convenience, but all shared the same simple construction of clay bound with straw, under a grass thatch attractive to termites, bats and snakes, and the same simple illumination of oil and kerosene lamps, attractive to winged insects. Everybody read books. The British found other entertainment on the polo field with members of the emir's family and

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As well as the school club with the few administrative and other departmental duties, it was at each others' houses with bridge, talk, drinks and portable wine and beer. The Nigerian teachers were part of the local community, and many led the boys to the main town mosque in the old days of the town. The boys (and it must not be forgotten that most were well educated at the time they left) studied, read, gossiped or played cards and dominoes. Cards were frowned upon and gambling forbidden, but

The well-known characters provided more mundane essentials. A woman known to all as Al' Mai Waino got up at about three o'clock in the night to make the beds, and when life began to stir in the morning there would be a string of hungry and often shivering youngsters passing in and out of the house to get some food or just to get warm in the 'Queen's' company. The woman was a man who made his living by doing boys' laundry. Starch and soap were not for common use, since the locally spun *gwado* cloth had yet to yield to the softness of the imported goods. Dan Kwaido's washing provided sparkling white that was admired in the moral eyes of the principal. This concern for cleanliness was reflected in the British virtues next only to godliness, reached its peak at the regular competitive inspection of the whole college compound. The 'house' system was introduced, and spin was awarded the right to fly a flag, and although the boys were given at the end of each year for prowess in class or in sports, the British tradition of British schools was more common – a reward was given to some such mere token.

The immediate purpose of the school now being to produce headmasters of secondary schools and secondary school teachers, all these early candidates were required to complete that was much more than moral, to teach for five years before being eligible for the NA that had paid their fees. In 1929-30 when Abubakar had been teaching for two years, the country's education departments were still in the infancy of the new chapter. One result was that the school's name was changed to 'The Higher College Katsina', although intellectually it was still a school like the western Higher College Yaba; another was that after the first year the work divided – the teachers' course continued as before, and the students were to train for the BAuchi NA's choice that he should continue to study in the more academic new alternative of secondary education and spend a different undertaking to work in government or NA service. In either case there were never to be enough teachers, as the school and administration preached endlessly from the profession. Abubakar was the school's very handsome student. He did his duty at games, in the school and in the community, and became over-confident in them. When he was appointed in 1931, he did not specialize in it; in any case he was not a specialist and there was virtually no 'apparatus'. For a year M W

In 1931 the British and northern police forces were amalgamated: 85 British and 150 African chief inspectors, superintended by the British and African in uniform, backed by the various native police forces and *dogaris* in the bush overseen by the British. By 1931 the international world could not be ignored, and the school was well established in its own community, where excellence without regard for the world was the motto. The slump had hit all of Nigeria

increased the number of their beds, schools the number of their places, the railway extensions went ahead and mixed farming continued to improve where it had been demonstrated. Back at home in Bauchi, the NA was building a new central office and treasury, and the cement gatehouse and balcony for the emir's palace. Staff was continually being taken off duty to deal with swarms of locusts. But not all was well. Britain's exports of men and new investments seemed to end. Not only was recruitment to fill colonial vacancies stopped, but those in post were faced with ten or twenty per cent cuts in their salaries, without negotiation. Even the Katsina college boys had their monthly thirty shillings cut to 22s 6d in their first year, rising by half a crown a year, and only to reach the full rate again in their fourth. Had anyone hoped for three or four higher colleges throughout the north, such hopes were now crushed.

Although a late developer with no obvious ambition, Abubakar slowly turned into a noticeable character by his fifth and last year. He became a prefect in Gabas house, a calling in which his juniors found him stiff and stern, unable to forget his responsibilities. He did not joke much, and set a conscious example of hard study. He dealt with miscreants on the spot. One day he found the sweepings of the house beside, not inside, the dustbin. A notice appeared on the wall:

Boys will be boys! From to-day
I expect rubbish to be left *here!*
A.T.B.

This was interpreted by Hausa striplings as a 'strong' notice. But what now impressed his British masters was his great earnestness and the probing questions: 'What is a kingdom? What is 'the aristocracy'? Should women be educated?' These came out quite fiercely before debates, when he would compose his speech carefully on paper and then commit it to memory overnight, a practice which lasted all his life, reinforced when he learnt that it had been Churchill's too. Some of his questions were very awkward, and no amount of staff embarrassment or tact, even without wireless or regular newspapers, could quell all knowledge of the unsettling events in the wider world.

In 1929 the women's riots, in the southern Nigerian town of Aba, against rumours of female taxation (under a new system of chiefs established by warrant, where none had existed by tradition) would certainly become a matter for common talk, and perhaps also the Indian round table conference, where dominion status for a non-white part of the empire was first mooted; but it is unlikely that the fund set up under the first UK colonial development act was noticed in Katsina, still less the fact that one of its purposes in lending and even granting money was to relieve British unemployment as well as to stimulate colonial economic development, both aims having few governmental precedents; and it is certain that nobody there knew that 1929 was the year when the term *apartheid* was first formally used in South Africa. Princess Marie-Louise visited west Africa, an adventurous exploit for such a senior lady of the royal family. In 1930 Mahatma Gandhi opened his civil disobedience campaign, a revolt in Abyssinia made Ras Tafari into the emperor Hailé Selassié, and a Canadian proposal for preferences to protect dominion wheat was rejected at an imperial conference. In 1931 a new boy joined the school, Yahaya Gusau, soon to become Abubakar's friend; 'Carter Bridge' was opened and Lagos was at last joined by an adequate motor road to the Nigerian mainland; a skeleton route survey was also made for a possible north-eastern

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extension to the Nigerian railway, reviving some of Lugard's thoughts. In
India Gandhi and the congress of Hindus agreed to recognise the round table
conference process as constitutional advance, but no agreement was reached
on the rights of religious minorities, including the Muslim multi-millions; the
status of Washington defined 'dominion status', formalizing the concept of a
free association in a commonwealth of equal and independent nations sharing
allegiance to the crown.

But while Indian politicians seemed far from ready to show communal
impartiality and respectful tolerance, there would be few British officials
with the imagination to foresee an African dominion being created in
their lifetimes. In 1931 Britain's many overseas dependent civil services and
departments, except for India and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, were joined on
paper to the unified colonial services, regulated by the secretary of state as
a common employer, exchange and ultimate nominal disciplinarian, but still
administered and paid as local conditions permitted by the same many separate
overseas governments that actually employed them; in 1932 also, the Indian
congress was made illegal and Mr Gandhi was arrested; and in 1932 again
some modest imperial preferences were agreed at an economic conference
in Ottawa. 1933 brought a royal return visit to the 'white man's grave' of west
Africa to the Princess Marie-Alice, the King's much travelled elderly cousin;
Newfoundland revealed its grant-aided colonial dependency because it could
not attract investment and United States opposition, coupled with rampant
British nationalism, brought failure to the attempt at a world monetary
and economic conference in London to produce currency stabilization. An
economic planning board, a dignified British official body, had been set up
in 1931 to coordinate imperial treasury control, to promote reciprocal
trade, to coordinate development through food production research, marketing
and surveys, and had done much to spread the belief throughout the mother
country that Britain embraced a multi-racial, non-militarist and peaceable
policy towards hereditary dominions and colonies; now in 1933 it was
clear that, through the political dominance of those convinced either of the
virtues of tariff reform (that is, rejection of free trade) or of reducing avoidable
government expenditures. However, most college debates were on abstract
subjects and most opinions were parochial, even if Abubakar's own faculties
had become critical. International affairs and national politics were matters
hardly touched on in schools anywhere in the world at this time, and were left
for adulthood and experience to teach. Even at universities, economics were not
always thought wholly respectable, and real history normally ended in 1914.

In any case, Abubakar's pleasures were not sophisticated, and his greatest pride
was in his school house winning the cricket trophy. In his last year at college
his principal, now Tom Baldwin who had succeeded T S Phillips in 1932,
made an attack on the cultural barriers that still existed, and arranged that a
younger married couple should have the senior students in to tea. Mabel and
Tony Shillingford gave this first tea party, the first time that most of the lads
had ever found themselves talking socially to a European woman. They had
often met and greeted each other before, naturally enough; it was the mannered
informality of the English practice that was strange. Twenty-five years later,
when A A Shillingford was inspector-general of education for the federation,
the newly appointed prime minister wrote to him and recalled that he had eaten
on that occasion 'a wonderful sweet called *Hundreds-and-Thousands*', spread
on bread and butter, which he had never tasted since. He also retained over

those years a remarkable capacity for mimicry of Katsina's British teachers, who had also included Eric Mort and E E Nicolson, particularly the more mannered of them.

In 1933, his last year, one of the new boys was an Abdurrahman Mora, of whom he took some notice. Formal written examinations were now introduced for the first time, as part of the scheme to attempt the levelling of standards between northern and southern Nigeria. Until then a general assessment of work and effort was agreed by the combined teaching staff over the whole of the student's time at college, and certificates awarded accordingly: under 50%, a failure; 50-75%, third class; 76-93%, second; 94-100%, a first. Abubakar received a third class certificate, doing best in English, despite having set his hopes on history and geography because he hated maths. His friends cannot remember that anyone had ever been given a first class pass. In any case, they chose him, a *talaka*, to make the speech at the farewell *wasu*, or celebratory feast. One of the junior boys in the first form who heard him from the outer edges was a Zaria lad, Nuhu Bamalli.

He returned home at a time of change. The slump had led to a shortage of currency. Since recruitment had stopped, the administration had been reduced, and taxes had been cut as well as the salaries already mentioned (10% generally, 20% for some); but an income tax and a capital levy were introduced. A real cash limit meant less public expenditure, the greatest damage being to the staffing of the education programme, in which Lagos and Kaduna shared comparable responsibility for priorities. Threatened with virtual abolition, the agricultural department hurriedly found new interests in the northern bush and pressed for more mixed farming, and the geological survey department diversified into well-sinking. All this was because a new governor had arrived back in Lagos, Sir Donald Cameron from Tanganyika. The traditions of 'indirect rule' were also under attack. Cameron thought, like some other outside analysts, that a Lugardian style of administration had come in lesser hands to mean that quasi-Indian pseudo-princely states ruled by feudal monarchs were sheltered from awareness of the outside world, and from having to come to terms with the increasingly Christian south. Although those Aba troubles had directly arisen from the belief that women were to be taxed, they could be traced back laboriously by other analysts to the Wall Street crash in America and to the slump in vegetable oil prices. Nevertheless they had perhaps led Cameron to see imposition of authoritarianism where it had not in fact had to be imposed, for example in those parts of the north where Islam was not in fact wholly the way of life. Certainly he overestimated the powers of a small administrative cadre to improve social and economic conditions without real wealth to invest, and he was blind to the real reluctance of parents in the north to send boys to school.

Cameron took judicial powers away from residents in charge of provinces, and extended the presence of the high court, whose judges did not always talk the language or understand the ways of all the different peoples. He caused the downgrading of the lieutenant-governors in north and south to chief commissioners, which thereby ceased to be 'Buckingham Palace appointments'. He did so mainly (so those close to him maintained) because he resented the discovery that the Hausa translation still did not differentiate between governor and lieutenant-governor – but *gwamnan Kaduna* inevitably remained the common parlance, rather than *cifkwamishinan arewa*. He also retitled the Central Secretary (the office he had once himself held under Lugard) as Chief Secretary to the Government, and created a true central secretariat

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to try to control policy and its execution in the hitherto rather self-energizing provinces. He introduced minor penal reforms, some of which caused as much disrespectful mirth as amelioration. Not all Cameron's innovations, which pleased many anxious for progressive change, were approved in high places. When the governor recommended the reprimand and even dismissal of certain officers connected with the Aba riots, Lord Passfield was secretary of state (he was the Fabian, formerly Mr Sidney Webb, who had endorsed the philosophy of the 'dual mandate' in a white paper on the paramountcy of native interests whenever developing the resources and prosperity of all of a territory's inhabitants). He closed the colonial office file with a red minute:

If anyone needs to be dismissed, it is the Governor - Sir D Cameron.

P.

This did not save one district officer concerned, whose own peers judged him to have acted fairly in very difficult circumstances but who was criticised in the official report, from shooting himself in his obsession with the apparent injustice after being posted to a remote 'one-man station'. However Cameron showed caution in beginning to reverse the process of placing pagan tribes under the control of Muslim district heads, although examples were to remain in Bauchi emirate, notably the hill Jarawa and Abubakar's Lere neighbours, the Seyawa, into the 1950s. This mainly centralizing wind of change only blew very gently in Bauchi town, though it stirred the file pages in the resident's little mud office; and it was quite unfelt in Tafawa Balewa. Lagos was still another world entirely, and life's set courses were still where they had been, to be followed by the sons of Adam wherever The Creator had placed them.

3 Malam Abubakar: Nearly a Novelist

Tsakuwa ɗaya ba ta dabe

Many a famous man has only triumphed and met his destiny after long years of 'slaving in the galleys', unrewarded, unrecognized and not even certain that his own conceit of his worth had any foundation. Abubakar never once thought of the next twelve years as his galley years. They fulfilled his felt purpose in life. He came home and was appointed to be a teacher at the Bauchi middle school. The vacancy had been created in the native treasury estimates on the assumption that he would pass, despite the economic troubles of the time – even had he failed, he would still have been employed, but paid at a lower rate. The next year native authority teachers' salaries in the northern provinces were reviewed, and uniform scales laid down: those who had held certificates from the higher college were placed on £4 a month during a probationary period of one to three years, and after confirmation *might* receive £5 a month. Those with elementary certificates got £2, and once confirmed were eligible for £3 *if possible* – it was recognized that the poorest native treasuries might not be able to afford so much. Failures were given no more than thirty shillings a month, for at least three years. More than a generation would pass before it would be accepted that native authorities could only expect to employ competent people if they paid them competitive rates, although central government junior service salaries were not yet substantially greater. Besides, every pressure was in the direction of working less expensively in one's home area.

This was, it must be said, a society where virtually everybody, from the district heads and chief officials to the school labourer, did some farming on a patch granted and perhaps sublet under a system that was tenurially feudal while lacking the strictly military aspects of European feudalism. It was still arguable whether it was the cash economy or subsistence that prevailed among the local official class. They found their own housing, normally on a site granted by the emir or district head, and often built the compound themselves with the help of family and neighbours, to keep down the costs of mud or *zana* mat outer walls, mud-brick huts, roof trusses and thatch, and the floor-beating. Windows were small holes in the walls, sometimes enjoying rough wooden shutters. Even the small numbers of central government employees from the south (mainly clerks and posts and telegraphs operators living in quarters maintained on crown land by the public works department and paying arbitrary but subsidized rents to central government) would reasonably hope to be shown favour by the native authority and be allotted a small plot to farm somewhere.

This may be compared with the 'senior service' (the British officers working for central government), who on first appointment at this time as graduates earned £30 a month. From this sum, and without a farm, they could somehow pay not only their taxes and the 'iniquitous capital levy', but their cook as well,

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a steward, 'small boy', and a labourer to keep the garden and compound tidy. Then there were their local and imported food bills (no doubt including a crate of beer and a bottle or two of spirits), and the monthly instalment in settlement of the debt to their tropical outfitters in London who financed the necessities for each of most officers' successive eighteen months' tour of duty in the west African colonial service (including the older officers' wives' sea passages). Indeed, if they spent most of their time on touring and earned the five shillings a night travelling allowance, they might even save for home leave. In areas like Bauchi which were free of the tsetse fly, the horse allowance, if prudently laid out without ambition to cut a dash on the polo field, would normally cover the cost of feed and the groom, and possibly also the monthly instalment of refunding the government advance to buy the horse and the saddlery. At least the British and the Nigerian had this in common - that they were always in debt to some authority. Some missionaries escaped taxation on the last £100 of their income by being paid, legitimately, £99.19.11³/₄d.

Abubakar quickly shed any remaining aspects of a twenty-one year old schoolboy, and his naturally solemn dignity made his entry into the schoolroom as 'Malam Abubakar Tafawa', the new class teacher, a straightforward and undramatic change. The school was built under the south-west shadow of Kobi hill, a granite outcrop round which Bauchi town had been built, easy to climb and less severe than most of the rocky features of the emirate, though not so smooth and symmetrical as the dome back in Tafawa Balewa. Malam Abubakar was given a staff quarter that had been his old teacher Baba Sidi's, so that he need never be far from call, but like most of his colleagues he saw the dangers in 'tied cottages' and made early plans to establish his own compound elsewhere in the town, on the road to the Ran gate. He renewed friendship with his other old elementary teacher Muhammadu Dangikka, who was now a visiting teacher.

Like most of his peers with an assured living, he also wasted no time in getting married. By the time six months had passed, on 16 September, he gained a wife Hafsatu, whose father Malam Halilu was a Fulani scholar of a Bauchi family and had become *alkali* (Islamic court judge) at Ari in the Ningi chiefdom. It was a very traditional but very happy union. Before the end of 1933 Hafsatu, known to some as Zainab, was with child and on 28 August 1934 a daughter A'isha was born, forever to be known and loved as 'Talle' (Hausa for 'orphan'), the child who more than any was to take after her father. The birth was tragic, almost doubly so: Hafsatu died, and in the uproar and misery of the event the child was forgotten, only to be found in the afterbirth and cared for just in time. The loss of his first wife may have affected Malam Abubakar even more deeply than at first seemed natural. Although his affection for his later wives and his children (who were ultimately to be many) was very real, he was never to be regarded by many of his friends and colleagues as being altogether the complete family man; his work was always to come first, for duty rather than enjoyment, and when thankfully he could find a strong enough excuse to break away, more and more it was to be to his farm rather than to his family compound that he would turn to let the tensions slacken. The next six marriages, contracted under the aegis of the *ajiya*, with whose house he remained linked, were to end variously in Muslim divorce, registered before the *alkali* after the court had made formal efforts to reconcile the parties. A'ishatu was the first, followed by Husaira, Matar Malam (known as Fatima), Tasalla, Kande and Kabo.

None could have effaced memories of Hafsatu, all the others found proper relations with a senior wife difficult to form, and to some degree none proved

the right stepmother for the well-loved Talle. Over the next ten years all six departed. There was no question of instability or personal clashes, but those who know the importance of succession in the male line will understand. It was not an uncommon experience, and as private domestic business was not matter for observation or particular comment. It is unlikely that the two British superintendents of education in Bauchi station, sharing duties between the Kobi middle school, the Yalwa teachers' training centre and touring inspections of village elementary schools, would ever have much reason to hear about a junior teacher's family concerns; still less would the district officer, R S Davies, or the touring ADO, John E B Hall, to whose office meetings in the 'government residential area' outside the town Malam Abubakar would occasionally cycle, risking the tails of his gown in the spokes of his wheels; nor would the provincial superintendent in charge of all education staff who at this time lived at Toro, 96 kilometres westward on the road to Jos, in the non-Muslim 'vernacular' teachers' training centre. Mr B A Babb, the superintendent who spent most of his time at Kobi between 1931 and 1937, gave Malam Abubakar a shilling an hour to coach him in his own house for the intermediate standard Hausa examination, and would sometimes enter his tutor's *zaure* or porch-hut, but it was not mannerly custom for those who were not family intimates to expect to go further into a Muslim home.

It was Burland Babb who first had the experience so often to be shared by others (though such stories improved in the telling) of showing a visitor round the school while English was being taught by Malam Abubakar, and of listening outside the classroom door while the stranger uttered surprise that there was another European on the staff. Malam Abubakar had bought his own hand-mirror out of his £4 salary and was following Gerald Power's method of making his pupils copy his tongue and mouth movements, and using phonetic instead of the mysterious Anglo-Saxon dictionary spelling to begin with. He taught the 'Remove'. This was the name given to the entry class in which children from the elementary schools, where they had conscientiously not been taught to see their future as separated from village life, were now first brought to realize that henceforward an unaccustomed standard of discipline, concentration on learning, and purposeful recreation were to separate them from their fellows, but also to raise their aspirations and prospects. Although most of them would not join the true élite and go on to college, something of Katsina's English public school atmosphere of spartan conditions, emphasis on excellence and rapid chastisement for avoidable failings, rubbed off on the middle schools. This made the use of the word 'Remove', otherwise unlikely to be known in Bauchi except perchance in some Thackeray novel on an official's rickety bookshelf, not wholly ridiculous.

Malam Abubakar's single-mindedness left the impression on the British officers who first knew him at this time that he was a loner with few close friends. But being new and inexperienced, and aware that the boys recognized this too, he did not feel that he could afford to relax in the presence of school company. He preferred to occupy himself with improvement of the history and geography which he now taught as subsidiary subjects, and he started to read about the medieval traveller Ibn Batuta, who had passed through the whole of the western Sudan (though not the Hausa states). History was a double period which started lessons on Wednesdays, and was the subject which most of the boys preferred to have from Malam Abubakar. He would come in, check that the classroom was spotless, and begin in a loud, clear voice that sometimes echoed from Kobi hill behind. They liked this because they credited him with

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choosing the syllabus, which covered west African and Muslim history, using Hogben's *Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria* for local detail, as well as 'English' (or rather western world) history from a standard short text. He spoke more quietly in his geography and English language and hygiene lessons, but his energy and alertness ensured good order because enough of the boys were reasonably keen to learn without threat of punishment - at least, that is what they said later. He had some favourites, like every normal teacher, and made them earn his praise: a class monitor Aliyu Abubakar would collect the exercise books from his house after marking, and would be glad to go down to the market to buy cigarettes for him (he preferred the local *Pirate* brand to the even cheaper *Bicycles* or *Motors*); later his ward Adamu from Tafawa Balewa would clean and light his hurricane lamp for his evening studies, and then wait in the shadows in hope of conversation; boys respected him, but did not find him as remote as did the adults.

Not long after Malam Abubakar returned home, the chief commissioner came to perform the formal opening ceremony of the new hospital built, as recorded in the last chapter, in exchange for the Yalwa ETC. Sadly, the hospital was occupied by very few patients, and the medical officer was at his wits' end to prove to His Honour that his medical skills were appreciated and that the scarce funds allocated for his equipment were justified at a time of recession. The doctor appeared in the middle school at the last minute and appealed for substitute bodies to fill his beds, and Malam Abubakar played a full part in mounting a successful deception. The distinguished visitor did not remark on the young and fit and admirable fitness of so many patients. This story was one that Abubakar was to repeat, shaking with laughter, for the rest of his life, sometimes innocently refuting the belief of ill-informed hearers that he had little sense of humour.

Malam Abubakar certainly showed little interest in politics at this time. Nigeria was about to enjoy its first small budget surplus after seven successive lean years of deficit, which had discouraged too much confidence in the risks of radical change. However the makama of Sokoto, Malam Muhammadu Sani Danqadi, visited a tour in 1933 by going round the middle schools of Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and Zaria, the true houses of northern Muslim conservatism, going against what criticized hereditary systems of rule. He said that the politics of the future could only come through party organization, without overlooking the concerns of economics and constitutions that might be offered. Sir Baerns was not yet to be stirred in this direction. Instead Malam Abubakar showed a new keen which blossomed once and, sadly, was never repeated.

Fuqer East, who had an artistic Fulani wife, was the superintendent of the literature bureau that had been set up in Zaria by the education department, to provide something for the new group of literates in romanised Hausa to read. He decided to hold a competition for Hausa authors. Some entrants volunteered, others were invited. The first prize was won by a future wali of Katsina, Malam Bala Kagere, the 'chaplain' from the higher college, the second to an another Malam Abubakar Imam who was to succeed East as chief promoter of Hausa reading matter, and the third by Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Only five volumes in all were published from this contest, being a response text, including a halfpenny royalty for the author. To write Shamsi Umar was something unusual, which boyhood had offered no incentive to attempt such a thing. The schoolmaster never found opportunity to write fiction again, but it showed better than any human memory the mature sensibility of

this young man and the values of his world. Most of these standards were to change little in the next thirty years, greatly though his world was to grow and shift.

The story of Shaihu Umar's romantic travels is centred firmly on his abiding love for his mother. Shaihu's Islamic education and character, his humanity and acceptance by the community as a 'mallam', all suggest an unwitting self-portrait of the author's. The novella idealizes Hausa family life, and is set against a western Sudan background in which remote and shadowishly defined Europeans are progressively establishing their rule over the whole familiar world, from the Turkish caliphate through Egypt to the lands once known as Mali and Songhai, and the Mahdi is raising his banner against Egyptian dominion in the Sudan. There is a wicked brother who steps into the shoes of a worthy ruler, but who in the end is redeemed and keeps his royal place. The intrigue and despotism of élite courtly life is described dispassionately, almost as a system that has evolved naturally in humanity without consciousness of any deliberate evil. The slave traders are not drawn as vicious creatures but as typical humans, sometimes indifferent to the feelings of others, sometimes capable of thoughtfulness. Slavery is a fact of life, accepted as part of the society described, without emotional distortion through outsiders' spectacles; Islam enjoins kindness to slaves, and encourages their manumission. The position of women is as clear; they have a duty to accept the authority of their husbands, and to mother their children, with the help of their female relatives and household friends, but they never lose their own dignity and personality. Children are weaned after two years, and the first one is then brought up by the father's own mother. The tale succeeds in natural mention of such high points in everyday life as a birth, a wedding, the bride's departure three days afterwards for her new home, a funeral, the fostering of a child, an attack by raiders, events at a chief's court, some magic, some ritual among pagans, descriptions of nature in the wild, and a sandstorm.

The lesson for the reader from all the hardships described must be to guard against the historical fallacy – that where the reality of the environment and of the inherited culture make pain or wretchedness unavoidable, it is pointless to look for culprits to blame, whether for their conscious sadism or their aimless cruelty, still less to rail against the fact of a society, established under God and honouring His Prophet and His Law. Even the worst villains can earn forgiveness. Even innocent caravans perish in sandstorms. People submit to their environment, the environment does not form their characters; love is instinctive, or it cannot be taught. Such compassionate practicality informed an excellent teacher, who worshipped his Maker and who loved his mother. It would one day be seen as weakness by rivals and critics who were at once more brutal and more ambitious.

Meanwhile the short novel, put on sale in 1934, reflecting its writer's personality and inherited identity so well, slowly went out of print, although it was later serialized in the Hausa newspaper *Gaskiya* at a time when the literature bureau was finding material to fill space in short supply. It was largely forgotten until the days when other hands would exhume it as research evidence, and also anglicise it and convert it into effective stage and film entertainment. The facility with written language which it showed was continued throughout his life, increasingly in English as well as Hausa, through lengthy letters which (unlike most Hausas' correspondence) held much more solid fact, considered opinion and pointed questioning than ritual formulas and greetings. But the time was not yet come for the questioning to go beyond

understanding why things worked the way they did, and how they might be managed. No more than Shaihu Umar was Malam Abubakar ready to challenge Allah's evidently declared will for the scheme of things. As for the Novelist who Might have Been, it must not be forgotten that although Rupert East's competition brought to light some names that would have become distinguished in northern public life in any event, it did not result in either a literate public demanding Hausa fiction or a stable of writers devoted to a strange art form. Verbal artistic expression remained the work of the market or of feast singers, in other words of illiterates. Written poetry would come, but as an élitist, often a political, practice.

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4 The Junior Teacher

*Ruwa da ya isa kurme,
da faɗawa cikinsa an sani*

The international events of the next few years set movements in train which present-day readers of a historical mind may reckon have yet to come to rest. Industrial and inventive leadership began to shift away from Europe, to the United States in the first place (when Britain could boast three thousand domestic refrigerators and 1.7 million private motor cars, America now had two million and 19 million respectively, for only three times the population). The predominance of Britain (and implicitly also of France) in Asia and Africa received its first significant challenges. The very far-sighted might have deduced from these that it would not always be London's sole prerogative to recognise this or that colony, protectorate or mandated territory as ready to join Iraq, say, in the family of self-governing nations – let alone a Paris decision that La France should boldly ignore the physical gap in space and time and absorb a distant land, people and culture into her own self-conceit. The League of Nations, more and more deprived of the world's most important voices, might be said to be compounding the anthropomorphic error of 'one sovereignty, one vote' with the delusive notion that specific moral judgments were self-evident and, because universally right, therefore bound to prevail. Control of disease and public health measures began to spark off population growths that would not everywhere be contained by equal growth of newly found or created resources. The opening up for international exchange of information, belief, effort and material of the last closed jungle and mountain cultures coincided ironically with the explosion of religious doubt. The prospect of a world uniting in a single revealed spiritual belief retreated, even as the desirability of a synthetic, unitary political system, within which to seek the good of all, seemed more and more questionable – except to a minority within each existing system.

Seen from Bauchi (where few people outside the British circle had access to wireless news or regular newspapers), whenever vision might rarely be lifted from the local imperatives of harvest, worship, family loyalty and official intrigue, the important movement was the rise of Hitler. Although Churchill, voicing his warnings of the growing menace of German airpower, was yet to mean anything to Nigerians, the memory of Germany, as the enemy defeated a mere sixteen years before, was still fresh. Nobody saw any connexion between the approaching restoration of economic activity in slump-stricken Britain and the reluctant beginnings of rearmament; but the fear that another war might have to be fought in foreign parts, for the same vaguely understood reasons as once before, communicated itself from the British to educated Nigerians. Colonial servants were most likely to see, as something that must be resisted,

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the threat of authoritarian domination to what they believed to be their beneficent administration of less fortunate people.

These views were seldom resisted by the Bauchi élite, who had little evidence at hand to suggest any other view. Memories of those who had known German rule in Kamerun were mixed: tough old men were not averse to admitting that they had respected those legendary Germans who clearly stated their intentions without always troubling to offer justification, carried them out to the letter, and exemplarily punished any who stood in their way. Such legends reinforced the Teutonic reputation for harshness; they also disturbed the British by the implication that certainty, one way or the other, might be preferable to the nagging doubts about its ultimate purpose that enshrouded many a British administrative novelty. There was no doubt that northerners saw caprice in the seeming inconsistencies of individual British officers' awards of justice, mercy or forgiveness. In such comparisons an element of caricature was usually present, often intentional. It is hard to suppose that many would have preferred to have been ruled by the Kaiser, and it is certain that the prospect of Hitler strengthened the tolerant acceptance of the resident, the district officer and the provincial superintendent of education among the abiding half-certainties of life in the thirties.

By the time that the Italians had invaded Ethiopia, the Germans had reoccupied the Rhineland, and the war between Japan and China had broken out, Malam Abubakar was one of the essential elements in the Bauchi middle school. The roll in the earlier 1930s reached 120, and the first class IV (including Aliyu Abubakar) passed out in 1934. He was slightly junior to the man who was to be his friend and confidant to the moment of his death, another Abubakar known as Garba Mañin Madaki, the housemaster of Madaki house; Malam Garba had a more diffident manner, a lighter sense of humour, and an awareness of the limitations of man-made institutions. He also knew the vulnerability of everyday mortals in the face of determined characters, whether the challenge were based in spiritual pride or in selfish ambition. Throughout their lives together these two discussed ever-again 'G K M' (as the NA file minutes were initialled), the actor of the district head's house of Ganjuwa, who placidly accepted as of right not with an amusedly sceptical air his own gradual progress up the native administrative tree of preferment, and 'A T B', the able nobody who found responsibilities given to him without his seeking them and shouldered them without a murmur. The advice and comfort that Malam Abubakar looked for from no one else in all his crises of human relationships for more than thirty years were accorded until the very last days, but were to be important in keeping him from floundering. The other two housemasters at this time were Malam Husam, Deare of Wembel house, and Malam Mamudu Zayam of Sarkin Yaƙi house. Malam Mamudu was the senior man, but by the time that war came Malam Abubakar was soon become housemaster of Galadima house, and was effectively recognized as the headmaster's chief assistant. Malam Fate had taught Malam Husam subjects, bolstered by Bauchi's chief alkali, Malam Sambo, and Malam Abubakar indirectly learnt more about Islam from them.

Malam Husam, Malam Sarkin Yaƙi ('chief in war') and Galadima ('prince master') were, like Ajiya, were traditional titles held by district heads in existence all over the country. School discipline was mainly exercised through the house prefects, who were in danger of developing into bullies if their fathers were not 'natural rulers' themselves. It was the headmaster, Malam Sa'adu Gumbi, who was expected to concern himself with such things

generally. Malam Abubakar's personal interests were more academic, and as yet he rarely came into touch with the emir or the NA hierarchy. By the time that war was declared he was also teaching in the top class, so that some boys who had met him in the remove were happy to face him again across their desks in their last year. Meanwhile new educational initiatives were being taken close by. In 1935 the emir of Bauchi ('Yakkers of the Red Beard' to disrespectful junior British officers) had been persuaded by a contrived visit to Kano that girls' education was acceptable – but they would have a chaperon in their own building, and there would be no co-education: it was still inconceivable that normal children of either sex who had passed puberty could associate with the other and remain chaste. Prevention through separation was effective and unoppressive, so long as nobody was educated to question it. The many parents who had residual doubts resisted any blandishment to offer their daughters for education at all.

By 1937 Bauchi candidates were being sought for a residential girls' school in Sokoto, and naturally they came out of this special class, which was officially being treated as a great success. £5,000 were put into the native treasury estimates to rebuild the middle school itself. Parents' committees began to be formed for each school, although it required great faith to detect increased support for teachers or effective paternal influence on pupils from their deliberations. The PSE, H R Phillips, had been pressing that the provincial school committee, which consisted of British officials, chiefs and *alkalis*, should discuss community education; at last he managed to include the middle school headmaster and the senior visiting teacher, but for several years more these two never attended those meetings at which the resident was sufficiently interested to be present. The PSE moved back into Bauchi from the Toro training centre, which was now serving many other provinces that had pagan populations, and was ready to become a government-run institution; two circumstances helped to make this move desirable – the elementary training centre at Yalwa had itself become more important, serving the whole of the Muslim north since the closure of the Katsina centre in 1936 (that proposed for Bida was never opened); and although the middle school's administration was normally left sufficiently to itself to survive a hiatus between two British superintendents officially posted as 'in charge' during 1937, there were doubts about the practicality of the hierarchy that actually ran it at this time.

In fact the organization was an interesting example of the inconsistencies of indirect rule. The school was undeniably a Bauchi native authority ('NA') institution, and in a sense was the emir of Bauchi's property since he was in corporate person the sole native authority named in the letter of appointment issued and signed by the governor under the native authority ordinance. At the same time it was a general native administration (also abbreviated as 'NA') institution, since all the native treasuries in the province contributed to the joint Bauchi-Dass treasury for its upkeep, and paid fees for their boys who attended it. The British superintendent 'i/c', like the district officer (except for the latter's power under ordinance of judicial intervention by review of the native courts system), had virtually no statutory authority to tell anyone what to do. His wishes were technically 'advice', including his comments on the estimates and countersignature of payment vouchers. Yet unwritten convention and experience handed down on both sides generally defined not only the hard and fast areas where the colonial officer as the local authority took unquestioned decisions (his wish being their command), but also the grey areas

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where progressive ideas of custom and culture, and protective ideas of what was comfortably familiar, might beckon in opposing directions.

Like all unplanned human relationships, this mystery worked better in the actual presence of goods, all even with intermittent eruptions of exasperation, than many a formulated body of rules painstakingly negotiated and agreed. This disconcerting fact had not deflected critics who had never been parts of the system from trying to justify their convictions that it was fundamentally wrong. It should also be remembered that when Malam Abubakar was to voice his own opinions, his early experience of indirect rule had been within local education confines. What was truly awkward about the Bauchi middle school around this time was that the local powers were unwittingly anticipating the consensus management theories of a future western generation (which was to be more suspicious of authoritarianism than it would always be of totalitarianism); a relatively new and young headmaster was expected to rely heavily on the advice of his Arabic expert, who was clothed in prestige because of his learning, and also on that of the relatively uneducated crafts instructor, who far outdated them all in length of service. Uncertainty prevailed in this triumvirate, with first Walter Wood and then Dennis Hibbert as superintendents 'i/c' being rightly reluctant to step beyond the grey areas. One welcome acceptance of advice by the emir, after the evidence of two years of seemly school behaviour, was to permit pre-pubert co-education in all elementary schools in place of the separate girls' classes - not only would this allow more girls in, it would allow teaching staff to be spread more widely.

About this time the British colonial administration was distracted by the publication of a perceptive, polemic, but unnecessarily unkind critique of itself by a former junior colleague (*Nigeria*, by Walter Russell, or 'Rusty' Crocker). The book was based very largely on his experience and diary jottings in Bauchi province, and was not backward about scattering clues with which to identify personalities. It was primarily talked down as the work of immature disloyalty, and more readily refuted as rooted in impracticality: all the northern provinces were managed during the slump on about 12s 6d per head of population each year - how could a depleted staff change everything, attitudes ingrained in minds above all, when every single achievement was a miracle of improvisation? Yet the unspoken consciousness that authoritarianism was too great in the public service and the NAs alike, that corruption and untrustworthiness were too rife in the NAs, that the gap between the governor's and the chief commissioners' secretariats in the HQ towns and the residents' provincial administrations in the bush was too wide, and that Britain at home thought too little about what it should do with its empire overseas, ensured that Crocker's publication was widely known, and would be spoken of till long after the second war. Malam Abubakar read it at some stage, but disliked it; the book is no more flattering to Africans than it was to imperial administrators.

A more significant event that year went unremarked in Bauchi. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, still known to many by the baptismal name Benjamin which he discarded, returned to Nigeria. Azikiwe had pursued his studies in the United States, where like so many youngsters working their way through school in the American tradition, in his case at Storer college and Howard and Lincoln universities, he had had brief experiences of being a coalminer, road labourer, liftman and dishwasher. He had then had a fraught spell of journalism in the Gold Coast where he had successfully avoided a charge of sedition. As he told the ex-Malayan administrative secretary in the Lagos secretariat, John

Macpherson, at their frequent meetings, he wanted a senior appointment in the education department. There had always been educated and renowned nationalists in the south, but 'Zik' was to be the first to make any personal impression on ordinary people in the north, and that would not be for another decade. Meanwhile, born at Zungeru in the north to a soldier, and now the Igbo newcomer to Lagos, he joined the well-established old Lagos families, and some more adventurous Yoruba youths from the capital's hinterland, in finding two major hurdles in the way of all of their ambitions. The colonial service had admission standards for the 'senior service' which were now set under regulations made by a secretary of state in London. The theoretical view was that appointees should remain acceptably interchangeable between far-flung territories at experienced stages in their careers. The service did not think of itself as in any way the heir of the insignificant administrations of Lagos Colony or the Oil Rivers protectorate in the buccaneering days of the White Man's Grave, when experienced and worthy Africans had often been heads of technical departments, commercial agencies and churches – there had probably not then been a single possessor of a 'recognized degree' (in other words a 'good second' from a British, certainly not an American, university) among them, black or white. The question raised now was whether Nigerians could expect to hold their own on equal terms with the wily and technically equipped functionaries, diplomats, engineers, scientists, academics and military experts who served the Stalins, Roosevelts, Hitlers, Mussolinis, Blums and Francos of the unforgiving outside world – and the answer which most British officials gave, conscious of their own comparative lack of sophistication in a profession with only a minority intellectual appeal, was that under colonial regulations they could not – yet – although no doubt the day would come.

To most of the British officials it seemed equally self-evident that before that day could come, the education system and economic production would have had to evolve a society able to sustain not only local governments which needed no technical inspiration or advice from central government's officers, but also a central government which could choose its higher servants from as wide a variety and number of Nigerian candidates as did His Majesty's Government in Whitehall from the British universities. The Nigerian administrative service would by then have withered away – as Miss Perham was writing at the time, the British scaffolding would be simply withdrawn when the day came, holus-bolus. So no room was seen in a temporary, alien administrative hierarchy for educated Nigerians, even with a 'recognized' degree: their future should lie in the countless permanent vocations in the professions and native authorities that would not one day be redundant.

It is easy now to question why this view, justifiable perhaps in the context of indirect rule through local governments in the countryside, was taken also of the less glamorous but more comfortable posts in the secretariats which led both to some involvement in policy-making and to possible promotion in the worldwide service. Many more Africans wanted to work in secretariats, even the attenuated ones in the provinces, than to become bush DOs. People live to-day in a world accustomed to governments of all complexions, served by many heavily staffed ministries, all perpetually interfering in their nationals' daily lives. It may not be easy for such a generation to imagine a *laissez faire* tradition – governors and district officers knew that their personal success probably came from not being associated with troubles or stirring up change, but rather from making decisions that were unlikely to encourage a fuss below or to be overturned if challenged above; 'policy' meant interpretation of law,

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...the customary land tenure, soil erosion, ... very seldom touched on anything ... understood. The secretariats were ... they fancied the and the jealousy they ... Even if they had been seen as training ... interventionist civil service, they were ... to produce registry clerks in the ... precedents in the files. They were only ... his personal responsibility for administering ...

... of the Lagos nationalists, many of them ... since 1934, which became the ... An older and more sober coterie ... was that led by Herbert Samuel Heelas ... who had founded the Nigerian national democratic ... the first west African bishop, and ... of Nigeria's first grammar school. He was a ... and saw no reason why others should not ...

... flanked by Dr J C Vaughn (who ... and was later succeeded by Dr Kofu ... born in 1893 and no longer a youth, ... in 1926, and with the help of a young ... the NYM's *Daily Service* from 1938.

... and take precedence in what after all seemed to ... their own country, but this particular barrier was ... Because British officers seemed ... with no prospect of settling like true ... that Nigeria was an amalgam of many ... different creeds, practices and ... a single historical origin; and yet again ... to preserve all customs not repugnant to ... they were no more able to think of it as an ... a federal western Europe ... from imperial Rome. Nigerians could be ... into full membership of a wider family, but ... that peoples in one part of Nigeria would ... from an African from another part.

... has always been that the ... individuals who had ... the emerging partner takes on the religion, the ... the temporary dominant, and finds new ... the remaining differences become irritants and ... the British were uncomfortable ... as masquerading as imitation Europeans ... when many of their volunteer or ... by self-conscious ... superficial customs, but not their ... their otherwise largely ... the people of the north would continue to reject ... from southern intellectuals; not ... were seldom more than

tradesmen and clerks whose private loyalties were patently confined to their own extended families, tribal unions and churches, however loyal they might be to their employers. In short, for many years to come, southern nationalists were to feel themselves treated as more foreign intruders in northern Nigeria than the officers of the imperial power. Not surprisingly they blamed the British for encouraging any tendency to division, thereby apparently making alien rule easier. Unhappily for any such facile explanations of frustration, the northerners rarely needed to be encouraged, and in mutual incomprehension all classes closed ranks in revulsion at the southerners' seeming arrogance, contempt for their own ways, and material expectations. As well expect Gaels and Slavs to recognise their brotherhood and embrace each others' institutions. Malam Abubakar shared the cultural rejection of the typical 'Mister Johnson' (the exemplar in Joyce Cary's great novel) to the full, and so also by extension the 'Zik' he had never yet met.

It is worth looking back at Tafawa Balewa to see an example of how Malam Abubakar's new classes were now prepared for selection. An ajiya appointed in 1934 had come to grief within two years, for peculation of tax and misdirection of village heads' salaries. His younger brother Umaru, who had been Muslim DH Angas in pagan Pankshin division until the Cameron reforms, succeeded him, and it was decided that he should set up again in the former headquarters of Tafawa Balewa. With the return of a new ajiya and an alkali in 1937, it was time to have a rebuilt Muslim school in the south of Bauchi emirate once more; Sudan Interior Mission schools already existed in one or two pagan districts, but they were administered from the Jos plateau. Now only the simplest uniform was allowed, of sleeveless jumpers and short knickers. The teacher in charge was expected to take two or three classes unassisted (the usual opening pattern was to alternate yearly between forms 1 and 3 and forms 2 and 4, with new entries every other year); to give simple medical treatment to the children, and to the villagers; to organize adult classes if locally acceptable; to run both wet and dry season vegetable gardens, as well as a school farm (from which sometimes a teacher would profit more than the children, and so fall from grace); to know two or three crafts (some even to instruct in simple carpentry); to give practical expression to village sanitation, and other community work; and to keep his records of attendance, marks, punishments, visitors and complaints accurately. There was even the threat of having to cope in the future with double sessions. No wonder that when 'community development' or 'group-organization social-work' were introduced as innovations in later post-war years much of it sounded very familiar to older hands. Small wonder too that some village schoolmasters became powerful as they grew older, even becoming district heads, although surprisingly many remained content with the relationships they built upon. One such who retained dignity and civic respect was Malam Abubakar's old playmate from Yalwa primary schooldays, Malam Muhammadu Babban Mutum, who was transferred to Tafawa Balewa at about this time and made a reputation as a worthy successor to Malam Zubairu. Elsewhere six non-Muslim NA schools were opened, not to leave all initiative to the missions.

Meanwhile in distant India a new constitution was introduced in 1937, and the All-India Congress was the most successful party in the elections but refused to play its part in government, insisting on full dominion status as a pre-condition. The Indian empire, since the days of the Honourable East India Company, had been administered quite separately from Britain's dominions, colonies,

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protectionists, mandated territories and other dependencies. It was not only because the economic exigencies of wealth and poverty and population, and the political power of India were so incomparable that Africa's administrators saw their own task as of a different order. Certainly, if India could not yet have been made a nation, how much less, they asked, could a not so vast but more backward conglomerate like Nigeria yet be 'ready'? But in fact India was a different world, and even Malam Abubakar was too conscious of how much he had to know to imagine that Indians might not know far more. Like many of his colleagues, he was a member of the schoolroom to his pupils. For a short time in 1938 he was the head teacher at the Katsina school, relieving Phillips, and was then appointed to the same post with the utmost discretion, how he managed to bolster the school's management, his head teacher in the rickety triumvirate management. Phillips earned his respect for his seniors, and how he used it loyally to his advantage.

The great event of 1938 was not of course Britain's apparent return to the world stage, announced by the launching at last of the Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth*, and the Admiralty's centenary celebration of the great trek, but the installation of H. O. Davies's mainly Yoruba NYM of Macaulay's *Education in Nigeria*. The installation was a landmark, another Abubakar destined to distinction. In 1938 the Katsina college old boys' association was founded, and Malam Abubakar was a prominent member from its Katsina days. There was some discussion about the faults in native administration and of the administration of the provinces, but the debate was unstructured. Before the government moved, not through official discouragement but through the government's and various preoccupations: some years passed before its revival. The year that was most to colour Nigeria's future went almost unremarked. It was the year of the administrative convenience the southern provinces were divided into West and East, with an additional chief commissioner for the province of Eastern Nigeria as well as Enugu. The effective separation was completed in April 1949. This meant promotion for a few senior administrative and departmental officers, and underlined the ethnic differences between the more Yoruba kingdoms of the west and the much more disparate and fragmented Igbo-dominated forest peoples of the east. It also served to underline the apparently monolithic giant of the north as something more different from the south than ever, not least that its components had yet to speak in more than one single voice.

And language and financial difficulty would probably have stood in the way of any thought of dismembering the north in the same way at this time. The vast Christianised or animist areas in the centre of the country had no natural reciprocal access, and still seemed in secretariat eyes only to be administratively viable as dependents on the organized and developing administrative system. Even Bauchi was officially described in an ill-informed Lagos report as 'a multiplicity of small village units without traditional sanction'. But there was no such positive thought of subdivision, and Bourdillon's bisection of the south actually goes without mention in some Nigerian histories. At much the same time the post of financial secretary ('FS') was created, colleague of the chief secretary ('CS' or 'CSG') and attorney general ('AG', or 'HAG' -

Honourable attorney general, so distinguishing him from the accountant general in later nomenclature).

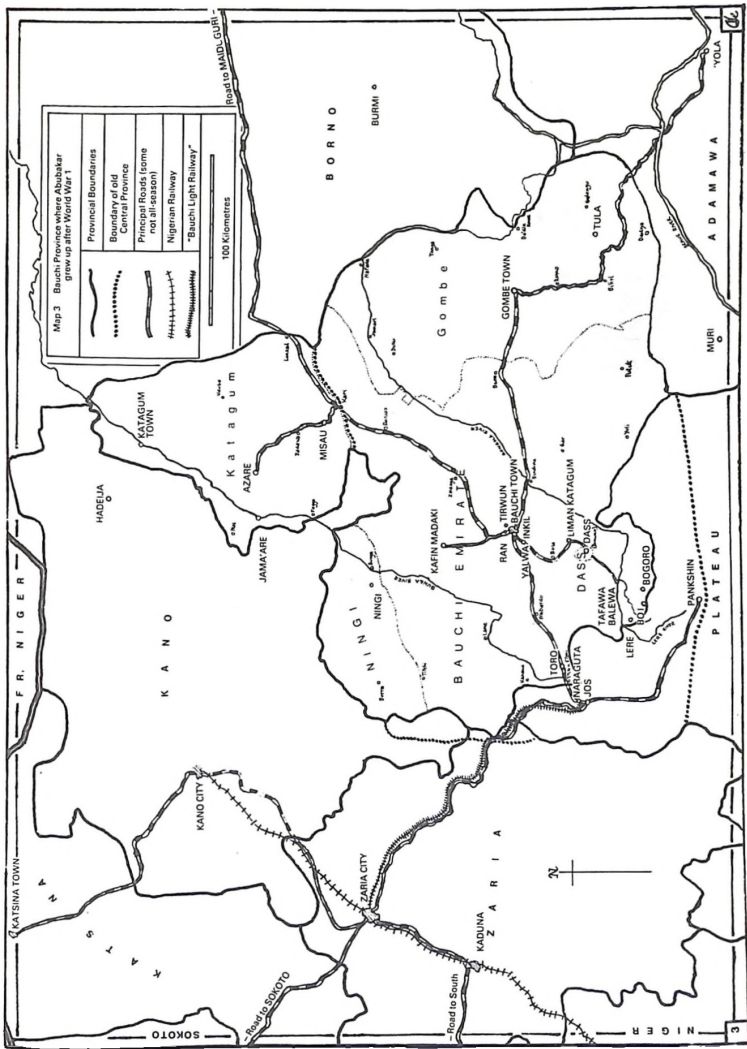
Looking to the future, the emir and chief alkali of Bauchi agreed at a provincial school committee meeting to departmental proposals that forms V and VI ought to be added to Muslim middle school education; and that the time was now ripe to think of post-elementary schooling for non-Muslims not catered for by the missions, since there were now fourteen non-Muslim NA schools in Bauchi province teaching up to class 3 – the Toro centre's production of non-Muslim teachers was growing, and the only suitable middle schools for pagans were far away in Benue and Kabba provinces. Not that they wished to disturb pagan social structures by turning out middle II boys with no jobs to go to, and they counselled caution – perhaps the Toro training centre might develop a higher elementary school in parallel? The sensitive will note that as the term 'pagan' became embarrassing and obsolescent, it was overtaken by the tendentiously Islam-centred 'non-Muslim'. But the war put paid to all these progressive thoughts, just as the first war had frustrated Vischer and the slump had thwarted Hussey.

However all was not well in the Bauchi native authority during these years. While modernity was reflected in the planning of a new 'aeroplane ground' with drains and hard strips to facilitate the weekly airmail delivery from Kano, Yakubu II reigned approvingly over speculation in the native treasury, and most officials in the native administration were in debt to moneylenders. Some owed up to two years' salaries because they had accepted grossly overvalued cloths and other articles from shysters. The chief moneylender, Kwara, had so much influence that the emir wanted to make him his waziri, or chief adviser and senior council member. The British administration frustrated this, and planned with the chief alkali to have any disputed goods truly valued, and fair periodic repayments of the loans organized from salary deductions; but they could not stop Kwara from driving around in the emir's car (for which the NA paid), and only with difficulty discouraged the emir from taking Kwara with him to chiefs' conferences in Kaduna. Such matters never appeared on the formal but unwritten agenda of the meetings which the resident and the district officer held with the emir each Wednesday, alternating between the palace and the residency; they nevertheless took up much of the discussion time, and (depending on which adviser attended and on the emir's temper) became part of the town's gossip.

It did not please Malam Abubakar, by now regarded by his adult colleagues as strict and authoritarian, deeply religious, and a clever deviser of all kinds of punishments that fitted the crimes of naughty boys, yet still by his pupils as an interesting and popular teacher. One new boy was a child who was to play a part in Abubakar's future public and private life, Ahmed Kari. There were 25 boys in the remove, 76 in the rest of the school in 1939 (at this time the 67,000 square kilometres of Bauchi province held a population of one million souls). To his other responsibilities had been added that of school librarian, and he had read almost every book he controlled. He did not know at the time that his name had been on a short list of suitable mallams to become Hausa editor of a proposed new weekly vernacular newspaper for the northern provinces. This was to be *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, (literally, 'Truth is worth more than a penny', a characteristically catchy and proverbial Hausa title, mischievously translated by some as 'truth is preferable to capital'), which first came out in January 1939 under Dr Rupert East's literature bureau in Zaria. But more even

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than of his distaste for local folly and corruption Abubakar was, when the war broke out, sensitive that his higher teacher's certificate was only of the third class, something which little troubled most of his equals. Emotionally he had passed another of life's staging posts: his father, Yakubu dan Zala, died in 1939, leaving him as head of the family with only his mother to remind him of days and ways now long gone



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important country in Africa. It is a unique story of a unique man told
in a simple and readable style.

5 Wartime Awakening

*Allah ya gyara rimi,
cediya ta bar fushi*

When the Second World War was fought, its fortunes and its climaxes flared, and it was in the end won, in places remote from Bauchi. Romantic (or perhaps idealistic) newcomers to the west coast of Africa would willfully ignore the deafening and thunder from the Sahara as stage effects from the ongoing drama of the desert campaigns in the far north-east. It made them unconscious of being part of a 'phony war' which dragged out for months long after the blitzkrieg through Norway, the low countries and France to an end to the civilian finger-crossing that had deluded the masses in the first winter and spring. But already Germany and Russia had surrendered; Poland, the three Baltic states had ceased to appear on lists of free nations whose independent freedom might be asserted by any third power; and Finland's distant and heroic attempt to face the soviet Goliath with the much more than slings, stones and snow-shoes had intermittently reminded the international world that even a just war required that good, even unique, individuals should face sacrifice. The war's effects on Nigeria, and on places like Bauchi, have frequently been described in terms of liberating or liberalizing influences on the country's leaders; but few of those who were to essay such tasks, and fewer still of the leaders, ever themselves risked contemporary soldier's sacrifice, whatever discomforts they might have witnessed or heard of at second hand.

In 1941 all the wartime replacements and reinforcements were 'specially selected for service with native troops in a tropical climate'. The selection of officers in time of war inevitably lost the old (and mostly unjust) overtones of finding opportunity for those who could not afford the mess bills and social demands of their home regiments to recoup honourably in an unhealthy posting, where recreation would be cheap and the human challenge to those who had served for their men rewarding. Once General Sir George Giffard, the general officer commanding West Africa, and his military superiors in Whitehall were agreed that, following the Nigerian and Gold Coast brigades' success against Italians in Abyssinia, British West Africa as a whole should contribute two divisions to south-east Asia, together with such corps and base troops as transport, engineers, anti-aircraft and medical units, and reinforcement, transit and leave camps, then the selection of newly commissioned subalterns quickly became a straightforward matter of matching whole training unit outputs to whole reinforcement shipping convoys. Choice of British NCOs to provide 'native troops' with discipline, weapon and tactical training, and local tactical leadership in action, generally remained more careful in the infantry, where peacetime selection for the colonial forces had been recognized as an honour; but in some of the specialist corps which had grown from a minimal base,

the inability to restrict African postings of British other ranks to those whose experience and character had already earned them at least the stripes of a wartime serjeant led to some problems. The myth spread, not always reaching those who should have quashed it, that a European signaller or lance-bombardier was senior to an African serjeant-major (who, probably being illiterate, would not make an issue of the challenge); and not all the young men who were granted acting unpaid chevrons for administrative convenience on a troopship draft deserved the further paid temporary and war substantive ranks that awaited them on arrival in a wartime colonial unit desperate to fill the vacancies on its establishment.

The war therefore brought reciprocal racial assessments to west Africa; and although the immediate experience was confined to the garrison towns such as Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Kano and the smaller stations close to suitable bush and jungle assembly and training areas, the awareness spread, indirectly at first, to places like Bauchi. As a centre for recruitment and transit to and from leave, Bauchi was required for a while to support a small permanent detachment of troops under command of a single officer with a British NCO, and later a full infantry training centre. Although an occasional full dress visit of a battalion's drum and fife band might be engineered to encourage enlistment and raise civilian morale, the colourful, and by contemporary taste popular and smart, parade uniform of red fez, scarlet and yellow zouave jacket and long khaki puttees had given way to felt slouch hat and calf-length 'long shorts' – the legs were protected against thorns and gravel but feet generally remained bare. Fear of mustard gas had made obsolete the tough traditional open sandals introduced for bush wear from India; the strange substitute 'cownose' boots, designed by a distant ordnance authority to fit what was misconceived to be the average shape of African feet hitherto unaccustomed to socks and footwear, were rejected by most of the soldiers whose unit discipline allowed it (except for the few, usually literates from the south, for whom shoes had by now become a token of self-respect).

There were other distinctions, varyingly subtle: British troops, besides all wearing boots, had collars to their shirts and never wore fezzes, for example (although there was an unsuccessful post-war move to authorise fezzes for officers on the old Egyptian model). But there is one common misconception to shun. It is true that in the second world war African soldiers went to Abyssinia, Egypt, India and Burma, and came home proudly, having shared in victory over Italians and Japanese. They had seen Indians living in apparent squalor and obsequiousness unimaginable at home. Above all they had seen European and American soldiers performing menial, manual tasks and not always behaving with the circumspection and virtue expected in the myth of a self-regarding superior race. They had also been paid more while serving outside their own homelands, their nominated wives (not more than one each) had received regular small allotments, and most had been induced to amass some credit balances of pay to add to their final gratuities. What is not true is that these experiences led at all directly to any upsurge of nationalist and anti-colonial feeling on their return, even though their basic pay had been calculated on their homelands' and India's cash economies and not on comparison with the UK. On the contrary, as in all the most reliable and successful combatant forces in history, what developed was the sense of solidarity in a kind of sexless masculine extended family, that was founded in the platoon and company, and embraced the battalion (or their equivalents in other arms than the foot soldiers); and,

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more often than struggles to wartime service life suppose, there might also be a touching personal equality to the officers and leaders that chance had saddled on them, what was surely commonplace.

Very few African troops who served overseas, and even fewer who saw action, were well-educated men of sophisticated or prominent origins. Very many came from British colonies and nearly all returned to rural or humble urban conditions or their eventual discharge from military service. Artizans, signallers, medical orderlies, craftsmen and clerks occasionally included men whose economic education had begun; some qualified teachers were turned into army schoolmasters, but almost never into riflemen and gunners. By the wars end the cadre of the West African Forces had less than a literal handful of substantial African officers with government's commissions, and of these only the Lord Chelmsford had fought overseas (although some Sierra Leoneans were full commissions in the R.A.F.). There were a few non-combatants, privileged with superior status. Some were the uniformed Class V chaplains, wearing lieutenant's shoulder badges. They messed with the British officers and overcame the mental barrier of classness according to the extent that individuals of the two races were emotionally equipped to adapt themselves - the Nigerians to conventional adult values, who were not usually of the kinds to be found in mission stations or government offices, and the emergency ('hostilities only') officers to black men whose English was not limited to military vocabulary, King James and Doulos bible language, and pidgin. Others were the Muslim imams who wore white robes and reluctantly donned jungle green shirt and trousers under fire; they messed alone or with serjeant-majors because they spoke no English. Imams were specifically neither 'enlisted' nor 'enrolled'; they were employed. None of these religious men played any part in postwar Nigerian political party development.

But even had not a single Nigerian soldier gone abroad in a West African Expeditionary Force, there would still have been an equally wide new consciousness that neither the Europeans so familiar in official offices and trading concerns, clubs and municipal schools and workshops - assured and influential, whether they were steady and instructive, patronising and remote, or arrogant and rude - nor the prostitutes and alcoholics who embarrassed the respectable - other being unenviable tasks in undistinguished places and perhaps gaining tormented reputations as 'characters') were typical British citizens. Psychological salience of hasty judgments brought about an equal postwar reevaluation, not of the dependent empire by a returned UK citizenry, and of the imperial power by nationalist Nigerians; this owed little to early British setbacks in the far east or to African victory in the Arakan, but much to a greater awareness of each other as strangers under stress in Nigeria itself. There, while the neighbouring French colonies remained answerable to Vichy, a handful of younger British administrative officers were spared for emergency military service to border patrol and intelligence work, assisted by a select few local informants. Muhammadu Aminu, the emir of Kano's eldest son and likely heir, was one who wore a soldier's dress of drill uniform in this vocation.

Among the new influences at work in this two-sided reassessment was the substantial presence among the Europeans ('Wallo') of exiled Poles and southern Russians, whose parent nations had a superfluity of officers. The Poles transferred English grammar schools and built high school ideas of duty with a local sense of aristocratic responsibility for peasantry; they also carried the concept of being actually loyal against Germans. The pre-war Rhodesians capoled British recruitment into a realistic adjustment to bush life; they also

moderated the British parade ground distinctions between the cadres of the leaders and the led, hastily learnt in wartime cadet training units (and further confused by local social practices resting on a civil service order of precedence); they brought the British to a full realization that educated European and uneducated African skills could support each other to mutual advantage in rough circumstances. In such ways cultural and personal relationships became more complex during the war. Not surprisingly, when peace returned the new generation of expatriate newcomers to civilian life in west Africa was to include many who had formed their opinions of the land and its people through sharing exotic and belligerent novelties with them, and who wanted to continue such happy experience.

Civilians in towns like Bauchi were only affected by the war in so far as they had become accustomed to imported luxuries. Stocks of imported cloths fell (to the benefit of the emir's favourite Kwara) and traditional local weaves maintained their position against purely fashionable tastes, while simpler styles of dress prevailed and were patched and made to last longer. Food, if one ignores a small black market and the informal rationing schemes of the importing firms guided by the Lagos secretariat, became a matter of living off the country for the British outside the army as much as for the Nigerians. Torch batteries, still a rare luxury in villages, became unobtainable except where military canteen supplies created the black market. Alcoholic drinks, limited in supply, came increasingly up a safer shipping route from unaccustomed sources in south Africa. Tours of duty in undermanned posts became longer. For most of the war there were only seven education officers in the whole north, and at one time the senior education officer in Bauchi found himself also in charge of Borno province. Those expatriate officials who had no true need to go to Britain for leave were encouraged to take the less dangerous passage to south Africa, where many wives were progressively evacuated for the duration of the war. There were casualties nevertheless as a majority of the Elder Dempster shipping company's fleet was sunk one by one, by submarine or mine, in or on the way to convoys in the western approaches. Many a voyage between a British port and Freetown in Sierra Leone touched the Arctic and north America in search of comparative safety from German marine or air attack. But all that has been described in this chapter did not happen at once: while in 1945 it was to be clear that too much had changed for a return to the familiar certainties of six years before, very few of the events that impressed the public were seen at the time to have been individual turning points. Abubakar was conscious of them all.

In 1940 Malam Abubakar was promoted a grade II teacher: this year, while the Dunkirk evacuation of the British expeditionary force from the allied defeat in France filled the news bulletins, was also the occasion of the first colonial development and welfare act to be passed in parliament (by a coalition government); drafted by peacetime Conservatives with the West Indies in mind, it made the break with the centuries-old treasury tradition that colonists should be self-sufficient. Closer to Nigeria was the news first of the Royal Navy sinking the French fleet in Oran, and later of the combined British and Free French failure to occupy Dakar, their battered fleet recouping itself in Freetown. The RWAFF joined the east African campaign while British Somaliland was evacuated. The Indian congress refused to serve on the viceroy's war advisory council. Africa suffered the largest epidemic of yellow fever ever recorded. And this year Malam Abubakar also took some leave and paid his first visit to Lagos. His own record of this is worth some thought, for a number of considerations.

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...the lack of concern for 'primitive' customs in
...government, education, and the consequent emphasis on the
...of the 'primitive' was. He wrote afterwards:

...at all times copy the white man blindly.
...dress which altogether does not suit the climate of
...the educated African
...European dances and
...in big and small ways and he regards any man
...as unprogressive. I could remember
...Lagos in 1940. I asked some of my
...because I had never seen the sea and I
...studying for their diploma at Yaba Higher
...Government hospitals
...European fashion but as for me, I put on large
...with a big turban on my head. My friends did not worry
...and I noticed that people in the streets were looking at
...one Lagos or Southern clerk who was a friend
...and then questioned my friends
...a strange company. He spoke in broken English.
...and he became very much astonished and begged me pardon.
...European dress and said that 'no one' would ever
...because of my costume. Now you can have a picture of the
...producing! I was very much amazed by all that
...I had heard of such a remark. My Hausa friends
...during working
...accept any medicine from them. They said that this
...they had to adopt certain Europeanised 'southern'
...that they were Hausa. These were only
...for independence for the

...tended towards the less flamboyant versions of
...Malam Abubakar never
...to avoid embarrassment in foreign environments by
...European style. To the contrary, like the future Sardauna,
...for example, Scotsmen wore their own native garb on
...presence. The conscious significance to him was that
...distinctions and should not become symbols
...Lagos seen through Hausas'
...work in Bauchi, Katsina and elsewhere. He was
...which had led, as he thought,
...education should not separate children from
...nor reduce girls' fitness for their
...to equipping all children
...it is hard not to see
...of a reactionary, or at least a prig.

...thirty-three years' reign. As ever, much
...to be his heir,
...to development of a

progressive outlook? The new emir, a district head in Fali and Toro since 1913, was proud of his descent from pagan Gerawa, was unashamed that they would have been virtually unclothed, and claimed a sympathetic understanding of the animist tribes under his rule. His fellow Bageri Malam Abubakar accepted the choice as correct in custom, but reserved his private judgment on the man. YaKubu had a warm sense of humour and got on well with British officials. His competence at overseeing production of corn for military needs, at finding amenable recruits for the dangers of the army and the health hazards of the tin mines, and at various fund-raising events in support of diverse war efforts, was more than an indication of where, quite apart from heredity, his weaknesses lay. His succession overshadowed news of the war. Yet the war news included such cheering events as the taking of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the occupation of Madagascar and Syria, and an advance against Rommel in the desert far to the north; there was also the signature of the Atlantic charter, with its equivocal assurance of 'freedom' – did this mean Roosevelt's generous interpretation of 'independence' for constitutional dependencies which were sharing in the fight to fend off enslavement, or did it mean Churchill's more precise picture of the rule of law? In that fight the polyglot origins of the RWAFF led General Giffard in Accra to insist that every African other rank should be taught to read and write English, more effectively to be led by any strange Britishers introduced on the battlefield as casualty replacements: the war office argued that this would be costly, and it is said that a well-meaning lady in the British treasury could not understand why British reinforcements could not be taught to speak 'African'. Among northern Nigerian soldiers nearly all the Europeans continued to learn 'barracky' Hausa, sometimes on pain of being disciplined for frustrating Giffard's aim. Few British officials paused to consider whether northerners' reluctance to learn English (particularly if the British learnt Hausa) was the reason why southerners' attitudes to politics, invariably expressed in English, were so rarely mirrored or repeated in the north – and when they were, why the few northerners concerned were treated as defectors.

The war's atmosphere did not stifle the civilian creation of a local government trades union, the federal union of native administration staff (FUNAS), which aimed to close the gap between central and local government salary scales and to follow John Holt & Co's and the United Africa Company's introduction of pension schemes; despite this its strength in the north remained slight. And then prospects worsened and improved all at once – Germany attacked Russia, which turned from an equivocal non-belligerent into an equivocal ally who shared one enemy; Japan took Hong Kong and swept over the whole British, French and Dutch south-east Asian empires; the loss to the allies of Java, whence came most of the world's quinine, forced efforts to find substitute anti-malarial chemicals, resulting first in atebirin, known to expatriates and all RWAFF soldiers as the 'Mepacrine' which turned their skins yellow. But the United States entered the war, as Roosevelt had always intended. A new dimension of geography had to be quickly learnt and taught, and one of the new boys to be taught was the ajiya's son Adamu, who became Malam Abubakar's ward at school and was accepted as his virtual little brother. A wild child at first, Tiger Phillips promptly forced him into line by demanding in front of the others that he should copy his guardian, not shame him. Loss of face was as important in Bauchi as in the far east. Adamu soon recognized also that others might be self-conscious, and that his 'big brother' Malam Abubakar was working privately to qualify for something better than a third class higher teacher's certificate. It became Adamu's job to light Malam Abubakar's Tilley lamp

at night study, when the previous war restricted supply of kerosene sufficed. Aminaka also gave private tuition in a virtual night school for his own family and dependants of his colleagues, and began to write well-regarded articles in the Nigerian *Teacher* publication, particularly on English grammar, in which he devised new techniques of his own for instruction of Hausa-speaking young students.

6 Wartime Maturity

Rugugi-rugugi babbar dafuwa

1941-42 was an unsettling period for the British administration in Nigeria. The British staff in Bauchi was particularly depleted. Even when the senior education officer did have an assistant, both found their off-duty attention distracted from the needs of the bush schools by the conflicting fortunes of the war. The Indian congress party rejected Sir Stafford Cripps's mission offering terms of self-government in return for co-operation in the war effort against the fascist powers. The British desert army retreated to the edge of Cairo, and then was led forward again from El Alamein, while the new allies from America landed in a scarcely known island of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate called Guadalcanal and began to clear the Japanese from the Pacific, isle by isle.

Yet Nigeria's governor, Bourdillon, looking back on his times in India, Ceylon and Uganda, found the time ripe to agree a ten-year education plan, to appoint two African members to his executive council (as did his colleague in Accra), and to look forward to peacetime change. He caused a conference to be held in confidence at Ibadan, with unofficial participation, which recommended that from two to six African administrative cadets should be appointed, on the identical conditions of qualifications and service as British recruits: the only reservation was that they should only be posted to divisions where the chiefs and people accepted them, and that they should not serve in their home divisions. This last point unwittingly echoed the practice of the Chinese imperial mandarin service, while retaining all cadets in the same position of having no local emotional involvements. The governor followed this suggestion by visiting some of the leading emirs in the north, to encourage the broader development of such a new racial and political point of view. After being told vehemently by the emir of Yauri and others that they would in no circumstances countenance the appointment of African district officers in Nigeria's administration, since inevitably these would be southerners and interchangeable with posts in the north, he shifted ground slightly: granted that although they might still not want to have the people in the south interfering in their northern affairs, yet surely they recognized that northerners ought to have at least an equal say with the southerners in advising the governor on the affairs of the whole country? The governor could not make laws for the north for ever in his sole discretion, with only officials to advise him. Could not regional councils, embodying NA representatives and some elected members, assume the governor's powers of nomination?

The chief commissioner brought the message to Bauchi, and the youthful and progressive emir of Misau composed a song in celebration; but the emir of Bauchi and he both said that they would not sit on the same council as

southerners. Separate northern and southern councils, with a conference of chiefs, and a supreme council to effect co-ordination and compromise with representatives from the north and south, would be acceptable – so long as the governor retained sole power to legislate on religion and custom (including chiefly affairs). So the seed was sown for the effective response to Cameron's suspicions of the NA system. It had seemed to Cameron to have given birth to imitation Indian states, such that they enjoyed a polity quite distinct from the central administrative, landholding and lawmaking processes co-ordinated by the Lagos secretariat. Even he might have found this anomaly comprehensible had the leading emirs been like the maharajas, equally at home at Windsor or Cannes. The main difficulty in getting the seed to germinate was that the policies of the whole country were still to be settled in Lagos, a place which most of the emirs and people of the north never saw, nor were able to imagine, and in which (as has been shown) those few like Malam Abubakar who did see it felt themselves to be, both physically and psychologically, unhappy strangers. The converse applied naturally to the Africans whose homes were in the south, and to some of the Europeans who worked there.

Northerners in the south, and southerners in the north alike, had to learn to adjust to foreign systems of land tenure and to wholly strange processes and sanctions in the native courts – 'native law and custom' was recognized as that practised by the locally effective majority, although some regard was had to individuals' home-grown procedures in regard to, say, division of an inheritance among a family, provided that the local practice was followed in respect of court fees. Europeans were dealt with in the high court or magistrates' courts, since none of the rare, well-intentioned proposals to close this gap was seen as rational. Syrians, Lebanese and other such commercial immigrants were subtly encouraged, especially if Muslim, to submit to the *alkalis'* courts and the *shari'a* law of Islam. It might look absurd to have different systems of law and order, including national and NA police forces, working in parallel side by side, but so long as those in authority and the local majority both thought it was right, there was no conflict and it worked in practice much as it did in international settlements in Tangier or Shanghai. In any case sheer distance, discomfort and expense meant that avoidable journeys for litigation were rare events indeed. Even in Britain, which by the 1940s boasted the best communications in the world, most citizens of London and Glasgow, 640 kilometres apart, seldom if ever saw each others' environment for themselves, however prominent and worldlywise they might be in local public life. Kano and Bauchi were as distant from Lagos as Prague was from Paris, and effectively as remote as Moscow from Madrid.

To reduce northerners' ignorance, Rupert East was desperately trying to increase *Gaskiya's* circulation, despite severe wartime rationing of imported newsprint; distribution agents, mostly NA officials, might be offered commission on sales, but he preferred a quarterly productivity bonus which he called *ladan kokari* (reward for trying). His editor, a progressive ADO Hugh Elliott, was also making much in representations to the secretary northern provinces of letters he was receiving from a few educated mallams such as Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. These correspondents, he said, were not place-seeking, but they were critical of some of the weaknesses in native administrations. They instanced the excessive influence of southerners; the need to expand elementary education before public opinion demanded it; the need for formal and uniform NA conditions of service and 'general orders'; and the need to even out the disparity between rich and poor NAs. They criticized

illiterate district heads, and wanted to be enabled to learn by travelling. There was some reluctance to 'stoop' when greeting their superiors. They were not looking for a 'voting democracy', he reported, but they did want public opinion to be consulted.

Accordingly, so long as the chief commissioner in Kaduna remained the more relevant source of authority, little notice was taken of the disintegration in the national capital of the Nigerian Youth Movement party which was mentioned in chapter 4. The NYM, founded in 1936 by Ernest Ikoli and H O Davies, and invigorated by Zik the following year, had displaced Macaulay's NNDP; but after a difference of opinion in 1940, Ikoli had broken away and won a Lagos by-election. Azikiwe and Davies resigned from the NYM, which came under the leadership of a thoughtful Yoruba who was to practise law, Mr Obafemi Awolowo from Ijebu parts of the west. The original cleavage was quickly interpreted as the inevitable personal rivalry between different branches of the Yoruba people, exacerbated by one claimant having had the support of the easterner Dr Azikiwe and his Igbo followers. Ignoring their differences of birth-place, it was evident even at this time of their youth that 'Zik's political preoccupations lay in the direction of federating the British west African colonies and of radical constitutional reform in all of them; and that 'Awo's intellect looked toward economic development, education and replacement of Europeans in institutions of government, business and the professions.

It was more significant to a teacher in Bauchi in May 1942 that a small but exceptional student from Kano should arrive, keen to carry out his five months' teacher's practical training attachment. Katsina college had moved to Kaduna in 1938, and renamed its houses after Lugard, Clifford (who had opened the college), Dan Hausa (that is, Hanns Vischer) and Malam Smith (Urling Smith, the north's second director of education). E L Mort had always thought the railway junction and artificial administrative capital a baneful place, and was grateful that the war gave an excuse to move it again. The military commandeered his school buildings, and from temporary accommodation across the Kaduna river at 'The Junction' he planned a postwar move to the morally healthier and ancient town of Zaria, where its successor Barewa college now stands. W S de G Rankin had taken the teachers' training class ahead to Zaria, and now he brought them to Bauchi for their teaching practice classes. Aminu Kano was one of them, an aristocrat, a son of the Genawa. His family were learned, pious and clever, and Aminu was never able to forgive the royal family of Kano, that his father was passed over endlessly for promotion from a post of mufti, or judge's adviser and registrar, to alkali in charge of his own Islamic native court. From this time forward a catalytic lifelong relationship of intense mutual respect and disagreement grew up between the well-born rebel Aminu, who attacked ossified tradition and privilege, and the humble but self-confident and pragmatic arriviste Abubakar, who believed that gradual improvement could be drawn out from the worthy aspects of established power.

Next year Aminu returned to Bauchi to join the middle school as a qualified teacher. It soon became clear that innovative political thinking could develop, many miles distant from electricity, tarmac, piped water, the railway or printing presses, in a small rural town where even the dignitaries lived in houses with mud walls. Aminu proved to be a gifted teacher who knew how to keep his class bright and receptive. His second wife was to be a lady descended from Bauchi forebears. He joined Malam Abubakar (who had welcomed him and

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invited him into his home) and a third youthful teacher named Yahaya Gusau, a Sokoto emirate man who had been in Bauchi since 1941, to form a triumvirate of intelligently progressive staff members who had ideas of their own and who did not share most of their British officers' subconscious preoccupation with waiting for the war to be won before anything fresh could be planned. The school museum flourished. Malam Aminu Kano plunged delightedly into scouting, bare knees and all, when the chief commissioner, northern provinces, Sir Theodore Adams came for his farewell visit in January 1943 (Popularly known as 'Adamu', he had been diplomatically transferred from the Malay states in place of Bourdillon's preferred candidate, and spent his years resisting the governor's determination to treat the emirates as subordinate authorities and not as internally sovereign princely states or sultanates). Adams told the acting senior education officer P G S Baylis to start a scout troop with six boys in the remove. Malam Yahaya and Malam Aminu enthusiastically responded to W John Rankine's inspiration and filled the school's life with both spontaneous and scripted theatrical drama, whether schoolboy satire mocking authority, or serious character narrative of the *Shaihu Umar* kind.

Malam Abubakar lent the authority of his approval to all this adolescent spirit, but not so often his participation. Traditionally Hausaland society grouped itself (like the descending Chinese strata, under the dragon emperor, of officials, farmers, soldiers and shopkeepers) into the occupational hierarchy touched on in the prologue. This began with aristocratic rulers by birth (who included Malam Aminu Kano), and was followed in due order by aristocrats by appointment, Qu'ranic teachers, successful merchants and trading farmers, craftsmen, small and less successful dealers, brokers, simple subsistence farmers, blacksmiths, hunters, servants, carriers, musicians, and butchers last of all. Although *boko* teachers claimed an honorary place near the top, and although social mobility was possible and recognized, their family origins were never wholly forgotten. So those with acquired status would be circumspect where an inherited social position might have permitted independent high spirits and even frivolity: gilded youth has always got away with breaking social rules that bind the lowly.

Malam Yahaya had overlapped with Malam Abubakar at Katsina college, but had been one of the first to qualify under the new training policy. Having begun under a generalist régime, he had been faced with the slump which threatened an over-production of teachers, and in 1934 his class was converted into a set that specialized in science and mathematics. In 1936 he was appointed to teach at Kano middle school, where Aminu was in the top class (so closing another loop in the network of 'old boys' who were to hold northern political life together in the years to come); and Aminu in his turn went on to the college to find that his set had been planned to specialize in English and one other subject. In Bauchi this trio was junior both to Malam Mamudu Zayam, who was headmaster Baraya's own original classmate, and to Malam Garba Kafin Madaki; but by now there were few who did not see Malam Abubakar as the leading teacher, assistant head in all but name, despite being the 'loner' with few obvious intimates beyond Garba Kafi.

Shortly before Adams retired in March 1943, Sir Bernard Bourdillon toured the north to impress on emirs and residents the need for English teaching, girls' education and constitutional reform, regardless of Adams's views. In April the governor sent a message to the residents' conference, insisting that the north 'must step down from behind the plate-glass windows through which it surveys

disdainfully the antics of its plebeian neighbour, tuck up its long sleeves, and join in the *mêlée*'.

The formation of the first effective political body in northern Nigeria has been described by enthusiasts so often that its influence can be exaggerated. Some of the postwar network were involved, but it was not a necessary link in the chain of events. Malam Aminu found much in common with a son of the liman of Bauchi, Malam Ahmad Mahmud Sa'adu Zungur, who had been warden of the school of pharmacy in Zaria where dispensers were trained, but who suffered from tuberculosis of the lungs and had spent much time at his home in Bauchi since 1942, veering between illness and convalescence. Malam Sa'ad preached what would come to be identified by political sociologists as 'controlled instability', in pursuit of progress, and was skilled in colouring his beliefs to suit his audience. Like many successful politicians he appealed to intellectuals by the wit and depth of his argument, and to radical townsmen by his populist fire. At the same time he acquired a name among those who held authority for being a mere demagogic rouser of the rabble. In British eyes he also lacked physical charm. In 1939 at the age of 24, he had founded the Northern General Improvement Union, a name that owed more to southern usage of language than to Hausa or English tradition. Malam Sa'ad claimed at the foundation meeting that the indirect rule system was unnecessary to the peasants' way of life, and lacked any religious or structural necessity. To nobody's surprise, its members were dispersed by routine administrative postings. Malam Sa'ad found himself in Anchau, the field headquarters of the sleeping sickness service.

He was a poet as well as a radical thinker; in his search for inspired revolution, he resented the lack of technical and political change implicit in native administration as presently practised, and he greatly feared that this could only lead to the southerners permanently dominating northerners, and to Islam surviving only as a refuge for blind conservatism. His sceptical philosophy of root-and-branch change won him friends in the south who did not understand that after the removal of the system through which alone he believed that British rule was maintained, he also believed that southerners and Christians would lose any position in the north. His physical condition, before the discovery of antibiotics, and a dourness of personality meant that none of the British officers developed an understanding relationship with him. The likely economics of the purified Islamic society that he yearned for remained a closed mystery to them, and it seemed easy to ignore him as an impractical irritant, who only had an appeal to a very small minority within the literate minority of the north. Even to his scholarly friends his tactical concealment of his true beliefs in the face of differing audiences smacked of apostasy, although there was precedent for it in countries where Islam was persecuted. It alarmed Malam Abubakar.

Malam Sa'ad and Malam Aminu took to writing letters to newspapers published in Lagos, especially Zik's *West African Pilot*, important journals that were too easily discounted by the British because their antique and slipshod typesetting, inadequate sub-editing and poor wartime newsprint combined to suggest illiteracy and consequently ignorance. Their circulations were impressive however. Some of these contributions from Bauchi were published as news items from 'stringers', others as articles demanding reform and attacking the virtual *corvée* by which the NAs effectively directed underemployed young men towards the army, the tin mines and the production of corn in support of the war effort. French colonial authorities, Sorbonne-trained and Paris-yearning,

He always came legally required a modicum of enforced labour through the system of *protection*, under wartime strains the more phlegmatic British found themselves compelled to achieve the same purpose as the French through purely coercion and pressure, which NA officials, anxious to please, and peasantry, willing to earn cash, did not greatly resist. Some of his fellow teachers, including Abubakar, complained to the PSE about some of Malam Aminu's disruptive administrative and agitatory activities.

Administrative officers, conscious of the moral conflict but patriotic in motive, sought for ways to bring the arguments into the open locally where they might be balanced, rather than feed the flames of what might come to be interpreted in the Lagos secretariat as sedition. A J Knott, the district officer, consulted the resident about harnessing the uncomfortable newspaper press more constructively, and was allowed to encourage the formation of a *Public Discussion Circle (Taron Tatauna Al'amuran Bauci)* in 1943. He played a large part in its public activities. Tiger Phillips, still the PSE, urged Malam Aminu to become secretary. Malam Sa'ad joined in as his health allowed, a Malam Aminu who was to become chief of Wushishi was organizing clerk, and Malam Abubakar Gidafo and Malam Yahaya Gusau contributed much to its task. Malam Abubakar attended regularly but was regarded more as a social member than as a vital political spark; yet because he half-tolerated the ebullient radicals in an aloof but amused way, he seemed to these officials to be a part of them. He was now in his thirties, a *yaro* no more. Malam Aminu saw him as a humble northern yeoman, ready to speak truth in the presence of authority, but not as a leader.

The circle met at first in the middle school on Friday evenings: mosque day was the chance for the Christians to get on with their demi-official interests without interruption, just as Sunday was the time for Muslims to feel secure from officious intervention by government officers. The resident sometimes sat in, and occasionally spoke. The chairmanship rotated by election, often depending upon the suitability of the individual to moderate on the subject matter. This included the kind of debating society topics customary wherever such gatherings have been the intellectual peak of the week before the arrival of mass media. Once they discussed 'indirect rule', and Malam Abubakar is popularly remembered as having 'as usual' defended the British viewpoint, and argued that worthwhile reforms could only be founded on an existing orderly base. Malam Sa'ad heard of this from his sickbed and gave Malam Aminu a letter to be read at the next meeting which besought Malam Abubakar to think it possible he might be mistaken, attributing none but the most self-seeking motives to emirs and DOs alike, and referring to mallams as 'gutter elite and gambling desperadoes'. John Knott, believing that not all NA rulers and officials were evil or stupid, nor contemptuous of the peasantry, could not be expected to welcome the all-embracing, insulting criticism this letter offered; the radical mallams enjoyed it, without weighing the social and financial cost of instant democracy: Malam Abubakar was torn between the two extremes, and unhappy. But the discussion circle carried on; the concluding free-for-all question time became the favourite part, remotely inspired by the British officers listening to the BBC's wartime broadcasts of 'The Brains Trust' on union waves.

The climax came, as inevitable as the retribution of *hubris* in a Greek tragedy. One Friday the emir of Bauchi was in the chair, and Malam Sa'ad, partially briefed by Malam Aminu, wanted to know how an emir's official salary was calculated. The district officer referred to the gradings of chiefs, their area and

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population, the relative wealth and revenue of each chiefdom, the power to inflict capital punishment, and the precedence accorded by Shehu dan Fodiyo and his successor the sultan of Sokoto. Then came the question which all knew the emir of Bauchi would also have liked to put (and indeed Malam Sa'ad's query may have come as no surprise to the emir) – why the lamido of Adamawa was paid more, when on all these counts Bauchi came first: quite apart from the emir's grade A (unlimited) native court having exercised its full powers and hanged more murderers than Adamawa's, and Bauchi NT's having collected more *haraji* than 'Yola's, the shehu had ranked Gwandu, Bauchi and Kano, in that order, after himself and before Adamawa and the other emirates (in truth Dan Fodiyo's ranking had been Borno first after Sokoto, followed by Gwandu, the waziri of Sokoto, Kano, but indeed Bauchi before Adamawa). The meeting came to an early, embarrassed and unsatisfactory conclusion after only four members had spoken.

H S Bridel, the acting resident, whose own salary, much less than the emir's, had come indirectly under comment, told Knott to explain to Malam Aminu why, if he truly wished to learn about such things in the public interest, it was better to raise them discreetly in the privacy of an office. Malam Abubakar's vexed comment on all this was, *'Then it is no longer democracy. We are only trying to put it on the right path, to make it work'*. This was not enough to stop the liberal-minded John Knott from strangling his own brain-child: the Bauchi discussion circle became a lecture society under the DO's chairmanship and, deprived of debate and question-time, it came to a halt – so far from being on the right path, it was said, it had been 'going off the rails'; responsible loyal British people did not question the King's Civil List before strangers, and it was sheer bad manners for Hausas to do the same about emirs' salaries. Besides, although nobody would say so, in recent years the resident of the more remote Adamawa province had come to be tacitly regarded as more important in the British pecking order than the residency of Bauchi province; so it should not be surprising that the first class chief there, who was a Fulani after all, would get more. To most of the British, Bauchi was 'the last gentlemen's station': regrettably this meant that it was the last place where anything exciting might happen, although John Knott had hoped that the rest would follow where it and he had led.

Naturally the circle's supporters recreated it without official sponsorship, and the Bauchi general improvement union began to meet in the NA's 'reading room'. Not until peace came did this building enjoy a corrugated iron roof and cement floor; for the present it was only a mud and thatch hut, situated directly across the wide assembly space from the palace porch-house; here such newspapers, literature bureau publications and government posters as the ever more restricted paper imports permitted were displayed among the dust, the termite ravages, and the bat, lizard and gecko droppings of all such library structures (built with grants won with difficulty by Rex Niven, the Lagos public relations officer, from the new governor, Richards: Niven was an exile from the north, who was to return to greater distinction later as the senior resident and president of the lower house – he had been a Balliol man, contemporary with James Robertson). Malam Abubakar was not involved, but did not oppose the move; he remained a critical apologist for established authority, approving the sense, implicit in the Hausa word for 'improving' (*gyara*), of curing an ill and putting it right, rather than of material change. From these days on he invariably nicknamed his bolsy semi-ally, Malam Aminu Kano, 'Molotov' (it was scarcely a direct reward for this blasphemy that when one L N Pribytkovsky

... Nigerian chapter of the USSR academy of sciences history
... the name 'A. T. Balewa' would appear only once, as a
... (leading to the formation of a coalition government'). Nobody earned the name
... what might have been too subtle, and would certainly have been

7 Malam Abubakar, the Headmaster

In za ka huta, ka huta a babbar inuwa

This was the time when the battle of Stalingrad encouraged political calls in Britain for a 'second front', when the Royal West African Frontier Force crossed from the Chittagong hill tracts into Burma, and the colonial office drew up a plan for postwar university colleges in Malaya, the Sudan (which was another department's preserve), east Africa, west Africa (a single institution for both Nigeria and the Gold Coast), the West Indies and (this one was to be 'multi-racial') central Africa. The rival claims of Fourah Bay college in Sierra Leone, and the pride of the Gold Coast in its Achimota college, soon suppressed the economical proposal to have a single university for the whole of the British west coast. An early attempt at public enlightenment was being made in Kano, where an NA teacher Inuwa Wada listened to the BBC overseas news three times a day on the chiroma Muhammadu Sanusi's wireless set, and rewrote the main items in Hausa as a newsheet *Yadda Yaki Ya Ke Yau* [How the War is Going To-day]. The district officer L C Giles, who lived in a native house in the old walled city, edited it and it was printed by the NA press every day but Fridays and Sundays. Some copies sometimes reached Bauchi.

The political divisions of Nigeria also received an unexpectedly jolting emphasis. A delegation from the west African press was enabled to make the dangerous sea voyage to London, where the ministry of information and the colonial office were hoping to encourage further support for the allied war effort in local African newspapers. These papers' reports were censored for fact, but their opinions remained independent this side of outright sedition. Dr Azikiwe took the opportunity to deliver a memorandum to the secretary of state, setting out the reforms that he believed would be needed to lead to dominion status when the war ended, and referred to the Ibadan recommendations which Bourdillon had sponsored. The discordant note was blown by the only northerner in the delegation, Malam Abubakar Imam, by now the Hausa editor of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*. He was conscious that Zik had breached the Ibadan confidentiality, and although by profession he ought to have been more sympathetic with southerners than most of his peers, and had shared both a cabin and a hotel room with Zik, he refused to associate himself with the memorandum.

Furthermore he boldly challenged a meeting of what was then the superficially Yoruba- rather than Igbo-orientated West African Students' Union (WASU) in London. Could they deny, he demanded, that the southern newspapers ridiculed Hausas and disrespected emirs; or that southern clerks discriminated against northerners in the Kaduna secretariat and provincial headquarters, railway booking offices and commercial firms; or that southern intellectuals like themselves took the north for granted and merely assumed that in a Nigerian dominion the north would be a backward protectorate governed

This book is the first biography of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Prime Minister of Northern Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and work, and offers a unique insight into the twentieth century African continent. It is a most popular and, some would say, a unique story of a unique man, written in a most readable and well-

...the southern case they had ousted the white man? For possibly the ... a public and hostile audience, the pent-up resentments ... verbalized; and he added explicitly, 'We ... We call each other ignorant. The south is proud of its ... we are proud of our eastern culture. To ... the common people of the north put more confidence ... their black southern brothers or the educated ... a piece of contemporary advice given ... it was that the best course for Nigerians who were ... any notion of forcing the pace in northern and

... more than what the typical British district officer working ... at that time privately believed, although he was ... aware that British politicians and progressive Africans ... whether such a mood could last. It was not a welcome ... the Lagos secretariat, always suspicious of irredentists in the ... and not anxious to find them also among the public. ... had also recently spoken: the sultan himself ... a WASU version of Zik's proposed constitutional ... are in no position ... much less make proposals for ... Aminu chafed at some ... Abubakar, Yahaya and Garba Kafin Madaki

... Imam left England on the sea voyage home ... he had met Lord Lugard and Sir Hanns Vischer, ... had first brought British administration and ... and who in retirement spoke to the colonial office ... Lugard had asked him, 'So the emirs do not know ... the peasant?', and he had ... claim that Eric Mort's idea ... had become suspect in the emirs' eyes, ... support it had collapsed. Vischer ... would develop into another India, ... such a change, but it would not be ... by saying that editors knew how ... would be giving anyway, and would ... the distinguished pair that all, not ... the northern educated elements to their ... clanking hands with a man wearing ... the same man wearing a gown did not ... Lugard had also introduced Abubakar Imam ... and some directors of Barclays bank; ... like these journalists thought their ... African colonies. Abubakar Imam ... his London outburst several Kaduna ... with the mighty was giving him ... and at the immediate time the ... with his level of public tact and

... generally known, and this quickened a

lasting correspondence and friendship between the two Malams Abubakar, resulting in the Bauchi man's reading broadening to include the political pamphlets that the editor recommended to him. He was however still determined to win his higher grade certificate, and night after night when his ward Adamu had cleaned the hurricane lamp after the evening meal he would lie back in his chair with the long arms to support his legs (*kujera mai 'ya'ya*, the 'chair with children'), and would read and read, sometimes breaking off to chat with the admiring boy. Sometimes too he gave himself time off to listen to the traditional songs of an itinerant singer, Sarkin Magana Bature, and played checkers or some other kind of draughts with him (board games, he said, made one concentrate, and stopped idle people from coming in to interrupt you with their gossip and backbiting; one had to keep oneself occupied, and should never believe stories about how someone else is your enemy or trying to run you down).

Malam Abubakar passed the first part of the teachers' senior certificate in history at last (one of the only four northern teachers to pass in what was the highest available teachers' certificate, until its abolition in 1953: two others were Yahaya Gusau, in maths, and Abdurrahman Mora, in geography). He also made another marriage in 1943, to Zainab, known usually as Inni, sister to a member of a Bauchi title-holder's family, the Ahmed Kari who had been his school pupil. This marriage lasted very happily. Next followed the promotion which seemed a well-earned but premature crowning of a worthy and insignificant local career. The vacancy he filled was created in 1944, in a way familiar in the world of native administration, by someone else's fall from grace.

Malam Baraya Gombe had grown out of his reliance as headmaster on the other two props of the old 'triumvirate'. He also had little sympathy with Malam Abubakar's or Malam Garba's modified reforming zeals and their gentlemanly tolerance, so long as it did not contravene orderly custom, of children's boisterousness; he had none with the radicalism of Malams Yahaya and Aminu. But a master might be a beast, if he were a just beast; however, sternness which is seen by boys as oppression cannot survive once it is also believed to be corrupt. Money for subsistence and equipment was never plentiful, but the school became convinced that their head teacher was mishandling funds that might have provided better blankets during the harmattan cold, better food from the rations (which were delivered to his house), and more kerosene. One morning most of the school marched out and down the road to Gombe, their leaders including some who were now quite big boys like Sule Katagum, Tafari Ali and Adamu Tafawa Balewa, with no very certain aim other than to make a gesture that could not be ignored. Malam Aminu Kano and Malam Yahaya Gusau went after them on bicycles with Malam Iro Gawo, a former visiting teacher from Katsina who was now re-employed in Bauchi, caught up with them fourteen kilometres out, and listened to the juvenile tales of withheld pocket money, deprivation and cruelty. The emir and Malam Abubakar followed them to the scene.

For a while those three teachers from other provinces came under suspicion of having put the mutineers up to it, but this transparent cloud passed and the emir, the provincial administration and the education officers (now H G Butler and A G Eyre) found adequate grounds for dismissing Malam Baraya. Indeed they could find no excuse not to. There was an epistolary row between Laurence C Giles ('Afo' - *afu* being the Hausa for half a threepenny bit or

three ha'pence, an exaggerated reference to his stature), the seconded DO who was now English editor of *Gaskiya* newspaper, and the education authorities, including Butler, about premature reporting of the actual dismissal, and some other journalistic inaccuracies. The boys' rations were not increased, said the authorities, although they now got more to eat; they were also punished – they served three detentions for walking out. Baraya was quick to make Aminu and Yahaya the scapegoats for his fall, but never blamed Abubakar. There was little argument about the succession. Malam Mamudu Zayam was too lacking in personality, although Baraya's equal in seniority; Malam Garba Kafin Madaki was, as the English middle class would say, too nice; Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, though only 32, had the seriousness and the dedication. Furthermore, as he said to his ward after the appointment, '*Look, Adamu, I never take risks!*'.

He speedily put right the financial mess he inherited, and learnt much from the frank advice and friendship of Herbert George Butler. Apart from increasing the pressure on academic work, with the practical touch of allowing larger groups to share a Tilley pressure lamp each, instead of individuals huddling over dull little hurricane lamps at night, there were no radical changes in school life. Phillips returned from leave and with his sporadic succession of British assistants continued the 'indirect rule' tradition (which had after all given Baraya the lee-way to bring himself to grief) of not interfering with the headmaster's clear responsibilities; they would come in to check or supervise the classroom work, to teach a few periods themselves, or to coach in games, but found their principal occupation and professional joy in becoming the senior visiting teacher, and like him in touring the province's elementary schools. Of course they gossiped with the African staff. One day one mentioned with mixed irritation and amusement that he had tried to put some stamps at the post office on the way to school, but because it was still only ten minutes to eight o'clock the southern clerk had flatly refused to serve him, although he was ready and standing behind his counter. Such working to rule infuriated Abubakar, although the incivility did not surprise him. He would have liked to say of a schoolboys' strike at King's College Lagos at this time that such things could never happen in the north: but he could not.

Malam Abubakar soon also became schools' manager for Bauchi native authorities, performing a bureaucratic chore as the corporate person who signed all the documents with which government grants-in-aid were claimed and accounted for. He went to read what was before him and never to sign 'blind'. This required occasional formal appearances before the NA council, and frequent correspondence with the education officer and native treasurer. The emir held his council meetings in the traditional mud-built chamber behind the palace verandage, with the ancient and lofty four-part ribbed vault roof, framed in timber and palm branches which somehow resisted the termites. It had been said long before the British had been heard of and was known as *babban gwan*. 'In the hall of great skill', 'One day around this time a celebrated 'inner' council meeting took place inside the *babban gwan*. Malam Sa'ad's Bauchi general movement union then had Malam Baba Hala, a senior NA veterinary minister as presiding chairman, Malam Aminu Kano as secretary, and other NA officials such as the *harkya* (literally a sort of master of the horse, in fact the *darul* head of the *harka*), the chief imam and the supervisor of works as non-paying patrons. Three private meetings of the union had been held so that a motion might become recognized, and then its activities were properly advertised and new members solicited in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* and in Zik's

This book is the first biography of Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister, which provides a definitive study of his life and insight into the twentieth century Nigerian political scene. It is a popular and, some would say, a unique story of a unique man.

Lagos paper the *West African Pilot*. One or two NA councillors ventured to join, but the emir was not happy with a team that no longer had the divisional officer's hand on the plough. He had discussed it disapprovingly with the resident at what by now was his regular weekly return courtesy call at the private office in the residency, and probably anticipated approval of his intention. He raised it again with an *ad hoc* council meeting while the BGIU was in actual session. The union was discussing ways and means of setting up an independent Islamiyya school which would give advanced instruction to unspoilt youngsters in the forward-looking beliefs of Sa'ad's and Aminu's confession of their faith. The consequence was that a councillor was deputed to take a *dan doka* ('son of order', an NA police constable) across to the meeting where, with the ever nebulous authority of 'native law and custom' to back him, he had to announce that the emir in council had sent him to tell them that the society was not allowed, it was hereby disbanded, and they should please disperse.

Now undoubtedly the practice was recognized that public meetings required a permit; this was normally issued by the NA police, after consultation with their responsible NA councillor or, through him, the emir and full council. Malam Sa'ad Zungur, confident that there was a distinction between a public meeting and the BGIU discussion, demanded to know if the councillor were the bearer of a piece of information, or came with his policeman authorised to implement an emir's order. The councillor replied, 'I am only a messenger – but indeed the meeting must disperse – *Now!*' And Sa'ad riposted, 'Go and tell the emir and council, with the deepest respect, we won't disperse!' Tendentious retelling of this tale has inclined to hint that the councillor involved was Malam Abubakar, but he was not yet a councillor. The event was common property in no time, and certainly Abubakar regretted it, while recognising that the BGIU represented a threat of a kind to the NA.

After the councillor left, the meeting composed a letter to the resident, H Howard Wilkinson, expressing amazement that there had been meddling with freedom and interference with human rights; it was typed and delivered early next morning. A week later, after time for telegraphic consultation by the administration with the secretary, northern provinces, Kaduna ('SNP'), the emir sent for the BGIU's office-bearers and presented a patently British face-saving formula of compromise: there had been a misunderstanding, there had been no question of banning a non-criminal society, but of course it had been wrong to use public resources for private purposes – they must not use the NA's time or property, in future it must be held out of office hours, not in a NA building, and of course they must find their own typewriter and stationery. Malam Sa'ad unhelpfully wanted to know whether he should believe the emir's new version, or that of the councillor who had insisted that he was only doing what the council had authorised him to do. The emir promptly dismissed them, saying, 'We are not seeking trouble!' It was a lesson in the compromises of politics, and the union never really recovered its self-confidence despite the determination of its leaders.

Nor did the Islamiyya school next-door to the market, nor a similar youth association, ever take flight, although a NA councillor Malam Waziri gave them a roofless hut to repair, which they flattered by calling it the Bauchi community centre. Support came mainly from a few NA workers and businessmen who had fallen out with the authorities. The school seems to have foundered largely because the chief alkali, who did not object to teaching middle schoolboys who sat on benches at desks, would not countenance a Muslim school where boys would not be squatting traditionally on floor mats.

There was a concurrent squabble in the literature bureau. Malam Abubakar had tried to organize a competition through *Gaskiya*, based on contributors expressing their views on a potentially uncontrollable variety of topics. Some emirs had come to know that he had himself contributed views which had been suppressed, and yet at which they were themselves only too able to guess. Now it was suggested that emirs might act as judges in the competition. Hidden hands moved to quash the whole proposal before embarrassments became public.

The secretary of state, Colonel Oliver Stanley, following his office's official line of submissions, appointed another colonel, the Scottish MP Walter Elliot, to be chairman of the commission on higher education in the colonies (Stanley was thought by some critics to be rather negative in public manner, but had a high reputation as a minister in the office. In private he had a devastating wit, and was friend and mentor of another Oliver, surnamed Lyttelton). In the course of their travels to find facts, Elliot and his colleagues (who included Arthur Creech Jones and Julian Huxley), arrived at Bauchi in March 1944 to study the quality of secondary education. For the first time the headmaster observed the administrative and educational staff of the province dancing attendance on dignitaries from their own country, and listened to them afterwards disparaging some of their own lesser politicians too. It was another lesson in practical human relationships, more impressive than NNDP's winning Lagos town council back from NYM, still seen from Bauchi as a 'high dispute 'twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee'. There was also news from the French colonies: Félix Éboué, the negro governor-general, and his colleagues at Brazzaville rallied equatorial Africa to de Gaulle and free France, and laid plans for a future full partnership with their mother country.

In May an event took place that the northern administration ensured was given little prominence in the *Gaskiya* newspaper, but which spread widely by word of mouth. A leading young Sokoto district head, great-grandson of Shehu Usman dan Hodiyo, Abubakar's schoolfellow and collateral relative of the sultan, Malam Ahmadu Raġa, was unsuccessfully accused on three charges of stealing, involving £136 17s cattle tax. The resident, R D Ross, who on hearing the first complaints had ordered a thorough administrative investigation by a shrewd linguist of an ADO, A Neil Skinner, now ordered a retrial in the sultan's court, where the Sardauna was sentenced to one year's imprisonment concurrently on each count. The Sardauna appealed, as he could from the sultan sitting at first instance, to the high court, and employed a southerner, Bode Thomas, as his lawyer. A British judge, sitting in July at Zaria with the chief alkalis of Kano and Zaria as assessors, released him on bail and remitted the case back to the sultan for the accused to have the opportunity under Maliki law of evidence to take the oath of innocence. On being discharged from the court, he was soon re-employed in charge of the Sokoto NA central office, having earlier taught for three years in the middle school. The chiroma of Kano had openly taken his side. Ross's summary was that Malam Ahmadu's 'fault lay in his overweeningness, which was usually accentuated by any publicity'. Ahmadu Raġa had been writing letters to Dr *Akwere's West African Pilot* newspaper in Lagos, but he now stopped doing so. Although retaining antagonism to the sultan, he henceforth contained his struggle for pre-eminence within the traditional emirate system. Aminu Kano, who had also taken his side, remained on the outside of that system. The bond survived, shared by some of the British, that there had been a deliberate attempt to frame Ahmadu Raġa and so debar him from eventual succession to the sultanate, for which he had already been a youthful candidate. As the

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years passed, resort to *istihara* (seeking to learn the divine will through the prayer of holy men) seems to have confirmed Ahmadu in his own conviction that he would never succeed, and so strengthened him in his secular political ambitions.

The chief commissioner, Mr Patterson ('Patterjohn'), paid a visit to Bauchi shortly after this, at which he appealed to NA officials to recognise the need for self-sacrifice at a time when Britain had 4.5 million men and women under arms and the rest of the commonwealth (largely Indian) 4.2 millions; the allies' attack on the second front had been opened; northern Burma, the Solomons and Russia were now cleared of the enemy; but western Europe and eastern Asia still remained. He also discounted the council's suggestions that Malam Baraya Gombe should be forgiven and re-employed elsewhere. He urged instead the need to spread mass education; building on the slogan, 'Each One Teach One', he told them that every literate should undertake to teach five pupils, each of whom would in turn teach another five (the difficulty naturally was to interpret 'the snowball effect' in a tropical environment). The best news he brought was that a colonial development and welfare scheme permitted a new roads policy, of building and classifying national trunk roads 'A' of the highest standard, provincial trunk roads 'B' of all weather standard, and seasonal feeder roads to take produce to communication centres. Patterson wrote to all residents at this time to tell them that although *Gaskiya* was a government publication, it was inevitably becoming more political; but that it was not southerners alone who were responsible for political ideas spreading abroad among younger mallams. He hoped that the paper was helping chiefs and emirs also to understand the changes in people's attitudes.

At last Abubakar had a son in 1945, Baba Yakubu, who was to be brought up in Bauchi. The year came in with a famous conference at Yalta and the long awaited prospect of victory over Hitler's Germany; but despite the 14th army's successful assault on Burma, the war where most Nigerian soldiers were involved still seemed to threaten years of bloody struggle into south-east Asia and up through the Pacific. Nigeria was preoccupied with another dry season epidemic of cerebro-spinal meningitis; once more all provincial staff that could be spared from essential duty found themselves supervising bush isolation shelters where the infected could be nursed, bed rest still being almost the only treatment available. In July Nnamdi Azikiwe hurried from Lagos to Onitsha, since his newspapers had been banned, and claimed that he was threatened by an assassination plot (not to be his last such claim, but on this first occasion he named the governor, Richards, and the chief commissioners as the conspirators). In Britain Hanns Vischer died, while a conference discussed the future of sound radio broadcasting as a consolidator of the commonwealth; there was no thought of film being replaced as a parallel communicator of ideas, so long as television transmissions seemed to be technically limited to a radius of about 130 kilometres. Colonel Stanley (who had been a member in the 1920s of a small group of progressive young MPs, including Harold Macmillan, dubbed the 'YMCA') told the Americans that it could not be contemplated that St Helena, the Falkland Islands, Aden or the Seychelles might ever be in a position where independence was a reality, or if it were a reality, where it could be an advantage to them. The allied leaders agreed how to dispose of reconquered Europe, and hid their differences behind forms of words. Shortly afterwards, Roosevelt died; and so did Lugard, aged 85, with the humble epitaph chosen by his wife, once

The *Times*'s African correspondent Flora Shaw, 'All I did was to try to lay my sticks straight'.

A few weeks later the European war was over, and three months after that, and another major conference, at Potsdam, the first atom bomb fell on Japan. While their officers tried desperately to convince a selectively restive West African Expeditionary Force, now reassembled in Rangoon and southern India, that the troopships which had been available to transport them from home since 1943 were truly not all available at once to take them back (and were not being preferentially allocated to British troops who had been overseas for up to five years), the Congress 'Quit India!' campaign boiled over, the USSR demanded United Nations trusteeship in Africa (over Tripolitania), Egyptian nationalists demanded revision of Britain's treaty rights and the return of the Sudan from condominium control, and the French Cameroons experienced riots. After that the Elliot commission's findings were published, including Julian Huxley's and Arthur Creech Jones's stated views that the African university colleges which the colonial office wished to see set up, of which one should be in Nigeria, would suffice to produce the cadres of educated people who would in turn be the leaders of self-governing states or nations, in fifty to a hundred years' time. The United Kingdom still had but sixteen universities.

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8 Peace and London: Change in Nigeria

Kome nisan dare, gari ya waye

The coming of peace meant that the Nigerian secretariats, shrunken and exhausted, had to turn their minds seriously to the future that had concerned Bourdillon. In the colonial office Ralph Furse was still in charge of administrative recruitment, as he had been since 1910, and still using an entirely personal method of assessment by interview and uncanny judgment that owed nothing to the Northcote-Trevelyan home civil service tradition of competitive examination; yet it produced a worldwide colonial service uniquely composed of men who tolerated discomfort and modest pay for the privilege of exercising authority and giving interesting, interested and obedient service, directly to their superiors and indirectly to the people whom they saw as their wards in trust.

Except that a successful war had given them confidence (whereas a dubious peace was to give their successors guilt), their motives were identical with those of the young people who, two decades later, would vie with each other to work abroad as volunteers or in aid schemes. There was no longer competition from the India and Burma civil services, and the Sudan was becoming a mere staging post for a limited number who would hope later to transfer elsewhere. Not all the senior Furse-filtered survivors from pre-war days, whether Oxbridge classicists or regular army officers who had changed careers, welcomed these juniors who dutifully called them 'Sir' but were clearly lacking in awe; but one pre-war man who had managed to escape from the wartime bureaucracy into the Royal Air Force and so bridged the gap of expatriate generations was Robert Hepburn Wright – on his return the hand of fate set him down as district officer in Bauchi. He was a bachelor, he spent no time on files that could be spared for practical talk with people, and he quickly found in the middle school headmaster a man with whom creative exchanges were possible about the NA and its personalities. The relationship was to be crucial in this story.

There were about twelve Europeans (including one wife) in Bauchi station in the late 1940s, to staff the administrative and departmental posts in both the provincial headquarters and the Bauchi division. Azare and Gombe boasted two to four each for the other two divisions, and there was a touring officer at Tula for the Tangale-Waja pagans. Slowly the routines were recovered, of checking native treasury books and cash balances, of counting nomad Fulani herds for cattle tax, of inspecting native courts for justice and speculation, of bringing dispensaries, schools, workshops, roads, experimental farms and orchards, communal forest areas, markets and fellmongering plots back under regular surveillance. The colonial office, which had relieved the wartime administration of the irksome duty of compiling annual returns for the interest of MPs, reintroduced them (and incidentally demanded figures of corporal punishment

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n well.

... pressures on minimal staff their
... professional departmental officer (medical,
... works or police) usually supervised
... throughout an entire province. Each
... had at least one administrative officer of
... the practical side of health,
... services; and the further a division
... the more its specialist NA institutions
... the more they could ever hope to see of their provincial

... government's. Effectively their expenditure
... the NAs that collected them, as advised by
... their soldiers were now beginning to arrive
... accumulated of resettling them in their
... employment for them, so one by one
... were seen in the divisional or local authority offices,
... for help or direction (although even now
... to shun full-time wage-earning, especially
... because an invisible stigma of slavery still stuck
... everywhere, a cadet with war experience
... as local supervisor of the Nigerian Ex-servicemen's
... for which £2,106 were raised locally on
... he had an ex-RWAFF clerk
... who could help with the NEWA accounts.

The colonial office also called on colonial administrations at the end of the
... development plans for constructive use of the British
... and welfare fund, of which 'Patterjohn'
... news to Bauchi. Not for the last time, the Nigerian
... and departments'
... it was to be subjected to a thorough
... of commons select committee on estimates; the
... that it was a patchwork of individual projects, unrelated to
... objectives, and that it could not by its nature, however
... produce any clearly foreseen effects
... The truth of this cannot be questioned, although
... more deliberately calculated plans of the future, whether
... or greater may have been in their fulfilment.

So far as Bauchi was concerned, there were two consequences of 'CD&W'
... significant: the trunk roads of laterite,
... of heavy wheels, that led
... were slowly widened, their
... provided with trustworthy bridges.
... in the administrative service, functioned in
... for providing workshops and
... the PWD had likewise benefited
... against enemy and terrestrial
... and had also been collected
... The other noticeable change
... the 'development
... for short-term technicians

appointed through the crown agents), ex-service but unqualified or unwilling to seek pensionable employment, yet archetypically 'ready to go anywhere and do anything'. Of all levels from brigadier and petty officer (and more inclined than their permanent brethren to retain their honorary service ranks and titles), they were available in theory to manage and speed the specific CD&W schemes from which their salaries were paid, but in fact as superior odd job men to help administration and engineers out whenever an energetic personality was needed to get things moving. Some were invaluable; some had rough and ready ways, too reminiscent of the wartime disruption to appeal to fastidious local NA officials who remained sheltered from too rapid change, such as Malam Abubakar. A hundred were appointed under a ten year scheme, starting on £400 a year (and expatriation pay of £150).

This worldwide return to British imperial economic action might seem to imply political inaction. Hence it was as unwelcome to Russia as it was to the newly divided nationalist and revolutionary China; it was suspect to the United States; and it was a matter for tacit jealousy among the European colonial powers that had been bled by Nazi occupation. One small part of the action was that four scholarships were granted to northern Nigerians to study at London university for the one year's overseas teachers professional certificate course. The choice of scholars was Eric Mort's, who did not find it difficult to make; Yahaya Gusau from the north-west, Abdurrahman Mora from the south, Bello dan Amar from northern Kano (No 12 on Katsina college roll in its first year) and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa from the central east; all were teachers already, needless to say. Aminu Kano was disappointed, but Mort felt he could afford to wait a year. Malam Abubakar took the opportunity as calmly as he had Mort's earlier choice in 1922. With customary modesty he treated it as an honour (but one that he would only have yielded contentedly to Malam Garba Kafin Madaki among his immediate peers). He set about arranging his domestic household to be looked after with due propriety and adequate cash during his absence. This included the twelve-year old 'younger brother', whom his wives sent to market for meat, butter, vegetables and fruit, and other ingredients for soup, as well as taking the daily corn to the corngrinders, fetching in the firewood and passing on all the payments (One of the wives told the boy that one day he would be grown-up and have a wife of his own who could cook well - 'Never!' the young lad retorted, 'See how one spends so much money with wives! I will stay a bachelor and be free from a husband's expense!'). Relatives and friends helped his guardian Abubakar, but it was a lasting worry to know that they were to be left behind.

Abubakar also sought advice from those he knew to be best able to prepare him for what was far from a comfortable adventure. The resident, 'Wilkie', and the divisional officer entertained him with meals and admonition, partly with a view to experience with European customs at table; but it was the education officers who warned him of what to expect in the second class accommodation of one of the few unsunk Elder Dempster steamers, still crowded to wartime levels while board of trade restrictions remained inoperative, still vulnerable to stray mines, and six years overdue for full mechanical overhaul and repair of wear and tear. They also knew what he must expect at the customs and immigration controls at Liverpool, on the sardine-packed and rundown train south, and finally in London, which would remain blitzed and decayingly sandbagged, tightly rationed for fuel, food and clothing, a shabby and battered capital where nothing was to be had without queuing.

Exotic foreigners, apart from negro American servicemen, were still rare objects of attention for London's crowds, but allied forces somehow appeared to outnumber Britain's own, for whom the return home and demobilization had scarcely begun. Although advised to adopt European clothing for warmth and camouflage, Abubakar looked back on his Lagos experience and insisted on his own tradition: like dan Amar, he used his outfit allowance to have *riga*, caftan and trousers made of grey flannel, and was never seen without at least a soft red fez or white cotton skullcap. The other two, Abdurrahman and Yahaya, were more ready to compromise and, using their visitors' clothing coupons, decided that they would wear mixed or wholly western dress, especially in the winter. On his passport application form Abubakar had recorded his father's occupation as 'courtier', and when the document (no 18208) was received by him in his status of a 'British protected person' it was, like all passports issued in Nigeria at that time, signed individually by the governor. As they passed through the capital Malam Abubakar heard that he had been elected honorary Lagos and London president of the Northern Teachers' Welfare Association, which he had shared in founding (not surprisingly, Malam Aminu was the first secretary). This body was seen primarily as a staff association and was of modest effect as a trades union; it also saw itself as potentially a professional and ethical body, and soon dropped the word 'Welfare' from its title while renaming its head as 'general president'. The journey was an exciting one, made by air: night stops were made at Takoradi, Bathurst and Lisbon, and the aircraft was a wartime *Sunderland* flying-boat converted into a *Hythe* passenger-carrier.

The four arrived in Britain on 14 October 1945, two months after VJ day, and shortly before Lord Swinton told the house of lords that, 'Nigeria has only just begun to see Nigeria as a whole'. The colonial students' liaison officer settled them in the official hostel, Nutford House near Marble Arch, where many scholarship and bursary holders from the dependencies, for whom their institutions made no residential provision, were content to spend their time in London, sharing bedrooms and communal dining. There were 48 full-time students on this first postwar colonial department course, joined by 15 more in the next term. Some of the more enterprising young men found their way out into 'digs', but the more shy, uncertain whether chance would award them a fond and motherly landlady or a sharp-tongued dragon, preferred to stay in the limited security of an official home. The style of self-provision in bed-sitters was rarely adopted except by 'mature students', a phrase that still meant middle-aged persons who had returned to further studies after long experience in their calling; communal self-help in multi-occupancy rented flats was not yet heard of. The northern Nigerians were mature, but also shy and unaccustomed to anyone but their wives cooking for them. In Nutford House, while tending to stay together and to speak Hausa among themselves, they were inevitably thrown up against Chinese (including women pursuing the academic forerunners of sociological and social work studies), Malays, Hindus and Muslims from India, West Indians and of course many from the forest regions of the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. These brief or casual relationships broadened their awareness of humanity and offered new angles of reflection in which to judge the British as they found them at home, but they also hardened their own pride in self.

They observed that their own coastal neighbours still expected them to conform to southern ways and views before accepting them as allies in whatever conflict or clarification was the current subject of communication between the

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student body and authority. WASU, the body long established in London, gained no active supporters from, indeed occasionally was disowned by, this little group of northerners, largely because WASU regarded imperialist politics as a proper target for its energies, and to a lesser extent because it was so obviously itself a target for left-wing British political interest. The communists, and others of the far left of the time, made little headway with any but a handful of individual west Africans; despite the soviet part in the war the Russians' way of life, so far as it was generally interpreted, had no appeal to men whose own societies of villages and extended families were happy and stable. Few paused to question whether Russia and communism might after all not be co-extensive; and the jargon in the essential philosophy, indeed in the economic concepts, of Marxism-Leninism was not easy to grasp so long as the forms of colloquial English used in Africa were still deeply rooted in mission teaching, government education, commerce, and sundry pidgins and creoles. As for social justice, this seemed to such individualists to be attainable without abandoning free competition.

The friendship offered by Fabians and liberal thinkers was more beguiling, although much that was well-meant and had no unspoken motive was interpreted by over-sensitive or unconfident visitors as patronizing. Traditional Labour and Conservative voters at this time, reluctant to dabble in unknown waters, seldom went out of their way to get to know colonial students, although many enjoyed the novelty when circumstances did bring them together. Straightforward invitations to a Christmas party in an English home, a church 'social' or a Scottish country-dancing evening, calls to join in sheer fun and nothing serious, could forge many links of friendship; gratuitous protestations about race and equality, when clearly intended to dig a gulf between the speakers and their own compatriots overseas, were more likely to be received with forced smiles, masking distrust.

The northern Nigerians in the main held back from all such involvements. Their emotional self-sufficiency allowed them to minimise any loneliness, but they enjoyed the occasional introductions which came their way through chance or past connexions in Nigeria. They were not susceptible to the 'nervous breakdowns' (as these were still called) which afflicted many overstretched colonial students; but they observed antagonisms between some Malays and Chinese, and wondered at usually ebullient West Indians' propensity for lapses into morose self-pity when immediate success was denied them. They also witnessed the psychological barrier between men who so often looked alike but were divided by a plantation culture from a tribal culture. One of their hostel mates was to be prime minister of Jamaica, and many others must have achieved distinction of other kinds. Not least, the northerners discovered the gap between some Hindus and Muslims from India, and began readily also to recognise the regional and national characteristics of people from different parts of the united kingdom. Themselves a tiny minority among a group of minority categories, they were well placed to retain their distance and draw their own conclusions about the brotherhood of man, without detriment to their own manners and tolerance.

Once they had accustomed themselves to the strange convenience of the underground railway, with the makeshift relics of its recent use as mass air-raid shelters (the 'tube' and escalators were for years to leave the strongest of all impressions on most northern Nigerian visitors to Britain), and had learnt which 'bus route numbers served their regular needs towards Bloomsbury, life fell into a routine. Malam Bello dan Amar spent most of his time at the school of

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oriental and African studies (SOAS), where he studied Arabic with three Indian Muslims and a British girl. The Reverend G P Bargery, author of the greatest Hausa dictionary and former mission teacher in Kano and elsewhere since 1900, tried to retain Bello as his assistant to teach Hausa, mainly to colonial service cadets in training, but Bello was reluctant to prolong his stay overseas; this left the way open for Malams Hassan, related to the emir of Abuja, and Tukur, son and heir of the emir of Yauri. Otherwise Malam Bello and Malam Abubakar tended to pass most of their leisure hours together, such as they were for a highly conscientious and dedicated pair of bookworms.

Malam Abubakar, like the other two, passed his hours of lectures, discussions and tutorials at the institute of education, where his personal tutor was the same Eric Mort who had once plucked him from rusticity in the ajiya's arms. Mort had retired just after the war with the modest award of the OBE. His protégé attended the same classes in psychology and art of teaching in the tropics as Malam Yahaya, but otherwise adhered to his own subjects of English as a foreign language, history and geography, as did Yahaya to his science and mathematics. Abubakar also touched on tropical hygiene, primary 'three Rs' and maths himself. Bello's fellow students introduced them all to the London mosque, built with funds from India and from the Aga Khan, which they attended more or less regularly. Abubakar was moved by the knowledge and skills of the imam, Sheikh Abdallah, who also knew the Christian bible and brought learned references to it into his addresses. The four made a few Indian Muslim friends, but their social life was limited, as much in vacation as in term time, by the need to study and the sheer impossibility of contemplating failure in their courses.

Nevertheless they attended the victory parade, and shivered as did those of the overseas troops who marched through London in their own tropical light khaki drill uniforms rather than in temperate battle dress. Abubakar, whose picture of the army was framed in memory of the wartime battalion and training centre at Bauchi, was deeply impressed by the spectacle of military might represented by mass manpower on ceremonial parade. Malams Abdurrahman Mora and Yahaya Gusau went twice to stay with Eric Mort; Malams Bello and Abubakar went together as house guests of a Captain Sloan, a retired technical teacher from Katsina Ala middle school whom they had remembered for his speech impediment, caused by a first world war throat wound received while in the Royal Flying Corps. Other occasional invitations came, as when Tony Eyre took him out to lunch and reminisced about Malam Baraya's dismissal from the headmastership in 1944. But postwar conditions and petrol rationing would have hampered wider travel even had they been as enterprising as their successors were to be in decades to come. Abubakar did visit the family of a former Bauchi education officer who had become a tin miner, but his main joy lay in reading novels, and visiting museums as they slowly restored themselves to peacetime and brought their treasures back from safe hiding. He was encouraged to make the virtually 'duty' visits to a youth club in Hammersmith, to Canterbury cathedral and Windsor castle, to the Ford motor works at Dagenham and to a health centre at Peckham. He briefly met Mr Obafemi Awolowo, for long enough to form his judgment of him. He also made time to discover how to gain access to the strangers' gallery in the house of commons, and more than once watched Churchill orating in opposition.

As his interest grew in British politics, and new sources opened up for his eager, unending reading, he became conscious that criticism of British colonial

practice was not always confined to the radical left wing: looking back through issues of the periodical *West Africa* he discovered that in a wartime colonial debate in the house of lords Lord Rennell had spoken of northern Nigeria, 'where indirect rule is practised, where the communities are happy (I have no doubt) and well administered, but entirely unprogressive – and advised in many cases by persons whose principal object appears to be to keep the African administration which they found in cotton wool and camphor like a museum specimen, to ensure that it will in no circumstances be contaminated by anything like development or improved conditions for secondary industry'. Malam Abubakar knew that changes were afoot at home, but was stirred to find Cameronian words in the mouths of British leaders that reinforced his own growing attitudes. He had assumed that such important people could not have learnt anything they might know of his country without bias, since it could only have been described to them by their administrative and mercantile compatriots who worked in Nigeria.

Nevertheless he remained reserved and careful in his own concern for the facts. He seldom spoke in the general discussion groups at the institute, and his rare interventions only came when he felt that someone had said something too outrageously wrong to be passed over. This was however only a reflection of his self-possession and stability. He discouraged his fellows' wilder flights of fancy in a characteristically modest yet authoritative manner. Unlike so many colonial students, he appeared to have no problems with personal relationships or adjustment to strange circumstances, and he made no trouble for himself or for anybody else, least of all in private emotional matters in which he was always highly discreet. He shared interest in one tutor's idea that Muslim teachers should make their skills available to mission schools, but reacted less warmly to the claim that missions might have an interest in the novelty of intelligent and educated Muslims coming up from the conservative masses. Not surprisingly, he used to talk ruefully about Britain's 'cold sun' – he never enjoyed the weather.

However an opportunity came to emerge out of the background when Malam Abubakar Imam wrote a leader at home in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, on the suggested introduction of regional councils to underpin the Nigerian legislature. This gave Malam Abubakar Tafawa, who was chosen by random selection to make his comments in the BBC overseas Hausa service, the chance to say, '*I am a Hausa schoolmaster studying in London at the university. A most interesting document has just come into my hand. – In our view we have in the north come to the point where legitimate means must be given to the educated members of the younger generation to express their ideas*'. This sounds innocuous; in 1945 many would call it revolutionary. The *Gaskiya* leader had been reported and commented upon in the southern Nigerian English language press because it was a thoughtful contribution to an otherwise parochial Lagos party debate on the governor's despatch to London in March 1945, which contained proposals for the revision of the constitution.

In the light of later constitution-making, which was to be something of a bureaucratic heavy industry, the simple origins of this despatch are of some interest. Sir Arthur Richards, who from a Malayan cadetship had successively governed North Borneo, The Gambia and Fiji without recorded contradiction (as a cynic commented), had been on leave after demitting office as governor of Jamaica. He had had some private talks with Lord Lugard, who was one of his heroes. Otherwise Richards had come out to succeed Bourdillon in

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1943, his mind uncluttered with any suggestions from the colonial office on how Nigeria should best be governed. This was the standard custom: new governors might kiss the sovereign's hands if the audience could be fitted in before embarkation, and they received notes on uniforms, entitlement to gun salutes and passages in HM ships, what funds were available towards the expenses of employing an ADC and private secretary, and how much money would be provided for all leaves taken during the five years' commission; but care was taken that they should not meet their predecessors, or otherwise enter on their duties without an unprejudiced, not to say uninstructed, mind. As we have seen, Richards had had four previous governorships in which to learn his trade. Unfairly discounting the wartime limitations on Bourdillon, he had noted that Sir Bernard had amassed files full of others' opinions (including the 'Governor's Essay Prize' submissions - Bourdillon had unprecedentedly invited every administrator, however junior, to submit his uninhibited views on the necessary changes for the way forward), had asked for a royal commission to come out and devise solutions, but had left behind no definitive record of his own consequential views on constitutional advance.

Richards unjustly concluded that his predecessor stood by *laissez faire*. Being a strong-minded man himself, convinced that experience in the university of life must outweigh all theory, he had decided to engineer change that would break down the tribal barriers he found, but without undue haste. He adopted many more of Bourdillon's opinions than he admitted, most of which his predecessor had in fact adumbrated in a retirement leave *démarche* to the secretary of state Oliver Stanley, whose office preferred to leave all initiative to the brusquer new man. A Cambridge 'Apostle' Andrew Cohen was an influential assistant secretary who disliked Lugard's indirect rule, and equally distrusted Bourdillon's gradualism as idle *laissez faire* indeed: he looked to Richards to be radical and direct. The secretary of state himself had been overly impressed by Azikiwe and under-impressed by what he had seen of emirs; but like Swinton, the wartime resident minister in west Africa, he saw a solution in nurturing local civil servants rather than in educating politicians.

Richards yearned for enough time to allow the major tribal groupings to come to know each other, side by side, meeting in all four 'capitals' in turn (Lagos, Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu); and he affected to find some educated Nigerian thought to agree with him that nine years was a short period in the history of a nation. As a beginning he hoped for a strong federal government, with the residual powers firmly retained at the centre, where both north and south would meet. As well as consulting southern leaders in Lagos, Richards invited the sultan of Sokoto to come to stay at government house with his chief counsellors, and to consider practical changes. After this the governor consulted the three chief commissioners who agreed, with some hesitation, to his main proposals. These included a series of tiers of electoral colleges that would thereby keep every remote constituency linked to the ultimate legislature. The chief commissioners were loth to agree that the society of the western provinces was quite as much founded on a semi-'feudal' system as the north's, and they resisted Richards's desire to see a house of chiefs as part of the western regional council. They did not object to the powers of the regional councils (as Richards was terming these embryo legislatures) being restricted to questions and deliberative debates on resolutions.

The governor's despatch included a request that Lugard's opinion be sought, but colonial office administrators of the new generation, taught to be dubious of the basis for the Lugard legend, cut this from the published version, on the

specious argument that otherwise to avoid jealousy they would have to consult all other previous governors. Richards argued with some reason that only Lugard's adverse criticisms would carry validity in the world of opinion-makers, and further insisted to the office's discomfiture that he would consult the great man privately. Lugard supported the proposals, suggesting particularly the need for a review every three years. Bourdillon also agreed with them.

The essential point, then, is that in December 1944 Richards had taken the initiative, without much pressure from a secretary of state who was preoccupied with the war, and little more specific guidance from Whitehall officials; he had done so because he had recognized the unjust predominance of Lagos and its affairs among the old legislative council's business and membership, and the irrationality of the interests of the northern provinces only being protected by the governor and the chief commissioner. Not that Abubakar Imam saw the proposals as answering all doubts; and since his opinions in late 1945 appealed to Abubakar Tafawa and to many others of the 'educated members of the younger generation', they should be paraphrased here, because it was to take at least thirty years before they would cease to reflect the conservative majority of thought in the Muslim emirates.

What Abubakar Imam wanted to know was this. With northern society divided into about sixty native authority areas, each self-conscious of its differences, and a third or more of the people being non-Muslim, how could the governor's suggested fourteen northern members pretend to represent them all? Kano would have its voice, undoubtedly, but would Dass or Tangale-Waja? The people had no condemnation for the existing system of rule by and through NAs, but they did have criticisms of the gateways it left open through which oppression and selfishness might enter in. In pre-colonial days the Islamic solution was to overthrow a tyrant. British government would not tolerate revolt, but by exercising the power to depose chiefs the governor had assumed leadership of righteous dissidence [*here he was using an Islamic concept*]. It was right for a governor to defend the interests of the people, but might it not be wrong for him to do their duty for them? The emirs and their subjects should be united, to abolish corruption and nepotism; once that was accomplished, emirs and their officials would then co-operate freely. Emirs were seen now as the representatives of their peoples, both beyond their own territorial bounds and in parleys with the ruling powers; and if the masses were to be asked to choose spokesmen, they would certainly choose their natural rulers as the only leaders whom they were accustomed to respect. But if opportunities were not made for 'the educated members of the younger generation to express their ideas' [*the phrase that was unfortunately to become irritatingly repetitive*] and so to take part in government, the result would be political parties and cliques [*little distinction was drawn between the two in 1945*], which tend to oppose all existing government policies on principle, regardless of merit, and to be mutually antagonistic into the bargain. Restrictions on letters by officials to the press on the one hand encouraged anonymous scurrility or irresponsibility, and on the other hand suppressed legitimate complaints until oppression became so harsh and widespread that a large anonymous mass might feel bound to protest successfully, and so force the removal of the offender without risk of suffering individual revenge. Such was Abubakar Imam's philosophy at the war's end.

In all this it is clear that parliamentary democracy was not seen by northern intellectuals as the answer. The southern nationalists were even less enthusiastic about a legislature which was to be indirectly elected by successive tiers of

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colleges based on NA nominations at the bottom, and in which their own ambitious leaders would have to share political power with the placemen of historical rulers. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), an amalgamation of cultural and other union groups set up by Dr Azikiwe as secretary in August 1944, with the 80-year old hero Herbert Macaulay as president, moved into the vacuum left by the Nigeria Youth Movement and led the attack. The NCNC's views were pressed strongly on the London authorities, and the publicity brought it home for the first time to many British leaders that any changes were contemplated in Nigerian administration at all. They were mainly preoccupied with postwar domestic reconstruction and the thought of a welfare state, and with the infinite hopes that sprang from the newly established United Nations. Apart from India and Palestine (where the threat of a Jewish state was inciting ancestral voices in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to prophesy the inevitability of war), colonies were places whose infrastructural problems were believed to be soil erosion, malnutrition, inadequate water supplies for growing populations, communications and land tenure - experiments with DDT under scientific control were promising the end of the chief health problems carried by the mosquito and tsetse fly. Certainly these were the subjects which outweighed current constitutional law and politics in the training courses now being devised by academics under Labour ministers' direction for Furse's cadets at Oxford, Cambridge and London universities.

Newspaper coverage of Dr Albert Schweitzer's 70th birthday, celebrated at his hospital in Gabon, helped to encourage British views of west Africa as a place for rough-living pioneers, if not still a 'white man's grave'. While Malam Abubakar was able to learn about a 37-day general strike in Lagos, the temporary banning of the Zik newspapers *Pilot* and *Comet* (rapidly replaced by the *Nigerian Defender*), and a nine months' sentence for having libelled Bourdillon upon a young man called Anthony Enahoro, he did not read much about these events in his daily British newspapers. Nevertheless when seventeen unions called out 30,000 members, notably public service workers on the railway and in posts and telegraphs based on Lagos, and Zik's papers supported them, he expressed his strong disapproval. He noted the name of a young Yoruba organizer Michael Imoudu for the first time. Radical action that drew no moral or economic distinction between industrial strikes against a private employer, and political sabotage against a government responsible for the welfare of every sector of the community and for supplying almost every public utility, seemed to him contemptible. Accordingly he was disinclined to interest himself in the NCNC delegation, which was touring the country but arousing little enthusiasm from its largely uncomprehending British audiences. The incomprehension was sometimes mutual, as when retired missionaries who only knew distant bush or riverain stations exchanged challenges with delegates who only knew life in Lagos.

Early in the winter Abubakar went for practice teaching to Wessex Gardens boys' school, to Watford to look at the latest 'visual aids' in a junior school, and with Abdurrahman to teach at Battersea central school. At the beginning of the first full year of peace he made an occasional visit to Peckham, south of the Thames, for some practical experience in the girls' central school, which had mixed classes, and then in the summer term to Peckham Boys' School (Central). Both he and the children were shy with each other, but he lacked embarrassment and enjoyed his sessions, while never pretending to substitute for the regular teacher in history and geography. His methods were carefully prepared and conscientiously executed, but developed step by step from the

'lecturette' style which he brought from Bauchi. He never became convinced of the more liberal English classroom atmosphere however, nor of 'child-centred' education. To the children a dignified and graceful black man in fez and caftan, asking questions and writing on the blackboard, was still at this time rather like a visitor from the Arabian Nights. The other teachers were more sophisticated and helpful, but equally curious about the stranger; very few younger teachers with overseas wartime experience had yet been released to come home from the armed forces, even under the priority 'class B' scheme for those returning to essential occupations. These insights into ordinary British people, especially the boys and girls, living their own 'working class' lives without much thought or awareness for their national responsibilities abroad, while he tried to reveal to them those features of his own culture on which he set most store, served to strengthen his conviction that happy relationships were best built on an early frank exchange which should identify the points of agreement – the differences might thereafter seem less overpowering.

Ever anxious to improve his English, Abubakar asked his other tutor Dr Margaret Read to arrange special conversational classes for him. Dr Read asked Penelope Williams, the wife of a British student David, to take him out to tea as a stealthy, informal test outside the environment of the classroom. The Williamses reported to her that he was in no need of any such special tuition. There is one more symbolic memory that this London university mentor always carried, not knowing that Abubakar himself was often to relate it himself. It is of Abubakar squatting on his heels by a school fencing, and answering a little girl face to face as she stroked his hand: 'Why do you wear a funny hat?' – '*It is my custom, why do you wear none?*' – 'O! Why is your skin black like that?' – '*Why is your face white? God made it, and all my countrymen. He made you people different. It is God.*'. The child grinned, skipped away and looked quizzically back at him.

Early in 1946 Free France's wartime leader General de Gaulle resigned, and Britain's dismissed wartime leader Mr Churchill made a dramatic speech at Fulton in America, in which he coined the phrase 'an iron curtain'. Not long after this a new constitution was announced for the Gold Coast, the first to have an African unofficial majority in the legislative council; this stirred the Nigerian nationalists, but not the educated northerners, who saw the Gold Coast as a much smaller, prosperous country with an educated coastal population and only an insignificant and backward hinterland. One prominent northern chief, the *atta* of Igbirra, a Muslim convert, had sent his children to Achimota for schooling at the college with the black and white piano keys on its badge. A few Gold Coaster clerks and businessmen were known in the north and trusted. The Accra advance was not seen as relevant to the Nigerian north. No doubt this change played a small part in Lord Swinton's interesting statement to the house of lords at this time, that while there was a good case for amalgamating the administrations of Sierra Leone and The Gambia, he did not believe it to be practical, at this stage, to unite Nigeria and the Gold Coast. More to the point was the appointment of Alhaji Usman Nagogo, emir of Katsina and the most widely travelled and westernised of the northern rulers, to the Nigerian legislative council, to be followed soon by his less politically noticeable but much more vital appointment to the executive council where (although only summoned south to important meetings) he would join the most senior officials and two distinguished Lagosians and be free to advise the governor on proposed changes in policy, on the prerogative of mercy in capital sentences, and on discipline of senior civil servants.

book is the first biography of Alhaji Sani Abacha, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and insight into the twentieth century history of a populous and, some would argue, important story of a unique man told by well.

A young Gold Coast named Nkrumah attended a British Fabian conference at Clacton-on-Sea; a law called after an African spelt by the French as Houphouët-Boigny ended forced labour in France's west and equatorial Africa; and the new NCNC party toured Nigeria from April to December to make itself known at home. The veteran Herbert Macaulay died in Kano at the age of 82 during a tour by NCNC leaders (of whom he was now national president), to the grief of those who knew him. Meanwhile Abubakar must have heard that the retired director of education, Eric Hussey, had addressed the Royal Empire Society and suggested that government education officers should be like Vischers, take an active part in the general administrative affairs of their provinces or districts, and not confine themselves to their official pedagogic duties. If he did not, some educationalists who would be working with him certainly did. Then the reinstated *West African Pilot* got itself into trouble again; Richards withdrew its privilege to sit at the legislature's press table because of what he regarded as its flagrant misrepresentation of what he as governor had said about an alleged attempt on the life of its managing director ('I am sure that he had nothing to fear other than the dark shadows of his own imagination': to the end of his life Richards remained convinced that the alleged attempt, not the last, was Zik's deliberate invention).

A second bi-partisan colonial development and welfare act, the work of the wartime coalition, doubled the 1940 financial provision to £120 millions up to 1956 (not more than £17.5 millions in any one year); of this, £23 millions were for Nigeria, which would have to find another £32 millions itself towards its ten year plan (the value of these figures should perhaps now be judged against the contemporary newly revised home civil service entry salaries of £124 a year at age 17, rising to £152 at 18). Vigorous state action, where private enterprise had been uninterested or discouraged, was now the new orthodoxy for academic policy-makers. The loosening ties of the commonwealth of independent British nations were recognized by a privy council finding that a Canadian act discontinuing appeals to the judicial committee of the privy council was valid; and South Africa took a different, sad step away from commonwealth unity in passing the Asiatic land tenure and Indian representation bill.

Before the end of his London studies Malam Abubakar found himself asked to an Oxford meeting of radical African students, attended by a British ex-serviceman who noticed a northerner's careful attention, but also his refusal to become involved in the hot exchanges. Many years later, when the Briton had become an Edinburgh professor of commonwealth history, he mentioned the memory to someone else who had been present - 'Did you not know who that was?' asked Mr S O Biobaku; 'That was our prime minister!'

Abubakar's last chore was to write a 12,000 word dissertation for the institute of education, choosing as his subject, *The Evolution of Modern Ideas of Community Life and Discipline with special Reference to Relations between Staff and Pupils*. The roundhand manuscript is beautifully clear and uncluttered, as readable as a typed document. Three extracts have already been included in the prologue and chapters 1 and 5 of this book, and it is also evidence for much of the review of his character, at this stage of his career, in the chapter that follows. One or two approving quotations from academic writers, and possibly the wholehearted support for female education, may read like passages inserted by the student who knows what his tutors want to see. The bulk of the essay patently contains the man's honest thoughts, and makes up by lively conviction

for what many who are now ignorant of his early environment would be quick to brand as Muslim reaction coloured by a tinge of Uncle Tom-ism. It was not doctorate material, by the standards of 1946, but it was original enough to impress Dr Margaret Read and Messrs John Lewis and Harrison, the principal dons concerned with him at the institute of education. Nevertheless at the time they thought that two others of his group were more likely than he to have their eyes opened by the new postwar world. This did not inhibit the terminal report, which read in part:-

'Mallam Abubakar Tafawa has directed his studies to the ends which he defined clearly on beginning his course, namely, the attainment of an appreciation of methods in vogue in England in teaching History and English, and the practice of organizing and administering schools in this country. He has shown a commendable readiness to try out practical suggestions. . . . He has set forth the concepts of the more conservative elements of his people with a clarity and vigour that has helped many to realize that a conservative outlook need not necessarily be reactionary. At the same time Mallam Abubakar has recognized the need for integrating new and old ways of thought. . . . He has by his manner and conduct given people with whom he has come into contact an excellent impression of the quality of Hausa culture'.

In July 1946 Malams Abubakar and Bello returned to Nigeria by mailboat down the Clyde from Glasgow, being anxious to make the Muslim fast of Ramadan at home (the other two students, more 'modern-minded' in their western clothes, remained to sight-see for three more months). They had not lost their shyness, took their meals in their cabin and despite encouragement from a fellow passenger and education officer, John Digby Clarke, associated little with others. They were delayed in Kaduna, because the chief commissioner, now Sir John, wanted to talk to them. There Abubakar saw his ward and adoptive younger brother Adamu again, who was now anxious for permission to leave school. As soon as he reached Bauchi and had seen his household, Malam Abubakar wrote letters of thanks to his tutors, particularly to Dr Read and Mr Lewis. He was always a rarely punctilious acknowledger of courtesies and moral debts, so he also congratulated his emir on the award of the king's medal for chiefs.

As so often was to happen in the creation of postwar nations, the classroom skills which had now been so expensively enhanced were to be little used again, at least not directly with chalk and duster for the benefit of juveniles. But, in his own words, he '*returned to Nigeria with new eyes, because [he] had seen people who lived without fear, who obeyed the law as part of their nature, who knew individual liberty*'.

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9 Home and Advancement: An Interim Report

Hali zanen dutse, ba mai shafewa

Meanwhile Malam Abubakar Imam had indirectly set in train yet another sequence of chances that were to affect Malam Abubakar Tafawa's future. After his return from the journalists' wartime visit to Britain he had written a long letter to Lugard. This set out an independent northerner's thoughts on the consequences of the practice of 'indirect rule', as it had been variously reinterpreted by so many of Lugard's successors during the years of stagnation, first during the slump, and next during the frustration imposed by the war that was then still raging. The letter became something of an open one, and its influence on government house in Lagos is arguable. Authority in Kaduna at first thought it presumptuous, and said so. Nevertheless Lugard gave it to Sir Arthur Richards when they met. The chief commissioner Sir John Patterson then extracted Abubakar Imam's note on his visit to Lugard in November 1943 and thought again. He sent it in the strictest confidence to all residents, enjoining them to protect Abubakar Imam's identity and personal opinions from all emirate or hostile awareness: 'there is nothing very dogmatic about these statements: rather are they the searchings of a young man who is endeavouring to find his way in a maze of conflicting and confusing emotions, - he asks to be taught.' Patterson pressed this interpretation in July 1946, and implored his residents now to emphasize the need for human personal contacts between the administration and the 'younger educated elements'.

Quite soon one of Abubakar Imam's preliminary ideas was in fact implemented. Looking forward to NA nominations to the electoral colleges and to the legislature, Abubakar Imam identified the few headmasters as the only outspoken and wisely intelligent members of the educated class, to counterbalance those who had more brains than responsibility; he also saw the need not to give the sole native authorities a blank cheque. Consequently or not, middle school headmasters in the north came to be regarded officially, irrespective of their family origin or age, as the appropriate germs of youth and modern thinking to be injected, like monkey glands, into the sluggish bloodstream of NA councils. The emir of Bauchi accepted, after a token reservation of judgement, the insistence of his resident's advice to appoint the commoner Abubakar to his advisory council. In any case there was a chance vacancy: the galadima of Bauchi, who was the senior member, died in August 1946.

There was no immediate upheaval. Malam Abubakar recognized that not all the aristocratic councillors, who were illiterate in English even if some others besides the chief alkali were learned in Islam and moderately literate in Arabic, would welcome the upstart newcomer. There was no weakening of the custom of Yakubu III sending for his council, to announce what he intended to do and to hear their prompt acquiescence; and sometimes not all were sent

for, nor (as in British cabinets before the first world war) would a record always be kept outside their wayward memories. The weekly formal council meeting with resident and the divisional officer brightened a little. Here those attending discussed government's interests or even wider topics, but within a frame of law-enforcement and change, rather than of tradition; the resident would leave after major items had been settled, but he or the DO in their camp chairs would try to induce the councillors seated on the floor mats to become involved in actual debate, rather than merely peeping up through their eyelashes to detect any hints on the face of their emir as he sat on his wooden throne. Malam Abubakar gradually learnt how to react to such a lead, and to encourage creative conclusions without pushing the emir to the point of reactive resistance; but for some years he was quiet and cautious except when teaching was at stake. The resident and DO were more grateful that he did not seem to be a self-seeking toady, furthering his own family's interests.

He was of course no radical at this time, and some even thought him a reactionary himself. The resident called in J D Clarke from the vernacular teachers' training centre at Toro, where he had been posted after his return from leave, and showed him a letter from Abubakar opposing the admission of girls to the middle school, on the grounds that post-elementary education was unnecessary for Muslim women. Wilkinson commented that the government appeared to have wasted its money spent on sending him to London if he could write this so soon after his return. 'J D's pro-pagan sympathies led to a long talk with Malam Abubakar, pressing the need to educate both halves of any population equally. He succeeded in persuading him to agree to a separate class for girls, as an experiment only. 'J D' was convinced that this must fail, since in his experience Muslim teachers would positively discourage segregated girls, whereas mixed classes would frustrate their own chauvinism. Time was to tell. Meanwhile as the only commoner on the council Malam Abubakar remained sensitive of his social status as a *shigege* – an interloper. He agreed to the local extension of the approved age of consent to marriage of members of the girls' class to 17, but he knew that this would be ignored if the suitor were seen by the emir or council to be a man of importance. Child marriages were sanctioned in Islam from The Prophet's own time, and were always to be the biggest obstacle faced by workers in women's education.

Late in 1946 Arthur Creech Jones succeeded Hall as secretary of state for the colonies, very conscious of having referred in a Fabian publication on Labour's colonial policy to 'the slow work of nation-building'. He was widely admired for his sincerity beyond party boundaries, but his civil servants observed that he had not the personality to fight cabinet battles and achieve material change. Not long after his appointment he told certain administrative cadets in training at Oxford that independence for west Africa was a hundred years off, and shared with them his perception that economic and social development must precede political freedom. His parliamentary under-secretary Rees Williams said the same to the combined Oxford and Cambridge cadet courses when they united for a final academic term in London. Contemporaneously down in Lagos the financial secretary Sydney Phillipson conducted an inquiry into the financial position and prospects of native administrations; his report on the allocation of revenue through grants-in-aid and sharing capitation tax under the direct taxation ordinance was basic to fiscal practice until 1954, and remained influential long after that. In terms of policy, the colonial government took it tacitly for granted that the wartime innovations of seeking to control the

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... military discipline practices must continue; and this led insensibly to the apprehensions being that it had also some responsibility for stimulating nationalist change.

Scarcely the last outward sign of wartime upheaval disappeared with the closing of the numerous Ibeja demobilization camp on the mainland near to Lagos where impatient soldiers had set off an increase in petty crime and a widespread fall in local morality and legitimacy. The last men were now officially released to return home with their gratuities, with their uniforms if they had a civilian life after their badges and insignia had been officially removed (but often replaced with an element of fantasy), and with imaginative tales of wonders seen. Most of the men demobbed to the north did finally go home through the successive staging camps to their villages, where their relatives took them in hand. Numbers soon escaped to be absorbed into the labour movement in the larger towns at NA works yards, as government messengers or domestic servants, or in the newly re-expanding commercial world in every conceivable capacity from the manually cranked petrol pump mechanic to commissionaire or motor driver. Before long, it was easier to attract wealth in the north by growing cotton and groundnuts than by being employed, although neither the educated nor the ex-servicemen were quick to leave the north. Nevertheless the time came when it was recognized that if the north had not stimulated wartime production, £30 a ton for groundnuts in the north would be so.

In the south urban life was a more common experience, and townfolk were more inclined to have cash to spend on the consumption of goods like pencils and rubber typewriters, sewing machines and wrist-watches, beer, stout and malted grain, gramophone records, gramophones and imported cotton prints; here a larger proportion of the old soldiers found it too frustrating and monotonous to adapt themselves back into rural ritual and subsistence economies, and flooded back into the towns to seek wages. But it is timely to remember that, as was hinted in chapter 2, even in the south the ex-servicemen gave no lead to the demand for national change: even though they had had opportunity to see more advanced systems for discipline while overseas. The handful of WAFFs in Egypt, the few of thousands in India and Burma, had indeed seen the other races, religions and systems and observed free-and-easy Americans and low-ranking Europeans and were regularly aware of sporadic propensity to civil unrest in foreign lands; but they had with rare exceptions remained trustingly obedient to their own officers and had seen no successful physical challenge to British rule before they returned home. Indeed they returned with a sense of great racial superiority to the Indians. Scarcely any Nigerian 'veteran', to use the expression often favoured by politicians above the level of his village or tribal council, has drawn lessons from their wartime experiences in the near west which were taken to heart by a third hand by better educated men who were sent to colonial schools, colleges, of whom a very few were able to travel to study in Europe or the United States, either before or soon after the war. We will meet some of these men later, many of whom had been a soldier.

In 1946 a colonel in the French Sudan founded a political movement, *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), and in 1947 he led a campaign against the French Indo-China against the restored independence of the Cameroons under British Mandate (which was later placed under the United Kingdom Trusteeship (UUKT), following a decision of the United Nations General Assembly of the newly constituted United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC). At the same time the chief

commissioner, NP, visited Bauchi middle school on his farewell tour. Sir John discussed with Captain E J ('Pop') Bowler, the senior education officer of the time, and M V Backhouse, the acting resident, 'a very interesting article' which had been written by the headmaster on his return from London. He took a copy away with him and directed that another be sent to the deputy director of education in Kaduna, but nothing further was recorded on any following action. Max Backhouse was famous for having presided over the driving of the triangle of new main roads through the warren of mud buildings in Bauchi town, linking the Wunti and Ran gates with the central office and palace: what was then the vast sum of £7,500 was paid out in compensation to the townsfolk involved, who would probably have complacently accepted the deed unatoned if the emir had decreed it. Backhouse was less famous for his manners: social abuse led to a strong disagreement of principle and to the district officer, Wright, seeking a transfer to the education department (this was finally to be granted late the following year after a short posting to Gombe and home leave, as an exchange with Waller Wood, a former auditor who had become an EO and now became a DO).

1947 opened with the bringing into force of Nigeria's new constitution, by which Richards had intended, as explained in his despatch, not only to break the absurdly predominant influence of Lagos and its leading inhabitants, but also to integrate the native authorities in all parts of the country with government through the electoral colleges and regional councils, and to secure greater participation by Africans in the discussion of their own affairs. The thought of separating the legislative, administrative and judicial capital from the commercial and communications hub, relocating it to somewhere central and culturally uncontroversial, seems never to have been considered seriously. But the changes were in fact regarded by many observers of the time as 'modified self-government', in comparison with traditional crown colony administration. There were to be only sixteen officials against twenty-eight unofficials; only four of the latter were to be directly elected on a £50 franchise, the remainder being indirectly chosen (by each of the consultative but legislatively powerless regional councils, or nominated by the governor to represent important special interests which would otherwise be voiceless). By now Malam Abubakar was a member of the northern self-development fund committee, forerunner of the *Kudin Taimakon Arewa* ('money for the help of the north') movement which was to be featured periodically in years to come whenever leading northern opinion felt more strongly than usual that their British administration was not doing enough to cushion them against southern sophistication. He was also one of five senior NA teachers (the others being Bello dan Amar Kano, Shettima Kashim from Borno, Yahaya Ilorin and Ahmadu Coomassie) who were upgraded to a new post in the NA hierarchies, to be called 'education assistant'; this was on a level with a grade I chief scribe at £240 a year, rising by £12 increments to £300.

A A Shillingford had been acting for the first time in Kaduna as deputy director of education, northern provinces, and had received a 'sticky' deputation including Malams Bello and Abubakar to claim some kind of advancement for those with advanced qualifications from London (or with specialized experience or responsibility like NA council membership). Shillingford recalled having had a sheikh seconded from the Sudan education department during his posting to Borno in 1936; the sheikh had been awarded a salary suited to his fully professional status and duties, and Shillingford had suggested to the then

director in Lagos, Eric Hussey, that something similar was justified for the best products of Katsina college, possibly after further overseas training. This proposal had been forgotten after Hussey had lost a battle with the governor, Bernard Bourdillon, and had retired hurt over extra funds for another educational project. Shillingford now revived it and overcame the doubts of the chief commissioner, who had been concerned lest emirs question improved status for mere schoolmasters. There was some disputation about Shettima Kashim, who had not wanted to go to Britain on a course, and Ahmadu Coomassie who was not qualified, and the less costly alternative of honorary membership of the most excellent order of the British empire was toyed with in their cases.

In the event they received, as they deserved, both promotion and the decoration, as did the teacher Rwang Pam who was about to be recognized as chief of the Bi Rom pagan tribe on the Jos plateau; and this appointment paralleled that of Tor Tiv, the new chief of the Tiv (or in the joking slang of barrack Hausa, the 'Munshi') people surrounding Gboko in Benue. Despite the failure of the warrant chiefs imposed in the 1920s on the fragmented kinship groups of the southern-eastern districts, where Lugardian indirect rule had failed to work through the medium of 'native courts' with influential clerks, it was now officially thought appropriate to appoint chiefs for major tribes in the north. This was to be done after election, by some form of organized acclamation where their traditions were egalitarian, or by family groupings at the most. This, believed the chief commissioner, would give important 'pagan' districts a place in the upper house of the regional council, thereby giving them a kind of parity with the emirates, where the native authority was already a living, visible symbol, capable of ceremonial recognition by the British. The propriety of the move failed to avoid the later emergence of problems when interested relations were to arise and claim that chieftaincy must invoke some hereditary principle.

Meanwhile Malam Abubakar handed over the Bauchi middle school headmastership to the Kanuri Malam Othman Ja'afar, who had been a colleague for the past year. Apart from the routine matters of supervision, he left his successor to be his own man, except for the general advice that he '*must try to be as fair as possible*'. One of his last duties had been to be the generous host to the northern travelling scout commissioner, the former Kano teacher Malam Inuwa Wada, who ate too much of the proffered cassava pudding with Fulani butter and was sorry for it. The report on the scout troop was nevertheless a deservedly good one.

But much more important than jugglings with public position was the rapid growth of a rare affinity between Malam Abubakar and the district officer in Bauchi, Robert Hepburn Wright, particularly after his transfer to the education service. Wright was generally a companionable and courteous bachelor, a Harrovian from a successful Warwickshire family, with means enough to make his natural independence of mind and spirit effective. He had been Bourdillon's wartime private secretary, and had succeeded through that influence in being released for uniformed service in the Royal Air Force. Bourdillon and the war had taught him much of eternal value. Being generous with cultivated hospitality as well as personable and good-looking, he was widely popular. Station cricket matches; seasonal festivals; picnic parties at dawn to the top of Buli mountain; versions of the clowns' scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* rewritten by Malam Aminu Kano and performed by unlikely expatriate

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artizans (Bottom was translated as *Buhu*, Hausa for 'sack', and wore Aminu's own *buje* trousers with the big crutch); provision of transport and quantities of corn beer to entice a band of pagans from Miya to dance round a bonfire: such frivolities went to give the impression that life with an idealized district officer or education officer was fun. His quiet ebullience concealed principles of steel.

He was not inexhaustible; his stamina would not always let him accept the return of hospitality, which in any case his friends seldom had the inventiveness to match, and he might seem to some one-sided in his social duties. He conserved his principal energies and his thoughts for the less spectacular side of his responsibilities, keeping the paper demands of office routine to a manageable and acceptable minimum, touring as much as was practicable by kit-car and horse to keep an eye on district heads and courts, schools and dispensaries, and above all, talking, talking, talking to NA officials and complainants, absorbing the attitudes of Bauchi and spreading an awareness of a civilized, sternly but lovingly paternal, tolerant and receptive but not over-sentimental philosophy in the office which above all others nobody had qualms about entering. It was a stable-like divisional office, enjoying white-washed walls of mud block, 'pan' (galvanised corrugated iron) roof covered by grass thatch, and white ants everywhere, particularly in the safe and stationery cupboard.

Sometimes here, sometimes in the DO's house, and sometimes in the middle school office, Robert Wright and Malam Abubakar exchanged their often identical opinions on emirs as sole native authorities, on corruption among traditional or revenue-handling NA officials or inspectors, on when and how the British hand might be withdrawn from advisory control of local affairs. The NA police and prisons, like the middle school, the agricultural and the veterinary offices, had become so accustomed to the attendance and itemised agreement of the appropriate government officer at any important transaction, that it seemed unlikely that their services could now survive the removal of the indirectly ruling expatriate whose statutory powers were usually in truth very precisely limited, or null.

In the resident's office Malam Abubakar always insisted on sitting in traditional style on the floor mat; in Robert Wright's house he found it equally proper to sit on chairs from the beginning. Sometimes because they looked through opposite ends of a telescope they never quite agreed on the necessity or the speed of a particular change, but they developed a deep and lasting mutual trust. It was not unique between NA officials and expatriate officers, and followed upon relationships of confidence in past years between Malam Abubakar and Shillingford, Phillips and Butler; but no other such friendship went so deep or had such consequences. At this time a little boy in the remove, Shehu Awak, one day to be a high commissioner in London, remembered Malam Abubakar telling the class that he was not physically powerful, so that everything he tried to do he had to achieve by thought and intelligence. The sessions with Robert Wright, so similar in physique, were valuable practice in argument and persuasion, in appreciating that what is self-evidently wrong to a vocal few may take time to improve, and that a different viewpoint may lead to a different, but quite as adequate, cure: that contrasting rules and institutions of religion and culture may be seen by otherwise alien peoples as equally well meeting such abstract definitions as 'justice', 'freedom' or 'impartiality'.

The trust which grew was not wholly unconnected with religious principles; Wright was not ostentatiously Anglican, and there was no conventional English-speaking church to attend in Bauchi in any event, but he did keep the King

his book is the first biography of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of independent Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and work, with insight into the twentieth century Nigerian political scene. Most populous and, some would argue, most unique story of a unique man told by a well-known writer.

James bible, the revised version and also the reset and illustrated 'bible designed to be read as literature', damp-spotted and foxed, on his shelves. One Saturday lunchtime Shillingford was entertained on tour from Kaduna to a groundnut stew, and over the preliminary gins discussed the various versions with Wright, his host; Malam Abubakar, drinking fresh lime squash, was puzzled and then fascinated to learn that there could be varieties of bible, and was also impressed that government officials might after all be worthy People of the Book (*Ahlil Kitab*: the Jews, Christians and Sabeites, who believed in God and the day of judgment, who did right, and who might have their reward with their Lord - people who shared most of the prophets of Islam, but who misinterpreted some of their own scriptures, and did not accept others of the true believers, and so were none the less infidels still).

Under the Richards constitution the native authorities of the Bauchi province were empowered to select a representative to the northern house of assembly, the lower house of the 'regional council'. Bauchi NA had a first class chief, was central and included the provincial headquarters, and was wealthiest: nobody really questioned the probability that a Bauchi man should be chosen. There were some minimal nods of implicit agreement behind the scenes from the new resident, Geoffrey Harland Payton, and from Robert Wright; but there was no lack of sense generally that, even had the administrators not expected him, Malam Abubakar was the obvious choice of the emirs of Gombe and Katagum as the most senior Bauchi NA official to whose salary their treasuries all contributed. The resident thought that the only other honest official serving the emir of Bauchi (who was less enthusiastic than his second class colleagues) was the indispensable native treasurer, the *ma'aji* Baban Inna, who kept his knowledge of English well hidden. The emirs of the province had no thought that they were sponsoring a future ruler greater than themselves, and their councillors tended unsurprisingly to follow their lead. So Abubakar's political career began with stronger support from the neighbouring divisions than from home: some now like to see this as a modern parallel to the appointment of the emir Yakubu I by the shehu Uthman. It is an appropriate moment to assess, as a teacher would, what sort of a man he had become, nearing 34, emerging from the background already described, owing something to many individual influences, and holding the opinions so firmly recorded in his London dissertation.

In 1947 Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was a practising, believing Muslim, in sympathy with the Kadiriyya *tariqa*, the brotherhood or 'pathway' in Islam to which shehu dan Fodiyo and the principal emirs (except Kano) had belonged; this meant that he was likely to be pious and humble rather than excessively scholastic, and that he was averse to fanaticism or flamboyant ritual; it also made him respect rather than despise those who admitted the discipline of non-Muslim creeds; but the agnostic and atheist were a mystery to him, hard to explain or to forgive. The main weakness of Christianity that he saw (Christians needed to be reminded that Jesus was a prophet in Islam, the last major messenger in the scriptures before the One God in His mercy and compassion sent Muhammad to be the final true Prophet of the faith) was the ease with which Christians separated church, law and 'state'; in a complete way of life that required submission to God and His will, he could not accept secularization of education, justice, public morality or mutual support. In his view, Africans usually took Christianity as a mere vehicle to the secular comforts of the western

world. The injunctions of the Qur'an and the *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet) were indisputable, but ought also to be seen by other People of the Book as worldly commonsense.

From his parents and his upbringing he had acquired patience, broad-minded tolerance of those who were contrary, provided that they feared a God, and a certain reserve. Because he had not been spoiled his anger was quick to cool, yet his simple personality could still stand out in a crowd. As a polygamist he had at last found peaceful order and happy contentment with Zainab Inni, and A'ishatu Jummai whom he had married in 1947, and later he was to take two other wives. His closest acquaintance were always to insist that his wives contributed far more to his philosophy of life than strangers sceptical of traditional Muslim households would admit. Although they are not mentioned frequently in later pages, an African friend would observe that a man who remains in a patient, intimate partnership with his wives for twenty or thirty years understands true leadership; they could advise and they had their own power. Malam Abubakar's wives however never took up household crafts or any of the common small businesses or trading pursuits of so many others; they never increased the family's small material wealth, but concentrated on its stability.

He delighted in set periods of play with children, but partly through his reserve of manner that made complete relaxation difficult, and partly through his ever-increasing responsibilities, he was never to be a very close figure to his own family, although a loving one. For his own favourite relaxation he read books endlessly, and would still readily doff his outer gown to take part in Robert Wright's cricket matches; but already he was a keen farmer and found more solace in growing plants and rearing creatures. He enjoyed a quiet joke, but with a subdued mirthful hoot: the unrefined belly laugh of many west Africans was foreign to him. His speech was always low, slow and carefully considered. Although his own tongue was Hausa, he was not himself 'a Hausa'. His tastes in food were, and remained, simple. His physique made up with dignity for its apparent frailty, with fine hands balancing fine facial features. His clothing was always spotless, unostentatious and usually white. He looked for change through gradualism, not sudden upheaval.

He was not free of all confusion: his view of history was still heavily coloured by the traditions and knowledge handed down from the local past, more than by the lessons he had learnt and now still taught in *boko* schools. He found slavery and concubinage reprehensible, but while never suffering an 'inferiority complex' he was always conscious that his own lowly origins would be remembered even when tactfully being ignored on the surface, and must be taken into account whenever he took up some social position; it is to his credit that, having been brought up as a child of the *ajiya's* household, he never developed overt insecurity or resentment after becoming conscious that he had no more claims of birth upon the district head than would a slave or a natural son. His experience of British education and administrative officers had on the whole been happy, and his experience of Nigerians from the south more varied. Northern Nigeria, as a mixed Muslim and pagan land under British rule, preferably enjoying the relaxed class attitudes of Bauchi as compared with Kano or Sokoto, was a vivid reality to him; but Nigeria as an entity was still much more a figment of historico-geographical imagination. He held tightly to the heritage he knew. He criticized Christian missions for having tried too long to Europeanise their adherents, instead of studying their customs and enabling Africans to develop the good aspects themselves and to retain pride in their

indigenous where possible. Unlike southern Nigerians he could not assume that the educated had a special legitimate right to rule.

He criticized the government education department because schools were still not regarded by the people as part of their own world, any more than were the departmental offices where Europeans worked: once the people's children had crossed the boundary into that strange world, they would despise work on their own machines, yet be unashamed to be labourers or servants to foreigners. Curriculums were pointless when the public did not want chairs, tables and cupboards, yet boys hated maintaining school farms as part of their education. Children should be sent home to take part in all tribal festivals – yet in fact they behaved surprisingly well at school and only broke out into mischief when on holiday or after leaving for good, as though the only purpose of education was to train out scribes and more teachers for offices and schools. In the familiar educationist's dilemma, he contradicted himself: even while insisting that schools must not undo the good training that African children got from their homes, he was wondering indecisively whether teachers might not very well direct them to think for themselves what might or might not be good for their community of to-morrow.

But, in whatever form it might come, he recognized that change was inevitable. The speed of modern transport alone sufficed to convince him of the sad result of reform, that those who struggled to retain the good of the past were regarded as 'primitive'. He took seriously the contemporary Oxford argument that when most civilized countries had taken hundreds of years to reach their present progressive state of democratic and economic development, it was asking for trouble for territories like Nigeria to hope to do it in a decade. He was sceptical of educated Nigerians who wanted the unadulterated introduction of the British parliamentary and local authority styles of government, having only come to know them from books and seldom, if ever, having been out of Nigeria. He feared that the British systems might not suit them, while it was open to them to improve what they already had – even so they must be very careful.

His opinions of Europeans as a materially dominant race and as individuals were tinged by his view of social evolution. He saw the ideal noble savage, living in small family groups, as indeed inhabiting a garden of Eden, and agreed in theory with the thought, 'The more civilized, the more foolish'. He believed that it was environments that through time created racial differences, and that the savages occupied the most favourable environments, leaving the worst for the whites to retreat into; but that even so happiness remained a possibility so long as man's power for destruction was limited. He had read for himself what the modern world meant. Science and technology had from the beginning created progress and greed, but had also inspired intellectual growth, and this had happened most effectively among the Europeans; man had also felt everywhere the urge to serve God, which the Europeans had chosen to do in the Christian way. The white man had had the strongest influence on the rest of humanity, in religion, habits and traders spreading their technology, religion and comforts around the world; but the main revolution had been the work of the missionaries, who did not stop at stopping war, human sacrifice, witchcraft and cannibalism, yet brought comfort by creating a different class of people, half native and half European. He wondered then why Lugard had classified Nigeria into three categories – the advanced, the half-civilized and the primitive. But Abubakar did not accept the European civilization was the last word in progress; he would have found

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it hard to admit that but for the chances of European influence and institutions he would himself have remained in obscurity.

He was unwilling to judge the British only by casual meetings in the London streets, but he saw them as great industrialists with a very high standard of living, who knew that one had to work to get one's living. Quoting some satirical novel that he had read (*'The blackman is made to serve the whiteman, and the whiteman to serve the clock'*), he jibed at civilized man's slavery to time and machines, and preferred that work should only begin when it was needed, and that time should never be needlessly wasted. He felt that the strong British democratic system gave too much freedom (too much even of good things being as bad as too little), since no people would ever all agree fairly about everything. Regarding freedom of speech even in modern states as both good and bad, he believed that it did far more harm than good in a less developed community, where it was bound to be misunderstood. People's judgment might be good or bad; their mental capabilities, means and opportunities were not all the same; some were well off, some middle-class and some poor (even in Russia, he observed); some cared only for their own interests, some worked for the good of all; and so, as with children, to allow everyone to act as they wished was bad. But looking at it from a very much less developed community, he reluctantly admitted to a great respect for the British organization of society.

He had a similarly censorious attitude to western trades unions in practice. He approved of their creating security for their members, but not of the country suffering when this quest for security was ill-used. Strikes that hurt even the workers themselves, or that severed the free exchange of goods, or injured the work of hospitals, were in his eyes worse than selfish, and he expected the newly formed and naïve trades unions in Nigeria to be nothing other than sources of trouble. People tended to obey union rules with far more faith than they did the laws of God.

He recognized that science had made strict religious observance difficult, but he regarded the modern view that religion was only a matter of ethics and peaceful relationships as loose and weak, a shallow excuse not to say prayers or to attend mosque or church. With the departure from the peoples' hearts of the fear of God, evil began to appear. God was punishing us, he wrote, and he instanced the six years of war and destruction that had just followed on an advanced community abandoning the fear of God. Religious revival was needed, and must find its root in the schools. Early development in young people of service to God gave better discipline than all the psychologists' new ways.

He was always to be more enthusiastic about teaching children than educating adults. Despite all the lectures in psychology he heard at the London institute, he rejected the attitude that a child should be free to live in his own 'child world' and to develop in his own way; yet he also rejected freedom for the child to learn adult responsibilities prematurely, for example by remaining in the adults' company while their elders were confronting hardship, cruel problems or discouragement. All lessons learnt by watching an example should be consciously guided: let the child play freely and choose his own associates, but not whenever and however he liked, regardless of the environment. Formal ways of education were needed to train children to be good and worthy citizens. Before they were fully grown it was harmful merely to let them find out their own faults and limitations and correct their mistakes for themselves. He was opposed to beating children if the sole purpose of the punishment were to make them conform to adult ways, but freedom must have limits,

and wilful naughtiness certainly merited physical correction. Love, mercy and comradeship should be the basis of nurture, but boys and girls must respect adults and never mock their parents. Education should not be used to change society, and should not separate the young from the society of which they are the heirs. Teachers should win the parents' confidence, and take an interest in solving the community's worries; they should visit pupils' homes on holidays. Senior boys should manage small ones, and so gain a sense of duty in later life – ex-prefects caused least trouble as adults.

There is little in this paraphrase of his recorded views in early maturity that should surprise anyone who has read the preceding chapters, and it is of no value to criticize Malam Abubakar's conservatism and marginal chauvinism at the outset of his public career. But there is one more characteristic to cover, his attitude to women. He was never to dispute his reputation for preferring the liberal interpretations of the traditional Muslim views. It was an attitude which he had to acquire deliberately, and was not to be the least change as his character grew. For years he was suspicious of the consequence of women's education for a happy, stable society, and also for well-founded polygamy. His initial reaction to the British way of life had sprung from his natural beliefs: there was *'too much in common relation between the male and the female sexes'*; . . . the female section had been allotted its separate part to play in the making of society and could not take part in everything; . . . being physically weaker he would not recommend women sharing political duties with men, though as England was the birthplace of democracy, he feared that one day women members would dominate men in parliament; . . . the male sex in any animal was the protector of the female; . . . English women had their freedom because of monogamy and the necessity of maintaining life in a temperate climate, where women as well as men must earn their living (modern civilization had not yet made life so hard in northern Nigeria, where living was very cheap); . . . while women were equal to men in many branches of life, he was against equal rights in some branches of politics and foreign relations; . . . during war years it would be almost impossible for women to act as leaders; . . . *'delicate creatures, their womanish character would not allow them courage to do what was really needed in grave crises'*.

Then he would cover his tracks by deploring the way women in Nigeria might be regarded as *'a sort of slaves or articles of possession'*, and admiring the excellent part women had come to play in running British society; and although never having yet taken an enthusiastic lead in Bauchi, he commended the education of women and girls *'for the modern African life as wives of modern native Africans and mothers of modern African children'*; they would not necessarily, he said, all marry college husbands, indeed most would have to marry husbands whose education did not go far beyond the elementary level. In this ambivalence his intellect, under tuition, was in advance of his instinct, still governed by experience. The two would close up together later.

From here onwards Malam Abubakar's life is rather more a matter of public record, and some of the events and personalities in his experience may perhaps be more familiar, at least to Nigerian readers. The story will ultimately tend to be more one of his influence on and part in occurrences, rather than of what had gone to form his character and convictions. He was now mature, and it only remained that ever wider familiarity with human natures of unaccustomed fashioning, and with new modes of power to control the outcome of novel techniques, should toughen his resolution and mellow his prejudices

or incomprehensions. Always, as from the black rock of Tafawa Balewa, from Kobi hill, from the chamber of *babban gwani*, his mentors' reports would be –

Tawalu'i, sauƙin kai, ba shi da izza:
Humbleness, amenableness, he has no conceit.

Or as the emir himself said with an oracular smile, '*Ya hau doron kasa* [he's on his way]'.

his book is the first biography of Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and offers insight into the twentieth century African continent. Most populous and, some would argue, most influential, it is a unique story of a unique man told in a well-






COLONIAL NIGERIA
 including
 The Cameroons
 Under
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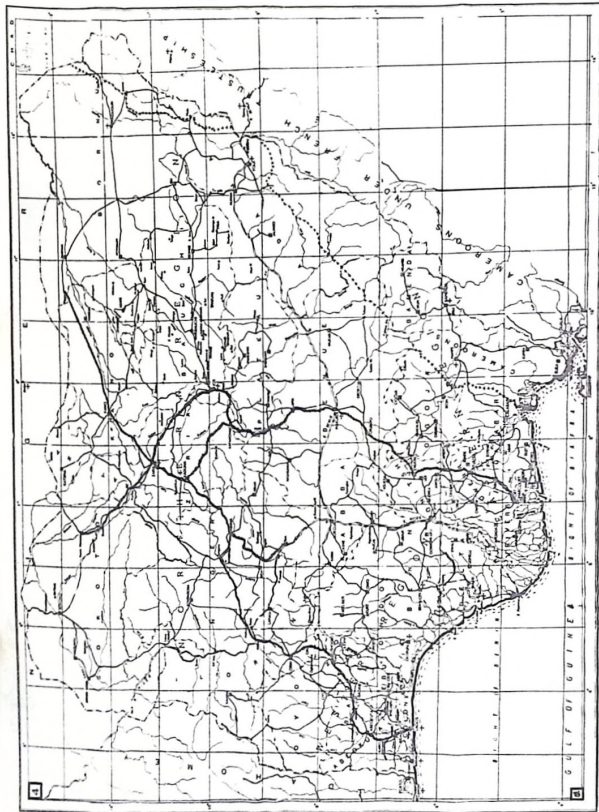
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REFERENCE

- Boundaries, International ————
- Boundaries, Provincial - - - - -
- Boundaries, Regional - · - · - ·
- Boundary, Nigeria-Cameroons + + + + +
- Railways 
- Roads, Main Trunk ————
- Headquarters, Provincial  BAUCHI
- Headquarters, Divisional  NSUKKA
- Principal Towns  Funtua
- Wireless Stations 

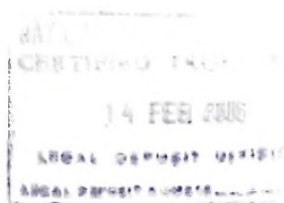


PART TWO

The colonial politician in the north

1947–1951

Sara daya ba ya ka da itace



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The next few years of this record may at last be seen, nowadays, as having had their events cloaked by a coming to terms with reality on the part of those remote and thoughtful but distinguished men who were actually immersed in the fountainheads of world policy decision. Most of the persons involved in day-to-day mundanities would have been hard put to it to recognise this at the time. Britain had expended its capital and moral resources in two great wars and was now superficially in the throes of a major social revolution which many of its honest citizens believed that an elderly infrastructure could support.

Churchill had lent his name in 1927 to a white paper in which Lugard's 'dual mandate' was reinterpreted: thenceforward this should mean that economic development and the paramountcy of native concerns were to be pursued in parallel, in order to increase production – and that those commercial and resident immigrant interests which had identified themselves with the prosperity of their chosen territory should be associated more closely in this honourable trusteeship. Twenty years later, under all British party political practices, this modified dual mandate in Africa had given way unobtrusively to a firm commitment to dominion status at some future time; the date might still be indeterminate but it would nevertheless arrive, within a very few generations.

For the British in Nigeria this meant that those officers whose simple hearts only lay in orderly administration were nevertheless also prepared to humour their superiors and to dabble in social development; that those adventurers who already believed in development (a word that speedily became susceptible to many definitions) felt encouraged to experiment with actively imposed economic innovation; and that those intellectuals who went so far as to trust in planned productive revolution could not resist further demands for local political participation, and indeed local political control. The sequence was irresistible.

The dismantling of the imperial scaffolding was now certain, and was bound to accelerate unless overtaken by the catastrophic distractions of some renewed world conflict. The certainty did not disarm those local public figures who enjoyed the impatience of youth; nor did it reassure those elderly leaders who feared that they might fall from their branches before the sweet fruits of freedom were harvested. The imperial agents in the field were wholly preoccupied with reassembling the minute resources that the war had reduced to an all-time low, and were looking for means of organic growth rather than dynamic upheaval.

Abubakar was not the only person who found himself, through the combination of chance and certain personal qualities, caught up and carried into a whirl of cares which he had not sought but could not in good conscience refuse. He was one of the few who were not, at least in part, spoilt by the exhilaration. Even so, he remained more receptive to the excitement than did those others of his countrymen (and of their rulers' alien agents) who, like him, found

book is the first biography of Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and offers insight into the twentieth century history of a populous and, some would argue, the most unique story of a unique man told to well.

occasional breathing time to shake their heads at the pace of events. He did not on that account try to halt the flow, something he knew well enough to be beyond his powers, but he became insistent that the destination be kept clear and unambiguous. However, the stage he trod was still only that of the northern provinces of Nigeria.

10 The Education Assistant: Additionally, The Honourable The Second Member for the Northern Provinces

Ba don tsawo a kan ga wata ba

Not long after the war an unsavoury incident in Bauchi left its mark on a number of prominent northerners. But for it they might have remained more inclined to discount the familiar southern attitudes, as perhaps based in anti-Europeanism rather than in anti-colonialism. A British inspector of works, Orgle, whether from bravado, misplaced humour or sheer stupidity, threatened and fired at Malam Sa'ad Zungur with a gun, to warn him off entry to the works yard where some dispute was in progress. While many people thought he should have been charged with attempted murder, the consequence was merely a five pounds fine for having an unlicensed firearm. In the result, Malam Sa'ad raised his sights to bigger targets than autocratic emirs, becoming general secretary of Dr Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, and Malam Aminu Kano's own distrusts expanded both their fields of view. Malam Abubakar and certain other NA officials concluded that some typical quirk of English law had, as so often, allowed the obviously guilty to find a technical loophole, but they were not very content. Elsewhere incipient radicalism was beginning to organize itself more consciously.

In Kano an Igbirra man, Malam Habib Raji Abdallah (who had been recruited together with Anthony Enahoro by Sa'ad Zungur into the Zikist National Vanguard, a youth wing of the NCNC founded by Sa'ad), set up a Northern Elements Progressive Association (NEPA) in 1947; he was supported by Malam Anthony Howeydi and a Bida man, Malam Abubakar Zukogi, and followed it up with a Kano branch of the Zikist Movement, of which he was to become national president. NEPA's philosophy was that the enemy was not the south and southerners, but autocracy in any form, for which an all-Nigerian nationalist movement would be the only remedy. Although one son of the emir of Kano joined, it consisted mainly of clerks and the artizan class. The Zikist movement was much more radical than the NCNC, and profited from its name since Zik himself did not disown it. Both it and NEPA fell foul of the Kano native authority (which sacked some of its members), and their obvious southern sympathies lost them their hope of mass northern urban support. Nor was the Kano provincial administration happy with them. In any event, constitutional change went ahead unaffected.

The inaugural meeting of the new northern regional council opened with the northern house of assembly gathering in the makeshift surroundings of the Kaduna trade centre, on 20 January 1947, to perform its limited functions

a book is the first biography of Alhaji Iwa Balewa, the Prime Minister of independent Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and an insight into the twentieth century history of a populous and, some would argue, in a unique story of a unique man told in a well.

of asking questions and being consulted on bills and policy papers. Tony Shillingford had said good-bye to Malam Abubakar at Jos station with, 'Don't forget, you're making history!' Abubakar smiled and said, 'I won't forget'. Indeed he was quick to take part: his was the first minor question, spoken in Hausa, on the preliminary adoption of standing rules and orders. The president, the senior resident Mr Eric W Thompstone (who was to succeed Patterson as chief commissioner and was vulgarly known as 'Tombstone'), gave an address in which he stated unequivocally that the main object of the new constitution had been the development of this British-superimposed unity into a living thing, which would then grow into a nation - a nation of Nigerians. The assembly next selected the names of Malams Bello Kano, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Iro Katsina, Aliyu (the makama of Bida, who shared with Abubakar the double-edged advantage of being a commoner, but was five years his senior) and Yahaya Ilorin for submission to the governor to be nominated as unofficial members of the central legislative council. Their standing in their home provinces, and their command of Katsina college English, made for little competition, although Bello Kano had a very young man, Maitama Sule, who embarked on a long political career by helping him to draft his speeches.

In the main general debate that followed, Malam Abubakar (sitting like the others, next to his own resident Wilkinson, neither of them too happily squeezed behind school desks) spoke third, in Hausa and then, dispensing with the interpreter, in his own English. Somewhat abridged here, his slowly resonant words staked his claim to be the voice of most northern leaders, adopting the political stance which would impress his observers into the late 1950s, but demanding flexible reactions from the British and warning the southerners that a nation of Nigerians would not be developed out of southern heritages alone:

'Since the war years things have been moving at a tremendous speed. We have our own laws and forms of government; we have our own traditions and our much-respected customs. I am quite aware that many of these need reform and that some of them must be abolished altogether if we are really to compete with the rest of the world in the race towards modern progress. We are fortunate in having the British here as our guides and teachers. They are great colonial administrators and they have great experience in developing and administering many tropical dependencies. I want all our British officers to realize that now is the time when we, as their pupils, need all their patience and courage, and the use of their knowledge and experience. If ever the northern provinces change, as I know they must, I want them to change into modern Northern Nigeria, but not into some sort of artificial civilization which is not either European or African. The northern provinces are now facing a great danger. Evil ideas are creeping into the north from outside sources. In all countries of the world you find men who thirst for power, who agitate the government and disrupt the happiness of the people for the satisfaction of their own personal ambitions. I understand we have such a class of people in Nigeria. I do not know what right those people have to claim to be the voice of the north. We must do something soon in the north to show Britain and the world that these self-styled leaders do not and cannot in any matter or in any way represent us. We have our own leaders whom we have chosen. We must do all we can to help the success of the new constitution by co-operating with the government and by creating among ourselves an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust.'

The only direct comment on this challenge to the overseas officials (and its rejection of the Lagos parties) was made by the waziri of Sokoto, who pointed

out that it was proverbially difficult to chase and overtake in one day someone else who had been travelling for thirty days: 'We are quite aware that we are far behind those people in education, but let him realize that they were the Europeans who kept us behind and left us alone on our traditional ways'. Malam Abubakar's gauntlet was the most public demonstration of feeling yet to reflect Malam Abubakar Imam's *Gaskiya* leaders and other writings; the Sokoto shaft was also the first public complaint in an official forum that the British administration, despite its minute resources, might have taken the risk of turning northern society upside down, instead of respecting it and conserving the stability that it assured. This conflict, between those who wished to build selectively on the old existing foundations and (as it were) those who would have risked total slum clearance of all tradition and have planned new towns of progressive culture, was to continue far beyond independence.

In fact radical ideas were already at work. Mr Obafemi Awolowo, the southern Yoruba teacher and journalist recently called to the bar, whose first political book had attracted attention in academic Britain, suggested the creation of ten to twelve 'states' to the governor. The governor thought the introduction of such a vaguely American tier of responsible governments to be premature. A northern conference of the residents in charge of provinces had decided that district and village councils should be promoted vigorously, in order to bring NAs into touch with public opinion. This view accorded only in part with the secretary of state's February direction to all African governors, contemporary with the the King's tour of South Africa, to build on a democratic tripod of elected local governments, trades unions, and co-operative societies. 1947 was a year when Britain's postwar approach to its colonial responsibility began to look very different from the simple re-establishment of pre-war ways which Roosevelt had feared. Mass education officers (sometimes called social development officers) were appointed in the Gold Coast, Nyasaland and Nigeria; new technology was recruited to grow groundnuts on virgin Tanganyikan bush and eggs on the banks of the Gambia river (and because the prime motivation had been to ease food rationing in Britain, the distant ministry of food in London had the ultimate oversight of the groundnuts, rather than local directors or practising colonial agricultural officers); the 'commonwealth relations office' replaced the 'dominions office', and the colonial development corporation (CDC, which oversaw The Gambia's eggs) was established; the house of commons heard of the need for the BBC to broadcast on short waves in Hausa; a Labour member suggested that the west Indian colonies be sold, to recoup Britain's losses of sterling and overseas investment when paying for the war; restoration of Newfoundland to responsible government (lost since the recession in 1934) was discussed, while India and the new bisected nation of Pakistan were taken to an initially bloody and chaotic independence by the last viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, and the Attlee government; ways were examined, none too fruitfully, of associating the old dominions with the mother country's administration of its dependencies, besides that of recruiting dominion nationals into his Majesty's colonial service; the first meeting of the West African council (comprising governors and their senior advisers or representative executive council members from the four British territories, under the chairmanship of the governor of Nigeria) took place in Accra, to improve interterritorial and international co-operation; and the first meeting of a south Pacific commission was planned

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for 1946. France was facing riots in Madagascar and Casablanca. There
were also moves in self-governing Southern Rhodesia to deprive Africans of
eligibility to vote.

Malam Abubakar's return from Kaduna met with many congratulations. He was
embarrassed that his old draughts-playing entertainer, the well-known *marokki*
or *beggar-minstrel*, Sarkin Magana, had taken to singing his praises on public
occasions, something he associated with emirs and immodest grandees, but
nevertheless the work of a popular and well-rewarded profession. However
Sarkin Magana had also entertained some of Bauchi's other leading mallams
like Aminu Kano and Yahaya Gusau with songs and game-playing in private;
he won him over with his traditional art, which had a common ancestry with
Iberian flamenco and fado. In the years to come he played a prominent part
in many election campaigns, once politics had conquered scruples. As the
minstrel said, *da abin aiki a ke yin aiki* [you make the most of practical
things to hand]; this was before the days of public relations officers. A few
hints were dropped that Abubakar still had duties at home. There was a
moment of barely hidden friction when an acting provincial education officer,
Jack Spicer, standing in from the Yalwa teachers training centre, brought his
wife into the office to carry out some short term assignment which Abubakar
considered should properly have been his own to do. The affront rankled
far into independence. There may have been an excuse. In the new grade
of education assistant (EA), he remained an official of his own principal
native authority, but he was expected to go regularly out of Bauchi, to
inspect and oversee certain aspects of the teaching work of the other NAs
in the province (towards which those NAs contributed financially), as well as
being the PEO's chief local confidant. During the next four years residents
and PEOs came to regret that (excepting Ahmadu Coomassie) all the new
EAs' preoccupation with incipient politics, let alone their regular absences
to sit in the legislatures and on boards, kept them closeted in their offices
in headquarters and away from their touring duties of inspection of remoter
NA schools.

Hardly was he back from the January Kaduna meeting than he was summoned
to Lagos in March for the first session of the new legislative council and
the budget debate on the appropriation bill. The three directly elected
members for Lagos boycotted this meeting because the NCNC chose to
reject the Richards constitution, with its heavy weighting of nominated
members from the provinces. Malam Abubakar was escorted on his
journey south by his ward Adamu, who on leaving school had been
trained to join the central government education department's Bauchi
office as a clerk, third class. Abubakar's early lack of sympathy with
southern politicians had been sharpened because on joining the train at
Jos he was booked to share a first class compartment with a well-known
Igbo lawyer. The lawyer, as was then usual, wore European-style clothes
when not dressed very informally, and made a great fuss about accepting
someone in northern attire whom he assumed to be a non-English-speaking
illiterate. Humiliated and infuriated, Abubakar made other arrangements,
eventually sharing a compartment with Malam Yahaya Ilorin, and arrived
with Adamu at the old Continental hotel behind government house, and
near the UTC Standard Vanguard repair shop in Lagos. Between Agege
and Iddo they had been interviewed by a young reporter on Zik's *Comet*,
'Ishmael' Jose, who found Malam Abubakar to be parochial, pleasant,

too apologetic for the Richards constitution, and unlikely to become more than one more of the anonymous voices of the north. In casual conversations Abubakar told southerners who spoke of liberation from the colonial yoke that northern common people considered themselves liberated when the Europeans came to the country; and that southerners should consider themselves lucky that the Europeans had come before the northern rulers enslaved them all. In a subsequent letter to a Lagos newspaper he added, *'Let the south know that we will never co-operate with that gang of agitators who are not even sure of what they are doing'*.

It is not surprising that he was in no mood to sit quietly and learn, as new members of parliaments are generally well advised to do. After the governor had inspected the guard of honour outside the legco chamber in pouring rain, the members of the house took their places before swearing the oaths of allegiance, and the superstitious were suddenly alarmed by the portent of a light bulb exploding in the storm. The five northern commoners sat immediately behind their four representative chiefs, the emirs of Gwandu and Katsina, the *atta* of Igbirra and the emir of Abuja, all splendidly dressed and determined to be noticed in this unaccustomed environment. With them were their chief commissioner and the senior northern resident.

At the final meeting under the old constitution, the governor had mentioned that the 54% of the population who lived in the northern provinces had contributed 46% of all regional revenues (including NA shares), which had been raised at 3s 3d per direct taxpayer, and they had received back 36% of the total expenditure; that the 20% in the west had contributed 30% at 2s 6d a head and received back 26%; and the 26% in the east gave 24% at 1s 9d, and got back 38%. He had not drawn attention to some other facts, such as that where water supply, electricity and hospitals were provided in the south, it was at central government's initiative; but that where they were provided in the north, the largest native authorities were likely to have financed them. Malam Abubakar's first question in the new house concerned fair shares of revenue for the north, and making up for past losses. He was assured that government expenditure had never in the past been calculatedly allocated to the various provincial groupings as such – but that in future it would be. He asked other questions, about the eligibility of northern students for the college of higher education at Ibadan (*'the newly proposed west African university'* which was to be founded in the following year); about mass education; and about the failure of all eleven northern students who had attended the Yaba higher college between 1933 and 1946. He went on to support a criminal code amendment bill which required essential service workers in public utility undertakings to give seven days' notice of strikes, and expressed the thought that those who enjoyed the status of monthly pay should have to give three weeks' notice. He was never to shift from his stand that the public service was distinct from commercial or industrial workers, and that in its privileged position of serving the public, the public's interests must prevail over employees' rights.

At this point impatient readers looking forward through the many pages yet to come will need a modest reassurance. There is no intention of recording every word of Malam Abubakar's parliamentary contributions through the years; but many were significant and cannot be passed over by a writer who wishes his subject to speak for himself. His early interventions serve to confirm what has been written in Part One, and his first major speech

in legco was also one of the two unforgettable occasions that proved to be pivotal in Nigeria's story; again a condensation will be more constructive than a commentary. A man should be judged more by his unvarnished words than by facile reinterpretations. As soon as the father of the house, the Rev T A J Ogunbiyi, a widely loved old character from the colony of Lagos, had sat down, Malam Abubakar was the second to rise in the debate on the appropriation bill. He began by commenting on the Harragin report on salaries revision. Sir Walter Harragin, chief justice of the Gold Coast, had been called in as an honest broker, neither colonial officer nor Nigerian governor having been able to spare a suitable commissioner to head the review. His findings were about to improve the civil service's 'take home pay', and possibly thereby its living standards, for the first time since the slump. Harragin formally recognized a division between 'senior' and 'junior' services, introduced 'voluntary' retirement at 45 (with some leeway for encouragement or resistance on both sides), and instituted common basic salaries for all in the senior service, with an expatriation allowance (as recommended from Whitehall) for the overseas officers to compensate for having to maintain separate domestic establishments at home and in the colony of service. Abubakar claimed that native authority staff conditions of service should be equated with central government's (at the time a class I NA chief scribe had, as we have seen, an education assistant's salary and received £240 a year, rising by £12 annual increments to £300; an Arabic teacher £12, rising by 12s to £18; while a newly appointed administrative cadet would now receive £450, with expatriation pay of £150, but would now pay back a percentage of the basic salary as rent for official accommodation - although only half of that if living in a 'temporary' building made many years before of mud and thatch). Then he went on to the substance of his speech, that had largely been drafted in the calm of undeveloped Bauchi, with more than encouragement from the district officer Robert Wright in his last months before becoming an education officer; and his delivery, intonation and received pronunciation won the admiration even of those whom he regarded as 'agitators':

'We are still far from one country, despite the railway train and the motorcar which have created the opportunity of understanding among ourselves. This alone is not enough. We here are representatives of different communities, to discuss our common problems and to establish our future destinies. The success or failure of the Richards constitution lies mainly with the unofficial members. We should not close our eyes to the fact that the Yorubas, the Igbo and the Hausas, who are the predominant tribes in the country, do not see eye to eye. The masses are still illiterate, and we should always consider the position of our people who do not have the privilege of western education, and could not earn their living by sitting at a desk. We have got many primitive tribes living in small communities in hills and villages on the minimum of food. We have to educate our women. Some people look on European or Asiatic countries and try to draw comparisons. They forget the great length of time taken by these countries to reach their present stages of development. Our primitive communities must be brought up to a fairly reasonable level of education before we can call Nigeria a civilized country.'

'Among the needs of the northern provinces are mass literacy, and for the education of our boys and girls to go side by side. We have only one secondary school - we ask for five more, three for boys and two for girls. In the award of scholarships, the northern provinces should have more places, because the western and eastern provinces have been enjoying those opportunities for a

long time. Now the time has come for the north, and we should like to make up for what we have lost. We are glad that it has come to the notice of government that the northern provinces have not been receiving the use of their full share from the Nigerian government. Well, we do not want to lose utterly, and we ask for the development of the north absorbing the greater portion of the funds allotted to Nigeria from the colonial development, so as to make up their losses from the revenue. We ask for improvement in villages which have remained in the same places as before the British occupation, and for better prices for the farm produce, which means raising the standard of living. Agriculture alone cannot save us, there must be industrialization. I draw your excellency's attention to the lowering of food production for local consumption: there will be a food problem in the future. [Here he reflected concern in the NAs that the end of wartime 'encouragement' to grow food crops to benefit the military effort, with its attendant opportunities to fill officials' corn-bins also at a fixed price, might not be as beneficial as the village producers thought].

. . . As to native authorities – we should like the position of our emirs and chiefs, as rulers of their own people, to be clearly defined. Most are men of experience. Their experience and knowledge of their own people and of the local conditions carry great weight. [It was a risky and highly controversial topic for British field officers to raise, let alone a plebeian NA official; he made no more of it on this early occasion].

' . . . The doctor's care is still badly needed, but it should be remembered that the child is now fast reaching years of discretion, and he is now asking to be given an opportunity for a quicker growth. Our mistakes could be corrected easily because we should always have the advice and guidance of our British officers. . . .

'There are some people in Nigeria who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of speaking for the whole country as one. A delegation of these people toured parts of the northern provinces. We did not then understand the real intention of that tour, and we naturally mistook it for one of friendship. We had never dreamed that it could ever possibly happen that these people could have thought of becoming our mouthpiece. We should like the world to know that in the north we have got our own leaders, whom we have chosen ourselves, to be our rulers and our voice. We do not want our southern neighbours to interfere in our development. We have never associated ourselves with the activities of these people. We do not know them, we do not recognise them, and we share no responsibility in their actions.

'We shall demand our rights when the time is ripe. If the British quitted Nigeria now at this stage, the northern people would continue their uninterrupted conquest to the sea'.

The governor scribbled a congratulatory note to Malam Abubakar in the red ink of his fountain pen, and passed it down by hand of his orderly from the president's throne. The picturesque and electrifying conclusion, with its veiled reference to past northern warriors who had once fought their way south of Offa, was a direct challenge to the NCNC. That party had not been used to being attacked in faultless English, and was indeed well used to tying British officials up in knots of argument. The attack was however far from welcome in the lower reaches of the Nigerian secretariat. Their days of leaving it to those peculiar members of the northern administration (who mostly hated their occasional secondment to Lagos) to keep the vast and distant northern provinces (the 'NP') orderly while they got on with the riddles of finance,

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of Lagos and Westminster, and of their importunate neighbours based on Enugu and Ibadan, were clearly over. The fighting spirit which it embodied also restored to that northern administration an element of the confidence and pride that had been eroded by the resourceless grind of slump and war, now that they found some of their more arcane preferences reflected from such an unexpected source.

The fiery speech also left its lasting mark in the memory of the new chief secretary to the government. Mr Hugh Mackintosh Foot, recently promoted in the vigour of youth from Palestine, Transjordan, Cyrenaica, Cyprus and Jamaica to succeed Sir George Beresford-Stooke (who went to govern Sierra Leone), had been privileged to hear Lloyd George, Birkenhead, Bevan and Churchill, and ranked Abubakar's oratory with theirs. There were to be changes, and excitement charged the air, even in the 'last gentlemen's station' of Bauchi where it had all begun. In truth, the excitement continued for twenty years, and in full course of time Malam Abubakar was to change his vision of Nigeria.

Meanwhile, before the house adjourned, he secured from Foot at question time a new definition of 'indirect rule': 'So to organize and improve indigenous administrative institutions as to form an efficient administration based upon modern conceptions which will eventually be fitted to bear the entire responsibility for all administrative action in the area'. It was hardly a form of words that rolled easily off the tongue of the implementing bush officers, although it still allowed for the Perham metaphor of the provincial administration as a scaffolding: it certainly emboldened Abubakar to challenge any future district officers who tended to do the job themselves for the sake of economical achievement, instead of letting the NA learn from its own expensive or corrupt mistakes.

The session marked the beginning of other organizational changes inspired by Richards. The legislature's standing committee on finance (SCF) gave to an unofficial majority control of financial expenditure, which was effectively to vest those back-benchers who sat on it with power to delay matters, while still having no power or responsibility for the executive arms of government. This in turn hampered the concurrent development of civil service Whitley councils, since their chairmen were never able to oversee negotiations with a foreknowledge of what the government was or was not ready to concede - that was subject to the SCF unofficials who were subject to no disciplinary whip. Two new posts were also created: a development secretary, in the hope that economic progress would move faster than it had in the traditionally tight political hands of the chief secretary and fiscal hands of the financial secretary, both of whom however remained his seniors; and a civil service commissioner, who was in the Cameron tradition to seek to resist attempts at devolution to the provinces (he did this through directing his assistants posted in the three provincial secretariats). The session also introduced Abubakar to more gentlemen of the press, and one regular visitor through the years was a reporter Gabriel Fagbure who was to be editor of the *West African Pilot* ten years later.

Following the Ramadan fast of 1947 Malam Aliyu Abubakar, who had attended the Kano law school after leaving Malam Abubakar Tafawa's class in Bauchi, and had been teaching since then, was attracted to Abubakar's daughter Talle, and with Aminu Kano's encouragement told him so after legco had all returned home. Malam Abubakar was happy to promise her to his old pupil and long time friend, in preference to many other would-be suitors.

Shortly afterwards the Clay mission (the second oilseed mission) visited British west Africa, seeking ways to forestall the starvation that many feared would follow on the threatened continental Africa population explosion. Concurrently the first of the produce marketing boards was set up as permanent replacement of the supposedly emergency wartime commodity boards, the others following over the next two years: controlling groundnuts, cotton, cocoa and oilpalm products, they covered the primary wealth of all three regions, and introduced guaranteed prices to the farmers, orderly local purchasing and export marketing, and the build-up of buffer funds to cushion world swings. The new governor, Sir John Macpherson, was to take as great pride in the permanent establishment of these interventionist boards as in any change during his future seven years in office. He saw them as holding the funds in trust for the growers against renewed hard times. Interventionists were to see them also as an opportunity to amass capital for research, feeder roads and what was not yet called 'infrastructural development'; and that would lead in turn to politically inspired expenditure which might not always benefit the farmers who husbanded the crops. The commercial trading companies like the UAC, although involved through the licensing of buying agents, were dubious from the beginning about where all the benefits would lie.

The governor and the sultan jointly laid the foundation stones in Kaduna of the Lugard memorial council chamber, which was to be the first permanent home of both houses of the northern regional council. The NCNC, after the countrywide and money-raising tour which Malam Abubakar had disparaged in legco, made a further visit to Great Britain in August, to protest against the Richards constitution and to popularize their 'freedom charter': this introduced into wider politics the notion of dividing Nigeria into 'states'. There too the delegation, which included the young trades unionist Michael A O Imodu, a lady Mrs Ransome-Kuti and a 30-year old northern teacher from Borno, held meetings in provincial cities; it met little more comprehension than had their predecessors in 1945, despite the presence of one or two colourful minor chiefs from the creeks to leaven the lawyers. To their regret they found the secretary of state, Creech Jones, no more sympathetic than they had found Richards himself. He told them to give the new constitution a trial. Unsurprisingly Abubakar had been deaf to suggestions that he might join Zik's mission. Later in the year the Labour chancellor of the exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, exhorted the first postwar conference of African governors to mobilize their territories' resources to support the further rehabilitation and strengthening of western Europe, which the US General Marshall's plan, announced in June, had made possible. Cripps was forced to end the convertibility of sterling, as the British economy failed to recover.

Many northerners had been disturbed by that 1945-46 NCNC fund-raising tour, despite its foreignness, which had led in Bauchi for example to their finding only one competent and willing Hausa interpreter (Malam Sa'ad Zungur): this incidentally was the occasion when Zik and Aminu Kano had first met. In Niger province the emir of Abuja sought help against the southern politicians from his resident, Mr Bryan Sharwood-Smith, who suggested that Malam Hassan (the emir's brother who was about to go to assist Dr Bargery to teach Hausa at London's school of oriental and African studies) should write to the government public relations office in Lagos. The letter was published in an official news sheet, and such a furore was caused that the secretariat closed the correspondence. That naturally alarmed other northerners, including Malam Aliyu, the makama of Bida, also in Niger province (*makama* is a formal NA

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title, originally given to the official who apportioned their duties among the district headmen). Sharwood-Smith told the makama, who was head of Bida middle school, that the north would have to use constitutional means, and to speak out in councils; but that he personally did not see how the north would succeed if it did not bring the four categories together in some single organization, such as the acronym 'SMAT' (*Sarakuna* - chiefs, *Malamai* - scholars, *Attajirai* - merchants, and *Talakawa* - peasants). Makama thought long and hard on this, and was to share his thought with his fellow northern legco members.

Malam Aminu Kano had indeed followed Malam Abubakar to study in London, where he had played a much more political rôle, and in fact had dallied with membership of the communist party (material evidence of which many years later was to upset an incredulous prime minister); the reconstitution of the old 'Comintern', formed to promote world marxist revolution but dissolved in 1943, as 'Cominform', a European communist co-ordinating body, had just taken place. Aminu also took his duties as secretary of the northern teachers' welfare association seriously, even at that distance. After his return, which was to Bauchi middle school, he reorganized it as the northern teachers' association (NTA), holding its inaugural convention in Zaria with the emir of Zaria as patron; the SDO Captain Money made the opening speech, the headmaster of the Borno middle school Shettima Shehu Ajiram was elected president, and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa vice-president. Dr Russel Aliyu Barau Dikko (the only northern government medical officer, a Fulani brought up in the CMS mission at Wusasa, close by Zaria), Malam D A Rafi (a railway official) and Malam Abubakar Imam were in attendance. The NTA tended to absorb membership of the original NEPA, but it soon had 25 branches and was also awarded a representative on the board of education in recognition of its more conservative elements. At about the same time as this superficial return of Malam Abubakar to his home duties, the middle school of which he was no longer headmaster experienced a second walk-out to Gubi, a strike to which outsiders were again blamed for inciting the boys. They were brought back, threatened by Malam Othman Ja'afar with severe punishment, and told that youngsters so well looked after should not repay their tutors thus.

Malam Abubakar was soon afterwards back first in Kaduna, and then in Lagos, as the semi-annual regional consultative and national legislative routines settled down. For years he was accustomed to lodge on the way at Jos with a prosperous businessman and fellow legislator Muhammadu dan Karfalia, and then in the emir of Bauchi's house in the Tudun Wada area of Kaduna, where chiefs had their quarters; but he often stayed overnight with Malam Yahaya Gusau at the college when changing trains at Kaduna junction to or from Lagos. He was in no hurry to specialize. In both houses he made lengthy criticisms of the proposed powers of a board to be set up under a motor transport licensing bill. Controlled fares and freight charges might well benefit the government, which would only pay the statutory rate, but common people would be squeezed to pay higher than the legal rates, and so allow the operators to continue to run very profitably but with less competition; more police would also be needed to oversee licensed traffic. But in the advisory house of assembly he alone voted with the officials on a member's proposal that a representative of transport owners should sit on the board, so allowing the president's casting vote to defeat it. He also variously objected to produce inspectors or examiners having powers of arrest under the marketing boards' legislation; wanted ignorant farmers to

be warned rather than punished for first offences at produce buying points; thought native treasury estimates should be debated in the regional council; again pressed the need to improve NA service conditions; wondered how provincial representatives could best be taught to get to know the whole of their provinces; looked for one or two experienced northern teachers to be appointed to the northern board of education (thus anticipating the NTA appointment just mentioned); inquired about which industries would be developed in the north; and had some doubts about the amount and purpose of NTs' reserves and investments placed with the crown agents for the colonies in London. He worried about bills going through legco without the bush people having heard all the objects and reasons clearly explained first. On the free-for-all adjournment debate in Kaduna, he attacked the availability of beer in Muslim towns: in cosmopolitan places like Jos and Kaduna it might be all very well, but in Bauchi, Kano or Sokoto, *'It is no use speaking of juvenile welfare if we are going to allow such thing in the native towns'*.

By the end of 1947 his questing mind found yet more topics to raise in the assembly. Village improvement; relations between supreme, magistrates', mixed and native courts, and executive interference with the latter; using Qur'anic schools for mass education; tin mine labourers' wages; and social welfare. On conventional education, he welcomed the new policy proposals for handicraft centres as junior relations of the technical education developments, but argued against all schools being open to children without distinction of religion, since doubtless *'Islam and the various Christian denominations would come into clash'*. But in the battle to reach parity with the south, he had *'no objection to people being forced to do things for their own good'*.

He also came back once more to the well-trodden path of 'indirect rule', on which he was still confused between approval of the principle, disapproval of the practitioners, and uncertainty in which direction he might best move. He began to distrust his own emir more and more over his material corruption, and wished that the administration would take sterner action; yet he respected the emir's conventional love for his people, including the pagan tribes, and recognized their conventional loyalty to the emir; he also recognized his own ambivalence, both towards district officers whose advice was invariably accepted, and to those who were very reluctant to offend the sole native authority with any advice at all. Fumbling his way forward through his thoughts while on his feet, he said (again this has been edited down),

'It is undoubtedly true that indirect rule, in its old form, must go. No country in the world has yet succeeded in producing a perfect system of government, and I am one of those who believe that European systems in their entire forms will not suit us. All political changes must take account of the old foundations. There is nothing wrong with indirect rule as long as it will constantly keep on readjusting itself to suit the changing conditions of the modern world. There has been some talk in the south on the question of appointing African administrative officers. It was then forgotten, sir, that in the north we have got such officers under the title of 'district heads', but not a single DH who has been trained. Now, I would like to say again that indirect rule is the best system for us'.

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11 Northern Defensive Lines are Drawn

*In ka ga makiyinka a rana,
ka kara hasa wuta kusa da shi*

In fact at the time when Malam Abubakar was speaking, three Nigerians were on the Devonshire course in Britain, part of the largest cadet intake ever, and one of these was a son of the northern chief and legco member, the Atta of Igbirra. Sir Ralph Furse, about to retire, claimed that between 1945 and 1947 he had recruited to the colonial administrative service, including contract appointments, the equivalent of eleven normal years' intake: 470 had gone to Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and the three east African territories, and only eleven had resigned before their probationary period ended. He also claimed that, of these, 70% had entered from alleged motives of idealism, but he thought that they were practical idealists. If he were unable to breed confidence in the future of the colonial service, it would be liable to suffer in the same way that the Indian civil service had suffered latterly, from fear of premature abolition as a service recruiting British officers, before it itself believed that its job was done. This psychological brake on political progress, as some saw any promise of full careers to British officers, was to be removed later in the same year.

The governor set up a Nigerianization commission in May 1948 under the chief secretary to the government, Hugh Foot. It included Dr Azikiwe, and the native treasurer of Adamawa NA, Malam Muhammadu Ribadu, as a northern representative. Zik wanted the administration to be Africanised urgently; many politicians from the western provinces, familiar with their own large chiefly ruled NAs, saw the provincial administration as a temporary evil, which should remain British - they could not see their obas giving the same courtesy to most potential African officers of the day. Foot reported quickly on 10 August, and among practical proposals for selection boards, and training scholarships with equal treatment for NA staff, concluded that Nigerians must still be recruited to the administrative service, and that no non-Nigerian should be recruited except where no suitable and qualified Nigerian was available. It may reasonably be suggested now that in concentrating on the upper grades, the commission gave scant attention to the middle technical grades. Foot continued to persuade the governor of the necessity of Nigerianization of politically sensitive posts, and found that his chief had already recognized the need to avoid the semblance of having to be pushed.

Not that training was till now unheard of. Already the British Council had been active in organizing familiarization and mind-broadening courses in Britain for colonial citizens, and in January 1948 Malam Abubakar's friend Malam Garba Kafin Madaki, now Bauchi's chief scribe, went on local government training in company with, among others, Katsina college old boy Ahmadu

Raġa, who was now a Sokoto NA councillor, supervisor of district heads and proud holder of the title 'sardauna'. This meant 'captain of the bodyguard', and its last holder was now the sultan. Somehow Malam Garba seems to have been selected to go back to Britain four months later, this time in the company of the emir of Katagum, and this time to study 'the British way of life' (the emir's strongest impressions were of tube escalators, of the royal horse show, and of how few people in Britain ever sauntered – all were in a hurry to go somewhere, which he found strange). Malams Abubakar and Garba discussed these visits at length, before and after. For such journeys the Labour government's new nationality legislation began to introduce small implications. Under the British citizenship act of 1948 citizens of all independent commonwealth dominions shared the status of 'British subjects', but for those who belonged specifically to Britain and its dependencies the formula 'citizen of the United Kingdom and colonies' was devised; the significance that Lagos was a colony, and most of Nigeria a protectorate, and that citizens of the latter were 'British protected persons', began to fade in practice, but not in the completion of official government forms.

Meanwhile in December 1947 a critical event in the Gold Coast had been the return from education and unofficial lecturing in the United States, and from assisting anti-colonial movements in Britain, of the former Francis Nwia Kofi, son of a goldsmith at Ankroful on the border with the Côte d'Ivoire. He was now known as Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the nationalist who had shown interest in Britain's Fabians. He had been asked to become organizing secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention in November, the bourgeois Dr J B Danquah being unaware of the revolutionary ideas he had acquired while fraternising with the communist party of Great Britain. There were riots around Christiansborg castle, the governor's residence in Accra, in February, which led to detachments of two Nigerian infantry battalions being flown to Accra for two months of patrol and guard duties in support of the Gold Coast regiment and the civil power. The Aitken-Watson commission of inquiry followed, in which Keith Murray played an important part, and reported in June. The lawyer commissioners did not confine their inquiries to ex-servicemen's discontents, and were considered by those governing the Gold Coast and Nigeria in effect to have surveyed the entire Gold Coast situation and have given a coded message to hasten moves towards self-government. This sequence of events gave Nkrumah the chance to defeat his less radical competition. He spread his fame by travelling abroad to Abidjan and elsewhere, but at home he concentrated on building up the party through radicalizing the susceptible young, and demanding loyalty to himself personally. The Gold Coast's middle classes woke up too late, as he broke away from the UGCC and went on to found the Convention People's Party (CPP) in June 1949. Those persons in Nigeria concerned with internal security took note, but most people outside Lagos were disinclined to see much relevance to their vaster country with its strong regional tensions.

Elsewhere an attempt was made at federalism with the establishment of the central legislature of the east African high commission in Nairobi, to supervise the common services (posts, railways, harbours) of the three British territories. At the centre of affairs, Whitehall formally allocated the promised £23 millions from colonial development and welfare funds towards Nigeria's £55 millions plan. The secretary of state was faced generally with colonial governments whose establishments were filling fast, but who now found that when in April

is book is the first biography of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of independent Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and work, and insight into the twentieth century history of the most populous and, some would argue, the most unique story of a unique man told in a well.

In 1944 the colonial office had rejected soviet-like centralized imperial planning, and plumped for outline sketches from London, which would give wide freedom to territories to work out their own development programmes (and parliamentarians of Nigeria's original effort has been noted earlier), it had like most other authorities failed to anticipate continuing postwar shortages of materials. Impudent men blamed lack of resources, plans stagnated for lack of staff. Good examples were obvious in Nigeria's communications: huge pyramids of unexportable groundnuts were stacked up, particularly at Kano railhead, because of troubles on the Nigerian railway and inability to replace worn-out rolling stock and engines. The possibility of reviving river transport downstream from Baro was again looked at. A scheme was also approved to experiment with small dams, to allow nomad cattle to remain in their wet season grazing grounds instead of wandering to erode the fallow parts: nothing came of any of this in Bauchi. A Lagos-based department of commerce and industry was set up in the wake of the plan, spawning in its turn a department of marketing and exports.

Malam Abubakar was at this time appointed to the board of control in Zaria of Gaskiya corporation, which had been devolved from the education department's northern literature bureau. He refused Dr East's offer of hospitality, preferring the humbler thatched roof of Malam Abubakar Imam, or that of his old Katsina classmate Aliyu Dankyari. The African staff of the corporation were puzzled that their expatriate seniors 'enjoyed' government service conditions, and were protected or disciplined by the government's general orders, whereas they were vaguely equated with the native authority gradings, scales, and employment practices; it looked to them as though higher authority could not imagine northerners in central government's garb, or outside the world of N.A.s. But the notion that there might be other norms besides government, NA and commercial rates was remote; the day of the 'parastatal' had far to come. In February the staff sent a 'round robin' of complaint to East, the sultan, Dr Dikko, Leslie Goble (the Secretary, Northern Provinces, or 'SNP'), Henry G Farrant (the field secretary of the Sudan United Mission) and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Abubakar, who was regarded as an honest broker, eased the relationship between the British who expected co-operation, and the Hausa language staff who were suspicious of subordination. All this meant yet more trips away from Bauchi responsibilities, although he was far from a regular attender at board meetings.

However he took part in plans to publish *Gaskiya* twice weekly in 1949, three times weekly by 1950 with a Saturday supplement, and ultimately, by 1953 if possible, every day with a new weekly supplement for readers in the areas more remote from distribution centres. He also had a token part in creating the English language *Nigerian Citizen* weekly, the $\frac{1}{2}$ fortnightly *Jakadiya* for a more rural readership edited by Abubakar Tunau, and a *Id Tiv* monthly edited by an untrained young man Benjamin Akiga. Early in the year Gordon Wilson, the currently seconded DO, left the corporation and Abubakar was pleased to see that when after an interval Wilson was succeeded by Harry S Seaford, Seaford was not made nominal editor of *Gaskiya* and that Abubakar Imam remained in the full-time chair. However, at the age of 36 Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had begun to face the dilemma of 'the great and the good' of more advanced years in developed countries - he was member of too many bodies to give them all his due attention.

During the summer meeting of the regional council he first met an administrative officer, Peter Stallard, who had been appointed joint clerk to the house of chiefs and to the house of assembly. Stallard covertly combined these duties

with those of the first northern political intelligence officer, in which he was helped by Malams Isa Wali and Sule Katagum. He took an opportunity to invite Abubakar to lunch, who met there the emir of Gwandu and Shettima Kashim from Borno. In the house of assembly Abubakar demanded ploughs instead of tractors, and in the course of regret that elders were losing their grip on the youth of the north, warned against the infiltration of the belief that the government would only listen to people who agitated for the things they wanted. At this meeting the Saradauna first took his seat, having succeeded the waziri Abbas who had just died.

Abubakar applied this year for an advance from the NT to buy a maroon Austin 16 motorcar, and was (unlike most NA officials at the time) successful in winning the DO's advisory approval. His first driver, Garba dan Kwara, taught him to drive the car himself, but on touring to Kafin Madaki to open an elementary school at Nasarawa, Abubakar suffered a mishap on the Gubi river dry season crossing. The damage to the car was repaired; there was no damage to his driving confidence, and a lifelong hobby of sitting behind a steering wheel had begun. He liked to keep the outside of his car clean and shiny, but although he was always to ask questions about the working parts, covered in caked oil and laterite as they usually were under the bonnet, he never pretended to understand an internal combustion engine; and he never became too proud to travel between Kaduna and Bauchi in a mammy-wagon if a car let him down.

Sir Arthur Richards had retired as governor late in 1947, with the unusual reward for a career colonial servant of a barony. He took his seat on the Labour benches of the house of lords, but was in later years to move steadily to the right (at his last African governors' conference, held in November during his retirement leave, he answered Creech Jones's opening speech with a classical allusion: 'Our purpose, following Antaeus, son of Zeus, who was invulnerable as long as he was on the ground, is to ensure that you in the colonial office keep at least one foot on the ground'). Sir George Beresford-Stooke, acting *ad interim*, presided at the second session of the legislative council for the last time. This was held in the trade centre at Kaduna in fulfilment of Richards's undertaking to take alternate legcos out to the provinces and let the members see each other in turn against backgrounds closer to their contrasting homes. Kaduna as an artificial expatriate-dominated capital, apparently built round the brick secretariat and a racecourse, was an unattractive place for most southerners, particularly at the peak of the dry season with virtually no humidity at all, and the desiccated grass and scattered trees still covered with the Saharan dust of the winter's harmattan. The sprawling African satellite town of Tudun Wada looked more to the traditional emirate culture of Zaria than most of the northern provincial capitals' *sabon garis* ('new towns', set aside for immigrant residents from non-Muslim areas, and for junior southern civil servants), and generally the atmosphere was inhospitable. Even the chief commissioner's government lodge was on the wrong side of the railway tracks.

Malam Abubakar maintained his attacks on what he saw as the presumptions of the southern leaders and the north's subsidising of the south. Like nearly all his peers, he judged the peoples of the high forests by the relative cultivation of those who represented them; he could not yet imagine that the subsistence poverty of some groups in the thickest southern bush, and their traditional so-called 'nudity' in a hot, humid climate, might still be greater than that of the northern hill tribes. He challenged the financial secretary to justify the variations between direct capitation tax of 3d in parts of the east and 2s

... how the government can maintain its unity... I would like the rules to be flat throughout... I was in a hotel for a year and never... Perhaps conscious of his own instincts in a major... that the British should interfere with the emirs and... and teach parity with the youth in western... to remove chieftaincy disputes from... He astonished southerners and the British alike... Onyeama's... should be empowered to make... orders for illegitimate children (Onyeama... who had briefly been an administrative officer... and was now the first member... *It is almost something the less mention of the better.*... *adultery is only punishable by death,*... *we think it is wrong to discuss this ungodly thing'*. His... and left more than a hint that he believed that the only... were begotten by Europeans. After a cross-party... supporting the motion and easterners claiming that... and nurtured their bastard children, the motion was...

The second member for Lagos, ... tabled an ambiguous motion to condemn... among various communities of the country. Malam...

... they are all too loose about it - . When I look... the chiefs and the commoners... sitting... to feel some presence of unity. But I am sorry to say... outside this chamber... The southern tribes who... do not mix with the... and we... look upon them as invaders. Since... been trying to make Nigeria into one country,... are historically different in their backgrounds,... and do not show themselves any sign of... to is that Nigerian unity is only a British... reaction to the president's rebuke that... I should like to make myself clear because I... I have the right to say so and to make myself...

... the budget, where he followed a prolix... that foreshadowed the next twelve years,...

... in which the parties who unite are not... I even pray for real Nigerian unity, in... could be allowed to enjoy equal opportunities, and... religion should not prove a barrier. I know, possibly manage without an outlet

to the sea, and economically Nigeria must remain one country, but I think, Your Excellency, economically the world is one. . . . Nigeria's political future may only lie in a federation, – and I think that no region should be denied self-government because the others are not ready for it. . . . I am now really beginning to be afraid that with the present too early mad demand for self-government, that the Nigerian self-government, for which I say we all pray, might be forced upon the northern provinces at a time when we are completely unready for it.

. . . I cannot help remembering a conversation which I once had with one southern gentleman five or six years ago; I was discussing a book with him, I think the book was called British and Axis Aims in Africa, and I think it was written by one Nigerian in America. Now I asked the southern gentleman, sir, what would happen to the so-called conservative, backward north if Nigeria were to obtain immediate self-government. My southern gentleman, sir, gave me a very true, frank answer. He said that the north would supply the labour'.

He also rounded on Zik for criticizing the almost universal northern customs of removing dusty or dirt-laden shoes at an outside door, or in the presence of a superior and making a stooping 'obeisance' to him:

'Our schools must aim at educating the young people for the society [to which they] are going back, . . . and in that case, now if we allow the students in Kaduna college to wear shoes, and just when they see their principal come, say 'Good morning, sir', well, when they go back home during the holidays, or when they leave, they cannot behave in that way towards their parents – they would get a good beating. . . . The time will come when the young people who are now criticizing these things should be in a position to say, 'Well, now we allow you to carry on with your modern adoptions'.

Meanwhile he would never accept the growing belief of the radicals that inherited outward forms of polite respect reflected some inner servility.

The first Lagos member, Dr Olorun-Nimbe, had animadverted on the presence of northern chiefs as legco members. In fact the emirs rarely spoke, disdaining personal exchanges in public, and pretended to understand no English at all, relying on Malam Isa Kaita from Katsina as interpreter. Malam Abubakar defended them warmly, while hinting at the way for change:

'Since the time of the Songhai and Malle empires in the western Sudan, and since the time of the Habe, the kings of northern Nigeria sat in councils and took part in all discussions. . . . Our obas [a tactical reference to the great chiefs of the western provinces] and emirs are not constitutional monarchs like the kings in Europe, so I see no harm in their coming to this council . . . because they are at the same time being trained in the art of modern government, and this will all be to the good of their own people'.

There were yet further exchanges with Zik. Malam Abubakar voted against his motion that legco members should be paid £600 a year (to equal the minimum of an expatriate administrative officer's total pay), and strongly opposed another motion calling for papers on the NCNC's unsuccessful deputation to the colonial office. He said that he had himself been asked by this 'unknown organization of self-styled representatives' to join in presenting the case of Nigeria. With whom had they discussed their new draft constitution? There was no difference between Richards forcing his constitution on the people of Nigeria and the NCNC trying to do the same thing.

newspaper cuttings and intelligence reporting what was truly happening under the screen of exco minutes and legco proceedings.

Energetic, unpompous, and despite an infirm back a happy man with the regal gift for never forgetting a face or its name and context, he quickly revived his monthly dinner or drinks with Dr Azikiwe for frank discussions, of which Zik never took journalistic advantage. One of his first acts had been to ensure that Zik was included in the Nigerianization commission mentioned early in this chapter. He had also tried to meet Mr Awolowo when the latter returned from Britain, but Awolowo for long succeeded in evading all approaches. When at last they did meet, Sir John chided him, suspecting that his fear had been that the governor would use him as a stalking horse and quote back to him those parts of his book *Path to Nigerian Freedom* which might now seem too 'pro-British'. Awolowo admitted it, and Macpherson tried to reassure him during a discussion of the implications of the foundation at Ife of a Yoruba cultural organization, Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Sir John now accepted secretariat plans for a five week introductory tour of the country, knowing that his fifteen pre-war months in Lagos had been no true introduction to Nigeria. The itinerary left Bauchi out of the list.

Malam Sa'ad Zungur and his friends in Bauchi distributed leaflets of complaint, calling for a protest meeting; with the support of Malam Aminu Kano he went straight to the emir and pointed out that the new governor clearly wanted to see things for himself, would not believe what was merely reported to him on files, and should be shown how despite Lagos's budgets nothing had changed in Bauchi. They did not think the NA police chief would give a permit for the mass meeting without consulting Cox, and they felt sure Cox would not agree. The emir's prior oral agreement pre-empted written refusal, and what has grown in notoriety to be commemorated as the first mass political meeting in northern Nigeria took place in the town market. In the name of several hundreds, resolutions were passed and conveyed to Payton, the resident, to forward to the governor, asking for a visit. Two days later the DO asked the equally disingenuous organizers for their non-existent permit, and admonished the emir Yakubu III for giving his oral covering approval. Malam Abubakar thought Bauchi merited the courtesy of being included in a 'first impressions' tour, but did not care for discourteous protests. The resident had in fact lost no chance of voicing his own lonely theme in other correspondence, that Bauchi was the third northern province in total area, the fourth in total population, the fifth in total NA reserve development funds, and usually the last to be remembered.

New ways of managing Europe's colonies were presently in the air. Paris, smarting from a six-months rail strike in its subsaharan territories, promoted the French high commissioner for west Africa to be additionally governor-general of the colonies, having a military general responsible to him for the defence of the united commands of French west Africa and French equatorial Africa. As for London, despite prescient comments in the upper house by Lord Rennell that there was a great deal lacking in the knowledge possessed by the foreign office of administrative and colonial matters, and that time had come to institute a limited interchange of personnel between it and the colonial service, the attempt was made in fact at the wrong extremity, the top. A commissioner-general was appointed for south-east Asia, half a governor-general under the colonial office, half an ambassador under the foreign office, having neither the authority nor the prestige of either status.

The commissioner who described 'this fantastic arrangement' declared that the 'great office knew nothing about colonies or colonial affairs, and even less about responsibility for government and administration, and should therefore be consulted but never allowed to dominate. This lesson was never to be learnt since colonies survived.

The colonial secretary of state for the colonies, Mr Creech Jones, was in any case summarising Britain's aims in this way: 'The central purpose of British colonial policy is simple. It is to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the commonwealth in terms that ensure to the people concerned both a fair standard of living and freedom from oppression from any quarter'. What was fair? Who would define 'oppression'? And how urgent should the guidance be? Sauchi's education assistant, and his official colleagues, saw these questions still in strictly local terms. Creech Jones, supported at the official Africa desk by the Cambridge 'Apostle' Andrew Cohen (originally from the mining revenue and former administrator of Malta's civil defence), believed that the 19th century stereotype of British working class history was relevant to Africa, and their policy despatches, themselves an innovation, concentrated on trades unions, co-operatives and local government. More practical, with the creation of the UN's world health organization (WHO), was the beginning of massive attempts to destroy malarial mosquitoes with the new insecticide discovered during the war, DDT. Whatever its later recognized ecological ill side-effects, this chemical for a while lifted the malarial burden from many places and provided another boost to population growths in urban Africa.

Other foreign events of interest in 1948 were the communist coup in Czechoslovakia; the signing of the Brussels treaty forming the basis for western European union; the forming in French Cameroun of a people's union political party (UPC); the creation of the state of Israel and outbreak of an Arab war; the defeat in South Africa of General Smuts by Malan; the beginning of the Berlin blockade and the Malayan emergency; and the return home of the Tunisian nationalist Habib Bourguiba.

A notable official resignation marked the education assistant's departure on his second visit to Britain at the end of September for the African conference, yet again before he had had time fully to resume his local routine. Murmurings were beginning to be heard from district and education officers that if national interests were to monopolize Malam Abubakar's time, then the national treasury should relieve the province's native treasuries of the burden of much of his salary and retirement benefit liabilities. These murmurings were to go unheard until he was to be granted leave without pay in order to become a minister. The visit to Britain was an enjoyable success. British newspapers and cartoonists made much of those Africans who sported their colourful or unusual customary dress, most of it without patronage or ill humour. Malam Abubakar was introduced to King George VI and photographed with his Majesty and other members of the royal family at a Buckingham palace garden party. He met Roy Welensky, the Northern Rhodesian train-driving politician, who incidentally praised the Nigerian chief secretary Foot, who was also a delegate, for pointing out that the conference gave an opportunity for unofficials from *within* to meet the colonial office people face to face, without their own officials getting in between. He visited Birmingham, and tried but failed to visit Robert Wright's father in Warwickshire. Abubakar was the only Nigerian delegate to attend at a meeting of the empire parliamentary association in its ancient home of Westminster Hall. He took part in the discussions, and talked to Mr Speaker, leaders of both Labour and Conservative parties, and various

members of commonwealth parliaments and colonial legislatures, realizing gratefully that it was not always as a ceremonial convention that he was listened to here as an equal.

At the conference in early October, he had heard Creech Jones announce that he, personally, was dubious about the philosophy of 'leadership', harking back to the rantings of Carlyle and the experience of fascist and nazi and communist Europe. But Malam Abubakar was by now aware that personality, example, ideas and influence could be melded in various degrees to induce other people to do good and needful things. He took part in the conference debate on local government, and defended the north's 'one step at a time' approach to the ballot box:

'The system of indirect election to the central legislature is recognized as an immediate compromise, in view of the high proportion of illiteracy now prevailing in the African colonial territories. It is not acceptable, sir, as a final method of choice, and we hope that the ultimate policy must aim at the polls and the ballot box.'

Before he left for home he confessed also to an interviewer that he had been most impressed in peacetime Britain by its Roman archaeological remains. Many of the implements and utensils he had seen in museums were similar to those still used in northern Nigeria. He thought that the typical Britisher had 'a strong reverence for ancient monuments', a characteristic which as a northern Nigerian he greatly admired. For some years he was still going to work with Britishers who also honoured the past, yet who believed in building on it instead of digging new foundations on virgin sites or unthinkingly burying the relics under characterless modern structures.

However, while he was in London yet more political foundations were in fact being dug on greenfield sites at home. In October at an old Zaria reading room Dr R A B Dikko, Malam Abubakar Imam, Malam Aliyu Abubakar and Malam Aminu Kano attended the formation of a *Jam'iyyar Jama'ar Arewa* (northern people's congress); coincidentally in Green's hotel, Kaduna, Malam D A Rafi, the Nigerian railway inspector, formally inaugurated a *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa a Yau* (association of northern men of to-day), together with Malam Yahaya Gusau, who was now teaching at the government college, Kaduna, and became general secretary. The first of these had followed on discussions at the NTA convention, and had led to the merger of such groups as the Zaria friendly society or Zaria youths' association, and similar bodies in Kaduna. The taste for such social discussion had arisen in fact from the inquisitiveness inspired by listening to wartime news broadcasts such as had led to Kano NA's war news broadsheet. The intention was to set up such merged clubs as a 'cultural' organization in parallel with whatever branches of the northern teachers' association were opened, and naturally Bauchi was first to follow. However Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was not quick to join, nor surprisingly were most of the 'headmaster' class, those who had everywhere been encouraged to join chiefs' councils as progressive councillors. Perhaps some at first felt it a little beneath their dignity.

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12 The Education Officer: Constitutional Change Accelerates

*Kowa ya daure kura,
wa san yadda zai yi ya kwance ta*

in the morning of 1947 the largest single flight of ex-servicemen, university-
trained, administrative class officers in Nigeria. One of the two who came to
Kaduna province, was a Canadian who spent three months in the Katagum divi-
sion, and three months in the Kaduna division, and three months in the provincial
administration in the Province, to be then posted as Cox's assistant district
officer, Kaduna, where he was to spend the next five years, while
the other was to spend a similar period of mutual doubts, he
arrived in Kaduna in 1947, with a sense of assembly from Abubakar,
the then Premier of the Province, after a long and arduous budget meeting,
the Premier had decided to recruit new officers, instead of recruiting even more
of the existing ones. The question was: "How many professional people: was this
a question of 'more' or 'less'?" There were already

many (many of them were administrative professional officers) showed some
of the same qualities as administrative officers, who might be younger
than themselves; they did not always
bring with them the same amount of age and experience were to be best
of the existing ones, side by side with their
some of whom were equally young and new. Malam
the structure, *status quo* in the provinces, with
departmental officers, compensated
the generalist administration, was all that
of many of the slowly emerging
at this time he did believe that
of the existing unreinforced and
of a full of young eggs. He did not know (he could
transmission territories, where the
to keeping the Boers out, and
on the principle mistakenly
the Indian princely states: otherwise he
to their merits, and particularly on their
of those NA
for touring, for personal
in their offices or mud-block

bungalows with their office files. The Bauchi cadet received mixed marks on these criteria.

A J Carpenter, a visiting adult education officer from Zaria, was struck at this time by the quiet courtesy with which Malam Abubakar received him, at unavoidably short notice, and discussed the problems of adult literacy at home in his own porch-hut, furnished only with an iron bedframe and one chair. It was in the same simple surroundings that Mr J B ('Jack') Davies, general manager of the United Africa Company's Benue area, first called on him; sometimes they would take tea, but over the years they would spend more and more hours in deep analysis of the country's commerce and development. At this present time Malam Abubakar was no less critical of the UAC, and of the rights to the mining royalties which it owned, than he was of brash ADOs. These talks, duly reported to UAC's Lagos and head London offices, were the foundation for the company's eventual sale of the royalties back to the Nigerian government two or three years later. Coincidentally it was now that the organizer Mr Nduka Eze renewed his trades union attacks on the 'colonial system' in the south; he concentrated his expenditure of ammunition on the UAC as a mainstay of that system, but since the government failed to react, most of the company's employees fell apathetically out of the political fight, and trades unionism was not a large factor in Nigerian private commerce till the end of the colonial years.

Malam Abubakar's favourite book was at present G M Trevelyan's *English Social History*, which he kept re-reading in between other volumes, and once carried on the plane with the Qur'an when the governor gave him a lift to Lagos: its warm, left-of-centre liberal care for ordinary people rather than for kings and statesmen pleased him greatly, and it reassured him to find that the new ADO had read it in wartime India and also enjoyed it. This discovery followed on Malam Abubakar reading the dictation piece for the ADO's lower standard Hausa oral language test. Affairs which encouraged them both included a successful spread across Bauchi of the development and welfare well-sinking programme under two hard-working and idiosyncratic British artizan inspectors; reports by well-drillers of coal and mineral oil discoveries in Gombe to the east (regrettably, soon to be discounted); and the creation of a local boy scout troop for illiterates. Tin production was rising above normal demand. Artificial fertilizer, some of it free, was distributed to farmers from the new northern region production development board, which also funded boreholes and heavy road-making machinery.

The NA had just founded a staff 'Whitley council' to discuss employees' problems (although there was little room for negotiation of conditions of service, which were standardised from Kaduna), and the emir's own council now kept a minute book of its decisions in roman Hausa ('*Sarki ya yarda* [The emir agreed] . . .') introduced each conclusion just as colonial executive council minutes used to end, 'His Excellency concurred in this advice and directed accordingly'). The right of the resident and district officer to talk directly to the emir was not yet in question, but there was a growing sensitivity to the suspicions aroused by any private sessions before a council meeting, and council members were now rarely left waiting for long outside while emir and administration predigested the agenda. The dry season brought cerebro-spinal meningitis again close to the north of the emirate. Administrative precautions against an epidemic did not hinder the inclusion of two more of Malam Abubakar's friends, the native treasury accountant, Malam Yakubu Wanka,

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n well.

and the works supervisor, Malam Shehu, among the seven northerners to join another British council visit to Britain, the purpose of this one being to study 'local government in transition'. They were followed shortly after by the emir of Bauchi's northern neighbour in Katagum, Umaru; that emir's 19-year old eldest son, the chiroma, Muhammadu; and Malam Othman Ja'afar, the Borno man who had succeeded as headmaster of Bauchi middle school.

Elsewhere in Nigeria practical things were on the move. The institution was agreed of a trade commission in London, under a retired British resident, to be formally opened as a full representational commission in 1950. Technically minded people installed radios in four Lagos police cars, and examined the practicality of recording legco sessions on new British tape machines. Kaduna (ex-Katsina) college moved again finally, to Zaria. Shell oil prospectors were encouraged by their renewed surveys of the Niger delta, and forecast test drilling next year: they had conducted gravity and seismic surveys over a 155,000 square kilometres concession from 1938 to 1941, and had returned in 1946. Twenty-four northerners were shortlisted for interview by the central public service board. Communal labour (in the guise of voluntary self-help) achieved international respectability when the documentary film *Daybreak at Udi*, recording E R Chadwick's inspiration and direction of local people intent on community development in the eastern provinces, was awarded an 'Oscar': its 'treatment' or story-board was the work of David Williams, and the script had been written by Montagu Slater, librettist of Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*. Abroad, there was a brief but bloody confrontation in the Côte d'Ivoire between the French administration and 'fellow-travellers' associated with the nationalist Monsieur Ufwe[or Houphouët]-Boigny; the north Atlantic treaty organization (NATO) was formed in April, and next month the eleven-month-long Berlin blockade was lifted; a conference at Victoria falls laid the foundation for a federation of British central African colonies; in June a South African citizenship act laid the foundation for full-scale *apartheid*; soon afterwards sterling was devalued, the USSR tested its first atom bomb, and riots broke out in Buganda; the all-African Coussey committee reported on Gold Coast constitutional change in October, and the Chinese communist party's troops took over Peking and the country's government.

In Britain a 'colonial month' passed without too much notice being taken by the Londoners who were the hosts; although political and journalist critics did point to inadequate production, for example of railway rolling stock, to meet colonial development orders at a time when, despite all the wartime planning for the relaxations of peacetime, the UK's overall output was hardly sufficient to cover its own demand. The prime minister Mr Attlee persuaded the colonial office to set up what came to be known as the 'smaller territories committee', to advise on what was to be done constitutionally and politically with the little places where he was convinced that 'Westminster' could never be sensibly reproduced in miniature. Miss Rita Hinden, the South African-born, long-serving key member of the Fabian colonial bureau, paid her first visit to west Africa, and spent three-and-a-half weeks in Nigeria as guest of H O Davies's Nigeria youth movement. Many members of the Conservative party began to suspect the deliberate influence of communism behind such events as the Gold Coast riots and the emergence of Dr Nkrumah, and in the attitudes of colonial students at British post-secondary institutions. Attlee on the other hand abandoned his immediate postwar intention to encourage the colonies to maintain armed forces capable of defending themselves. Yet a commons select committee recognized that the Royal West African Frontier Force (of

which The Gambia Company was about to become a full Regiment again as in wartime) was still equipped as if part of a plan for imperial defence; it also noted that the west coast colonies were expected, if they could afford it, to contribute to UK funds 125% of their 1939 military expenditure, including the whole cost of their purely internal security. Partisan voices were not lacking to hint that Major Atlee was reluctant to over-arm black colonies, in case this should upset the white South African authorities, where the Afrikaners were inaugurating their voortrekker monument; and the victory of their National party ought to have destroyed lingering liberal illusions that the majority of white voters shared the beliefs of western democracies in reasoned parliamentary debate.

At the Ibadan budget meeting of 1949, Malam Abubakar had other contributions to make as virtual leader of the northern bloc, besides scepticism of the value of administrative cadets. Like most taxpayers (but few undergraduates or enforcement agencies) he favoured the bonding of scholars to return and serve their sponsors after qualifying; he supported southern wishes for compulsory free primary and mass adult education in principle, but thought that practicality required the regions to discuss the implications first, and to introduce it voluntarily. Most importantly, he succeeded in forcing a motion through to hold back surplus balances of revenue for diversion to a special northern scholarship fund, which would compensate at some future date for the past adverse differentials; he also opposed a commission of inquiry into the posts and telegraphs department, since this would only open the door to destructive probes into every department, good or bad, which might ever attract partisan criticism. Then he got himself tied up in an hilarious muddle of mutual explanation and misconception over another honourable member's attempt to use the bizarre Westminster convention of moving that a matter be read 'this day six months'; this was meant to frustrate Zik's private member's periodicals and publications bill, but it ended with Sir John Macpherson confessing, like all the other amateurs of exotic procedure, 'I don't understand' - both in this debate on freedom of speech, and in another supporting Mr T A Oduola who had been warning easterners off interference with western and northern natural rulers, Malam Abubakar pursued his familiar lines of criticizing fossilized indirect rule, the indoctrination by the press of youth in disrespect for tradition, and the government's seeming wish to turn the whole country into an extension of Lagos. The young Lagos reporter ('Ishmael') Jose saw him as a man of good manners and candour, who would however not reach 'the top'.

He did play a useful part in clarifying some confusions in the house over the chief secretary's motion to refer a review of the constitution to a select committee. The governor, wielding a new broom, had decided before even the second session of the legislative council under the Richards constitution was completed, that a review should be held; so far from letting it run for nine years, with a minor look at detail at three year intervals, he had decided of his own initiative and with Foot's enthusiastic support, to speed the process up, and had informed London accordingly. Thinking hard of Accra, he had said to his official colleagues, 'I am never going to be forced to amend the constitution because I am being besieged in my government house. I am going to have my amendments before that happens. Not that I would mind being besieged by anybody, except the Lagos mob. The Lagos mob is no more vicious than anybody else, but the fact is that they're more ignorant. They don't know anything about the country, and they don't know the kind of thing to shout for'.

The immediate practical consequence of Macpherson's move was that for

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Six months all Nigeria's public life was sidetracked into conferences, held successively in village areas, divisions, provinces and regions, to discuss constitutional change. The British officials, accustomed at home to an unwritten constitution which gradually changed in its detailed interpretation over decades and centuries in reaction to gentle social development, had tended to assume that a broad framework would evolve, which would then with little further change support the slow process of creating a nation, which would one day assume dominion status within the statute of Westminster. They did not appreciate that a motley population, consulted by their rulers on fundamental matters for the first time, might find themselves appealed to again and again, not over six months but over a good many years, by politicians who found each successive framework insufficiently satisfying. British ideals of adaptability were typically exemplified at the very start of the 1949 consultative process, when the prime ministers' conference in London announced that the commonwealth of nations (no longer 'British') agreed to the retention of the new republic of India within its fellowship, since the republic accepted the king as symbol of the free association of his family of independent nations, and as such as also the 'head of the commonwealth': a fundamental change lacking the logic of feudalism and chivalry, without pages of legalism either, but based on mutual respect and trust.

Nigeria was to need legal forms, in thickets, before trust could be created. Village area conferences, ignorant of village life in other provinces and bemused by the simplest explanations of the national and extra-territorial responsibilities of modern central governments, retreated like all close-knit communities into parochial introspection and chauvinism, and left it to the higher levels to answer the incomprehensible questions as best they might. In the north the great majority would have opted for no change, had a few NA officials and the British administration not made it clear that this would not have been acceptable, and had the governor's questions posed to them all not assumed the need for their involvement in change.

The example of Pakistan, still headed by a king's representative, unsurprisingly came more and more to mind, as the Muslim parts of the north were forced to talk of political destinies. Thoughtful observers wondered what place 'the younger, educated elements' would wish to allot to the 'pagans', or to what was beginning to be known as the 'middle belt' of more southerly provinces - to the very substantial part of the north, in other words, that was not native Hausa-speaking. The Pakistan analogy, which Malam Abubakar was always quick to discount, unfortunately drew attention away from the common factors shared also by Nigerians who were neither northern nor Muslim.

Mr Awolowo, while writing in favour of federalism, and reckoning that even as many as 30 or 40 regional houses of assembly would not be too many for a future united states of Nigeria, had recognized that as long as every person was made to feel that he was a Nigerian first, and a Yoruba or Igbo or Hausa next, each 'would be justified to poke his nose into the domestic issues of the others'. The conceptual unitarist Dr Azikiwe's freedom charter, unveiled at Kaduna in 1948, had demanded states on a national and linguistic basis; now in June at Aba he called on the newly formed Ibo state union to recognise that the 'discriminations' against the Igbo nation (no Igbo on executive council, inadequate electricity and pipe-borne water, worst of all no fire brigade outside Port Harcourt) would only finally be eliminated if it became free as a separate state in a future west African federation. The Ibibios and others were talking in similar terms. No wonder that the thoughtful observers were disappointed

but unastonished, on now observing that the northern intellectuals had begun to ask how landlocked nations might gain access to the sea, or to speculate on how to establish commercial harmony with foreign neighbours. Sir Eric Thompstone, chief commissioner in the north, celebrated his thirty years in Nigeria in the conviction that the inescapable growth of political parties on communal lines, regardless of any theoretical basis of opposing policy doctrines, made a stable future for Nigeria only practical if it were embodied in the loosest of federations. Such views were underlined by the administering authority's decision, meeting the UN trusteeship council's wishes that the special status and problems of the Cameroons and Bamenda provinces should receive particular recognition, to appoint a Commissioner for the Cameroons in April. He was also to have responsibility, somewhat vaguely defined and even more vaguely implemented, for purely trusteeship matters in those parts of the territory administered as parts of the northern provinces of Borno, Adamawa and Benue.

A minor counter-excitement in July for the officialdom and NA mallams in Bauchi province was Robert Wright's arrangement to fly two lion cubs and two ostrich chicks to the London zoo; the orphaned cubs had been brought by a hunter to the emir of Katagum (who housed them temporarily with Azare's head butcher), and were named 'Umaru' and 'McKenzie', after the emir and his district officer. Malam Abubakar was one of many who had played with the cubs and chicks in Wright's garden.

In September, as a small wave of new British educational staff, including a woman, arrived in Bauchi, Malam Abubakar was summoned to Lagos to be interviewed for his suitability to be promoted to the 'senior service'. There had been much agitated discussion and minuting behind the scenes. There was on the one hand the seemingly irresistible pressure for 'Nigerianization', and there was also every justification for maintaining standards of competence; while to allow practical experience to substitute for evidence of qualifications on paper would open the door to more and more exceptions, and so to corrupt favouritism. Finally a compromise was reached which allowed the civil service of the Nigerian government to retain its UK-comparable standards (which the better educated south was in difficulties over attacking), and allowed the north to point to its own 'senior service' members in marginally larger numbers. Four native authority educational assistants would be promoted 'Education Officers (NA)'. They would still be NA staff, and so government general orders and conditions would not confine them; but in salary, status and informal precedence they would rank with, and indeed share the responsibilities of, the provincial government staff whom they worked beside, and might officially relieve as stand-ins.

Thus Malam Abubakar was raised to the new basic salary, including the current £60 'temporary addition to rates of pay (TARP)', of £510 a year, with entitlement to government rates of travelling and motorcar allowances. Horse allowance did not interest him, but he began to think of a new motorcar. He was also tentatively approached about membership of the Bauchi club, the senior service club in a mudhouse in the government residential area. He declined, more embarrassed than honoured, on grounds of expense and teetotalism, and so was spared involvement when next year there was dissension in the membership over the appropriateness of a suggestion that a Mr Kassim, the Syrian who owned a local trading store or 'canteen', might join. The club would have benefited from both their subscriptions, and possibly from Mr Kassim's

wholesale goods. A curious aspect of all this was that the Hausa language had only known Europeans to be members of the 'senior service' till very recently, and translated, say, 'administrative officer' or 'education officer' as '*baturen mulki*' [literally, white man of rulership] or '*baturen makaranta*' [literally, white man of school]): Malam Abubakar was therefore now a *baturen makaranta* – but before there were British in the land there had been Arabs, and indeed originally a *bature* only meant an Arab, so that Mr Kassim was also strictly a 'white man', in Hausa at least. But Mr Kassim's equivalent in the Niger Company's canteen was a southern clerk, and clerks were certainly 'junior service' and not clubbable. The exclusion therefore was turned with some deviousness into a distinction of class, not race, and Malam Abubakar (to whom certainly Mr Kassim was a grocery clerk rather than a social friend) might have acquiesced – while suspecting that Bauchi club members like Mr Orgle and his successors as PWD foremen were no more privileged than clerks when they were back at home in Britain.

The tiers of constitutional consultation reached the fourth level by September 1949, with the chauvinism of the grass roots firmly embedded throughout the whole country. The northern chiefs and commoner representatives agreed their line in the Kaduna police college dining room, and settled for a central legislature that might vest extra powers in the regional councils. Southern politicians were thus invited to recognise that all tribes, including their own, put their own narrow interests first, and that political parties in the south would ignore this at their practical peril; but that northern leaders would disclaim the right to speak for any but their home areas. The easterners thought the regions should only have powers that the centre specifically delegated, while the westerners wanted all residual powers to be given to regions which should be based on ethnic divisions. More even than Richards before him, Macpherson saw what was to be dubbed 'ethno-centricity' as something too deeply implanted to be eradicated by order-in-council, and much bitterness and recrimination later came his way from those who stubbornly supposed, despite the experiences of India and elsewhere, that the reversion by him to a unitary or tight confederal constitution would have created a united nation.

In October he set up a drafting committee in Lagos under the chairmanship of Mr Foot, the CS, with Eric Himsworth the FS, Gerald Howe the AG, and two or three representatives from each region, to study the recommendations of the pyramids of consultative councils, and to offer a constitutional framework to a national conference. There was a rather academic recognition that most federal constitutions came about from independent states surrendering some powers to a new centre; this was going to be a novel experiment, a centre devolving, which might or might not lead to a federation at some stage. From the north, where the final consultations had nominated these three, the representatives were Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the wali of Borno Muhammadu Ngileruma, and (in his first national responsibility) the sardauna of Sokoto Malam Ahmadu. The Colony and Lagos also had one representative each. Their discussions lasted over twelve days in October and another week in November, and required them all to compromise: they recommended a new federal legislature with a strong central executive, formed from thirty northerners and twenty-two each from west and east. Substantial, but largely concurrent, power should be devolved to the regions, where the north and west should each have an upper house of chiefs. The delegates foresaw no danger in leaving residual powers at the centre, since the central legislature would

surely comprise watchful representatives sent from the regions. There should be an impartial but final re-examination of regional boundaries, of particular significance to the west. A majority agreed with the western conference's view that Lagos and the colony should join the west under a single legislature. Heads of departments should no longer sit in any of the legislatures, but at first only the east and west should gain ministers. The centre should have six ministers for the purely central subjects: three for concurrent subjects shared with the regions, and three without portfolios.

Four distinct southern minority reports respectively denounced regionalism, in favour of a larger number of ethnic states; opposed upper houses anywhere, and indirect electoral colleges in favour of universal adult suffrage; demanded direct votes for southerners resident in the north; and attacked the status of Lagos, part of the constitutional colony, as an effective separation of the capital from the west. Recommendations were more equivocal over apportionment of seats: should the north predominate, as democratically it should, or should the regions each be equal? At this stage, despite the trust that regions' representatives would not forget their origins when debating 'residual' subjects, the moral assumption was that no region should be able to dominate and that members would come to see themselves as representatives of Nigeria. Nobody had objected to a privy council for the prerogative of mercy, but a minority had argued against defence and external affairs remaining governor's 'reserved' subjects. The westerners wanted the King, advised by the Nigerian chief justice, attorney general and privy council, to appoint and dismiss the judiciary, but the rest were content with the *status quo*. All wanted a fiscal commission to divide the revenue, which they had found too difficult to balance between *per capita* fairness and the need not to hurt the east and west.

When the JJA and JMAY, described at the end of the last chapter, became conscious of each other, they naturally coalesced at a joint second meeting in Zaria into the informal *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa*, or Northern People's Congress (occasionally called at first the Northern Nigeria Congress). The first vice-president was the 19-year old Malam Maitama Sule. The first finance secretary, who was quickly to become general secretary, was Malam Yahaya Gusau. Malam Abubakar was not there, but his friend from Katsina and London, Malam Abdurrahman Mora, was, as also the scout commissioner Inuwa Wada, who was now chief clerk of the Kano NA electricity undertaking. Of the 135 official employees who made up this first conference, 17% were in education, 53% worked for government and the other 30% were from various NA departments. At this delicate stage the NPC insisted that it was a cultural club, without any political ambitions that might embarrass northern government officer members such as the chairman of the meeting, Dr Dikko. The northern teachers' association was regarded as its 'organizing arm'. Nonetheless all its concerns were political issues, however non-partisan it tried to show itself in face of southern parties' challenges. It was committed from the start to War Against the three '-Cis' (*Yaƙin Ci Uku*), the three *cis* being *jahilci* (ignorance, illiteracy), *lalaƙi* (idleness, dissipation) and *zalunƙi* (oppression).

It was also bold enough to oppose the ancient practice of emirs and district heads officially touring their own areas, as this might lead to oppressive impositions on the peasantry. Dr Dikko and Malam Yahaya Gusau were at one in claiming that the north could only be saved by northerners, not by the British. Northerners' feelings for other Nigerians were to be of 'cautious friendship', but southerners should not be allowed to organize northerners in political parties. The congress claimed no intention to usurp the natural rulers;

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despite his desire, verbalized by Aminu Kano's cousin Isa Wali, to restrain the house of chiefs within a purely advisory council of elders, and to confine them to their palaces, it ardently desired to enhance their authority 'whenever possible', and to help them in properly discharging their duties and enlightening the *malikawa*. There was also a suggestion of admitting women, because Malam Isa Wali had a widely respected, well-educated and 'liberated' wife. Sa'ad Zungur, observing for NCNC, was elected adviser on Muslim law, and ruled that this proposal would be permissible, adding that the shehu had allowed ladies to join his classes. It had been naïvely hoped that the congress would meet the chiefs in a joint session, but there was disputation and the two groups kept apart.

The sultan's blessings were read out at the opening, nevertheless, and the emirs of Kano and Zaria wired their congratulations, because they also feared the south and needed their peasantry's loyalty. Most of the administration expressed scepticism about the relevance of all this to culture, and especially about the professed lack of political ambition. Malam Abubakar simply gave it all his support. Malam Yahaya's own opinions were more specific: the village assemblies that had formed the base of Macpherson's grand consultative pyramids should lead directly through electoral colleges to a regional house of assembly, without any later introduction of the native authority nominees who packed the present consultative house; business and trades union interests (including teachers) would have special representation, youth movements would be involved, and without question the house of chiefs would merely 'advise'. This would bring pagans into government politics, and to one British commentator it was also a reminder of how the Third Estate of 1789 was short-sightedly politicized and so produced Revolution in France. With such ideas abroad, it would now be impossible for the north to turn back to any *status quo ante*.

Towards the end of 1949 eastern Nigeria had its stereotypical colonial tragedy. The process of consultation on the constitution was badly distorted by the November Enugu coal-mine shootings. The railway depended on the coal. The Zikist movement had encouraged strikes in the industry, and also tax refusals, and had fostered a false belief familiar enough to those who remembered short-lived postwar mutinies in the RWAFF in India, that money approved for disbursement was being physically withheld in buried strongboxes by local supervisors. The go-slow workers were actually inside the Iva valley colliery, and the authorities decided to remove the explosives from the dangerous goods store for fear of misuse. Misunderstanding led to riot, misjudgment led to police opening fire, and twenty-one people were killed at Enugu. Violence spread badly, and in the event the Zikist movement was banned. In towns with English language newspapers or wireless sets, the news strengthened whatever anti-government or anti-easterner feeling already existed; in the bush it tended to be heard as another titillating rumour of no local relevance. The Enugu shooting certainly seemed significant in Lagos and London to those who could never forget the Amritsar shootings of 1919 and Mr Gandhi's subsequent civil disobedience campaign in India. In Bauchi, although loss of life anywhere was deplored, and officials equivocated over whether to blame the police officer or to thank God they had not been in his shoes, it all seemed far away. Malam Abubakar had never yet been to Enugu, nor had most of the Bauchi British, who now numbered (including a few wives) nearly two dozen in all services and departments.

The lasting local decision at the year's end was the result of district officer

Cox's hand-over for his leave to the new ADO, with a file recommendation for the NA to adopt the 'Borno type' of elementary school classroom blocks. Bauchi NA still built 2-class schools of mud and thatch for £100, which fell down after a couple of rainy seasons. Two such blocks formed a 4-class school. The Borno type cost £400, with a solid central teacher's office and store, shutter windows, a concrete floor, masonry pillars to support the roof, and roof trusses of sawn timber secured with zinc bonds; the local people supplied the mud and rubble to fill in the wall between the pillars, and thatch (or if they were wealthy, galvanised iron) – these schools needed routine annual repairs, but they did not fall down. The ADO and the education officer persuaded the NA, Malam Abubakar and the works supervisor that Cox's advice was far-sighted. Such schools often survived beyond independence, and Malam Abubakar personally presided at the formal opening of one of the first.

During the school holiday Malam Abubakar also served on a board of inquiry into an error of judgement in the vernacular teachers' training centre at Toro; his duty was shared by Shettima Kashim from Borno, who advised the expulsion of a whole rebellious class. The Bauchi station was made to celebrate Christmas day by playing a cricket match on the airfield; Robert Wright's batting order was alphabetical, and Malam Abubakar and the ADO were the opening pair to defend their wickets at opposite ends, the former in singlet and baggy northern trousers, the latter in aertex shirt and red shorts. Neither made many runs. However, Robert Wright and Malam Abubakar were having very serious discussions in Wright's house throughout the British festive season about Nigerian constitutional affairs.

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13 Speedier Reform Through Distinct Regional Developments

*Sama ba ta komo kasa har abada,
tudu ba ya komo gangare*

In 1950 Malam Abubakar showed once and for all to other Nigerians at the constitutional bargaining sessions, and to other northerners over the issue of native authorities, that he was much more than just one of the familiar, intelligent and thoughtful, but too few, educated northerners. He was certainly not seen by any Nigerian as a future prime minister, indeed no southerner could conceive of any northerner ever 'leading' the whole country; yet whenever the prospect of the north seceding was freely discussed, it did become easy for the time being to picture him calmly arguing for the breakaway, and personally leading it. One independent British journalist, writing then as 'Matchet', did see him as a PM-to-be, but kept his vision to himself for the present. So also Cecil Harmsworth King, the director of the British *Mirror* newspaper group who was in charge of the Lagos *Daily Times*, was saying, 'Watch that man'.

1950 was also the year in which the world was made to recognize that neither the forceful defeat of fascism, nor the development of welfare states, nor the aspirations of the united nations, had opened the gates of the millennium; and in which London came to recognize that British gradualism was not acceptable to world statesmen in a hurry. The Schumann plan for a European iron and steel community was announced, and the Colombo plan for reinvigorating south Asia's economy. On a lower plane, Britain ended petrol rationing, but not food rationing. The USSR announced that it too now had the atomic bomb, and America ordered the making of the hydrogen bomb. Senator Joe McCarthy denounced alleged communists in the American state department. North Korea invaded south Korea, and the western world's demobilized troops agonized to a man over the threat of having to redon uniform for a third world war. Russia and China recognized the Viet Minh nationalists in French Indo-China. South Africa's new racial policy gave rise to riots in Johannesburg. There were disorders in Côte d'Ivoire. In the Gold Coast Kwame Nkrumah and others were jailed for inciting strikes and sedition ('positive action' for absolute 'self-government now!'), and a state of emergency was proclaimed; shortly afterwards six Gold Coast senior assistant secretaries were promoted as supernumeraries, out of their normal turn as judged by usual experience and merit, with a view to speeding 'Africanization' in the Accra secretariat. The clumsy handling of what was ambiguously called 'the Seretse Khama affair' in Bechuanaland (the chief had married an Englishwoman) shook public confidence in the political touch of the still novice British commonwealth relations office. Italy, who despite having changed sides in the war still tended to be remembered as the enemy by those who had fought in east Africa, was

awarded a ten-year trusteeship of its old colony in Somaliland; the British foreign office was content with the implication that 1960 would see Italian Somaliland independent, which had further implications for British Somaliland, whereas the colonial office and local officials still distrusted the compromises under *force majeure* which such fixed timetables tended to demand. In the event the Italians, who had in fact re-entered the territory on the presumption of renewability after 1960, soon decided to seek local goodwill by anticipation, and planned for its even earlier independence. This had inescapable implications, not only for the rest of Somalia, but for better educated territories like the Gold Coast and Nigeria.

In Liberia there was a trivial change with ultimate symbolic models for many countries: the fez, and the cummerbund and puttees which had developed as virtually the standard tropical military and police uniform throughout Africa and much of the hot Asian and island worlds, were speciously abandoned as 'too conspicuous for active operations', in favour of ostentatiously American uniforms, based on patterns which had developed in temperate USA climes. This quixotic change came to be reinterpreted through hindsight as a coming of age and rejection of colonialism, and progressively to be imitated by other apostles of innovation in new nations yet to be, not all of them friends of America. Where once flags had followed trade and bibles, now sartorial fashion led the new technological and cultural imperialisms, which were (at first) 'Yankee'. Such events, big and small, from Korea to Africa, were noticed by the intelligentsia in places like Bauchi, where the NA police had only just adopted the military khaki style in place of flapping blouses and baggy pantaloons made of thick but loose local white cotton weave. They failed to weaken wiser northerners' total preoccupation with the fast changing Nigerian trends, a fixation which was essentially defensive, and derived from fear of the future.

Macpherson's pyramid of popular consultation culminated in the general conference in Ibadan in January, from which both Dr Azikiwe and Mr Awolowo absented themselves. Fifty 'mostly windy' (the epithet is Abubakar's own) Nigerians and three British officials (the attorney general Howe taking the chair) debated the drafting committee's recommended constitution in detail and at length. The emir of Gwandu, Yahaya, who said very little at the table, was a strong influence on northerners behind the scenes; renowned for his total integrity, he had as a district head been much affected by the friendship of a local Christian missionary, but his morals and faith remained firmly rooted in Islam. Malam Muhammadu Ribadu, the native treasurer of Adamawa, a man still disregarded as an upstart by certain northern chiefs, rounded on what he called the insignificant minority clamouring for independence. He claimed that it was only the pressure of the British that held the country together; their removal would result in chaos and bloodshed, and all the great work in the last half-century in Nigeria would be obliterated in a moment. The wali of Borno said they merely pretended to call themselves Nigerians; as soon as there was something to discuss, in five minutes' time they automatically took two different stands – the north and the south . . . it was not tribal, religious or linguistic differences, he thought it must be 'something else'.

Malam Abubakar's contribution was more positive:

'During all of those years the northern provinces, the real north, and by that I mean the people and not the British officials who represented us in the old legco, were not

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to express themselves. It is at this point that we shall either break

as warm and heartfelt, even when they thought to calm other participants' passions. Northerners, staking his first claim, founded on the overall northern leadership, by insisting that they were largely agreed that at Ibadan Abubakar was the creator and the fighter, particularly in the militant north which emerged for the north to curb the influence of the south by the seats in the future central legislature: the last census had shown a surplus in 1951, but the annual tax counts were strong evidence that the north was the best put together.

The warning was against putting faith in catchphrases about 'Nigeria's response to the ooni of Ife's and others' appeal for reconsideration, Nigeria was to go as one country, the north's insistence on regional autonomy was merely temporary - he took it that the federal experiment ('never tried in any part of the world') was merely temporary, up to such time as the regions could really march with the east and west. Meanwhile he saw 'uncultured folks' wrangling about disproportionate revenue allocation while, since they had no intention of marking with a surplus of clerks) or in economic development, until the north (with its illiteracy and two graduates) could catch up, the gaps seemed destined to grow even wider.

Abubakar could insist that the draft be amended to give the north priority of votes, and that revenues be fixed which would recognise *per capita* needs, not source of derivation. It seemed, at the time, a minor matter that Lagos should become part of the west, which not all Yorubas in fact wanted. This was to have the unforeseen consequences that Zik, who would have preferred to provincial governments and a strong centre, was to be squeezed out of the future central legislature; more than that, because he failed to secure his entry on the Lagos electoral roll, he could not even stand for the Lagos town council. Nor was it difficult to compromise on an expatriate as an independent outsider to be president, or speaker, of the central house, although Abubakar had been arguing strongly that the governor remain in the chair. The truly important issue, the limited understanding of which partly led to the short life of the '1951' constitution, was the creation of ministers. The northerners did not want ministers at all, at the centre or at home, and Malam Abubakar fell in line with his colleagues' timidity, in order to maintain the NPs' unity. In the end, after the western obas had reassured the northern emirs, they agreed to take the risk of installing inexperience at the helm: however the novice ministerial powers were to be confined by the draughtsmen to initiating discussion of policies in council; to dealing with their portfolio in the houses; and to seeing that the policy and legislative decisions on those subjects were carried out in co-operation with the executive heads of the departments concerned. In other words, the civil service departmental directors would still direct, would still control their professional officers in their specialized activities throughout the country, and could not be overruled except by the governor or lieutenant-governor. 'Matcher' foresaw trouble, and had a long argument in private with Hugh Foot on the issue.

There was a further problem: how to introduce the basic understanding of

British parliamentary democracy to millions, of whom only thousands had experience of voting at all, and few were used to the validity of decisions taken by a simple majority. The solution unanimously agreed at the Ibadan general conference then, was to use tiers of electoral colleges, beginning (according to local stages of literacy and sophistication) at the level of a village area or town ward. There an unstructured kind of folk-moot would choose its representatives, who would in turn at successively upward, more formal, gatherings select from among themselves those who would ultimately speak for a division or province.

The next difficulty that was foreseen, in the absence of organized local political party branches, and in the light of the general distrust of strangers (particularly the educated stranger), was to prevent the primary colleges from choosing nobody but local worthies, who would lack any awareness of the world's governments or of cultures beyond their nearest marketplace. The solution to that, again unanimously agreed at the time, was to 'inject' into the final electoral college (where secret balloting would take place) a ten per cent leavening of native authority nominees, who would inevitably be prominent NA councillors or officials. The weakness was that dignitaries who might have been rejected at a primary might be injected back into the final college, and be elected: indeed it did so happen, just as a district officer might fail to intervene with evidence and unsolicited advice when an emir 'injected' his under-age son and saw him elected – and this also happened.

The recommendations went to London, including full agreement that the governor (who always felt flattered by the trust that this showed in him) should arbitrate on the disputed Ilorin/west boundary. The chief commissioner of the west took off his hat to the northerners: 'They have put up with being lectured and scolded and patronised by a lot of schoolboys in a really long-suffering way'. Malam Abubakar came home to be moderately lionised as the hero of the day; but he confided to his official friends that he was very upset, and the sooner he could 'get away from this very dirty work the better. I hate politics – Nigerian politics – and I deplore the way my country is rapidly marching to its doom'. He saw no signs of friendship between the east and west either, 'at each other's throats in the conference hall', despite their obvious support for one another against his own 'legitimate' northern recommendations. He was also worried about his own health, and complained of physical weakness.

This did not stop him from playing a full part in the northern leaders' immediate preparations in Kaduna for a delegation to London, in case the secretary of state did not accept their views on the Ibadan conference. He had unwaveringly advised his colleagues to be patient, and to state their case consistently and logically, so that if things came to the worst (as he truly feared they would), what he privately called '*the unforgivable Labour government in England to-day*' should see that they had tried their best to reach agreement, and that it was necessity which compelled the north to seek separation. This was the ultimate purpose of the remarkable fund-raising committee now set up by the sultan: the other members were the shehu of Borno as vice-chairman; the emir of Katsina as treasurer, and the chiroma of Kano as his assistant; the sardauna of Sokoto as secretary-general; and as ordinary members, the emirs of Zaria and Abuja; Mr Rwang Pam (chief of the plateau Bi Rom tribe); the wali of Borno; Malam Muhammadu Ribaḍu, and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Such men were derided by many southerners as 'unrepresentative' of a north very inaccurately alleged in contemporary reference books to be 66% Muslim, 33% animist and 1% Christian; but it is hard to suggest another eleven

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northerners who would have been recognized as more welcome or effective leaders of their entire people in 1950. The north was not yet, unlike the urban elements of the south, imprisoned by the conviction that democracy could only express the people's will through party political systems answerable to ballots or mass meetings. The legal steps were taken to collect money from the public to fund the potential delegation, and the chief commissioner was told by the sultan of Sokoto in writing that the committee and the north intended to stand firm and be courageous. They also decided from the start that if the fund collected were not needed after all, because their requests were met, it would be used to send young men on scholarships for further studies overseas. The sardauna of Sokoto and Malam Muhammadu Riba'adu went to see Peter Stallard, who had succeeded Harry Seaford in April 1950 at Gaskiya corporation. He suggested that the fund's name be stabilized as *Kudin Taimakon Arewa*, and arranged for the printing of the receipt tickets. A large sum was collected of around £11,000, in traditional ways, but also through the reluctant help of the native treasurers' offices and paperwork.

It was known to the sultan, the emirs of Bauchi and Katsina, and one or two other of his friends that Malam Abubakar had talked all these possibilities over with his trustworthy expatriate confidant, the provincial education officer (PEO) Robert Wright, and that Wright had suggested the tactics for their wisest presentation. It was also known to Phillips, the deputy director of education at Kaduna, and to Thompstone. Because separation of the north did always seem attractive to the more romantic or less worldly-wise British field officers in the north (and perhaps to the more ambitious of those in the Kaduna secretariat), knowledge of this very personal and private consultation with one Englishman may have come to add strength to the undying opinions, elsewhere and in the future, that Britain was encouraging separatism through its far-flung sons, in order to divide and go on ruling. But a people whose culture was recorded in its proverbs still said, '*So mai sonka - wanda ba ya sonka, rabu da shi*: love him that loves you - keep clear of him that loves you not!'

The truth is that it was the mass of everyday northerners ('Audu in the bush') who still, a generation ago, perceived the southern immigrants as having come in as camp followers of the British during the short span of less than fifty years since Lugard, and who supposed it possible that if the British so willed it, the north might once again be left on its own to 'dree its ain weird' (or go its own way). They needed no alien encouragement, and at the time Malam Abubakar did not either, with whomsoever he might consult. It was the less sentimental British, be they in Whitehall or the sceptics in the Nigerian services, who saw that freedom from outside interests and interference had gone forever. 'We divide, you rule', an Indian had said at the round table conference in 1931; yet the sultan's committee was not a new Moslem League nurturing some new Jinnah's Pakistan - the pagan north shared the same fears as the Muslim majority, despite the few scattered voices of those non-Muslims who joined the Aminu Kanos and Sa'ad Zungurs in attacking imperialism, rather than tribalism, as the main enemy of peace and justice. The paradox, seen from so much later, is that the 1950 conservatives wanted to remain Africans, using British technical assistance; the 1950 radicals wanted to become Europeanised in terms of political philosophy and culture, and to be answerable to none but themselves for the consequences of their ambition. Malam Abubakar took a long time to lose the depression which he had developed at Ibadan: the

recommendations could be tolerated, but the schisms and mistrust were demoralizing.

The northern house of assembly debated the joint select committee's report on the general conference in the newly completed Lugard memorial hall, and Malam Abubakar seconded the motion to adopt it. Then the 'central' members, beginning to wonder when they would ever again be settled in their own homes, packed their loads and bedrolls, and went on by train to Enugu to join the legco for the same purpose (and also for the budget meeting) in March. Two events coloured the political ingredients of the other debates: the commission of inquiry into the Enugu coal-mine shooting had reported, and a member of the Zikist movement had just made an inefficient (and ineffective) attack on the chief secretary in Lagos, Mr Hugh Foot. The commission, including two African judges and a British Labour MP, saw the troubles as essentially industrial rather than political, despite the internal security element. Production per hewer had gone down dramatically in recent years, possibly discouraged by lack of rolling stock to distribute the coal that was won. The commissioners thought the answer lay in better trades union organization, and their report condemned both the secretary of the colliery workers' union for deceiving his membership, and the police officer who had ordered the shooting for an honest but unacceptable error of judgment. Malam Abubakar feared and expected public turmoil when those findings became known, but in his private communications showed greater interest in the reactions to the attempted murder of Foot. Zik allowed himself to be carried away in general debate by Jeffersonian memories of his student days in America, and made an unwisely expansive reference to the tree of liberty having to be watered by the blood of tyrants.

Malam Abubakar did not speak to this, although many members did in their varying ways deplore the attempted crime; but privately he told his friends in despair that *'Zik seemed to suggest that assassination at this stage of political evolution was unavoidable and said all sorts of things more or less in support of the evil act'*. Foot himself was quick to demand that Zik say exactly what he did mean. Abubakar was gladdened by this evidence that at last the official government was *'realizing it must not slack'*, as was shown also by Foot's sharp riposte that if the honourable gentleman referred to Nigerians as slaves, he would certainly say that Zik was the freest slave, because he controlled newspapers which had been allowed every freedom. *'It was most interesting'*, added Malam Abubakar later, *'and Azikiwe had shamefully to go back on those points and denied [them]'*. Next month the Zikist movement was formally proscribed.

Malam Abubakar was able to avoid the repetitiousness that now entangled all debate on the constitution, and followed his own line that reform of local government should precede any national reform. He was glad that the eastern provinces had now got that opportunity; but he insisted that although the people there would now say what was good or bad for them, the government still had its own responsibility to advise, and even to initiate. If Nigeria had to revise its latest constitution, which was said to be working so well, then the west and the north could revise their native administration systems, which were old-fashioned and not working so well. However, in a private meeting of northern members, held at his special request with the governor, who was worried that their intransigence would wreck his initiative, Malam Abubakar told Sir John Macpherson bluntly what was in his mind: *'I told HE that it seems to me that the idea is to sell the north to the south and that the British are deserting us. The emirs told him that*

if we go back from the northern recommendations, he, the HE, has to find a ship to take us to some other country because the northern people would not receive us [back again].

Sir John, more perhaps than Foot, saw the implacability within the politeness, and in turn told Whitehall what the man who had been 'practice-teaching' in Peckham only four years before was now saying. Malam Abubakar was also pointing out to British journalists that separation would not reinforce the sole native authorities – on the contrary, it would free the *malamai* and the *talakawa* from having to concentrate on resistance to southern domination, and allow them to turn to popularising the idea of *sarakuna* who would sit in effective councils. To the southerners who challenged him to show himself as a Nigerian (in other words to join them), he said.

We are trying to build a mighty house on a foundation of straw. I love this country, but have always asked: do we want Nigeria to be a happy place for everybody, or to be a hell for the masses and a paradise for the few? The north would very much like to march with the rest of Nigeria, but at a reasonable speed, not at an impossible speed for the north.

The Lagos reporter Babatunde Jose who had discounted him the year before now realized that in the future Abubakar would lead the north, and when one-man-one-vote came in, that would mean him leading the government.

On the budget proposals, Abubakar attacked once more the arithmetic which permitted the many in the north to receive less than the few in the east after the revenue raised within their respective provinces had been deducted: this raised doubts in his mind, he said, about the administration's true intentions for the central departments after regionalization, and suggested that things based in Lagos would become neither smaller nor cheaper (the Lagos secretariat was being extended even while a new one was built in Kaduna). It was '*in the big towns that you find all the noisy people and the agitators, but we must not forget that in the villages we have the people who are of real use to the country*'. Again, still echoing and pre-echoing so many other twentieth century politicians appalled by what they saw as institutionalized unfairness in terms of relative cash in pockets or pouches, he expressed dismay to the house that contractors' engineers, working in rough conditions on the construction of the Foggo bridge to Birnin Kudu, were paid more than the provincial engineer stationed in Bauchi who supervised them: and was not impressed by the standard civil service reassurance that the PE had secure pensionable terms and modest comforts (and prospects of promotion) to compensate him. At the end of the month-long session in Enugu he asked that native authorities should be encouraged to run their own hospitals with grants-in-aid, rather than that the government should take them over and share public medical services with the Christian missions. He was pleased that at Gaskiya corporation, where Stallard was still secretary, the plans to increase publication were being fulfilled.

Malam Abubakar returned home to his family farm and office for the summer, and was pleased to find that Robert Wright had toured the NA schools in Ningi and southern Bauchi, thereby doing his work for him during his absence. Gombe NA, which still paid part of his salary, was less pleased that the EO(NA) had yet even to visit their headquarters in that capacity. He was worried about his own Bauchi NA's slow progress in repairing the old middle school buildings and constructing the new, and about the shortage of teachers holding the higher

elementary certificate. He was also again worried about his own need for a new motorcar, and was having second thoughts about buying a Standard *Vanguard* like Wright's: so many friends were selling theirs because they were unreliable on laterite roads. Eventually he negotiated an advance from the native treasury to buy a black Ford *Pilot* V8, which was sturdier but very much more expensive. The emir of Bauchi had been encouraged by the PE to acquire a similar car, but with his eyes on an American Chevrolet had insisted to the acting resident, Cedric ('Foxy') Cole, and the ADO that he did not want what by his estimation was 'a small car [*karamin mato*]'; he would have been still less pleased had the EO(NA) had the same model. What was much more important was that Abubakar married again this year, taking Maimuna (more commonly known as Laraba) to be his third wife after Inni and Jummai.

The emir was created an honorary commander of the most excellent order of the British empire (civil division) in the King's birthday honours list, and the post-nominal letters CBE were thereafter interpreted by the expatriated wits of the Bauchi club as 'Corn Buying Expert', in recognition of the chief's control of the official grain-purchasing ring for NA institutions. Malam Abubakar was more diplomatically liberal: '*all the first class chiefs are given lambas [badges], so should Bauchi; even if he did go to jail twice as a youth, he paid the penalty*'. He was also not distressed that, although Labour won with a reduced majority, both the secretary of state Creech Jones and his parliamentary under-secretary Rees Williams had lost their seats in the February British general election (the former because a communist split the left wing vote); he hoped that there might be better appreciation of the north's difficulties from the successor, James Griffiths, and still did not realize that the largest component of the largest colony might not be a continuous preoccupation of British politicians behind Whitehall desks or on their feet in Westminster. In truth Griffiths did hold views that Malam Abubakar shared; he did not wish constitutional changes to get in the way of development and welfare schemes, and thought that both private entrepreneurs and politicians should admit that bargaining about political power and change was the way to discourage investment and 'to hand the world over to the Kremlin'. But Griffiths was to be a disappointment too; dubbed by his opponents the 'minister of tears', he allowed sentiment to stand in the way of strong leadership.

It must not be thought that tribalism was always buttressed by the apathy of those who weakly tolerated it as a sad fact of life. A regular feature of educated African leisure in Bauchi now was the revived descendant of the old 'discussion circle', at last formally named the 'Brains Trust', after the BBC programme: assorted government officials organized by Robert Wright faced questions posed by an invited audience including NA mallams, southerners in government offices and anyone else showing interest. This brought together in friendly intellectual competition Hausa teachers and scribes, Yoruba postmaster, Fulani veterinary or agricultural assistants, Igbo local treasurer and northern Christian clerk, and many more. The mixture of surprising knowledge and residual unsophistication shown by the question lists remains of absorbing interest, looked at as a litmus paper for educational development; but the four questions surviving from Malam Abubakar at this moment are of particular relevance to his own priorities in 1950:

- (1) *What is the modern conception of Life after Death?*

This book is the first biography of Alhaji Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and insight into the twentieth century history of the most populous and, some would argue, the most unique story of a unique man told in a well.

- (2) How could N. Nigeria be saved from the present Nigerian Political difficulties?
- (3) Why do the Democracies hate communism?
- (4) What are the fundamental (sic) differences between Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroasterian and Confucianism (sic)?

The assorted government brains were strained to reply to some of these.

The truly important event of the season, however, was experienced on his own and his neighbours' farms: there was a severe drought and the groundnut crop was the first of two years of partial failure. This encouraged all farmers to raise their prices, which they were about to do in any case in a spontaneous pre-emptive strike, at the government's promise of the fondly mis-called 'temporary' addition to [its employees'] rates of pay, or TARP: inflation was still thought to be a passing aberration which should generally be met by tightening waistbands, and high cost of living something which would end when postwar peace became normality everywhere. More scientific were the beginning of the Sokoto rice scheme, and the first distribution to selected farmers in Bauchi (including Malam Abubakar) of artificial fertilizer, which was followed later by organized visits of other farmers to see comparative results of using *sabon takin Turai* (new European manure): they were not warned that the new man-made fabric, rayon, was being touted as a substitute for cotton. There was news of a labour strike on the plateau tin mines, which did not reach the workings in the west of Bauchi emirate. Among the immigrant community at Gusau, in Sokoto, Yorubas expressed fears that the local Igbos were determined to ruin them. Other labour troubles, on the Nigerian railway, suggested to some that bad management might be as responsible as poor maintenance and lack of replacements for the failure to clear the pyramids of groundnuts awaiting export from Kano and other railheads: indeed it was the lack of a new crop to move the following year which made the final clearance of the backlog possible. However, there was good news also, in the plans for the RAF to cover the north with aerial photography for new maps, and Bauchi was scheduled for such a survey in the autumn.

A former Katsina college boy and NA official, Malam Umaru from the royal house of Gwandu, who had acted as clerk to the northern houses the previous year, was appointed the first northern assistant secretary in the Kaduna secretariat, and so started a distinguished career as clerk to the legislature. In Britain the emir of Katsina's administrative secretary Malam Isa Kaita and a southerner Mr S O Wey received their diplomas in public administration from the university college of Exeter, and flew home in BOAC's new *Hermes* airliner. Colonel Stanley, conservative secretary of state 1942-45, and the Duke of Devonshire, the junior minister after whom the postwar colonial service training courses had been named, both died in their mid-fifties: Stanley had been the first head of the colonial office whose name was remembered by Malam Abubakar, because his seven predecessors had served only seven years between them. An intriguing Whitehall argument was raised over the last minute scrapping of plans for a new colonial office facing Westminster abbey, mooted in 1938 and approved in 1946; surely, said its proponents, this cancellation would weaken the friendship of Britain's colonial peoples, since it was to have expressed in architecture the high value that Britain placed on their importance? There was nobody to suggest that it might one day have been converted into some new mega-department of the environment or of trade and industry. The rebuilding of the bombed house of commons was completed, however, and its 'ayes' lobby was furnished with Nigeria's finest timbers.

A Mr Enoch Powell (a wartime brigadier) made his maiden speech as an MP, and expressed his shock that colonial regular manpower serving with the colours had decreased by 15,000; and other cynical voices repeated the inquiry whether this might be because South Africa objected to African standing armies, but was ready to maintain in their place the Simonstown naval base, its own air force, and its ground forces in support of British and western strategy in the near east and elsewhere. At the same time the GOC West Africa, General Whistler, was telling the Nigerian governor that he would like to do without all British non-commissioned officers in the RWAFF at once, to have promotions of African captains in five years' time, and majors in ten. Macpherson agreed, but thought the general would have some trouble with his battalion commanding officers. 'I'm big enough and ugly enough to deal with them', said Whistler, 'I don't want to leave a muck-up behind me'.

At a lower level, the Bauchi ADO accepted an invitation to visit the colonial office on leave, at his own expense, to 'exchange informal views'. He asked the principal who received him whether indeed, as a widely circulated weekly journal had just claimed, Britain did not care how much political freedom it gave its colonies, so long as they remained tied up in economic chains: and was told that British ministers had too many crises on their plates, and too much detailed work to do, to sit back and work out such tortuous policies, even if they believed in them. He repeated this lesson in realism to Malam Abubakar on his return to Bauchi. A concurrent act of realism was the end of the west African council as a political body, whose lack of practical function had long been apparent: its spirit (and bureaucratic establishment) survived in the west African inter-territorial secretariat (WAITS), which was to supervise jointly funded research institutions.

Northern political changes continued. The ailing Malam Sa'ad Zungur resigned the federal secretaryship of the NCNC, thereby reducing its semblance of a pan-Nigerian party (none of the colonial Nigerian parties ever had such wide national support as Nkrumah's Convention People's Party managed to achieve in the much smaller Gold Coast). For reasons of symbolic unity, Malam Sa'ad had preferred his title to be 'national' rather than 'federal' secretary, but this had not deterred him from trying to form a northern people's party (*Jam'iyyar Al'amuran Nijeriya ta Arewa*) for northern migrants while living in Lagos; yet it was disillusionment as much as ill-health that brought him home – he resented those whom Malam Aminu Kano called the 'phoney' nationalists, who were (he said) only seeking to succeed to the power inherent in British institutions. Although he was to remain a member of the national executive of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), his direct influence became more restricted as tuberculosis and other illness confined him to Bauchi. Nevertheless his political opinions were familiar to the town's educated officials and to Malam Abubakar, who had at least one philosophical letter from him on the Muslim illegality of *mulkin danniya da mallaka* (roughly, oppressive rule by abuse of authority). There was for a time a very strong rumour that the emir was going to bring Sa'ad safely in from the cold, or into the shade, by giving him a palace appointment.

NEPU, just referred to, was founded on 8 August 1950. A group of about eight young Hausa-speaking radicals, mostly commoner traders or waged employees, had been encouraged by the new Hausa page of Zik's Kano newspaper *The Comet*. Disappointed at NPC's rejection of overt politics, they declared that the *Jam'iyyar Neman Sawaba* (association to seek freedom), or *Jam'iyyar Ci Gaban Arewa* (association for progress of the north), should

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became a political party under this English title ('Nepu' or *Nefu* became a vernacular word). Malam Abba Maikwaru was first president, and '*Sawaba!*' (Freedom) became its slogan. Malam Aminu Kano's was rightly regarded as the brain behind the move, but as a government teacher (now at Maru in Sokoto) he could not join it officially until he resigned from the service in October and returned home to Kano. It would be a relief to him no longer to have to apologize, and to promise never to break general orders again, every time he wrote or spoke some political squib for public consumption. Some members of the (still apolitical) northern peoples congress (NPC) adhered to NEPU at its beginning, but not Malam Abubakar, who was still suspicious of all professional politicians. Some of NEPU's future leaders and members were to belong, like the emir of Kano himself and a small minority of Bauchi people, to the Tijaniyya Muslim fellowship, a quasi-mystical Sufi order which rejected the conservative acceptances of Islam: rightly or wrongly, they assumed that the general Qadiriyya confession, professed by the sultan, was used to keep the common people in subjection. The Tijanis' proselytizing puritans tended to attract those believers who were given to supererogatory rites of public devotion, and were known as '*yan wazifa*'. At the worldly level the emir, the chiroma and active NA mallams, with the tacit approval of resident and SDO, decided that some action must be taken to counteract the attractions of the NCNC and this new NEPU for the young men in the *sabon garis*. This move became less and less distinguishable from the activities of the cultural NPC.

At about the same time a body called the Northern Non-Muslim League reorganized itself in Jos as the Middle Zone League (MZL), to become the focus for the problem of the 'Middle Belt', which would vex national and regional politicians and administrators long past independence. If the north generally was not going to submit to southern domination, there were also northerners who did not accept that that meant their own perpetual domination by *dan Fodiyo's* flag-bearers. These were mainly found in those provinces that straddled the border with the east and the west, where animism and the missions prevailed or Islam was recent and tolerant. Bauchi emirate itself, as the emir and Malam Abubakar knew so well, had large groups of animist tribes within its borders, and there would always be need for broad-minded diplomacy to retain their willing friendship. There was also always to be scope for ambitious middle-belt politicians to develop tactical alliances with southern parties, not to bolster the southerners, but to weaken the traditional northern leadership; with such, Malam Abubakar could not sympathize, but he had a grudging understanding of them.

In August the northern house of assembly held its fourth session in Lugard Hall, completed but unplastered, and still something of a building site. At the end of the legislative business there was a bill to raise the age of girls' consent to marriage, from 13 to 15. Malam Abubakar doubted whether this would be enforceable or desirable until there were enough schools for girls, and he referred to early marriage in the England of Chaucer's time: he added caustically that some of the British who had lived in the north understood that the consequence of such a change, before education had taken wide effect, would be more prostitution. In that expression he tacitly included simple promiscuity. He undoubtedly believed that he spoke for the great majority of Africans of both sexes at the time.

But if he sounded to progressive expatriates as a voice of specious reaction, he had a surprise in store. After several hot and dusty days, when few members had

any other wish than to go home, he rose on that same Saturday afternoon, in the debate on the adjournment, and delivered what was always to be regarded by northerners and by civil servants in the north as his greatest, certainly his most influential, speech. His resolution was

'... to appoint an independent commission to investigate the system of native administration in the northern provinces, and to make recommendations for its modernization and reform: and that the northern public be given the fullest opportunity to discuss and criticize the report and the recommendations of the commission before their final acceptance by the governor'.

Other observers, and later historians concerned with wider issues, were reluctant to concede too much importance to an impassioned but verbally restrained attack on a tradition which they might think already moribund: but without having made this speech Malam Abubakar might never have led his country, because at that time, and in that house, no other northern commoner could, and no aristocrat would, have uttered it; and without it the reform of indirect rule, so that it could sit as comfortably under parliamentary democracy as it had under a colonial administrative service, might never have been won without violence.

The speech has been mistakenly attributed to Robert Wright, but this is a gross misconception. Although he did give some help with the presentation of the speech, the substance of it is entirely Malam Abubakar's. Following his practice from school days, Malam Abubakar committed his oration (British officers present could use no other word) to memory, and hardly glanced at the fair copy which he referred to as 'notes'. His increasingly well-known rhetorical techniques, the pauses and regular recognition of the chair, the consciously deepening voice and flinging forward of the gown sleeve, followed by the folding of it over the shoulder ("That must have been how Cicero used his toga", commented one former classicist), and the slow look round the listeners, became so memorable that prominent people later claimed to have heard the speech who were never there. In fact there was only one expatriate face in the comfortless strangers' gallery, the Cambridge undergraduate son of the chief education officer, Shillingford. It may be of more than passing interest to reproduce the whole speech as Malam Abubakar finally wrote it, since it has become fashionable to quote from it selectively:

9th 1950

Mr President, Sir,

First I must crave the indulgence of the House and make my apologies to you Sir for constantly referring to my notes. My line is direct and the words I have written are frank; and I consider the motion of such fundamental importance that I can take no risk of missing one point or of weakening one statement by impromptu diversions

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into which I might be led by the strength of my feeling. You will see that the motion concerns the North alone; and as the other Regions are dealing with the same problem in their own way, I hope I shall not be called upon to move this resolution in the Legislative Council. For it is here and now that a remedy for our disease must be found and applied with the least possible delay.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I have no axe to grind and wish for no heads to roll in the gutters. I do not wish to destroy; I call for reform. We must ask ourselves whether the Constitutional battles we have fought, and are still fighting, will have been worth while if the Victor's laurels are to crown a statue with feet of clay. It would surely be the height of unwisdom were we to disregard the example of other Nations who had suffered similar teething troubles, and fail to appreciate the importance of our relationship with the other Regions of Nigeria and with the World at large. We cannot afford to stagnate; we must go forward. This I maintain is quite impossible with the present machinery of Governments and the sooner this is recognized and admitted, the sooner shall we take our place unhampered by the legacy of an age that is past.

Bear with me Sir while I briefly recall the history of the System which has outlived its usefulness so long that it now constitutes the chief barrier to our progress, and we will see if it cannot be so modified as to retain whatever there may be of value in the traditional pattern. We are not so rich in traditions that we can afford to be prodigal with our store and I look to the Commission to ^{for the} grafting of modern ideas on the old stock.

Now, the late Lord Lugard, whom we all respect, introduced the System of Indirect Rule when the country was

occupied by the British fifty years ago. Practically unaltered it has functioned ever since, but Lord Lugard, surely, never intended that the expedient of the hour should remain the unchanging authority of all time. Constitutional history *vis* does not designate any one form of Government as perfect. All are susceptible of modification as the communities which they serve develop. Thanks to the British ~~Adminis~~ Administration, the North is stirring with the spirit of progress, and Lord Lugard, I am sure, would agree with those of us, who have her problems at heart, that the time has come for us to put our house in order. The British have shown us the way with their genius for organic growth which obviates the necessity for the bloody revolutions of less happier lands, and we must follow their example. The resolution before you is a most important step in the right direction. We might well have learnt from the poet who said:

For forms of Government let fools contest,
What e'er is best administered is best.

And *vis* we should have left our constitutional building until we have a firm foundation of local administration to build on.

Our greatest administrator, Lord Lugard, commenting on Native Administrations, in his Political Memoranda, wrote as follows: — The prestige and influence of the chiefs can be best upheld by letting the peasantry see that the Government treat them as an integral part of the machinery of the Administration. That there are not two sets of rulers — British and Native — working either separately or in cooperation but a single Government in which ~~not~~ native chiefs have well defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with the British officials. Their duties should never conflict and should

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overlap as little as possible; they should be complementary to each other, and the chief, ^{himself} must understand that he has no right to his place and power unless he renders proper service to the State." Now it is for the House to examine this extract from Lord Lugard's Political Memoranda and see how far his principles have been observed or the powers he granted abused. And this extract from another source, ^{this} clearly points out a danger so real that all of us know, is seldom avoided: "Before Europeans came to Africa, the chiefs' authority was limited by his need to keep his position. He dared not become too unpopular for fear that his subjects would rise against him. Now backed by ^{the} strong authority of Central Government, he may feel that he need not consider public opinion as long as he remains on friendly terms with the Colonial Government." Both writers you will notice stress the importance of public opinion - of the people themselves; whereas in practice in the past their views have never been sought, their welfare seldom regarded and their helplessness shockingly abused. And in the Native Authority Ordinance they hardly find a place. Far from the chiefs having well defined duties, one of the biggest defects of the system is the complete ignorance of every one from top to bottom about his rights, his obligations and his powers. This ignorance must somehow be removed and the people made to realise that they too have a share in their own government. First, it is necessary for every one in authority to understand that he is a public servant, fed and clothed by the Public and to act accordingly. This is the immediate duty of the British Administration who must explain exactly how powers and responsibilities be allotted. At present, ^{since} nobody knows where he stands and District Officers have often assumed the role of dictator and given executive instructions instead of the advice to which the Native Administrations are entitled. This

relationship must be made absolutely clear to all and I ask for a return to the principles laid down by Lord Lugard in my first extract^{ions}. This can only be done, following on the Commission for which we ask, by a complete re-statement of policy which will entail the further delegations of responsibilities to Local authorities of whatever composition they may be, but the responsibilities must be real. It may be claimed, Sir, that the process ~~is~~ is already in action in the form of Village and District Councils; but, these ~~are~~ lack responsibilities and they lack guidance. Responsibilities they can never have under the present System and what sympathetic guidance will they expect ~~to~~ when their District Officers are changed two or three times a year?

The illiterate mass of the people recognise no change in their status since the coming of the British. They are still ruled by might and administration is still none of their concern. Somehow they must be made aware of their rights and duties and with the world moving at the pace it is today we rely on the British to accelerate this process to the utmost. Every one in authority, black or white should know that he cannot fulfill his functions without winning the respect and confidence of the people and this can only be done by practical demonstrations of his sincerity in working for the wellbeing of the people. And ~~they~~ they, for their part, ^{appreciate} should understand that the North enjoys freedom of speech and freedom of action within the law. It is not so today.

Now this brings ^{me}, Sir, to the question of 'Sole Native Authority'. How this idea originated, we do not know and nor could we discover the circumstances which made its creation, in 1934 necessary. Whatever was the reason, ~~it~~ it is an idea which should be condemned. People often say that it exists only in theory and ^{that} it is harmless. I do not agree with such people because the mere provision of this power is

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enough to justify Native Authority Councils, as they must
 always feel that their functions are merely advisory. I may go
 so far as to say that 'Sole Native Authority' idea may even be
 said to be against the broad principles of Islam. ~~The~~ ^{It is} ~~highly~~
~~regarded~~ ^{regarded} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~modern~~ ^{modern} ~~Northern~~ ^{Northern} ~~Nigerians~~ ^{Nigerians} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~democratic~~ ^{democratic};
~~dictatorship~~ ^{dictatorship}. I feel very strongly that the revision of the Native
 Authority Ordinance is overdue. Native Authority Councils, Sir,
 should be given ^{real} powers and their functions should no
 longer be only advisory. This problem can be solved by making
 all individuals who are now termed Sole Native Authorities -
 Chiefs or Emirs-in Council. The democratisation of native
 authority councils has now also become a necessity. I am
 not aware of what is being done towards ~~this end~~ but I
 am asking that it should be more intensified. Before I leave
 this point Sir I would like to strike a note of warning to our
 'Natural Rulers. The Natural Rulers of the North should realise
 that Western education and world conditions are fast creating
 a new class of people in the North. That this new class
~~should exist~~ ^{might} ~~exist~~ ^{exist} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~North~~ ^{North}, and the Natural Rulers, whom the
 North must retain at all costs, should, instead of suspecting
 it, try to find it proper accommodation. I consider this
 a very important matter which must be given urgent and
 serious consideration by the ~~North~~ Natural Rulers. When I
 say a new class of people, Sir, I do not only ^{mean} those Northern
 Nigerians who are favoured with Western forms of education
 but the class also includes traders and people in different
 walks of life. This is purely a matter for the Natural
 Rulers, and, I will personally prefer to see ^{such} ~~any~~ changes ~~to~~
~~this effect~~ coming first from the Natural Rulers rather than
 from the new class. Things are rapidly changing and much
 trouble and bitterness could be avoided if those in high
 positions of authority would keep their eyes open and
 agree to move with the time.

In speaking on Native Administration ~~we~~ one cannot keep away from making references to ^{the} British Administrative Officers. Some time ago I criticised Government ~~for~~ importing 836 Administrative cadets into ~~the~~ Northern ^{Nigeria} Provinces. Today, I will take the opportunity of clearing away any wrong impression which might have been created by that criticism. First of all, I must say, that we are not ungrateful to the British Administration which has laboured under difficult conditions to make Northern Nigeria what it is today. I like ^{very} to pay tribute to the services of the British Officers who came to serve in the North when railways, motor cars and aeroplanes were unknown in ^{the} country. Many of ~~those~~ ^{them} ~~officers~~ ^{had} rendered excellent services in the ~~interests~~ ^{interests} of the Northern people. They knew no leisure, every hour was a time of work for them, and they made their tours of inspection on foot, on horseback and by canoes. At that time also almost every one of them was Jack of All Trades - because during those days, a District Officer in a station was the single only single ^{white} official of every department. Another most important part of ^{their} ~~work~~ was that, those officers always came into close ~~contact~~ ^{touch} with the masses and this gave them the opportunity to understand something of the people and the people to understand them. This understanding was ~~often~~ ^{such} good that the masses often invented suitable nicknames for the officers - a thing of very rare ~~occurrence~~ ^{occurrence} ~~today~~ ^{nowadays}; that was a teacher's job and carried out by men who had time and patience to teach; but what is the position today? It can be found in the answers to these questions which show how the picture has changed.

1) What ^{are} the real and well defined relations between the Administrative Officers and the Native Authorities ~~today~~?

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- (2) Do Native Authorities and the people generally regard the average Administrative Officer as their adviser and a man appointed to help solve their problems as a friend?
- (3) How many good friends could the average Administrative Officer boast of in his station from the local community?
- (4) Does the average Administrative Officer really now come into close contact with the masses and has he given himself any opportunities of knowing the people and of winning their confidence?
- (5) What efforts does the average Administrative Officer make to train Village and District Heads in ^{the art} methods of discharging their duties under modern conditions and to educate the masses to know their rights and duties as citizens?
- (6) Apart from his messengers and the N.A. officials that the average Administrative Officer meets in his station how many ^{village and hamlet} heads could he call by name?
- (7) Which part of his duties take more of his time, his secretarial work or his tours of inspection?

I think answers to these questions are enough to explain the position today. I use the word average ⁱⁿ because I ~~would like~~ ^{would like} to be fair to those Officers, present in the country who are doing their best. It will be appreciated how difficult it must be ~~even~~ for officers of even the best intentions to carry out their obligations when I tell you ~~So~~ that in ~~the~~ ^{one of the} Divisions in the North there have been 18 District Officers in 82 months, an average of $4\frac{1}{2}$ months each.

Now I cannot leave out this most important point - the training of Native Administration Staff. It is obvious ~~So~~ that if Native Administrations are to be efficient they must have trained staff. By the word training ~~So~~ ^{So} I do not merely mean that type of training which is obtained in clerical Training Colleges but training in its broadest sense that is, training which

will educate the individual to know his position, to afford him with opportunities to care for himself and to in increasing both his health and wealth and to allow him to share actively in the development of his society. I am sorry to say here that it is the lack of this kind of training that District Administration in the North today is far from being satisfactory. Neither the Native Authorities nor the British Administration seem to ~~trouble~~ ^{trouble} come with ^{the} work of village and District heads as long as they collect their taxes in time. To explain what I mean better, I will make bold to say ^{that} there is hardly a single District Head in the North today who sits in his district with ^{the} full knowledge of his work and who can send comprehensive regular reports about his district to his Central Authority. Now people may ask as to how we could improve our district administration. I will say that improvement is impossible as long as Native Authorities continue in the practice of putting square pegs in round holes. This practice is one big weakness in the Native Authorities and unless it is dropped completely it is bound to cause some amount of trouble in the immediate future. This is again the duty of the British Administration who can make the Native Authorities understand the weight ~~in the~~ necessity for such all such changes. I would like to see adequate effective measures taken to ~~provide~~ provide Native Administrations with that kind of training which I referred to earlier.

As I now turn to another point of very vital importance - the Native Administration Finance. It is clear to every one that the success of the Native ~~Adminis-~~ ^{Adminis-}trations depends mainly on their revenues and it will be impossible for the many small Native Administrations to undertake major schemes of development in their areas from their ^{present} petty treasuries; and nor could they they afford to pay for qualified trained staff. I think that

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The House agrees with me that the time has come when attempts should be made to get some of the Native Administrations to pool their resources ~~together~~. Doing this will in no way interfere with their traditional independence or with the status of any particular chief, but it would be to their own advantage instead. A great deal of the detailed control by Kaduna should be removed after the general approval of the estimates based on the policy formulated by the Chief Commissioners. The Native Administrations should then be given entire responsibility for their own accounting thus relieving the District Officer to perform his more valuable political functions; for these are to increase in scope and importance. Really Sir, the reason for the disparaging contrast I have drawn between the old and the new breed of administrator, does not, I think, lie in the quality of the individual but in the ever growing piles of paper with which he is ^{now occupied} ~~overwhelmed~~.

Finally Sir, I come to the sting in the tail. One feature of Native Administrations above all demands the immediate attention of the Commission. It is as all of you are well aware, the twin curses of bribery and corruption which pervade every rank and department. It is notorious Sir that Native Administration servants have monetary obligations to their immediate superiors and to their sole Native Authorities. It would be unseemly for me Sir to particularise further but I cannot over-emphasize the importance of eradicating this ungodly evil. No one who has not lived among us can fully appreciate to what extent the giving and taking of bribes occupies the attention of all degrees to the exclusion of the ideals of disinterested service. Much of the attraction of a post lies in the opportunities it offers for extortion of one form or another. Unless the Commission fully realise the gravity of this problem, and tackle it with

courage, any recommendations they make for superficial reforms are bound to fail. It is a most disturbing fact that few officials can afford to be honest. Now having asked for a Commission, and having outlined the nature of its task, I hope you will forgive me Sir if I suggest the form of its composition. I would like to see a Professor of Political Science from an English University, a retired and a serving administrative officer of the North, an experienced and trusted friend of the North such as Dr. Miller of Wusasa and some one with up to date knowledge of local Government in East Africa. I believe Sir that an entirely African Commission could never hope to absorb our atmosphere or appreciate, for example, the extent to which the system is deep in the poison I have mentioned. It is in this, as I have said, that they will have to be bold. Sweeping changes will have to be made and doubtless many enemies with them; but the British must risk our curses now in the knowledge that later they will earn our praise. ~~Hitherto Sir~~ Hitherto Sir, they have sought to humour us by letting sleeping dogs lie. If they leave this particular dog much longer they will find that he will not only show his irritation by scratching but also by bark and even bite.

This speech was formally seconded by a Kano trader, Alhaji Taju Deen, and then received supportive congratulations on its courage from two Borno aristocrats, the wali and Shettima Kashim, and two others, the teacher Malam Yahaya Ilorin and the native treasurer Malam Muhammadu Ribadu from Yola. It had taken Malam Abubakar 45 minutes to deliver, and despite his opening disclaimer, had required few references to his draft; it took as long again for his own full Hausa translation. The official leader of the house, the secretary, northern provinces, Mr Leslie Goble, wanted there to be no misunderstanding: the officials would vote against the motion for an independent commission, not because they were opposed to democratization of the system, which many, many chiefs (and NAs themselves) were anxious to see, but because they opposed the detail of the proposed method - development of local government should come from within, not be imposed by outsiders. Malam Abubakar wound up by hoping that silence from those unofficials who had not spoken meant consent; this was directed at the Sokoto and Kano

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...enthusiastic than they were to claim in the years to ... This disappointment in the official reaction was ... becoming more confused and unpolished in ... when he had been speaking confidently and prepared ... It may be said with hindsight that in his impatient moments he ... the native authorities swept away; but that on ... the lesson of history and experience, that the traditional ... must give its own sanction to any fundamental change ... so long as justice might be won from ... of corrections. But his motion was won by a single vote, ... late hour for any official meeting during the weekend in ...

... the sultan was privately not well pleased; 'This is what happens when you let loose our servants! This is our reward!' The emir of Bauchi expressed some moral indignation, but with some caution since the speech was made in his own councillor; having trades union trouble in his own NA works and he triumphed and he spoke of the need of a union for emirs. There were knowing references in many quarters to *cucananci*, the impertinent tendency of the sons of slaves who, knowing that they had nothing to lose and nowhere to go but up, were far too ready to speak their minds. Older conservative administrative officers, and some younger ones keener on polo than on Perham, might quietly sympathize with the sultan, through fear that more than just a higher age of sexual consent ought to await the long term effects of the northern peoples' immersion in wider and deeper education: but most officers and NA mallams knew that what Malam Abubakar had said was true, and that it had needed saying in the exact manner in which he had said it, rather than as Aminu Kano or Malam Sa'ad Zungur might have said it, had they been honourable members. The manner was of the essence, if officialdom was to react positively. What troubled them all was doubt about what practical, if anything, would be done - but this came with speed that was startling in that bureaucracy, and in fact as reassuring to the sultan as to the gradualist reformers.

Sir Eric Thompson was approaching his last tour of service as chief commissioner, and Mr Bryan Sharwood-Smith, now senior resident Kano, who still hoped to end his Nigerian days as resident Sokoto, was brought in to relieve him during his last three months' home leave. They met the governor in Lagos during the September sitting of the legislative council, when Macpherson made it clear that he would approve the northern administration's intentions only so long as Abubakar agreed with them. Abubakar was more than a little taken aback by his new found powers, and to appreciate that at last when he was complacently reassured (as some Kaduna secretariat officers were apt to reassure critics) that 'things are being done', something actually was being done. At the end of this first full meeting with Sharwood-Smith, he said to him, 'All that I want is for something to happen, and to happen soon - then I shall be perfectly happy'. Sharwood-Smith's judgment was, 'Here's a winner!'

Plans erupted for local government training courses to educate district heads and their scribes (traditionally the least progressive level of development), native court officials and others. Two senior district officers with experience of both the 'holy north' and the 'middle belt', Douglas Pott and Kenneth Maddocks (a former clerk to executive council under Sir Arthur Richards), were hauled out of their districts to tour the northern provinces and amass a detailed analysis of how each NA was organized, and how far democratic

involvement had already gone in practice. They started their task at no notice, with no guidance beyond the vague indication that Malam Abubakar was pressing for more democracy in NAs, and they finished it in six weeks. If they had read Abubakar's speech before setting out, they might have known better what points to look for. Not surprisingly at the time, in a world of poor communications, limited circulation of inadequate journalism and local radio news, and bush administration psychologically and emotionally poles apart from political and legislative deliberation, hardly another field officer in the north ever read the speech, nowadays praised so enthusiastically, either.

Nevertheless Maddocks and Pott took care to interview the emirs and the mallams separately, not least in Bauchi. Missives were sent out insisting that routine and paperwork be cut back, that secretariat domination through centralized records demanded for London's satisfaction be weakened, and that administrative officers be once more seen and known for their effective presence in the field. In the same philosophy, a post of commissioner for native courts was foreshadowed, to professionalize the administration's supervision and the court members' methods of working. In three hectic months before Thompstone returned, the acting chief commissioner, known from his earlier days as '*mai wandon Karfe*' (the man with iron trousers – never creased because he never sat down), was portrayed, not for the last time, by cynical underlings as the gallant knight in shining armour, charging on his white steed in all directions at once to defend the immaculate north against internal and external assailants. He was always to feel embarrassed for his service; he thought it was 'a pretty shameful thing' that the initiative had had to come from a Bauchi teacher, and that the continuing complacency of certain of the more influential of his administrative colleagues, no doubt largely based in fear of the unknown that would follow change, had been the cause of inactivity. Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was content, and back at home after more months of absence even considered undertaking an education officer's tour to Gombe. Indeed he was for the time being well pleased. So were the Robert Wrights of the civil service. It was an exciting time to be an administrative officer.

14 Last Months as an Education Officer

Shekara kwana ne, in da rai gaba

Geoffrey Payton had retired early as resident of Bauchi province, overseas service having broken his marriage: he was also disillusioned, and when looking back he concluded that he still knew only two honest NA officials – the Bauchi native treasurer, Malam Baban Inna, and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Malam Abubakar was now learning to know Payton's permanent successor, Humphrey Gill. It was not easy for either of them: Abubakar's reserve calmed in the presence of shyness, and Gill was a deliberately calm lawyer, given to disconcerting silences behind his pipe, which ended with pithy comments that strangers found deflating. Nevertheless they met and talked each time that Malam Abubakar came home from his legislative and committee travels, and gained a mutual liking which remained short of the close relationship enjoyed with Wright. Gill regarded Abubakar as genuine, but so serious that he wondered whether he was sufficiently down to earth. Malam Abubakar in return could not penetrate the protective skin that hid both a deep percipience and a dry humour. As the provincial educational world still deplored the rarity of the EO(NA)'s visits on tour, so the resident now regretted that Malam Abubakar so seldom took his place in the emir of Bauchi's council, leaving the pressure for change in that forum largely to himself and the DO, with modest moral support from the subdued eye-glances and facial movements of the chief scribe, Malam Garba Kafin Madaki, and the *ma'aji* Baban Inna.

Malam Abubakar had of course been kept in Kaduna 'to attend boards' after his assembly triumph (although he resigned from the Gaskiya corporation board in October 1950), and then had to go on to Lagos yet again for legco. There he appealed for less development in towns and more in the villages, where self-help and directed labour would readily supplement central finance; thought that Islamic law and commonsense alike made a southern member's suggestion unacceptable that nobody should await trial in custody for over four weeks; granted out with a hint of mischief that emirs did not pay direct tax; seconded Mr Onyeama's motion to create a Nigerian navy, army and air force; and also Mr Alvan Ikoku's motion to allow the teachers freedom of association, in the light of the Christian missions' educational policy of keeping the profession unorganised.

The secretary of state had approved the general conference's constitutional report in principle, and referred the outstanding issues, including the four minority reports, back for local decision by legco. Revenues were to be based on need rather than derivation, otherwise no concessions were made. When the chief secretary moved the adoption of the select committee's recommendations that the new legislature be unicameral, that the governor should continue to preside for the present, that the north should have half of the elected seats, that Lagos should be part of the western region for administrative

(as opposed to metropolitan) purposes, and that appointed members might still represent 'special interests', he noted that eastern members had been complimenting northerners on 'their new spirit of compromise and friendship'. Malam Abubakar responded that clearly the regions wanted to go together as one people who would remain such, and thanked the people of the east and all who had contributed to the select committee. It seemed to be a time for tact and diplomacy in public utterance.

However on 5 December 1950, the earlier northern joint select committee's report was tabled, which contained the provocative suggestion that as opposed to the legislative council's agreement of 68 northern, 68 southern and up to 12 'special interest' seats, the new central legislature should have 84 northern members and 21 each from east and west; the joint committee had also suggested that the new northern house of assembly needed only 66, not 90, members. The argument for all of this resulted in Malam Abubakar reviving his ethnic doubts during the regional budget debate. It was not the last time that after boldly agreeing with major change he was to consider back-tracking in the face of consequences. The northern ideas were however to be overtaken by the secretary of state's decisions, and were soon forgotten.

Something cropped up in the debate to remind Abubakar of the crassness of the British MP who had said some time before that the solution to Nigeria was to open the 'unoccupied' lands of the northern provinces to the people of the east. This led him to refute Mr S O James, the member appointed to represent southerners' interests in the northern assembly, by describing in detail the contrasts between the favoured environments of 'clerks' quarters' in northern towns, and those of the 'Hausas' in southern communities, where there were no northern members representing special interests in the regional assemblies or district councils. He regretted that the Richards constitution had to be revised so prematurely, when northerners were only just beginning to understand it. He expressed great fears, and in private wrote that, *'the new constitution will be nothing but sham and it will definitely not come to the north as a blessing. I am really fed up with the whole thing and the sooner I can get out of it the better'*. In other debates he pleaded for time limits to speeches, referred to regional assemblies as training grounds for legco and conferences, and castigated the suggestion that only English-speaking literates should represent the north. Interestingly, he was very sceptical of a reply from the secretary for finance (A J Knott). He had asked if it was possible to invite the Shell company to undertake geological work in the NP, and was told that there was no evidence that there was anything for them to investigate. From such unexpectedly rough treatment at the hands of the creator and executioner of the Bauchi discussion circle, there grew a fundamental distrust of all financial secretaries, which was never wholly eradicated.

In Bauchi he told the ADO that, despite all the decades of fruitless efforts by the geological survey far afield from the tinfields, and the evidence they had dug up from well-sinking everywhere, he could not believe that the north was not sitting on vast untapped resources of new minerals; he seemed to think that poor populations instinctively expanded over tracts where explorations might make them rich, even that the surveyors made finds only to conceal them. He also told Robert Wright of his political depression; and Wright, looking to the inevitable offers of high office, but not to the unthinkable end, felt bound to convince him of the vital contributions that only he could make, and to his lifelong regret persuaded him where his duty lay.

While Pett and Maddocks were publicly reporting their findings in tabular form, with much comment *sotto voce* on the contrasts of styles and energy in the many NAs which they had visited so hurriedly, Sir Hugh Foot was translated from Legos to his first independent command, assuming the unique historical role of captain-general and governor-in-chief of Jamaica. He had barely spent four years in Nigeria, but had made a considerable impression on southern politicians, and been particularly noticed by British journalists who supposed that his distinguished political family relationships at home assisted his success. This unjust assessment, of a man who shared his family's strong personalities and intellects, had had the strange consequence of reducing the credit given by commentators to the initiative and originality of the governor: many chose to see the creation of the constitution and pressure on Nigerianization as mainly the work of Macpherson's lieutenant, Foot, but although they worked so closely together on duty, it was not so. Macpherson, who had included Zik in the Nigerianization commission and listened approvingly to his general Whistler, was the quietly magnetic leader whom few did not love, while Foot was the skilled public debater and superintendent of the paper mechanics who attracted more photographers. Malam Abubakar never saw the relationship in any other way, and held both in high regard as strong but contrasted administrators.

At the end of the year the northern people's congress held its conference in Jos. Because in theory it was still a cultural body, Malams Sa'ad Zungur, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Zukogi, all now members of NEPU under Abba Maikwaru, and regarded widely as 'dangerous radicals' because they wanted NPC to become a proper party, were removed from the executive committee. Malam Inuwa Wada and the rest of the Kano delegation were expelled from the conference, which voted to proscribe dual membership of rival organizations. Malam Aminu Kano, as has already been noted, had resigned from government service at Maru elementary training centre in Sokoto, and had returned to Kano. Malam Abubakar's depression deepened, and for several months, despite Wright's encouragement not to lose heart, and Malam Garba Kafin Madaki's support, he lay low and concentrated on office work, recreational shooting and his farm: at the March legco budget meeting, unusually, he made no contribution at all. Dr Azikiwe's own retirement to his tent was more dramatic, not to say grandiose: he announced at the Ibo state union convention held at Enugu at the beginning of the year that he must not impose on an unready people; that Nigerians were not ready to tread the historic way trodden by China, India, Burma, Egypt and Indonesia; and that he was retiring from Nigerian politics for five years - therefore the NCNC, which was his sole creation, no longer existed, and there was no political party in Nigeria. This was an oblique way of proving that Nigerian 'politics' were still mere aspects of regionalism, tribalism and personalities. However, a little later he returned, in response to the consternation he had aroused among his courtiers and to the undisguised satisfaction that his abdication had given his critics. The *status quo ante* prevailed. But many people in Nigeria, African and European alike, continued in some innocence to wonder why no national party seemed possible in Nigeria whereas in the Gold Coast the CPP seemed to have countrywide support, even if it were of an urban flavour.

During February Dr Nkrumah was elected (while still in jail for his part in fomenting strikes) to fill the seat which Mr Gbedemah had vacated on winning another, and the governor, Sir Charles Neil Arden-Clarke, released him to join the government as CPP 'leader of business' in the assembly. This act led

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to theatrical demonstrations of joy in the streets of Accra, but was regarded by at least one senior colonial office official (and by many administrators, including indigenes, closer to those streets) as 'an absurd leap forward which was wholly unexpected even by politicians there'. The first African domino had fallen, and no one could now say that, in another current metaphor, Ceylon's self-rule had marked a halt on the route march to colonial emancipation. One of Nkrumah's first pronouncements was that there should be no more new district commissioners, and shortly afterwards British recruitment to the Gold Coast administrative service was closed. In London Mr Attlee introduced a 'loose grouping' of departments of state, in which the colonial office 'came under' the foreign office; that office was about to be shaken by the defection to the USSR of the middle grade diplomats Maclean and Burgess. The worldwide Anglican communion was strengthened by the creation of the province of west Africa under its own archbishop. In Nigeria Dr Samuel Manuwa was appointed director of medical services, the first Nigerian to hold such a post since the nineteenth century; Kano gained from government a new runway for international aircraft, and from its native authority a bus service and a magnificent new mosque, designed by the PWD; Bauchi authorities studied the Nigerian livestock mission report, but were more concerned with new threats of locusts from further north; administrative and agricultural officers read with more interest of yet another artificial fibre, 'ardil', made from groundnuts to replace wool. Foot's successor, Mr Arthur Benson, arrived at the beginning of May. He was a CS who never forgot that his trade had been learnt as a cadet in the Northern Rhodesian bush (he was also to record that in all his life he had only known two 'great' men, serving under one, and serving with the other: the second was Abubakar).

NEPU held its conference in April, and continued to attack the deadening effect on the north of its emirs, and of their rule by 'Fulani family compacts', despite the great ethnic and scholastic variety that the country enjoyed among its chiefs. Malam Aminu Kano was elected vice-president. At the same time there was an official 'education week' in the NPs, which the Bauchi branch of the NPC decided to mark by a public meeting to discuss the new constitution. Unfortunately, Malam Sa'ad Zungur, who was organizing it, failed to inform either the provincial education officer (Wright) or the ADO (who was temporarily in charge of the division, but in fact in bed with a malarial fever) that they were both booked as visiting speakers. The failure of the event led to a new local misunderstanding between Malam Sa'ad and the administration. Dr Dikko, the Bauchi provincial medical officer and NPC president, had known nothing of the proposal either, and Malam Abubakar groaned sadly when told: this was when he visited the sick ADO, incidentally to ask him the true meaning of 'avalanche', a familiar word which he had however just for the first time read of in a newspaper, accurately describing a tragic natural disaster. Both were currently amused that a ban on dollar imports meant that the emir had to be content, not with the American Chevrolet he coveted, but with a British Austin *Sheerline* as his latest replacement motorcar, at a time when the Anglo-Iranian oil company was nationalized in Iran and the cost of petrol had risen to an unprecedented 2s 10d a gallon.

Malam Abubakar cheered up when Malam Bello Kano and he were nominated by the chief commissioner to receive HMG's invitation to represent the northern provinces, joining two easterners, two westerners and a Lagosian as guests of the festival of Britain during July 1951. They attended the royal garden

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party (although King George VI himself was seriously ill and absent), and with 90 other commonwealth delegates fled into the palace when a storm broke, to find a farsighted provision of duplicate crockery and cakes awaiting them. They also went to a reception given by the colonial secretary and a tea-party with the prime minister, and enjoyed the novel use of personal saloon cars to every function. Abubakar visited the midlands and Edinburgh, and was shown a television aerial for the new BBC service on top of a Scottish hill by Kirk o' Shorts. Despite the pitiable failure of the temporary 'skylon' to challenge the Eiffel tower, and the impermanent appearance of the new London south bank buildings and the Battersea gardens, he could see that Britain was officially trying to look once more like a happy, forward-gazing country. He had yet to see how countries even worse blighted by war were emerging into their own futures. The opportunity was taken to hold a British colonial conference, addressed by Mr Attlee and Mr Griffiths, by Messrs Patrick Gordon-Walker, Emmanuel Shinwell and Herbert Morrison, and by the chief of the imperial general staff and the chancellor of the exchequer. Malam Abubakar was more enthusiastic in his letters home about his private visit, achieved at last, to Wright's parents and relations in Warwick, and his enjoyment of their house, pen and garden. He also told a gentleman of the press that he wondered why Nigeria's new constitution had not received more publicity in Britain; but the Sultan had looked at the Nigerian stand at the British industries fair, and had commented from a different historical perspective on how remarkable Nigeria's progress had been during the 'comparatively short period since 1900'.

While Malam Abubakar was in Britain, Dr Azikiwe, Mr Mbadiwe, Mazi Abibu Uba and other NCNC delegates passed through Bauchi on a mission connected with a party convention at Kano, where an efficient doctor Michael O. Okpara (who had qualified at Yaba in 1943, and joined Jaja Wachuku's short-lived New Africa party in 1950) made his mark by presenting the NCNC's health manifesto. Malam Sa'ad Zungur surprised the ADO (whose subsequent report on the visit, passed on to Kaduna, attracted the chief commissioner's attention): despite his past history, he refused to play any other part in welcoming the delegates than what courtesy would require for old time's sake. The organization he was now supporting, said Sa'ad, the NPC, could not lend its aid to NCNC political aims, since its own fight was firstly with illiteracy; and he discouraged NA employees from buying NCNC party cards, even as impulse souvenirs for early discarding. There was some difficulty over finding any horses, in the hope of lending a northern social cachet to the parade: in this the various groups of local southerners who were trying to organize the formal reception were frustrated, in case it should seem that the mission was parodying the emir's parade on the previous day in celebration of the lesser *Bairam* - and when two worn-out hacks were at last derisively produced, in the face of much dissuasive advice, it was Malam Sa'ad who finally insisted on their removal. Zik spoke moderately to the crowd outside the reading room on the subject of unity, his interpreter embroidered his message with rebellious Hausa matter, and Malam Sa'ad made his distress at the interpolated abusive passages quite apparent. Malam Abubakar commented later that if the 800 adult southerners in Bauchi's strangers' ward still could not set up a formal and effective local NCNC branch, the town had nothing to worry about.

Meanwhile Abubakar had sent his regrets at also having to miss the last meeting of the old house of assembly, at which the sardauna of Sokoto had moved, on terms roughly agreed with him before leaving for London, the setting up of a joint select committee which would ostensibly discuss the

Pott-Maddocks report, but in fact face up to Abubakar's famous motion. The Sardauna defended the traditions of Fulani government as both democratic and religious, a mode of rule that would do nothing without due consultation, and would welcome any change that was not drastic. The committee should include one elected member and one chief from each province. Malam Abubakar was sidetracked on his return home to join it as the Bauchi member. His chief colleagues on the select committee were Shettima Kashim, the wali of Borno, the makama of Bida and the sardauna of Sokoto. This body turned its attention primarily to the stiffening of district councils, which the secretariat's finance branch and the provincial administration were already vesting with some control over the district council funds ('DCF': these had recently been inserted into most native treasuries' estimates to carry out what were nominally district heads' own improvement projects); then to the creation of 'outer councils' as second tier consultative bodies, in order to bring popular opinion closer to the chiefs' own ('inner') councils; to training and conditions of service for NA employees; and particularly to the discouragement of bribery. To a limited extent this move false-footed the NEPU leaders, who had no specific policy plans on paper at this time for detailed change in the machinery of any level of government.

Because of the imminent constitutional changes, and the administrative preoccupations with such basic innovations as electoral rolls in townships, a year was to pass before anything in the joint select committee's recommendations could be formally debated, and two years before anything was enacted as a primary law; but it was made clear at once to divisional officers and NA officials in the field, through more circular exhortations and a general busy-ness, that the change and reform inspired by 'the speech' had already begun. In Bauchi Laurence Giles ('Afo') was the enthusiastic and intellectual (but still polo-playing) new broom of a senior district officer, with the scholarly approach to local languages and cultural history that had served him well in the Gaskiya corporation. In the government education department, three northern teachers were promoted 'senior service' education officers, despite having no university degrees, following on the NA precedent that had benefited Malam Abubakar. As for the Richards constitution, before giving a valediction to it, and to those who had made it work, Malam Abubakar made a significant comment on the last day of Nigeria's final legislative council sitting; referring to some disputed pensions legislation, he said:

'if through our ignorance we are invited to agree to something and through that ignorance we agree to it, we are bound, I think, to stand by our word. Well, that might be a mistake on our part, but I would warn the members of the house that we should be very careful not to create the impression outside that Nigeria goes back on its word'.

He supported the creation of a new executive class between the administrative and clerical grades, and equivalents elsewhere in professional departments, which would effectively bridge the chasm that had always kept the senior service (still six-sevenths European) and the all-African junior service apart; but he voted unsuccessfully with Zik against making expatriation allowance a pensionable emolument.

During the late summer the first two young Nigerian cadets passed their entrance exams and were admitted to the royal military college, Sandhurst –

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...the first 25-foot boat was launched at the ... people, mostly children, died in a terrifying cinema fire ... implications for the wider social responsibilities ... a senior French west African administrator ... and four other northern towns to study divisional ... territories, and gave Malam Abubakar and the ADO ... did not believe that any colonial power could resist ... pressures, even if the colonial peoples were overtly to ... administrations; the Bauchi elementary training centre came ... of newly graduated teachers' successes, with 19 passes out ... modern test oil well was spudded at Owerri by the Shell D'Arcy ... development company (only to be abandoned, dry, at nearly 3,500 ... and the first waterborne petrol 'train' of lighters up the Niger and ... in Garoua in the northern French Cameroons was planned in ... by Shell, Socony-Vacuum and the United Africa Company; King ... offered 30 scholarships at Al-Azhar university, Cairo, which northern ... were more anxious than British educationalists of the time to see ... and two weeks were allowed for the registration of Nigerian voters ... for elections which were to be spread over three months.

King Abdullah of Jordan was assassinated, as also not long after was Sir Henry Gurney, the high commissioner in Malaya, by jungle terrorists: both events disturbed Nigerian emirs and administrative officers. A Victoria Falls conference was held to discuss a central African federation of northern and southern Rhodesia with Nyasaland. The peace treaty with Japan was signed. Elections in Sierra Leone were won by a Milton Margai, and on 24 December Libya became independent. Before these events, the revived NCNC held its annual convention in Kano, hoping thereby to strengthen its claim to be a nation-wide party. The Hicks commission on revenue allocation, which had followed on Whitehall's approval of the Ibadan conference and the constitutional reforms, pointed out that the east had twenty secondary schools for each million of population; the west six; and the north 0.4: Hicks recommended a 'once for all' special capital grant of £2 millions to the north to make up for 'deficiencies of equipment'. Concurrently the 1945 Nigerian ten year plan was superseded by a revised plan looking forward to 1956; this appeared to be once more a series of unco-ordinated projects, placing the main emphasis on the development of central government departments (whose directors would have been horrified to have been told that this was a bureaucratic form of socialism), rather than on the plural economy as a whole - nevertheless, it did concentrate resources on transport and communications, to the benefit of export crops and their producers.

The NCNC August convention had called for independence in 1956. As significantly, Mr Obafemi Awolowo brought the Action Group into material existence in 1951, with the equally aloof, but also arrogant, Bode Thomas as its secretary. Since March 1950, when a tiny handful had answered his summons, it had been but an idea in his mind, an 'action group' working from his private Ibadan home within the highly respected cultural society, Egbe Ormo Oduduwa. The EOO, or society of the descendants of Oduduwa (the Creator), had been founded in London in 1945 by a group of Yorubas, mostly students, like Ayotunde Rosiji and Awolowo: it was refounded in Lagos in 1948 by names which were for the time being more distinguished, and it incurred Zik's bitter hatred; it also became more closely identified with the Lagos Yoruba 'élite', whom some of the Ijebu Yoruba affected to regard as 'decadent'. The meeting

in Ondo province on 25 April 1951, presided over by the oba of Owo, still had a strong EOO flavour but omitted the Lagos élite.

The new party's slogans were 'Unity through Federation' and 'Freedom for All - Life More Abundant', the specific freedoms to be from British rule, ignorance, disease and want. Awolowo had been a convinced reader of pamphlets about the Indian national congress's views favouring the creation of provinces round linguistic groups. It seemed at first to many that a group of Yorubas, who had only been concerned originally to formulate concrete proposals for constitutional review, were driven into becoming a separate organized partisan body (which incidentally embraced elements of the old Nigeria youth movement) by the hostility of the main Igbo membership of the NCNC, and also by an upsurge of western feeling resentful of penetration by the enterprising Igbo people. During the run-up to the elections, Zik addressed an open letter to Awo, seeking a united front in the western provinces, despite their apparent fundamental differences, in order to force the governments in London and Lagos to grant a better constitution; the point made being that ministerial appointments under the new constitution were going to be incompatible with true cabinet government. If his failure had no other consequence, it meant that neither the British nor the northerners need strive to draw attention to tribal divisions that were still only too patent. Indeed only Zik's most extreme supporters seemed to have the right to hold themselves out as pan-Nigerians.

The formal promulgation of the new constitutional order-in-council in June provided for the chief commissioners to be upgraded to lieutenant-governors once more, and for the advisory regional councils to become houses with special legislative and financial powers. Central bills, except those seeking monetary appropriation, were to be laid first before the regional houses for discussion. They would not be dissoluble separately from the central legislature. All ministers would be appointed in the discretion of the governor or the lieutenant-governors (who would offer advice to the governor on regional names prior to his making his own choice), and the central ministers selected would be subject to the prior approval of the regional houses. All these ministers would deal in council and legislature with subjects and topics, not departments as such, but would look to association with the public officers in the related departments in order to ensure that their councils' decisions were carried out.

In October at the middle of the subsequent lengthy Nigerian electoral process, the Attlee Labour government in Britain fell, having already lost in the 1950 general election almost all of the huge majority that had remoulded postwar Britain. The governor in Lagos had appointed Mr A F F P (Foley) Newns, a former ADO (Bende), assistant secretary (development) at Enugu, and DO Colony, and now principal assistant secretary (political) in the central secretariat, to be the first secretary to the council of ministers, a post which would also rank as a resident. Newns was on leave in London during the bureaucratic lull between the Attlee and new Churchill administrations, and arrangements were made for him to attend the cabinet office in London. Sir Norman Brook, secretary to the cabinet and joint permanent secretary to the British treasury, gave him a desk in his private secretary's office, and free access to an index of precedents and related papers, all highly classified for security. Newns attended a meeting of a cabinet committee (mainly composed of officials), and returned to Lagos to draft notes on cabinet procedure in the UK, which were copied in confidence to regional lieutenant-governors

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and became a seminal procedural document in British decolonization. Malam Abubakar was to study the notes closely and virtually commit them to heart.

To the local people in Bauchi the significant thing was the return to power of the fabled name of Churchill, which seemed to presage the triumph of 'safety through strength based on freedom' - as those enjoying authority would define such terms. Mr Oliver Lyttelton just avoided becoming minister of materials and rearmament, and was appointed colonial secretary; Mr Alan Lennox-Boyd became his minister of state for the colonies. Lyttelton's father Alfred had held the office for two years at the beginning of the century, and he himself was no stranger to Nigeria's primary non-agricultural economy. During the slump and the commodity collapses of the 1930s he had represented the colony in the attempts to create an international tin cartel, intended to maintain buffer stocks; these had failed because new production could only be stimulated if real demand caused prices to rise. He had also contributed directly to the moves to make the imperial resources of copper, lead and zinc self-sufficient when the 1939 war broke out, something which had not been achieved for 1914. Proud that one of his ancestors laid claim to having invented the water-closet, he was primarily a business tycoon and patriot, rather than a party politician or orator, and unlike his deputy he never became interested in the practices of colonial politics, as opposed to the nature of the individual politicians. Lennox-Boyd's name was little known in Bauchi, and Malam Abubakar would have been disbelieving had he been told that the minister of state's greatest ambition was to succeed Lyttelton, so accustomed had he and all interested colonial subjects now become to politicians who regarded that secretaryship of state as a mere staircase to higher thrones. They also assumed, with much justification, that colonial office policy was largely made by its officials, even though they had never yet heard the name of the head of the African department, Andrew Cohen, who had tried so hard, in his own correspondence and in drafts for ministers, to encourage the overseas administrations to adjust to their new local élites. Griffiths had just appointed Cohen to be governor of Uganda, assuming that after a short interval of Conservative party rule he could be brought back as permanent under-secretary of state by the next Labour administration.

The Bauchi GRA ('government residential area') now began to buzz with rumours that Malam Abubakar was going to 'throw a drinks party', and expatriate wives were curious about who would be invited and what would be served. Abubakar had asked Wright on his last home leave to bring him back books to read, .22 cartridges for his hunting forays, and a complete dinner service and cutlery for six people, including candlesticks. One morning the ADO was told by an NA messenger that the *baturen makaranta* (school white man), the one that was a *bakin mutum* (black man), would like to see him at his home about five o'clock. The ADO put on his long trousers and a tie, as he would when calling on the emir. Malam Abubakar was waiting in his entry porch in the house where his dear grandmother had looked after him at holiday time when he was at the provincial school. The native treasurer, the district head of Bauchi town (holding the title of *baraya*, or master of the stables), the NT accountant and another teacher were sitting on wooden chairs against the circular mud wall, and the ADO was firmly told to occupy the sole deckchair. The host placed a full, uncorked bottle of whisky, a jug of water and a glass on the floor beside him, and with a small smile whispered, 'You will know what to do with that'. His Muslim guests had orange squash. The ADO waited for other European guests, but there were none: he was the

guinea-pig, and felt very honoured. The Hausa small talk was free and easy (the baraya spoke no English), ranging from the failure of the groundnut crop that had left the Nigerian railway, for once, with no freight to shift, through the difficulty of finding elected representatives who were not already persons of some traditional authority, to the question of whether Churchill's age and weaknesses mattered beside his position as a symbol. Apart from the emir, who invited the senior officials and their wives to watch the *salla* celebrations from his palace balcony and offered squash and groundnuts afterwards, with a very occasional tour of the harem quarters for the resident's and SDO's wives, this was the first formal return of European-style hospitality from a Bauchi NA official to a government officer. Nor were the others quick in following up the precedent.

Meanwhile the earliest declarations at the primary level of elections (in the other larger northern towns) had produced results that those in traditional authority found uncomfortable. NEPU, or NCNC in southern-dominated wards, had come first in Kano, Zaria, Jos, Minna, Maiduguri, Kaduna and Nguru. It was all very well to say that these were small minorities compared with the millions yet to make their choices in the rural districts. There was no organization in existence, ready and fit to combat a radical movement which total reactionaries caricatured as an urban mob of young bicycle-hirers, canteen clerks and 'yan iska (sons of the wind, ne'er-do-well drop-outs), led by the nose by leaders who were only doing their southern masters' bidding. The weakness of NEPU, which only the emergence of a rival party would illuminate, was not the undoubted rag-tag-and-bobtail nature of its pawns; it was that apart from Malam Aminu Kano its leading figures lacked any recognized status in a kaleidoscope of hierarchical societies – and the few who had some residual claim were summarily disparaged as malcontents, because they had for whatever reasons challenged their own particular society and been discarded by it. It was never true that the masses of northern Nigeria did not talk about politics, however parochial; what was true was that they never made their views and colourfully gossipy opinions (not all of which were confined to personalities) known, except by word of mouth to those who spoke their own language – and at the time these included few journalists and no academics. It was also a practical truth that very few individuals among all Nigeria's anonymous masses ever came into contact with the government machine (as opposed to particular government officers) except as members of some community, which would include the classes of criminals and taxpayers.

The reaction began to be harnessed at the very end of September 1951, when Malam Abubakar invited the sardauna of Sokoto and the makama of Bida to hold a meeting in Kaduna, jointly with leaders of the *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa*. Indeed there are those who insist that Dr Dikko and Abubakar were responsible for the Sardauna's entry into the hurly-burly of practical rather than palace politics, and that this always gave Malam Abubakar a final moral authority over Malam Ahmadu. In a discussion of the possibility of JMA being turned into a political party, there seems to have been some scattered reluctance to admit either Abubakar or the Sardauna, because on JMA's foundation the former had turned down the invitation to join, and the latter had only promised some money without further commitment. This pettiness did not survive the news that the meeting enjoyed the awareness and support of those leading emirs who saw in such a defensive party against the south, protective security for themselves as pivots of a stable society. The JMA held an emergency meeting in Zaria next day, in the same street as Malam Abubakar Imam's home.

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Abubakar Imam was the cultural organization's general treasurer, who had as editor of the *Gaskiya* newspaper recently been asked by Sharwood-Smith as acting chief commissioner why the sensible, educated people were all in the wrong places. Abubakar Imam had said that he thought that the '10% NA' election into final electoral colleges (described in the previous chapter) might be useful in putting this right, always provided that the chiefs were discreetly guided to nominate able English-speakers and not just their sons and grandsons; that of greater impact would be a political party which sensible, educated people would not be ashamed to join, as well as conservative nationalists and members of ruling Fulani dynasties. He now moved formally in the emergency meeting that the JMA social organization be declared just such a political party, and that because of the government general order banning civil servants from overt political activity, Dr R A B Dikko should demit office as president (and Yahaya Gusau would have to resign as secretary-general, if he were to remain a government teacher); his deputy Alhaji Sanda (a less than literate and virtually unknown Lagos trader) would act as president until the general meeting in December; meanwhile from the next day the JMA, as 'Northern People's Congress', should contest the remaining elections by nominating candidates committed to resisting NEPU and the south. In some alarm at the threatened politicization of government officers, the SNP Leslie Goble insisted that the NPC assistant secretary Isa Wali hand over all the records; he could do nothing about the many NA servants, like the teacher Abdurrahman Mora.

The NPC manifesto was to include regional autonomy within a united Nigeria; reform of local government within a progressive system of emirates and chiefdoms; the 'voice of the people' being heard in all councils of the north; a drive for education; the elimination of bribery and corruption; 'One North, One People, Irrespective of Religion, Rank or Tribe' as slogan; and eventual dominion status within the British commonwealth. The loss of the civil servants attracted a little criticism, but the north had so few senior officers, and Dr Dikko's influence was so limited in any event, that the point was soon forgotten. It was too late for any administrator to suggest that the most senior local government officials ought not to be involved in partisan national politics either; nor would it have been wise, whatever the precedents elsewhere, given the lack of 'sensible, educated people' in other sectors.

Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa returned to Bauchi happier than for many months. Giles had reorganized the divisional administration, which now included one of the 'development officers' (paid for from the CD&W funds provided by the British parliament and treasury, and resented by the local accountant in view of his lack of qualifications) to carry out the DO's statutory duties of checking the native treasuries, and two more ADOs, of whom one camped permanently in the fraught chiefdom of Ningi, and the other concentrated on works and natural resources. Malam Abubakar had thought well of the previous lone ADO's response to his hint that an emir's messenger had been faking the returns in certain *jangali* (cattle tax) counting of nomad Fulani wandering in Ganjuwa district, and of the tactical confrontation of the emir with his guilty servant at a council meeting when the emir had no option but to approve of justice being seen to be done. Now that this ADO had been delegated advisory responsibility for the administrative sides of police, courts and education, Abubakar summoned him one day by telephone to the middle school, 'as you are our minister for education!' It turned out that a naughty boy had sent a naive but not quite innocent love letter to a girl in a lower form, and the lady education officer had demanded condign punishment.

Abubakar seemed to suggest that '*as our minister for corrections also*', the ADO should, as in prison inspections, preside at the execution of sentence, which was delivered by the school serjeant-major through at least two pairs of short school uniform trousers.

The alfresco ceremony having duly been observed through Malam Abubakar's office window, the real purpose of the summons emerged: anxious for another of the regular gossips that they held over some nominal file query, he unrolled a wall-map of Nigeria behind his desk and started to talk about the constitutional changes. He was looking for ways for the north to shed the need to share the burdens of the whole country, and to be rid of the strangling and artificial mutual dependence between north and south. He was tired of being abused by untravelling Igbos as representing nobody but the emirs ('*after all I have done to get you people to control our emir!*'). With an expansive gesture he traced out on the map a rather insignificant-looking stream that straggled up from the coast in Dahomey and petered out north-west of Kaiama: '*I'm sure you British could negotiate with the French some right for us of importing and exporting through their country*'. At the same period another such conversation led to discussion of how the north would fare if any separation reduced the number of professional or technical expatriates available to support the public services. '*But until you people came, we had no doctors, at all!*', Abubakar expostulated. '*We survived!*'. 'Some of you', the ADO said, but to himself.

At the beginning of December the great NPC general meeting was held in Zaria. Malam Abubakar was deputed to represent the Bauchi branch, together with their local acting president (the NA works supervisor Malam Usman Katungu), their secretary (a central office scribe Malam Abdul Akabi), and (as part of his political education) the emir's young second son and chief of NA police, Malam Balarabe. There was much fuss at Zaria about who held membership cards – Malam Bello Kano, who did not, thought that if emirs could hold a card, then the emir of Katsina should be asked to join and to accept the leadership: the Sardauna might serve as a substitute. The meeting was ill-organized and inconclusive, but it formally registered to the outside world that there was now a new political party label, and it was northern.

Abroad the united nations were recommending that an economic commission for Africa be set up, Egypt was offering to let the future of the Sudan condominium be decided by UN plebiscite, and Libya was approaching federal independence under King Idris I; at home, NEPU and NCNC continued to alarm northern conservatives by winning 17 out of 26 seats in the intermediate elections in Kano city. In the eastern provinces, an anti-intellectual swing in the initial votes was leading towards three-quarters of the seats being won by 'the common man', and the NCNC's majority became precarious, having to rely on support from Dr Endeley and his fellow Cameroonians from the trust territory, in return for Enugu's backing of Cameroons expenditure projects. In the west the Action Group was the only campaigning party with new policies, such as to create a public corporation to nationalize the development of mineral wealth before tin became no more than a wasted asset. Its clever but wordy documents had been designed to induce those non-westerner opponents of Zik who were realists (such as Malam Abubakar perchance) to look forward to an ultimate alliance; but it was not these manifestos that won the west, but the party's traditional Yoruba flavour.

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In the east the new government was led, in the absence of Dr Azikiwe, by Eyo Ita, a 49-year old Calabari generally known as 'Professor', who had founded a Nigerian youth league movement but was now first national vice-president of the NCNC. He was given the portfolio of natural resources. The five Lagos seats in the western regional assembly had fallen to the five NCNC candidates Dr Abubakar Ibiyinka Olorun-Nimbe, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Prince Adeleke Adedoyin, Haroun Adebola and T O S Benson, in that order, but each gaining over 12,000 votes and within a few hundreds of each other. The NCNC's central working committee wished Zik and Adedoyin to be nominated by the western house to the two federal Lagos seats, and Adebola and Benson were ready to stand down, but said so too late. Yorubas now succeeded in keeping Zik out of the central Lagos seats, where he had pictured himself naturally as the Lagosian nationalist: Dr Olorun-Nimbe, Lagos's 48-year old mayor, refused to stand down, and Prince Adedoyin, who had acceded to an inducement to withdraw his nomination, withdrew the withdrawal, claiming that he had submitted it 'inadvertently'. In the event nobody stood down. This meant a ballot, and the AG block gave Adedoyin and Nimbe sweeping majorities. It became very difficult for Dr Azikiwe to place his trust in Yoruba politicians hereafter, although the ancestral tribal tensions had been obvious even in the early days of the NYM. He and Awolowo were both isolated in the western house, but Zik held no office outside his party. It also became progressively more difficult for Nimbe to win trust from either side of the town council of which he was the first and only mayor.

The AG also took an early trick in attracting headlines when Chief Samuel Akintola flew to London at Christmas and demanded from Mr Lennox-Boyd on new year's day that the powers intended for governor, lieutenant-governors and *ex officio* members of councils should be reduced, and that all long-serving administrative officers should be withdrawn because they were incurably unsympathetic with change; Lennox-Boyd did not discuss this political *jeu d'esprit* as freely as Akintola was to claim, nor would any structural change at that stage have been practical politics, even if conceded at the last minute - the constitution had just been brought formally into force, and senior 'palace appointments' had been made. British draughtsmen and appointees of staff had already moved on to other priorities. However the Action Group promptly went on to upset the British theorists, who had imagined that the new provincial (or regional - this expression was beginning to be generally accepted in anticipation of the new constitution's terminology) houses would meekly follow the supposed conventions of Westminster and English town hall politics, and select their central representatives in proportion to the seats won by each faction: it now appeared that the AG would use their western majority to send none but AG members to the central house. The party also decided at a conference in Benin city to forbid any social fraternization with the governor.

Katsina was the first northern province to complete its election, and the NA development secretary, Malam Isa Kaita, was among the successful, having been 'injected' into the final college despite having actually stood and been defeated in a primary. Other 'NA ten per cent injectees' elected elsewhere included the sardauna of Sokoto, the makama of Bida, Malam Abubakar Imam and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, of whom none, for various reasons of logic and convenience, had faced a village primary. The moral acceptability of Katsina NA's action remained for a time a theoretical mark on Malam Isa Kaita's political career, but he soon expunged it by his energetic and loyal success in office. The voting of the members of the final Bauchi provincial

electoral college, held in the middle school on 21 December, is of interest to Bauchi historians: of the seven successful candidates Abubakar gained 53 votes; Jauro Gombe (visiting teacher) 31; Buba Gombe (supervisor of works) 26; Abubakar, chiroma of Bauchi 24; YaKubu Wanka (Bauchi accountant) 22; Muhammadu Kabir (son of emir of Katagum, alleged by some to be under age) 17; Bawa Bulkachuwa (Katagum scribe) 16.

During the year speculation on Thompstone's successor as chief commissioner in the north had been enlivened by a campaign in the leading London periodical on west African affairs, pleading for the appointment to a job, than which 'few [were] more important . . . in the colonies', of a young man with wide experience from outside, from whose breath of fresh air 'might blow the wind of change' (some nine years before Mr Macmillan and David Hunt used the expression in other contexts); someone who would appreciate the special problems of the area, but not let these stop the north from playing a full part in a Nigerian political revolution. Sir Eric Thompstone was sworn in just before Christmas as the first lieutenant-governor since the post had been downgraded two decades before by the centralizing Sir Donald Cameron: he promptly proceeded to pack for retirement and to hand over, not to a young Lothario, but to the Bryan Sharwood-Smith who had been torn between nostalgia for a favourite residency, doubts about his age (still the early fifties), and concern that his long bush career might suggest to the envious a lack of adequate secretariat polish; Sharwood-Smith had finally decided to accept the honour of the offer, with a silent hint to his closer acquaintance that the north might be better off with the devil it knew than with a minor Mountbatten. Not least of his worries was that the north still had only one indigenous fully professional man, Doctor Dikko.

There was inevitably disappointment elsewhere among the ranks of residents: even churches and universities nurture the hierarchical jealousies that civil and military services suffer. Malam Abubakar was calm: 'Yes, I know him. He is difficult to understand, but he tries to be frank'. Sharwood-Smith did sometimes strike strangers as incoherent, especially when adhering stubbornly to his point, but as a lapsed classical scholar he always wrote lucidly and with style. He judged characters quickly, and trusted those best whom he had known best. Inevitably those who had never served with him in the Cameroons, Niger, Sokoto or Kano interpreted the later advance of those who had (including NA officials) as favouritism; yet when he was to come to leave Nigeria people from Bauchi and Benue, whose work he had never seen at first hand in younger days, had also advanced. On his 53rd birthday he was sworn in as lieutenant-governor and presided over the first meeting of the newly elected northern house of assembly where, despite the alarms in the cities, the grand majority of seats was occupied by competent and weathered NA officials. These mallams now resorted to the NPC label, under which they were comfortably at home among their own kind. The business of the house was to elect 40 members to join 40 from the house of chiefs in a joint council, which would in turn choose the 68 northern members of the house of representatives; and to give approval to the governor's proposals for the three northern ministerial appointments at the centre, and to the lieutenant-governor's for a preliminary four in the north (there was more difficulty in the south, where reliable professional men were sometimes disinclined to exchange a profitable consulting room for an as yet unprofitable ministry). Thompstone had discussed possibilities informally with Abubakar,

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the Sardauna and others, and had subsequently reached agreement with Macpherson.

There was minimal dissent from the names for the northern executive council, all taken from the traditional north: sardauna of Sokoto, Malam Ahmadu; makama of Bida, Malam Aliyu; Malam Bello Kano, dan Amar; and the wali of Borno, Malam Muhammadu Ngileruma. Malam Bello boldly asked the Sardauna outright whether his unwillingness to go to Lagos was because he was reluctant to become too remote from the succession to the sultanate, but the Sokoto aristocrat remained silent. There was no objection to the governor's choice for the central government of Shettima Kashim from Borno, Malam Muhammadu Ribadu from Adamawa (to fill the place notionally pencilled for the Sardauna), and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa from Bauchi; these three also came from the 'traditional' north, but from pillars less close to the well-beaten tracks between Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. It was hardly a coincidence, despite the time-lag since the initial recommendations had been submitted early in 1951, that the new year's honours list included honorary MBEs for Shettima and Ribadu, and an honorary OBE for Abubakar.

Malam Abubakar's summons to Lagos may seem to readers of the foregoing pages as the promotion of a sincere, determined but easily wearied and disillusioned man, of intelligence but modest experience, to a level where his insistence on justice for his own provinces must, if successful, lead to the break-up of Nigeria. At this time it was dan Amar and Kashim whose personal qualities and sense of conscience stood out in Whitehall estimation. Not too many yet expected Abubakar to make a greater mark than either of these. It is the task of later chapters to show how he grew into a man of a much wider world, without any change in his character.

PART THREE

The minister for technical subjects in Nigeria

1952–1957

Ya zama wando daidai da kugun kowa

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Abdullahi Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria.
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In its early years of ministerial, semi-responsible government the paradox was that Nigeria was becoming more introspective politically, even as its economy was beginning, slowly, to be more internationally integrated. British politics affected to be producing a nostalgic revival, seen by romantics as a new Elizabethan age; but the British people's active interest in what was done in their name in their sovereign's dependencies continued to dwindle, until a coincidental concern for standards in the developing world and for the effects of population growth on the globe's natural environment began to emerge from a new generation in several western nations, a young minority but a vocal one, composed of the inquisitive and educated. Their peers in countries like Nigeria cared little for 'planet earth' or the 'global village', and were preoccupied with the avenues to political power. They did not suppose that the origins of human miseries were the same in both developed and undeveloped countries, nor that human well-being was not dependent solely on the standard of living. They did not yet sense that they could afford the emotional thrill of being givers, which the first generation of bourgeois legatees of the new state welfarism believed that it had discovered.

The administrators in the wilderness, to an extent much greater than that felt by their professional and technical colleagues, laboured under a growing sense of pressure from distant powers whom they did not believe to understand the human truths that lay behind academic or *weltpolitik* reasoning. They craved to be given more time to prepare the way, and were told that they were making selfish excuses in a world where no highway had ever been constructed wholly straight, however carefully it might have been planned. Their wards and friends who shared their doubts began to see their equivocations as cowardly withdrawal of guidance.

Abubakar was readier than his younger intellectual contemporaries to notice the contemporary cold war, and to recognise the necessary interdependence of even those countries that were historical strangers or enemies. He did not attribute all human ills to economic conditions, but to man's relationship to man, which depended on man's relationship to God. Yet he was no swifter than other would-be liberal thinkers to notice that a shrunken world containing ever more people might become very much more uncomfortable, even if it were to become richer overall. His concerns widened again, but they were still confined. Even so, the whole of Nigeria was no small frame.

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15 The Minister from the North: 'Each one teach one' At the centre of Government

Itace daya ba ya kurmi

It has been argued that the north was 'successful in slowing down' the Nigerian movement towards independence after 1951. Future pages may rather hint that it was the involvement of the north on equal terms, so long delayed until 1951, which calmed the urges towards earlier independence that had arisen separately in both east and west; and that this forestalled an otherwise probable insistence on secession on the part of the Muslim north. That might even have led to the north trying, in the teeth of British resistance (more likely to have been diplomatic than military), to exchange the commonwealth partnership for an imaginary north African confederacy; if so, it would not have been 'Nigeria', as it is still recognized, that would have gained the year or two's sooner freedom. An implicit argument which the reader must also consider will be that had the northern leadership at the centre been in any other hands than Abubakar's, there would have been such a split in any event, regardless of the British view or of the resultant difficulties over communications; and that then the chances of more immediate independence for the south, whether unitary or in smaller fragments, would have been slim indeed except with accompanying countryside violence. So much more time would have had to be spent on negotiating some solution to the difficulty of providing new northern trade routes; so little conviction would have backed any tactical use of British force to quell recalcitrants in any quarter. By good fortune most Nigerians saw that most of the British could not conceive of remaining where they were not wanted, and were only doubtful about the details of a timetable that would not create chaos.

One factor which strengthened Abubakar's leadership in the next five short years was that the pattern of northern education before the 1950s (indeed before the 1960s) had not produced what social historians have since identified in the southern provinces, namely a stratum of partly Europeanised youth in whom 'the psychology of revolt, rooted in denial of social status,' could be implanted by apostles of fundamental change. The radical northern opposition did seek to prove that there was a parallel to such southern models among its urban supporters, but it was rare enough only to be numbered in tens of thousands. Malam Abubakar never required their kind of help, let alone the Sardauna. It may have been mere coincidence that by now the expatriate populations of Lagos and the north had doubled since the war's end, while those in the east and west had actually trebled. But it was the progressive expansion of his own experience that came to convince him, as a central minister, not only that a Nigerian unity was after all possible (through what the older historians called gradualism), but that for the present, unhappily, there was no African

beside himself fitted to give meaning to it. Certainly Malam Muhammadu Ribadu never attempted to challenge him in this rôle.

Postwar studies in London had taken him into an utterly new world, but only for a limited time, of which the conclusion was known and clearcut. It requires strong imagination for an alien reader to understand the degree of what is now dubbed 'culture shock' experienced by a Muslim northerner (or for that matter a long-serving expatriate administrative officer from the northern provinces) summoned to Lagos in colonial days, not just for a duty visit or to embark on a mailboat, but to establish his home indefinitely. It was more than a matter of ensuring arrival with the first of countless successive sacks of northern vegetables, leaves and cereals to maintain the accustomed domestic diet. The population of Lagos was about a quarter of a million, including 5,000 'Europeans' and 'Syrians'. There were frequent, however minor, indications of social or racial tensions between individuals, of which the provinces had less reason to be conscious. Even the most senior officials' houses lacked large enough gardens to guarantee privacy from the inquisitive, and although there were beaches, creeks, tennis and golf for sportive Europeans, there was no ready access for anyone to truly open space. Sophisticated or westernised southerners played tennis and other competitive games, but as yet rarely indulged in beach or swimming parties for recreation, although the habit spread fast once it started as the result of 'Nigerianization' and intermingling of senior staff out of office hours.

But for people like Malam Abubakar, whose home town still had only about 15,000 inhabitants and under 40 British (including the officers' families), the absence in Lagos of nearby savannah bush where a man might breathe air that was not humid, let alone go shooting, and above all the lack of a farm, was emotionally crippling. By contrast the famous northern 'reserve' of manners was an equal mystery to Lagosians, who were puzzled to discern what lay behind it. Besides, the immigrant northern community in Lagos was composed of uncultured traders who made money, not of the mallam class, concerned with status, power and philosophy. There were mosques, but they were not the places to which all one's friends and associates went to pray on Fridays, and prayers tended to become a matter of domestic observance at home. There were many more roads than around Bauchi, but even once across Carter bridge to the mainland, the evening drive through the bustling traffic and undisciplined crowds in the motorcar to *sha iska* (drink the [fresh] air) was no relaxation.

He was sworn in as a central member on 5 January, and as a minister on 17 January. From the day of arrival there was work to do, new, puzzling and demanding (as Abubakar wrote to Wright, '*I am very very busy, reading reading reading all the time, started on my new interesting job. It will as I see be some time before I get to settle in it. I find the people here kind and helpful*'); and in spite of the advice given by strangers anxious to be useful, but unfamiliar with the newcomers' ways, the family and the few original house servants, such as Ahmadu Koto who had been a Bauchi middle school labourer, had to learn their new routines for themselves without much guidance from the head of the household. Malam Abubakar had been given leave without pay from the Bauchi native authority (although he remained a member of the emir's council) on the date that the governor gave him the central portfolio of works, which included national water projects, museums and antiquities. His initial salary was multi-tiered: as a member of the house of assembly he received £300, doubled because he was also a member of the house of representatives; as a central minister he received a further basic £400, raised again by £400 because

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his portfolio was for a subject held concurrently by regional ministers – had he held an exclusively central portfolio, he would have drawn yet £300 more, but had he still drawn his NA salary, that would have been deducted. In this tortuous way his total was £1,500, equivalent to a senior district officer without expatriation pay, and he was entitled to 30s a day travelling allowance, equivalent to a resident. He was liable to pay a fixed rent for his quarters in the Ikoyi government residential area, which some of his ministerial colleagues resented because they had no practical choice in the matter, unless they were to make their own arrangements in the warrens of Lagos. The environment did not stop him from eating his simple meals indiscriminately with household staff and his family, on the floor.

Malam Abubakar also received an advance of salary to buy a Chevrolet saloon car, with a driver and maintenance schedule assigned by the public works department, and a basic allowance to cover depreciation which virtually covered the monthly loan repayments. For the present, he kept his Ford *Pilot* and private driver. Demands were soon heard, based on comparisons of chiefs and the salaries of the most senior civil servants, to raise these ministerial emoluments and perquisites. The governor at first resisted bids to pay more than was approved for the attorney-general and financial secretary, but eventually gave way, upon which the ministers insisted that the British *ex officio* council members should receive equivalent increases also. The governor continued, as unsuccessfully, to advise restraint in the demands for better houses and more furnishings, larger cars and higher allowances. Malam Abubakar was his lone supporter, recognising that Macpherson foresaw the hazard of a widening gulf between the African 'haves' and 'have-nots' as self-government came nearer. He did not object to the Milne-Levy salaries report, which consolidated the 1950 TARP 'temporary additions', reintroduced the overlapping of junior salaries with the lower senior scales, and paved the way for a future middle 'executive' class.

Macpherson set up the skeleton ministries in sequence, starting with four: it was a laborious business to transfer the basic files from the old secretariat archives on which each initial registry might be founded. R L (Larry) Armstrong was the chartered civil engineer who was selected as a suitable PWD officer to be Abubakar's first official secretary. He was a former provincial engineer at Maiduguri and divisional engineer at Kaduna, with boyhood knowledge of Egyptian Arabic and recent familiarity with Hausa. He had met him off the WAAC De Havilland *Dove* at Ikeja airport and taken him to the Ikoyi catering rest house (CRH) until the civil service house made temporarily available was ready to receive the minister's household who were following on by train. The new office was in the public works department headquarters near the racecourse, and one of the main problems of this early ministerial period was for all concerned to discover what a minister ought to do. It was easy to set out to imitate the theory of Whitehall political control, but few had any relevant experience to know what should be done, and by whom, and what could not. Armstrong was not alone in having no briefing beyond the direction that he should help his minister in any way he could. As recorded in the last chapter, Downing Street cabinet procedures, handed down from 18th century Walpole and Great War Hankey, had been divulged in confidence to Foley Newns, the designated replacement of the former clerk to the defunct executive council, who edited a manual for local conditions; these precedents were explained to the new ministers as they were brought in turn by their secretaries to take

their oaths of office and of secrecy at the new council of ministers office (which had been designed and built next to government house in accordance with advice from Newns to the PWD architects). They had their friendly 'getting to know you' talks with Sir John Macpherson, the chief secretary, attorney general and financial secretary, and they received their first secret agenda and council memoranda from the council's secretary, Newns.

But it is a curious fact, to be repeated in many British colonies over the years, that nobody was ever consciously or specifically 'trained' in how to preside in, sit in or serve a colonial cabinet except by learning on the job and (as used to be said in British industrial practice) 'watching Nelly'. There were the confidential 'ministerial code of conduct' and 'notes on administrative procedures', as Newns had paraphrased them from Downing Street, but all had to be interpreted afresh locally for each constitutional novice, official or politician, without direct guidance from anyone who might have been hardened in the fire of experience in older democracies. Because it was public, supervision of the parliamentary learning curve was to be done more professionally. Not every meeting of the council of ministers was predictable: rare ones at which fireworks had been foreseen were despatched easily and quickly, occasionally a routine agenda, as approved by Sir John the president, went wrong because touchy individuals suspected slights or resented the ebullience or tetchiness of others, or because regional politics coloured interpretations of the proposals tabled. However 'Nigerian' this seemed, it was in fact very like life in boards, committees and councils anywhere. But the council of ministers very soon worked like clockwork, served by an office determined to maintain Downing Street standards, and from the first meeting found the 'conclusions' (minutes) delivered to their ministry desks within 24 hours. Over the years it achieved a remarkable volume of work and approved many important and complicated bills for introduction to the house. Newns's procedures became a model which was replicated in different environments all over the emerging British world of decolonization up to the later 1970s.

The Director of Public Works was still head of his department, and his deputies in the three regions were still answerable to him for federal projects. Armstrong had to research and write papers and briefs for his minister to present and defend at council of ministers or at debates in the house of representatives; he had to help him with hasty notes from the official box at the house in answering oral questions and supplementaries; he also had to be sure that the briefs and answers were acceptable to the director. In these early days the private secretary was only rarely asked to leave his minister alone with a visitor. Once a Lebanese gentleman called, and Armstrong was told to leave them together. After the visit Malam Abubakar said, *'The reason I did not ask you to stay was that the subject under discussion with our visitor had nothing to do with government business. To reassure you, I can tell you that my answer to his request was NO!'* Then he added, *'He will come to my house this evening, I shouldn't wonder, but the answer I shall give him will still be NO!'* Once when Armstrong went round to his house late in the evening with some message, he found him, as often, sitting on the floor with a visiting relative and taking his evening meal from the male servant; he was asked to join them, and squatted on his heels as he had learnt to do as a boy in Cairo. Malam Abubakar grinned and commented, *'You see, Mr Armstrong, I like to live simply'*.

One valuable and educative way of keeping a minister constructively busy (and incidentally out of the professional director's way) was to have him go

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on tour, and then Armstrong found himself as virtual ADC, organizing the rest houses, catering and exchanges of hospitality throughout the country, and on one occasion bringing the minister's two very young sons down from Bauchi to join their father at 21 Lugard Avenue in Ikoyi. Car journeys of hundreds of miles a day made it possible for ministers and their private secretaries to know each other quite intimately as they indulged in long general conversations, while the baggage and servants followed behind in a kitcar or station wagon. Armstrong heard one day from Abubakar how his grandmother had told him of seeing her husband's throat cut by marauders before British rule had been established.

Abubakar gradually began not only to appreciate through Armstrong's conversational exchanges in their bush travel together what his director, the DPW, was talking about whenever he took refuge in engineer's technicalities, but also to see how the parts of Nigeria he had never known were administered and how their inhabitants lived. One of the construction sites to which Armstrong took him embodied a large junction in the Lagos water-main that had to be replaced at the time of lowest demand, which was between 1 and 3 *am*. Under floodlights a water engineer explained the whole process of shutting off the huge water flow and replacing the faulty pipe, and Abubakar watched fascinatedly while the two British inspectors and the work gang finished the job and restored the capital's water supply. Returning in the car in the early hours, he commented that he had not thought to find two Europeans down the hole with their African workmen, and later at home on a visit to Bauchi mentioned this to the ADO, who was glad to reassure him that expatriate well-drillers in the province also went down the holes which they and their teams sank, sometimes several hundred feet. Elsewhere the trunk road programme, which involved the upgrading from central funds of many key routes to 'A' grade (more in the south than in the north, as it seemed to the sardauna of Sokoto, the equivalent minister in Kaduna), took the minister of works to virtually every province over the next three years.

But once the period of induction was over, the weaknesses of this new ministerial system became very evident. The presence at periodic full meetings of the three lieutenant-governors and the three ministers without portfolio (emir of Katsina, ooni of Ife and Dr Endeley from the southern Cameroons) made little difference to the quality of business. There was a contradictory regional resentment, especially in the north, that laws passed in regional legislatures had nominally to be assented to by the governor on the advice of the council of ministers, most of whom were inevitably alien to the region concerned. There was in fact another damaging belief, that the chief secretary objected to regional authorities being referred to in the government gazette as 'governments'. Even before this stage there had been problems with individual ministers, such as the one, typical of every new administration in all kinds of government, who demanded to be shown all the correspondence in his department until it was proven that he would spend all his waking hours reading flimsies, with no time to comment or decide. Bode Thomas was the first of the new ministers to insist that all his office's files should be clearly titled and registered as ministry files, expunging all traces of their secretariat origins, and keeping them unseen by his departmental professionals. The governor also quickly recognized the difficulty that his ministers, who had been to all intents and purposes appointed by the regional houses before party politics were effectively functioning, were answerable to a central house where a two-thirds majority could remove them:

the NCNC majority in the east, for example, sent four ministers to Lagos where the NCNC in numbers and behaviour appeared to be the main opposition. Another minister, Mr Arikpo, saw the house as a government bench of 18 facing an opposition of, potentially, 130. The immediate solution was provided by individual and group appetite for office, which temporarily outweighed taste for mischief, but this merely ensured that most ministers were not so much interested in carrying on central government as in promoting the interests of their home regions. They were also seen to be jealous of the appearance that colleagues from other regions had power to issue instructions through their departmental directors for executive action in their own homelands; while the emirs and obas at home were equally assumed by cynics to be affronted by regional departmental decisions which could be attributed to their own commoner subjects in the Lagos council.

Legalistic civil service practice in publishing legislation did not help understanding either, nor did it for years to come: constitutionally, decisions made by the council of ministers under power given by statute were still the governor's, though he must now act after listening to their corporate elected advice; but the instruments published in the gazette did not seem to the suspicious to betray any practical advance away from colonial autocracy, since they appeared 'by his excellency's command' over the name of the expatriate council secretary. Other anomalies were detected: there were for example four ministers of education (two of them embraced in a 'social services' portfolio) in the central house, although three of these were backbenchers from the regions; every African minister in the northern executive council, except the sultan of Sokoto, was in fact a MHR, as were most of the eastern and western ministers. The refusal of the north at the constitutional conference to countenance the possibility of a southerner acting as Mr Speaker in the house had resulted in the clerk assistant at Westminster being appointed as president (he was later to become Sir Edward Fellowes as clerk of the British house of commons, having initially been brought out to advise on parliamentary procedures and the drafting of standing orders for all the Nigerian houses). He continued to visit Nigeria for this duty, widely respected but regularly criticized for giving opposition members their fair share of time and discretionary tolerance. A trifle he had to deal with was that, unlike ministers, the floor members did not inherit from the old legco the honorific 'The Honourable' in outside society; the conventional courtesy of being referred to in debate as 'the honourable member for such-and-such a constituency' was admittedly confusing, and it did not help that some members had spent money on printing visiting cards using the old style. Malam Abubakar had no visiting or business cards until, much later, his office produced them for approval, and even then he found little use for them.

The personalities in the council of ministers began to emerge after a few months of interrelation. Dr E M L Endeley from the Cameroons had no portfolio and was seen as a typical former medical officer. The minister of commerce and industries, Mr Alfred Chukadifu Nwapa, a jolly journalist-cum-lawyer from the east, with a very personable doctor for wife, came at first to be treated as the most important NCNC political figure, leading the more intellectual lecturers who were virtually conscripts, the gentlemanly botanist PhD Eni Njoku and the anthropologist Mr Okoi Arikpo (who had been doing fieldwork in Ogoja). Dr Njoku was 35 and never became hardened to the viciousness of politics, and perhaps for that reason became one of Abubakar's first close Igbo friends; but Arikpo learned to accept the rough with the smooth. The three lawyer westerners – Mr Samuel Ladoke Akintola

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(ebullient and fork-tongued former editor of the *Service and Express* and the only man who had asked specifically for his portfolio, that of labour, because of his interest in the 1945 strike and the lessons of the Enugu shootings); Chief Arthur Prest, the 46-year old Itsekiri from Warri, a former police officer with a broad-minded affection for ladies; and the shrewd, rude and behaviourally pendular deputy to Mr Awolowo, Chief Bode Thomas, an Oyo Yoruba – were perhaps more overshadowed by their Action Group leader Awo, seated on the back benches, than was Mr Nwapa by Professor Eyo Ita, who was dominant in the Enugu exco, or Malam Abubakar by the Sardauna. The northerners found Akintola abusive, Thomas unfriendly and disdainful, but Prest, no stranger to alcohol, affable. Shettima Kashim, minister of social services and welfare, was never happy whenever the company was large; he brought a superficially dour but impressive Kanuri nobility to the group, and the *arriviste* neo-aristocrat Malam Muhammadu Ribadu a dignified Fulani stubbornness coloured by Malam's volatile humour and a respect for goodness in others; but Abubakar, in his fortieth year, was already regarded by journalists as more 'venerable' than either, and as the northerner from whom the most ebullient felt incapable of withholding respect: the *London Times* even now called him 'the silver voiced strong man of the north'.

Stories began to filter out about his simple integrity. This was sometimes embarrassing for those senior expatriate officials who mistakenly pictured themselves as theatrical agents managing temperamental performing artistes (such functionaries believed that it was more politic to give way to ministers' greedier personal demands, in the vain hope that immediate amiable relations would make firmness on matters of wider principle more acceptable if that should be required later). It was less embarrassing for political colleagues, who merely thought him inept at mastering the system. An early example was that of room-cooling air-conditioners, still a luxury on the coast and quite unknown in the north except in one or two American missionaries' homes equipped with private electricity generators: there had been pressure on the PWD to allot these to ministers as a priority, and the matter came all the way to the council of ministers for settlement, with the recommendation that each should have two. 'But I already have three', said a minister; 'Well, I have one', said Malam Abubakar, 'so that makes it right, doesn't it?' He was observing with pleasure how Sir John Macpherson combined dignity with approachability, warm lack of affectation and a simple manner with firm leadership; his own ability to turn aside unpleasantness with a convincing smile was strengthened by watching Macpherson's own amused skill at the art. The governor's way was founded in the belief that they all had to live together, and in the hope that things would always improve.

A beginning of the breaking of barriers after office hours was made by the social secretary of the mainly African Island Club, Dr Moses Adekoyejo Majekodunmi, a Roman catholic Yoruba gynaecologist, a government specialist who now superintended a popular nursing home. Although many of his friends who led more political lives were in the Action Group, he believed that the three northern ministers should be made to feel welcome in Lagos society despite being teetotalers. He found them willing and sociable; Malam Abubakar also found to his surprise that a club served a purpose which he had not missed in Bauchi (where Dr Dikko was now an active local club member); and was pleased and even a little flattered whenever Dr Majekodunmi would pick him up and drive him there for an orange squash and chat. The doctor lived

round the corner in Force Road with his Irish wife, and Abubakar became a close family friend of both of them, as well as using him as a family doctor and lender of books. Like Dr Dikko, the new friend fancied that some of the obstacles he had met on his way to and from Britain for training, when a young newly qualified professional, had been erected socially against his origin rather than technically against his inexperience. The medical man's profession also opened the doorway to his family's friendship with the two wives who most often stayed with Abubakar in Lagos, the principal wife A'ishatu Jummai, and the fair younger one, Inni: Malam Abubakar could joke with his doctor in a slightly ribald way naturally denied to his lay friends, and would claim that he would have to send his number one wife home - he only had to touch the hem of her garment for her to conceive. This new relationship was noticed, and may have lent strength to a short-lived belief that the NPC, still sneered at by Igbos as a reunion platform for Katsina college old boys, was looking for an alliance with the AG. Before long Malam Abubakar also found a solid social friendship with the newly installed 59-year old oba of Lagos, or *eleko*, Adeneji Adele II, who had been a survey draughtsman in the north and then served in inland revenue as provincial treasurer in Kano, before returning to Lagos to contest the obaship in 1949. Northerners seeking workmen's compensation from the mysteries of the high court would come to Shettima Kashim and Abubakar, and this led to another friendship, with the court registrar Mr George Shodeinde Soweimimo, who had been born in Zaria and schooled in Kano. Yet another new friend was the wife of the most senior Nigerian government medical officer, Dr Samuel Manuwa; she gave him advice on the care of the strange official compound, where to find the best garden cuttings and window curtains, and (in due course) on children's schooling in Lagos. What all this meant in truth was that Malam Abubakar was beginning to relax in frankness and trust with non-northerners, if they showed friendliness to him, in a way that he had so far confined to a small number of British officials met in the way of duty.

Parallel changes in the north exposed some differences. There the deputy directors had virtually made bids at an auction in the SNP's office for the men to hold their portfolios, but although the medical man had tried hard to win the Sardauna for social services, it was the education man, Dennis Hibbert, whose nomination of Aliyu, makama of Bida, was successfully passed up to His Honour; Hibbert particularly wanted a Muslim from the middle belt with Christian relatives. All first four ministers were Muslim, although three vacancies were deliberately retained. There was no minister of local government, the view of the first- and second-class chiefs remaining unchallenged that they were appointed by the governor (after due process of native law and custom) and nobody else should be seen to come between their administrations and the governor or his official representatives. The Sardauna became minister of regional works, and Malam Bello Kano the minister for the indefinable subject of community development - the latter never forgot Sharwood-Smith's assurance that all were equal and none took precedence over another. Their first meeting ended inauspiciously with the announcement that King George VI, to whom the executive council had just completed swearing allegiance, had died. It was the wali of Borno, the member for natural resources, who came back next day as their senior spokesman to tell the lieutenant-governor that they all wished to repeat their oath to the new Queen, lest anyone should suggest that Muslims would not be faithful to a lady sovereign. (A few days later the Bauchi administration organized an open-air memorial service to coincide with King George VI's funeral in London. The

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emir, Yakubu III, and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa attended. The ADO (in his white uniform, and black armband sewn by a colleague's wife) and the provincial engineer Armitage watched the two Muslims' reactions to a Christian occasion conducted largely from the anglican prayerbook of 1662, the invitation to which both might quite properly have declined. The emir was bemused but patient: Abubakar listened intently to the solemn or archaic words led by Gill the resident, and seemed to be very moved.)

Unlike Lagos, where ministers were quickly introduced to the convention of initialling memoranda related to their portfolios, for some time most of the memoranda to the northern executive council continued to be circulated over the initials of the civil secretary or the financial and development secretary. But the emphasis on touring, of which the northern tradition was stronger, led to as rapid awareness as in the south of the limitations on the new ministers' power to initiate instant change, as well as to a powerful scepticism out in the provinces of the effect of introducing ministers at all. There was for the present more interest in the north's first boy scout jamboree in Zaria, and in the proven success of the new drug antrycide in enabling trade cattle to be trekked through the tsetse fly belt to southern markets.

Events abroad that attracted notice included the appointment of the first native Canadian, Vincent Massey, as governor-general of his dominion; and the invalidation by the South African supreme court of Malan's race legislation, followed promptly by his bill to make the union parliament a high court in more than nominal terms, and so clip the reviewing judiciary's wings. General Eisenhower was inaugurated as president of the USA. Egypt's unilateral denouncement of the condominium caused the British to accelerate the movement to Sudanese independence from both suzerains. Attlee's smaller territories committee, set up under Creech Jones, now reported to Lyttelton; its ideas were noted but put aside for the moment, and were eventually buried.

At home in Bauchi Malam Abubakar lost his friend Wright, whose promotion to Kaduna as chief education officer, announced at election time but delayed by a Christmas shooting accident, in which he had lost a toe to a faulty borrowed gun, now took effect. Abubakar wrote an upset letter to commiserate over the injury. Even the emir, who had always respected but been slightly nervous of Wright in his three successive local appointments over the past six years, was also upset by the transfer; nor was he at all compensated by the knowledge that the ADO, who after only three years had now worked longer continuously in Bauchi division than any administrative officer since before the war, was to take charge provisionally after Giles went on leave. From the centre Abubakar was realizing that continuity of postings, so often honoured in the breach during the lean years, had become even more hard to maintain in an expanding service; but he reserved judgment on the merits of individual cases.

Branching far off from a northern assembly meeting on his way to see roads around Onitsha, the heart of Igbo territory and trade, he encountered a case in Makurdi where reasonable continuity of usually sympathetic officers had not prevented trouble: the Tiv people had rioted in 1947 over resentment that a Yoruba Muslim was recognized as chief of the largely immigrant Muslim capital of the Benue province, and again much more recently over a tribal boundary dispute. He took the opportunity to face a rather nervous mixed crowd of aggressive Tiv, argumentative Igbos affected by events in their own provinces, and others, and gave an impressive extempore speech in Hausa and English, asking for a national unity that would end such communal conflict. He also fielded awkward questions in a skilfully courteous way, and left a lasting

impression on the resident, Desmond MacBride, and the townsfolk alike that Nigeria still had new soil to cultivate. He had not yet seen the disadvantages of pressing his secretary to attend political meetings in bush with him; on the way north on this tour Armstrong had had to sit by and watch him keeping his local support fresh during at least one all-night session. He also found that Abubakar was never to lose the capacity for long walks in the bush if there were no road.

The first budget meeting of the house of representatives gave Abubakar Tafawa Balewa the opportunity to show as much confidence in himself as a defender of government and authority as he had shown before as a critic from the floor, and he justified the trust placed in him by governor and fellow ministers through the allocation of responsibility for government business during the session. He moved the message to the British parliament in appreciation of a visiting Westminster delegation. He pedantically rebuked members more than once for ignoring the standing order that discouraged the reading of speeches, particularly those that had been written weeks or months before the debate and blatantly took no notice of contrary facts just given by previous speakers. On behalf of his department he acknowledged a motion of appreciation of the record time in which the newly opened parliament building had been completed (which also effectively ended the brief tradition of holding meetings alternately in the regions). He reminded his fellow Bauchi member Malam Yaƙubu Wanka that the emir of Bauchi's council had decided only a year before that the townspeople did not want heavy lorries to go through Bauchi town, in spite of Malam Yaƙubu's own preference for shifting the route of the trunk road 'A' away from the bypass. Impassively, he quoted expert advice that preferred to spend money more economically on improved motor roads from Kano through Nguru to Maiduguri, and perhaps on to Fort Lamy, rather than on an expensive railway. A motion by Mr Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe to remove Lagos from the western region (it had only just been transferred thither) was disallowed, but the house was reassured that the council of ministers would seek fresh expert advice on the comparative status of similar capital cities.

Malam Abubakar did his best to clear up a separate confusionist argument over budget provisions for certain central government institutions and expenditure loosely termed in the central estimates as 'Colony' items, despite Lagos (the historical 'colony' including the island and part of the mainland, whose commissioner now sat on the Ibadan executive council) having since the 1951 order-in-council (as Mr Mbadiwe had been complaining) become part of the western region. He clashed again with the member who had caused that argument, Mr Jaja Wachuku, who in another debate wanted all assistance under an aid to pioneer industries bill to be confined to those companies whose total shares were subscribed by Nigerians, or two-thirds of whose directors were Nigerians – this Abubakar bluntly called '*discrimination*'. He also challenged Mr Awolowo's opposition to this bill, saying, '*The fact is that now we want to industrialize Nigeria, but we have not got the necessary capital to do so*'. Chief Arthur Prest, the AG minister of communications, also defended government policy against Awo, and followed Abubakar's earlier procedural lead by boldly drawing attention to the fact that his own party's chief had spoken for longer than standing orders ruled. Malam Abubakar and Mr Arikpo were the only two elected members to be appointed in the first instance to the governor's privy council, a body whose sole purpose was to advise on the exercise of the royal prerogative of mercy in cases of capital sentence; there was a motion to add to it some members from the north (a chief, perhaps) and the west, and Abubakar

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responded: '... in a matter of this kind people should [not] be speaking with regional minds... we cannot... have a representative of every tribe or of every region... [or] we shall have a privy council containing 500 people'. Like his colleagues he also had to adjust to the necessity of council of ministers' meetings after dinner while the house was sitting.

This had been the first meeting of the Lagos legislature for many years without the presence of Zik, who was to spend part of the year visiting Britain. Some observers could not understand how he had not become a minister. Others suggested that the slender threads that held the Nigerian family together at the centre were on that account alone visibly snapping: indeed Zik's own newspaper the *West African Pilot* now hinted for the first time at the possibility of secession by the east. It was to be a curious example of individuals' growing commitment to the substance of power once it was actually held by themselves - central ministers quickly saw the potential strength and resources in a unified team strategy; those of their colleagues who did not share in their Lagos decision-making were seduced by hopes of lesser tactical victories more easily achieved in the outfield; while their outright opponents preferred to confine their battles to the only sites where the rules, terrain and weapons made it likely that they would win. Malam Abubakar was beginning to recognise that once sentiment and prejudice were consciously set aside, it was sometimes possible to find more in common with one's temporary neighbour than one's blood brother. Notwithstanding their early clash in the house, Mr Wachuku noticed that Abubakar's relationships outside the council of ministers with the influential Nwapa (whom he called 'a bit of a comic'), the knowledgeable Njoku and the taciturn Arikpo were losing their initial mutual suspicion; he eventually went out of his way to encourage the reciprocal regard between this 'restrained but quite likeable northerner' and the groupings in the NCNC who believed in a Nigerian 'nation', even when they differed over who should lead it. Akintola's realistic approach to his labour department and the encouragement of proper standards among trades union officials was also generally recognized.

But Abubakar's view was still firmly based, however lonely, on the conviction that the present constitution made no provision for party politics, and would not work if every party took the line that its policies must be accepted by everyone else when it gained majority power. It troubled him that he could not always discuss policy matters with his northern colleagues in real privacy. He and Kashim still disliked Lagos, far more than did Ribađu, and became inseparable. The three of them would often have long evening drives for a chat, with Malam Abubakar at the wheel. When the Sardauna visited Lagos there would be prolonged sessions in the minister's office behind closed doors; officials from the north noticed how pleasant and relaxed the Sardauna would be in Abubakar's company, away from the self-consciousness of his own growing empire. More important than this was that all the central ministers had begun to take turns at hosting informal Sunday morning meetings to discuss mutual political problems and exchange ideas: this tended to soften the AG's disruptive insistence that the colonial council of ministers was not a true political coalition. Meanwhile that council was gobbling vast amounts of straightforward business despite differing regional attitudes. The governor never asked for a show of hands, and the cabinet-style effort was always made to achieve agreement by consensus.

Malam Abubakar made his first visit to the Gold Coast with three ministerial colleagues in April 1952, to attend an inter-colonial athletic sports meeting at

Achimota. He found that colony full of change; Dr Nkrumah had become a titular prime minister, who would take precedence immediately after the governor (contrary to the British traditions which placed the heads of church and courts next after the crown), and have the right to be consulted before the governor submitted names of ministers to the legislative assembly for their acceptance. District commissioners ('DOs' in the Gold Coast were 'DCs') were to be retitled 'government agents'. Not yet responsible for foreign policy, Nkrumah had none the less sent a direct petition to UNO about South Africa's defiance of a general assembly resolution on South West Africa. Malam Abubakar returned with a distaste for Nkrumah's personality, which tinged some of his opinions of these changes, and also for his host's superstition and apparent tendencies to fetishism. In essence he thought there was too much self-confidence and too much hurry, but he refrained from comment on the Gold Coast governor's supposed encouragement of the process. Sir John Macpherson was equally restrained in Abubakar's company, but said to one of his closest officials, 'Arden-Clarke is going too fast. He will force us to follow, but we are a much bigger and more complicated country, and we need more time. He will lead us down the slippery slope before we are ready'. Perhaps Abubakar detected what he did not hear.

The rise of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya and violence among the Kikuyu were causing a more than passing interest in Nigeria. With the marginal exceptions of certain tin-mining practices around the plateau, and minor plantations in the south-east, there was no European incursion on native lands comparable with that of the colonial settlers in east Africa. The concern of the administration with the Kenyan stories, apart from professional interest in the techniques used for the simple preservation of law and order, was more that of the traditional anthropologist; it suggested a need for study of the evolution of old rituals, as they acquired new purpose and method, into practices for which colonial government in the 1950s had become ill-prepared. There were parts of Nigeria where such violence was not unthinkable, even if its objective might be different. The Nigerians' questions were directed more towards how another British service reacted to such events in a place where they knew that African involvement in policy was still much less than their own. The northern lieutenant-governor took advantage of a forthcoming meeting of the Kaduna assembly to have an officer of the security service brief chiefs and leading members about Mau Mau, and Malam Abubakar asked some pertinent questions; he was horrified by some of the gruesome details described and illustrated, but anxious to understand why people should want, or be induced, to behave in such savage ways. He was not surprised when Kenya declared an emergency in October.

The northern administration had just been damaged by the death of its financial and development secretary, John Knott, who had as we have seen assisted at the birth of the Bauchi discussion circle. The accelerated promotion of his deputy, Peter Guillum Scott, turned Sharwood-Smith's mind back to the question of filling the vacant seats on his executive council. Early in June the established northern ministers had assured the sceptical secretary of state, Mr Oliver Lyttelton, who was visiting Kano and Kaduna on his way to Enugu (where he doubled himself up inside a coalmine adit), Ibadan and Lagos, that they would need British administrative and professional officers for another full generation. At the time the administration and most chiefs wanted to believe them. Lyttelton also believed that without local raw materials there could be no basis for industrialization, and those materials demanded a

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sound agricultural foundation. He had met the French high commissioner and governors in Dakar, and he was convinced of the principle, 'More haste, less speed'. All this reinforced his stated opinion that, 'Administration is the most difficult technique of all, and demands the highest of all qualities'. In this atmosphere the lieutenant-governor felt the time had come for the emirate Muslims to recognise that 'pagans' from the plateau and Christianised people from the 'middle belt' formed a large part of 'the north', and should also be involved in the execution of powers and policy.

It came as a shock to Sharwood-Smith to find in an informal reception at Kaduna's government lodge that both the central and regional northern ministers were unwilling to contemplate this, in spite of the NPC's slogan. That the Sardauna would be uncomfortable to see the sultan of Sokoto, the commander of the faithful, sitting round a table with pagans, even if predominantly first among doubtful equals, was to be expected. It was depressing however to hear the others also suggest that he was unjustified in his belief that non-Muslims objected to domination by people who seemed to patronise them: what made it worse was that Malam Abubakar, whom he had begun to refer to privately as 'a nugget of real gold', insisted that anti-Fulani and anti-Islamic feelings were largely the work of bigots among the missionaries, and should be ignored as artificial. Abubakar could, regrettably, quote some isolated examples of such bigoted intolerance and political meddling close to home. The lieutenant-governor's only encouragement came from Malam Bello Kano. However, after an unhappy adjournment the cabal of northern ministers had second thoughts among themselves, and the Kaduna executive council was soon to be enlarged by the admission of Aku Uka, the Jukun chief of Wukari, Mr Peter Achimugu, the Christian supervisor of works from Igalu who received a portfolio of local industries, and Malam Yahaya Ilorin, a Muslim teacher and Yoruba from the southernmost emirate who assumed the subjects of health and social welfare. More followed later, but it was to prove significant that culturally and educationally chiefs and prominent commoners from the plateau, Igbirra and Idoma might adhere to the NPC court, but never a Tiv: their differences will be referred to in chapter 30 and others following. Although at no time did any middle belt members achieve power or prominence in a Lagos cabinet, there is no suggestion that Malam Abubakar regretted this change of mind; his relationship with middle belt people who co-operated with the rest of the north, or with Nigeria as a whole, remained as amicable as they were even now becoming with all other minority Nigerians. At the time the outburst had been a lingering trace of an older naivety. Bauchi people, familiar with both emirates and pagans, tended to believe that they had a full understanding of the whole north.

While Malam Aminu Kano and a NEPU colleague went fruitlessly to London to complain to the minister of state Mr Henry Hopkinson (Lennox-Boyd having been promoted to transport and civil aviation) about the system of electoral colleges, the brief 1952 summer meeting of the northern house of assembly was devoted to acceptance of the year-old joint select committee report on the development of local administration and the passing of the native authorities (definition of functions) bill. Moving the motion on the report, as the man who had lit the fuse, Malam Abubakar said that it was never the intention of anybody in the north to wipe out the present native administration organization; the emirs' and chiefs' readiness to accept the change from sole native authorities to emirs-in-council was, he tactfully suggested, 'very progressive'. With equal tact he abstained on an unsuccessful

private member's motion by Malam Ibrahim Imam, the Borno NA supervisor of works, for the creation of a ministry of local government, which went down heavily to defeat led by Malam Bello Kano; nevertheless Sharwood-Smith noted that the seed had been sown, and that the rest would follow, though nobody yet knew how to fit emirs into a constitution where they might be seen to have been placed underneath ministers in any guise. The bill did set the formerly (whether potentially or actually) autocratic chiefs in much the same position as the governor to his council: normally they would act after hearing and in accordance with advice tendered, but they would retain the exceptional power to act otherwise provided that they reported the circumstances and reason to the lieutenant-governor, just as a governor-in-council (except for his reserved discretionary subjects such as internal security, external affairs or the civil service) must report such conflicting decisions, if there ever were any, to the secretary of state. Malam Abubakar used his new Lagos knowledge to help to explain from the floor in the committee stage the comparable exceptions in matters either too unimportant in themselves, or too urgent to admit of any delay, for the chiefs to feel bound to summon their full councils from the districts into the palace before making a decision. He hoped that these exceptions might be codified, but accepted the legal secretary's opinion that yet more legal definitions would merely create more interpretative problems.

In the house of chiefs the lieutenant-governor gave a renewed warning to unscrupulous and indolent princes, that in this modern age there was no place for bands of corrupt retainers. Shortly after this meeting, the growing concern shared by northern ministers, chiefs and teachers about lapsing discipline among the younger urbanised or educated generation led to the setting up of a committee of executive council status to report on moral and religious instruction and moral standards. Such a body might have been scorned at a later date, certainly so in a more permissive Britain; but at this time and in these provinces the consensus of the majority at all levels favoured stricter instruction, less tolerance of misbehaviour and insubordination, and enforcement of traditional structures and sanctions. This move was not defined, except perhaps by the few intent on radical change, as political (as opposed to social) reaction, and Malam Abubakar, still nervous of meddlers inducing the immature to revolt, sided with the teachers and traditional judges who wished the moral standards committee well. It met from time to time, received reports and contributions from the provinces, and reported, but eventually sank out of sight and despite the initial enthusiasm earned few records in Nigeria's history books. It is hardly surprising that at the first meeting of the Sokoto NA outer council the demand was passed by a strong majority that if the (now clearly diminishing) authority of the British was still determined to prevent a return to the amputation of robbers' hands, convicted thieves should at least be branded. However the chief *alkali* of Zaria, appointed as adviser on Muslim law to the house of chiefs, offered no encouragement to such ideas, there or elsewhere.

Others had other ideas of how to evangelize and modernise the young. Alec Dickson was a Scot who had learnt much about human motivation from resettling *askaris* from the King's African Rifles in east Africa and from organizing community development work in the Gold Coast. He had been enabled, with the help of Bill Fuller, an ex-Blue Funnel mariner from the Outward Bound School at Aberdovey in Wales, to create a training centre at Man o' War bay, close to Victoria in the Cameroons. Here young educated men from all over Nigeria were given three weeks' preliminary stretching of

ok is the first biography of Alha Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It is a definitive study of his life: a portrait of a man who brought Nigeria into the twentieth century. It is a popular and, some would argue, a unique story of a unique man told in a simple and direct style.

their physical and mental capacities in the 'Outward Bound' tradition on mountains, cliffs and sea; this was followed by three weeks' practical manual and organizational community development work on such projects as building dams, incinerators, roads, clinics or wells in bush conditions, while billeted in some remote village school. This experience of sweaty labour in vestigial working clothes among unlettered rustics had remarkable psychological effects on most of the self-opinionated or class-conscious clerks, mallams, citizens, managers and junior officials who were nominated by expatriates and who attended from many parts of Nigeria. Many nominees required considerable persuasion to go; only a few insisted on not completing the course. Most courses were joined by a handful of sympathetic younger British administrative officers who shared wholly in route-marching, exploring jungle, harvesting plantation bananas, mixing cement, and enjoying the evening debates, sing-songs, quizzes, dancing and impromptu happenings.

For some reason the centre was at first funded not from an education vote, but from the central works department. The Bauchi ADO took the son of the chief of Dass, who worked in the Bauchi-Dass joint native treasury, on one of the early courses; this course suffered a tragedy. While the Bauchi pair was with one group, perspiringly rowing a lifeboat round the coast against the high current, the other half of the party lost an Igbo and a local Bakweri in the cold mists on mount Cameroon, towering over Buea. There had been a failure to obey climbing rules: the two youths died, partly from exposure and partly from loss of confidence (the full psychological story would be long and irrelevant). The consequences for morale on this and the following course were considerable, and there was massive resistance to repeating the climb. Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa visited the next course, to which a northern MHA Malam Haruna Dauda Kwoi had come from southern Zaria: Haruna was not a physically strong man, and the fear that the 4,095 metre mountain had engendered was infectious. In normal weather it presented no great challenge, requiring some stamina but no skill. Malam Abubakar said to him personally, 'You will go and climb the mountain, even if it kills you, for the honour of the north', and Haruna and many others went up successfully and returned down proudly; so did all subsequent groups, till the training centre left Victoria and Buea for the Jos plateau, upon the separation of the southern Cameroons from Nigeria. Man o' War Bay's training and enlightenment, based on showing how much more a developed character might achieve than its owner ever thought practical, and not on partisan political philosophy, was to have influence on many youngsters blessed with more intellect than sophistication or brute strength during the 1950s. Malam Abubakar continued to support it throughout his future offices.

In June Mr Awolowo created an artificial 'constitutional crisis'. He discovered that the new order-in-council had not in so many words altered any earlier legislation which had given the governor or lieutenant-governors specific powers to exercise in their discretion, some of those being trivial appointments to offices, and refused to accept assurances that these paper powers would now always be used in the spirit and not to the letter. He wanted categorical amendment to the royal instructions. He also demanded that ministers should have full control of the departments related to their subjects; that parliamentary under-secretaries be created; and that a 'political party system' be introduced so that regional 'prime ministers' be empowered to recommend the names of all other ministers. The northern executive council rejected all such demands in

to, and the eastern ministers, who might have been expected to sympathize, were unenthusiastic because Awo had not thought to consult more widely before his *démarche*. A few weeks later the Action Group was more subdued, but the governor promised to look at ways of giving ministers 'secretariats' which might become true embryo ministries in place of the skeleton private offices, and of increasing contact between ministers and heads of departments.

July 1952 brought an emergency convention of the NPC to Kaduna, at which the Sardauna became vice-president and Malam Ibrahim Imam the substantive secretary-general; despite the fact that the party's national executive committee had previously included not a single one of the northern central or regional ministers, a circumstance which had in part led to the calling of the convention, the only other legislative leader to gain a party office was the wali of Borno, who became legal adviser. Many of the other office-holders chosen, including regional president and regional secretary, were never either re-elected or replaced. Students of politics have found this, and in particular Malam Abubakar's position, hard to explain in terms of social or party development. It may be easier to accept, regardless of the 1951 change in the NPC's objectives, once it is agreed that all that mattered in practice to those concerned was this: most of them who had now entered governmental policy-making councils and legislatures had already been important men at home in their native authorities, where they were surrounded by supporters who had suddenly become, like themselves, passively content to call themselves, and to be called, 'NPC'. All that this meant was that 'NPC' was a fashionable term, a modish reflection of traditional NA power, and that titular status, in some party office which had to be weighed against that party's impoverished bureaucracy, was of no account. Just so long as other parties and regions were now forced to concede that the northern intelligentsia had an institution with which outsiders must do wordy battle, so be it, it sufficed. These were early days, and few members had very precise thoughts yet on what any political party might be intended, or even have the power, to achieve. As for the resourceless party bureaucracy, Malam Nuhu Bamalli, the principal organizing secretary, was a Zaria dignitary. He had most recently been book editor of the Gaskiya corporation, and was at this stage like many others a reluctant politician, but he was respected for his oratory, especially in Hausa at its most stimulating; he was unpaid, and shared a tiny office near Malam Abubakar Imam's home with an assistant who earned £48 a year. The party was intrigued to hear the visiting Indian commissioner to east Africa, Mr Aba B Pant, warn the north against abandoning electoral colleges too hastily, for they had been an insurance against irresponsible demagogues in his own huge country.

Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, although minister of works, found himself directed by Sir John to be government spokesman in a central house debate on the accelerated Nigerianization of the commissioned ranks of the army. He knew that the governor, like General Whistler, was in favour of the principle, but his prudent brief was to say that the government was not opposed, but wanted more time to examine carefully how it might be done. Britain would meanwhile be asked to accept fifteen cadets annually for training, and the house's request for a military academy in Kaduna would be considered. It is unlikely that, had he been a regional minister in Kaduna at this time, and had defence been in any way a matter for regional debate, this subject would have been handled by anyone but an official such as the CS. It is equally unlikely that he thought of himself as an NPC politician when he spoke, rather than as still a representative northerner with Nigerian responsibilities. Giving one of

his first interviews as a foreign journalist at this period, he said, 'We need more time... many of us for the sake of evolution is too rapid for the north: if the country were given independence now it would mean handing one region over to the others'. It was again as a practical man that he approved of the minister of transport's announcement to the effect that the railway was, in principle, to be established as an autonomous statutory authority, working on quasi-commercial lines. He took no personal stand on an N.C.N.C. motion to make Lagos a federal territory.

A census was held during the summer, for which in the eastern provinces Dr Michael Okpara was appointed as minister without portfolio to be the political overseer. This modest man was proving himself to be an outstanding, however partisan, administrator. In the north the counting remained under official supervision, and discontented southerners were for long convinced that DOs had inflated the figures in order to strengthen the claims of the NPC; the figure arrived at there was 10.8 millions, which surprised nobody who knew the north, because now that regular district administrative touring had again approached pre-war intensity, in all but a few urban wards the tax registers had not for many years produced major detectable anomalies. 78% of Nigerians made their living by agriculture, forestry and fishing; only 5% (in contrast to India) by handicrafts. The western figure, including Lagos, came out at about 6.4 millions, and the preliminary eastern figure at approximately 8 millions, including the southern Cameroons. Throughout the country the counting had been hard and specific, with much rechecking at the time and place of the original form-filling. Against this background a sharp comment by Malam Abubakar had some point: Mr Awolowo was still chafing at the substantial gaps between the powers of a British sovereign cabinet and those of a novice regional executive council, enhanced by the differences between a colonial executive department and a Whitehall policy ministry. In particular he had gone over his lieutenant-governor's head to challenge the governor about the remaining formal restrictions on the powers of a regional minister of local government, even though his reduction of district officers' advisory powers by retitling them as local government inspectors or clerks to divisional councils had met as little resistance from the former administration as had his ceasing to celebrate Empire Day. Awolowo had the powers to react immediately to a report by Mr Bernard Stoney, town clerk of Norwich, on the Lagos town council, which gave him grounds for dissolving it and substituting a committee of management until a new all-embracing western local government law could be enacted (this move involved an abortive attempt to induce Prince Adedoyin to resign his seat in the central house and become town clerk, thus creating a by-election which might have won Zia a place in the house of representatives after all) - but when Awolowo was found reason to travel abroad and visit India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Egypt, where the monarchy had fallen in July) and the Sudan (where he met the then secretary, James Robertson), Abubakar's opinion was, 'He should not believe an empire is bigger than the Gold Coast he has the right to do as he pleases because they, none of these people have patience'.

Dr Nkrumah himself, with an estimated 20% of population, was still sponsoring the idea of the United States of West Africa, but other prominent west coast politicians detected the clear implication that this might be conditional on the leadership remaining in Nkrumah's hands. In practical terms the British subjects among those invited at the west African inter-territorial conference which was now set up with its secretariat staff under Dr Nkrumah's nose in Accra, as foretold in chapter 13, it was chaired by the governor of Nigeria or

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his nominee, and included ministerial and local membership from all the four British funding territories. The French colonies, co-ordinated from Dakar, saw this as an important development, with the usual Gallic suspicion of Albion's motive. Despite being a titular prime minister, Nkrumah was not invited to a commonwealth conference of the self-governing dominions; however the prime minister of Southern Rhodesia was invited, as had long been customary for earlier reasons of constitutional semantics and convention which now failed to convince African critics who did not choose to split hairs. Malam Abubakar felt able to stomach the distinction since his colleague Mr Nwapa was invited to represent Nigeria as minister of commerce and industries at the associated commonwealth economic conference.

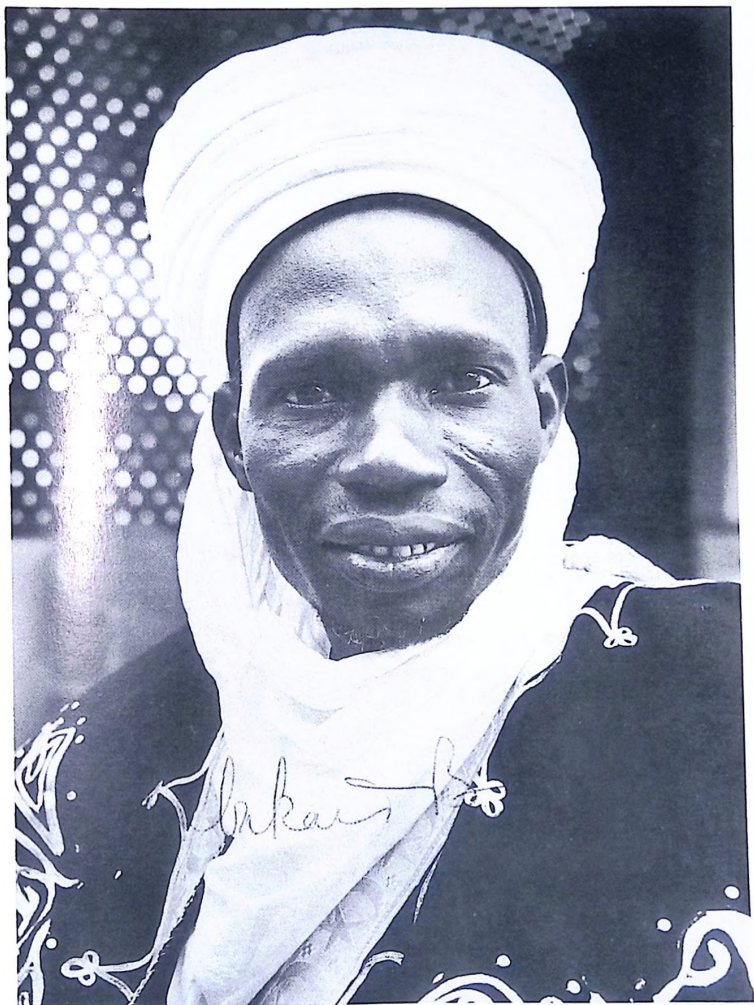
Yet Mr Nwapa had other difficulties. His own party, the NCNC, again held its conference outwith the east; this time the special convention was at Jos from 8 to 13 December, and in the middle of a crisis, which began as political and became constitutional, of the very kind which Sir John Macpherson had begun to fear. Those party members who did not enjoy ministerial power, and who resented Zik's failure to win office, formed a large pressure group which succeeded in passing motions to refuse to work the constitution and to expel Nwapa, Arikpo and Eni Njoku from the NCNC (but not Dr Endeley of the Cameroons). None of them had gone to Jos. Other motions demanded direct elections, universal adult franchise (only taxpayers could vote anywhere in Nigeria, and no women could vote in the north), the excision of Lagos from the west, the localization of the whole public service, and the abrogation of the 1951 constitution as soon as possible. It was a defeat for advocates of 'regional autonomy'. Most of the regional ministers in the eastern provinces, who were also disposed to try to help the prematurely aging premier Eyo Ita to make a constitution work in the interests of the east, however much they disliked it in theory, clearly sympathized with their unfortunate friends in Lagos, if only on the ground that, 'There, but for the grace of God, go we'. Eyo Ita had advised them also not to go to Jos, and so began what became known as the 'sit tight' eastern crisis. The eastern parliamentary party met under Zik's dubiously valid chairmanship (he was not a member of their house) and called for resignation of the Enugu exco, ostensibly to allow a reshuffle of portfolios: this request was met, but when Dr Eyo Ita and five of his nine ministers discovered that they were to be dropped entirely, they withdrew their resignations before the papers had reached the lieutenant-governor, claiming that they had been delivered 'under threat'. Dr Michael Okpara did not withdraw. The 'sit tight' continued for several months. Whitehall observers concluded that the crisis would have been averted if K O Mbadiwe had been a member of the eastern executive council; he and Azikiwe both wanted the NCNC to reach the 1956 election with a record for good sense, and he and the motor magnate Louis Ojukwu were at the time Zik's closest political advisers and had greater influence among the party's rank and file.

Since the constitution was based on 'representation', not on competing partisan organizations, the electoral process was a single chain that linked regional and central houses together: it has already been noted that there was no provision for dissolving any part of the structure in isolation. In the council of ministers, in face of the AG's doctrinaire refusal to treat it as a 'coalition', a *modus vivendi* grew up. The regional executive councils all had their pre-meeting single party caucuses in which elected ministers went through agenda and decided the line to take with their presiding governor and *ex officio* equals, but this could not

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happen in Lagos, instead, each central minister took it in turn to invite the others to his home for a weekend rendezvous, at which joint policies on major current issues might be polished up. Regional lieutenant-governors found themselves forced to have comfortable tactical discussions with the official members of opposition benches, but did not turn them into full counter-caucuses; the governor felt able to be more relaxed, knowing that a full discussion was often probable, without too many preconceptions in minds already made up. In the last resort, of course, each central minister would find it irresistible to speak regionally. The patience and flexibility of the council's president was what produced many useful conclusions, whatever political lead Malam Abubakar or another might have given round the table. Macpherson's only real tactical power was that of dealing with the council secretary the order of the agenda. He was awarded the job when Mr Njoku, minister of mines and power, brought in the bill for that no African would have been allowed to see before 1952, the date of a substance bill. 'I've studied them', said Njoku, 'and should like to see how it will stand in the legislature to-morrow, that we must be constantly prepared to those who have been in charge before we took over: that they have not forgotten the interests of Nigeria's interests'. In such contexts it was good to be backed by few, that the firmly tolerant Sir John Macpherson, the first commissioner as governor, which had just expired, was succeeded by a new man who had just presented a new Queen's colour to the 4th battalion of the Nigerian Regiment, whose colour-party was headed by a lieutenant, a warrant officer, who had served as a warrant officer class II in the 4th Battalion during the war).

Looking back on his first year as a minister, Malam Abubakar found that there were still many things to which his imagination happily in his home region that it was he summarized in regard as the artificial world of central politics. The clearer skies of Bauchi, where he had yet to reflect electric light (and where indeed the ADU was winning the installation of his first flush lavatory and cold running water up, extended from a garden stand-pipe, luxuries which Abubakar's own home had yet to enjoy), had interested him in the stars. Larry Armstrong undertook to send Abubakar personal copies from Britain of the books on astronomy which he and Dr Majekodunmi had lent him: this encouraged him to buy a telescope and find a new hobby in studying the constellations, sometimes with an older friend, Armstrong's tour was ended, and he handed over to another engineer, the Edmund Armitage mentioned earlier at the King's memorial service, whom Malam Abubakar already knew well as the provincial engineer, Bauchi. Among the early topics they had to share in small talk apart from arranging guest lists for a teetotaler's cocktail parties, might have been the testing of Britain's first atomic bomb; the gaining of his pilot's wings at Liverpool university air squadron by a northern veterinary student, Sarda Bala; the founding of a medical school at Kano (whose lecturers to work under the supervision of full graduates, were unknowingly to inaugurate the 'barefoot doctors' of Mao's China) and of the northern regional university, which to administer the self-development fund (the YTA mentioned in chapter 14), the subsequent sending of five 13-year-old northern boys to foreign public schools, the slump in the market for hides and skins which had set in a year in the quality of those actually bought; the first visit to war Africa of Sir Percy Main, who had spent much time in Uganda and had been working in London on colonial administration since 1933; the discovery of an improved strain '66' of cottonseed, some of which Abubakar's own farm received, and the latest fumigation techniques



Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

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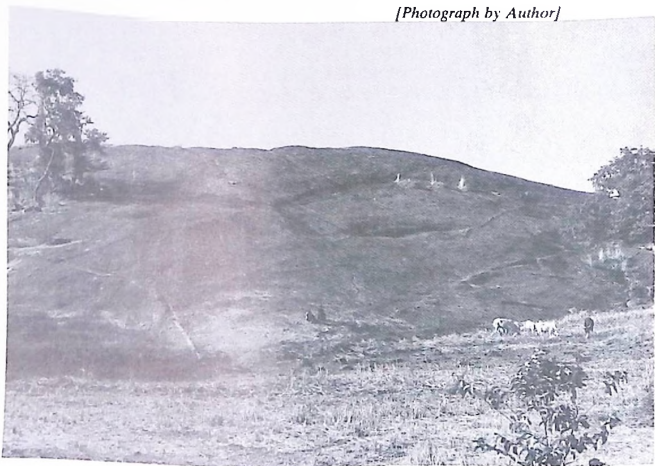


The Rt Hon Alan Lennox-Boyd, Secretary of State, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

[Photograph by courtesy of the late Lord Boyd]

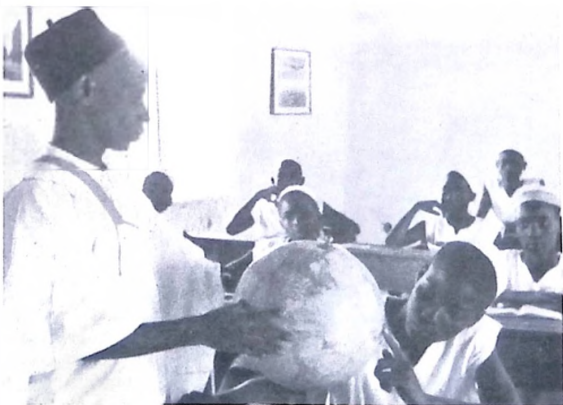
The Black Rock of Tafawa Balewa.

[Photograph by Author]





The young Abubakar. Teaching geography in Bauchi Middle School and inspecting primary schools as Education Assistant.



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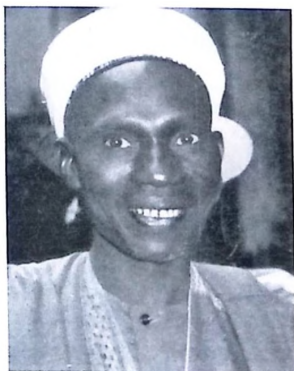


Abubakar at work on his farm.





Varying moods.



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A Common-
wealth Prime
Ministers' con-
ference
(Abubakar
near left,
Douglas-
Home centre
left)



Oliver
Lyttelton
presiding over
the 1953
Constitutional
Conference.

A Buckingham
Palace
Common-
wealth
Reception
(Abubakar at
left).



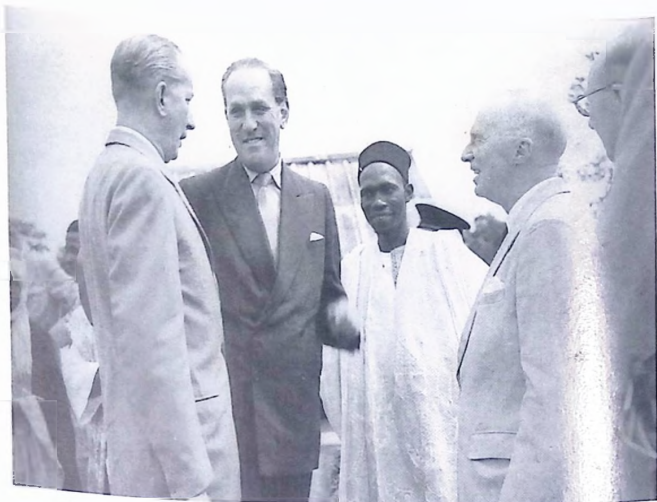


Sir Jock Macpherson introducing Lennox-Boyd to (right to left) Abubakar, K.O. Mbadiwe, Inuwa Wada, Matthew Mbu and Adegoke Adelabu.

Awolowo, Abubakar, Sardauna and Lennox-Boyd at the 1958 Constitutional Conference.



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Sir John Macpherson, Alan Lennox-Boyd and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

Malam Abubakar bids farewell to Her Majesty and Prince Philip.



used on pests invading the new generation of groundnut pyramids, which were building up again into a backlog not to be cleared until 1954-55; and the death at 80 near Jos of a distinguished scholar missionary, Dr Walter Miller, whose dedication and integrity as a virtually naturalized northerner had led Abubakar to suggest his appointment to the external independent commission called for in his famous 1950 speech on indirect rule.

Armitage's wife (like Armstrong's) was drawn into Abubakar's new and lasting enthusiasm for sending Christmas cards, and also into showing the minister's household how to manage dinner parties for VIPs: although a familiar servant had stayed on from Bauchi, and a young apprentice Dauda Sa'ade for whom he had bought a sewing machine came down from Bauchi and did all his tailoring, the official domestic staff were all southerners. The Armitages soon had almost a family relationship; if the secretary drove out to Ikeja airport to fetch his minister back from a northern visit, Abubakar would sit in front with him, unlike those ministers who sat in the back rather than share with a 'chauffeur'. Armitage in his *Ford Pilot* once led a convoy from the airport of all three northern ministers in their Chevrolets, and was made to stop by the urgency of his small son, who decided to disappear behind a tree: the whole convoy halted and Abubakar, seeing clearly what was happening, mischievously inquired in an innocent tone, '*Have you broken down?*' The secretary also had to gather all the intimate details of his minister's own family when the first central income tax demand arrived: previously Abubakar had paid his *haraji* direct tax to the Bauchi-Dass native treasury.

Armitage shared most professional officers' doubts about the predominance of the administrative service, and would have noticed, as did Abubakar, some figures published at this time to compare with the census populations: there were 214 administrative officers in the north, 133 in the east and 123 in the west, of whom respectively five in the north were Nigerians (but were not northerners), nine in the east and seven in the west - there was no Nigerian yet in substantive charge of a division. In the senior service as a whole, embracing all professions, there were 18 northerners, 188 easterners, 243 westerners and 63 other west Africans, who had been promoted since the Foot report on Nigerianization in 1948. A matter which they did not discuss was the NPC secretary-general Ibrahim Imam's loud declaration that the northern government was not a 'NPC' government: this was a logical point of view which the official members of the Kaduna exco shared, the financial and development secretary in particular not fearing to make it public. Of the thirteen seats on that council, five were occupied by British officials and two by chiefs; only four original ministers admitted NPC allegiance. It was certainly a more 'moderate' government than Malam Ibrahim Imam would have wished, and all its members would have admitted that it was only the first span of a bridge from colonial administration to cabinet government. Shettima Kashim, who had taught Ibrahim Imam in elementary school, kept his own political interventions for private argument and was uncomfortable at his pupil's populist brashness. Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa looking on from the centre, where he also was more free to flex his ministerial muscles, was disinclined to join in a purely regional party argument. He was happy enough to let Armitage write a letter for the *Sardauna* to the *Lagos Daily Times* during one of his lengthy visits from the northern minister of works.

Towards the end of the year Britain conducted its first test of an atom bomb, and General Eisenhower was elected president of the United States.

This book is the first biography of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and offers insight into the twentieth century Nigerian population. Some would argue that it is a unique story of a unique man told well.

A lengthy commonwealth conference was attended by officials representing Nigeria and the Gold Coast, both of whom appealed for greater freedom from Whitehall treasury control, to allow them to invest the colonies' own sterling reserves as they saw fit, and to establish central banks. They were advised to take full advantage of the long-term inter-commonwealth alliance to achieve their development, since only the adoption of common policies would ensure the generation of adequate capital within the sterling area.

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A shekaru

As Britain's coronation year came, it was clear that his growing interest in Africa. In the house of assembly, he pounced on a proposal for an increase in the lieutenant-governor's salary, and I do not want the public to have the impression that the house increased tax on produce only to pay him. A little later, he overcame his irritation by using his knowledge of Hausa and perception of the situation, particularly patronising in his full dress debate at this meeting: 'I hope that I shall not surprise you by the rescue of administrative officers. . . . Can you imagine asking for if we have not a strong administrative staff, let us bring good types of administrative officers from the north. . . . I will not agree to the masses to be the victims of the NAs. . . . We are now crying every time for the rescue of officers?' This rescue effort did not lead the house to reject the civil secretary's request for stores and equipment, who might have relieved district officers for mainstream competition in debate, raised by a second southern special member, M. J. M. had been appointed to join Mr S O James, he delivered a speech at the lack of northern representation in southern assemblies, and the over-generosity to those voluntary educational agencies which supported the offspring of southern immigrant communities. He had risen to speak on the ponderously titled white paper on 'Local Government and Possible Future Developments in the Field of Local Government in the Northern Region'; among other changes, this at last proposed the creation of a new portfolio to co-ordinate the development of local government. His view was that, 'we must be absolutely certain that the peace and happiness of the masses is not disturbed', and that the traditional system must be reformed to march with the times; but he showed his preference that the chiefs themselves should be marshalled into this march by implication rather than by forthright direction, although other members who followed his speech disagreed with him. After encouragement to the sultan and his peers behind the scenes from Sharwood-Smith, the house of chiefs also accepted the move. The sardauna, Malam Ahmadu, was shortly afterwards appointed minister for local government: the preposition 'of' was deliberately not used, so that emirs might be reassured that the minister was not in charge of them or of their NAs, but would speak for their affairs in council and legislature - it is doubtful whether

ook is the first biography of Alh Balewa, the Prime Minister of his time a definitive study of his life sight into the twentieth century opulous and, some would argue nique story of a unique man toll.

this semantic track was any better appreciated by the chiefs than it was by the native English-speakers in the colonial service.

Colonial legislation was constitutionally subject to the secretary of state's powers of disallowance on behalf of the sovereign, and regional statutes (known as 'laws' to distinguish them from central 'ordinances') had like all formal communications with Whitehall to be submitted through the governor's office. The Action Group were currently boycotting Sir John Macpherson, as we have seen, for his supposed part in delaying the royal assent to the new western region local government law, and this created some embarrassment for central ministers Akintola, Thomas and Prest. Malam Abubakar deplored the bad manners that were inevitably displayed in any boycott, and was not convinced that Mr Awolowo's plans for his provincial administration's future part in local government were not asking even the more advanced NAs of the west to run before they had yet learnt to stumble into the 1950s. He also sympathized with Macpherson's broadcast comment on the sudden crisis in the east that it had temporarily damaged Nigeria's good name abroad; after discussion in the full council of ministers, the governor had announced that all the ministers had been gravely concerned and hoped that the situation would be speedily resolved for the good of the east and of Nigeria as a whole.

The northern wing of the eastern house of assembly had voted 'no confidence' in the Emergency executive council, but not by the two-thirds majority required to force a resignation under the constitutions for obligatory resignations. The NCNC split from the NCNC Jos convention, prompted by Eyo Ita, and the NCNC and the Taka Wachuku, whose mistake was seen by many as a deliberate attempt to become publicly as Zik's puppets, had founded the National Progressive party (NIP). This was led by Mr Arikpo in Lagos, and the NCNC government in the southern Cameroons shortly afterwards adhered to the NCNC. The NCNC government thus remained a practicality, although the NCNC was not supporting it but in the eastern region the NCNC's large majority in the NCNC government legislation by intimidatory open voting; the NCNC government did not dare to use a secret ballot of 'no confidence', and the NCNC government. The eastern lieutenant-governor was forced to use his powers to suspend the 1953-54 budget for the bare existing services and to suspend the NCNC government in order to restore good public order. Macpherson was on the NCNC government's side in the Nigerian political situation with Lyttelton, at the time of the London meeting of the Gold Coast also attended. This London meeting was held in the presence of the federation of northern and southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa in the light of which bold experiment the Union of South Africa government was using of wider emergency powers under a public safety bill which would require for racial relaxation in the south of the continent.

Macpherson continued to feel less diffident about his departmental responsibilities. When asked endless questions and reading through the back of his hand, he had come up to him, he tightened his relationship with the NCNC government. Macpherson was sometimes vexed that his minister's attitudes, as a general administrator, curious about everything, assumed that he was an engineer, he be mechanical, civil, electrical or whatever it might be, and that he would quickly master any other kind of engineer's work. The minister's Ford V8 *Pilot* car, which he had advised Macpherson to buy in 1951, was still in the hands of the minister's Ford V8 *Pilot*, it was now worth but past restoration, and after some hopeless attempts to sell at more than it was worth, Abubakar agreed to dispose of it at a fair scrap price,

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which was a small one. Minister and secretary would go to the PWD workshops and works yards, to learn what was then necessarily how each physical or chemical process the unsuitability of his northern gown or caftan for the dirt installations; unlike some of his colleagues, Malam Abubakar his accompanying European officers wearing bush clothes working outside the office. His tolerance of informality allowed him to new places made him for the first time aware that in the forest areas, to which he was still a stranger, the people's might still be as scanty as among the northern hill 'pagans' also seen, when touring country districts he was always embarking on traditional gifts from local dignitaries: he followed scrupulously the custom of giving the servant or messenger who had brought (tukwici in Hausa), worth about a tenth or so of the supposed and would sometimes run out of ready coins and have to take the cashless British royalty. He was well received everywhere as a guest; he enjoyed being entertained by some of the total staff of his hosts as this stage of his career, and only regretted that with a very small staff, he could seldom reciprocate in the way he was learning to enjoy. Armitage found himself included in the minister's hospitality, and was usually presented by his Muslim 'master' as a civil service private secretaries' term of affection was quickly spread to the Nigerians' secretaries) with material hospitality to spare when billeted elsewhere as a house guest on longer tours. I. Muhammadu Ribadu gave Abubakar's secretary the job of the invitation list and organizing the party when the federal government was a farewell to the retiring director of veterinary services, S G M.

The official position of the secretaries was still a matter of concern to all concerned probed to discover how far it was sensible to and chief secretary to the government expected much of then giving the clearest guidance. A secretary would draft memoranda of ministers, and his 'master's' speeches. It was even rarer for a Street for a minister to draft anything but a purely political himself, and at this time rarer still for a technical paper to be a minister's initiative, unprompted by his department. Malam Abubakar went through his drafts very carefully, yet would seldom suggest a change when topping and tailing. A secretary would try to be tactful at this stage was expected to send any draft, on its supporting ministers' secretaries for their comments if the subject mattered to them. These early secretaries were naturally unsure of their own; they would wish to seem to commit a minister in these consultations their own: but they recognized more readily than some 'mas' officials that the British *ex officio* members were also ministerial, entitled in law and convention to be given the same consideration consulted. Malam Abubakar was more tolerant of constituting most of his colleagues, but even he could be touchy or upset if consulted the CS or FS on a draft or query before informing; entirely happy to receive unsolicited advice direct from a house engineer, and as willing to accept it as from the CS: the secretary's basic long salary grade (or soon afterwards on the lowest 'supernumerary' not see the relationships with affable juniors and with gentleness as being simple and similar, and knew that the FS's express

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being consulted failed to conceal firm expectation that he would invariably be consulted.

But Armitage, like all but a minority, learnt his trade the hard way, and with his peers helped to build up an inheritance for successors down the years. Inevitably Malam Abubakar still found words in drafts which he did not know, not all of them technical, and would search out all the possible definitions before adopting them: it was exactly like satisfying himself before a debate why this bridge must be made in concrete, and that one in stone. He was not at this stage in any way discomfited by the existence of a director of public works; he believed that he had all the control of central works that he required, but became aware that some of his colleagues saw frustrations at every turn. One day he went to see the governor and warned him, *'They want more power in the ministries, I think we must sort this out'*. Shortly afterwards, at the end of February, the central ministers unanimously asked for executive authority over their departments, claiming support from all their regional colleagues and pointing at Gold Coast precedents. Macpherson strongly advised the colonial office to prepare constitutional amendments, and the secretary of state raised no objection.

The minister once went to the waterworks, which passed the whole of the water from the Iju river under pressure through the Lagos mains which he had inspected before with Armstrong. The existing pumps, dating from early in the century, were now inadequate and were being extended with the addition of noisy but powerful electrical centrifugal pumps to increase the capacity (current flow of the Iju river permitting). Malam Abubakar looked at the majestic old steam pumps, slow, shining with brass and enamelled manufacturers' nameplates, turning rhythmically and eccentrically round with their great flywheels: *'What a pity we can't get more like that!'*. He was acquiring an enthusiasm for the physical beauty of indestructible Victorian engineering. This rhymed with the historian's feeling for antiquities to which Katsina had momentarily exposed him and which he had exhibited during his student year in Britain: because this fell within his portfolio, and because the head of the antiquities service Kenneth Murray (who had been discouraged by the old secretariat) now felt more able to press for legislation to protect cultural relics, Abubakar duly went to Ife to see some excavations. Bernard Fagg, the government archaeologist, provided the minister and his secretary with bicycles to travel a mile or two down the bush track, and they followed rattlingly behind him. The rattles of Fagg's own machine made him oblivious to the fact that he was no longer being followed: Abubakar's gown had caught inelegantly in his chain, but he happily reciprocated in the mirth of some passing Yoruba market women.

At the site in Olokun grove, supervised by Fagg's brother William from the British Museum, some potsherds were produced which the Faggs found very exciting but which to untutored eyes looked no different from what could be bought new and unbroken in the local market. The local district officer served lunch, committing a social gaffe which passed without overt comment, and tea was had with the ooni of Ife. On the way home in the car, Malam Abubakar broke a silence with, *'They don't know what they are looking for, or what to say it shows when they find it'*. He was to be left aghast at the sums of money that Murray's department had to pay to buy back antiquities which had only left the country fifty years before. His enthusiasm could appreciate the beauty and the technical skill of a Benin terracotta or an Ife brass, as of a pumping

engine, but his artistry could not bring him to see an ancient social object or recovered work of art as intrinsically valuable, still less worth the value placed on it, in comparison with Nigeria's present needs of material resources and educated wisdom. It had amused him that the skull of 'Piltown man' had just been pronounced a scientific hoax.

He was to show a much greater interest in the newly opened Jos museum, perhaps because it and its collection of prehistory were so close to the Seyawa hills of home. When he visited there, he stayed with his secretary at the Jos hill station, a superior hotel-like establishment managed by a retired Borno education officer, Captain E H ('Pop') Bowler, and much used by expatriates for local leave because of its comfort and the refreshing plateau climate. Bernard Fagg, also the resident curator here, gave Malam Abubakar some insight into new discoveries of the prehistoric Nok culture from the stone age; this brought home to him, something the shard had failed to do, that the land's interpretable history went back beyond both the Islamic and the Christian eras. The resident, Rex Niven, unwittingly irritated him – Armitage had 'signed the book' (the ritual of British official overseas life that had replaced the Edwardian leaving of visiting cards) at the residency on his minister's behalf, Abubakar being tired and anxious to avoid social fuss. Niven came up urgently to Hill Station and appeared importunate in his invitation to dinner: they accepted, but the minister was far from keen. However he did agree at short notice to open the new Jos market, for which Niven had acquired money for the native administration from the northern regional marketing board and had purchased Arcon prefabricated stalls, a remarkable change from the age-old mud-and-thatch, or bare concrete flooring at the best, of most urban markets of the time. Malam Abubakar adlibbed his speech, and was pleased to be cheered by the Jos people, who were an even more mixed community than that of Makurdi. He was also pleased at the surprise and gladness shown by Armitage when introduced to one of his wives who had remained in Bauchi, who was encouraged to sit beside the secretary in the car.

He returned to Lagos to face some problems created by PWD workmen complaining about their conditions of service; as their metropolitan rates were much higher than those paid in provincial Bauchi, he was content to leave negotiations to the director. He explained his responsibilities to the makama of Kano, Malam Bello for the north, when he stayed in the legislators' flats. Taking food over with him for a friendly chat, and dismissing his police orderly, he told him that his department's main job was going to be a bridge at Agege, but that there was also to be a new railway terminus at Iddo, which he had personally minuted on the file should be concrete instead of brick.

There were greater problems than these to be faced in the house of representatives in March 1953. The interesting aspect of this historic budget meeting, to those unfamiliar with colonial Westminster, is that the minister of works played a very full part in many of its debates, but uttered no public word in the crucial affair for which all Nigerians and politicians have since remembered it. He had fewer questions to face than before, particularly oral ones, a clear indicator that he now knew how to face down hecklers or parliamentary trouble-makers. He explained his style for the present thus:

'Now I would like to tell honourable members of a peculiar kind of saying which the old teach the young in northern Nigeria. The elders in the north always tell us to speak only when we must. And they also tell us that when we do speak we should

be brief and that we should not go round and round our points but that we should come straight at them. Well, I am afraid that politics these days is trying to undo this training in us, but I shall try to be very brief.

And so he was, explaining a decision to drop an appendix 'T' from the estimates which had traditionally raised false hopes by listing prospective capital projects in the promise of print, even when there was no money voted.

In the debate on the governor's address he spoke up warmly, despite his philosophical doubts, for his antiquities service, and again in the second reading of the antiquities bill which Murray had fathered. He took several opportunities to underline which public works were central and which were regional, and to remind members that they could find out much for themselves by looking up sessional papers in the library without putting down otiose questions. He defended African contractors, PWD labour and expatriates alike against the members' readiness to allege conspiracies for misappropriation of government stores, without the capacity to produce at least some evidential facts in support. He referred to a joint economic co-operation agency, now renamed a mutual security agency, which was helping in the construction of an extended Kano-Maiduguri road into French territory from Borno; he prophesied that multi-storey buildings would solve the overcrowding of Lagos; and he explained why trainees holding engineering diplomas from the Yaba college were still inadequately qualified to sit for membership of the British engineering institutes so as to gain promotion to higher PWD office.

Mr Enahoro moved for a special scholarship programme to train Nigerians for a future foreign service; nobody rose to speak until the CS, Arthur Benson, broke the silence and gave the official reply, upon which many members found they had much to say after all. Then Malam Abubakar re-emphasized that there were no training colleges to which to send would-be diplomats, and wondered aloud whether that was what should be given first priority at this stage in the march towards self-government: but the rebuff did not mean that they in government were going to close their ears to all that had been said. He answered a challenge to a £640 thousands increase in the defence contribution to the RWAFF by pointing out that HMG was responsible for external security, but the Nigerian government must pay for its own internal security:

'What the honourable members have been saying . . . appears to be that they want control over matters without taking responsibility over them. . . . We haven't yet got a Nigerian army, and if matters affecting the RWAFF (Nigeria) are to be discussed we must do so with HMG and the other west African governments. . . . Last year motions were passed to set up certain military institutions like a military academy. Well, we are not saying that we are not seriously considering all these matters. . . . I like to ask whether they are really serious in their demand for self-government. If they are serious, they must be prepared to shoulder the heavy responsibility which self-government will bring.'

For by 1953 'self-government now!' was a standard slogan shouted at all public political meetings patronised by southerners throughout the country, and 'SG NOW!' a common newspaper banner headline.

But when the AG planted its SG bomb, Abubakar left all the public arguing to others, most of whom were rather better equipped to speak with the loud passion, self-centred rancour or obsession that characterized the debate. The occasion has been fully described so often that a summary should suffice for

those interested in Abubakar rather than in Nigerian history. The governor's version of certain events will be given in the next chapter as he explained them to the subsequent London conference. The central, northern and eastern ministerial councils had in their various ways, but mainly through a willingness to adjust their personalities (something easier to achieve where all had senses of humour), arrived at a *modus vivendi* in a system that had senior British officials sitting with elected Africans as ministers, but where the African ministers did not have direct authority over their departments. The western executive council, with its exceedingly earnest leadership, had not found any compromise.

The 'softly, softly' approach to the handing over of power had had more than one basic reason: for one thing, not only had politicians who lacked experience of running a bureaucratic machine to be given the chance to acquire some lightness of touch and skill in moving the metaphorical levers, pedals and wheels – the public servants, most especially the professional and technical men (rather than the generalist district officers and secretariat men, whom the politicians and specialists hungry for power found it easier to argue with, and only too easy to resent), had also to be reassured that their jobs and environments would still be tolerable and satisfying after the change. Many such men were fond of Africa and Africans, but loved the ethics and achievements of their vocations more. An exodus of disheartened experts for whom no indigenous replacement was available, not even one unqualified on paper but possessing some practical experience, would not benefit the country. If northerners still shunned the thought of an influx of southern administrators, lawyers, engineers and others, it was not to be expected that southerners (who also required for their own development many new administrators, lawyers, engineers and others) would welcome an influx of total strangers who would come from – where? So the tacit argument had run: but the western leaders of the AG did not accept that a truly unprejudiced expatriate, committed to training Nigerians for self-government, might need evidence to reassure him that once ministers were possessed of real powers, they would not make unacceptable demands of his conscience or his comfort. In effect, as the British, the northerners, and many of the easterners (who had their own reasons for disliking the constitution, and whose own central ministers had set up a study trio to examine federal structures, with a view to devising some form of national constituent assembly) then saw it, the leaders of the west decided to sabotage the machine unilaterally in their urgent quest for true power. There was nothing secret about their decision, and their success was very substantial.

The method adopted to do this was not entirely planned or deliberate, and indeed Awolowo agreed to it without consulting either his other party colleagues or the western obas. Mr Anthony Enahoro, still an AG back-bencher (a fact that fuelled suspicions of that party's leaders' tactics and motives), put down a motion which appeared on the order paper for the last private members' day towards the end of the meeting: 'that this house accepts as a primary political objective the attainment of self-government for Nigeria in 1956'. '1956' had replaced the sloganeers' 'NOW!', largely for the unexpectedly pragmatic reason that the elections for new legislatures would not be held until that year, so that all occupied seats would remain comfortably safe until then; the realization was also sinking in on the AG leadership that formal amendments, even to unpopular constitutions, took time and that conventional changes might perhaps be negotiable. A few also wished to anticipate the Gold Coast's promised emancipation. What had not occurred to them was that not

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all Nigerian peoples might be ready to acquiesce in fundamental change merely because political leaders like a wali or a sardauna, an Awolowo or a Mbadiwe, might conceivably reach some private agreement among themselves on self-government. Malam Ahmadu, sardauna, discreetly asked Enahoro to save embarrassment all round by withdrawing a motion which could not be honestly debated without all the parties having first consulted their supporters and constituents (again proving that in the north the party was as yet only a channel of representation, not a powerhouse).

They would both have known informally that the governor and his council of ministers had already, by a consensus (NCNC abstaining from absolute overt commitment), corporately agreed three things: that the embryo parliamentary business committee should try to hold the motion back to the end of the list in the hope that it would fall, through the proceedings being suspended at the 'moment of interruption' before it was reached; that central ministers (including Abubakar, naturally) should not speak since constitutional matters did not lie in any of their portfolios; and that *ex officio* members would remain prudently silent also, to avoid provocation. Enahoro replied, in effect, that he was only the front man for a party decision already taken immutably at Benin; so the Sardauna and the makama of Bida, Malam Aliyu, invited Mr Awolowo personally to reconsider. Awo's response from his party, after overnight deliberation, was that they would withdraw it until the August meeting, if the NPC would guarantee not to oppose it then. Since the Sardauna was committed, with Abubakar's entire backing, to prior popular consultation at home on this very point, that was the end of the negotiation; Awo departed and arranged to shake hands with Zik, his ally for the superficial moment, and both determined that a southern dominion would have no customs union with a northern colony. The disappointed northerners found it hard to reconcile the AG behaviour with the Yoruba people's conservative approach to tradition - did not AG literature admit that the average westerner could not conceive of a society without a king at its head? Why were they intent on destabilizing similar peoples' societies? But they knew that Bode Thomas regarded themselves as mere savages.

The ooni of Ife came in distress to government house early in the morning of private members' day and told Sir John that he had come down from his usual pedestal and had been talking to 'these rascals' (Thomas and Akintola) for hours, but since they would not listen to him he was now resigning. The governor said he was lacking in courage, but could not refuse the resignation. Macpherson had come to rely on the ooni of Ife's gentlemanly offices to deal with Bode Thomas who, in these days before his mental breakdown, was sometimes very difficult in the council of ministers, where his demeanour veered between the cozening and the outrageous. Sometimes kindly, sometimes intransigent, it was only the ooni who could calm him down, and Sir John had had once to adjourn a meeting to let the chief talk to Thomas privately.

The movers, some NCNC and some AG, of the five preceding motions on the order paper, including Mr Enahoro himself, failed to rise when called, as had been agreed between Awolowo and Mbadiwe, so the 'SG 1956' motion was in fact quickly reached, proposed quite moderately, and seconded. The speeches that followed were rousing but unspecific, and the temperature rapidly rose. The Sardauna hurriedly moved an amendment to which nobody in his party had demurred, however they might interpret it: to substitute 'as soon as practicable' for 'in 1956'. The wali of Borno seconded him. The Sardauna pointed out that the 1947 constitution was intended by Richards to have lasted nine years, so that the north might have time to gain experience; it had been submitted to

revision by Macpherson after only two; the resultant present one had barely been effective for a year; such private members' expressions of opinion as Enahoro's motion and wordy speech destroyed any hope of happy inter-regional relationship. The wali said the number of educated elements in the whole country who knew the implications of self-government was very, very small. After a suspension of the house (for tea), the ooni of Ife exposed the agony of the central western ministers by announcing that the motion had worried him for days, and that he had felt it right to resign from the council of ministers.

Immediately the NPC secretary-general, Malam Ibrahim Imam, despite his known personal conviction as a proponent of centralization, moved the adjournment, ostensibly to allow the regions to settle their differences behind the scenes and come back later with a genuinely popular agreement for united self-government. The house collapsed into uproar. Malam Abubakar was slumped in stony depression and renewed despair for there ever being mutual understanding. Ibrahim Imam's seconder refused to contemplate the mistake, in an uncertain world, of commitment to a date without there being any prior plans for action between now and then. Mr Awolowo, seemingly unprepared for effective opposition, launched himself into an extempore attack on British sovereignty and the indifference of the masses, and enraged the Sardauna and permanently antagonized the Muslim northerners by a gratuitous reference to 'the bones' of Shehu d'an Fodiyo. The tactlessness of this manner of naming the revered warrior was something that neither he nor the other southern members were able to recognise, let alone admit, then or since. Mr Mbadiwe, for the NCNC, deplored the woeful education that had made Nigerians suspicious and fearful of each other. Zik (who had been in the strangers' gallery) and Awo were seen to fall into each others' arms in a spontaneous engagement of emotion. Then AG and NCNC rank and file followed Awolowo and Azikiwe out of the house in a noisy walk-out, hurling vituperation at the north and leaving it to NPC and NIP to finish business by passing the dilatory motion – and to face abusive demonstrations from the Lagos crowds who had been fed tendentious versions of the day's proceedings. The NIP made the face-saving point that they had disagreed with the timing of the substantive motion, though not its substance.

Next day it was formally announced that Akintola, Thomas and Prest had also resigned. Prest was ill, but Bode Thomas and Sam Akintola exercised their Westminster privileges of making personal statements. To modern proponents of 'open government', and hardened practitioners or beneficiaries of the inspired leak, the outrage at the time, of officials and religiously-inclined politicians alike, at their breaking of their ministerial oath and obligation of secrecy, modelled on the privy counsellor's oath to the British monarch, may seem bizarre: it was at once a token of the sincerity of some ministers, and of the efficacious tutorship of those officers responsible for interpreting Downing Street practice at third hand, that Bode Thomas's publicly detailed account of how the governor and council of ministers had treated the Enahoro motion after receiving it in cabinet secrecy, although widely known in general terms, was regarded by so many politicians in 1953 as perjury, if not blasphemy. Malam Abubakar, who like so many others had begun to nurture a selective liking for Akintola as a man, despite the complexities of his political ways, certainly thought Bode Thomas's behaviour unforgivable. Nobody denounced the governor when later he publicly accused Akintola and Thomas of breaking their oaths.

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The argument was subsequently put about in journalists' commentaries that Macpherson would have been shrewder had he allowed his AG ministers a free vote and then devised tactics (which the detractors did not venture to define) to reassure the NPC yet also hasten the north towards realism. This speculation failed to suggest how the governor would have explained to Whitehall why, despite consulting his northern and eastern ministers also, he had lost the confidence of over half of his territory; for this would have been the inevitable consequence. NIP ministers managed to move the adjournment of the house *some* *time* *late* at the end of the day's business. Jaja Wachuku believed that the most important thing now was to get the embryo ministries working properly, if they were not to collapse under the strain of self-government, whenever it might come. Malam Isa Kaita commented obliquely that if the west and a section of the east felt that only their case should be heard, 'there need be no delay'; the Sardauna in a mixture of petulance and pomposity said, 'The mistake of 1914 has come to light and I should like to go no further' (this mistake was Lugard's amalgamation of the constituent parts of Nigeria). Malam Abubakar, victim of *some* *time* *late*, was in more than half agreement. Entering his carriage home at Iddo railway station, the sardauna of Sokoto waved an invisible weapon over his head, crying, 'Next time I come, I'll have a sword in my hand!', and was heard later talking about union with French Niger.

Much has been written about the determination of so many northern legislators, who included the gentlemanly emirs of Katsina and Gwandu, after being insulted and humiliated by organized hooligans on the streets and in their lodgings, and after harassment by southerners paraded at every railway station on the journey home from this meeting, never to expose their chiefs, their servants or themselves to Lagos 'democracy' again. It was less commonly remarked that, even if the constitution did appear to have collapsed, Malam Abubakar and his two northern minister friends, the Borno gentleman who now held the education portfolio and the Fulani district head from Balaa Fufore near Yola, remained behind in the enhanced hostility of the Lagos environment, to help the governor and their NIP colleagues to administer the wreck. There were in fact some, like Dan Bappa from Minjibir who had been hit on the head, who still rejected all talk of secession, on the grounds that with patience the north must win in the end, while to cut the rope under the strain now was to concede victory to the south. Macpherson began ironically to point out that nobody had called the 1954 'Ibadan' constitution, entirely planned by Nigerians, the 'Macpherson constitution' until it broke down.

The rumpus had also distracted attention from the unopposed passage of Mr Njoku's important motion, agreed by his northern colleagues after several months of dubiety and informal talks with Macpherson that followed Awo's 'fake crisis', that ministers should have the general direction and control of, and individual responsibility for, their departments, without diminishing collective responsibility in the council of ministers: this ought to have met much of the AG's discontent, and although formal implementation had to await formal constitutional amendment, there was some early psychological and conventional change of daily relationships between most (not all) ministers and their directors throughout the country, even in the north where strictly the motion had no effect. In fact Sir John had already announced at the beginning of the meeting, through little notice was then taken, that there were to be 'far-reaching [though unspecified] changes' in ministers' functions and powers. It was also accepted that the constitution would have to be amended further, to allow the dissolution of a single regional legislature after consultation by the lieutenant-governor with his

executive council: the ministers might stay in office till the new assembly met, but the implication was clear that replacement of those central ministers who had been agreed by the outgoing assembly might have to follow.

However, the lasting consequence of the Action Group's SG move, following on the NCNC's internal divisions, was to petrify the relationship between the three regionally-based parties for so long as they were to retain the titles of AG, NCNC and NPC, whatever personal accommodations might be made within the central executive; and this made sure that the accelerated advance to self-government was to be achieved without the central stability for which only a percipient few yearned. The colonial office officials took the very correct view that Nigeria's complex political problems called for patient, unhurried and understanding consideration, mirrored in Lyttelton's reference to 'a time for reflection to let the dust die down': but political problems are human problems, so this was not to be.

The immediate consequence for Malam Abubakar was that in a temporary reshuffle of subjects he assumed the additional portfolio of transport from the resigned Bode Thomas. It was another unforeseen and fateful hinge in his career. Here the secretary was a northern administrative officer, Michael Varvill, who had shared with Robert Wright the influential wartime training of serving on Bourdillon's personal staff, as the governor's ADC at government house. He had briefly acted as resident Bauchi before being posted to Lagos to help to set up the new constitution with its ministers. Laurence Cox, the Bauchi district officer who believed in public works as the hub of development, had also been serving in the transport ministry, which was not therefore a wholly strange place. There was in fact an underlying suspiciousness about the merged portfolio. The Stanford institute in the USA had presented a convincing study which had been commissioned into Nigeria's transport; the question had inevitably arisen of who should have the policy responsibility – there were those who insisted from the beginning that the subject should not be associated with works; but others believed that so much economic development depended on roads and airports, which the PWD would have to build or contract out, that it would be unwise to dissociate them. The governor's final decision in the circumstances of the upheaval, after much discussion and consultation in and out of the council, had been to add it to Malam Abubakar's portfolio. One of his first courtesy duties was to welcome engineer Hein Frijlink, a tall and able Dutch chief hydrologist of the western Niger delta study, which was to determine how to ensure permanent access to the inland ports of Burutu, Warri and Sapele. The Netherlands engineering consultants ('Nedeco') were an organization which brought together experts *ad hoc* to work on multipurpose engineering projects of any kind anywhere: river science, coast erosion, navigation and communications, natural resource exploitation or harbours, all were grist to these Dutchmen's mill.

The added burden of transport rather confirmed Abubakar in his natural manner of being a reactor as opposed to an activator: never short of broad ideas for improvement, and sometimes for a general innovation, he nevertheless tended, like many a public official who had been weaned late from files and committees, to respond to events and to proposals from his subordinates or groupings of equals, instead of handing down a series of spontaneous directives. This characteristic was turning him for the present into an admirable chairman who commanded loyalty, but made it easier for rivals possessing more *éclat* than foresight to be spuriously contrasted as charismatic leaders. He took the first

opportunity to return home to recover from turmoil, and to contemplate events in the north, and in the world outside.

Britain's colonial expert Miss Margery Perham had strongly advised the reunion of the colonial and commonwealth relations offices, 'for the benefit of the dependencies', but the Labour minister Lord Ogmore (Creech Jones's former deputy David Rees Williams) replied that there was nothing to be said for it. In Kenya Jomo Kenyatta and five Kikuyu were convicted of managing Mau Mau, whose atrocities and oath practices the sultan of Sokoto condemned in a public statement; a London conference was being held on the creation of a British West Indies federation; the Nationalists won their first clear majority in a Union of South Africa general election; and the radical left-wing People's Progressive Party won its first election in British Guiana. Stalin had died in March and the Russians had tested the world's first hydrogen bomb. At home, the lieutenant-governor Sharwood-Smith had pressed his moves for NA reform, which so many like Abubakar believed to be more urgent than 'SG' for an apathetic and still pitifully undereducated population: elected district councils had begun to be set up in the north, starting (after riots against the *atta*) in the southernmost division of Igbirra; the *lamido* of Adamawa had been first warned for corruption, and then induced to retire for stirring up opposition to his own NA council; the *waziri* of Borno, focus of local extortion, cattle-rustling and brigandry, and the mortal cancer in the *shehu's* council, had been dismissed at the beginning of a long process of cleansing the Borno stables; the emir of Argungu was about to be retired also; a commoner (but immensely wealthy) trader had joined the emir of Kano's council; Malam Yahaya Gusau, the teacher, and his fellow MHR Muhammadu Sani Dingyadi, *makama* of Sokoto who had seconded Ibrahim Imam in the Lagos upheaval, had joined the aristocrats on the sultan's council (changes quite as dramatic as the concurrent nomination of the first woman as a special member of the western assembly). The NA 'outer council' experiment was being spread widely through emirates and chiefdoms, with many local variations.

There was pressure on residencies from Kaduna's government lodge for provincial officers to try to reduce the influence of 'emirs' representatives' on tour and in districts, and to step up activity against the side-tracking of genuine communal labour on to emirs' or district heads' personal building and land interests. More attention was lavished by development officers on avoiding corruption at produce buying points. NEPU claimed some of the credit, but it had always been traditional touring district officers' interest to do all this, which until recently the unstoppable flood of paperwork had hindered. It all meant more work for the administration, and instead of being, as some iconoclasts feared, an excuse to delay 'SG', it did dispel apathy by way of reducing some of the limited but genuine tyrannies; and because Sharwood-Smith's warnings and every broadening of commoners' involvement received publicity in the growing distribution of Gaskiya corporation newspapers and pamphlets, it did make the prospect less improbable than Sharwood-Smith still believed, that herdsmen and cultivators might soon join literates and bicycle-hirers in putting ballots into boxes. So Malam Abubakar judged, at least, while recognising that so many of the NA officials, only too conscious of their own position as paid servants of the very authorities which they wanted like himself to reform, were still themselves members of what senior English Tories would recognise as 'old ruling families, good county families, or families grown rich by trade'.

The others, the 'members of no family at all' (to use the same frame of reference), might be thought to be the natural supporters of NEPU, the party

which was anxious for early SG, for early ballots for all, for weak emirs who would be mere constitutional monarchs, for a separate judiciary and access to native courts for lawyers, in other words the party that asserted the faith to take a gambler's chance on the survival of stability after consuming its recipe for national and local progress; but NEPU's activists were mostly in truth more attracted by any opportunity to be accepted upwards into the ranks of the privileged than by the prospect of presiding in and after a revolution, and Abubakar was in no position to criticize them for that. There were ministerial reshuffles to note in the north also: the Saradauna having become the promised first minister for local government and community development, the wali Muhammadu Ngileruma went back home to become the new waziri of the reborn Borno native authority; Bello Kano assumed the works portfolio; Peter Achimugu added natural resources to light industries. Abubakar paid some attention to his farm and attended at the emir of Bauchi's council meetings during his holiday; he was a catalyst in his criticisms of both the DO's and some councillors' feaisance and nonfeaisance, and he was also a healthy irritant in making the comfortable routine of the regulars more difficult, because of the need to keep him up to date item by item. He planned to return to Lagos after first holding party political discussions elsewhere in the north about where Nigeria should or could go next. He seemed to be glad that Tafawa Balewa, which he now never visited, had acquired its first permanent elementary school building.

There had been wide argument about how the north might best cut its links with the south, and many of the educated elements, by no means all regarding themselves as 'NPC', had searched on the map (as Abubakar had done in his middle school office) for new paths of communications. They had nothing to fear from economic independence, they believed. But although Baro was an inland port on an international waterway, there was no route for a road link, a railway or river passage to the ocean that would not pass through hostile coastal people, while dependence on air traffic seemed only to be a science-fiction thought for another century. After looking at the desert trails to Arab countries, and at the Cameroonians who also distrusted their Igbo neighbours, they conceded, with grim reluctance, that however closely they might 'tighten their belts' (as the makama chose to put it) and revert to self-sufficient subsistence, they must remain tied to Nigeria; but if so, then the central powers must be minimal and regional powers must be internally unfettered. Malam Abubakar, who like Ribađu and Kashim now had more experience than their friends of the practical obstacles, had reservations about how the details could or would be decided, but he could not resist the universal upsurge of separationist feeling. He was encouraged by the novel idea, which grew out of northern ministers' informal and free-wheeling talks with Sharwood-Smith, that 'Lagos' as a government might be reduced to some form of non-political common services agency: the east African high commission managed posts, railways and harbours for Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika - why not something similar on the west coast to spare themselves the irritant of ministers from rival parties fighting with each other?

Sharwood-Smith and Abubakar saw it perhaps as a temporary bridge towards a more lasting answer in the future; others, even the makama of Bida, were already talking seriously about permanent population exchanges, on the model of what they believed to have happened in the Punjab and Bengal. District officers were torn: they looked at the post offices, railway stations and

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...the clerical service, public works yards and commercial stores, and professional men's offices, buying stations and garages, the most important Kano airport and subsidiary airfields, all full of southern workers and many of them using no northern employees at all; they understood the feeling of their northern charges who blamed discrimination and the humiliation so many had experienced in all these places; yet they also knew and had affection for so many southerners, particularly the older ones, who were irreplaceable keystones in the north's administrative and economic fabric. What would a theoretical central agency do to restore the balances, fairly, that they and their government superiors and predecessors had for half a century lacked the tools to recover? The agony was greater because so few factions in the north believed that anyone in the south, in Lagos, or in London, understood the extent of their feelings.

The British minister of state Henry Hopkinson came out hurriedly in April 1953 to talk to Nigeria's leaders. NEPU told him that they favoured unity, but coupled with greater regional autonomy; the AG insisted on the reinstatement of the four resigned central western ministers (knowing well that the emir of Katsina and the NPC would then resign) and on the removal of lieutenant-governors from regional executive councils; the NIP wanted a federation, with increased powers to the regions; the NCNC would not meet him face to face, but let it be known that they favoured 'One Nigeria' with a federal Lagos capital; and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa said glumly that the NPC had only agreed to the 1950-51 changes in response to pressures from southerners and Sir John Macpherson. The order-in-council was at last amended early in May to allow lieutenant-governors to dissolve their legislatures on the advice of their executive councils.

A significant factor in the background was the latest joint report on Nigerization, submitted by the outgoing financial secretary Sir Sydney Phillipson, now a continuing commissioner on special duties, and Mr Simeon Adebo, an outstanding civil servant of western origins, who was self-educated, a self-made man, a pillar of Anglican probity and a keen member of the monthly Lagos dining club (which had half Nigerian and half British membership). Their report was dated April 1953 and its purport was widely known. The governor was now convinced that such a modification of promotion policy and drastic change of establishment machinery would drive the country more abruptly towards localization and independence than even he had at first thought wise. Its proponents hoped that it might enable Nigeria to beat the Gold Coast in a sporting race to freedom. Phillipson had held the common view that northern expatriate officials, none of whom he had ever known until they were posted to Lagos, were more northern than the northerners; this was true of a few but it overlooked, first, how very 'northern' virtually all of the northerners themselves were and, secondly, the truism that British colonial officials always took on the characteristics of those whom they were administering (a view reflected by Abubakar in chapter 24). It was equally true of most British officials serving the south or administering in Lagos. Phillipson and Adebo had told the Sardauna during their inquiries that the northern view was natural, but emotionally unsatisfactory for southerners, so that there must be compromise; this was even less emotionally satisfactory for the Sardauna. The report was not published until 1954, by when it had been overtaken by a constitutional crisis, political developments and a promised restructuring of what were to be several civil services by another commissioner; but the damage its leaking had done by frightening the Sardauna and his northern ministers, and exciting

the southern politicians, was not small in the eyes of those who yearned for a unitary Nigeria.

Immediately in its wake the 'sit tight' in the eastern region came to an end, when a general election swept Dr Azikiwe back to power as an NCNC premier, with Dr Michael Okpara as his minister of health. The executive council had advised dissolution under the new powers, and Dr Azikiwe had promptly resigned from the western house of assembly, leaving the opposition there in the hands of Festus Okotie-Eboh, Dennis Osadebay and T O S ('ToS') Benson. However the Cameroons bloc at first said they would not fight an election. On the day after the house had assembled, the NIP rump motion for SG by 1956 was not voted on, after another 'dilatatory motion' was passed from the NCNC benches, with the accompanying chorus that that party needed no help from NIP renegades in the struggle for independence. 'Professor' Eyo Ita's political career was now virtually at an end, although the NIP drew closer to the national union of teachers' president Alvin Ikoku's united Nigerian party (UNP, and although he was eventually received back into the NCNC fold not long before independence.

The one thing upon which all northern ministers were now inflexibly determined was that there should be no new employment of southerners in the northern provinces, whether by regional government or by native authorities; clearly it would take time for a 'northernization' policy to be formulated and for a northern public service commission to implement it, giving priority for permanent employment to northerners, and then to expatriates or other west Africans (none of whom would settle in and pose a colonist's threat to the country), and only in the last and inescapable resort to southern Nigerians, who must be on terminable contract. Malam Abubakar could see that this would not help the recruitment of northerners into Lagos-centred departments, but again he did not resist this movement, which had also taken flight in the slipstream of the 'SG' motion: as a central agency, 'Lagos' might cease to matter. Sadly, that was the last moment at which the Sardauna might ever have begun to regard Nigeria as anything but a northern region to which a middle belt and the south were attached as minorities that had had unjust advantages for too long.

Nor were all the feelings raised so rational as that. In Kano a group of urban thugs, remotely connected as servants or distant relatives with NPC and emirate leaders, and using the specious excuse that unnamed government Europeans were backing NEPU, had formed an extremist terrorising body calling itself the *mahaukata* [madmen]; their purpose was to fight back, viciously, against the hooliganism and catcalls of the comparable element among the followers of NEPU. NEPU responded by formally setting up a 'positive action wing'. Had the Lagos riots not been fresh in everyone's mind, it is likely that neither NPC nor NEPU would have gone so far. These were the circumstances in which the AG decided to carry its crusade, with NEPU approval, into Kano *sabon gari* in May. Not only the madmen were prepared; the cruder inhabitants of the whole of both old and new cities were making cutlasses and sticks ready to receive the people who had insulted their leader in the advance publicity that had been circulated, or to defend their heroes. Malam Inuwa Wada, the local MHR (related to Aminu Kano) who was now Kano NA information and adult education officer, knew that the NPC leaders were determined to stop both Zik and Akintola from lecturing their young men, and made a speech to the section heads at the works yard; this, indirectly at least, resulted in the organized workers declaring an unofficial strike in protest against the

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AG meeting, for which the NA had already issued Mr Akintola (who spoke both Hausa and Nupe) with a permit. Although the administration persuaded the NA to withdraw its permission on the morning of the meeting, ignoring protests from various quarters in Lagos, undisciplined counter-demonstrations by northerners built up rapidly into a weekend of bloody riot between 'Hausas' with cudgels and matchets and the southerners (mainly Yorubas in the first stages, but then increasingly Igbos, hastily identified as the tools of the alien political crusaders, all armed with home-made 'dane' guns and knives). The governor in Lagos received a telephone call from the lieutenant-governor at 8.30 am on the Saturday, and by 1 pm central police had been deployed by air in Kano - others brought in by lorries from Kaduna had been in action by 10 am, with their deputy commissioner John Hodge in command. They and the NA police could not calm down the 'disturbances' until there were nearly 40 corpses, many of them castrated, and hundreds of injured to be counted; but the riot was finally contained. There were others similar, but much smaller, in a few northern towns.

Dr Akiwe and the NCNC were already on their way to hold their party convention at Kaduna at the same time, while the AG had another group in readiness to follow Akintola's, which had prudently retired from the dangers of Kano. In the circumstances Zik accepted Sharwood-Smith's personal advice, conveyed by the resident at Minna railway station, to postpone his convention to a less fraught time: the wisdom of this was emphasized by the excitable behaviour in Kaduna of the Igbo youth gangs, calling themselves 'cowboys', who only reflected the Kano Hausa *mahaukata*. The regional NPC leadership knew what their Kano people were doing, and refrained from scolding; the original demonstrating strikers and their instigators were never prosecuted.

All this then was the emotional environment in which the northern houses of assembly and chiefs were summoned to Kaduna, to meet on the last day of actual rioting in Kano, and to bring together the popular political thoughts gathered over the last six weeks. Characteristically a brooding Malam Abubakar's sole public contribution was on a point of procedural order. He and Aliyu the makama were becoming concerned at their own party's new tendency to recruit immature extremists as its field secretaries, not least in Kano. After three days of private meetings between chiefs and members, during which all the ministers from the north and the lieutenant-governor also had frank talks, Yahaya Gusau opened a debate which rejected commitment to 1956 or any other fixed date for self-government. The three *-cis* were still unconquered. Delegates from areas with no roads or bridges looked at others who were demanding improvements of their already existing ones, and thought how glad they would be to have even others' cast-off rough roads and broken bridges. The British would fail in their duty if they gave 'SG' to Nigeria as an integral whole. The Sardauna said that the north would want 'SG', but only when northernization and efficient local government had been attained; he announced the future elevation of the clerical training centre into an institute of administration, and reassured those expatriates and southerners who had sympathy with the north's interests and customs. Not even the members who were closer in sympathy with the south than to the NPC voted against the motion rejecting self-government. Nor did they vote against the subsequent motion moved by Ibrahim Imam, (and translated without any changes of meaning into 'legalise' by the legal secretary Hedley Marshall).

Malam Ibrahim Imam's speech closely reflected Abubakar's own views: no

regional party had the right to insist on enforcing its policy, perhaps drafted after making up its corporate mind irrevocably at a caucus held in Benin or elsewhere, against the majority at the centre, and southerners must cease contemptuously to underrate northerners' intelligence or to regard them as the imperialists' mouthpieces; the eight points reflected northern popular opinion as expressed in consultation with constituents to the northern chiefs and members, and required:

- (1) complete regional autonomy, except for defence, external affairs, customs and west African research institutions;
- (2) no central legislature or executive;
- (3) a central agency, responsible for the exceptions in (1) and for any other matter delegated by a region;
- (4) this agency to be at a neutral place, preferably [and ironically] Lagos;
- (5) the agency to be non-political, with its composition, powers and responsibility defined by the constitutional order-in-council;
- (6) the railway, air services, electricity and coalmines to be run by independent statutory corporations, organized inter-regionally under experts, with minority representation of regional governments;
- (7) all revenues to be regional, except customs which would be collected at the port by the central agency and paid to the receiving region;
- (8) each region to have a separate public service.

The free exchange of news and comment between governor and lieutenant-governors and their ministers in Lagos and Kaduna, based on mutual respect, which was at present less easy in Ibadan and Enugu, meant that none of this was a surprise, however unwelcome, in London. The governor reported in person to Mr Lyttelton on all that had happened, and the minister of state Mr Hopkinson visited Nigeria in April to attend a discussion of defence matters and spy out the ground once more. Coded telegrams and demi-official letters between governor and Whitehall desk officers had long replaced stately ship-borne despatches as the web of empire. These communications demanded long hours from private secretaries who had only manuscript one-time ciphers and typewriters: the time of telex and machine cryptography had not yet come to colonial Africa. But Mr Oliver Lyttelton was well enough briefed day by day by alarmed Whitehall officials to be able to announce to the house of commons on 21 May, even before the northern houses had agreed their eight points, that it had not proven possible for the three regions to work effectively if they remained so closely knit together as the present constitution required: greatly regretting this, HMG considered that it would have to be withdrawn, to provide for greater regional autonomy and for the removal of powers of intervention by the centre in matters which could without detriment to the other regions be placed entirely within a region's competence. They were going to issue an invitation to a London conference within two months which would look at how and when to correct defects in the constitution and, without commitment, consider the question of 'SG 1956': 'to put it quite bluntly, recent events have rather forced our hands'. He was a blunt man. These events did not cause the northern houses to forget their sense of propriety and protocol: before adjourning, they sent good wishes to the Queen on her forthcoming coronation, which the NCNC leaders in the eastern region chose officially to ignore. Sir John Macpherson, on home leave at coronation time, was asked to address a meeting of members of both houses of the British parliament. He told them that the rapprochement

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of the southern leaders and parties would not last long, and was challenged on this by a Labour party specialist on colonial affairs, Fenner Brockway. It would be arrogant, said Sir John, for anyone to say he was 'sure' about what African politicians thought, but all his understanding of the people concerned was that it would not last.

The newly commissioned second lieutenants Zakariya Maimalari and Umar Lawan were part of the Queen's colonial escort in the coronation procession to and from the abbey; a commonwealth parliamentary association lunch for her Majesty in Westminster Hall took the place of the mediaeval coronation banquet traditionally given by sovereigns, at which Malam Isa Kaita, the NPC's financial secretary, was the northern representative; a new issue of bronzed 1d, ½d and ¼d Nigerian coins was concurrently minted (after wide consultation had demonstrated a fixed belief that shortage of low value coins had encouraged rural inflation); firework displays were given at every divisional and provincial headquarter, and mass gatherings of English-speakers were held in many expatriate houses to listen to the Queen's speech, written by the orator Churchill, followed by Churchill's own broadcast. In Abubakar's home town of Bauchi there was a planting by dignitaries of an avenue of trees, accompanied by loyal addresses from the emir and the resident Gill; the ADO was in charge of organizing the radio relay over a public system run on car batteries at the racecourse – preceded by horse-racing and comic school sports, and followed by feasting and dancing round a bonfire; with the provincial engineer and two other helpers he erected the firework display (at the last minute in case of rain) and lit all the fuzes, including those which went off in his face. Yet while the British gave the lead, it was noticeable that so much of the pleasure in ceremony and fun shared by the individual Africans and crowds who were drawn in to the Bauchi events was genuine, despite their physical weariness during the Ramadan fast which made even the dedicated Malam Abubakar too tetchy in the afternoons for complex business.

An independent commentator on colonial affairs offered some reflections on the chances which had been lost to make something more out of the coronation celebrations: the truth was, he wrote, that it was the British in colonial Africa – not the Africans – who had lost the pride and confidence, and to whom the concept of empire was now a cause of embarrassment, or worse – of boredom. This may have been true of the towns that housed the secretariats, but it was not yet true in places like Bauchi, where there still seemed to be so much that both races might do together, without pausing to study political dogmas. Where it had certainly become true was among the British in the towns of the united kingdom: the new Elizabethan age now being touted by the cliché-makers was not seen as a continuation of the imperial past. A symbol of the reason that, two years after the festival of Britain, the mother country was still tired and shabby under the tinsel of its decorations, a symbol that would hardly be noticed by African visitors from Bauchi, Oshogbo or Abakaliki, was that eight years after apparently total victory in a world war the country was only now able to abandon the rationing of sweets and look forward to improving on the pre-war imports of colonial cocoa. A country, many of whose fathers had learnt most of what little they knew of the empire from cigarette cards and empire marketing board posters, now looked at conferences of exotically dressed strangers, not with the hint of awe that had weakened those fathers' nervous giggles at newsreels of Mr Gandhi and the Indian princes in the 1930s, but with eyes already prepared by slapdash postwar journalism to see historic events as

showbiz entertainment: a process which the great expansion of domestic television sales to watch the coronation 'live' coincidentally accelerated.

Nigeria continued to seethe politically while the potential conference delegates prepared to go to London. The Middle Belt People's Party (MBPP), beginning to unify itself under a Malam Bello Ijumu who had broken away from NEPU, declared that if the NPC's 8 points were accepted by the British, it would demand a separate region based on its home ground of Kabba and Ilorin. The Middle Zone League (MZL), originally a cultural body for northern Christians in the plateau and southern Zaria, was acquiring a strong mission-based political flavour in Adamawa. The Tiv progressive union, the Idoma state union and the Igbirra tribal union (later to split into two ITU wings supporting different chiefs) were stirring into life. Ibrahim Imam stirred the pot further by announcing that Lagos would again be separated from the west (no doubt observing with irony in passing that it had been the western assembly that had just made the 'exclusive' Ikoyi club, originally created for expatriates, unequivocally non-racial by law as well as by modern convention). NEPU created a youth branch with an intellectual name, the Askianist movement, commemorating the Muhammad Askia who had usurped the Songhai empire in 1493 in order to reform its religion and invigorate its culture; this was later to be absorbed into the *Rundunar Samarin Sawaba* (roughly, 'youths' truth army'). The northern government was reshuffled as Malam Bello Kano, Dan Amar, amazed political pundits by resigning high state office in order to return home to the more lasting hereditary distinction of a senior district headship; the Sardauna added the familiar portfolio of works again to local government and community development, and Abba Habib, the Shuwa Arab schoolfellow of Abubakar's from the northern Cameroonian emirate of Dikwa, relieved Peter Achimugu of local (that is to say 'light') industries.

The Sardauna, after discussion in and out of exco with Sharwood-Smith and with his central colleagues including Malam Abubakar, announced that the north was considering the elimination of one tier of electoral colleges and of the NAs' ten per cent 'injection' into the final colleges, and so providing direct representation from divisions or large towns; the northern administration was also charged with organizing the rapid collection of the peoples' answers to the Seven Questions (*tambayoyi bakwai*) based on the NPC's Eight Points. The system of indirect rule made the mechanics of such a referendum easy, but for the first time the provincial administrative officers of the north were formally faced with the dilemma of so many farflung colleagues in the transition from what they hoped was enlightened autocracy to partisan democracy, the process that later came to be called decolonization: so many of the attenders at public meetings, district council discussions and NA outer and inner council responses to the questionnaire looked to the DO or ADO to give a lead, offer an opinion, interpret a puzzling term, or at least translate intelligibly. It was an alienating experience for both sides when so often the correct answer could only be, 'You must ask your political representative', if the politicians had to fumble over their own answers; there was still so much uncertainty, ingrained in mistrust of both change and its exploiters. But it was hardly unexpected that the NPC's points were popularly endorsed *in toto* except in parts of the middle belt.

Meanwhile the smaller changes progressed, and Malam Abubakar played an advisory part at a distance in the acceptance of one or two new and (it was hoped) reliable men in stronger positions on the emir of Bauchi's council: he also silently applauded the administration's moves which resulted in the

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om's eldest son, the chawma, going to jail for embezzlement of *jangali* and
eviction, and the acting DO's administrative review which increased the
alcal's lenient sentence to one which matched comparable cases (against which
no appeal was made). This happened against the background of administrative
business into the om's own financial irregularities and extravagances, upon
which his council, including Abubakar, had advised the resident and DO not
to seek his resignation, but to make him sign an undertaking in the nature of
a 'time warning' or 'cessary note. There was another occasion when the
resident minister was present, at a council discussion of the possible prospects of
economic development and welfare scheme covering a project for Bauchi town
which suggested that if the funds could not be secured, money could be
diverted from other local works item destined for office accommodation
and stores in the village market at Tafawa Balewa. The counter-argument was
that the area paid tax more willingly, received less benefit, and should
therefore be encouraged again for the town's sake. The discussion was warm, and
the minister spoke warmly but the minister of works remained mute throughout
the discussion, which seemed to be based in favour of his own area.

At the same time Malam Abubakar had realized that it was no longer necessary to
have the services of Kashim or Muhammadu Ribadu with him as political chaperons
whom he privately visited or received Benson, the chief secretary, since he
was now confident that his confidences would not be abused; on the other hand,
Abubakar had earlier been reluctant to visit government house when the CS
had been acting as governor, since Akintola and Bode Thomas would be
there and would make capital out of it in the press and elsewhere. Sir John
McPherson was now trying to restore an effective council of ministers: he
wanted a team to work for Nigeria', and was unwilling on principle to accept
the resignation from Ibadan of any of the AG group who had resigned except
the ooni of Ife - and the ooni refused to return without the others; and Malam
Abubakar, who was once again more than ready to find an honourable excuse
to renounce his involvement in politics, appeared likely to lead a resignation of
the northerners if the (as they saw him) hysterical and extremist Bode Thomas
was allowed back. This dilemma was not solved until, as the next chapter
will show, during the forthcoming conference the NPC conceded a temporary
reversion to the *status quo ante*.

McPherson was also setting up the country's formal delegation for London,
which involved tricky horse-trading. The temporary alliance of Zik and Awo
was playing hard to catch, since officially they were still 'not fraternising' with
the governor, although they did meet him discreetly to discuss the names of
amendament advisers; they were for the moment mutually agreed on one more
thing at least, that the NPC had no right to speak for the whole north, but
they were prepared to consider the governor's invitation to preliminary talks
on condition that the purpose was to revise those defects in the constitution
that made it unworkable, and that other politicians should be included so that
the talks could be seen as being with regions and not parties. 'This', they said,
but at greater length than is summarized here, 'is the last constitution conferring
dependent status which we are willing to operate. The constitution will come to
an end in 1956 or by earlier breakdown or abrogation. If any of those events
occur we demand that Britain should allow us dominion status. If she refuses,
we would unhesitatingly declare our independence and proceed to assert it,
whatever the consequences might be'. Despite this implicit total rejection of
the northern case, they did finally agree to meet the governor, together with

the Sardauna and all their various advisers. The Sardauna had flown round with Isa Kaita to Ibadan and Enugu to reach a superficial reconciliation with Awo and Zik, and had experienced an alarming forced landing at Idah in a violent tropical storm in the process. To the end Zik wanted London to think that he might not come to the conference, but he agreed with the NPC on the need to federalize Lagos. Yet he now agreed with the AG on abandoning 'unitary' government, on not now leaving residual powers with the centre, and on having direct elections to the centre; and it was hinted that this was because the AG was threatening libel actions against his press.

A generally acceptable outline of the conference agenda and the composition of the Nigerian delegation was finally sent to London. The northern members were to be the sardauna of Sokoto, Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the emir of Katsina Usman Nagogo, the makama of Bida Aliyu, and Malam Aminu Kano; they were to be accompanied by ten advisers from the plateau, Adamawa, the northern Cameroons, Borno, Kano, Kabba, Tiv and Zaria city and 'pagan' districts, thus including NEPU, the Middle Zone League and the Igbirra Tribal Union. NCNC and AG were similarly equipped, together with two delegates from NIP (whose inclusion Awo and Zik had strenuously resisted, because they supported a strong central government and now opposed '1956') and one from the southern Cameroons. With the addition to these internal delegations of all the official advisers who joined the governor, Nigeria's governments were left briefly in the hands of younger and junior people who quickly decided that it was easier to keep a system running smoothly if there were no important people around them to upset the balance of reason.

The delegations packed for their chartered flight, and gangs of southerners and northern ruffians abused and hurled missiles at some of them through the restaurant window at Kano airport. NEPU procured legal practitioners to issue what most members judged to be a mystical writ of *certiorari* to prove that the alkali who heard the subsequent case had no jurisdiction over the airport, which was federal land. The British judge, a relative stranger to the land, decided that the alkali did have jurisdiction, but since the court scribe's record did not specifically show on the face of it that he had such jurisdiction (something he could never have had reason to record before), quashed the case nonetheless. The accused were recharged and rearrested, and a better briefed district alkali handed down a second list of sentences.

The wider world did not stop revolving because Nigeria was rocking. The Kenya African Union was proscribed, the Kenya supreme court quashed Kenyatta's conviction (upheld a little later by the east African court of appeal), and the Kenyan government called on Mau Mau to surrender. The Nyasaland African Congress demonstrated against the intended federation, which Lyttelton was hoping would hinder the spread northward of the Afrikaner Broederbond's beliefs and practices. Dr Nkrumah introduced what the Gold Coast was to call his 'motion of destiny'; subsequently the post of the director of medical services in the Gold Coast was abolished, and his successor chief medical officer was subordinated to a permanent secretary. General Neguib became president of the newly republican Egypt. Dr Hans Wolff was sent out by UNESCO to Africa and elsewhere to create Roman alphabets for forty languages still lacking an agreed orthography, twenty-two of them in northern Nigeria. An armistice was declared in Korea. The French deported Mohamed V from Morocco. And, a little cloud out of the sea, perhaps, like a man's hand signalling change, the Shell D'Arcy petroleum development company of Nigeria Ltd, jointly owned by Shell and Anglo-Iranian, announced after sixteen years'

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...and the years' sailing from Calabar, 'a small indication of oil in a ...'.

Why has the 1954 constitution failed? At the time it seemed clear enough to Whitehall, and little has been discovered to change that view. Running through the failure was the fact that in southern party politics, to be moderate was to court political suicide. This thread may be seen in countless lights: AG and NCNC had to compete to appear to each other the more valiant champion of independence; ministers wanted to be publicly recognized as enjoying personal power over their departments regardless of experience; far too few individuals working at the centre could yet see themselves as simply Nigerians - northerners were unresponsive, westerners dreamt of a pan-Yoruba state, easterners only saw the rest of the country as a field of opportunity for educated temporary refugees from an overpopulated area; the attempt to maintain interdependence through electoral pyramids meant that any upset in one area infected the whole body; the central political executive was spatchcocked in by dissonant regional powers; there was impatient failure to understand that, because of their own historical precedents, the British could be trusted to amend stone tablets by adopting amiable conventions and ignoring the written words; the ambiguous status of Lagos was an irritant; the original supposition that the emergence of widely organized political parties would take years instead of virtually weeks had been a blindfold, particularly when they emerged as ethnic bodies, instead of offering a choice of social and economic changes to all citizens; the expectation of all areas moving at the same pace remained unwelcome and impractical, which led to the unforeseen solution of 'full regional internal self-government'; the many personality conflicts bedevilled progress; and the fatal flaw of judgement that led Dr Azikiwe to seek his fortune in the western region puzzled the many who had long ago leapt to the conclusion that Zik was Nigeria's only true leader. There was unravelling to be done. In that, Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa would play a truly leading part.

17 A difficult Conference creates a form of Federation

Kome zurfin ruwa, da yashi a ciki

THE HOTELS WERE COMFORTABLE, but No 10 Carlton House Terrace was not a relaxing venue for those delegates and their many advisers who had not seen London before. A mixture of strained grandeur from Britain's past, and of the secretarial makeshifts common to postwar European conferences harking back to Lake Geneva (Whitehall had not yet acquired the electronic techniques that were to be spun off from the full-time conferring at Lake Success), assisted some members to forget the realities left behind at home. In the evenings the Nigerians were lobbied, to their surprise and some indignation, by British fellow-travellers of the far left, and by Oxford Groupers equally anxious to indoctrinate the visitors with their own version of religious dogma. The peripheral social receptions and exhausting exchanges of formal hospitality also allowed British politicians and commercial people, and interested foreign diplomats, to flatter themselves that, through greeting its representatives, they now knew Nigeria instantly. But many Nigerians, especially the Muslims, complained that 'wine and dine diplomacy' was not to their taste. Malam Abubakar was one among these who meant what he said, and furthermore never developed such relish, even when he had become a widely hospitable and polished host himself. One social occasion which he did not forget was that at which he again met Sir Roy Welensky, the northern Rhodesian white leader; Welensky was, he was to say to some puzzled friends and to the Bauchi ADO, the only really intelligent European to whom he had talked in London on the subject of Africa. One day Welensky (who called himself 50% Polish, 50% Jewish, and 100% British) was to claim that he had been lied to by every British politician he dealt with, except the Earl of Home; some of them in return were to say that Welensky was a blusterer, who lacked the will to fight to the very end for what he believed in.

The chief secretary Benson, left behind in Lagos, lost a wager; every member was present in his place when the proceedings began. The secretary of state and the colonial office were determined that the conference should be an honest attempt at giving Nigerians, caught in the cross currents of mutual and hereditary conflict, an opportunity to settle some of their differences in neutral waters: they did not wish to impose navigational directions, if they could at least steer the combatants away from what the British judged to be reefs and maelstroms. As this intention became obvious, so the visitors found themselves giving involuntary credit to their hosts for some previously unsuspected sincerity. Lyttelton had been looking forward to the relief of parliament's summer recess; wearily he delivered a disappointingly short speech of welcome at the public opening and sat back, to meet an embarrassed silence. Everyone knew what was on the agenda, but nobody had been briefed on the

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protocol of the introductory pleasantries, and assumed that the chairman would guide them. It is not apocryphal that, looking round at the wordless gathering and with his overseas visits in mind, Lyttelton turned to the governor and a colonial office assistant under-secretary, William Gorell Barnes, muttering the well-worn worldly-wise Englishman's comment on all other embattled politicians. 'These fellows couldn't run a wheel stall'. However everyone knew that the era was at an end in which, as Professor W J M Mackenzie has put it. British governments had seemed to believe as a moral and prudential imperative that there should be no decolonization without viability.

Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa took it on himself to break the general pause, since the Sardauna was nursing a diplomatic cold. It was not a set, prepared speech. In two brief, almost Burkeian, sentences he began grimly, but in the slow, careful and confident tones that were to be admired at so many future international meetings: *'They say, sir, the constitution has not worked. I say, sir, we have not worked the constitution'*. The crisis had simply been a continuation of all that had been wrong since 1946. The NPC had come to London with an open mind, he went on, ready to give and take. He referred to the heartfelt and loyal rejoicing throughout the north in response to the coronation, and then came to the point. The plan (the eight points) which the north had produced as a solution to the present deadlock was known to, and had the backing of the overwhelming majority of, the 17,500,000 people who had sent the northern delegation to London. But they could not take final decisions here: any agreement reached would have to be referred back home for final acceptance. The future of Nigeria would be imperilled by anything but a loose federation, which was the only possible solution. There should be complete regional autonomy, and the regions should be allowed to develop at their own pace, without interference in their affairs from other regions. This was why they had suggested a simple agency at the centre, to manage common services.

It had been a masterly laying of cards on the table, but of course the pack was reshuffled for further games, in each of which Lyttelton thought he detected up the voluminous sleeves express or implicit ill-will to Britain, drafted before arrival in London. Mr Awolowo followed Abubakar, checking carefully that this would be in order. He purported to have a more open mind than the northerner, claiming that despite the fiery articles that everyone read in the press, sober discussion was needed and an end to throwing bricks at each other; the '8 points' were prejudicial to unity. Dr Azikiwe uttered some well-worn phrases about goodwill, harmony and equality, and said that he would support a federation, if it were not to be dominated by one region. Other leaders made introductory contributions before the meeting adjourned into private, and some less formal back-stage, deliberations over the next three-and-a-half weeks. The NPC delegates' insistence on leaving final approval to their people at home disturbed most of the other representatives, who wanted firm decisions there and then, referenda being the first casualty of institutionalized democracy. Malam Aminu Kano spoke with ill-judged rudeness about a lamb competing with the wolves, accused the colonial office of having been unhelpful over electoral procedure, and refused to contemplate Nigeria being reduced to a customs union; Mr Eyo Ita of NIP pleaded that all should think as Nigerians, endorsed Aminu's demand for 'One Nigeria' divided into many states (indeed was from now onwards a strong advocate of a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers state in particular), but agreed with him on little else. All the others desired regional autonomy in some sense. Dr Endeley, the Yaba-trained assistant medical officer

who led the inchoate Kamerun National Congress (KNC, spelt in the German way to emphasize that British sovereignty did not prevail on the mandated territory), pointed out that the UK, not Nigeria, held the British Cameroons in trust, and that from his point of view his own negotiations would be bilateral with Mr Lyttelton alone. Then the press withdrew.

There were therefore two ironic contrasts – the open contrast between the northern majority who felt willing and bound to trust the will of their unorganized millions, and the other parties who had called them imperialist stooges but were anxious to have their own unmandated way in the name of democracy: and the other contrast in the background, between the British officials who continually emphasized the administrative and economic advantages of as close unity as possible, and the majority parties of the colonised, who by planning to divide seemed likely to lengthen the span of imperial rule. Macpherson was vindicated, and the mobs of Lagos and Kano were seen to have indeed wrought ill. In 1953 it hardly occurred to anyone to suggest that a temporary administrative separation of the north, if boosted by a totally unprecedented and enormous pump-priming from the British taxpayers, might allow an educational and economic catching-up, and only later permit reunion within a balanced federation: the British treasury had never yet thought of development in such terms, and responsibilities for nation-building were still seen as being to assist a natural evolution rather than a new creation.

For his own part, Oliver Lyttelton told the conference that he would not mince his words. The only cement that held the rickety structure of Nigeria together was the British; let that be recognized. Britain drew little, if any, direct material gain from the country, and had just made a grant (he emphasized the word) of £23 millions for development. What was the present conference for? It had been convened, by the British, in order to try to keep the diverse elements in Nigeria together – left to themselves, they would clearly fall apart in a few months. He wanted to be frank and brutal, and he did not intend this to be well received. As he wrote later in his memoirs, in this negative intention he succeeded. He had already personally identified the fatal flaw in the 'Ibadan' constitution, that the central ministers were nominated by the regions, and accordingly were virtual delegates instead of properly national figures. He was hoping that direct elections to the centre might result in true Nigerian policies and decisions, in place of compromises between delegates who might be, or might only seem to be, stooges.

A fresh experience, particularly for the northerners, was the new ritual custom of 'meeting the press' for an unrehearsed session: the makama of Bida, Ibrahim Imam, Muhammadu Ribadu and pastor David Obadiah Vrenkat Lot from the plateau in the middle belt, all made clear to the world their various reasons for opposing self-government. Malam Abubakar seemed less ready to expose himself to reporters: on one occasion when the Sardauna's secretary sought him, he was found sitting on an upright chair in his hotel bedroom, reading a translation of Plato. The Sardauna, recently recognized at home as the north's 'leading minister' by the grant of a special allowance, was still far from comfortable in environments where so many did not recognise his pre-eminent authority. He remained silent for whole days on end: the lack of interest in the 8 points on the part of the London British was hard for him, and his short temper had left him too inflexible to take risks in open debate outside his powerbase. Some surprised onlookers began to suspect him of coming closer to Awolowo, who might yet be induced in practice to limit his southern yearning for the break up of the north into segments to a union of Ilorin and Kabba with the west.

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A few details of the conference's proceedings will help an understanding of how little the British were forcing the pace towards a pre-conceived finish (Lyttelton indeed seeming to the colonial servants present to be reluctant to give even the minimum guidance), and how divided the Nigerians were. Once they were in private session, Awolowo circulated a prepared lecture on federalism, drawn from Kenneth Wheare's celebrated textbook, and on constitutional change. Referring back to the celebrated interrupted march to the sea, he pointed out that, 'horsemen from the desert would have little success in the forests of the south'; it was the British, who had created a nation, who now wished to break it up again; the British in the council of ministers created suspicions by using their influence with the northerners to threaten the south. The centre should be responsible for specific subjects, the regions should enjoy all the residue, and they should be independent of each other. All *ex officio* ministers should be withdrawn, and there should be a central upper house to counter the northern majority. His actual tones were bland, and because the NPC suspected that the NCNC might fall in line with the AG, and now referred to them jointly as 'The Axis', Ribadu withheld a fierce speech he had prepared; the northerners looked implacable, but feared defeat in a war of words with clever southern lawyers. They had also learnt in corridor chat that the *ex officio* members, like the CS and FS, had minds of their own on Nigerian affairs, minds which the NPC at last had to admit that the colonial office had no means of controlling.

On the second day Abubakar Tafawa Balewa made a more restrained but firm restatement, and by his delivery began to impress Lyttelton. E O Eyo of NCNC was also moderate, and the surprised Whitehall secretariat agreed that the quality so far in closed session was superior to the West Indian proceedings that they had been covering just before. The secretary of state again made it clear to the steering committee that although he wanted to wield no big stick, some things he would not allow to go by; he would for example have no talk of 'divide and rule' when it was patently only the British who were holding the country together at all. A few days later he overruled his officials and did wield his stick; the tense atmosphere caused some restiveness, but also some progress. He had turned quietly to Macpherson and said, 'Jock, I'm going to break it up, and you go back and govern - with troops if necessary'. Macpherson had reacted, 'It would be great fun - for about six months. Then I'll still have to contact somebody, some time. Do have some patience, and see what happens'. The tension had risen when Awolowo had infuriated Lyttelton by commenting that it might be presumptuous to say so at the heart of the empire, but unless they went back to Nigeria with 'solid' decisions, the AG could only take the action which they had been planning until they were stopped by the decision to have a conference. Concluding that this was the result of his giving no firm guidance, Lyttelton insisted that the discussions first agree on the form of the central authority, despite the steering committee having settled on dividing the legislative lists before considering executives. He rejected NCNC requests that the matter be referred back to the steering committee. Thereupon Zik conceded both the preservation of existing public service conditions of service and the principle of compensation schemes for any officials prejudiced by constitutional advance.

Lyttelton also took the stick to the NPC. He ruled that they could not take the conference decisions back as recommendations for the approval of their people: they must decide here, and if they went home and failed to persuade their electorate, then like good democrats they should resign. He also proved to them that a common services agency must derive its authority from some kind

of a central legislature, and not an immutable Windsor order-in-council. The emir of Katsina saved the faces of the politicians by accepting both arguments, but pointed out that the timing of the ruling seemed to favour Awo, while the CSA was surely also needed as a bargaining counter with Endeley; Nagogo also began to suggest that the north might demand 60% representation as another bargaining counter, although tacitly ready to fall back again on 50%. Others were playing similar games and Zik's friend, the eastern transport magnate Louis Ojukwu, told an official that the secretary of state must know that demands like those for regional control of air services, and for removal of all expatriates from cabinets, or of legislative members for special interests, were all conscious bids for more than they knew would be given. While the governor was worrying about political embarrassment and upset apple-carts if the attorney-general (who had stayed in Lagos with Benson) should exercise his judicial discretion in favour of prosecuting Mr Enahoro for some current alleged offence, Mr Fenner Brockway made an overt advance to half the southern camp by giving Awolowo the loan of a secretary, who had been marked down by the London authorities as a 'known communist'. This raised the alarm among the Moral Re-Armament camp-followers in the eastern set.

Practical discussion of the division of power was not helped by the manner of Njoku's insistence for the NIP that the centre's powers must not be confined to a fixed list, with the residue going undefined to the regions, nor by his party's knowingly raucous laughter at Awo's interested reluctance to see banking kept specifically central; Lyttelton was further annoyed by Mbadiwe and Ibrahim Imam behaving derisively as if to the gallery in a public parliament, calling out 'Hear! Hear!' and making audible asides. The axis had hoped to avoid mentioning the future of Lagos, but both NIP and NPC insisted on it; the axis responded to this by demanding 40:30:30% central representation of regions, and twelve portfolios in each of the four governments; but they also conceded for the moment a continuation of indirect elections through the regional houses.

Two days later, lobbying and argument had produced some more progress, Chief Arthur Prest manoeuvring the NPC into talking about the centre again with NCNC and AG. Faced with the likelihood of NCNC leaving the axis, Awolowo (and his legal adviser Akintola) withdrew the objections to the railway, harbours, civil aviation, banks and shipping being exclusively central subjects; but to save him having to make any personal retraction, it was Zik who spoke in his most conciliatory style on joint behalf of NCNC, AG and NEPU, accepting the list. Thereupon Abubakar withdrew the north's opposition to centralization of the postal services. Awolowo then impractically counterdemanded that telephones and telegraphs be treated separately, making inter-regional lines central, but minor and internal lines regional; Arthur Prest did not agree with him but, unlike the practice in the NCNC, only the leader was generally allowed to speak for the Action Group. Electricity proved a fraught subject because of the AG's dislike of the electricity corporation of Nigeria's management priorities. Broadcasting caused some official consternation, when it was provisionally agreed that only the allocation of times and wavelengths should be central: the secretary of state was unmoved by bureaucratic concern that one-party regional governments might control political broadcasts, or that colonial radio stations still featured in notional imperial defence schemes. Lyttelton's appearance of willingness to listen to Awo's single-minded hectoring, while rebuking the others, was beginning to persuade some of the NIP and NPC that the certain way of always defeating the British lay in being awkward and

book is the first biography of Alhaji Abba Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and work, and insight into the twentieth century Nigerian political scene. It is a unique story of a unique man told in a well-written and readable style.

stubborn. Sir Lytton was, however, conscious that the axis was surviving not on the basis of any fundamental ideas passed by Zik to Awo, and that while Awo was the quickest thinker on his feet (or in his chair), others who preferred to think slowly before committing themselves might later recover their positions behind the scenes.

By the tenth day after the secessions of the delegates' relationships were becoming very strained. The NPC and NNC had come close together, and Abubakar now presented a view that resembled the ideas of Njoku and Arikpo. The Sardauna's speech had accepted that there would be a federal government after all, and that Lytton had closed the door on secession, reassured the secessionists, and the axes showed further signs of splitting up and of Awo's being on the side of Sir John Thomas, with no true friend. There was curious speculation as to whether Zik was setting the south down, or whether he was secretly planning some general election because he was nervous of the AG's current substantial lead against his press. He certainly seemed to be inducing Lytton to act as the spokesman or gadfly for any anti-AG points that needed to be made.

By what proved to be the middle of the conference, although nobody yet knew what the ultimate outcome might be, Sir John Macpherson found himself in a big, quite unable to discern where the talks were going. Malam Abubakar could understand Lytton's argument about a legislative body, but still in his heart wanted a CBA. He and the Sardauna were adamant about Lagos, being unprepared to countenance even a partial excision of the residential parts of the capital territory so that they might remain in the west; but they were also depressed by Awo's own apparent domination of the conference and the seeming lesson that independence meant. There was a long inter-party corridor negotiation about the need for, and nature of, an early dissolution of the house of representatives. Awo sought an audience with the Sardauna on this, but was rebuffed. Zik was told by the Sardauna and Abubakar that the axis's policy on financial allocation, that it should be based on the principle of derivation, would be fatal to his own eastern region; nevertheless he held his peace. In full discussion, before showing his hand on dissolution or the NPC/NIP proposals, he insisted that there must first be agreement on a direct election under universal adult suffrage, uniform electoral laws, an electoral commission to ensure fair play, and a redrawing of regional boundaries so that no one could dominate the others. Awo agreed in principle, but said there was no need for a general dissolution; if there were a dissolution of the central house, he would demand immediate self-government, otherwise he would make the constitution unworkable.

Lytton, allergic to threats, asked if he had heard aright: did he mean 'positive action'? Awo's reply was that he was not suggesting a Nigerian Mau Mau, but all means within his power. Did that mean constitutional means or force? 'Constitutional means', said Awo, but he was heard to add *sotto voce*, 'Boycott and non-co-operation'. Arikpo and Udoma, the alternating NIP delegates, spoke more soberly, and Abubakar said sceptically that the parties had come to London to point out the defects in an existing freely negotiated constitution, but were now apparently drawing up a new one: if there were no dissolution, then the same people who had failed to make their old one work would be trying to work the new one. Obviously they should resubmit themselves to the electorate - the NPC realized that this would take time, and favoured appointing an interim cabinet including elements at present excluded, which might involve nominated members and even some officials. This might

have helped Awo in his dilemma, but H O Davies was *clearly* not *sure*, and had no intention of working the present constitution, *altered* or *replaced*; but neither would he gain public support *for* such *alterations*. I am a Yoruba myself, and how many Yoruba died in Kano!

The Sardauna was still sitting silent in the actual conference, leaving all the arguing to Abubakar, with interventions from Muhammadu Buba and Ibrahim Imam. However Awolowo quickly dispensed with his 'communist' secretary, and Aminu Kano won a warm shake of the hand from Ibrahim Imam for apologizing for the incidents at Kano airport. And so, out of growing weariness there eventually emerged a vague provisional agreement that 'residual powers' (all those not specifically spelt out as central) should go to the regions, and that the 'concurrent list' on which all governments could legislate must be minimised (it would include higher education and industrial development); the centre would be confined to defence and external affairs (which the governor and chief secretary to the government would still control as, in this instance, HMG's direct agents), overseas trade, civil aviation, banking and currency, telecommunications, railways and harbours, electricity and broadcasting corporations.

Yet at the end of the second week the NPC were still temperamentally inclined to fall back on the demand for a CSA, while within the 'axis' Awo was looking for a decision on Zik's four points – how to avoid the north's domination; universal adult suffrage; abolition of electoral colleges; and a territorial commission to revise boundaries. The ooni of Ife suggested an adjournment for bargaining purposes, and the northerners, still feeling that Lyttelton was not on their side, and fearful of the north ending up divided or weakened, abruptly agreed in a panic to sign the axis proposals which embodied a larger central legislature, the removal of the *ex officio* ministers and regional lieutenant-governors from the house, and retention of the existing method of appointing central ministers. Northern expatriate officials advised them that this would mean thirty more legislators to do what promised to be one quarter of the present work, and a council that could still be paralysed by a regional party's whim; but they warned to no avail. Lyttelton accepted the deal as a step forward, but with concealed reservations; however one of his prime principles in negotiation was never to recapitulate an argument once it had been reached, always to move forward, never to retrace steps.

Awo had also agreed in private that he would find room for the two disputed ministers, Thomas and Akintola, in the western executive council. He reneged in the full conference hall. Abubakar repeated stonily that their return would not work: not that there was anything personal, but these two had said that they could not work with northerners, and they had told lies about the council proceedings – if they came back, he had made it clear to the governor that the northerners would resign, although they had no objection to the ooni or to Prest. Once they had realized that by signing the compromise deal they had in a sense been outwitted, the NPC (and the NIP) sulkily began to speak of flying straight home; but after blaming the outcome on the British they finally decided to make the best of things. They became belatedly wary of a new proposal emerging from the axis that disagreements between upper and lower houses should be settled in a joint meeting, which would leave them in a permanent minority.

Lyttelton accepted at this stage that Dr Endeley should win his point. The KNC leader was able to take back home with him, in a paper bag, some of

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the broken glass and the stones thrown at him by the mob at Kano, which he had brought to London to show to a nonplussed Lyttelton ('For once in my life I had no suitable phrase to meet the situation'); the secretary of state conceded that if the southern Cameroonians wanted total separation from the Igbos in Enugu, they could have it, even if this might lead one day to a union with their French cousins. It was now patent to the Englishman that Igbos were industrious, cheerful, gregarious, argumentative, and had a flair for trade and family loyalties (all admirable traits in his estimation); he could also intuit why these same domestic virtues, once carried abroad, were misinterpreted by Cameroonians, no less than by northerners, as conceit, brashness, nepotism, untrustworthiness and dishonesty. He noted that Abba Habib from Dikwa in the northern Cameroons and his allies, who had no links with the southern Cameroons port of Victoria, or with the French headquarters town of Yaoundé, wanted at all costs to remain with the north, and that Endeley did not dispute this; he saw some parallels in the Igbo position with the unpopularity of overseas Chinese who settled in south-east Asia, and indeed of the Jews in post-reformation Europe - they were hard-working and commercially successful. In turn Abba Habib accepted that for the north's part there would be no further specific colonial development corporation (CDC) funds for the northern Cameroons if they remained part of the northern region.

Officials now began to talk seriously about the need for any charter plane home having to overfly Kano (or to refuel at Maiduguri), to avoid more demonstrations. The strain of homesickness and tiredness of talk were beginning to tell. Louis Ojukwu told the axis petulantly that the only man fit to be a minister of finance was himself, and he would refuse the job. To nobody's surprise there was a beginning of the unconstructive 'walk-outs' that once marked so many failures to carry conviction in immature free political negotiations (it is less abortive to leave in protest against predetermined majority votes under a hegemony): towards the end of the third week the NIP walked out; H O Davies, Ribadu and Ibrahim Imam tried to dissuade them, but they preferred the relief of a night club, where Mr Chuku Nwapa was reported to have taken part in a cabaret and earned enthusiastic cheers. Allowing the suggestion that regional police commissioners should have power to recruit in their home regions, the secretary of state was now showing signs of weariness also.

Coming back after lunch with a half-smoked cigar, he noted that the agenda next included a bill of human rights: 'Freedom of conscience, freedom of human thought, . . . , why, you might as well put 'God is Love' in a constitution! I have the prestige of Nigeria too much at heart to wish that general ethical aspirations should be attached to the laws and constitution. You can debate this if you like, but not while I'm in the chair - if you do, I'm going off to play bridge'. This sally drew delighted applause, and saved the northern delegates from having to defend certain Islamic family and judicial practices against unbelievers; even Awolowo seemed to see Lyttelton's point, and the need to come down to earth. Lyttelton, who believed that the equivalent provisions in the Indian constitution had permitted more severe restrictions on the press than in most democratic countries, warmed to his theme: freedom of speech? yes, but still subject to the laws of slander and libel; freedom of conscience? this would hardly help - they did not know for sure what he might sincerely think, and he did not know what they sincerely thought, so he advised against putting constitutional checks between a man and his conscience; freedom of assembly? well, of course, but still subject to the responsibility of the police for keeping order. All laws, he

said, limit freedom: you could not bring a cobra into the legislature, or park your car in your neighbour's garden. The provisions would be 'meaningless'. Ibrahim Imam said they would serve no purpose. Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa added that to hint thereby that human rights did not exist would be a libel on a Nigerian government. The subject was thus passed over without a murmur, to the annoyance of Aminu Kano, who had intended to speak but turned up too late to do more than record his dissent.

In his impatience Lyttelton also agreed to allow public order to be a purely regional subject, trusting to the central governor's reserved powers in the last resort; this made future legislation to control political party uniforms problematic (Whitehall still had memories of Mosley and his blackshirts). Yet he took advantage of the Nigerians' 'miraculous' realization that he was human, to make clear that on certain constitutional matters HMG was not prepared to negotiate. The judiciary must be insulated from the executive arm; he explained that the lord chancellor wore a different wig from his cabinet hat when recommending the appointment of judges to her Majesty. The police must not be subject to any political party ('I would have no objection if they were subject to *mine*' – prolonged laughter); when Rotimi Williams said that the London metropolitan police was controlled by the home secretary, he again explained that once more this was a minister of the crown acting without his politician's headgear. The civil service must be recruited, appointed and promoted outside the influence of ministers, and although the prime minister countersigned the appointments of British permanent secretaries as advice to the sovereign, he did so on the recommendation of the head of the civil service. 'I could not break Sir Thomas Lloyd or Mr Gorell Barnes if I tried. I should be far more likely to break myself'.

The question of Lagos was the next stumbling block to exacerbate the basic differences. The AG regarded it as a Yoruba city with many immigrants, where the central authority might well still control all communications into and out of all the regions; nobody, they insisted, need fear any disadvantage if it remained electorally part of the west, with which it did most of its trade. The NCNC was to split with the AG on this, and joined all the other parties who had decided that the capital, however circumscribed, must be a distinct capital, a federal municipality like Washington or Canberra. The NPC as a party had thought it prudent at this point to sound moderate, and the majority did not insist that it be a sticking point, but individual NPC leaders would not be bound by this; Abubakar, supported by Ribadu and Ibrahim Imam once more, refused to accept that the port area and scheduled federal buildings alone should be the capital territory; to them it was a matter of life and death that the whole municipal area should be included. K P Maddocks, the administrative secretary from the Lagos secretariat, was told by Abubakar in his hotel room to go and tell Macpherson as much. Offered the promise, off the record, that if the federation were to break down, the British government would step in to protect the north by maintaining control of Lagos, they remained unconvinced. British party politics were now seen as a strange and unwholesome ingredient of the negotiations, and the very obvious support being given by Reginald Sorensen and his interested colleagues to the Action Group was interpreted by the NPC as proof that if by 1956 a Labour government ruled Britain, such promises could not be relied on. In despair how to advise a way out of the impasse, a group including the governor and the deputy under-secretary of state sought out Lyttelton, who had absconded to watch the final test match between the

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West Indies and the MCC at the Oval. 'I understand. How wise they are! I shall be seeing the PM [Churchill] to-night', he said at the gates to the ground, and left them standing there, nursing their vain hopes of being asked inside, to go back by himself to watch more cricket. The western lieutenant-governor, Hugo Marshall, had been prophesying a breakdown in his region, but Lyttelton's own opinion, which he cleared with his leader, was that even if there were riots in Lagos and the west, her Majesty's government must in the circumstances be seen to be backing its apparent friends in the majority. As for the other Nigerians, since Zik was also away for the day, in Cambridge, the NCNC delegates had concluded that they too could not compromise with the west, and Zik accepted this on his return. Unfortunately he failed to forewarn Awo. The AG therefore were badly shocked when Kola Balogun demanded in the resumed meeting that the whole municipal area be excised from the western region.

The secretary of state, faced on 17 August with the forewarned deadlock, suggested that the Nigerians allow HMG to arbitrate as honest broker with no further debate. Mr Awolowo agreed that this was now acceptable, since Lyttelton had shown himself to be impartial (a compliment which Lyttelton later joked 'kept him awake at nights', considering its source). He had given thought to gilding the pill by coupling his award with a promise of £½ million of CD&W funds for Lagos slum clearance, but admitted that it might look too blatant. He re-read all the delegates' statements, looked to his Whitehall draftsmen and was able to table a reasoned award in plenary session on 19 August, coming out in favour of a federal capital territory which would enjoy the supervision of one of the two promised new federal ministers. The AG was again shocked, and Awo and the ooni threatened to echo the Northern People's Congress and not to accept the decision without first referring it back home for a revision of the Yorubas' 'mandate', an attitude which they had condemned in the northerners.

On the naming of 1956 as an unalterable date for self-government, Lyttelton said firmly that he would force it on neither Nigeria nor any region; it must depend on Nigerians themselves overcoming the disruptive forces in their country; and Zik and Awo, though disappointed, did not press their objections strongly again. However the problem of ministerial appointments led to three more days of wrangling and disorder. Zik tried to engineer the return of five NCNC ministers to the eastern executive council, but the interim arrangements for the council of ministers smothered his efforts. Awo lost all patience (and also, it must be said, most of the sympathy he had been gaining from less partial bystanders, such as had judged him in charity to be an intelligent man, who was regrettably surrounded by many charlatans, whose claim to power in any future government or administration was not based on their executive experience - it would be based solely on their having won some election in some unsophisticated forum). He had much to say on the humiliations and victimizations that the west had suffered during the present constitution. There would now be tumult and the streets of Lagos would run with blood, he said. The constitution could not work, and he spoke once more of 'direct action'. Lyttelton commented that he had little thought to have been confronted so soon with conclusive proof that Nigeria was unready for self-government. Awo then pulled out and read a long prepared statement announcing that he and the AG were now 'walking out'.

The secretary of state appeared to think that that meant the end of the conference and a return to direct rule, and was again ready to call it a day. The

Sardauna, who had so far said so little but whose looming presence could never be ignored, now said not unreasonably that there were still representatives of 25 million people sitting there. To this the NCNC agreed, and talk did continue. Dr Azikiwe, who was content with the decisions already made on Lagos, removal of expatriate *ex officio* members of councils in the southern regions and the virtual guarantee of internal self-government for east and west in 1956, proposed that NCNC and NPC sit down together and reconsider both central elections and the mode of appointing central ministers. He was anxious not to be accused at home of having been an accomplice in the breakdown of the conference, nor was he ready to open a Pandora's box of tribal violence such as Awolowo, unheeding of creating precedents for the future, clearly was. If the constitution provided for elections to the house of representatives, distinct from those to regional assemblies, and if the central ministers were appointed from the central house, perhaps the NPC might then agree to the return of Thomas and Akintola? He would enter no more conditions about boundary revisions or uniform electoral laws. Macpherson conceded that he would take the two men back into his meetings until the new order-in-council required a new council of ministers.

There was an angry NPC conclave, in which the majority was chary of seeming to dictate to the west and sounded willing to allow the two back in office. The NCNC was now pressing for this for the added reason that if the AG returned to the floor, the conference might end without agreeing to the dissolution of the central house, which they wished to avoid. But Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa remained adamant that in that case he would resign, and asked the Sardauna's secretary Bruce Greatbatch to book his return air passage. Lyttelton had no doubt that in view of the AG walk-out the method of appointing central ministers must be changed in any event, and was now contemplating the likelihood of imposing a new constitution without further negotiation; this would include what had already been settled but would reflect his own thoughts on the general institutions, in which he favoured the more economical proportion of one member for each half million of population.

However Malam Abubakar was eventually persuaded by his friends and colleagues to calm his moral passions, and began to draw up his own positive proposals: these would involve dissolving the central house as soon as the order-in-council was promulgated, but not an immediate dissolution of the regional houses; he was moving towards acceptance of three MHRs per million people, to be elected by houses of assembly from among their own number, the successful members then resigning their regional seats and causing local by-elections. The central ministers should be appointed by the governor in consultation with the party leaders in the new lower house. As for the disputed western ministers, he was ready to leave that to the governor and the western regional party to decide – but if they went back, he personally would still resign, although he was conscious, and probably relieved, that Muhammadu Ribadu would now probably not. Zik did not see the formulation until the two party delegations met, and was at first well disposed; however he still wanted an unequivocal undertaking that the NPC would accept the return of Thomas and Akintola, to which the Sardauna responded with due propriety that his party would not dictate to the west on a matter which was for them and the governor: but he could not answer for the conscientious decision or attitude of individual northern ministers.

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The secretary of state was now bored with a con-
about with rumour and official secrecy, and aske
tell the conference frankly what had happened to
affair. Sir John said that neither the northern nor th
council had ever tried to dictate terms to the west.
eastern region had tried to make the constitution wo
as one: they did not want to be seen as less national
but inside the council they did personally understand th
He had advised the council of ministers to take the j
the debate on 'SG 56' should be allowed to run on f
even a fortnight if necessary, but that they as membe
not propose to express any view on it. The easterners
and the northerners had been content to follow this adv
took place, all of these same ministers had merely said tha
ministers named returned, they would feel obliged to resign
been suggested as replacements, but when these were reject
regional joint council on 3 July, the northern ministers had se
that they would make room for the original names, if this wou
for the governor (who had the other difficulty that if he did
suggestions of his own, not only the regional politicians but a
lieutenant-governors would be inclined to ask for his reasons.
he had less direct knowledge of each man's origins and backgro
responded that this would leave him with all his ministers from or
even two, since the easterners had already expressed the same v
held his peace to avoid recriminations all round, but had often tho
country deserved the whole story.

The council's difficulties were not just a hangover from the March
the 'SG 56' crisis. From the start the ministers from the west had p
interests and matters before Nigerian interests. Long before his bre
breaches of secrecy there had been leaks, and though there was no t
or disclosable evidence, all knew whence they had come. It was untru
ex officio members had always voted with the north: before March
time that the official members had voted with a single region had be
they joined with the east, on the question of bringing in an expert to
about the position of Lagos as a capital territory. On 'SG 56' there ha
three long, difficult meetings, and 16 out of the 18 present had held th
view. Once leakages started, all ministers felt inhibited from speaking
minds freely on any subject, in case their words uttered in confidence
be repeated outside and used against them politically. There had certainly
no muzzling of the house, since there was nothing to stop any of the othe
elected members from speaking and voting on the motion. The ministers
genuinely not wanted to show their differences: in practice regional mat
had not caused any friction, priorities apart, the only difficulty having o
been over the formal approval of a western region local government bill whi
contrary to Awolowo's allegations at the time, the council of ministers h
actually tried to expedite. As to the westerners finding the council of ministe
intolerable, he had gone to extremes to avoid voting instead of consensus, whil
others had accused him of being too patient with the west when he ought to
have 'cracked down' on them.

But he had a constitutional obligation to fill the vacancies, and Hugo Marshall
(who had succeeded Sir Theo Hoskyns-Abrahall as western lieutenant-governor
in 1951) had tried to persuade Awolowo that the governor only wanted to get

roversy which was hedged
 / Sir John Macpherson to
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 The ministers from the
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a whole team together for the purpose of national uni
 adamant. In suggesting the names of Enahoro and others
 to split the AG, but to get a team and show he was not o
 as such. The western executive council had even been a
 sending representatives as substitutes to the forthcoming W
 but they had refused that also. In short, he was not prepar
 region represented and not the other two: so long as the no
 interim council, and if the method of selection were to be c
 order-in-council, he would personally accept the resigned min
 moment. Dr Azikiwe thought the governor's full statement sho
 the governor demurred that it would still do some public hurt, a
 of state concluded that the council of ministers might consid
 version itself: it would raise dust, but a lot of dust had been raise

The conference returned to Abubakar's compromise paper, of w
 accepted the main lines, but in order to win back the NEPU an
 support which had been drifting away since the earlier appare
 the 'big three', he renewed the attack on the northern electoral c
 Sardauna and Malam Abubakar replied that they had no objection
 elections being held to the centre, provided that any members of th
 assembly involved did not have to resign their regional seats until aft
 been successfully elected to the house of representatives, but there
 no going back on colleges; they regretted that neither NCNC nor NE
 come to terms with the impracticality of introducing even a two stage
 such vast political divisions as Kano or Borno. After several hours of ar
 it was accepted that there should be separate elections to the centre, a
 new provincial colleges should be created in the north for the election of
 members, so as to start afresh from the bottom. This was seen as concilia
 the absent AG.

The NCNC next reverted to proportions. Since, they said, the NPC w
 not adopt universal adult suffrage, nor single member constituencies, the r
 could not be given more than 50% representation. Malam Abubakar retc
 that they insisted on representation in proportion to population, and in l
 of the undisputed census and tax figures they must have a clear majority
 was because of that that they had agreed to the introduction of an upp
 house with delaying powers. They would agree to being restricted to 50
 membership, but only if the upper house were dropped. At this late stage, o
 the last day, the upper house was accordingly dropped, which also pleased th
 missing Action Group.

Lytelton then exercised his strongest pressure on the north: if they would
 not accept Bode Thomas and Akintola back temporarily, they were being
 (using diplomatic words as hard as steel) 'very unhelpful': it was a 'political
 expediency'. Those last two words were offensive to some Muslims, as he
 probably failed to realize, but the Sardauna after a long delay agreed that the
 return meanwhile of the culprits would be tolerated. Malam Abubakar was seen
 to look like thunder, and his advisers assumed that he would now indeed resign.
 The minister of state, Henry Hopkinson, who had not played a large part in
 the proceedings, now suggested that the governor should invite the AG back
 to accept and sign the report, if they would; but official and Whitehall opinion
 was certain that any appearance of 'appeasement' (a damning word in British
 politics since 1938) would be fatal, and that the AG must make the first move
 towards reconciliation. In fact the AG did return voluntarily for the signing.

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... the agreement, the police would be 'federal', but regional...
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... their own spheres, would now be headed by full governors...
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... from British funds); and the new federation...
... (which seemed after prolonged Whitehall...
... the appropriate title for this tier of executive authority, now...
... were intra-commonwealth ambassadors); each...
... would have a separate public service and non-political public service

... having no responsibility for defence, would not carry...
... title of 'commander-in-chief', which was reserved...
... . They would have no place in the council of ministers;...
... to which the north would send 92 members...
... each, the southern Cameroons 6 and Lagos 2. Each...
... premier, and the east and west would lose their civil...
... and development secretaries. The southern Cameroons would become...
... , looking through their own premier and commissioner...
... but also having a seat on the federal council of...
... a federal supreme court and regional high courts promised an...
... and legalism, and perhaps a watchdog over renewed...
... but without halfheartedness the British formally...
... which so wished might be granted full internal self-...
... in August 1956, thus temporarily disarming...
... this regional 'SG 56' would be without prejudice...
... and conditional on compensation for any public servants...
... might be adversely affected. The commitment to...
... did, however, effectively block any possibility...
... moving in friendly harmony towards a more...
... up to eight regions. This was true, even supposing...
... might have been enabled to 'catch up' under...
... and so gained enough confidence not to fear...
... of its constituents.

... been described by an opponent of his own...
... his capacity for histrionic patience and second

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 diplomatic in his words, much more o
 Fortunately many important men on all
 now that they were so far from home, tha
 thought ignorant or malicious in fact became
 to some convincing evidence. Rivals might inc

When participants faced the press, Awolowo
 event accept and work the constitution, but o
 contradicting his undertaking to accept the chair
 tolerate an 'Ottawa', but not 'extra-territorialit
 London to carry on lobbying, and would then retur
 power to prevent the parts of the revised constituti
 from coming into force. He insisted that the Kano
 nothing to do with southerners, but were attacks by
 of Katsina and the Sardauna. The AG did not in fa
 beyond making acid criticism of Lyttelton in telegrams
 London authorities made it clear that any attempt to ch
 violence would be resisted (although it was later admitted
 or a future governor-general, should find all parties ne
 of one mind after an election, he would have a free ha
 Whitehall); but their resentment fuelled increasingly emotio
 on the western provincial administration and on British office
 ministries, who still looked to the wording of constitutional or
 for guidance when identifying legal sources of power. It became
 British sympathizers and apologists to treat Mr Awolowo's party a
 the bourgeois Benthamites who had emerged from the Egbe Omo C

As the delegates returned home in the emotional hypertension
 assurance that all such occasions bring, it became clear to Nigerians
 'axis' of the NCNC and AG had broken, and that the NCNC and N
 vestigially, moved closer; from Malam Abubakar's point of view, this wa
 the result of racial characteristics than of political logic. Malam Muhan
 Ribadu's jovial comment was, 'I am a politician and a party man. I'm i
 going in for politics when I get back!'; still a rare line for NPC pragmatist
 take. A coincidental comment that also showed how rapidly colonial subje
 complacency was evaporating was that of an Igbo undergraduate reading
 history at Oxford. Although bound for the eastern provincial administration
 he could if he wished look forward to taking over his wealthy father's transport
 business in Onitsha: 'I really want to join the army; after all, I could scarcely
 avoid becoming a general before I finished!' His name was Chukwuemeka
 Odumegwu Ojukwu, and he had first had the hint from Azikiwe (Some time

book is the first biography of Alhaji Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It is a definitive study of his life and his role in the twentieth century. It is a popular and, some would argue, a unique story of a unique man in a unique time.

...the young Nwoye did not get out of administration for the military, Sir John... the first of his father Louis, with less than usual... 'You are going to be a Colonel Nasser one day, put it... 'Nigeria would never accept it!' Sir John also thought... escaping from traditional Nnewi to be a produce... John's clerk, was more worthy of emulation).

...Abubakar joined Dr Eni Njoku and two expatriate... forces conference, which proceeded to create the... Army Advisory) Council: he was to attend this... as long as it survived. The Whitehall treasury... west African governments, which were becoming... a greater share of their own defence costs. The... of Nigeria raised from £½ million... of the British taxpayers paying £3 millions out of a total... government, in the treasury's view, should make its own... military forces were their own national forces, for... in an emergency, and for the maintenance of peace, order... Military coups were no part of British or commonwealth... future imperial expeditionary forces in support of... potential wars. There was further talk of a west African... but it was accepted that if regular cadets could still... and short service cadets to the British officer cadet schools... Aldershot, the cost of 30... a new academy would be profligate. A special 'pre-ocu'... in the Gold Coast, ... 1960. Then, the western house having again endorsed the... of the AG ministers to the central council of ministers, ... his works portfolio to Bode Thomas (who died two months... which still arouse speculation, to be succeeded as AG's... and national vice-president by Sam Akintola who beat Arthur... Sir John to let him keep transport: knowing his anxiety... to the outside world, the governor reminded... and west were to become two different countries, the... on good terms with them, but he gave him his wish.

...under personal attack from an unwelcome direction at the... his personal policy of 'non-fraternization'... conference, and made it more specific from the day of Sir John's... King, the controversial and waywardly left-of-centre... of the Daily Mirror group of British newspapers which managed the... had decided that Awo was 'the only statesman in... Macpherson's supposed lack of rapport in crude... acting governor, who had defended his... However King was not alone, for certain British commercial... and a few northern politicians, who believed in Awo... pressure on Macpherson to take... towards a 'reconciliation'. Sir John, because he thought the... and ineffective, let it be known that he would take no... from Awolowo or his closest colleagues, ... or humiliation for them, just as he had done in the... before the conference; but again they must make the first... whose own pride like Sir John's was founded in material

humility, had swallowed his over the two ministers. He could recognise that it would be Awo, not the governor, who would be eating his words when one day a one-sided non-fraternization inevitably ended. As for King, his group's resources, technical and financial, continued for years to come to support a conscious neutrality between the rival 'national' parties. His aim was to secure objective reporting by professionally trained journalists operating all over Nigeria, who would feed into editorial content that was constructive in its criticism. With its mechanical superiority in Nigeria-wide distribution by rail, road and air, and volume production, the *Daily Times* gave a painful competitive spur to the quality of the overtly partisan nationalist press. It also began to inspire a level of political thought among the literate classes that was less tribally prejudiced than its rivals', and more effective than the official forces of education and information; but this was not generally obvious at the time. It is an interesting reflection on King's judgment that one of his own Lagosian journalists who briefed him told him that Awolowo was too rigid to be a true politician; but from the beginning King was prophesying wisely that after independence the London ownership of any of the Nigerian press would be unacceptable and would have to withdraw.

Out in the provinces the principal excitement was now over who would sit in the new federal house – where for example could the north find 92 new knowledgeable and literate members, to go direct to the Lagos house, or to replace those who might move upwards and make room in the Kaduna assembly, without further cutting the value of local NA employees' workaday contributions to their employers? The adult education programme was only aiming to instil 22% literacy after a five year campaign, which had not yet been launched. Local ties would doubtless ensure that urban carpet-baggers and party misfits would still be few, but literacy did not mean political awareness, and did politics have to take priority over further education and development? At Kaduna the Sardauna was given an administrative assistant as his first African private secretary, Malam Ibrahim Dasuki. In Sokoto a Malam Shehu Shagari prepared to take a senior visiting teachers' course at the Yalwa training centre close by Bauchi. In Bauchi Abubakar's friend the chief scribe, Malam Garba Kafin Madaki, now calling himself Malam Abubakar Garba, had succeeded to the district headship of Ganjuwa as *madaki* (or often *madawaki*), and his successor Dahiru Yalwa was away in his turn on a British council local government course in Britain. There Nigeria was opening a students' office in London, with the aid of a liaison officer from the colonial office, and with the aim of adding sub-offices in Newcastle and Bristol; the stream of young people seeking further education in Britain was becoming a mighty flood.

The London branch of the Action Group, Awolowo being once more present himself, called for support for a separate middle belt which would reduce the north's domination, and suggested that if all else failed, the west should contract out of Nigeria. A mission from the international bank of reconstruction and development (the 'world bank', IBRD) arrived in Lagos, to prepare a report which the forthcoming federalism would to some extent frustrate, but on which the future national economic council would be based, enabling close consultation between the four governments and ultimately, a long way ahead, a national plan. Dr G P Bargery, compiler of the great Hausa dictionary, returned to Kano at the age of 77 to revise the Hausa bible; and Mr Mort, but for whom Abu might never have gone to school, came back to Bauchi for the 25th anniversary of the Toro vernacular teachers' training centre, but sadly did not see the central minister of transport. Elsewhere in the colonial world,

s book is the first biography of Ali
wa Balewa, the Prime Minister of
vides a definitive study of his life
insight into the twentieth century
t populous and, some would argue,
a unique story of a unique man to
well.

... was sent to British Guiana to prevent a coup by
... who were said to be trying to use the machinery
... by inciting strikes on the sugar estates for
... the subsuming one party communism; the ministers,
... by their own in which they contrived to
... of the WFTH in Vienna, were dismissed and
... In central Africa the federation of Rhodesia
... with Godfrey Huggins forming a government;
... in the federal parliament, which however had
... African affairs in the two northern territories, and Britain
... all interests affecting general native policy throughout;
... settlers were content.

... now appealed to the whole country, in preparation for
... that all leaders of public opinion should educate the
... everyone, having his own ideas, should discuss
... his DO, other officials, both British and Nigerian. The emirs,
... who had been heartened by the
... found the appeal difficult to hearken to honestly
... without the risk of being called reactionary. There was a break in the process
... while the core tutors held their November meeting
... The Bauchi middle school headmaster, the
... had won the imprisoned chiroma of Bauchi's
... Imam had deplored some criticism of the shehu of
... had been uttered in the house of commons by a Labour MP Mr
... Wigg and Malam Abubakar gave him his support, warning that, 'we
... political party policy in the UK, and this will
... of the people in England, nor to our good'. Wigg had also
... of Kano, but this was not mentioned.

... exchanges with the financial and development secre-
... whose speeches *de haut en bas* on produce tax and
... he had not been alone in failing to understand;
... with Guillum Scott over whether government grants had
... his own former NA salary ('It is not true'), but on a
... the capitation tax collected by NAs for government to a
... to say: 'In 1948 I violently opposed the intention of
... in favour of having a flat
... But ... the whole system is wrong. For example,
... I can never understand why government should receive
... more money to the native
... The actual coins hardly ever moved to the regional treasury or
... although except in the largest NTs cash was still
... than bank cheques and very few officials held personal
... but it was never to become rational in the eyes of Nigerians [any
... that supposedly autonomous local governments, which in
... nevertheless received all
... and received their grants in furtherance
... the bone of contention [as in Britain also] was that
... expected and received from central
... the more the central government felt bound to interfere).

... wondered whether Malam Abubakar was making a bid
... He was thinking about the chances: but he

knew that, much as he hated Lagos, the party leadership was the power which would settle the possibility, in which others had voices. In his short talks with Sharwood-Smith, taken as chance offered whenever he passed through Kaduna, courtesy calls which were beginning to take a partial place of his heart-searching sessions in Bauchi with Robert Wright in the old days, the matter was touched on at arms' length and very imprecisely; neither could make the first move, and the lieutenant-governor also knew how Sokoto minds and emirs' hearts moved.

In the northern house of chiefs a report was tabled which had again resulted from the lieutenant-governor's prodding of his executive council. It was of salutary importance far beyond the north, being concerned with the exchange of customary presents between chiefs and district and village heads and their people. The emir of Gwandu, the saintly man who had served on the reporting committee (and was to die two months later), moved the motion. The report admitted that only a very few such presents had an origin in religious or charitable motives, and that many served the ends of prestige, ostentation, avarice or mere *neman girma* (the Hausa equivalent of the Chinese giving and receiving of Face). A poor man could be caught in a system under which almost everything to which he was legitimately entitled, or which required officially to be done, probably had to be bought or acknowledged in advance by a present. The victims of the system accepted it no less than the beneficiaries, and it was not so much the deficiencies of the individuals as the sanction of custom that made corruption difficult to combat. Years later apologists were still to point out that the practices had begun, as also in China and elsewhere, in days long before any official had a set scale of fees, let alone a budgeted salary; sometimes to interfere with one ancient custom is to bring the whole edifice of stable tradition tumbling down, good with bad, often with deliberate covert intent. As a sceptic in Bauchi said, 'I take traditional gifts, you take bribes, he is thoroughly corrupt'. Meanwhile the report stirred DOs who were not averse to witch-hunts, and honest men like the subject of this book. Abubakar found time to write private letters to the acting DO Bauchi, congratulating him and his colleagues on the support being given to those emir's councillors who were prepared to stand firm on principle; he was also amused to learn at a dinner party during a fleeting visit home that the DO had refused a tentative offer of recommendation for the post of government secretary, St Helena, which seemed unattractive to both of them, for somewhat different reasons.

In October 1953 there were more riots in Kano, between *mahaukata* and their Askianist rivals, to the shame of NPC and NEPU leaderships alike. Nevertheless prisoners, released after their sentences for abusing the delegates at the airport in July, were issued by NEPU, NCNC and MBPP with 'school of politics' certificates and 'freedom caps', on the Gold Coast 'PG [prison graduate]' model. When the emir of Kano died in December, the chance was seized by the lieutenant-governor to accelerate NA reform there, just as it had been enforced in other major emirates. The successor, the autocratic but intelligent chiroma Muhammadu Sanusi, began well; he renounced the giving and taking of 'presents'; he sentenced *mahaukata* who were his supporters, in his own court which he now brought out of the palace recesses into public light; he made gestures towards the southern community; his councils took on an appearance of greater liberality, as he brought in educated commoners and even made district heads of some of them. But although urban Kano unrest became subdued with the forming of a 'political reconciliation committee' of NA, NEPU and NPC, the new emir's impartiality was not total, his

remained autoeratic, and the hardness of some of his officials and all his ~~guards~~ were essentially unchanged. Some of the councillors whose duty it was to brief him, and who could also keep papers away from him, were determined to ignore or revile the regional administration; in this they were assisted by a dubious tradition from the 1920s and 1930s that only the resident, and no mere district officer, might have private access to a leading first class chief. Kano remained a problem smouldering to choke the NPC for years to come. At the end of the year, with less publicity than had been vouchsafed to the official denial mentioned at the close of chapter 15, it was formally conceded that the northern regional government's policies upon the 'non-reserved' and central (now federal) subjects were in fact those of the NPC political party, regardless of their conceptual and drafting provenance; it was not conceded politically that this was subject to such prudent brakes as Sharwood-Smith and Guillum Scott felt able to apply. The general election to the eastern house of assembly saw five of the six disputed ministers lose their seats, and Mr Nwapa, the humorous central minister, lose his deposit. The quiet and withdrawn Dr Endeley's KNC took all 13 seats in the southern Cameroons, and fears were expressed that Dr Azikiwe's new team would be too inexperienced. A newly elected Lagos town council made fresh moves to oppose its separation from the western region. The new body had no mayor, but the oba or eleko was president, and eight white cap chiefs sat on it. The future still promised to be unsettled.

18 A resumed conference heals some wounds

Akuya ta mutu, ta bar fata wuya

The resumed constitutional conference in Lagos on 24 January 1954 was the stage for a piece of theatre which appealed to a people much given to play-acting. Malam Abubakar was by now too much of a sobersides in public to be a ham actor himself, but his private humour was unabated and he could grin at others. Mr Oliver Lyttelton, accompanied by his principal private secretary Jack Johnston, arrived wearing an unfashionable floppy fedora hat as a token sunbreak. Mr A R J Jabez-Smith of the Downing Street cabinet office was still the neutral secretary-general, but in Lagos he depended heavily on the local man Foley Newns for administrative support with paper work and in drafting of the minutes. Lyttelton opened the batting by explaining that their purpose was in part to divide the specific jurisdictions, that had already been agreed in general terms, between the centre and the regions: if they were to counteract fissiparous tendencies, some vital matters must stay in central hands, but it was as important that regions should not be left in control only of things which were petty and vague. They were also to settle judicial and fiscal details, and his own delegation would be in all respects on an equal footing, and no more than that, with the Nigerians. He concluded by producing a very large cigar, given to him (so he said) by Sir Winston Churchill at midnight before he left London, as 'something to cheer him up if things got sticky'. He laid it on the table and said that he firmly intended to smoke it, but only after a successful outcome. No minister of the crown had ever disobeyed his PM and got away with it, and he proposed to be the first. The conference must not let him down (he did not tell them that recently he had wickedly described Churchill as having the tired look of a trawler captain who had got into harbour after a buffeting).

After the second day, Lyttelton turned to Macpherson in the car returning to government house from the legislative council chamber, and said, 'You know, Jock, my heart rather warms to these Nigerians of yours'. The feeling was reciprocated by many delegates who knew that if two sides to an argument happen to like each other, most things may be achieved. The majority were also happily on familiar home ground. There was no more reference to whelk stalls. This is the background to something much less well known: an exchange which explains more clearly than any personal introduction to a biography why a former district officer would have felt the urge on behalf of his old service to honour Abubakar, and yet which only became known to him late in his inquiries. The conference had been finalizing a limited but powerful exclusive federal list of powers, and a substantial concurrent list of subjects on which both central and regional governments could legislate (with the central prevailing in case of conflict): jealousies were strongest over the residuals. The longest argument had, strangely, been over the Ife museum, which the

could, practically or psychologically, wanted to become regional; however when the agenda turned on a last to the subject of meteorology, perhaps because necessarily understood it, the conference stuck fast.

The secretary of state said he was disappointed: 'On much thornier headings than this we have reached agreement, and I have been warmed by the goodwill and the understanding that has made such agreements possible. Now, on this comparatively unimportant matter - no region is going to use the weather to the detriment of any other region - we appear to be deadlocked. But I cannot accept that. I want a proposal, and if none of the Nigerians here is able to make one, I must turn to the official members. Mr Attorney? The attorney general had no proposal to make, nor had Benson, the chief secretary - at least not at the present moment (the governor was now only present for the formal sessions). 'I am doubly disappointed', said Lyttelton,' - 'and surprised. Someone must have some ideas'. He picked up the cigar, fumbled in his pocket for matches, put it back in front of him very deliberately and looked round at all the conference, where African faces outnumbered the white officials and advisers four to one. As at the beginning in London, it was not his party leader but Malam Abubakar who broke a long silence.

'Sir, you should not be disappointed. You have asked the impossible. On this matter which you have said is comparatively unimportant - perhaps because it is unimportant - your own appointed officers have no suggestion to make. And on this comparatively unimportant matter the people of all three regions have taken the same view: the people of each region must have jurisdiction over this subject. It may be only for prestige; but for some amongst us there is more to it than that. How then can any of our expatriate friends make any proposal which would mark them out from the people amongst whom they live and work? Perhaps it is not understood as clearly in London as it is in Africa that the principal difference between a member of the British colonial service and members of the services of other European nations is that when the British colonial servant takes up his duties overseas he ceases to think primarily as a native of Britain: he becomes concerned with the interests and the welfare and the outlook of the people among whom he is living and working, and their thoughts and anxieties and wishes become his thoughts and wishes. So, sir, if you have listened to an opinion which appears to favour - shall I say? - the eastern region, it will make no difference whether he is an African or an expatriate, whether he is black or white: he is from the eastern region, and none of your officers will have any different opinion to express now - at least until he has had an opportunity to consult further with his fellow-easterners. You - and we from the north, and our friends from the west - may wish that it were different, but it is not so. I would suggest, sir, that this matter be left over to a later meeting so that, possibly with the chief secretary presiding, a smaller gathering of representatives may be able to work something out and recommend to the governor in that British manner some agreed compromise.'

Whitehall has never been the only political or academic centre that did not understand as clearly as Abubakar the emotional bonds that made nonsense of many a materialist theory (the virtue may of course become a vice if practised too narrowly: the disease known generically from Kenya as Maasai-itis may be contagious if its sufferers judge the whole country from the perspectives of Tiv or Bakoko Indian hill tracts or Appalachia).

There were greater decisions taken than that on weather-watching. The opposite opinion had been the Sardauna, Zik, Aminu Kano, Eyo Ita, the
 ... The Action Group repeated a request

made in London for a region's right to secede to be a key constitutional provision. Dr Azikiwe quoted scholarly arguments against this, from Daniel Webster, Robert Birley, de Malberg and Abraham Lincoln. Malam Abubakar, less scholarly, nevertheless followed as eloquently, and Lyttelton pointed out that it could paralyse any central government, always to be under the threat of a vital secession. Chief Awolowo resentfully accepted Lyttelton's outright refusal. The southern Cameroons was confirmed as a quasi-federal territory with its own executive and legislature responsible directly to the governor-general. The recommendations received from the fiscal commissioner appointed in London, Sir Louis Chick, were approved, balancing derivation of revenue against needs for revenue, in technical proportions that need not concern this narrative and baffled most participants. The marketing boards were regionalized and their reserves distributed (46% to the west, 33% to the north, 21% to the east), not everyone observing that Mr Awolowo had been strongly hinting that he would tap the cocoa farmers' marketing reserves for general expenditure; a central body would continue to supervise quality standards and the physical overseas marketing of commodity exports.

Despite the opposition of the existing judiciary and the Lagos bar, some of it bitter, the creation of regional high courts was confirmed; the northerners were particularly exercised to make sure that no northern judicial divisions or magisterial districts should continue to be supervised from courts based in Ibadan or Enugu, and that their own new judiciary should be composed of men whose sympathy with the north's patchwork *mores* and common ethics would exceed their love of court legalism – as some put it, they wanted 'British justice, not English law'. On matters of law there would still be certain appeals from high courts to the federal supreme court (and the federal capital territory of Lagos also duly acquired its own separate high court). The conference issued solemn reassurances to the civil service, and the die was now cast: the political shape of Nigeria was decided, in the form it would keep for twelve more years, by Nigerians. If the Kano riots had effectively ended the old constitution, there was now so much temporary reconciliation as to make outsiders wonder what all the quarrels had really been about.

Lyttelton told the press that if political circumstances warranted it (predominance of a single party, say, or one man emerging as leader of a majority which promised lasting stability), there would be no difficulty in providing for a prime minister. It was a juicy carrot to dangle before any leaders capable of party compromise. His chairmanship again inspired wide praise, although some chose to think it slick, and he was given a joyous send-off. The professional legal draftsmen, who now had to translate Lagos conference minutes into orders-in-council in Whitehall, found the precision of the provisions, and the rareness of the gaps in logic, a liberal education in constitution-making. Inevitably the Africans called their own recipe 'the Lyttelton constitution'. There remained a small hard core of opinionated critics who preferred to think that the northern administration had somehow succeeded in a Machiavellian plot to prolong their own powers through the sweeping devolution to all the regions. Most busy people had real work to return to, and Malam Abubakar's included putting his name to a minister's first foreword to an annual report (of the marine department), and joining Sir John Macpherson in laying the foundation stone of the new Iddo terminus in Lagos of the three thousand kilometres of Nigerian railway.

Nigeria was not represented directly at the concurrent meeting in Sydney of the commonwealth finance ministers, who were concerned to consolidate the

book is the first biography of Balewa, the Prime Minister provides a definitive study of his insight into the twentieth century populous and, some would say, a unique story of a unique man.

economic progress of the sterling area; but despite the greater news value of the Gold Coast, Cyprus, Kenya and Rhodesia, the commonwealth was at last beginning to notice the truth of Lyttelton's observation that over half of Britain's colonial subjects lived in Nigeria, and that its smallest region was as populous as the largest colonial territory elsewhere. Sir John told London, but not his colleagues, that he still favoured a stronger centre, and would favour the subdivision of the north at some future date – if he could but imagine how and when it might be engineered. Macpherson was also alive to Mr Obafemi Awolowo's realization, still rarely spoken, that if the notional 'mid-west' region where most of his opposition dwelt were ever removed from Ibadan's control, he might prove that an all-African party government could rule the rump securely and successfully.

The draftsmen produced a query which pre-echoed the troubles of early independence. Should the governor-general-to-be have specific reserved powers to intervene in regional matters in order to serve the interests of the federation as a whole? The point was dealt with, quite theoretically, by assuming that supplementary royal instructions might be sent in an emergency, but there was no unanimity of thought. Sir Clem Pleass in the east feared disaffection, while Sir John Rankine in the west was certain that such powers would have to be exercised by the governor-general acting in his own discretion rather than on the advice of some future council of ministers. The colonial office assistant under-secretary Tom Williamson was in no doubt that the latter would be preferable to suspending the constitution. All were agreed that at this stage the functions of an attorney-general should not be charged to any elected minister. None were yet convinced that the north's fears were finally laid at rest, although divided in their rationales. None thought at all of establishing firm precedents for the structures of total independence.

There were trivial things happening in Bauchi. The provincial agricultural officer, Ernest John Butler (brother of the educationist Herbert George), was spending an increasing amount of his time on advising, assisting and book-keeping for Malam Ahmed Kari, the protégé and brother-in-law of Malam Abubakar's; he had been a Bauchi NA central office scribe, but after the war had joined the labour department to resettle ex-servicemen and was now being encouraged with government loans to become Bauchi's first educated mixed farmer with a tractor. The ADO, who had just qualified for the full title of DO, had been embarrassed by having to discourage Malam Othman Ja'afar, the new MHA (member of the house of assembly), from seeking an advance to buy a large American saloon which might be hard to maintain and finance, and to be content with a Vauxhall Velox; he had just had an advance himself to replace his workman's kitcar with a large Canadian saloon – Malam Abubakar reassured him on his next visit: *'After all, you didn't get yours at once!*' But the DO then embarrassed the NT accountant, a MHR (member of the house of representatives), who sought his signature on an authority to buy Bauchi petrol at Lagos landed prices (a privilege for legislators and civil servants): the unheralded request took place alfresco, and lacking a writing table he presumed on the joking relationship of a long acquaintance to act the clown and sign the form on the back of the MHR's shoulder, which amused the town district head, chief of police and head warder who were all present. It turned out later that the MHR's own smiles had been forced. During the subsequent meeting in Kaduna of the northern house of assembly, there were many grumbles from the younger NPC members that there were still 'old-fashioned' administrative

officers who did not recognise that times had changed, that NAs could reject their advice, or (more significantly) that legislators were as entitled to respect and honour as emirs. The NPC ministers, who were already in conflict with the lieutenant-governor and civil secretary over slowness in selecting northerners to become district officers, took the complaints to government lodge, whence issued a stream of confidential letters to residents, and in particular a coded telegram to Bauchi's acting resident T F G Hopkins, requesting a full report on the public insult committed by the DO in the square outside the mosque and prison. The affair was ultimately treated as a regrettable but innocent gaffe, but also as a sign of the times: what eventually gave the DO greater cause never to take amicable relationships for granted was that a year later Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith told him that one of the most angry members of the protest delegation to government lodge had been Malam Abubakar. It was cold comfort to learn that Terry Hopkins had also been figured in the row, since his steward Thomas, an Ijo from the creeks, had refused to wake him up when Shettima Kashim had called at the residency for some assistance in his journey from Maiduguri to Kaduna. It was many years before the DO learnt that Kwame Nkrumah had written out his resignation as general secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention on a colleague's back in 1949, not that the accountant or Abubakar would have thought that a very relevant precedent.

The conflict over senior service appointments also erupted, as all concerned looked unavailingly for stable rocks to stand on. Sharwood-Smith's official advisers, Maddocks (now acting civil secretary in the north) and Guillum Scott, looked to the future when degree-holders would resent being junior to men with lesser paper qualifications, and insisted on 'good honours'; the Sardauna's main supporters, the makama and Isa Kaita, pointed to 'war service' group expatriate entries who had been judged by Furse's machine as of potential honours degree quality but been prevented by the emergency from completing their course. Their mediation failed, then the Sardauna grew angry, used strong language, and led a walk-out from a meeting, slamming the door: 'I'm resigning, we're all resigning, we're going home!' In the evening the ministers met again at the fives court by the Kaduna racecourse, and noticed the governor, CS and FS deep in conclave while taking the air. Next day the governor called at the leading minister's house, the other regional ministers were summoned, and agreement was reached that some further compromise should be found.

This was the last northern legislative meeting at which the honourable Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was to speak at length on regional matters, and he spoke significantly. In a tribute to the retired northern deputy director of education, Tiger Phillips, he hoped that this region would still use his experience, most especially now when they were embarking on a very big educational programme; he was always to be reluctant to see those officials whom he respected to be put out to pasture without some yoke ready to reharness them. But his first important intervention was made in the committee stage of the appropriation bill, on the subject of local administration and district heads. The DO Bauchi had been much involved in finding new institutions for those pagan tribes who, while retaining their own tradition of elders, had for so long been administered within Bauchi emirate by Muslim district heads as part or whole of their own wider domains; he had discussed the difficulties with him both as emir's councillor and as friend. The DO had also just toured a Muslim area that had suffered from inadequate supervision from afar, accompanied by the NA supervisor of agriculture, Malam Adamu Jumba, and had proposed new district boundaries. Now a new ADO, Gerald

Summerhayes, was investigating a similar problem which involved Abubakar's childhood neighbours the Seyawa. Against this background, here is a condensed version of what he had to say:

I think my constituents will be very pleased to hear what I am going to say. . . . I received representations from different tribal groups . . . Some of the house may know that it is a matter in which I am rather affected. . . . I am from a district where three-quarters of the people are a collection of these small tribes. . . . The people tried about twice to have a district head appointed from the majority tribe, . . . on two or three occasions we had some trouble. . . . If the NAs really want to keep such tribes . . . it would be good for them [to] give them sympathetic consideration. . . . The difficulty with these tribes is not because they want to leave the northern region, but they want more or less to be on their own locally. I do not think that if the NAs are to accept what they are asking for now – that is, for their own DHs or sub-NTs – there will be much talk of this artificial idea of the middle belt region. I am speaking from experience. I had a lot to do in the past years with such tribes, and when people speak of the 'middle belt' . . . none of them would be able to tell you what they mean. . . . We have one difficulty in areas where we have many of such tribes, they have been provided with certain kinds of native courts now, but unfortunately most of these are not efficient, and we often find that it is bad to replace the 'alkalis' courts by local courts. . . . When a DH is appointed from amongst these people he may not be able to discharge his duties to the satisfaction of the NA. There is also another difficulty; even in areas where tribes live, we find many different groups of them scattered about near the place. Thus, you find a village 'A' refusing either to pay their taxes to the neighbouring village, or the little tribe 'B' refusing to recognise a bigger tribe. That is why there is wisdom in having an independent DH in such an area. I think my friend, Malam Dauda Kwoi, and the other people who live with such people be better advised to get such tribes first to agree among themselves'.

Malam Ibrahim Imam, the increasingly restive general secretary of the NPC, whom some thought to be essentially a Kanuri in search of a separate Borno republic, later annoyed Malam Abubakar with a cliché about liberty being an inalienable right, to which he interjected, 'I am not denying it!' Malam Ibrahim went on to speak on the second reading of the amending and consolidating native authority bill, which had at last been drafted by the Saradauna's ministry and the legal secretary as the result of the past debate on the Pott-Maddocks report. Ibrahim insisted that it was an anachronism, because it entrenched the position of emirs, whether or not they sat 'in' or as 'presidents of councils. And, again as the man who four years before had mobilized reform, Malam Abubakar responded to innuendoes that he was now shackled by central authority and party protocol; this time he had no advisory editor in the background.

'I would like to make it clear from the beginning my position in this house. . . . I am a floor member, and I am at liberty . . . to criticize the regional government. . . . A member yesterday referred to me as a man fighting for the cause of the common man – in the past! But now I am said to be leaving off the fight for the cause of the common man. I am still the common man, and I will continue to fight for the common man. . . . The last speaker always speaks of that interesting word 'democracy'. I find it difficult to understand what is really meant by 'democracy'. It can be translated as 'practised by a particular place'. In America the people practise 'democracy', in the United Kingdom there is 'democracy'. France is 'democratic', sir, but they are all different kinds. So maybe our 'democracy' in Nigeria may be

yet another kind of 'democracy'. The best rule for any country is the rule in the way which people will enjoy; the rule which will make them live in peace and be happy. It had always been said that in this region we want to retain our good traditions and customs. And then it is our wish that we should borrow from outside any other good traditions or good new custom. One member spoke at some length on the evils of indirect rule. Personally, I do not condemn indirect rule completely. I have said many times that the system of indirect rule has brought us many benefits in the north. Had it not been for it, we should not have been able to preserve many of the good things that we have now, and I always feel that if we are to grow, it would be better to grow on our own foundation. This does not mean that I oppose any idea of bringing into our old ways foreign and new introductions which will improve us.

'A member kept referring to west Africa and not even to Nigeria. I think when we debate this bill, we can be too wide when we start to refer to a large area like west Africa. It is true that we are all politicians here, but we must face facts, especially when we are to discuss matters which directly affect the millions of masses that we represent. Every member will agree that the bill is an improvement on the old. What is our aim as regards local government in this region? The aim is to bring new ideas to the people, to give them the chance to take part in the discussions of their own affairs, and also to introduce changes to them in such a way that their happiness and peace should not be disturbed. We can only introduce these changes and still maintain the happiness and the peace of the people if the changes are not too drastic.

'We seem always to regard the chiefs of the north as a completely distinct group, and more or less as a group quite cut off from the people. I think this is wrong, it is our intention that the people will grow with the chiefs, and that our progress will be based on the old and the new being brought together. The young legislators require the experience of the older people. In this region, commonsense does not mean the ability to stand in the house of assembly and speak in fine language or to speak in English. The members know that in the northern region we have many people who cannot speak a word of English, but who are very sensible in all other respects. If we, the younger people, have the opportunity of learning English and of knowing history of other parts of the world, it would help not only ourselves but the whole region if we try to use the experience of these older people, and we can only be able to use that experience if we show them every respect, and by showing that respect I have no doubt that we can win the sympathy and kindness of the masses. Mr president, many people in this house – about two or four speakers – spoke of the common man. I want to refer to some points made by an honourable member, I think from the plateau. I always take him seriously because I feel that the outside world or other parts of Nigeria do not know how very respected the member is. The member kept on mentioning that the bill was going to harm the common man, but he did not tell us how or why, and it was stated that he was quoting details and inaccurate statements of history. Well, his history might be called indifferent history. I wish that when members make speeches they would be prepared to substantiate all the allegations that they make. The last speaker in the debate referred to the party to which I belong, that is, the northern people's congress. I do not like to mention the name of my party, but I think I find it is necessary to do so. My party policy, as he knows very well, is 'one land, one people, irrespective of tribe or creed'. It is the view of the NPC that everyone in the region will co-operate to make this bill a success when it becomes law. As for the views of the general secretary of the party which he quoted, I am afraid to say that that view was the personal view of the general secretary as an individual, and the general secretary was so strong in his views that it was right and proper that he should be allowed to voice them.

'The policy of the NPC is already known, and when any member of the party speaks for the party, he must speak within the policy of the party. Sir, many members also have referred to administrative officers. You will remember that

book is the first biography of Alwa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It provides a definitive study of his life and insight into the twentieth century Nigerian. It is a popular and, some would argue, a unique story of a unique man well.

I was one of the people in the old house who objected, not to the work of the administrative officers, but to the fact that the administrative officers in the region, at that time, were not doing the work that they should have been doing. All the time I know the success of local government or native administration entirely depends on these people. I want the administrative officers in the north to go out to assist the development of our village and district councils, to enlighten the people and to treat the people like men, because it is in this way that people will become more familiar with them and realize their responsibilities. There is one important thing in this region which I see often and young men seem to forget. It is only right that we should demand our rights and teach people to stand up for their rights. We must know that we have our obligations, and we must teach people to understand that they also have got obligations.

'Mr president, in this region I am afraid the younger people seem to think that the villagers in this country have reached the stage of rapid development that the younger people have in mind. I am sorry to say that the villagers in the region do not yet fully understand the implications of the different advances that we are making. We have now reached a very difficult stage. If the northern region prefers dishonest politicians, there is every danger that we are heading for trouble in the not far distant future. My advice, sir, to the house and to the region is that we should be very careful in how we go. We are not only fighting to make good our own problems within the region, we are struggling to save ourselves, possibly from the dangers which might come from within Nigeria, from other regions and, at the same time, we are trying to put ourselves on the map of the world outside.

'The task for the members of the house is very great, we must be realists, and I hope that everyone of us will have the determination to be courageous enough in public to assist in carrying out the provisions of the bill, when it becomes law. Sir, an honourable member made a very important point, that is, the translating of the bill into the vernacular. It is very important, Mr president, and I hope that government will seriously consider it'.

No reader can ignore the repeated references to villagers' 'peace and happiness' as more important than leaders' ambitions, and to the need that 'change' be not drastic and that obligations must balance rights; nor to his newfound words for 'younger people'. The warning about 'dishonest politicians' was also hard for his regional colleagues; it did not only mean southern carpet-baggers.

In the lieutenant-governor's 'speech from the throne' to the house of assembly, repeated in essence to the house of chiefs of which he was the president, Sharwood-Smith had reminded all members that apart from electing 92 new legislators, the north had the more gigantic task of reshaping and reorientating the vast and complex machine, which it was the overburdened civil service that must now undertake. He appealed for Nigerian unity (and here Jock Macpherson's hand can be seen) — northerners too should be proud of the Iddo railway terminus and the Apapa docks extension. He also referred (and was certainly thinking of the démarche by the ministers) to political leaders' reassurances to expatriate officers, and said they should be backed with action by their rank and file party followers: resignations had already begun to be submitted by Britishers uncertain of their future. There were 56 vacancies for administrative officers, and only seven recruits in view (no longer the hundreds of applicants for each post reported only eight years before). Yet political progress at divisional level was demonstrated by the new ministry for local government, the end of the sole native authorities, the separation of powers through the removal of alkalies from the NA councils, and the new institute of administration. He did not refer to his own (let alone Malam Abubakar's)

ambiguous feelings about existing politicians' lack of enthusiasm for service in the confines of Lagos, when the sources of power in such an ill-organized party of individuals must seem to be in Kaduna.

Malam Abubakar hurried home before returning to Lagos, and as well as attending to his farm on the road to Dass which had become his principal hobby and relaxation, delivered a stinging rebuke to the emir's councillors, who were still backward at introducing their topics in a meeting; he also included the district officer, who seemed to have brought down all the files related to the agenda himself, instead of passing them through those councillors who could read roman Hausa minutes on their portfolio subjects (by this time the DO did most of his paperwork beside the scribes in the NA central office, and restricted his own office and files to matters unrelated to the NA, or confidential). On the farm he received a courtesy visit from the Kano MHR Dan Bappa, who traded in hides, skins, groundnuts and other produce; their politics being the same, they found happier things to talk of than party matters.

Then at the 'lame duck' budget meeting of the house of representatives, journalists thought that the most important speech was again Malam Abubakar's, not for its content but because his measured voice and precise intonation made anything that he said, however trivial, sound important. He leapt back on Dr Olorun Nimbe, as he had on Ibrahim Imam, when the former asked if he should not keep in mind his opposition of government motions when he had been a floor member: *'When I was on the other side, I criticized government for unnecessary expenditure, and now as a member of government I should see that the government spends public money on reasonable things. The demand which is now being made upon the government is an unreasonable demand. Neither the road traffic nor the numbers of trains passing over the [honourable member's] level crossing warrants the provision of a gate'*. He showed his familiarity with his portfolio, and facility for absorbing notes from the official box, by dealing equably in the appropriations committee with aerodromes, Jebba railway bridge, caterers, tug masters, ferries, conditions of marine service, drivers' schools and railway lines; and he maintained his calm during an adjournment debate uproar over an alleged rail scrap iron scandal – a contract had been awarded to the eighth tenderer on the list, simply because the first seven could not put down their deposits.

In answer to a question that referred to a working party report on railways, he stated that public corporations could work untrammelled by rules and regulations as a business enterprise, and would bring in more revenue and opportunities for Nigerians to participate directly in the direction of their railway. Colonel Ralf Emerson had been adviser and general manager for over six months, and they hoped to legislate for a corporation with a joint chairman and chief executive, whose board would include members representing commercial users from each region, one 'academically and practically qualified' in industrial relations, representatives of the new ports authority, central marketing boards and general commercial interests, and two others. Government would reserve the power to issue general directions in the public interest, but otherwise the only ministry involvement would be an independent inspector with fifteen years' experience of a large railway system. There were other details concerning land, future relationships with a coal corporation and the ports, and protection of service conditions and provident funds. He also announced how the Nigerian ports authority would be established, to great applause (expatriate shipping, dock labour management

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and harbour control had long been objects of coastal port political discontent), and was particularly courteous in replying to two special members, Mr C M Booth of the Lagos chamber of commerce, and Mr J C Lucas who spoke for shipping interests. But he remained a generalist: he intervened elsewhere to accept 18 as the minimum statutory age of responsibility for capital crimes, pointing out that Islamic experts, who assigned such responsibility at puberty, found it difficult to be certain among themselves in which year puberty took effect.

The NPC'S annual general convention in April 1954 has been well documented in arrears, yet each of the many participants has a different memory of events. Kano, Kaduna and Zaria were still obvious places to meet, but on this crucial occasion, when the party was expected to pull itself together into a modern organization, they were discarded. The principal organizing secretary, Nuhu Bamalli, and the administrative secretary, Garba Abuja, looked for somewhere where food would be convenient and cheap; there were also those behind the scenes who with some cunning hoped for a venue where emirate influences might be remote, or if exercised have to be more visible. The choice fell on Jos, the cosmopolitan town up on the plateau already much patronised by southern and middle belt parties, and on the Rex cinema as the venue. A principal constitutional purpose of the convention was to elect office-bearers. There is no reason to doubt that, following an initiative of the hierarchies of Kano, Borno, Katsina and Sokoto, the district head of Zaria *sabon gari* and the chief alkali of Zaria were the messengers sent to let the organizers know that the leading chiefs wished the Sardauna to head the party; most emirs were after all still very reluctant to see traders or even wealthy commoners in positions of power; and there is every reason to believe that the emir of Kano sent some people by train and lorry to lend the Sardauna whatever support they could engineer. The emir of Kano had certainly been helpful to the Sardauna (as had the Zaria DH) during his court case troubles in Sokoto ten years before, and was related to him by marriage. Unfortunately straw polls and general awareness demonstrated that a strong majority of the NPC rank and file membership, and probably of the convention (including a handful from branches outwith the north and Nigeria), wanted Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as their leader. There was a council of war, or caucus, at the Sardauna's lodgings, including Malam Abubakar himself, makama of Bida, Muhammadu Ribadu and Shettima Kashim. Malam Abubakar was asked for once not to be pedantic about formal procedures, and he told them quietly and without petulance that he was not seeking office.

Malam Nuhu was sent for and arrived to learn what was wanted of him, but also to deliver a letter from Malam Ibrahim Imam which had anticipated events; Ibrahim had never thought himself an unlikely NPC leader one day, but had now decided to resign his post as general secretary. In his formal letter he insisted that the Sardauna and other leaders were reactionary imperialist agents, who feared radical change in the north (Shortly afterwards Ibrahim did become a party leader, but it was to be as patron of the Borno youth improvement association, which he was to dynamize into the Borno youth movement, the BYM). Muhammadu Ribadu and Shettima Kashim first asked Nuhu Bamalli how many delegations there were: over a hundred, they were told, and he and Garba were still looking for lodgings for all of them. He was told not to worry about sleeping, but to go and tell them all that the 'leadership' only wanted

the Sardauna as their head; and any who asked, 'Why not Abubakar Tafawa Balewa?', should be told that Abubakar had agreed to work with the Sardauna as 'number two'. Malam Nuhu then gave them Ibrahim Imam's letter, which particularly angered Malam Muhammadu Ribađu, who said it was calculated intentionally to disrupt the party. Nuhu pointed out that Ibrahim had followers, so that if anyone were to ask him to withdraw, it had better be Ribađu himself. The caucus riposted that they accepted the resignation, so Nuhu Bamalli left obediently to pass the word round the delegations. It became clear by the morning that neither this word of mouth nor Abubakar's own caution at the last house of assembly had persuaded all hearers.

The prime purpose of the convention, election of the president-general, was reached towards the end of the proceedings. Malam Bello Dandago, sarkin dawaki of Kano, was in the chair on the last day; there were two real nominees in addition to the scarcely known Alhaji Sanda in what he rightly called a crucial decision - Abubakar and Ahmadu, sardauna, neither of whom was present (Alhaji Sanda had met Nuhu Bamalli on the Zaria road at 8 o'clock, and was already preparing to go home to Lagos). Contrary to precedent, voting was not taken by paper ballots but on a show of hands. After the votes for Sanda were taken, Malam Isa Kaita, sitting in front, heard Malam Bello ask for all those in favour of Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to show, and thought he saw almost all the hands raised; he then heard him ask for those in favour of Malam Ahmadu, the sardauna of Sokoto, and saw some hands raised. Malam Nuhu Bamalli argued with those who were pleading for Malam Abubakar that their favourite did not want to be elected. Bello Dandago announced that Ahmadu sardauna had won, there were cheers, and he closed the meeting by promptly walking off the stage.

There were other versions of the occasion, and many others which have continued to question the vote in private, but there was never any formal challenge to the figures later officially announced (75-239-373). Abubakar knew that the traditional attitudes would always prevail over the ephemeral popularity of an individual. It was too soon to imagine the general peasantry acknowledging a commoner as a great leader; a leader maybe, but not a great one. Greatness was still for royalty. To use outmoded Indian and British terms, when it was a matter of caste, he knew his place. It hurt, but his lack of ambition for empty fame did not let it rankle for long. Nor indeed did he ever seek any office that was not pressed upon him by circumstance or by active encouragement. He was then elected, effectively by the caucus of war, but in appearance by the last day's meeting under the Sardauna's chairmanship, as first vice-president; Muhammadu Ribađu as second vice-president; makama of Bida, Malam Aliyu, as national treasurer; and Malam Isa Kaita as financial secretary. Shettima Kashim and Abba Habib were auditors.

To be the party's new deputy leader was no servile post. Malam Abubakar read out (and refuted in detail) Ibrahim Imam's reasoned letter of resignation, and Malam Inuwa Wada became next secretary-general (this led to his being appointed the north's first parliamentary secretary, to the Sardauna, which gave him no executive power but a firm and funded Kaduna base from which to tour). There were no elections at future conventions, and all these office-bearers (except secretary-general) remained unchallenged so long as the party survived - but for Ribađu, who was to die in office eleven years later. This had been the first NPC meeting at which Bukar Suloma Dipcharima, the district head of Yerwa, Borno, made an impression. He was the young Maiduguri teacher who had partaken in the NCNC's 1947 tour of Britain, but

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who had soon afterwards left immature politics to be a manager for John Holt's. Now he was back, in a different party.

After the budgets and the party post mortems, Mr Awosika temporarily relieved Malam Abubakar of the central works portfolio which he had been covering since Bode Thomas's mysterious death. Dr Azikiwe and the eastern transport owner Mr Ojukwu left to tour England and America on an economic mission. There was a row in the council of ministers over Lagos slum-clearance: since the AG needed the powerful landlords' support, Akintola claimed that the people did not want it, while Mbadiwe and Abubakar were determined to prove them wrong. The northern scholarship board surprised the cynics by awarding 163 scholarships for the next session, 89 of them overseas, 72 to the Zaria branch of the Nigerian college of arts, science and technology, and two to the university college of Ibadan. Malam Umaru Gwandu, the assistant secretary to the northern legislature, went to study parliamentary procedures for three months at the British house of commons. Mr George Uru Ohikere, secretary of the Igbirra Tribal Union, who had attended the London conference in the train of the NPC, was able to celebrate his party's winning of the first election to a wholly elected northern NA council, and not much later the 62-year-old ata of Igbirra was the next chief to agree to abdicate. Sir John Macpherson formally opened the upgraded clerical training college at Zaria, henceforth officially named the institute of administration and to be the Sardauna's pride as it raised the level of its product to embrace senior native court staff and potential administrative officers. Malam Abubakar opened the new mainline railway station at Jos, where the railway's narrow gauge link with Zaria boasted an engine which had run 1,200,000 kilometres since 1911; he announced that careful consideration was being given to line extensions, particularly in the large area of Nigeria between the Benue river and the northern frontier. The Sardauna departed on a European holiday, during which he was enabled to address British MPs and Nigerian students about the unique problems of his region. Mr Obafemi Awolowo began for the first time to acknowledge and even to accept invitations to British officials' social functions. Far away in Vancouver at the empire games a Nigerian won the gold medal for a record high jump of 6'9": his name was Emmanuel Ifeajuna.

In July the Oxford undergraduate Ojukwu mentioned in the last chapter received his BA degree at the Sheldonian before his proud father, and went with a research student at Nuffield college, Pius Okigbo, to receive the congratulations of another Nigerian, Taslim Elias, at the institute of commonwealth studies at 10 Keble Road. In response to the obvious questions, Ojukwu told the others that he had not made up his mind finally (although he was preselected to be an ADO), but was still considering what a British general had said to a recent club meeting. This general had warned the members that one of the major likely occurrences in the throes of independence for colonies like the Gold Coast or Nigeria, once the British had withdrawn, was the emergence of the army to assume the power of the departed imperial rulers; this was because independence might spell doom to the nationalist politicians who had won it, for the mastery of colonial power would not be so lightly or easily replaced by inexperienced theorists. He was told that his father (an associate of Elias's brother in a Lagos business) would never permit his heir as a motor potentate to be a mere soldier.

About this time the district officer Bauchi had gone on leave, his three continuous tours totalling over five years in one station creating a postwar

record in the province; the chief of Ningi had been replaced through this DO's support for the protests of a brave teacher called Barau, and now the gathering of the divisional records on the emir Yaƙubu III, from Robert Wright's first days onwards, had reached fruition. Humphrey Gill, the resident, to some extent inspired by Malam Abubakar's increasingly outspoken criticisms of the emir and unending advocacy of NA reform, found equal encouragement from the lieutenant-governor's zealous sallies into the sole native authorities' palaces. Sharwood-Smith talked over all such moves with the sultan and the Sardauna, and now where possible with Malam Abubakar too, but staunchly maintained the position as Queen's representative and president of the house of chiefs that the decision must be seen by the emirs as his own. It was generally believed, as has been seen, that the Sardauna was only acceptable as the minister for local government (or as head of the NPC) because of his royal blood, and that Abubakar would never have been acceptable to the most powerful as minister for local government any more than as regional premier, even though the sultan himself had moved the motion in the house of chiefs that led to the abolition of sole native authorities. In the case which affected Abubakar most closely, the emir of Bauchi and his council were summoned to Kaduna by the CS as officer administering the government (OAG) H R E ('Phiz') Browne. The party included the recently promoted waziri or senior councillor, who had been the supervisor of agriculture (and briefly district head of Bauchi town after the Baraya went to jail), Adamu Jumba.

Yaƙubu III had been a charmer, broad-minded, humorous and indeed liked from afar by many peasantry. He sat on the regional joint standing committee on finance, and the regional production development board, out of recognition of his status rather than of his capacity to contribute. But he had also been outstandingly corrupt and a nepotist in a society where such characteristics were easily acquired. The problem had always been to find witnesses and material evidence, because Yaƙubu was also clever. He intrigued against his own council, which he undermined by blaming it for any unpopular decisions taken in his name. With the new approach to native authorities a new weapon was available against him: 'You have lost the confidence of both your council and your people. . . . I have been unable to persuade you to change your ways. . . . You must go into retirement or face formal deposition'. He was far from the most guilty of his peers, but accepted his fate on condition of receiving a pension. He would never have agreed to retire but for the steadfastness of Malam Abubakar, the waziri and native treasurer, and the provincial administration: if the resident and district officers had been the prosecutors and the acting lieutenant-governor the headsman, the minister of transport's had been the persuasive voice in the process. It became noticeable that from now on his appearances at the emir's council became ever rarer except on solemn occasions, and his overt participation soon ceased, although he never resigned.

It must not be forgotten in a more secular age that, for the same reasons that made him attractive both to peasants and to those independent observers who met no point of personal conflict with him, Yaƙubu III never fully understood why he had to go, any more than the other chiefs who went at this time. For such grandees, if it had not been for this inexplicable new practice of the British, of pandering to the impertinent and ambitious new educated 'elements', there could be no justification for radical change: they saw for themselves that virtually nobody else in authority ever failed to take some personal advantages, the differences were merely of degree. The masses were all sharing in the new

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prosperity that came from agricultural and road development; everybody came to terms with the imperatives of food, shelter and clothing, the inevitability of death, and the likelihood under Allah of earthly happiness being magnified by simply avoiding trouble with those in power – would voting for new men with western ideas change any of this, except for the few 'elements' who would take the power over? The fallen emirs had the comfort that the will of the Almighty, merciful and compassionate, was not to be questioned. The radical young might have comfort of a colder kind in seeing stability shaken all over the world: in British Guiana Dr Cheddi Jagan was sentenced and the colony became a 'proclaimed area'; the French Indo-China key town of Dien Bien Phu fell to the Viet Minh; there was a state of emergency in Buganda. Dr Nkrumah's CPP won the Gold Coast election and he formed a new government in June. Across the continent a new political party was founded under a teacher Julius Nyerere, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU).

There was a final meeting of the old house of representatives in August 1954, mainly given over to Malam Abubakar's ministry's ports bill. He knew what the staff of his department and ministry wanted, and he had made those wishes his own in council. Now he had to persuade the house, which had already accepted the white paper on the policy. A shadow ports authority had already taken over the marine department and operational control of Apapa, Port Harcourt and the Lagos customs wharf, with equal representation from shipping and import/export interests; the government staff would be taken over on no less favourable conditions (although on independence the British treasury refused to treat the expatriates in corporations on an equal footing for financial protection with those colonial service officers whose equal service was unbroken). An official in the ministry, rather like the independent inspector of railways, would continue to be statutory authority under the shipping & navigation and wrecks & salvage ordinances, using ports authority staff as his agents. This was all distant from the Bauchi savannah, and most of the nit-pickers in the house were only looking for political minutiae themselves – the authority's chairman ought to be one of the board's members (in other words, an appointed politician); the minister ought to be seen to be in complete control; the authority's books ought to be scrutinised by the public accounts committee.

'I feel rather flattered by . . . the honourable members . . . insisting on getting more and more power for me. Now I cannot understand why they say with one voice, the chairman has too much power, and therefore he must share those powers with three or four other people, and the minister of transport should not have to consult his colleagues in the council. . . . The whole point of [the minister] putting these matters to the council of ministers is that he should have as much advice from his colleagues as possible. . . . This chairman must have special knowledge of port operation because he has executive functions to perform . . . It may not be possible to obtain a man like him from amongst the members of the board'.

After a suspension to discuss an amendment substituting 'minister' for 'governor-in-council' in a clause, he conceded:

'We agree to this, but we want to make it absolutely clear that we should make sure that the minister in issuing these directions does consult his colleagues in the council of ministers. We can find other ways of arranging this . . . [Parliamentary scrutiny of the accounts] would certainly mean turning these corporate bodies into

government departments, and that is not the intention. The accounts are not secret. The whole idea is to give them as much autonomy as possible'.

Dr Azikiwe took the opportunity to give the northern and eastern federal ministers a dinner party, and to tell them that the NCNC and the NPC should help each other. Malam Abubakar said firmly, despite having eaten of Zik's salt, that there could never be 'true' friendship or co-operation, and unwittingly echoed Sir John Macpherson's own explanation to Zik, that he could not yet get it so long as NCNC supported NEPU. Jock Macpherson judged that Zik would be willing enough to see the north break away, so long as they knew that it would have to deal with himself over access to the sea; but that his real fear was of an NPC-AG-NIP coalition.

Three weeks later in Abubakar's final appearance in the northern house of assembly his most common contributions were once more on points of order and procedure, including a challenge as chairman of the Nigerian branch of the commonwealth parliamentary association to the competence of a northern government motion that the future regional legislature should join the CPA in its own right. However he also successfully moved a motion that the northern marketing board should finance a farmers' co-operative bank to assist cash crop farmers; and when Malam Ibrahim Imam moved that an official opposition be recognized, he pointedly asked, 'May I know the honourable member's party identity?', and was told, 'I am going to answer my honourable and respected friend the minister of transport: for the meantime I am 'Independent!''. But a substantial contribution was on Ibrahim Imam's challenge to the NPC leadership on its lack of clear policy, as reflected in the estimates: to Ibrahim, as to so many, not least to Westminster MPs, a policy of specific economic schemes, development plans, loans funds and departmental expansions was no policy at all, if there were no attendant structural upheaval. Abubakar said,

'Only a few months ago the honourable member made his exit from the party. I do not think any member was grieved by his absence. In the last few years he had been trying his best to see that his party's policy was carried through. He has complained several times about keeping reserves overseas, and at the same time speaks of lack of capital in the region. If we want industry and do not have capital ourselves, and if we are going to withdraw all our reserves from abroad, it means we put all our eggs in one basket. This is very unwise. He does not seem to know the necessity of keeping reserves at all, but speaks of what to do in 1956 when colonial development and welfare funds might cease to come to us. The NPC believes that the most important thing is to keep the development of the country going'.

The Sardauna arose with an equally characteristic, but somewhat patronising, speech 'to congratulate my honourable friend, my lieutenant number one, who has just answered all the points that have been burning the hearts of the members of the party that I lead. Knowing that my title is always one connected with battle, I find that it is necessary to surround myself with generals who are going to defend me to the last minute. . . . I am not going to enter into any controversial issue with any member of any party - or the member who has just left my party. I just leave it to the young YaKubus and Sa'adus and other young kids to answer'. Ibrahim Imam, who could respect those he was in disagreement with, called out, 'The minister of transport is not a young kid!' He had exposed the exemplary contrast between leadership by character and argument, and leadership by status and what is now loosely termed 'charisma';

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between a man who distrusted power, but was prepared to use it for a purpose he might justify as good, and a man who thought power came as an act of grace, and used it unhesitatingly for the fulfilment of what he saw as destiny.

The northern lieutenant-governor had just read 'Philip Woodruff' (Philip Mason)'s pseudonymous *The Men Who Ruled India*, and had made sure that its newly published second volume *The Guardians* was made available to all his administrative officers. He also lent his own copies to the historically minded Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Both were struck by the paradoxical contrast that 'Woodruff' drew 'between on the one hand the ideal of a liberal empire, an India held in trust, and on the other the reality of despotic power wielded by Platonic Guardians in the interest of order and tranquillity'. Sharwood-Smith believed that the purposes of trust and tranquillity could be conjoined without compromise in the hands of his better officers, and Abubakar accepted that this was an ideal target, frequently missed although most of the aims were honourable. Like Sir John Macpherson, they did not yet detect much serious demand for a purely Nigerian-staffed civil service; a 'local' civil service still meant simply one that was free from Whitehall direction.

At the last meeting of the old council of ministers, Mr Akintola offended Malam Abubakar by staying away so as not to have to associate himself with the customary expressions of goodwill to the president and known or potential retiring colleagues, just as he had boycotted the chief secretary Benson's last meeting in the spring before leaving to govern Northern Rhodesia. On 1 October 1954 the colonial service was pedantically retitled Her Majesty's Oversea Civil Service, hurriedly renamed Overseas Civil Service, or HMOCS (and before long its many *soi-disants* Guardians were startled to be invited to subscribe to a memorial to themselves, to be erected in Westminster Abbey). It was entirely a coincidence that on the same day a new federal constitution was brought into force in Nigeria where more than half of them served. Under this, amongst much else, recent convention was institutionalized and the sitting ministers assumed, within the doctrine of collective responsibility, individual responsibility for and direction of the departments assigned to them. Macpherson also began to give them security information based on the administrative and police special branch intelligence reports.

19 Reluctantly reconciled to Lagos

Kungurmin daji maganin mai kishi ne

The tale has arrived at a turning point. No longer having a part to play in the northern legislature, Malam Abubakar now had so much less reason to think primarily of northern affairs. That he did continue to think as much about them as in the past, and to keep his Bauchi roots well husbanded, will remain obvious; but his horizons now began to widen remarkably. It was in the nature of the job that they should, but not all his colleagues would have responded as he did; few of them are still identified with their ministries' achievements of the late fifties as he is. Looking back to the north, and to the figures given at the end of chapter 15, it is worth remembering that even now the northerners in the equivalent branches of the government's obsolescent 'senior service' comprised only three agricultural officers, one broadcasting officer, seven education officers, one forestry officer, two local industry officers, eleven medical officials, three gazetted police officers, two public relations officers, one public works official and two veterinarians; the dozen holding 'administrative' appointments included two development officers. The real weakness of a region which could produce competent ministers, yet was utterly dependent on alien advisers and executives, could hardly be forgotten; the likely strength of a country, if ever it should learn to harbour internal trust and patience, might begin to be foreseen.

For the present Malam Abubakar once more resumed oversight of the works portfolio in addition to transport, a burden which he found heavy but acceptable because it was familiar, but which his urbane and self-motivating permanent secretary, Michael Varvill, found crushing: both were preoccupied with the problems of the new ports authority and railway structures. The minister felt able to claim that public confidence had been restored in the Nigerian railway since the appointment in 1953 as general manager of a Colonel Emerson, who although a newcomer to Africa had lengthy Indian experience. The ports authority was still very new, and under the Liverpool chairman Mr Clifford Dove, another newcomer, the local members included old acquaintances of the minister: Jack Davies, now general manager in Lagos of the United Africa Company, and J E B Hall, now director of commerce and industries.

In approving the appointment of 'commercial' to the ports authority, Malam Abubakar told them that it was important to have the opinion of the practical people who knew what would work, and what would not – they might be wrong but their 'interest' was known: *'We have too many politicians who will simply send their classified meeting papers to Ibadan and ask Awo what way to vote'*. Other responsibilities that were less burdensome were civil aviation and (no longer a subject of regional jealousies) meteorology. A decision that promised important consequences at the time was the new contract with Nedeco

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for a three-year study of the Niger and Benue river systems, in the hope of improving seasonal shipping conditions; the minister took an early opportunity to spend three weeks in a marine department launch's small cabin, looking at the Benue river from 'Yola to Lokoja for himself. He also visited Kabba province, where the acting resident Giles, well-remembered from Bauchi, drove him alone over an excellent communally made road from Okene, hometown of the Igbirra, to Kabba town. 'Afo' lobbied him for more federal help, and the earnest and modest charm slipped momentarily: '*You in the middle belt have had more than your share already*' (which in terms of population had in recent years been true).

But Malam Abubakar was again needed at home. The former emir of Bauchi had referred in his letter of retirement (on pension) to '... the present day call for a fresh approach by younger men more readily adaptable to new conditions', words which Abubakar and others had had to put into his mouth. The traditional selectors had unanimously chosen the waziri, Adamu Jumba, great-great-grandson of Yaƙubu I, as the successor who should be nominated for approval of the regional governor, to the pleasure of the administration and many NA officials; aged 47, he had been a village scribe in 1939, an agricultural assistant in 1941, the *wakilin gona* (agricultural supervisor) in 1943, and the waziri for the last two years. Two days after the official announcement on 26 October, Yaƙubu III's family organized a rabble to demonstrate; they damaged some property and burnt fourteen NA councillors' houses. Abubakar persuaded the governor-general to allow him the WAAC DH *Heron* that was regularly chartered for gubernatorial tours, and made an emergency flight to help Gill, the resident, to reconcile the malcontents behind the scenes. Adamu Jumba's claim to the emirate was from the distaff side of the Bauchi royal family, and there were three claimants with expectations who had descended on the male side. Calm was restored with the aid of Nigeria police force reinforcement to the NA police. The new emir incurred moral debts to Abubakar for his support throughout the period of his predecessor's abdication and his own appointment, but the controversy made it awkward for him to make repayment in ways that would have gratified Abubakar but have embarrassed Adamu Jumba. It was certainly after this occasion that tongues began to clack in confidence about Malam Abubakar hankering after a traditional title, to balance his status in the uninstructed public's eye against the sardaunas, makamas and waziris in his own party, and also the 'chiefs' who were beginning to proliferate as statutory titles of honour, starting from the western provinces, but now throughout the south. This matter will be returned to later, in chapter 23.

He was also needed in Kaduna. The governor, as he now was, had tried to temper the blow to the new premier's pride over his disappointed hopes of introducing a ministry of 'development'; he replaced the choleric financial secretary as chairman of the production development boards, and of the loans board, with the phlegmatic chief conservator of forests James Lockie. The Sardauna had gone grumpily on a lengthy tour after drafting an angry letter for the other ministers to sign: it spoke of the constitution being a dead letter, of obstruction by officials, and threatened complaints to the secretary of state. There happened to follow some violent anti-British and anti-southerner speeches from the NPC's Alheri youth association. Next came expensive demands to alter the budget estimates after the overworked government press had printed them to meet the legislature's deadline (the exco estimates committee had failed to meet, because ministers of spending departments had all been electioneering and touring). There was also embarrassing disagreement

with the colonial office's medical adviser Sir Eric Pridie, who believed that in the first stage of integrating departments into ministries the incumbent chief medical officer and the incoming permanent secretary should have equal status, as in Britain and the Gold Coast. Malam Abubakar came and listened to the turmoil, then warned Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith that his ministers were talking wildly about demanding a royal commission. The governor assured him that the reorganization of the four major ministries had been agreed 24 hours before. Abubakar persuaded his colleagues to consider the possibility that their anger was fuelled by the guilty awareness that their demands over amending the estimates (which had in fact been met) had been technically unfair, and their criticisms over integration premature. The Sardauna however remained reluctant to admit that the constitution, still very new but agreed by him at the conference, did not give him full powers over allocation of responsibilities and departmental administration. Malam Abubakar's calming influence was stretched to the full, as he also pointed to the collapse that must succeed any mass exodus of southern artisans and clerks if extreme chauvinism and militant religiosity were not curbed.

Malam Abubakar was based in the capital, and responsible for a country-wide subject. In the confrontational politics which British parliamentary democracy had encouraged, he was becoming isolated from his colleagues by one striking difference: he did not believe in pushing his opponents (except those he thought irredeemable) into a corner. He now knew how to put himself in the other man's shoes, to work out why that other man held a given point of view, and so to deduce the most likely way of getting the other man to change it. He could understand and work with Igbos, because even those individuals around him who were patently crooked were 'honest crooks'. He understood the Yorubas, but despite their claims to cultural affinity with northerners, he found the deviousness of some affecting his trust of them all. So, at least, judged his most senior British colleagues. But most of his political allies at the time, if given the opportunity, would have chosen to crush their opponents utterly, offering neither compromise nor forgiveness; in the tradition of most past conflicts ('enslave the unslaughtered'), the most compassionate comment to be expected from them could have been *vae victis*. This difference is hardly unknown in other countries and arenas, between the civilized realists and the less intelligent ideologues or egocentrics: in modern times, the latter will have tended to become full-time politicians, and many of them eventually to win elections – the former will have sought their rewards in the professions or creative callings, which need not exclude industry and commerce. The pity of it is the greater when the politicians, for fear of losing support and income, remain parochial for, as has been observed, home-keeping youths have homely wits. It has also been observed that a great man should have the heart of a boy with the head of a man. The reader may care to keep these two observations in mind when comparing, as he must (and as we shall later in chapter 24), Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa with Malam Ahmadu, sardauna of Sokoto, let alone Dr Azikiwe or Chief Awolowo.

But much of this is to anticipate. The histories do not adequately tell how near the 1954 constitution was to collapse from its very start, partly because the elections in the north were held later than those in the south. The general election to the new house of representatives was being fought on manifestos which, as in all partisan elections to local and national governments using multi-tier systems, failed to make intelligible to the voters what powers each

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level had (and had not) over which subjects. It was also fought on different franchises: in the east by direct universal adult suffrage; in the west by votes of those males of 21 native to the constituency or taxpaying with a year's residence, and females similarly qualified but paying tax of over £1; and in the north by adult males through the familiar indirect elections. Whitehall had begun belatedly to question whether a mere NCNC-AG alliance or coalition could rank as 'a party' singly commanding a house majority in strict terms of the constitution so laboriously devised; it also remained convinced that till a single federal party had such an overall majority no appointment of a prime minister could be contemplated.

The important political changes in the south were that the NCNC not only swept every province of the east in direct elections, but took 23 of the 42 western seats to the AG's 18, including Ibadan and half Abeokuta. In Ondo and Oyo they took 11 districts to the AG's seven, and shared five. They had profited from anti-Yoruba feeling in the Benin and delta ('mid-west') areas, from the unpopular Ibadan legislation which had treated rude newspaper reporting of ministers as sedition, from some Muslim support, and from general resentment of the high taxation policies of the AG without which 'free' compulsory primary education would have been impossible. In their home region the NCNC only faced real opposition in 'the rivers': five out of six Ijo and Efik coastal divisions, and at Aba where the Ngwa clan (who had produced the women rioters in the thirties) had turned against them. This would all apparently lead straight to a new anomaly, a federal council of ministers containing three NCNC ministers each from east and west, an NCNC minister from the Cameroons (who had nevertheless personally profited from anti-Igbo feeling in his campaign) and, presumably, only three NPC ministers, outvoted and forced into a corner; Lagos had no representation at all. Immediately theorists began to talk of a second chamber to introduce a check or a balance.

The transition period was however fraught with worry for the caretaking ministers, and showed our subject slowly curing himself of fright. At first Malam Abubakar was so disturbed by the unexpected party anomaly in the future council of ministers that he told the governor that, '*This is a bigger and better crisis than last year's*'. He saw the development secretary who was acting chief secretary and went with him and Shettima Kashim to government house where, quietly but with patent passion, he declared that, whatever his party might think, the north was '*doomed*'. He reverted at once to the need for a common services agency and a governor-general with a council of officials '*responsible direct to the [British] house of commons*'. He suspected that the NPC would refuse to nominate central ministers, join with the AG '*only to make trouble*' in the house of representatives, and by defeating all government proposals provoke a constitutional crisis. Should it be otherwise, the six NCNC ministers might defer to any NPC ministers who were appointed, but such behaviour would not be genuine and could not last: it was true that, as did AG ministers, the present NCNC trio consistently came for his advice, even asked him to act as the leader and virtual prime minister, but the goodwill was shallow and only used to gain northern support for southern ends. Ralph Grey speculated provocatively on NPC and AG dissolving their parties and forming a single one on paper, but Abubakar and Kashim scoffed. Malam Abubakar spoke with sorrow of Chief Arthur Prest's electoral defeat, blaming it on his attempts to dissuade the Action Group from '*irresponsibility*'. For himself, although he had not finally decided not to stand for the new house

of representatives as a back-bencher (it was not too late to enter the northern elections), he now wanted to leave Lagos, like Kashim, and to devote all his energies to Bauchi, which would need them. A disturbed governor-general told him not to pull down the pillars of the temple, and asked Shettima Kashim, who had said little but finally agreed that Abubakar ought to give the new dispensation a trial, to keep his 'psychological colleague' on an even keel. They parted with unhappy smiles, Jock commenting aside, 'When the north's desperate, it's capable of anything'.

A fortnight later Abubakar and Kashim saw Macpherson again, still adamant that they and their political colleagues could not stomach six NCNC ministers; if the NPC failed to win 86 seats, the party would accept a compromise – three NCNC from the east, two NCNC from the west, one AG from the west (if the NCNC could be induced to agree – although Abubakar himself did not think the AG would agree either), all to be personally acceptable to the NPC. Their Kaduna comrades were fearful that the NCNC would use its federal power to consolidate its particular interpretation of 'One Nigeria' in the north. The Sardauna was adamant that no alliance with southerners was contemplated, but if numbers made it inevitable then the chiefs and party rank-and-file must agree to it first. However Malam Abubakar admitted that he might after all stand for office in the federal house and government. Macpherson, who was under pressure from Whitehall to convince him that if the constitution did break down before it began, all the obloquy would be the north's to bear, reassured him that Lyttelton (and Mr Lennox-Boyd) had understood and wanted to support the north, and that that goodwill should not be forfeited. He himself would bear their interests in mind when allocating portfolios. Abubakar conceded that Zik's confidants Mbadiwe and Ojukwu had just rejected the NPC's suggested 'compromise'. He was now toying with the idea of persuading some of the AG to cross the floor, join the NPC and be considered for ministerial office, if the NPC might thereby become an outright majority; but he agreed that the east would be more difficult to seduce – one could hardly take in three of the only four NIP floor members, and equally could hardly keep the NCNC entirely out. He was calmer now, and the governor-general felt the panic was over.

Malam Abubakar went up to Kaduna again, where the Sardauna confirmed agreement with his now modified views. The northern executive and leading emirs gave him a free hand as the deputed federal leader, and he was reconciled to the probable continuation of his Lagos rôle. Azikiwe had sent Mbadiwe, the nominated NCNC federal leader, educated in America like himself, to reassure the NPC with promises that the NCNC would not 'overdo' their northern campaign, and that though they would 'lead' in the council of ministers, the NPC would be allowed to 'lead' in the house; the NPC's response was that they might do their worst, but that they could not trust them. Abubakar's own pipe-dream now was that the NCNC would recognise that their majority in the west was neither secure nor overwhelming, and allow the AG to appoint three federal ministers after all; but the men in Kaduna were talking about dissolving NPC, AG and NIP and creating a united front against the common enemy. Abubakar's view of that was that it must presuppose a full five year life of the house, without any talk of more constitutional revisions or of 'SG' in 1956. He asked Macpherson for political advice on his return, but unlike others the governor scrupulously withheld it, even in the privacy of friendship. Abubakar told Grey that he feared any alliances: one with the AG would be shameful; one with the NCNC would be one-sided, since their ministers would support the government but let their backbenchers oppose, leaving NPC, officials and

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special members to enjoy the ignominy of passing unpopular measures. Grey's advice was that he must play according to the rules, with the cards as they had fallen.

A day or two later Mbadiwe sought to reassure Abubakar personally. He had no doubt that the constitution could be interpreted to cater for alliances or grouped parties, and was certain that the time for fusions was before elections, not afterwards. But he told him not to fear a 6(or 7):3 division of power, since NCNC policy had always been not to push NPC too far (witness their concession over crash training of a foreign service); when NCNC had supported AG over 'SG56', he said to Abubakar's scepticism, it was really only because NPC had not consulted NCNC over the minor amendment to the 'Macpherson' constitution to allow regional councils to be dissolved separately. As for supporting NEPU and MBPP, NEPU had existed before NPC as a party, and to denounce them now would be blatant power-seeking; but he, Mbadiwe, did not know any of their members beyond Aminu Kano and Bello Ijumu, whereas he had many friends in NPC. Of course NCNC and the south must resist northerners trying to run the whole country. Mbadiwe then saw Macpherson, advised him to arrange a full dress opening of the house of representatives, with governor-general's speech from the throne, and warned him not to try to interview Zik and Awo together when seeking nomination of ministers.

The NPC executive had asked Malam Abubakar to see Dr Azikiwe with Abba Habib, the northern Cameroons member from Dikwa, but Zik proved elusive as ever. However Abubakar by himself had approached Akintola and Rosiji on 16 December, to pursue the thought of a united front grouping or even party, after first meeting them in the company of the Sardauna and Awolowo the day before; the Kamerun national congress (KNC) might also join such a front under NPC leadership, and the proposal was to invite NCNC to nominate three eastern ministers, and even to join as a party also. Abubakar's instinct was to say that if NCNC refused, they would get no ministries and NIP would be given them after all; but with realism accepted that that would result in total NCNC opposition to the north by every means available. The two AG politicians conceded that if the united front were formed, the AG would abandon - 'SG56'; their pan-Yoruba claims on the Ilorin-Kabba boundary; the five shillings minimum national wage which the federation could not afford; talk of breaking up the north into states; and the return of federal institutions in Lagos to western regional territorial control. They would put all this in writing to the NPC in Kaduna.

Abubakar smelt a rat, and nothing was settled; makama Aliyu of Bida advised him that the Sardauna and his party generally would reject a deal. He still could not track Zik down, and heartened by Mbadiwe's amiability took Kashim and Ribadu to see Macpherson again, asking him to call in all the leaders and say, 'This is *your* constitution, now *you* make it work!' The governor-general, despairingly watching the clock tick away to the summoning of the new house, also thought of Mbadiwe's advice and laboriously explained that if he held a 'round table' conference, Zik would merely ask him why he did not just get on with appointing ministers in accordance with the royal instructions; and he needed reassurance that the regional leaders would all come, and each bring a fitting federal colleague. It would be better to wait till political negotiations had finally broken down, if at all, and then he would call in NPC and NCNC first since they certainly had the majorities. He hoped for success by 5 January, only a week before the legislature opened. Malam Abubakar was still stubbornly suspicious of the NCNC despite Mbadiwe, and

said that the NPC was meeting in Kaduna on 6 January, hinting that a united front party would be constituted then.

In the indirect elections in the north the NPC and its supporters won 84 of the 92 seats, and NEPU not one. This was quite contrary to Whitehall's expectations, based on perceived experience in other colonies. The result strengthened the discreetly voiced, because ill-founded, London and Lagos suspicions that certain northern British officers close to the Sardauna not only were opposed to 'unity' but somehow also had the influence to hinder it. Sir John Macpherson went to work through Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith. The Sardauna himself had for the moment been playing a superficially active rôle again in national politics. He had left the north just before the elections on a visit to talk to Chief Awolowo at Ogbomosho, overlooking for the moment the *faux pas* about the shehu's bones, and the vulgar presumption was that he needed third party advice on how his own members in the federal house should face a council of ministers full of the NCNC he despised. In fact Awo had made the overture to him, hoping for support from Hausas resident in the western region for the AG. All that happened was that, as Abubakar later told Macpherson, the NPC '*played a little politics*' and told some northerners residing in the west to refrain from voting for any party, while Akintola had been persuading the Ogbomosho Hausas to vote for himself. On New Year's Day 1955 the Sardauna went to Lagos to talk to the caretaking northern ministers, and received a courtesy visit from Mbadiwe: doubtless the Sardauna thought, said some, that he was testing the possible reactions should the NPC alone try to form the government. He did not seek talks with the hard-to-catch Zik. Those speculations ignored the governor-general's final position: constitutionally he could take the advice of the leader of the majority party – but although Malam Abubakar's federal NPC was the largest party, it had ended by lacking an overall majority, and fronts, alliances and fusions remained hypothetical; this left Sir John no option but to look for recommendations on ministerial appointments to the leaders of the federal majority parties elected from each region. In effect, even if a Sir Robert Walpole was waiting in the wings, Sir John Macpherson was still George II and his own prime minister (although he did the chief secretary to the government the courtesy of referring to him as the substitute for a PM).

He did not want for more advice. Malam Muhammadu Ribadu told him that the NPC would still like to weaken the NCNC through a north-west understanding, but would not object to having two NCNC ministers if they held no portfolio. Mr Mbadiwe saw him again and was warned himself to go easily, if he was to enjoy the happy teamwork he seemed to want. An emergent youthful NCNC figure, Mr Matthew Mbu suggested that a 'leader of government business' be appointed, to 'soft soap' the NPC. 'Phiz' Browne from Kaduna pleaded that Abubakar Tafawa Balewa be not further upset, to the risk of the appellation. Malam Abubakar himself then came in on 3 January to admit that the Sardauna, Abba Habib and Isa Kaita had just persuaded him and his Lagos colleagues that Sharwood-Smith had convinced them that there was no choice but to agree to '6:3:1'. He regretted that the NPC had also decided that his own strong preference as replacement in Lagos for Shettima Kashim, Yahaya Gusau, was '*not enough of a party man*', so that Inuwa Wada would be the third northern minister (but that he and Ribadu would '*be able to control him*'). The NCNC could choose whomsoever they liked, there would be no consultation with NPC since there would be '*no coalition! It is a pity you haven't asked me to head an NPC government, even if it were only for one week!*'

He admitted that he would have to find six southerners to convert to NPC if Sir John were to do so, and that such a government could not survive; but he repeated his disgust at southern methods of winning votes. Muhammadu Ribadu came in next: he said that Mbu's idea was acceptable as a 'captain of the ministerial team', clearly discounting Macpherson's assessment of the CS's formal position. On 4 January Abubakar came back, with no express opinion on the idea, but stating firmly that the north expected the portfolios of transport, of mines & power, and of works.

The NPC executive met in Kaduna on 7 January, and the Sardauna found himself bound by Sharwood-Smith's continuing arguments (and the Lagos accord) to cajole them into acceptance of there being six southern federal ministers from the NCNC, and the seventh from the southern Cameroons; the sultan and the emirs of Kano, Katsina and Zaria had been inspired by the administration to assist. Next day, 8 January, the NPC's legislators approved the three names already agreed with Sir John - Malam Abubakar, Malam Muhammadu Ribadu and Malam Inuwa Wada - as the federal ministers from the north, and Abubakar resigned himself in his constituency victory to a very prolonged stay in Lagos. The party executive was at pains to explain to its members that the NPC would not enter into any form of 'alliance' with any political party which had its roots and origins in the south, or with a party that was southern-dominated. The resistance sprang from younger members, some of them renegades from NEPU, anxious to prove that NPC ministers had no power, unlike those in the east and west who brushed aside British officials on exco.

On 8 January Abubakar, Kashim and Ribadu, chastened by second thoughts, called on Sharwood-Smith in Kaduna. They were nervous of the consequences of a majority of NPC in the house being held permanently over the heads of an alleged million NCNC membership, they feared an increased sense of isolation in Lagos, and they sought reassurance that there was still goodwill towards them in official quarters in Kaduna. They received it, and Malams Abubakar and Muhammadu Ribadu returned to Lagos. The bargaining and interviews began, until late on Sunday 9 January it was agreed that two ministers from each region should have portfolios in the first instance. This would leave Victor Mukete (the NCNC Cameroonian with a BSc in botany from Manchester), Inuwa Wada (who all agreed had matured since the 1953 riots), Kola Balogun and Matthew Mbu without assigned responsibilities. Kola Balogun accepted this downgrading tolerantly, knowing that there was not yet adequate staff or accommodation for more ministries. For the same reason (and that federal responsibilities ought now to be lighter) no parliamentary secretaries would yet be appointed. Dr Azikiwe had nominated Mr Mbadiwe to 'lead' for both southern regions, but the governor induced him to repeat Chief Adela's nomination for the west.

On 10 January the council of ministers met, to hear and accept Sir John's initial allocation of portfolios and to face realities. Abubakar was confirmed in transport & works, Ribadu in land, mines & power, Mbadiwe in communications & aviation. They also congratulated Malam Abubakar on his CBE in the honours list, and the president of the house of representatives, Edward Fellowes, on his knighthood (his successor Frederic Metcalfe assumed his speakership the same day). Malam Abubakar made time to write his own congratulations to Robert Wright who had been promoted from chief education officer to permanent secretary of his Kaduna ministry, and to Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith who had had a KCMG added to his KBE. It began to be noted that northern ministers received honours in orders of chivalry for public

service while still holding political office, a gesture apparently withheld from British and, so far, southern Nigerian ministers, although the AG was beginning to reject the honours system. There had been correspondence at high levels about this part of the 'stick and carrot' approach, used by Sharwood-Smith in particular, towards encouraging appropriate politicians to remain 'gentlemen'.

Election decisions or service vagaries had been affecting many other people who have been mentioned in this story, men of varying importance. Lieutenant-governors ceased to be members of the council of ministers, which they had only attended on rare, usually formal full-dress, occasions. Sir John Macpherson became a governor-general; Shettima Kashim, who had decided that he would leave Lagos, became northern minister of a ragbag portfolio unworthy of him, of social development and surveys (cobbled together by Sharwood-Smith to save the face of the Sardauna who had, as already mentioned, announced without regard for the immediate realities of constitution, organization or economics that he would create a ministry of 'development', specifically to control the development boards); Malam Isa Kaita became northern minister of works; Malam Maitama Sule, now teaching at Kano middle school, was one of the many newcomers who entered the house of representatives, after defeating Malam Aminu Kano in the Kano urban constituency; others whom he joined there were Baban Inna's successor as the Bauchi native treasurer Malam Yakubu Wanka, and Malam Nuhu Bamalli from Zaria, now an assistant sales manager for UAC motors; NEPU expelled Abba Maikwaru for negotiating an unauthorised electoral alliance with the AG; Malam Aliyu, makama of Bida, wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* asking for British women to come to work in the fast expanding northern education department; the Bauchi district officer came back from leave on the same mailboat as Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, not knowing his next posting, and was told by him at the smokeroom bar that he should report to the governor's office in Kaduna – Sir Bryan was then ceremonially installed at Lugard hall as the first governor of the northern region for forty years, and the DO found himself an assistant secretary, as clerk or deputy secretary to the executive council in the new office built, like that in Lagos, next door to government house; and those of a satirical turn of mind noted that not only had a lieutenant-governor in a government lodge been titularly transformed into a governor in a government house, but that his washerman had been upgraded in view of the added responsibilities.

Such upgradings were to be enhanced by the work of the new salaries commissioner, Mr Leslie Gorsuch, whose recommendations for revised structures were to produce acceleration of promotions in the newly separated public services, and a temporary new labourers' expletive – workmen pushing a lorry or swinging sacks on to a pile would cry out 'Gor-such!' as the equivalent of 'Heave-ho!'. The secretary of state had appointed Gorsuch in reaction to initiatives by Mr Awolowo, when officiating as the leader of government business in the western region, which will be mentioned again. Gorsuch was to abolish the paper distinction between senior and junior services and to introduce British divisions into superscale, administrative or professional, executive, clerical and sub-clerical grades (or specialist equivalents), and to retitle expatriation allowances as 'inducement additions'. He was also to recommend payment of overseas children's allowances and holiday passages, but these concepts from UK-based services proved politically indigestible, and verbal substitutes had to be devised.

With NPC dominating the house (the north, the Cameroons and the officials could still outvote the NCNC) and NCNC dominating the council, it was

fortunate that Malam Abubakar's experience and maturity impressed all the newcomers to such an extent that his continuing primacy was tacitly recognized. He became the *de facto* leader of government business without any such acknowledged title. The first business meeting of the council marked his last sign of suffering reactions, when he let slip *sotto voce*, 'The NCNC are still enemies of the NPC'. He quickly recovered as work took over once more from politics, and as Mr Mbadiwe showed his readiness to co-operate and to listen to the northern case with realism. The handful of NIP survivors (soon to rename themselves the united national independence party, UNIP) now tended to support the AG as a fragmentary opposition, despite Wachuku's own contrary reactions to Akintola.

Zik had claimed that the new house would represent its constituencies' interests directly, and not its members' regions; the new constitution appeared to accord closely with some of Awo's views before the conference; with much last minute superficial goodwill in the air, and with the AG licking its wounds, it is not unnatural that with so little to grumble at, the new council of ministers got down to the work of understanding each other, and of development through greater co-operation. This was despite the intellectual non-politicians like Eni Njoku, Nwapa and Arikpo having made way for such non-intellectual politicians as Adegoke Adelabu, chairman of Ibadan district council. Adelabu proved to be a Muslim autocrat, but noisy and scurrilous, skilled at charming his electorate and very mindful of Yoruba history as understood by villagers. His practical experience had been gained from produce inspection and UAC employment.

Under Sir John Macpherson's presidency, a more grave and delicate Abubakar and an imperturbably rumbustious and tough Muhammadu Ribadu led Mr Adelabu (natural resources & social services) and Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh (formerly Festus Edah, the wealthy NCNC treasurer and donor who had ousted Arthur Prest and now held labour & welfare), Messrs Kingsley Mbadiwe, Raymond Njoku (who had defeated Nwapa and was given trade & industry), Kola Balogun (reputed to have coined the slogan 'SG in 1956') and the other newcomers to council to accept the lesson that in the privacy of a cabinet room good personal relationships allowed great affairs to be argued in a friendly, sometimes dispassionate way, while paranoia and prejudice could lead to the best of ideas being thrown out. Possibly it was necessary for British officials to be present to make an essentially British system work in an African environment. Mr Mukete remained the exception, seldom speaking except when the Cameroons were concerned. Zik told his colleagues that if both sides were genuine and sincere, he believed that NPC and NCNC could work by agreement. NEPU however planned another delegation to London to demand a uniform electoral system. Mr Tony Enahoro commented at this time that because of the prevalence of corruption, Nigerians should think twice about Nigerianising the upper ranks of the police.

Abroad, Mr Henry Hopkinson, minister of state for colonial affairs, clumsily declared on the eve of Lyttelton's resignation that Cyprus would 'never' get independence, a statement he had meant to qualify, but which appeared to inspire the prompt renewal of the demand for *enosis* (union with Greece), a four-year long emergency, and consequent independence (Hopkinson was elevated as Baron Colyton in 1956); an agreement was reached on the evacuation of British troops from Egypt's canal zone; the high court upheld the withdrawal in Uganda of recognition of Freddy Mutesa as kabaka of Buganda; an author, Richard Wright, published a book in the United States

with a title offering a new catchphrase, *Black Power*; there was terrorism in Algeria which grew inexorably into a war; and General Nequib, with whom Sir Anthony Eden had laboured for understanding over Sudan and the British military Suez bases, and had signed a treaty in the previous October, but who had now lost the support of those Egyptians and powers who had opposed King Farouk, lost power to Colonel Nasser. In the year in which the USA exploded its first test hydrogen bomb, Great Britain at length saw the last vestige of food rationing removed.

The new secretary of state, Alan Lennox-Boyd, accompanied by the responsible assistant under-secretary Tom Williamson and the principal private secretary Jack Johnston, came out to witness the first session of the new house, whither he was escorted by Foley Newns; he had happily attained his ambition and had succeeded Lyttelton. Oliver Lyttelton was now Viscount Chandos, elevated after demitting office (because his capital and savings were becoming exhausted on a minister's income and commitments) with the sardonic comment, looking beyond Nigeria, that 'most of these [colonial] governments would make a bad town council in Oxford'. The Queen's message was read by the governor-general as president. Malam Abubakar being clearly the senior minister, regardless of party strengths, made the first business statement to the legislature, but otherwise confined himself to a point of order which won him improper applause from the gallery. Ribadu also spoke formally. Chief Sam Akintola, now leader of the opposition, referred to the new government as a 'glee club' or 'mutual admiration club', and abused the NCNC ministers for failing to use their majority to advantage. Chief Awolowo commented sourly (but with truth) from the sidelines in Ibadan that the new constitution and expectations from Gorsuch (the salaries commission) had simply meant less work, more noise, more pay, and that those who clamoured loudest for amenities and development generally were among the worst tax evaders. During a tea break Malam Abubakar had his first substantial talk with a new member, the Sokoto visiting teacher Malam Shehu Shagari. This meeting also founded Abubakar's relationship with Lennox-Boyd, the closest example of mutual trust and respect reported between a British colonial leader and a secretary of state, although Lennox-Boyd's regard for Tengku Rahman of Malaya fell not far short. Malam Abubakar was pleased that Mr Lennox-Boyd had been briefed to use a Hausa proverb in speaking to the house of representatives: 'At the same time as the wall itself is built, the finger marks on it are made', a paraphrase of *tun ran gini, ran zane*.

Lennox-Boyd was a very tall man, like Lord Reith, the pre-war director-general of the BBC and now chairman of the colonial development corporation, who also visited Nigeria at this time: each had the habit of approaching other tall men in a gathering, as if tacitly to measure themselves against them. The sardauna of Sokoto, less tall but well-built and so often enhanced by a turban, has had recorded his preference for big men, not least those who agreed with him; it was also a little easier for big men to persuade the Sardauna to agree. It was a direct result of Lennox-Boyd's visit to Kaduna on his way home that the northern regional ministers, mindful of the makama's letter about women education officers, were encouraged to sign an elegant letter to *The Times* comforting 'expatriates' that their future service was assured, that British officers who had left the Sudan would be welcome to come to the north, and that northerners had nothing to fear from any new foreigners who might come on fixed contracts to do work for which no northerners were yet trained. The letter was sufficiently sincere, but probably had little direct

influence on the recruits who did come from the Sudan civil service; as for the existing expatriates, they were on the whole touched, but recognized that NPC's opponents would not be bound by it. Sir John Macpherson, who never admitted to any official whether he had a 'favourite' region (although he was not always using a technical term whenever he referred to the emirs as 'despots'), commented to the Sardauna that a hint of thirty years' more service to an ex-Sudanese 'retread' only proved that a white peg could be more easily removed from the board than a black peg, and the Sardauna grunted his apparent agreement. Macpherson wanted the country's leaders to work in Lagos, but never regretted the Sardauna's preference for Kaduna.

Lennox-Boyd had also come to judge Macpherson before his retirement: press speculation on his successor was rife, in which 'Jock's' shaky health was ignorantly mentioned as reason enough not to extend his service again (he would sometimes be forced to receive his files in government house while lying flat on his back on a hard board, and occasionally even have to take a council meeting standing upright, leaning against the wall to relieve spinal pains). A vacancy for the permanent under-secretaryship of state would soon occur, and Lennox-Boyd was already thinking with Sir Thomas Lloyd, the outgoing incumbent, of arranging to have a man appointed from the field rather than the routine promotion within the Whitehall pool. He believed that the colonies would be more trustful of London, and that the office would benefit from experience at the top gained in the territories; the occasional past exchanges between colonial office and colonial service had led to one or two ex-Whitehall men going out as governors, not always with success, but never yet to any ex-colonial servants coming back at a level to be high policy mandarins (the reason allegedly expressed being that they might see files on their own past, present or future governors). Lennox-Boyd had spoken openly to Abubakar about the Sudan manpower and the need to bolster service morale; his local testing of this other concept had been very generalized and discreet.

Malam Abubakar himself was conscious of the need to maintain confidence among sympathetic experienced overseas officers, and showed it in various ways. Once a wardrobe heater had caused a fire in his former secretary Armitage's house and he, Ribadu and Kashim (who had all tended to use Armitage informally as a confidential aide, being the only ex-northern officer who was serving a northern minister - indeed Armitage once drafted a letter to a Lagos newspaper for the Sardauna) rallied in support of the succouring neighbours; Ribadu had offered temporary shelter in his own house, but Abubakar offered Armitage a cheque for new glassware to replace breakages in a cupboard which another secretary had rescued too clumsily. More significant, and encouraging to those public servants who were beginning to be sickened by the 'squandermania' and corruption they detected in some ministers' use of newly won power, was his action when the new council of ministers voted itself a monthly £50 basic allowance to cover the running of a private motor: most, including their wives, used the official car and driver for all purposes, including their domestic and private recreational needs. Malam Abubakar asked his permanent secretary Varvill what his allowance was, and hearing that it was around £18 minuted personally to the accounts clerk that he wished to draw no more than his permsec: Varvill naturally made sure that the whole staff knew this. But then Abubakar was often quoted as saying that it was civil servants who were needed to run a country, not politicians: once reasonable stability had been achieved, the need would only be for improvement and checking of efficiency, not for major changes. The purpose of government

was honest management of existing forces, not a series of radical upsets and social innovation. All his northern radicalism had leant in search of a political consistency which ordinary people would then be content to tolerate while getting on with their ordinary lives. When his other former secretary Larry Armstrong's wife was killed in a Bristol *Wayfarer* air crash near Calabar shortly after Lennox-Boyd's visit, Malam Abubakar was more greatly distressed than he seemed to be at signs of colleagues' corruption.

He was reappointed to the governor-general's privy council: there was little objection in Nigeria to the fact that this body only tended to advise clemency where the truly local opinion saw reason for mercy, and did not borrow artificial excuses from more distant philosophies for not letting the law take its course where that local opinion favoured execution. This was certainly Malam Abubakar's own view, although the officials and some southerners agonized more. The responsibility was now narrower, since outside Lagos and the southern Cameroons the regional authorities exercised the prerogative. He and the chief secretary also attended, as Nigerian representatives, the first meeting in Accra of the army advisory council which, it will be remembered, had been set up for British west Africa to ensure uniformity of organization, equipment and training methods. Nigeria had just assumed responsibility from the Whitehall war office for its own military buildings, and a ten year programme had been drawn up, but revenue problems made progress slow: however a boys' company of the Nigeria regiment had just been mustered in Zaria, to produce the educated NCOs and, it might be, officers of the future (a full Nigerian military academy was to be its direct descendant).

Because Nigeria was still a dependency, neither Malam Abubakar nor any other minister could attend the grand Afro-Asian conference attracted by President Sukarno to Jakarta; this did not upset him, but it did arouse renewed internal criticisms that the country still lacked a prime minister. Nevertheless the Gold Coast and the Sudan, because their freedom seemed imminent, did join the four African and twenty-three Asian nations from 18 to 24 April at Bandung. There their leaders (including Nasser and Chou En-lai) sought to strengthen the post-colonialist beliefs that politics could control economics, and that colourful autarchs could best control the political parties of *le tiers monde* – the 'third world' became a conceptual keyword and shorthand simplification from this time, completing a triangle with the western democracies and the eastern planned economies. There were minor compensatory foreign ventures: the northern region sent Malam Isa Kaita and Shettima Kashim to Pakistan on a goodwill mission, and to look at Islamic educational and judicial practices. The administration hoped that they would be encouraged to recognise the great obstacles that must be removed before self-government could be viable, and that even now Pakistan, another country where conservative Islam had afforded spiritual strength but technical weakness, had many British faces hard at work behind desks in back rooms. Non-northerners expressed worry that the north might be looking for support in Islamic countries rather than in Africa. Northern Muslims, looking at Kenya where the government had just issued terms for the surrender of Mau Mau, and at Ashanti where the Gold Coast governor Arden-Clarke was being attacked because a national liberation movement (NLM) had dared to emerge to oppose Dr Nkrumah's CPP, said they had their reasons. Soon afterwards the Sardauna himself, with the emir of Kano, visited Tripoli, Egypt and the Hejaz to inspect pilgrimage arrangements: they were received like heads of state, and this courtesy not only left its mark on

the premier's mien, but reinforced the nervousness of non-Muslims throughout the country, both in and out of government.

As the Nigerian railway was congratulating itself that once again the last stored pyramid of bagged groundnuts had been cleared for export from Kano, Sir John Macpherson paid his farewell visit to the north. Twelve students were entering the newly operational Kano medical school, and he also saw preparations for a northern Nigerian festival of arts, including paintings by a Frenchman who was asked to design the next definitive issue of the country's postage stamps. The name of Sir John's successor was not yet known, and service morale sank low as journalists forecast convincingly that a British politician would be appointed to accelerate the change of routine in the run-up to self-government: to those who thought themselves already hard at work, a threat of yet more root-and-branch change under an amateur did not sound progressive.

While the federal council of ministers was peaceful, matters were less satisfactory in the regions. In the west a 'frigidaire' policy was introduced under which no new appointment or promotion of an expatriate would attract expatriation allowance without explicit approval of the regional executive council. Western ministers also expressed disturbingly public doubts over the continued employment of easterners in their region, especially in the police force over which they had no control. The west also created trouble for all the other governments by introducing the minimum regional daily wage of 5s already mentioned as projected national party policy, whereas its former provincial scales had varied from 2s 3d to 3s 5d. Had there not been relative immobility of labour, the east could not have long adhered to between 1s 6d and 2s 7d, nor the north to 1s 6d-2s 3d, figures which reflected local cost and standards of living.

The eastern governor, Sir Clement Pleass, went so far as to offer his resignation; he deplored his inability to curb Zik's own scheme to enforce rapid localization of key posts by excluding expatriation pay from the budget for six of the thirteen permanent secretaries and for two assistant secretaries in the governor's own office; the semblance of all these being 'governor's men' rather than 'ministers' men' was also Zik's target when the senior resident's post was abolished, the four other residents were put in the eastern version of the frigidaire (that is, marked out as frozen, not to be replaced), and the secretary to the premier and executive council was downgraded: effectively the governor's constitutional discretion over the civil service appointments, promotions and postings was fettered by locking the cashbox, and a well-documented dossier showed how conditions and prospects of particular officers were prejudiced, contrary to the conference assurances and Dr Azikiwe's own promises to the public service. Aimed at overseas officers, the cuts struck at local men's own expectations also. Eventually Pleass, who had other difficulties with Mr Eyo Ita and his expatriate legal secretary, had to use his reserved powers, the last resort of a colonial governor, to pay some of them their contractual dues.

Lennox-Boyd defended Pleass's attitude in the house of commons (and attracted criticism for his own inflexible reaction to Zik's continuing desire for fourteen states); but it was no longer the sceptics alone who realized that more was needed to enforce solemn undertakings than a lawyer's reference to the intentions of the draftsmen of hastily printed words. Regardless of individual justice or capacity, if emotions demanded that sensitive positions of apparent power should only be held by indigenes, these emotions were liable to prevail. The Gorsuch reforms which abolished (by absorbing) expatriation pay for all

officers on the superscales (the fixed non-incremental salaries enjoyed by senior officers above the timescale long grades set for administrative and professional officers) would partly solve the dilemma; but it became clear that the posting of the appropriate men to the appropriate jobs was to demand skilled negotiation in future, and not only in Enugu. The east was also shaken by a house motion on bribery and corruption which led to an inquiry by Mr Justice Ikpeazu; leaks of the precise allegations were broadcast, and because of the slurs Mbonu Ojike had to resign without his colleagues lifting a finger in his support, dying some months later.

Financial affairs later reached the stage of serious discussions in Whitehall, which all four governors contrived to attend, of whether the promise of internal self-government to the east should be withdrawn. Pleass argued strongly that his region was not inherently bad but had had too short a time to develop, and all its traditional pressures were for moral standards different from a British public service that had developed in the unique British social system. Admonition was wiser than threats. ISG might bring budgetary disaster in a few years, but refusal of it would cause trouble now. Sharwood-Smith warned that if the NCNC withdrew from the eastern and federal governments, and internal security troops had to be withdrawn from the north, anti-Igbo disturbances might break out there. The eventual conclusion was that Mr Lennox-Boyd should be advised to counsel Zik personally, that his expenditure on universal primary education, a university and sundry statutory corporations (all needing expensive professional or administrative manpower, beyond the 48 NCNC MHAs who sat on their boards, a privilege denied to British MPs) were about to exhaust his region's reserves. This worry became scrambled with the bank scandal discussed in chapter 22, but governors and home civil servants all hoped that any initiative to postpone the conference beyond August 1956 might emerge from some Nigerian leader, and not have to come from themselves.

Sir Bryan in the north had different problems meanwhile: he now had to warn a house, most of whose best floor men had been drawn off to Lagos, that corrupt NA councils could be more dangerous than corrupt chiefs, for the very reason that they had an appearance of bogus respectability. This new house was more alive to its own fears of southern domination than to any actual threats from a partly disaffected middle belt; its brightest backbenchers were made parliamentary secretaries (which gave them no legitimate access to ministerial papers) and silenced thereby.

In fact the practical northern opposition, weakly reinforced by a handful of inexperienced minority representatives, had shrunk to a single man, Malam Ibrahim Imam, who must not yet be overlooked just because our main interest is moving to Lagos, for he continued to be a person to whom Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa paid attention. He had recently been removed from the Borno NA council for failure to attend and for animadverting on the integrity of other members, but also for criticizing the shehu's sole right to build two-storey buildings or to use an umbrella; he had then been dismissed as supervisor of works of Borno NA (in the ensuing strike of 2,000 FUNAS members, all except those with more than ten years' service were dismissed, with the concessionary chance of being re-employed in impartial competition with other applicants for new appointments, but starting again at the foot of their pay scales); his solitude as a fluent debater bored both himself and the whole house of assembly; and later in the year he joined NEPU (which was now intriguing with the deposed lamifó of Adamawa, holding out the bait of recovering his forefathers' lands in

the French Cameroons). He could hardly hope now to become a parliamentary secretary, but like the rest of the house he enjoyed a salary which had been doubled because of increased regional constitutional responsibilities (with no counterbalancing reductions in the federal house). Something of a scholar in Islam and Arabic, a quick and clever thinker, he was typical of those who could have been of high estate had they been ready to conform. It was good for the NPC northern government that at least one intellectual faced them, but his tendencies to flippancy and thoughtless ranting made him less philosophically dangerous on the floor of the house to the northern government than Malam Aminu Kano would have been. Before many months he was to announce that he was 'on temporary leave from the arena of Nigerian politics'.

A strange interlude occurred in early 1955. The Moral Re-Armament movement had made an effort to proselytize delegates at the London conference, and made the remarkable claim in one of their films that but for their efforts the Nigerians would have deserted Lyttelton and decamped to Moscow, figuratively perhaps. MRA did at least have one strong supporter in Hugh Elliott, a former northern administrative officer now serving in the eastern administration, and the London claim appeared marginally less unlikely with the setting up of a Nigerian national committee for MRA (in conjunction with performances of an MRA play that toured the country, to the embarrassment of administrative officers who gave hospitality to what they had supposed to be professional British actors in a commercial drama): on paper this committee included ten eastern regional ministers, the ooni of Ife, the alake of Abeokuta, Kola Balogun, Matthew Mbu, Muhammadu Ribadu, Inuwa Wada and Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Activity quickly faded out, although MRA's claim of influence did not: Abubakar was interested ecumenically in the movement's surface motives of restoring morality and resisting communism, but he accepted the inclusion of his name more in charity and avoidance of embarrassment at refusal than out of whole-hearted conviction.

20 A new Governor-General: The north still calls

Sabon maza fada

His new transport matters were still dominating the thoughts of Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Work had begun on a new taxi-way and terminal building at Kano airport. He piloted the Nigerian railway corporation bill through the house of representatives, and enthusiastically promised an engineering survey of an extension into Bauchi and Borno as far as Maiduguri. He rejected Akintola's motion from the opposition to extend several other major lines, which would have added 168% to the route mileage: *'Railways are not extended to make little places important. . . . The proper course is first to undertake a survey of the traffic which is likely to be offering in an area, and . . . to follow up with a detailed investigation to decide the actual line'*. Later, *'I can do no better than quote from . . . the then vice-president of the party which now follows the leader of the opposition, . . . the late Chief Bode Thomas: ' . . . a public utility of this kind is better operated on quasi-commercial lines by a statutory corporation than by a government department. The rigidity of control and the established formalism which are proper and necessary in the operation of a government department are not suited to a public utility which should not only provide the service required by the public but should do so on sound financial lines'. That, in my view, sets out government's case very clearly'*. The original expression of these thoughts was that of governor, CS, FS and senior officials; but both a southern man of affairs, Bode Thomas, and a northern dominie, Abubakar, found them logical, reflective of their own experience, and easy to adopt as their own. He refused an opposition amendment to allow the minister to direct the corporation, and found it relevant that, *'in Hausa we have got a saying: a giant often borrows a child's pants to bathe in a river'* (the proverb *Da warkin yaro a kan shiga ruwa*, or 'With a boy's leather loincloth one may go into the water', implies that a big man may put the blame on an inferior if things get exposed).

In defending his works department, from the HQ of which Armitage, unwilling to be junior to a non-professional officer, had returned to being provincial engineer on the plateau, the record shows his confidence, in contrast with many colleagues; he is obviously not always reciting ministry briefs; Akintola's demand for a new bridge, subway or tunnel to supplement communication between Lagos and the mainland is swept aside because *'congestion does not build up on Carter bridge alone'*; the trunk road 'A' *'achievements have been carried out in spite of great difficulties over staff. There is a proverb that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. I should like to remind the house that reproaches without a word of thanks will make a very dull department'*.

He was deputed by the government to move the house's appreciation of the gift of a mace from the commonwealth parliamentary association, and was left

by the chief secretary to hold the military fort and defend both expenditure and the new title 'NMF' which had replaced 'RWAFF (Nigeria)'. Chief Akintola wanted an 'army', certainly, but a cheap one and out of sight: 'We love them, we admire them – at a safe distance from us'. Abubakar wearily repeated the old argument of each budget session about the folly of expensively training more officers locally when they could not fill the vacancies already available at Sandhurst, Eaton Hall and the Gold Coast military school at Teshie; and he exhorted the older members to educate the new ones, and the new ones again to read the old Hansards in the library. When members were arguing over

'an expenditure of half a million pounds over the [Nigerian Military Force], it makes it very difficult for anybody outside to understand what they really mean . . . it will be wrong to have three soldiers and call the three soldiers an army. It is wrong. I have heard several times in this house that we in Africa or we in Nigeria want only the best. What I have been informed now, sir, is we can have a few soldiers (with a few dane guns perhaps) and then call them the Nigerian army – a mockery of what is known as 'army' elsewhere . . . a Nigerian army that will cost half a million pounds cannot be an army. It is impossible for Nigeria to get an army with only four million pounds' – (Cry of, 'Liberia is using the word 'army'!') – 'Well, if you want an army like the one in Liberia, then may God help you!'

The soldiers had present reason to be grateful to him. However when Mr Jaja Anucha Wachuku moved for the appointment of a prime minister, it was the CS who replied to the debate; those who had been led by Malam Abubakar's domination of the house to expect him to answer, imaginatively conjectured that a disillusioned northerner was ruminating in silence whether it would not have been better had he been leader of an all-NPC team. But of course he simply recognized political inevitability, and he also recognized equably the propriety of the governor's deputy explaining what was still a decision for Westminster sovereignty.

After the budget session of 1955 the combined portfolio was again, and definitively, divided and Malam Inuwa Wada became federal minister of works, leaving Abubakar to concentrate on what were now his engrossing interests; these included discreetly encouraging the director of aviation in Mbadiwe's ministry, Wing-commander Eric Coleman, to ease the creation of Sharwood-Smith's present enthusiasm, a northern regional air communication flight. With first one, then two single-engined, high-wing, fabric-skinned Auster *Autocars* as a beginning, 'NRCF' cut from days to hours the northern governor's and ministers' urgent tours, despite the scepticism of junior financial officials who suspected all Sharwood-Smith's ploys as grandiose extravagances, and had yet to learn that time was indeed money. The flight was managed by the Kaduna governor's office, and the deputy secretary to exco there was more than once to arrange under direction that the minister of transport 'borrowed' an Auster for duty trips to Bauchi during party meetings in Kaduna.

Shortly after the first NRCF flight Sir John Macpherson left Nigeria on retirement, handing over to Sir Hugo Marshall a retirement *bonne bouche* of his own, two final months as acting governor-general. Marshall was the former lieutenant-governor in the west who had relieved Sir Arthur Benson (now earning the resentment of white southern Rhodesians after his promotion to govern Northern Rhodesia) as chief secretary to the federation. Marshall was provisionally and then formally succeeded by Grey, who was succeeded in turn at the new joint desk of secretary to the governor-general and council of

ministers by Newns, who had in practice been left undisturbed by Grey in all his original council duties. Grey was a former development secretary who had been brought into the governor's office for the special duty of dividing up the country's civil services and establishing the regional high courts; he had also already acted as CS, as was seen in the last chapter.

Macpherson left behind himself a deep reservoir of genuine goodwill and admiration. The name of his successor was only announced just before he sailed (Macpherson became chairman of a UN visiting mission to Pacific trust territories, and was in New Guinea when Lennox-Boyd's telegram came offering him the permanent headship of the colonial office instead of an expected Washington appointment). Sir James Robertson had been civil secretary of the Sudan and a key figure in what even he, a sympathetic figure, called 'the rush' of that country to self-government since 1951 (a rush enforced by the need which the Sudan civil service perceived to save the mixed cultures and religions of the Sudan from absorption by Egypt, whose claims were naturally supported by the British foreign office and the US government). After retirement he had been chairman of the commission to advise on a return to a workable constitutional government in British Guiana. He was about to become a new, one-man, commission to set up a unified central civil service for the Caribbean federation, when Mr Lennox-Boyd characteristically summoned him after rejecting the other nominees, including the dreaded political names, and offered him at minimal notice a three year contract as the governor-general of Nigeria.

Robertson got his wife's agreement and accepted. He was happily familiar with Africans and with Islam, and his administrative record was long and more than creditable. He was also more familiar with the foreign office, which did not understand administration or the practicalities of government and had left Sudanese internal affairs very much to its civil service, than with the colonial office, which was sensitive to parliament and inclined to offer guidance on matters which interested inquisitive MPs. He was a big man (such as the Sardauna preferred), simple of speech, assured, lacking in pomp, and possessed of a pawky humour. He was, needless to say, a Scot. *'Tell me, Mr Whalley'*, Malam Abubakar said to his new private secretary, another former ADO in Bauchi, *'the acting governor-general tells me that we are to have a James Robertson. Is there a rule in the colonial office that we are only to be governed by Scotsmen? Will he speak English?'* It was a fact that the Sudan service tended to have an even greater proportion of Scotsmen than the colonial service.

Not long before Sir James's voyage out to Lagos, Britain submitted its dispute with Chile and Argentina over the sovereignty of the Falkland islands to the international court at the Hague, but neither of the claimant countries agreed to submit their counter-claims. Sir Winston Churchill had in old age relinquished the office of her Majesty's first minister and was succeeded by Sir Anthony Eden, the long waiting heir-apparent. Eden had just been gratified to see his 'middle eastern NATO' or central treaty organization (Cento) founded with the accession of Britain to the Baghdad pact between Turkey and Iraq, although he was disappointed that the western powers, Egypt, Iran, Jordan and Pakistan all still held aloof; nevertheless West Germany had been a welcome acceder to NATO, just when the eastern bloc had created the 'Warsaw pact'. At the British general election in which the Conservatives increased their majority, Abubakar said one morning to his PS after hearing the radio news, *'Good news, Mr Whalley, we have gained 59 seats over all the others.'* The new government also meant that the colonial office could submit the papers which they had been hoarding up to cabinet level again. Soon afterwards Eden set up a colonial

policy committee of the cabinet, with the lord president of the council chairing the colonial, commonwealth and foreign secretaries and the minister of defence. They were delegated to see to the running-down of the colonial empire and to the disposal of the residue. Their part in what followed was never noticed, if co-ordination and direction of agreed policy was what was expected of them.

Sir James Robertson's arrival culminated in the swearing-in ceremony in front of the law courts, with Foley Newns reading out the instrument. His early journeys of familiarization round Lagos and the regions were no excuse for politicians and civil servants to wait and see what changes he would wish to press on them; too many springs were already wound up and turning. He accepted that in the north, as in the Sudan, there was no reservoir of educated men outside the civil service, unlike the south (and India) where there were already some anxiously waiting for their opportunity. What did surprise him, knowing that he was likely to be the last governor-general, and with fresh memory of how the responsible politicians had thrown discretion to the winds in the Sudan, was how little Nigeria's senior professional men understood of the division of powers between federation and regions in the new organization, and still more how few senior posts were held by Nigerians. This was particularly evident in those core areas where qualifications to practise were not accredited by independent boards of internationally recognized professional examiners, in other words the administration, the police, education and the army. He speedily addressed himself to Kerr Bovell, the inspector-general of police, newly arrived from a senior assistant commissioner's post in Malaya, and to the general officer commanding who, though still keen on localization, felt himself part of a west African military family, and whose officers still tended to keep themselves socially apart from the civil administration.

Critics have preferred the charge, with apparently good evidence, that the colonial office and the local administrations themselves regarded the protection of the conditions of service and future prospects of career expatriates as their highest priority. Yet the defence is not entirely unjustified, that those who felt themselves to be held responsible to world opinion for the well-being of African millions under their sway, rather than merely for the thousands of politicians and functionaries understandably thirsty for ascendancy over their millions of fellow citizens, were moved by concern for stability for those millions rather than for emotional satisfaction or power for those thousands. It is also a tenable proposition that they were equally, however paternalistically, concerned with the long-term prospects and conditions of the indigenous staff. The existing senior men, and their weaknesses, were known: their replacements would be a quantity quite unknown, especially if to be catapulted precipitately without training or tutelage into the top posts but with an apparent guarantee of decades of secure future tenure. Robertson was conscious of the unweighable dangers but, unexpectedly for a Merchiston Castle school old boy, was cannier than his Watsonian predecessor, although like him he did not propose to give himself the time or luxury to develop sentimental attachments. His first problem was to reconcile the crying need to localize the newly separated federal civil service, so skilfully excised by Ralph Grey in his special duties, with the attendant problems of backing up the newly separated southern Cameroons civil service, of maintaining links with the newly autonomous northern, eastern and western civil services (so that they did not drift irrecoverably apart in their conditions and prospects), and of implementing the newly published second Gorsuch report on the structures of all of these five public services. Gorsuch

did not acknowledge that powers taken from Lagos ought to downgrade those ministries that had no federal-wide responsibilities over regional authorities. The very real autonomy which the regions now enjoyed led to rapid divergences which were to be Malam Abubakar's own problems in the next phase of change; and this is why some passages on the griefs of bureaucrats are necessary here and later, which political historians tend to find an irrelevant aggravation.

Every bureaucratic reorganization designed to promote economy, efficiency and a rapid response to the vagaries of public and political demand tends to result instead in expansion and rapid promotions. The eating of the pudding often proves that individuals do not necessarily do a better job because their own post is upgraded and better remunerated, whatever the theoretical incentive designed for their successors. Gorsuch and his ancillary grading teams offered a sensible and logical structure which was familiar to Whitehall. It was foreign to men, both indigene and from overseas, attuned since recruitment to one horizontal division between a senior service (into which Nigerians could expect to move, once equally qualified to the overseas incumbents) and a local junior service, and to another vertical division between the bush and the secretariat. There was also the inflationary error of assimilating the expatriates' inducement element into all the more senior or directorate salaries (the 'superscales', as described in the last chapter), which gave many a young man who earned fast promotion in a small stream double the salary of his peers elsewhere who faced competition in greater waterways. The 'knock-on' effect on politicians' salaries, and thence on commercial rewards, opened a gap between the leaders and the led which was, as Macpherson had foreseen, to cause irreparable moral damage.

The north, led by Sharwood-Smith and Guillum Scott, thought the new Gorsuch proposals extravagant, but accepted the principles: the 'Sharwood bounty' (the governor's retirement structuring and promotion list) was ultimately to make certain that the bush officers gained at least as many promotion posts in proportion as the Kaduna people, and meanwhile Guillum Scott encouraged the establishment heresy that some permanent secretaries were less equal than their ministers, and provided a lower tier for the less vital. Northern ministers were more concerned to be satisfied that the new advisory public service commission delegated no powers to residents, lest they appoint any southerners; provincial appointment advisory committees had to send recommendations for even the most junior established posts to the Kaduna PSC. Dr Azikiwe in the tax-shy and relatively poor east tended to keep all the ministry gradings lower, and to treat the central machine as an enlarged colonial secretariat rather than a team of chrysalis ministries; this was economically sound, but coupled with a hard line on the expatriation pay proposals (the 'inducement addition') and a deliberate deflation of the importance of bush work, not unfortuitously encouraged eastern overseas officers to look forward to premature retirement. Those rises that were given did however lead to pay rises for legislators, to 'preserve a proper balance', and by enhancing pensions in east and west to increasing the attractions of terminal 'lump sum compensation'. The west continued the process begun by the AG, with fully developed ministries and public service commission, transformation of the provincial administration into a virtual inspectorate and source of county council clerks for the local government ministry, and a ruthless approach within the constitutional provisions to localization. The federal service largely accepted Gorsuch, but held back full implementation in hopes that the cross-flow, for which there was now no central control, might soon settle down

of the many Nigerian officers who were seeking voluntary transfer to lush pastures in their own home regions, or were escaping threatened discrimination in the regions where they found themselves assigned; there was also contrary pressure from overseas officers denied promotion in their regions for transfers to the expanding Lagos bureaucracy, where premature superscale promotion was common.

The need to increase the proportion of northerners in Lagos was recognized, but Malam Abubakar was in no position in the existing circumstances to hint to Sir James, the chief secretary or the administrative secretary (Leslie Goble, who did the actual postings) where they might come from, when they were also desperately needed by the Sardauna in Kaduna. It was a minimal, but happy, consolation to him that Malam Yahaya Gusau had chosen to resign from the house of representatives to which he had so recently been re-elected, in order to become a government education officer, a post from which only three months later he was seconded (after consultation between Robertson and Sharwood-Smith, in order to consider ministerial reactions) to be an influential member of the new federal public service commission: this also meant that while congenial northern friends living permanently in Lagos remained so few, Malam Abubakar had a close private link, two or three times a week, with a wise man no longer intimately tied down by the shackles of politics and policy. A less vexatious act of co-ordination for the new governor-general was to satisfy himself that a royal visit, mooted guardedly by the office and palace before he left Britain, would be welcome in Nigeria and raise no jealous hackles on Nkrumah's or Arden-Clarke's napes in the Gold Coast.

Soon after Robertson's arrival he gave strong encouragement to the creation of a national economic council and a national council of natural resources. A committee of ministers was also set up under the chairmanship of the financial secretary, who until August 1957 was Algar Robertson (the substantive FS)'s deputy, George Carlyle 'acting up'. This committee's task was to turn the competing proposals from all federal ministries into a coherent development plan worthy of the name; but the minister of transport was not a member and his first bid to finance a railway extension to the north-east, for which Shettima Kashim had originally pressed, was turned down. Malam Abubakar had two meetings with Carlyle in the attempt to change the committee's mind or to find new funds elsewhere, and on the second occasion quite lost his normal politeness in his disappointment. Abubakar's long-standing suspicion of FSs had been enhanced by the mystified awareness of the camouflaged fence which earlier FSs and Algar Robertson had erected round the federal reserves, a fence which possibly only Muhammadu Ribadu among the country's colonial-period ministers had the financial wit to penetrate. The purpose had been to conceal their amount until ministers were matured enough by hard experience of responsibility not to indulge in a spree of squandermania. Whether or not they had now learnt this lesson, the development plan was the occasion for Carlyle to expose them to the truth; but Abubakar, being outwith the magic circle, seemed to think (just as he had once disbelieved the evidence of geologists) that the whole truth must be even greater, and said as much in the full council of ministers. He refused even to believe the evidence of the country's audited balance sheet. Sir James achieved a compromise by suggesting that a railway extension might be added as an annex to the plan, to be added if at any time more funds should materialize, thus resurrecting a form of the obsolete estimates appendix 'T' mentioned in chapter 16. In April 1956 the colonial office became involved in finding finance for the whole plan,

and being anxious to attract the world bank towards a loan for some scheme in Africa, lit upon the railway extension tucked into this annex.

The minister of transport's uncomprehending fascination with engineering machinery had clearly by now transferred itself to his railway. The government railways had after the passage of the bill now formally become a corporation, and Ralf Emerson had become a chairman as well as a general manager. Malam Abubakar had a good working relationship with the ex-sahib, who had impressed many others as being irascible. None yet knew that he was developing what was later to prove an inoperable brain tumour. Emerson asked his minister to dinner one night and placed him beside the superintendent of the school of radiography. During social conversation she asked Abubakar what he was reading at the moment. The answer was not what she might have expected: *'Das Kapital'*.

The international bank mission had recently delivered its report on Nigeria's future economic development, a report which (in the opinion of some) expected more of Nigerian taxpayers', and a few of their local and national rulers', readiness to face the implicit cash and borrowing challenges than was reasonable. Despite such scepticism, the disparate trio of Abubakar, Emerson and Varvill, with the federation's financial and economic specialists in the background, but now caught up with the colonial office's desire to score, were able to persuade the world bank to 'put the money up front' to finance the railway development which the minister had promised to Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi and Maiduguri: this was to be one of the few major rail route-extensions to be constructed anywhere in the world after the second world war.

Those who believed in the flexibility of road transport, particularly the PWD engineers, still doubted the economics of the rail scheme; none doubted the sincerity of Malam Abubakar's own belief that a good rail system, evacuating from the feeder roads, was the most efficient route from the groundnut buying points to the ports, and that the passage of the likely line through Tafawa Balewa was a happy coincidence and no causative factor. He chose to travel north by train on his way to the formal installation by the northern governor of the new emir of Bauchi, a ceremony which the sultan of Sokoto also attended. As usual, he did not ask for a private saloon, as was his privilege, but only a reserved first class compartment on the regular limited stop train. The deputy chief superintendent, the man responsible for motive power, happened to be travelling on inspection in the same coach. Between Ogunshile and Ilugun the train came to a juddering, clanking halt under the pitiless afternoon sun, nothing unusual for regular travellers. The expert walked to the engine and found that both injectors feeding water to the boilers had failed: he spent ten anxious minutes on the footplate trying to make one work while watching the pressure glasses but had, like the driver before him, to admit defeat. The fire was killed, and the guard made contact with Ibadan by hooking the emergency train telephone on to the overhead wires. The expert then walked back, knocked on the minister's carriage door and explained that there was no remedy, that the train had been protected by detonators on the line fore and aft, that the relief sent for from Ibadan was expected at such-and-such a time, and that they should be in Ibadan by so-and-so. He then apologized. *'Thank you, Mr Jaekel'*, said Abubakar, *'It is of no moment. We are not in an aeroplane'*.

The Bauchi celebrations were happy, although there was old-fashioned depression in his education circle that after only ten years the new middle school buildings already required the huge sum of £10,000 to be spent on repairs. The

resident, Humphrey Gill, had had his days brightened by the opportunity to join a retired senior district officer, Humphrey Tupper-Carey, now a re-employed forest estate officer and unofficial game warden, in assessing the variety of wildlife in and about the Yuli forest reserve in Duguri, round which the new emir and the former DO had ridden two years before: it was not yet widely known as Yankari. Malam Abubakar was somewhat sceptical about game preservation for its own sake (as the DO had been about the existence of game there at all in any numbers), and certainly did not expect international tourists ever to come to such a remote wilderness, either for excitement or for pleasure. He was more concerned about an unofficial meeting of all the northern chiefs which it was now known that the sultan was calling in Kaduna in early June 1955.

After the end of the last session of the northern legislature there had been a private meeting of the leading chiefs to discuss where the new constitution was leading Nigeria, and more particularly whether the Sardauna and the NPC were now leading their region. Politicians had been voted more heavy salary increases, and this had included the chiefs on the executive council, who had not been consulted and did not want them (some decided to donate their rises to charity). The premier had embarrassed progressives by an intemperate aside in the legislature to mutilation of thieves and to slaves (*Akwai su kuma*, or 'And we've got them'); he had also annoyed the emir of Kano by inspecting a special guard of honour of NA police outside the royal palace gateway. Many chiefs, not least the honourable ministers without portfolio, saw their position being deliberately undermined by events, to the extent that they could no longer carry out their inherited and religious responsibilities to their people; as they saw it, the new politicians were struggling to assert themselves in the eyes of the peasantry with an ostentation modelled on the ways of the Sardauna (who was at least justified by his birth): yet the peasantry, as the politicians saw it, still obstinately looked to their true chiefs and, what was worse, to those officers of the provincial administration whom they might know best, for guidance. There was a natural chiefly reluctance to voice their forcefully held views in the artificial, if not potentially gladiatorial, atmosphere of the house of chiefs (a reluctance which Sharwood-Smith recognized as more critical than did the new guard, who could not believe that chiefs would play any active rôle in the future Nigeria); but setting that aside, the sultan was after all a co-member with the premier of the governor's executive council: he could not with propriety lead a proper debate on the place of his fellow emirs, their problems and those of the native administrations they headed, certainly not in public, even though the house of chiefs was presided over by a sympathetic governor.

The sultan had telephoned that governor in Kaduna to say that all the chiefs on exco wanted to talk to him. They were disturbed, he said, by NPC intimidation of native courts and interference with NA business, not only by immature and presumptuous ministers but by younger party extremists, some of them hooligan exiles from NEPU. Although these chiefs were members of the government, they only attended the so-called important exco meetings, and much went on about which they were not consulted or involved. The non-English-speakers, dependent on confidential clerks who were equally remote from the political caucus talk that preceded the formal papers, were especially disadvantaged. They could not approve, and did not see how they could carry on. What would happen if they resigned? Their fellow-chiefs who were not on exco were losing confidence in them. Sharwood-Smith told them to hold their hands until he had talked to the Sardauna. Like

his civil servants, he recognized that, whatever consultations on policy the Sardauna as premier might hold privately with the sultan and emir of Kano, all formal exco discussions under the governor's chairmanship that included them and the emir of Zaria and the aku of Wukari were little more than token acknowledgments of their constitutional rights as ministers without portfolio. The complaint reflected a widespread view of the premier as a man determined to rule the whole north, using the traditional rulers as mere agents, and whom very few traditionalists or NPC supporters dared to challenge. It was not only older administrative officers set in their ways, or thoughtless younger ones, who found that conflict with less experienced politicians and their hangers-on was difficult to forestall, because conflict was actively sought; some chiefs thought that some ministers, as well as smaller fry, were now too full of their own importance – importance developed out of nothing more than some lesser title or office which had led first to easy election and then to easy nomination to some ministry. There had been some embarrassing interviews between chiefs and their British advisers, whose own frankness and probity was beginning to look questionable as they lost their moral powers. One example is enough.

The Emir of Bauchi, Adamu Jumba, came to tea and asked the deputy secretary to the executive council in Kaduna, as his own old confidant, if he might express his worries as frankly as he had a few years before when a son had once had a bad report from Zaria secondary school. 'What is going to happen? Our people do not understand. They know their chiefs and follow them; they see that a few bad chiefs have been simply thrown out by the governor (*gwamna ya ficce su kurum*); they understand that. Mallams are given to them to choose from, who will then be their voice in Kaduna or Lagos, but then these mallams do not even come back and ask them what they think now or tell them what new thing has been done. They are not their voice, not at all. Some mallams are made ministers, and we do not know if they have real power to tell doctors and teachers and DOs what to do: their knowledge is not enough for that. With the will of God, and I am grateful to Him, I am now emir of Bauchi: are they above me? The governor wound the turban on my head and gave me my red [gilded] staff, not they. Our own school teacher [Malam Abubakar] is a good man, and we trust him because he respects us although his speech may hurt us. But the Sardauna is not the sultan. The other ministers are strangers to most of us. Our elected members (*wakilai*) still greet us with words, but we see that they only want to take our chieftainship away from us, they do not greet us with their hearts'. He might have been portraying a constituent, grateful to be citizen of a stable country, but resentful of his MP who seemed to be effusive at an election canvass but was never seen or personally heard from again.

There followed a conversation about 'democracy', a word which even in the Arabicised version which had penetrated the Hausa tongue left most hearers quite as doubtful of its true sense in the absence of practical experience of its virtues as it had Abubakar in his speech (quoted in the last chapter but one) on the native authority bill the year before. The emir saw no problem in opening up even further his own accessibility to ordinary people who had ideas and difficulties to tell him about; after all, the sultan himself said, 'I for my part have always regarded myself as the servant of my people', and the supplanting of a sole native authority by a chief-in-council was a horse well-saddled for a journey. But self-government? '*Mulkin kai* [self-government]? That is something new that happens in Kaduna and Lagos, the people cannot see it. If it means the DO and other Europeans are to go, we none of us want it, not

one. How can we have self-government? Are you going to go away and leave us in our ignorance? Look at these shillings! Can we make them? No, they're made in England and brought here for us to use as money. When our own people can stamp (G) our own coins, let us talk about self-government'. The emir went away without feeling any reassurance from the advice that the only help he could properly look for was from the sultan and the emir of Zaria, the honourable members of exco; and the governor was told of the conversation, as so many similar exchanges were reported from other sources, some even more naïve. The same emir was to say to K P Maddocks when acting as governor, 'Why do you British have to leave us?'

The governor had then had a series of private talks and tea-parties with chiefs, particularly with the emir of Gwandu alone, and had arranged to open a semi-formal session of the emirs of Kano and Zaria sitting with all the ministers holding portfolios except for the Sardauna (who was resting at Jos), Aliyu turaki of Zaria and Abba Habib. He left the sultan to take the chair and the secretary to the governor to make a secret record. The sultan had been restrained, almost quiescent with discomposure, so that the legitimate criticisms were muted, but the ministers promised greater future consultation and co-operation with native authorities, and the senior chiefs withdrew their suggestion of resignation from exco, although without showing much conviction. The aku of Wukari was not present, but was 'kept in touch'. Piqued by the affair, the premier began to talk about a unilateral demand for immediate regional self-government, but disavowed it when Malam Abubakar heard of the unrest and brought his own strongest pressure to bear, although the Sardauna's first response to this was to offer to 'make the supreme sacrifice'.

An intriguing background to this passage is that not long beforehand the makama of Bida and Muhammadu Ribadu had seriously discussed the desirability of trying to bring Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa back to the north as premier; they had thought he would be better able to 'handle' Sharwood-Smith, who had a stiff repute as the determined British strong man with the iron trousers, contrasted with the more flexible and diplomatic strong man with the velvet glove, Macpherson. The Sardauna, they believed, although drifting apart from his governor, would always draw back from a final break with the man who knew him so well, for fear of it reducing his chances of succeeding to the sultanate. Ribadu discussed the idea with Malam Abubakar Imam; it was no new thought, after all. Abubakar Imam advised him against what he saw as amounting to impeachment, since in his view the north was more in need of a premier who could face up to the emirs than to Sharwood-Smith. The Sardauna later heard a tactful version of the story from the makama and Ribadu, and thanked Abubakar Imam for 'saving his neck'.

There had been two similar occasions, between the closing months of the 'Macpherson' constitution and this chiefs' meeting, when the minister of transport's Lagos telephone rang with messages about potential NPC palace revolutions which were never to take place. Malam Abubakar would argue out the case, in semi-seriousness and total trust, with his private secretary: if he did go back north, he knew he could make something of it despite the *masu sarauta* (emirs and title-holders), but who then could manage the Lagos end? Ribadu, Kashim, Wada, all were still lightweights in any combat with seasoned southerners. And what could the Sardauna be expected to do if he found himself leading an internal opposition? Remain quiet and content? If one side could organize a political coup, so no doubt could anyone else. 'We politicians, we are all butterflies in a thunderstorm!'

The colonial office saw things differently within their world perspective. The departmental head Christopher Eastwood and under-secretary Williamson believed that if the chiefs had left *exco*, it would have led inexorably to the Sardauna's downfall, despite his popularity with the crowds. They speculated on whether Shettima Kashim, for all his agreeability with the other ministers, 'carried the big guns' to enable him to take over, rather than bringing Abubakar Tafawa Balewa back from Lagos; or whether Sharwood-Smith's gingerly use of the emir of Kano to counterbalance the Sardauna might be having the result of that chief now seeing himself as the future premier. They were swayed by their own assessments from all their sources of information, that the northern government worked more smoothly when the Sardauna was absent on his tours and travels, that the governor was only papering over the cracks with the traditional rulers, and that a change in the northern leadership would be good both for Nigeria and for the region's unity. Williamson summarized it by saying that, as the French had not yet learnt, one could govern by consent, or one could govern by force, but one could never govern by logic.

Sir Bryan had talked to the Sardauna, as he had promised the sultan he would, and reminded him of previous cool conversations, when he had warned the premier of the danger of letting mischief-makers rampage under NPC colours, but had been told that they were safer there than under command of NEPU, UMBC or their allies. Now the chiefs were holding him responsible for the same villains' extremism and backstairs intrigue. The Sardauna's reaction had been bleak, but he had suggested that the sultan call another meeting of emirs and other leading chiefs from the whole north; they could present their grievances again openly, the ministers would put their own point of view, and all would then be finally settled. This having been agreed and arranged in principle with the sultan, things fell apart. Sharwood-Smith was the governor, the fount of honour, the president of both the house of chiefs and the executive council, and the man to whom the sultan had appealed; the governor intended to address the meeting briefly on why they had been called, perhaps to say something on his personal vision of the 'twelve pillars' (to be explained in chapter 23), to leave them to crystallize their thoughts in a free private forum, and only then to allow the ministers to go in and work out an understanding together. The Sardauna was the premier, chafing at being number two in a council where officially the CS, AG and FS were still numbers three to five, and where the four chiefs had an equally high courtesy placement; his intention was to go straight in with no introduction by a governor, and to 'explain' the political reality without giving the chiefs any chance to prepare themselves and present a united front. The premier's tactics were sound, in a short term political perspective, if he only wished to stifle open criticism: the governor's strategy was sound, if the sultan were not to stay sulkily silent, the others to sit humiliatedly tight, and the clash of wills to remain unresolved for the foreseeable future. At their meeting in the governor's study the Sardauna stormed and led the ministers out in anger, while Sharwood-Smith said miserably that he would think it over and bring it up again. He knew that there was an emotional private involvement and rivalry for affection in the background, which was preoccupying the premier.

The governor took the train to Kano to present the insignia of the CMG to the emir, whose NA reforms were for the present effective and highly popular; Sir Bryan was doggedly convinced that in 1955 the NPC and the traditionalists and natural rulers could not yet afford to fall out with each other, and that it was still a kind of foreign sentimentalism that could believe in some third force

wresting any popular support from either or both of them. If the masses saw those natural rulers whom they loved as weakened by the British suzerainty, the new title holders and elected 'mallams' were still very much on popular probation as a substitute, he thought; classless malcontents and semi-literates were nowhere in the running. His deepest depression lay in what he thought had been his first true crisis of confidence with his ministers, and in admitting it to a new governor-general in Lagos and secretary of state in London.

Muhammaddu Ribadu rang the Kano residency from Kaduna to say that the northern federal ministers had arrived from Lagos. Malam Abubakar Dawa Salawa had heard the story from the regional ministers and had spoken frankly to Abba Habib and Isa Kaita especially (the Sardauna had been talking against going directly for 'SG 56', and had looked to them for support against the emir of Kano and others who agreed with Abubakar and Shettima Kachum about the need for better relationships with official advisers and for financial conscience: all ministers' actions were watched, and they could not buy with the public's money or with publicly supplied transport. He had told them that in their federal colleagues' view it was not the governor who was going to hold the place together and reconcile chiefs and ministers, and that it was the young people' who were making the trouble. Abubakar wanted to speak to him as soon as he came home. In Kaduna Abubakar came up to GH, repeated Ribadu's message to Sir Bryan, and went on: he himself wanted an alignment between political leaders and the progressive chiefs; the Sardauna and the governor had grown far too much apart; Sharwood-Smith did not realize what pressures the premier was subject to; he should see him as much as possible - if not daily, then at least make a telephone call. The governor admitted that, although he was popularly thought to have retained firm control of everything, his own considered line since the creation of a premiership had been not to interfere with the Sardauna in anything that was not a 'reserved subject' (perhaps underestimating the effect of his own personality when differences at exco meetings created tension; this *laissez faire* line had disturbed many British officials in the provinces who were still more interested in good government than in political development). Abubakar said, in fittingly school-masterish tones, that he had ensured that the Sardauna would ask for an interview later that day, and that they must try to get back on to their old terms of friendship. He was determined to support the Sardauna, to preserve unity and face.

Sir Bryan's regard for Malam Abubakar's moderating influence and political wisdom reached a height during this agonizing experience, and their meetings and friendly exchanges of written or telephonic assessments of northern affairs became established; Sir James Robertson knew of them all, clicked his teeth occasionally, but raised no objection - the case was special. The Sharwood-Smiths began to parcel paperback thrillers for Abubakar to relax with: he was still a voracious reader of serious history, but he had learnt the soothing effect of fictional pap in a crisis. Sharwood-Smith's practice came to be interpreted by the older generation of observant northerners as using Abubakar as a psychological partner to urge the Sardauna into balanced ways, by applying carrot to the vanity and stick to the petulance; they also thought the northern governor was subtly pointing out to the federal minister of transport what power Abubakar still had in the NPC, which might otherwise be slipping out of his grasp. But others noticed that hereafter Malam Abubakar seldom asserted that 'the north was not ready', even when he continued to make his view clear that

Nigerian self-government must wait awhile.

While the chiefs' meeting was in train, another meeting had been held in Makurdi of the federal representatives from the middle belt, coincident with the merging of the NEPU-leaning but AG-sympathizing Middle Belt People's Party with NPC's nominal ally the Middle Zone League. The chief of the Bi Rom had become incensed with NPC blunders on the plateau, and the merger led to the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) under the presidency of the northern commoner minister without portfolio pastor David Lot, aided by Patrick Doherty. The makama of Bida was saying that the middle belt movement was primarily negative, opposed to the NPC and the Sardauna, rather than inspired by positive plans; the Bi Rom regarded Hausas on the plateau as Hausas did Igbo in Kano. But the movement's political failure so far had sucked many defectors from NEPU and MZL into NPC.

A few days later the NPC held its annual convention in Maiduguri. There was great expression of anti-Igbo feelings, encouraged by descriptions of the treatment of Hausas in the east, and leading to talk of exchanging populations. In the radical and crowded atmosphere of the moment there was a real threat that some of the Sardauna's closest cronies among the party officers would be challenged for re-election, and the president suspended the election; Malam Sule Katagum also sorted out some confusion by moving the readoption of the existing executive *en bloc*. An authoritative belief was engendered, for which material evidence is lacking, that by consensus if not vote the slate of office-bearers was consequently to be left unwiped for five years.

Pedantic proceduralism having been set aside, the convention then looked at self-government, for which the plateau, Potiskum, Zaria and some 'radical' eastern branches had shown support. In the preparatory executive meeting Malams Abubakar and Inuwa Wada had tried to keep this off the formal agenda, although they realized it could not be kept out of spontaneous floor contributions; but the Sardauna insisted that as it was already agreed party policy not to have a fixed date for SG, it would be as well to take the opportunity to emphasize that those who wanted SG before the country was prepared for it, under a strong federation and with access to the sea by river and through Lagos, would only have themselves to blame when they later found out their mistake. He was being encouraged by the very outspoken Isa Kaita and Abba Habib to work for a position whereby the north could claim SG56 after all, if the omens began to be favourable. In the event a local radical did call for SG in 1956, but found no supporters, even among the other radicals. Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa said that he would subscribe to any form of political advance, provided that he could be shown a convincing plan: not a single advocate of early self-government had met that challenge, so he adhered to

'as soon as practicable. . . . Self-rule requires much thought, particularly in the planning of stable local government bodies and allied institutions. We lack qualified men to run the present local government systems, and we have not gone half-way in the construction of local government bodies. To have three court systems all over the north with almost the same powers is improper: this must be set right before considering self-government. Now, other regions that want self-government are still experiencing difficulties in their local council bodies'.

Nobody challenged his sober and solemn assessment, and Aliyu makama and Shettima Kashim supported him. Malam Abubakar spoke afterwards

impatiently of curbing Malam Isa Kaita, whose freedom of comment at this time could, he said, damage the work of others who were united in trying to preserve good relationships outside the party; yet he never forgot that he was his elder from Katsina days: *'he can always come in without being announced, ko da ni ina bayan gida'*.

Meanwhile in Whitehall officials were once again looking towards the future north and resurrecting the human rights issue that Chandos had buried. There were arguments on one hand against encouraging litigiousness, and on another for placing restrictions on liberty for reasons of morality, public order or health. The provisional consensus view was that the constitution to be fashioned next year must give as good a guarantee to Christians as Lugard had given to the Muslims, without giving way to southern demands that would be anathema, such as votes for women or free access to the northern public service. The need for rights in the south must have seemed less arguable to the mandarins, who had some archival problems in discovering the precise terms of Lugard's promise at Sokoto in 1903.

Back in Lagos a contemporary journalist's interview with Malam Abubakar describes him well in his fine, air-conditioned ministerial office, wearing a blue velvet cap and long white net gown, his lively face, with its thin tufted beard and moustache, wreathing and crinkling as his keen political intelligence explained the intricacies of regional and national politics, and how Macpherson's considerable diplomacy had persuaded northerners to associate with the NCNC (*'some well-known [for] doubtful reputations in the past and even criminal records'*). Malam Abubakar now arranged for the appointment of Malam Bukar Dipcharima, who had been working for John Holt's in Bida, as his first parliamentary secretary, to a small extent in anticipation of having a caretaker during a forthcoming overseas journey. In the event the southern Cameroonian Victor Mukete, who was chafing at having no portfolio, was to act for him; Mr Mukete wanted to use the ministry of transport in order to see the northern Cameroons.

The sardauna of Sokoto, with Malam Muhammadu Ribadu, Malam Inuwa Wada, Malam Isa Kaita, the emir of Kano and others had gone for the first time on the holy pilgrimage to Mecca, where the Sardauna experienced a virtual spiritual conversion, producing a new sense of mission and a coat of humility. The Lagos journalist Babatunde Jose was another pilgrim, who was about to be transferred from Enugu to Kaduna. At the same time the first commonwealth law conference had been held in Westminster, there were riots in Morocco, and the Indians made their first attempts to enter the Portuguese enclave of Goa. Malam Aminu Kano led another fruitless NEPU delegation to London, accompanied by Ibrahim Imam (who was otherwise sitting in the wings in Maiduguri), a Mr Nwajeri (an Igbo lawyer from Kano alleged by his opponents to be a communist), Yerima Balla (who had followed Bello Ijumu out of the middle belt lobby), Abubakar Zukogi and a representative lady.

At a federal house meeting Malam Abubakar noticed wryly that Chief T O S Benson, who had been returned for the Lagos west seat after an election petition and been appointed NCNC chief whip, had led three revolts against his ministerial party line. He also said in a court bill debate that, *'a lawyer friend told me that common sense is the best law, so I think I feel rather qualified now to speak on the subject'*, but his main interventions were on aspects of public service, and reflected his reasons for fear of SG haste. Sir Hugo Marshall was the latest senior official to retire to learn that *'the country really needs the*

services of hard-working and honest experienced administrators like him . . . [who] well represented a service the members of which are famous the world over for their integrity, for their loyalty and for their devotion to duty. The British colonial service is a service of which any country in the world can be proud. The attendant holders of the still unaccustomed nomenclature, 'overseas civil service', were pleased to blush.

After pointing out that in welcoming Sir James Robertson, 'it [would] be impossible for him to succeed without the sincere and honest co-operation of members of the legislature', he later had this to say on the 'inducements' of the Gorsuch commission: '*If we want these people to come, we must be prepared to pay them. . . . If you have the courage to say you believe in it in this chamber, you must have the courage to say so outside it. Sir, we must face facts . . . we are competing with the rest of the world in recruiting staff from overseas, and naturally with the advance we are making towards what people call independence, overseas officers would think twice before they came out to serve in this country*'. Another journalist pointed out that northern members were beginning to enjoy the good humour of parliamentary life under a 'coalition' government, even in a house where few received any of their papers to study before they arrived in Lagos; he noted that although the dignified government bench listened more than it talked, it was only the sonorous voice of Abubakar, firm and crisp, that commanded the respect of all sides. Any time he rose, the opposition sat up.

At the end of the meeting the federal minister of natural resources and social services, Chief Adegoke Adelabu, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment with hard labour, without the option, being charged with a contemptuous offence based on going to a native court in the western region to make a protest and calling the judge 'a mad fellow'; he was allowed bail on appeal. The convoluted background to this untoward happening was that a Mr R D Lloyd had delivered a report on riots in Oyo, in which he had advised against the suspension or punishment of the oba, the alafin of Oyo. The western regional government had however suspended this distinguished first-class chief, who was supported by the NCNC. The federal NCNC ministers had angered the regional ministers by certain public comment, and the western minister of local government had contrived to unseat Chief Adelabu from his position on the Ibadan town council by vengefully discovering a technical breach of the local government law. Adelabu had promptly been re-elected with an impressive majority; he had a reputation for being able to mix with unprivileged or uneducated people without condescension, and to make them feel his equal. However in an apparent attempt to keep him personally away from the polls he had been subpoenaed to appear in a civil native court suit on election day, although neither plaintiff nor defendant had called him as a witness. The consequent oral exchanges in the court had created the trouble, but the sentence was that of a magistrate's court. There were those who saw relevance in the native court judge's being father of the town clerk of Lagos, who had been commissioned by the western government to inquire into Ibadan town council's dubious affairs – a commission from which the federal council of ministers, which had succeeded to the western region's former powers over Lagos, had withheld its consent, preferring to import the town clerk of Abingdon in Oxfordshire as a total outsider.

Akintola in the labour ministry was no admirer of Adelabu, whose dealings with Syrian and Lebanese traders seemed to him equivocal, but he took no advantage of him in his present difficulty. Adelabu's disconcerting punishment was not long enough to disqualify him from office, but Robertson called in K

O Mbadiwe and Abubakar to discuss an inquiry into his alleged corruption (Sir James's personal problem was that he had a very soft spot for his errant minister; Adelabu in council would feign that he was just following Robertson's own line, to which the governor-general had to retort that he did not have 'a line' - 'No, sir, but you'll develop one!') Sir James had meant to tell him to go on indefinite leave, but was persuaded to save face when Mbadiwe said he would induce Adelabu to apply for two months' leave. Kola Balogun covered the portfolio, and presumptively on Adelabu's return would assume a permanent portfolio of research and information, the former subject covering the disgraced minister's fuzzy responsibility for federal natural resources, and the latter taking over the chief secretary's public relations office. This would have left Adelabu with social services alone, but in the event he did resign from both the council and the NCNC. Abubakar was content to let his southern colleagues sort out the mess. Adelabu's public habits with alcohol had been more than he could tolerate. He looked for personal psychological contentment in his new union with his fourth wife, another Zainab who was not confused by strangers with Zainab Inni because she was invariably called Umma. But, as has been hinted, Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was also preoccupied: he was bound for a country of young men, God's crucible.

21 New transport in a new world and departure of an old friend

Ku bidi alheri ga mai sakin fuska

Malam Abubakar's enthusiasm for his trip to the great American rivers was rooted firmly in two soils: his concern, which was at its peak, for finding a safe passage for northern exports should the south become foreign or hostile, and his fascination with motive power, engineering and travel. He was perhaps more impressed than many with the continuing significance of the Congo basin convention and other relics of the treaty of Berlin that partitioned Africa in 1884-85, by which the Niger and Congo rivers were 'guaranteed' as international channels of navigation for people of all nations, regardless of who ruled on either bank; in the seventy years that had passed, despite confirmation in the Anglo-French agreement of 1898, no international commission had been set up to enforce such a provision; but the conventional rhetoric was still attractive. It was, it must now be said, a similar thought that had coloured his warm espousal of the corporations and authorities which should be independent of the federal government and its civil service, and only in emergency be subject to directions by some minister who would in the future not be himself. He and Varvill met the PS, Jim Whalley, in London and set off for a three weeks' inspection of transport on American rivers. The arrangements were under the auspices of the US state department, to whom the US consul-general in Lagos had passed the concept once all concerned had had Sir James Robertson's agreement. UAC's Niger river fleet was carrying 170,000 tons annually on routes up to the northern French Cameroons. The independent Netherlands engineering consultants were already looking at their navigability, and had pointed out to the ministry how much their conditions resembled the Mississippi before it had been tamed. Now the visitors wanted to see for themselves the works that trained the direction of the Mississippi and the Ohio, and controlled their floods; the newly designed rivercraft and towing techniques which had transformed the modes of water transport from stern-wheelers; and the relationship between the responsibility and rights of the US federal government's inland water corporation and of the many private companies which ran all that nation's river, road and rail freight. Ralph Grey, the chief secretary, had also asked the British colonial attaché in Washington for reassurances about racism in the southern states, and about the costs of the journey that Nigeria would shoulder.

They spent five days in Washington, where an assistant secretary of state gave a formal dinner in honour of the minister whom he suspected to be at least a potential prime minister. He made the promise that when independence came, American aid and technical advice would be forthcoming. Malam Abubakar detected some urgency to see early independence, but also a degree of patronage in the absence of any word about Britain's part in the process. Unforewarned of any need for speeches, he gave an impromptu reply, to the

effect that the USA had been the friend of Britain as an ally during the war, and that any friend of Britain would be the friend of Nigeria. Then having made his first, curt, foreign policy statement, he sat down. Washington also meant monuments, museums and sight-seeing before the serious inspections began: Malam Abubakar was fascinated by the interpretation centre at the Gettysburg battlefield, unexpectedly identified for his own amusement with a set of previously unknown underdogs who had founded a breakaway confederation of southern states, and brought back a triad of confederate flags which stood lightheartedly on his office desk until republican days (he never fell into the liberal trap of supposing the civil war to have been fought over the issue of slavery, rather than the right of secession); he also escaped from his staff like Haroun-al-Raschid, with the connivance of the black hotel doorman who took him to see where and how his family lived, and there the neighbours were amazed by his northern Nigerian clothes. But there were also talks with the association of railroads about their unfair competition from river and roads: American railways paid for their own track maintenance, but trucks only paid turnpike tolls, and riverboats did not even pay lock tolls; so the railway magnates told him.

The US army corps of engineers became their principal mentors, with the state department attendant, for the rest of the three weeks: these were the specialists who since flood disasters in 1927 had had the national responsibility for control of the waterways. They took the party first to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, high on the Ohio, with its chemical and steel industries; here Abubakar looked hard at the use of reservoirs, some of them fed through locks in the mountains, to retain flood waters for feeding into navigation channels at times of low water, and noted that their use for supplementing manufacturing needs and hydro-electric power was resisted by coal interests and trades unions. Thence they went to St Louis, nearing the junction of the Mississippi. Again the minister tried the caliph of Baghdad trick, with less success: a lift operator totally mistook his interest in being introduced to novelty, and escorted him across the river to a Sapphic establishment specializing in tribadism. When, with some difficulty, he understood what was afoot, he was shocked and returned abruptly: *'Never again!'*

Downstream as far as St Louis the corps maintained navigation on the Mississippi by another chain of locks and dams, a facility which Malam Abubakar was to remember; on the lower river the similarity to the Niger and Benue was greater, with sandbars, banks that caved in and channels that meandered and kept changing. There the engineers dredged the bars and dug straight cut-off canals across the sharper bends. Below St Louis Abubakar looked with admiration at the way in which the riverbanks were stabilized and the channel was made certain for nearly three hundred kilometres, through a process of constriction. A series of timber groynes slowed the water flow and built up silt behind them; once the banks built up, they were revetted, and the main flow kept the remaining channel scoured. The present-day work involved much concrete and mechanical work, but he was also impressed by the effective survival of willow mattresses, weighed down with stone, which had been sunk at the foot of the banks as much as two generations before: if Nigeria still lacked many techniques of the latest heavy engineering, it did not lack manpower for an older style of engineering. However, he looked closely at the economics of the huge grading and sinking 'units'. The grader cut the bank to a pitch of 1:3, cutting two kilometres every six-day week of two ten-hour shifts; this went on

for the four months of low water, after which three-quarters of the work force were paid off and the rest put upon maintenance. The sinker protected the bank below water by laying a continuous mattress of fresh concrete over forty metres wide, down to as much as a hundred and forty or so metres below mean water line. Again, three-quarters of the crew were paid off at the end of the season. The artificial bank was asphalted from crest to low water level. It seemed a potentially valuable way to employ migrant rural labour who would be happy to return home annually with full pockets, and the supervision by a disciplined force confirmed his ideas of the peacetime value of a well-trained and equipped army.

At Vicksburg the visitors saw the headquarters of the Mississippi river commission, and also that of the corps of engineers detachment responsible for the lower Mississippi. This lay two-thirds of the way downstream from Pine Bluff on the tributary Arkansas river to Natchez, which represented about seven hundred and thirty kilometres of unbroken levee. The sheer brilliance of a century's engineering achievements left Malam Abubakar wondering; the capital investment had been vast, but the national dividends from the expansion of industry and agriculture in the river basin had also been heavy. He noted how the waterways experimental station was financed from a revolving fund, raising full economic charges for all its research, including that carried out for the federal government. He also pursued his whimsical fancy during a tour of the Vicksburg fortifications, where the heroics of the rebel defenders and the apparent impregnability of the installation made their mark: *'As long as I am here, no Yankee will get in!'* Finally the party arrived in New Orleans, the point where the freight brought downstream was transhipped from rivercraft to oceangoing ships, and where another engineering wonder was the Bonnet Carre spillway, over two kilometres long, diverting floodwaters into Lake Pontchartrain eight kilometres distant. The last thrill was a flight to see the whole Mississippi delta from the air.

This was the 'deep south' at last, where state department officials still had reason to be nervous about the potential treatment of distinguished visitors who were not white; it was not long since the ambassador of India had been insulted. An official cocktail party was held in the Nigerian minister's honour at the hotel where they were staying but, in spite of the diplomatic hosting, the manager checked over the list of guests for possible black men. The PS mischievously asked, 'What about His Nibs?', meaning Malam Abubakar: the manager seriously replied, 'Oh, he's not a negro'. Once more the significant difference was that he wore Nigerian robes: he was a character from the thousand and one nights, not quite real. He was invited to make a broadcast over the Voice of America, and deliberately tried to impersonate Churchill for nearly ten minutes, impishly explaining the temptation afterwards: *'I studied my English in the house of commons, and I always thought they listened to him over here'*. He also indulged his humour at a ceremony when the mayor presented him with a certificate of citizenship and key of the city, insistent that it was the same privilege that had been bestowed the week before on a Mr Bob Hope; it proved not to be a large key, and he asked his private secretary under his breath whether it might not be the key of the petty cash.

Looking back over the purpose of the visit, he concluded that the operating costs were high and the conditions strenuous, even before translation into Nigerian contexts. The pay was generous, and so were the 122 days' annual holiday

enjoyed by the permanent staff, but men were on duty night and day seven days a week: could such terms hold in Nigeria above the level of skilled manual worker? There was also a substantial difference between the American way and the quasi-corporatism of colonial development. Although the US federal government had since 1928 only left the provision of rights of way and the upkeep of the levees, after they had been constructed, to local interests, there was no single overall authority, and all the carriers were private entrepreneurs. An interstate commerce commission supervised the implementation of the US congress's policy on regulation of surface freight transport, with a view to fair competition for private enterprise, but (as it seemed) to the railways' disadvantage. A Mississippi river commission (including corps of engineers representation) advised on the plans for navigation and flood control, and provided inspections at both high and low seasonal limits. The coastguard service looked after buoyage, lighting and some licensing. The corps of engineers itself did have an annual appropriation of both capital and revenue from congress, a budgeting system which limited any major forward planning, but they had no control over the troublesome industrial pollution. There were voluntary bodies and pressure groups like the Mississippi valley association, which could be friends or foes of the official interests, as circumstances changed. There seemed to be no comparable bases in Nigeria on which to build a network of control and development that Americans might recognise as familiar, and Malam Abubakar could see that the beginning of long term planning for a local solution must await the Nedeco reports.

Nevertheless he had the faith and patience to believe that the Niger and Benue should be tamed to serve national transport needs. The western region could still rely on the railway for initial carriage of its cocoa and bulk foodstuffs; further east, where all the coal and a third of the palm-oil and kernels were carried by rail, competition from the river might benefit Benin, Onitsha and the delta ports, while the railway made no profit from its statutory duty to carry the coal; in the north, the region and the railway relied on each other for export crop evacuation, but the branch line from Minna might be enabled to begin carrying the traffic for which it had been designed, if once imports could come upriver in quantity to the port of Baro, and so relieve the western line. There were stories that the new Sudanese government would extend their own tracks to within 1,300 kilometres of Nigeria. The rail link to Maiduguri, and the French need to export from Garoua, set against the expense of maintaining heavy lorries on laterite trunk roads, seemed to promise a healthy symbiosis of railways and rivers, rather than a cut-throat process of mutual bankrupting. Enthusiastic comparing of notes led to the prompt compilation of the bones of an enthusiastic report, for which the minister, as nominal author, later handsomely asked in the legislature that all the credit be given to his permanent secretary, Michael Varvill.

Years later he confessed to a meeting of the Nigeria Society, held to discuss national unity, that before 1955 he had not believed that Nigeria could ever be united. Then he

'had the privilege of meeting French, German, Polish and other nationalities from different parts of the world whose ancestors had settled in [the States]. They worked together as one people. They were proud to call themselves Americans. They believed that they were one nation, the great American nation. They talked about the American way of life, despite their different backgrounds. On seeing this, I then asked myself: if the United States with more than 160 million people can

regard itself as one in spite of all its diverse constituents, why should Nigeria not be one nation?"

He wrote a letter home to Malam Garba Kafin Madaki, telling him, '*henceforth I was a Nigerian and nothing else*'. It was a conscious political decision, and a moment of truth, more positive than any artificial commitment to pan-Africanism would have been.

Returning by way of New York, Abubakar went inevitably to the top of the Empire State building, where he bought all his fellow ministers souvenir ballpoint pens. A fellow passenger on the flight back to London was the British foreign secretary, Harold Macmillan, who greeted him warmly. Michael Varvill went straight on to Lagos and final drafting, while the minister relaxed for a week and did some more shopping. At Marks and Spencers in Oxford Street Jim Whalley succeeded in finding three managers who had served in the RWAFF and remembered some of their wartime barrack Hausa; they assisted at a hilarious session of pricing and sizing nightdresses for the minister's wives at home. If Whalley could be trusted to escort the minister's wives to a female clinic in Lagos, where he had to translate for them, then lingerie was no cause for prudery. Malam Abubakar went down to Hythe in Kent to visit Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith who was on leave, and called on Tom Williamson at the colonial office to talk about Nigerian affairs. He telephoned Sharwood-Smith to say 'good-bye' and in Lagos reported on his mission to the governor-general, who asked if he had had any difficulties from certain of the American prejudices which other Nigerians had suffered. Sir James was reassured with a knowing chuckle: '*They thought I was an Indian rajah or an Arabian prince, and treated me with great respect*'. There was also news to the point from the Netherlands: Nedeco had made a model test in their hydraulic laboratory at Delft of the Escravos bar, as an extension of their western delta study.

The journey in a confined cabin from 'Yola to Lokoja had persuaded the minister that the Dutchmen's ideas for better north-south communications were based on reason. The tour down the American waterways had now convinced him of their practicality within the parameters of the existing Nigeria, a country whose economy could afford finite and easily calculable numbers – whether of Bedford or Dodge lorries, of kilometres of properly drained all-season laterite roads, of De Havilland *Herons* and Bristol *Wayfarers*, or of improvements to a 1.07 metre gauge railway. Readers who question the importance of individuals, or who seek to trace long-term structural causes of what they may think to be the inevitable products of historical processes, may well regard this riverine diversion as an irrelevance. Nevertheless a recorder of events must remain alive to those uncertainties and possibilities which were the only future known to contemporaries; and people in public life, however inspired their imaginations and ideologies, have always found themselves restricted by the limitations of the people and tools they had around them. Nobody in 1955, not even that colonial office official seconded to Bauchi who had in a rapture astounded his colleagues with a vision of factory chimneys belching smoke in the plain below the Tangale-Waja hills, foresaw the very different resources and frustrations that Nigeria would possess, only one generation later. Whatever the ultimate value of the Niger studies, it is vital for our present purpose to recognise that Malam Abubakar had seen, however briefly, the superpower from which some other west African politicians had acquired their new ideas; he had met many

self-confident white men whose attitudes differed radically from those of the British he knew best; he had been shown technical successes of a degree to which the Britain, which he recognized as an island with a long history and a race unified through chronic pain, seemed no longer to aspire. He was happy to come home (and that meant to Bauchi and the farm), but he now had the primary evidence to support his bookish awareness that Bauchi, Lagos and London might all be places of importance in themselves but that they were all distant from and unimportant to countless millions elsewhere. Yet, though parochialism was being banished from his thinking, his feeling for friendship and trust was not affected.

A trawl for appropriate northerners to be appointed to the governing body of the proposed new central bank (which in the popular mind would replace the west African currency board, the issuer of uniform British colonial paper money for the coast) had produced Bauchi's native treasurer, Malam Yakubu Wanka, who was in consequence to pass on next year the office of the NPC's chief whip in the federal house to Malam Maitama Sule. Malam Abubakar was not yet in any position of spontaneous patronage to advance Malam Yakubu Wanka; on the other hand his political influence could not but be helpful, and he was recognized already as being prepared to encourage promising young men and to take risks on giving them early responsibility. The promised national economic council was set up at the same time, under the governor-general's chairmanship, and still with a predominance of officials in the Lagos and the northern membership, to meet the IBRD's recommendations that there should be some machinery that might encourage the federation to cohere financially.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo saw Sir James Robertson at this time for their first important discussion, as all began to look forward to next year's conference. Many of his views, expressed in confidence, were remarkably close to Malam Abubakar's own, it appeared. Under a sensible constitution, he said, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa should simply have been invited to form a government, and a new one was needed. He did not wish to see the balances changed at the next conference; he wanted more regions in theory, yes, but not if this were to force the north out. He wanted a separate Benin-delta (or mid-west) region simply because these provinces were a liability to his Action Group government, but he had no idea how it would be financially possible; he admitted that he had not considered how untrained and inexperienced men could administer newly self-governing states. The centralism of Azikiwe and the NCNC was a mistake in such a large country, but a senate would redress the northerners' predominance in the house of representatives. The ministers' code of conduct should be extended to prevent federal ministers meddling in regional affairs and *vice versa*. He confirmed that like the easterners he expected SG in 1956, and took it for granted that it would not be withheld just because a current team of ministers might have ruined internal or external confidence - Britain could always step in to repair damage. However if the conference did regionalize the police, governors should retain the reserve powers, and also powers in relation to obas and natural rulers. He did not wish to see a conference held in volatile Lagos unless it might be made an offence to publish anything about its proceedings except official handouts. Unsure how seriously to take the last point from a politician whose party had its own newspapers, Sir James was much reassured by the rest of what he heard, much though it differed from Awo's public outbursts; some of the NPC were still troubling him with their talk about a minimal central body like the east African high commission,

and Abubakar himself had not banished a 'central agency' entirely from his vocabulary either, even if it no longer featured in his serious plans. It also emerged that the Ibadan government was no longer as opposed to the honours system as it had become upon internal self-government. Awolowo did not say that he expected a Calabar-Ogoja-rivers region to be carved out of the east, nor that he hoped that that in turn would make a middle belt region irresistible.

In November 1955 Robert Wright took early retirement from the service, and a duty visit to Kaduna allowed Abubakar a last meeting on home grounds with the man whose advice, help with language, and moral support had assisted his mounting of the lower steps of political life. Wright's views had not changed. Abubakar had accepted them as any pupil does his teacher's, even after he came under the influence of other worldly-wise and experienced Africans and more powerful but trusty British officers with whom he now related as his equals or loyal subordinates. Wright had had doubts of the wisdom of using Westminster democracy in a self-governing Africa, but had recognized that at least any government must have an educated and responsible opposition; this had been why as principal of the Yalwa training centre he had also advised, encouraged and warned (but with less acknowledgment) his lecturer Aminu Kano who, unlike the emirs' nominee Abubakar, had no NA establishment power-base and so must one day create a following and fight for votes himself. Since 1951 Wright and Abubakar had had fewer exchanges, but now for the last time, as ever, the teacher urged upon the former pupil the thought that for the politicians to make democracy work in Nigeria they would have to show qualities of generosity undreamt of in their philosophy. That meant, he said, that Abubakar would have to attempt to tone down what some other people were beginning to call the excesses of the Sardauna, for the other regions would not put up with him for ever. Wright reminded him that in 1947 he had given the south cause to respect, if not to fear, the power of the north; in 1950, when he had first threatened to abandon politics, Wright had convinced him that it was his destiny to show the statesmanship which alone could keep the country together, a task for which no one else was fitted.

To the question which Abubakar consistently put to so many of the expatriates to whom he said farewell, '*Why are you leaving us when so much remains to be done?*', Wright's response had to be in part that he was sickened by Britain's apparent eagerness to shed responsibility, particularly in the failure to exercise reasonable restraint on the Sardauna; giving the Sardauna his head, he said, certainly made Malam Abubakar's job of driving the federal team all the harder. He was unpersuaded by Sharwood-Smith's policy of avoiding 'interference' or too frequent exercise of restraints, since it was not recognized by ministers or public that the governor was being cautious; remoter sanctions seemed to be less, not more, effective, and he did not accept the governor's opinion that the premier was now 'a changed man'. That there was nothing now that Wright could do to help his pupil and friend was recognized by both.

The more direct disillusionment in Kaduna was also of concern to the minister as a student of government machinery. The appointment as permanent secretary had been personally unsatisfactory to Wright. Most of the new permanent secretaries had been administrative officers, because Sharwood-Smith and the Sardauna had with some reason believed former district officers

to be more understanding and tolerant of political issues. The professional heads of departments had all in varying degrees resented this laying of ministry cuckoos in their familiar nests. Wright, as a former DO himself but now a departmental officer, saw himself as neither flesh nor fowl, while others affected to see him as a diplomatic compromise who ought to do more to smoothe his fellow educationists' ruffled feathers. The constitution now laid down that, subject to the direction and control of the minister, the department should be under the supervision of the permanent secretary ('*What meaning has English?*' Abubakar once asked Whalley about this title, with some poetic licence, '*I have had thirteen so far*'). Wright was of an independent nature, but he had little information and less authority in his ministry, since in practice the northern education department continued to be energetically controlled, directed and supervised by the director, Tony Shillingford, while Robert Wright regarded himself as merely another staging post in the paperchase; they and their gentle but determined minister, Aliyu the makama, were a trio of good friends, but Wright felt he himself had little influence other than as a balance weight between the other two. He was also distressed by what he termed the alarming pace at which authority for policy was thrust on those ministers who seemed more interested in expensive cars, large official houses and immediate nepotism. He sensed a lack of direction from governor and civil secretary other than *laissez faire* ('they are the masters now, let them have whatever they want!'). Sharwood-Smith's policy towards the premiership has been explained. Some of Wright's peers were more forgiving ('there's no point in having a row over every little excess; save the showdown for a battle worth fighting'), but sceptics believed that resistance delayed would be resistance ultimately denied; permanent secretaries naturally saw little directly of the governor, and perhaps overrated even his influence on egocentric ministers.

The financial secretary, Guillum Scott, turned the ratchet further by a unilateral decision that, as in Whitehall, departmental finances should be controlled by the ministry permanent secretaries. This was seen by the directors, for whom politics meant only the clash of competing personalities, as callous disregard of the reactions of very senior departmental servants, and contrary to the spirit of the previous interpretation of the constitution, whatever the revised letter might suggest. As they understood it, the head of the department shared an organizational partnership with, but was not subordinate to, the permanent secretary, since each had right of access to the minister at will; the minister and permsec were there to consult the director, to win popular approval and budgetary resources from exco and legislature, but not to involve themselves in running, disciplining or improving the department, be it health, education, works or whatever other subject. Although this controversy spread until full integration was achieved of the old colonial departments into divisions of the new ministries, and professional advisers were substituted for the old directors, Wright grew weary of the task of merely pouring oil on troubled waters (or on flames), and unhappily confessed that he had lost interest. His real heart had been in provincial work relating to human beings, and it was too late to return there from the world of paper and tantrums. Malam Abubakar understood the philosophical problems, and was forced to come to terms with a future in which there might be few or no such confidants whose very foreignness might make their opinions the more valuable for being, in local terms, disinterested. They met again in Britain socially, but the Nigerian parting was sad and hard. Wright never received an honour for his devoted service.

Malam Abubakar's official interests remained weighted towards the army advisory council, which had taken him to Kaduna to chair its second meeting. *'West Africa command will cease to exist next July [1956] and the Royal West African Frontier Force will be in three separate commands, for Nigeria, for the Gold Coast, and for Sierra Leone and The Gambia respectively, each having its own commander and staff'*, he announced (they would still be subject to the British army council in London).

'It is not intended that the change in command structure should result in complete isolation of the forces of the four west African territories. There are common problems and common needs. It is in the interests of all that such matters as the training and type of equipment of troops should not diverge unnecessarily, and that west African governments should keep in contact with each other on technical and policy matters. It is therefore proposed that the army advisory council for west Africa, which was created in 1954, should be kept in being. Moreover, west African governments are now considering what proposals might be made to her Majesty's government in the united kingdom for the appointment of military advisory staff to assist in the co-ordination of west African defence'.

The mutual comfort of the British west coast family, headed self-consciously by Nigeria but under the imperial umbrella, seemed not yet to be in doubt in these words. Others heard in them a clear end of any west African contribution to commonwealth defence in a future world war. Yet contemporary comment from liberal observers is also apposite: 'The Gambia is a colony where no politician thinks of independence'; 'the biggest of those British colonies which at present seem neither rich nor big enough to sustain independence is Sierra Leone'; 'the strength of the Gold Coast's currency, about to be issued, well backed by enviable reserves and a dollar surplus, is a strong support for her claims to independence (but political party rivalry, and calls for regional devolution, may hamper her self-government in 1956)'.

If the Gold Coast's wealth and stable future seemed certain, and with it her competence to secure her independence and mutual security with her friends, the cloud signalling change that was to overshadow and transform Nigeria's prosperity and equilibrium now grew visibly for those who were looking at it. Spasmodic references have been made in this survey to oil. Indeed a Nigerian bitumen company had once explored near Lagos and had found traces of a thick, unmarketable substance in 1908, but it had closed down in the year before Abubakar was born. Shell D'Arcy, already named twice, had been conducting gravity and seismic surveys over a concession area of over 155,000 square kilometres from 1938 until wartime difficulties caused a suspension between 1941 and 1946. Having spent £6 millions, they had hastened matters in 1951 by adopting aerial surveys of 38,000 square kilometres of the delta, that would have taken many decades on the surface and were only possible on the few clear days in each month, but which were completed by April 1953. The first test well had been spudded in near Owerri in September 1951, and abandoned, dry, when it had reached 3,350 metres deep. Then a 'showing' of oil and gas had been found in November 1953, as the tests moved southward. Now oil was found at Oloibiri, in quantities larger than any since prospecting had begun. And still many people admired the prospectors' perseverance but few drew any conclusions.

A year after the renaming of the colonial service, work was finally stopped on the foundations of the new colonial office in Westminster. A Bi Rom

cadet, Mr Yakubu (James) Pam, was the fifth northern Nigerian to gain his Queen's commission in the army after training in Britain. Other overseas occurrences included the return of the kabaka to Buganda and the return of the sultan of Morocco Mohamed V from his exile in Tangier, after violence had broken out in his own country; the declaration of a state of emergency in Cyprus after a long series of terrorist bombings; the withdrawal of the Union of South Africa from the united nations general assembly, because the organization still insisted on considering a 1952 Cruz report on apartheid; and continuing rioting in Cameroun. In the eastern region, although Mazi Mbonu Ojike had been cleared of specific corruption by the 'Ikpeazu' commission of inquiry mentioned in chapter 19, he and Mr Michael Awgu were found 'corrupt' by the eastern Nigerian bribery commission, and both were asked by Zik to resign; the western regional government also invited Ibadan district council to remove its ex-minister but re-elected chairman Mr Adegoke Adelabu. A report by a visiting mission from the federation of British industries created worry and resentment in equal proportion: illustrating ordinary businessmen's practical fears of political uncertainty, administrative chaos and lack of natural resources, it advised the withholding of further further risk investment in Nigeria until the future became clearer after 1956, or whenever self-government should come. Northern critics of the FBI noted that the firm of Whiteheads had nevertheless invested heavily in a textile project in Kaduna, despite heavy inducement to go to another region, because the site was nearer to the cotton growing areas and there were fewer strings attached to the contracts. In Tilden Filani, on the boundary of Bauchi with the high plateau, a celebratory beacon was given protection as a national monument, to commemorate fifty years of tin-mining.

NEPU sent yet another delegation to London to insist on the abolition of electoral colleges, and Malam Aminu Kano was received by Christian Action before seeing the minister of state on 4 January 1956. His party had had the boost to morale of having defeated the NPC in the election to Zaria's new town council (where rival NPC 'traditionalist' and 'progressive' candidates were unable to avoid splitting their own votes). Their move was made in hopes of pre-empting a preliminary constitutional conference on 6 January ('Lordy, how many of them we had!' the chief secretary had said after the previous one): this conference was to prepare for the full conference that had been promised by Lyttelton for August. Malam Abubakar had by now confirmed to Sir James Robertson that the Sardauna and his party would never agree to any breaking-up of the north, or to the federal government receiving greater power. Despite his own waning chauvinism, he left Sir James in no doubt that most northern politicians and educated voters would still have preferred that the rejected non-political central agency should be all that should hold a loose confederation together. He gave him a summary note of the NPC's wishes:

- (1) an upper chamber, but a lower chamber divided strictly on population;
- (2) a regionalized police force;
- (3) the governor-general to have special reserved powers in time of emergency;
- (4) a strictly federal Lagos;
- (5) the '12 northern pillars' (a theory of Sharwood-Smith, devolution to provincial authorities in the hope of binding native authorities and the regional political government closer together, to be mentioned further in

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- chapter 23) to await a committee which was studying it under the waziri of Borno;
- (6) majority leader to nominate at least two expatriate special members out of a total of eight;
 - (7) a northern speaker from outside the lower house (if already elected, to resign his seat).

Personally he had come round to thinking that some reference was needed to freedom of worship, and some definition of 'rights', since he had studied the Indian constitution further. Robertson showed him the equivalent provisions in the Sudan self-government statute, which he had helped to draft, and Malam Abubakar liked it, against the time when governors might not have the power to reserve bills for her Majesty's pleasure.

The governor-general for his part was already troubled by the indecisiveness and occasional failures to co-operate shown by those of his ministers who were most subject to dictation from their party leaders in the regional capitals. Sir James was also affected by the knowledge that on 1 January the backward Sudan had become an independent democratic republic. His respect for Abubakar was becoming deep, but this did not reduce his doubts about the north; he was not impressed to find that the Kano and Sokoto provincial secondary schools (as the middle schools were becoming retitled) could have taken in nearly double the number of pupils, and in his early months had seen injustice in the northerners' hostility to educated southerners, when it seemed to him that these had only been quicker off the mark in preparing for new employment opportunities. Robertson had stronger reason still to observe tolerance between people of the Book: he never believed that the intertribal hostility he saw all around him in Nigeria had any religious cause. Nonetheless he did think of the Indian empire, and of the Sudan's past and likely future, and he did warn London: 'In the federation of Nigeria we are trying to achieve something that has never been done before – make a Muslim become a willing and friendly bedfellow with an infidel'.

The brief January conference advised Sir James that the three regions should each send ten delegates to London, the southern Cameroons five and Lagos two, and should between them reflect all practicable shades of opinion. Each regional delegation would have five 'advisers', and the Cameroons three. That from the north would include three chiefs, to act (as Abubakar put it) as '*an insurance against panic decisions*'. The governor-general, the three governors and the commissioner of the Cameroons should have their own advisers. Malam Abubakar was to be part of the federal representation. The final conclusion, at a meeting arranged by the Sardauna in the minister of transport's office, was the willing and happy agreement by the three regional premiers that there should be a political truce during the imminent visit of the Queen.

22 The year of the Royal Visit, a Scandal and Suez

Ko yanzu ruwa na maganin dauda

The Royal Visit of January and February 1956 was a remarkable event, in more than one way. Not least, the British commonwealth seemed briefly to be real, and to be a good club of which to be a member. For all but the few people closest to the governor-general there had only been three months' warning, in contrast to the practice in respect of even quite small territories, where a year had always been thought essential to find the revenue, design the decorations, order the materials and rehearse the minutest details. In consequence the concentration of effort, backed by the party political truce, produced a unity of national interest, and general sense of happy uplift across the barriers of race and employment, that those of that generation who took an active part would only experience once more in Nigeria. The emotions were recognized by the most cynical to be genuine, as every headquarters town in Nigeria played its part in showing how Africa could so well celebrate a ceremonial occasion, and in sending groups to honour a welcome visitor who could only in fact be seen at a few principal places. The federal programme was co-ordinated by Peter Stallard, the one time clerk to the northern legislature who had been posted to Lagos since 1954, and supervised by the swift melder of detail Ralph Grey. For those expatriates who loved Africa, the excitement shown by the population, from chiefs and politicians to workmen and schoolchildren, seemed to exceed whatever they might have known of the coronation season in Britain three years before. In a sense it explained the affection they had for people, some of whose practice of imported politics they might find totally unlovable.

But it was not only the sentimental British who wondered why happy, hard-working conviviality for a common purpose could never be more than a nine-day wonder. If, as on all such occasions, there were those who regretted that it took a monarch's interest to have contracts completed, paint renewed and potholes filled, there were also many who were glad to admit that a thoroughly undemocratic patriotic leadership appeared to fulfil some indefinable need on the part of the white man as well as the black; and radio journalists made much of it. In the Sardauna's book *My Life*, it was later recorded that during the Queen's visit no case of crime was reported to the police; and (in a purple caprice that joined a very English mind with a Hausa tongue) that 'It seemed as though a kind of peace, not of this world, came over the country - and it was just as well it did. It did not endure long after the Queen's departure'. Indeed the truly remarkable characteristic of the whole highly theatrical occasion was its sheer innocence: those who were able to observe the royal household at close quarters were astonished at how unsophisticated the pleasure and enjoyment were of people whose whole lives were woven into ceremonial. This itself seemed surprisingly African.

Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the first African minister to be introduced to Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. They met after landing at Ikeja airport in the same BOAC *Argonaut*, RMA *Atalanta*, that had flown the royal couple to east Africa before her accession. Abubakar was reported typically by the journalists as dignified, which he was, and as impassive, which he never was: restraint on formal occasions never erased all the tiny movements of eyes and lips that interpreted his feelings to those who knew him. The house of representatives had agreed that the minister of transport (for NPC), the minister of communications and aviation (K O Mbadiwe for NCNC) and the leader of the opposition (Chief Akintola for AG) should wait upon her Majesty with a humble address of loyalty, and on 31 January these ministers followed Mr Speaker's preliminary welcome. Malam Abubakar's oratory was the briefest, but he (like Akintola) thanked the Queen, seated on Her Nigerian throne, for what they both still termed her Majesty's colonial service; he spoke also of the value of the British connexion to Nigeria since the treaty with king Docemo [Dosunmu] of Lagos in 1861, and referred to the commonwealth as '*the only effective league of nations. . . . The Queen's presence signifies that the joint enterprise begun in Lagos 94 years ago is nearing completion*'.

The Queen was attended throughout by the extra equerry, newly promoted major Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi of the Nigeria Regiment, who had been sent to learn his duties at Buckingham Palace. Aguiyi-Ironsi had been to school in Kano and spoke Hausa. He had joined the army in 1942, becoming a company serjeant-major just after the war, undergoing training at Camberley and being posted to Accra in the Gold Coast as a second lieutenant in 1949. A captain in 1953 at the age of 29, this was his first appearance before the public, but his further ascent up the military ladder will require notice in chapters to come. The Queen used the occasion of the visit to confer the title of The Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment on the infantry.

Sovereigns visiting self-governing dominions usually had a local minister in permanent attendance throughout, as well as an ADC. Nigeria, being dependent and having a few senior white officials who constitutionally still took precedence over ministers, avoided many of the pitfalls of protocol and sensitivity dug by five mutually excluding governments, and appointed no ministers in attendance; but when the royal party later left Iddo for functions in Ibadan, having opened as visible symbols of development the Apapa wharf extension, now completed after four years' work, and the Ijora power station, the minister of transport was in attendance to answer for his railway service also. There had been a careful rehearsal at which Colonel Emerson had shouted at the two dilatory officials standing in for HM and HRH to 'get a bloody move on' out of the royal car and into the reception hall; Abubakar looked pointedly at his chief executive to see if he would do the same courtesy for the real couple. He also looked enthusiastically up at the skies when a ceremonial flight of RAF Gloster *Meteors* flew past with the streams of condensation from the heavy air flowing from their wing-tips. This sight seeded another ambition. But when he attended at the airport to bid farewell to her Majesty when she finally left Lagos, he frightened his staff by fainting, blaming it on '*an old trouble*'.

As the Sardauna's sarcasm has shown, reality soon returned to the country at the end of the three weeks of pleasurable pageantry. The western regional ministers of education and works, Mr S O Awokoya and Mr E A Babalola, resigned, blaming Chief Awolowo for his autocratic ways, and assisted in the

setting up of a short-lived NPP (Nigerian peoples' party); Chief Adelabu was also committed for trial on corruption in his district council chairmanship. The eastern region took steps to outlaw *osu*, a caste system not unlike those of India and Japan, and the marriage of girls under 16; it also boldly grasped old nettles and made all men over 16, all women over 16 with an income exceeding £100, and all women traders in urban areas, liable to a form of income tax. Unlike *osu* (and 'customary nudity'), the ritual slaughter by beating of horses, part of a tradition that was also related to the winning of the eastern title *mazi*, was thought to be a practice best left for education and growing sophistication to abolish, through desuetude rather than legislation: hippophiles in the north and Britain thought these priorities wrongly judged.

Contemporaneously the northern minister of education, makama Aliyu, encouraged by the governor, set about organizing a kindergarten in Kaduna for children of leading Africans and Europeans. Although nearly all white children still returned to Britain for schooling, an expense which the Gorsuch-inspired service reforms were slow to alleviate, the makama found his own British officials to be disapproving of the scheme's social divisiveness, and of Nigerian resources being diverted in however small a way to benefit overseas children. He persevered in face of their disapproval, and a dozen little blacks with half a dozen little whites (including Angela Sharwood-Smith) started lessons in a disused railway rest house. Soon Malam Abubakar, who had been considering the acquisition of a house in Kaduna and had a quiet word with Sharwood-Smith, placed two of his own children, ten-year-old Bala and his younger sister Binta, in this school, where they became Angela's rather nervous playmates at weekends in the government house garden. Later it acquired a large boarding wing as 'the capital school'.

Bala (Inni's son, properly called Abubakar, who had reached primary class III in Bauchi) and Binta had been placed by their father, at the Sardauna's prompting, to be brought up in a customary way with the premier's family: Alhaji Ahmadu had no sons of his own. The household swarmed with children, some from the emir of Kano, some from the deposed lamido of Adamawa, but among them all sardauna Ahmadu would only allow Bala and Binta to call him 'Baba!' (a term for one *in loco parentis*, or an elder of the same or lesser social standing, not a true equivalent of 'Daddy!'); and he reassured Bala that he too, like his father, preferred to sleep on a floor mat or rug rather than on a European-style bed. The Sardauna laid down firm rules for care of all, but had little time for too personal a guardianship, and the upbringing at his home was both old-fashioned and yet lacking in the work ethic. Abubakar's pair were sometimes able to visit Lagos for holidays, when their father filled them with thoughtful homilies in the guise of children's stories.

Apart from education for the élite, the north had greater preoccupations with which Abubakar for the present had no direct concern: an upsurge of violence involving such disparate participants as deposed chiefs, prostitutes and uneducated children, and stress between the more traditional Kadiriyya *tarika* and the revisionist Tijaniyya, was exploited by (and attributed by some to) NEPU extremists; and rumbles of middle belt unrest, which had spread from the Bi Rom and the non-Muslim parts of Kabba and Benue to the Tiv, were aggravated by AG support for the Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) in the hope of opposition to the NPC being manipulated into a tribal desire to secede from the north to the west. Overseas events of interest included South Africa's request to the USSR to withdraw its consulates; a referendum in Malta showing that a majority of its 300,000 people favoured integration with Britain;

the declaration of Pakistan as an Islamic republic, and its immediate rejoining of the commonwealth, accepting Queen Elizabeth as its Head though no longer queen of Pakistan; the deportation from Cyprus to the Seychelles of Archbishop Makarios (Lyttelton had said that he would have liked to deport him to Athens, where he might have been 'submerged' like Bonnie Prince Charlie in Rome, and drawn less world attention); a *loi cadre* for French African colonies; the independence of Morocco and Tunisia from France; and the dissolution of Cominform, as a gesture by the eastern bloc to the west.

The ministry of transport was now a happy place to work in under its courteous and patient minister and careful permanent secretary, who tended to straighten things out on Sunday mornings over coffee in each other's houses or verandahs. One of the three assistant secretaries was an amicable and outgoing Gold Coaster, Joe Warmann, and the woman personal secretary was another of the Scots in Abubakar's life. In fact the airport episode had shown that Malam Abubakar's health was going through one of its doubtful periods. Yet he managed to steer two important debates through the house, at one of which visiting pressmen again drew the contrast in superficial and intellectual styles between him and the Sardauna, who was sitting in the distinguished strangers' gallery wearing his usual majestically flamboyant dress, with a turban topped by two royal 'ears'. Abubakar's headgear might only be the multi-coloured woven cap of Borno style (popularly known later as a *zanna*, after Dipcharima, and later still when elongated as a *shagari*) which was beginning to be fashionable even among northerners who were not Kanuri; but as senior minister he was reported in journals as 'leading his colleagues firmly on the path of parliamentary tradition, and so softening the acidity of partisan behaviour in public debate'; the Sardauna had been displaying in his own legislative house how little he could brook any opposition which he might choose to take as personal, even though the actual debates might be over rioting and hooliganism.

Malam Abubakar's first subject at the meeting was the Nigerian Naval Force which, since it could no more spring fully armed into existence in a day than might a military or an air force, must start modestly and build up as economy expanded and revenues rose: '*I must give a word of warning. Whether Nigeria is independent, and however much this country grows, it will be very necessary for us here to be in the commonwealth pattern of defence, because it is becoming increasingly clear that it is almost impossible for a country single-handed to defend itself in a catastrophe the kind of which many members of the house seem to think about*'. He meant by this a third 'conventional' world war. The other matter was the navy's civilian counterpart, the founding of an inland waterways department – the appointment of a director now, to create the new organization by 1958, and so anticipate the Nedeco reports; the same traditional manpower, familiar with the water, would also be competed for by the navy and the ports authority who had already absorbed most of the old marine department, and there would still then be need for a hydrology service, he added.

His ministry was also polishing its policy for navigation in the western delta ports of Burutu, Koko, Warri and Sapele, as well as further up the rivers. One problem was how the ports authority should deal with these ports, where the shore-based installations were owned by private companies; the other was how to meet obligations under international law once river traffic should grow. The line taken, approved by Abubakar, was to encourage the private investors to improve their facilities by creating a climate in which they could risk the capital

expenditure involved with reasonable reassurance. The government would undertake not to take over control until 1982 at the earliest, on two conditions: all sea-going ships, regardless of flag or ownership, should be treated as 'first come, first served' (this would follow both the international conventions on the régime in maritime ports and waterways of international concern, and those on freedom of transit); and the ministry would set an upper limit to commercial charges after studying the companies' operating costs, including interest and amortization of their investments. Malam Abubakar insisted on understanding the treaties signed at St Germain in 1919, Barcelona in 1921 and Geneva in 1923, welcomed the appearance of French ships on the rivers however few, and agreed that the official navigation dues should be restricted to payment for departmental services actually rendered, and should not be discriminatory. A few days later he was admitted to the Creek hospital for the internal pains that had caused him to faint to be investigated. The care shown there by the nursing sister in charge, Mrs Mary O'Hara, led to another long expatriate friendship which extended to his whole family. Telegrams of concern and condolence flew back and forth between the emir of Bauchi and the sardauna of Sokoto, and the ministry of transport.

In April Malam Abubakar was flown to London to enter the hospital of tropical diseases and hygiene at St Pancras. Finding Carlyle, the acting FS, among the well-wishers determined to see him off at the airport, he decided at last to bury the hatchet over development moneys for railways. He was expected to remain in hospital for six weeks' observation, and his illness cast a gloom over orthodox 'responsible' elements in the north, who for the time being considered the emir of Kano to be their only other truly strong man. He was visited in the hospital by the gynaecologist Dr Majekodunmi, who was in Britain on leave. Abubakar told his friend that he seemed to have a severe abscess in his intestinal tract, that the surgeons wanted to operate and that it would mean a long convalescence. Majekodunmi commented that that might clash with the next constitutional conference, and that medicine might still cure the infective 'bug'. He spoke to the registrar, offering to take responsibility, and the surgical consultant released Abubakar to the mercy of penicillin. He was discharged with encouragement and medical advice, looking fitter already through the enforced rest and the reassurance that his most trusted doctor gave him. He was usually to take the opportunity for a 'check-up' during future visits to London, as he also had a chronic sinus trouble. Disillusioned or unhappy as he often became with politics, he never suffered any clinical depression.

Looking forward to that next constitutional conference, he commented that he had been wondering whether HMG might not create a ministry of Nigerian affairs: *'There used to be a Burma office'*. Official Britain was however thinking of ways of reducing its entanglement with the least embarrassment, rather than of reinforcing its responsibilities. There were still one or two romantic British idealists, saddened by crude twentieth century nationalisms elsewhere and by local events in Ibadan and Enugu, who had Milnerite dreams of binding the commonwealth together with a single multi-racial and apolitical civil service of the Northcote-Trevelyan tradition, transferable at will through a commonwealth public services commission between Australia and India, UK and New Zealand, South Africa and Canada now, and impartially to add Nigerian, Kenyan, Malayan and Caribbean ministers as potential masters imposing all their various internal policies in the future on flexible multi-racial

functionaries. Malam Abubakar was attracted by this concept too, in his own less realistic moments.

The announcement of a proposed 'special list' of HMOCS showed that Whitehall was looking in the opposite direction, although Westminster in the person of Lennox-Boyd was anxious to support even-handedly the interests of both colonies and their British servants, in pursuit of his policy of bequeathing stability through the historical British connexion. The British treasury under Sir Edward Bridges was opposed to supplementing overseas officers' pay, especially on the brink of self-government, holding that HMG should 'pressurise' colonial governments into paying its servants adequately, failing which it should recommend the servants to give in their notice. It was prepared to consider using colonial development and welfare funds to assist educational trusts for the children of HMOCS, and would have tolerated the raiding of CD&W for salary supplementation, had that been legal. The secretary of state told his treasury colleagues bluntly that if the British left, colonial ministers would have to employ 'undesirable foreigners'. The modified intention now was to encourage serving expatriates not to desert their posts by taking their compensation entitlements as soon as constitutional advance reduced both their conditions and their prospects, but instead to continue so long as the former colony required their services: their incentive would be that if the new dominion dispensed with them or altered their circumstances adversely, the British government would 'use its best endeavours' to find comparable employment for them at home or elsewhere.

The intention was honourable, but the certainty that future promotion could not be guaranteed, and the mistrustful uncertainty of what Whitehall would deem to be comparable employment in the UK, were to prove unattractive (Whitehall assistant secretaries were reluctant to equate senior district officers with themselves, and district officers did not see themselves as gas board executive officers). The governor-general was also facing a prolongation of his difficulties in hastening Africanization of the federal service, since more of his Nigerians in Lagos were anxious to leave for supposedly quicker promotion in their home regions, and regional governors were proving selective in releasing good senior men to fill new promotion posts in Lagos. In the event not many British officers joined the original HMOCS 'special list', and a number enjoyed premature but short-lived promotion in the federal service. Sir James, jovial on the surface, was gloomily concluding that it might take ten years before independence could be justified. The inspector-general of police was particularly depressed by his first impressions in Lagos that all his NCOs were restricted to 'standard VI' education, and that most of his more senior overseas officers had come like himself from Malaya, or from Palestine or the West Indies, and so must lack the emotional attachment of the administration to their first loves with whom they had matured (Malam Abubakar himself was still imagining a post-independence civil service that would still employ many long-service expatriates.)

The protestant Christian council of Nigeria and the Sudan United Mission (SUM) expressed their formal worries to the chief secretary in March, that some future Muslim government in the north, and some future predominantly Roman Catholic independent social service system and government in the east, might have less tolerant religious policies. This move reactivated the Whitehall files on human rights, since a constitutional conference was still expected in September. The reconsidered official colonial office view that now emerged was very Lytteltonian: it was that if Nigerians remained tolerant, there was no need for

a declaration of rights, and that if there were no tolerance, it would be a waste of ink. There was a renewed rummaging in the archives to decide what precise evidence survived of the guarantees that Lugard had given in March 1903, and argument whether a mere promise of non-interference with Islam gave Christian missions the freedom to which they were now used in various hypothetical circumstances. However Sir Ralph Grey (who had been knighted during the royal visit) undertook to encourage Malam Abubakar to take some initiative. After his return from the doctors' hands with a clean bill of health, Abubakar raised the matter with his party. The NPC proved ready to accept words like 'Freedom of conscience; freedom to profess religion, subject to considerations of morality, public order or health as laid down by law; freedoms of expression, of association, and of combination, also subject to law'. They were much less happy about 'Freedom to propagate, and to practise, *and change*, religion', but might bargain 'manifest' for 'propagate'. Sharwood-Smith spoke to Abubakar and then advised Grey that an existing formula that already enjoyed world-wide familiarity, the wording of the UN universal declaration of human rights, would have the fairest chance of success. Then the debate hung fire.

Ababakar was more concerned to authorize feasibility studies for multi-purpose dams at Jebba and near Bussa, and in particular to reinforce his support for Emerson's specific plans to extend the railway, which it was now clear had no option but to pass from Kuru through Tafawa Balewa. Carlyle went to London to talk with the colonial office about financing the plan; the office, as has already been mentioned, wanted Africa to be seen to be benefiting from some world bank loan, and thought that Abubakar's scheme was likely to attract goodwill if sensibly presented. Abubakar remained convinced that the result would supplement, and not conflict with, the increased production of food, groundnuts and cotton in Borno and Bauchi that the river navigation improvements would bring about. Nedeco now had two substantial launches plying on the Niger and Benue, and they also received a new commission: to advise on the practicability of construction of a bridge across the river Niger near Onitsha. The existing ferry was reliable, but it was a physical bottleneck that constricted the possibility for Enugu, Owerri, Port Harcourt, Calabar and the southern Cameroons to enjoy rapid transport of people and bulk freight to and from Lagos and the west. It was ironic that Nigeria's next crisis arose across this very barrier; it proved to be a damp squib, lit to fizzle for far too long, and left a sulphurous odour.

Dr Azikiwe and his family were still substantial shareholders in an African Continental Bank based in the east, which he had created to make credit more easily available to local businessmen who believed the loan terms of Barclays, the (British) Bank of West Africa and other overseas banks to be too restrictive. There was also a similar National Bank of Nigeria in which the western region's politicians were equally heavily concerned (readers will remember the interests disclosed at the last London conference). Indeed it was common enough to hear citizens describe themselves as 'Nationals' or 'Continental', depending on the bank owned by their political leader. Zik's bank was in fact losing money, and the statutory eastern development corporation put £2 millions into it. This was a large sum in 1956, equal to a third of all the native administration annual revenues in the northern region. Zik was not on the best of terms with Mr E O Eyo, the NCNC chief whip and chairman of the development corporation in question, since Zik was suing him for libel. Mr Eyo put down a motion asking for an impartial inquiry into the apparent abuse of public office: the

patent implication was that the eastern premier had ordered public money to be invested in a shaky enterprise in which his personal interests were great, as who should apparently know better than the chairman of the public fund? The UNIP supported Eyo, and once the speaker of the house of assembly had refused a debate on a matter that was in part *sub judice*, Dr Azikiwe threatened to resign because his governor Sir Clement Pleass felt morally unable just to let the matter drop.

Since 1952 corruption had too commonly become as sweeping a general allegation against ministers as it had long been against some chiefs and NA officials; Sir Clem's superior, the governor-general, believed that such a plausible allegation against one of the country's few internationally known leaders, made so soon before a conference from which he might emerge even more powerful, had at all costs to be cleared up. This public principle had outweighed Robertson's private reservations: on the one hand Pleass, who recognized that whatever the outcome his own relationship with Zik must now reach its end, was telling him that nothing would be gained by an inquiry; and on the other all the press reports and covert intelligence showed that even if Zik were found to have been involved in impropriety, or worse, and to have gained personally, his Igbo and many other followers would still support their hero. Too many Nigerian party members expected their chosen leaders to enrich themselves, so long as they also benefited their clients – what else was power for? Sir James forced himself to the conclusion that while he was responsible for Nigeria, Britain should do what was right and not leave itself open to the charge of conniving in what the masses took for granted: he still had to persuade the colonial office and Lennox-Boyd to appoint a commission from London, but was eventually successful, despite the inevitable corollary that the constitutional conference must be postponed. Mr Aneurin Bevan tried to embarrass the secretary of state at Westminster by asking whether the association of politicians and bankers was not as notorious in Lagos as it was in London. Awolowo thought that Azikiwe was only trying to turn a personal tragedy into a national calamity.

Sir James was disturbed to find himself attacked for 'attempting to dethrone Dr Azikiwe and to perpetuate British banking hegemony'; he had not been in Nigeria long enough to develop a fixed attitude to the idol established on the opposite bank of the Niger, and he certainly had little knowledge of the international politics of banking. Newns was on leave at this time; his relief as secretary to the governor-general and council of ministers was Peter Stallard. When the affair was raised in the council, it became clear to all that Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, already sickened by Adelabu and suspicious of one or two other of his colleagues, was quite opposed to the cabinet being dragged into any discussion of the inquiries into the ACB and Zik – the northern ministers as a body thought it should be dealt with by lawyers (as indeed it was, once the tribunal was set up under the Nigerian federal chief justice, Sir Stafford Foster- Sutton, and all the expensive QCs had been briefed).

It was seen as unfortunate that the chairman was not an 'outsider', since this blurred the fact that it was a Whitehall-appointed inquiry. There was also an unfortunate place for preliminary legalistic argument about the status of the tribunal, since the precise powers of the secretary of state appeared to have been muddied by the adaptation of laws order made under the constitution to divide the various exclusive and concurrent powers of the former central governor between the federal governor-general and the regional governors: was the power to be exercised on the grounds of its federal or its regional

application? However the tribunal was set in motion, and held in public, deliberately taking the same form as the UK Lynskey tribunal, which Mr C R Attlee and the British home secretary Chuter Ede had instituted in 1948 to investigate charges of corruption against a minister and officials: it was to find out the facts, and much was made in fulsome speeches of how nobody was on trial or charged with any offence, and of how anxious all were to assist. The many individuals who felt themselves to be involved all had several lawyers to represent their interests, and Dr Azikiwe relied on Sir Frank Soskice, Mr Tudor Davies and Mr Daniel Ibekwe.

In the north there was some violence in east Sokoto during a prolonged hot dry spell after ramadan, because of the Tijani leader from Sénégal, Ibrahim Kaolack's activities. The sultan called in the principal chiefs to discuss this. There was also more trouble over corruption in Borno, and the former federal minister Shettima Kashim left regional politics like Bello Kano before him, and became the new waziri; before long he and a government PRO Abba Jiddum Gana founded a Kanuri cultural body, the Borno State Union, with the long-term aim of uniting a north-eastern state embodying Adamawa, Bauchi and the plateau, with its capital and a university at Maiduguri. The local government reforms in Ilorin were also enduring unexpected political storms. As the result of Whitehall prodding for some signs of vote-casting democracy, the resident, Charles Michie, had been asked by Macpherson while he was still in Lagos if he were willing to help in breaking up the 'medieval' system of local government in the north. This had led eventually and indirectly to Sharwood-Smith, who shared some misgivings with the Sardauna (who was committed to more NA reform, but supposed that this should strengthen the NPC predominance), endorsing Michie's brief; this directive was, with Hedley Marshall overseeing the legal drafting, to dispense with a phased timetable, which might have tested one tier at a time, and to set up province-wide local councils all at once, enjoying a majority of elected members. The inexperienced Ilorin Talaka Parapo (commoners' party) was fully expected to give the officials and wealthier people who supported the NPC a well-earned run for their money; what had not been anticipated was that the ITP would recruit the aid of the wildest Oyo elements of the AG, and that violence and intimidation would be imported to disfigure the tender new Ilorin democracy. In May 1956 the AG had won a regional by-election over the NPC as a result of well-organized pork-barrel politics and tribal opportunism throughout the institutions. It was hoped to export the lessons northwards.

The early consequence was that the nominal ITP won not only the district council elections in the southern part of Ilorin, which was most closely related to the nearest Yoruba in the neighbouring region, but also the northern councils which had not previously been thought to be sympathetic with Ibadan, including the Ilorin town council itself, and ultimately the emir of Ilorin's own inner council. On a journey north Malam Abubakar passed through Ilorin and observed with distaste the new kind of NA corruption and partisan jobbery; what he still most resented was the interference from across the regional border in what should have been purely local affairs. Later in Minna he stopped to talk over tea to the resident, Desmond Macbride, who had spent many earlier years in the provinces bordering both the Benue and the Niger, about the rivers' potential for navigation; he was ever anxious to hear fresh evidence and opinion to reinforce or weaken judgments already made. He also heard that an effort by NEPU to hold a 'popular front' of local parties

in Minna had not been very successful. The main purpose of this journey was to tour the Nigerian railway as far as Gusau and Kaura Namoda, for daytime inspections and evening political meetings. He was pleased to let his new private secretary, Richard Kinsman (who had been posted from Sokoto to succeed Whalley), take his young family with the official party on the journey in the three-coach train.

The other purpose was to attend the NPC's emergency convention at Kaduna: at this meeting the Sardauna chose a new NPC 'central working committee', on the lines of the NCNC, except that this CWC consisted entirely of members of the northern regional executive council. Until now Abubakar's personality and experience had meant that no major northern policy decision had been taken without his agreement, even if given from a distance. His intelligent directing brain had been vital in campaigning. It appears that he accepted the situation dispassionately, and in so doing he lost the last practical opportunity to test public acceptance of the superior strength of the Sardauna's traditionalist supporters over the numerically larger younger generation with whom he sympathized.

The Sardauna gave reassurances to members of HMOCS serving in the north, and also announced that there would be a northern regional general election in the dry season; he then went on another private visit to Egypt before performing his second pilgrimage, during which the former waziri of Borno, whose head had sadly fallen in the recent Maiduguri troubles, was found a post as Nigerian pilgrim officer in Khartoum.

In August the minister of transport was pleased to tell Carlyle (with whom he was now on the most friendly terms) at a reception that, knowing the financial background, he should go with Emerson to Washington and start negotiations with the world bank for the railway loan. A little later he showed how a dependent colonial minister could be diplomatic: although there was never any shortage of recruits, there were regular complaints of unsatisfactory treatment of Nigerian labourers on plantations in the small off-shore Spanish colony of Fernando Póo. A ministry of transport party had occasion to visit Victoria in the Cameroons and thought it appropriate to make an official call at the local Spanish capital, Santa Isabel, on the way home: the presence of the senior minister would be the unspoken reminder to the Spanish authorities that there would one day be new powers watching over migrant labour's interests. The Spanish seemed anxious to open preliminary negotiations at once over a revision of contracts of service, but while the party and the British vice-consul (seconded from the eastern regional administration) energetically toured the palm and cocoa plantations, Malam Abubakar simply disappeared and so all commitments were avoided. On the final passage home the launch passed a group of canoes in the darkness, obviously smuggling: '*Are they loaded with brandy?*' asked the strictly abstemious minister; '*Good luck to them!*' was his humanly mischievous throw-away line.

Contemporary occurrences were a UN plebiscite in the ex-German Trans-Volta Togoland trust territory, which had shown a wish to integrate with the Gold Coast; the cession by France to India of its settlements there; the promise of the dissolution of the Leeward islands colony so that Antigua, St Kitts-Nevis with Anguilla, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands might each enter the Caribbean federation distinctly and directly; the emergence of Abdullah Khalil, an elderly Mahdist and rural leader of the Umma party, as a coalition prime minister of the Sudan; and the offer by Harding of surrender terms to EOKA in Cyprus, which were rejected.

But it was other external affairs that for the next few months began to make a greater impression on educated Nigerians generally, as distinct from the élite who were ministers and officials, than at any time since the war. Dr Nkrumah increased his party's majority at elections, demanded independence and had it conceded on 18 September 1956: the Gold Coast would be renamed Ghana, a name chosen by Mr J B Danquah after the distant medieval kingdom near the sources of the Senegal and Niger rivers, and some of those who still thought seriously of a northern Nigeria, separated like Jordan, considered appropriating the other ancient kingdom's name Songhai for their own pipe dream. More alarming, after the United States and Britain successively informed President Nasser that they could not at present take part in the financing of the Aswan high dam, which Eden had long favoured, the colonel nationalized the Suez canal in July, and this provoked economic retaliation by the two countries, in which they were joined by France: in the aftermath eighteen user nations supported the plan for future control of the canal devised by the American secretary of state Foster Dulles, who had been appalled by Nasser's dalliances with Moscow and Peking, but the USSR, Indonesia and Ceylon supported an alternative devised by Pandit Nehru. Britain and France finally took the dispute to the UN security council. At this stage there was no Nigerian consensus: Nigeria did not need the canal, and politicians' views wavered between legalistic respect for the sanctity of treaties, favour of free passage for all on international waterways, and sympathy with rising nationalisms.

While Suez was thus approaching boiling point Malam Abubakar indulged during a short house of representatives meeting in some theorizing which not all his hearers were quick to understand: *'In this house it is not regions which are represented, but political parties'*. Mr Jaja Wachuku had moved that the house should send its own representatives and advisers to the forthcoming, though delayed, constitutional conference; but, said Abubakar, *'though here we belong to the federation, we still have our parties. . . . The political leaders of all . . . parties representing the house are all members of the regional legislatures and not of the federal legislature. We regard ourselves as part of parties with roots in the regions. . . . Mr Wachuku's motion would mean that this house still constitutes itself more or less into one party . . . but we must not fool ourselves by thinking that we can sit here and constitute ourselves into a [Nigerian federal] party. . . . It is our duty to see that the federation stays. . . . The federation is not a constituency'* (applause). Later he moved a motion to raise federal parliamentary secretaries' salaries to £1,000, to overjump leapfrogging by regional equivalents, and supported the chief secretary's proposals for training of future diplomats against Wachuku's criticisms: *'The CS pointed out that Canada, being the first independent country in the commonwealth, has got only half the representation of the UK in foreign countries. . . . Now as a teacher I am used to starting from the known to the unknown. . . . This is a work which the individual would mainly learn while on the job. . . . The Gold Coast is becoming independent next year, but so far they are only training twelve people for their foreign service'*.

Then, sparing time to congratulate his former ward Adamu, who had become first class clerk in the Bauchi education office, on being appointed *ajiya* or head at Tafawa Balewa of their own home district of Lere, and the former resident Gill on becoming the north's first commissioner for native courts (to ease the introduction of the new native courts law and the Moslem court of appeal), he took the chair at a conference to consider the 'special list' proposals for HMOCS. These were explained in detail by Ambler Thomas, the responsible

assistant under-secretary of state from London. Abubakar was keen that the scheme should succeed, both as another bridge over the psychological resource gap between total self-government and northern self-sufficiency in its own indigenous civil servants, and (as he seemed to Thomas to wish) as a guarantee that haste for Africanization would not lower standards of efficiency; Abubakar accepted the British civil service theory, as some of his northern and many of his southern political colleagues did not, that the apolitical mandarin served ministers of all political colours impartially, and implemented any settled policy without prejudice in the interests of the public. The difference was that he still assumed, till proven wrong, that each British officer believed his own national theory, while for the present he expected southern Nigerian officers to prove by their deeds in practice that they also believed it. He was alarmed that the northern region alone still demanded a local language qualification before confirming overseas officers in their appointments – he supposed that if an officer quite ignorant of a local tongue could never understand the people, then those who did not wish him to speak and hear at least a little must wish him not to understand them at all. The 'special list' scheme was accepted, despite some doubts from other politicians present that Mr Thomas was a Greek bearing gifts, but as has already been mentioned, the scheme did not meet with great success in its first form. The governor-general said flatly that it was two years too late.

Disturbing foreign affairs followed in a bewildering sequence that lasted over a period of days only, too quickly for rational understanding or contemporary assessment. Amongst other events the USSR vetoed a draft Anglo-French resolution at the UN security council to consider Suez; there were demonstrations and an uprising in Hungary on 21 October; the primate of Poland, cardinal Wyszynski, was released from detention; Israel, with whom Egypt considered itself to be at war, invaded Sinai; cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary was released; Russian troops invaded north-eastern Hungary on 4 November; Britain and France, very conscious of economic threats to oil, and having issued an ultimatum to Nasser, but apparently forgetful of political dangers to freedom of thought in eastern Europe, vetoed a resolution calling on Israel to withdraw (Britain's first use of the veto); Britain and France, in apparent accord with the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, intervened militarily between Israel and Egypt, but also bombed Egyptian airfields on 5 November; there was a run on sterling; USSR vetoed a western request that the security council consider Hungary; Britain and France accepted a ceasefire in the near east under pressure of American disapproval, provided that a UN force were introduced to keep peace; USSR hinted at the use of rockets on London if there were no ceasefire; President Eisenhower, who had discounted the significance of the canal to western oil supply, was re-elected in the USA; and a ceasefire was proclaimed at Suez, although no evacuation was planned by France or Britain until the UN force arrived. The British commander, General Sir Hugh Stockwell who had led the 82nd West African division of Nigerians and Gold Coasters in the second Burma campaign, commented that if he had now had the same standard of signals communications as in the jungle twelve years before, he would have completed his occupation of the canal zone before the message could reach him that he was to call a halt. The strategic consequence was that there was no longer the possibility of a buffer force in future conflict between Israel and Egypt.

Thoughts and opinions at the time were very confused, although minds were subsequently made up strongly, in arrears, and the ultimately persuasive

accusations of collusion between France, Britain and Israel were slow to emerge into the public domain at the time. From the moment that Britain's forces were assembled and involved, there were many British officials in Nigeria who were distressed (or scared, as they had been when the Korean war broke out), and just a few who were cheered because (as one put it) 'the old *zaki* [lion] had one more roar left in him'. British and Egyptian diplomatic relations were, of course, severed. Sir John Macpherson in the colonial office found his new Whitehall colleagues in other departments of state ill at ease because for once policy directives were coming down from ministers unsought, instead of as reactions to their own carefully balanced assessments and inquiries.

The telegrams from London to Lagos demanded assessment of popular opinion. The earlier replies were reassuring after a fashion, at least from the north: among the great majority of Nigerians who still relied on market gossip rather than on newspapers or radio, the assumption was that whatever Britain, which had led Nigeria to victory over the axis powers, might now do in another quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom they knew nothing, was probably in their interests. Those who read the press with care were divided between the old-fashioned who distrusted revolutionaries of any description and the new guard who favoured any anti-imperialist change; this meant that most of the native administration groupings doubted Nasser's purposes, and most of those looking for early self-government were at least reserving judgment. The core of the messages to London was that there was surprisingly little sympathy with Nasser on religious grounds, no interest in whether or not Egypt were attacked, and no noticeable lessening of 'loyalty', a word which henceforth was seldom used without some disconcertment. The main concern in the emirates was whether the pilgrimage would be affected, but it was still remembered that the *haj* had not even been stopped by the second world war.

Not always with permission, the foreign office's intelligence briefing notes and guidance papers for its own diplomats, which were circulated to the most senior colonial officials, were selectively passed to those influential ministers who could be trusted not to pass their sources on: Sir James Robertson ensured that Malam Abubakar knew how the British case (or as some would say, Sir Anthony Eden's) could best be presented. Abubakar himself tended to the legalistic, conservative viewpoint, and was never averse to the idea of force being used to maintain stability. The Sardauna's public comments were in the event confined to acerbic asides about Israel's continued occupation of Akaba and Gaza. The main point for the present purpose is that although the Suez affair has been seen by so many as ruining Britain's moral leadership in much of the world, regardless of its casual comparable consequences for France and Israel, its implications in Nigeria were for the moment minimal. It offered no tactical levers to force the door of self-government, since that was unlocked and the hinges were oiled.

The death of Zik's former right-hand man Mazi Mbonu Ojike at the early age of 44 made quite as great an impression as the Suez invasion: he was credited, amongst more important achievements, with having led the fashion away from European suits and ties for those eastern politicians who had not inherited the Yoruba and Hausa robes for 'best dress'. Malam Abubakar observed with some pleasure that Sir Roy Welensky had succeeded Lord Malvern (the former Godfrey Huggins) as premier of the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and with dismay the escalation of riots in Cameroun into a civil war, although on a smaller scale than that in Algeria. There was also great interest in the reports

from the Melbourne Olympic games about the prowess of participant Nigerian athletes. In the north locusts arrived in quantity, not least in Bauchi, as a partial distraction from the regional elections: there were many more constituencies, all with single members, and only two tiers of electoral colleges, with no NA 'injections'; but for want of major constitutional change, there was still only provision for electoral registration of half a million voters to use actual ballot boxes, in the nineteen principal urban areas. NEPU won four seats to NPC's ten in these areas, but ITP, allied with AG, took four of Ilorin's six seats. Of the ministers, Shettima Kashim lost his seat to a truck driver in the Borno youth movement; Aliyu turaki of Zaria lost in a split vote; Yahaya Ilorin made a tactical error in trying to 'heal the breach with ITP', and was made to withdraw; and Peter Achimugu did not stand.

Otherwise NPC and their sympathizers took a sweeping majority, which some blamed on the 'band waggon effect' (as with opinion polls) of the early returns from rustic divisions, and Malam Aminu Kano himself lost again, at the ballot box, to a wealthy trader. The result was that NEPU's parliamentary leadership was of the most ineffective, while the UMBC was headed by a left-winger Moses Rwang. In Borno, Zanna Bukar Dipcharima, whom the combined forces of his own minister Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the northern premier Ahmadu and Malam Sule Katagum could not restrain on his home ground, began to set about undermining the waziri Kashim, who eventually had him dismissed from his post. Outside politics, prosperity from rising prices for tin, cotton and groundnuts was an encouragement to all sides' morale, as was the completion of the Kaduna textiles factory.

In the west agitation began for the creation of a mid-west region, on which the western government was resolved in principle, provided that the Yoruba areas of the north were added to their own region in compensation, and which it was widely believed that a majority of the council of ministers thought should precede internal self-government. Malam Abubakar sympathized with the principle, but shared his party's lingering doubt that weakening one rival power-base might merely strengthen the calls for secession of Ilorin or for a middle-belt region. He interpreted the AG's support for a COR state in the east as deliberate encirclement of the Igbos.

He was pleased to accompany Sir Ralph Grey once more to the west African army advisory council, which was formally opened at Accra by Dr Nkrumah, who arrived an hour late, and was chaired by Mr Kojo Botsio, the Gold Coast minister of trade and labour. The other Nigerian ministers were the eastern minister of health Dr Michael Okpara, and Mr Anthony Enahoro from the west (in fact from the minority Ishan area of the mooted mid-west). Mr Stanley Wey, Isa Kaita's fellow student at Exeter, was now in the defence section of the security & defence branch of the governor-general's office, and in attendance. Lieutenant-general C D Packard, the military adviser to the four British west African governments, played a major part in the council, which was alarmed to hear Nkrumah declare that after self-government the Gold Coast would withdraw: 'Now that my country is to be independent, our position will be incompatible with a colonial status'. The Nigerian ministers, with Dr Milton Margai of Sierra Leone and their Gambian partner, were disappointed by their failure to persuade the Gold Coast not to break up a potential joint defence council, and some lost their hitherto instinctive faith in Dr Nkrumah. Abubakar, already offended by the host's unpunctuality, added, '*If I had known, I would not have bothered to come*'. S O Wey passed a note to Grey insisting that in no circumstances should the WA army advisory council

meeting already planned for 1 September 1958 be cancelled. We began to see himself as the broker between the chief secretary who was answerable for defence matters and the minister of transport who was being introduced to the subject, but he also foresaw the long-term weaknesses of preserving this and the other inter-territorial organizations without associating the french-speaking countries also.

The argument that persuaded those outside observers who fancied themselves to be long-sighted was that independent west coast countries with stable governments would hardly invite foreign attack: they had no monopoly of important strategic products. Those on the inside did not have any vision of a valid independence that lacked either army or allies. The conference must have been educational for the Gold Coasters in one aspect: shortly before it, an official with 21 years' service with the Nigerian railway had become general manager of the Gold Coast railway and harbours authority, and in his regular contacts with Nkrumah, Botsio, Francis Gbedemah and Krobo Edusei had tried to discover their opinions of Malam Abubakar and the other Nigerian leaders apart from Zik. Plumridge had found that they had none – or that at the most they wished to seem indifferent and uninterested. Now they knew at first hand there to be other Nigerian, and African, leaders, quite as significant as any Gold Coaster.

1956 had ended without self-government for anyone. Lennox-Boyd had to explain the reasons in the house of commons to the Labour 'shadow' secretary of state, an appointment in which Mr James Callaghan had just succeeded Mr Aneurin Bevan. The simple cause was that the Foster-Sutton tribunal had yet to finish its inquiry and to report. The conference would now meet in May, or at the latest by mid-June 1957, and so far as possible within the law, practical effect would be given within a month afterwards to whatever measures of self-government it might agree, in anticipation of the making of formal instruments. Chief Awolowo went to see Lennox-Boyd and Sir John Macpherson to protest, but so mildly that the permanent under-secretary (who was deliberately treating Nigerian affairs at arms' length) felt able to chaff him with gentle sarcasm: 'Awo, the way you are behaving now, I could almost attend the conference!' Otherwise, Lennox-Boyd's impression was that Abubakar was relieved, and that other Nigerians' disappointment was not bitter, in the context of their other preoccupations, that of the tribunal itself naturally looming largest in the east. Malam Abubakar's own personal preoccupation now was with more foreign travel.

23 Waterways in the old World: Yet another conference

*Watan bakwai makarar rani;
in babu damana da alama*

There were formal talks in Lagos early in 1957 about the studies of the Niger and Benue rivers, with French experts as well as with the expatriate Netherlanders. The French hydraulic engineers, working on the upper Benue beyond Garoua in Cameroun, had always enjoyed informal exchanges with Nigeria and Nedeco; their models were included in the experimental buoyage and pilotage systems which were to be extended to two difficult stretches of the Benue, in addition to the Niger between Baro and Lokoja. Radio links existed between Garoua and Lokoja, and the French were also helping Frijlink and the other Dutch consultants with technical advice from further upstream on their final proposals for making river navigation safer and faster. There were long-term thoughts of a major dam at Lagdo if commercial freight interests should seem likely to take full advantage of such public investment, and these were coupled with suggestions to harness the Faro river which ran into the Benue in Cameroun. Malam Abubakar was anxious to listen for chance evidence of any progress on another French scheme, code-named *Hirondelle*, which was designed to move groundnut produce from beyond lake Chad and around Fort Lamy in Tchad colony, past the northern boundary of Nigeria into Dahomey, and so to the coastal export routes: his interest was in the possibility of persuading them, if their own scheme should fail, to build a rail extension from Maiduguri to Fort Lamy (the present day Ndjaména), so that French freight might bring more revenue to his Nigerian railway corporation. He knew that his rail and river enthusiasms were still not shared by the road lobbies in other ministries, and he suspected that any successor in his present appointment might lack both his own determination and his vision of future incentives for more prosperous farmers throughout north-eastern Nigeria.

Looking for stronger sources of enthusiasm to pass on to others, he now expressed to his advisers the wish to visit Holland, to see the hydraulic laboratories for himself and to discuss the potential application of the tests made there on the modelled harbours of Lagos and Escravos. He believed that a developing country needed technical help if economic independence, as opposed to political self-government, was to have real meaning. The Dutchmen were impressed by the thrust of his questioning, which was personal and pointed, and quite unlike the smooth inquiries to which they were accustomed from party politicians who had read a few civil service briefs. He seemed to them to be that *rara avis*, the layman who accepted that data must be painstakingly acquired from prolonged and careful measurements, if they were to be of any value at all, and had some idea of how the observations

might then be used in practice. He saw the direct implications for agriculture and education of 'infrastructure' (a word that was only beginning to enter common parlance). He might be a teacher in a caftan, but he saw his country's problems as a practical challenge, not as an excuse for verbal philosophy. The Dutch perceived that it obviously mattered to him personally that it might soon be a reasonable possibility to predict the Niger's periodic water-level well in advance. The Netherlands government, acting on Nedeco's detailed intelligence, therefore found it justifiable to involve itself in extending an invitation to attend a forthcoming conference, and in making arrangements for the visit of an African minister who was still as little known in Europe as he had been in the States. Again Sir James Robertson thought the experience would be valuable, and gave his blessing, despite his awareness that whenever some minister was absent (which was often) his colleagues or temporary substitute fell back on delay or indecision rather than commit themselves or their party leaders to a fresh resolve.

Unhappily, when Malam Abubakar's mind was not concentrated on such practical responsibilities, it was now once more subject to self-doubt and despair. Like all good teachers, he knew the limits of his scientific knowledge, and like all true leaders, the need for his followers to believe that he would be with them to the end. He had learnt by now to trust Sir James, but still needed a second opinion to complement the governor-general's bluff, deceptively simple technique of jollyng people along. He accepted that the NPC hierarchy would find no party place for him in the northern region while the Sardauna was the leader there, but he was questioning his own physical capacity to carry on in a Lagos whose organization, though it had been constructed on Nigerian advice, he now suspected would for long need British management to survive. To a Bauchi NA official who looked forward to retirement, he said that he would like as an old teacher to take two or three classroom periods a week, not in a government or NA school but privately without salary, and otherwise just farm and sleep. To the speaker of the northern assembly, Rex Niven, he had said, *'I'm tired of all these southern people who talk politics all the time. If they wanted to get on with developing the country, that's all right, but they don't - they want to develop themselves. I don't agree with that, and I want to go'*. Now he turned also once more to the northern governor, to ask what task he might expect to be given if he were to cut the traces and come home forthwith, without allowing for more discussion or persuasion from colleagues and other advisers. Sharwood-Smith included Abubakar's request in his memoirs; the writer of the following note was well aware of how much more persuasive the British still found handwritten private letters than those which had been impersonally typed:

'I am forced to write to you on my personal problems. It is not common with me to worry people with my difficulties but I trust you as a father and hence I am writing. I am now thinking very much about my future. The climate of Lagos is not suitable to my health and I am never happy here though I find the work most interesting and the people respect me generally. I have been doing my best to assist in making the federation work though I myself do not believe the present type of federation can exist without the British Administration. There is much talk now about a Prime Minister for Nigeria after the Constitutional Conference and my name is being freely suggested as one. Now I do not like to be Prime Minister under the present arrangements and I also do not like to continue with my stay in Lagos. I

am very tired of politics and I am seriously thinking of retiring quietly at the end of this year. I cannot see in what other capacity I can serve the N. Region and so I hope to take up my NA Education work again. You will appreciate the delicate situation in which I am now placed and so I think of quitting politics without any fuss. I have been discussing this matter with my colleagues for some time but they do not seem to appreciate my difficulties. Some of them even say to my face that only death can free me from Lagos! If I act it will be without their knowledge. . . . No British Administrator knows more about us in the North than you do and so I come to you for . . . guidance in helping me to solve my personal difficulties. I appeal to you as a son to a father'.

His health aside, it was the letter of a keen administrator who hated the deviousness and selfishness of all affairs of state. What it was not, although it has been maliciously so misinterpreted by strangers to both men, was a grovelling screed of self-humiliation before a patron; it was a statement of trust from one well-bred person to another, couched in terms readily translatable into familiar Hausa modes of expression. This was not the first time that he had made the plea with Sir Bryan, if only he could find somewhere for him. Just as Robert Wright had done seven years before, Sharwood-Smith found again that he could only answer in the words also fully quoted in his book: to make them brief here, he could but advise sadly that there was only one Abubakar; any country could produce demagogues, but he had experience (and, he might have added, integrity) which could not be matched. Judged in the northern perspective and in the belief that Nigeria's survival must depend on realism when assessing both the north's interests and the south's long-term benefits, the advice was persuasive. Nine years later both Wright and Sharwood-Smith found their consciences smitten, and said so publicly: at the time Robertson was grateful. But Sharwood-Smith also suggested the need for a true holiday break after the postponed conference, while warning him that the NPC's victory at the regional polls did not mean that the party's leadership was as well loved outside the rural majorities in the traditional emirates as it was strong in the ranks of the Muslim native administrations.

Malam Abubakar was not well pleased when the council of ministers was now asked to contribute some federal revenue to the costs of the secretary of state's tribunal of inquiry into the African Continental bank affair. The report had concluded that Zik's actions, connected with the placing of so much public money in his own bank, had fallen short of the expectations of honest and reasonable people, and although nobody of substance chose publicly to impute worse to him than carelessness and a lack of wisdom, it demonstrated that British standards of political integrity, as officially professed in the 1950s, had not been successfully exported. The governor-general's pawky summary was that it 'found Zik had done something not normally done by someone who was trusted and was an honourable and straight head of state'. Zik surrendered his bank interests to the eastern regional government, went to the country over the heads of 'the brave soldiers who guided and controlled the destiny of the NCNC', and was returned to power by his faithful electorate with the large majority that had been forecast from the beginning. However he lost some friends by dropping certain ministers who had remained loyal to him throughout. Sir Clem Pleass, who had done his best to maintain friendship with the NCNC, and as has been seen had advised against the inquiry, now finally felt forced to retire as eastern governor. Mr E O Eyo's career also

ended. Abubakar resented the expense, which he considered to have been needless, merely going to prove what everyone already knew, and moreover had cured nothing.

In Britain Mr Harold Macmillan had just succeeded the ailing and partially discredited Sir Anthony Eden as prime minister, and had reappointed and so reinforced Mr Alan Lennox-Boyd as colonial secretary. In March Macmillan met President Eisenhower, who had refused to back Eden, in Bermuda. All sides of British private political opinion, at home and in the overseas services, tended for the present to look forward to a rather ill-defined period of moral reconstruction in international affairs, instead of raking over the smouldering ashes of Suez. There was a wry recognition that Britain had lost more repute in the eyes of those whom the canal action had affronted than had France and Israel, giving a perverse satisfaction that Britain must have had more to lose. Yet educated Nigerian opinion, while noting British ambivalence, was still essentially parochial. At least as much notice was taken that Mr Khrushchev, who had denounced Stalin only the previous year, was now describing him to his Chinese visitor Mr Chou En-lai (soon to be spelt Zhou Enlai) as 'a model communist'. Very little notice was taken of the death of the novelist Joyce Cary, whose four African tales set in the northern Nigeria of the 1920s had helped some students of English literature to imagine the interactions of simple humanity that had vitalized a period and place about which available history was dull and doctrinaire (the former Bauchi district officer had once lent *Mister Johnson* to Malam Abubakar, who had returned it saying, '*I did not know old DOs understood us so much, but I wonder how he could translate the southern clerk's songs*').

Most attention was paid to the independence of the Gold Coast. There had been a clause in the Ghana independence bill laid before the house of commons which logically excluded the new country from future benefits dispensed by the colonial development corporation ('It does have a very chilly look', said Earl Attlee); but in redemption, future overseas 'aid', a term which suggested alms from a ruling class to subservient clients, would be restyled 'technical assistance' or 'co-operation'. Constitutional advice had been sought for the Gold Coast from a former Indian civil servant Sir Frederick Bourne, but it had come too late and too impersuasively to allow a federal structure to be considered so that, as also theoretically in Nigeria, the legs of rival cultures and traditions might prop up a single stable stool. The majority of expressed British parliamentary opinion had preferred to be seen to show prompt confidence in existing African leadership, although the sceptical observation was also heard that a similar political mood had prevailed when an act of liberal faith had been placed in the Afrikaners of the union of South Africa in 1909. Few knew that Nkrumah had developed last minute fears of what independence would mean, and that Lord Chandos in retirement had played a part in keeping him on the road. Dr Nkrumah's head appeared on the new Ghanaian currency and postage stamps, although the prime minister was not head of the new state; however the *osagyefo* did not on 6 March 1957 yet have legitimate personal control over the judiciary, armed forces, civil service or life of parliament, nor a veto over legislation. Instead he was looking forward to wider federations, not to an internal one: he told the Nigerian delegation to the independence celebrations of a proposal for union with Guinea, but a doubtful Malam Abubakar lost no time in prophesying failure. Abubakar also noticed that Dr Nkrumah sulked whenever the Duchess of Kent, the Queen's personal representative at the celebrations, received popular acclaim. Even among sceptics and doubters there

was no lack of goodwill for the new state, which was also per head the wealthiest in black Africa, the equal of Mexico and South Korea. There was a good deal of envy, and the leader of the Nigerian opposition had to be reassured by Malam Abubakar that it was the Ghanaians themselves, not the federal government, that had failed to nominate Chief Awolowo for an invitation to the celebrations. Nigerian delegates, not least those from the north, were greatly struck by the deference shown by the American vice-president Richard Nixon and other visitors to Ghanaian politicians. They returned home anxious to benefit from comparable courtesies.

The house of representatives had reassembled on the eve of, and very mindful of, Ghana's independence day. While it sat a London constitutional conference agreed on internal self-government for Singapore in 1958, and EOKA agreed to suspend its campaign of terrorism provided that Makarios were freed; Britain accepted an offer from NATO to mediate over Cyprus, but Greece rejected it. In Lagos it was another budget meeting, and the minister of transport wound up for the government side on the appropriations bill with references to his railway, ports authority and government coastal agency, and the Nedeco reports: *'The Niger and its tributaries are international waterways, and in view of our hopes of encouraging traffic on them, it was plainly right for the federal government to reaffirm its obligations in international law towards shipping. The second purpose . . . was to provide the economic conditions under which these ports might be developed by private enterprise. . . . I think that my ministry can also claim some credit for having matched the advance of Dutch science with the administrative instruments required to turn that science to the public service - and they have not lagged behind'*. Turning to the delayed Nigerian conference, he mentioned that the governor-general had *'also warned us that a federal system of government is extremely difficult to operate. . . . I doubt if any such variety of peoples has been built into a political union before. Even in this house we have no African language common to all - only English. . . . There is one factor which, if given time, will work steadily for the cause of the federation - I mean the force of economic interest, for Nigeria is a natural economic unit in which each part can, and should, contribute to the common good'*.

'But, I repeat, time is required to allow the force of economics to take effect. . . . I have no wish to see a farmer's wife of a federal government cutting off the tails of three poor blind regional governments. An over-centralized unitary government can only bring disaster at this time when the peoples throughout the country and outside Lagos are gaining political consciousness. . . . The concurrent list [of subjects on which federation and regions could both legislate] - and I repeat that this is my personal view - should be reduced as far as possible, if not actually abolished, and where doubt exists residual powers should rest to the regions. . . . I would issue a warning against any hasty revision of our present constitution. . . . This constitution has worked - and here I wish to pay tribute to the civil service whose loyalty and industry have made it a reality - and this constitution has in fact given us the substance, if not the name, of self-government in our own affairs'. He also took time off from the house to open the new show-room and workshops of the British West Africa Corporation ('Bewac') at Apapa, where he spoke for the government in reassuring commercial interests that these were wanted to expand, and so long as indigenous industries were not handicapped, that other firms not at present interested in Nigeria should come and help. He noticed incidentally that Bewac were the agents for Rolls-Royce.

He continued to give the lead in other debates in the house. He had to explain

diplomatically that under corporate responsibility other ministers could answer for a missing Mr Mbadiwe; he tried repeatedly to show that by refusing funds for a deputy to an expatriate whom they wanted to Nigerianise they were only depriving a Nigerian of his salary; he fended off calls for 500 more kilometres of railway line in the east, and with Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh reacted angrily to Chief Akintola's charge that ministers 'trembled' before officials or any *ex officio* 'housemaster' like the CS. But in the light of his own warning just quoted, he found himself in a dilemma when Akintola, as leader of the opposition AG, pre-empted all other nationalistic bids in a motion that delegates to the conference should ask for independence in the current year, 1957. Akintola's speech was not in itself rabble-rousing, indeed he flattered the British for in a large measure humanising the imperialism which had welded a number of people together who would otherwise have remained warring tribal groups. Chief Solaru made the thoughtful point that it was the British who would be liberated, no longer having to play the rôle of rulers instead of showing their natural generosity. Yet if the north rejected the motion, there was no knowing how much of the hooliganism, bloodshed and tribalism which the AG's 'SG' motion had unleashed in 1953 would again be let loose.

Northern ministers knew well that, despite the Sardauna's stand, not all their chiefs were ready to bow the knee to elected ministers, or to African residents and district officers, without there being some politically uncommitted governor to whom to appeal; northern radicals blamed the British for avoiding earlier radical solutions and rejecting responsibility now, but could not on that account look forward to regional self-government so soon as 1959 without qualms for their own subsequent position; but the younger members of the NPC were, like all vigorous men of ambition, in no doubt of their competence to manage better than their elders and superiors, while indifferent to dangers which remained unseen - they were thirsting for promotion. Recrimination was avoided, and a short breathing-space provided, when Mr Jaja Wachuku, who had just rejoined the NCNC from UNIP, suggested with T O S Benson's support the amendment of substituting '1959' for '1957', and Chief Akintola realistically accepted this. The need for time to make ready was only too apparent, if only the goodwill of the NPC were not withheld. Yakubu Wanka and Maitama Sule of NPC had been prepared to lend their support. Malam Abubakar made history, according to a journalist's report which dramatized the debate as the most important event in Nigerian history since 1900: he '*saw no reason why [his] party should not agree to 1959*', and acknowledged that Nigeria had '*come of age*', and these are the phrases that are remembered. It is a mistake to ignore their context, as it is to forget the emirs who now thought that further delay, while the British fumbled with the apron strings, might let egalitarian trends and freedom for the radicals go too far; or the Sardauna who saw the north as an island of Islam-led power; or the pressure from the educated northern youth who imagined self-government as nothing more than a progressively accelerating replacement of expatriates without competition from southerners. What Abubakar actually had to say on the last day of the budget meeting, choosing his words carefully yet clumsily, was in fact this:

'The members of the party in this house therefore are taking part in the discussion of this subject with a view to conveying to our party the wishes of the members of the house of representatives and to seek for their co-operation at the next constitutional conference. Once this is understood, we see no reason why we of

the congress should refuse to allow the house of representatives the opportunity to instruct their political delegates to press for the fixing of a date for Nigerian independence in 1959. The NPC has never been at any time opposed to the idea of self-government. The only difference between us and the other parties on this subject is the question of fixing a date. . . . By accident of history, I mean the fact that the British entered this country from the sea, . . . the rate of progress and development in the western European civilization has been uneven, with the vast northern region dragging behind. . . . It will take some years before we can hope to reach parity with the south in this field [western education]. . . . The first elementary school in northern Nigeria was opened in Kano in 1908. . . .

'We still cherish the plea that the development of a federal system of government in any country largely depends on the even progress of the units comprising the federation. . . . It is . . . natural for the people of the north, though greater than the south in numerical strength, to fear domination. . . . Those fears still exist, and they can only be erased by the most sincere practical demonstration of goodwill and by the unselfish co-operation of the south. . . . There are 46,000 men and women in the federal public service. . . . I very much doubt if [the number of northerners] even amount to one percent. . . . We from the north have only come to be associated with [a legislative assembly] in 1947. . . . I consider it a great achievement that in only ten years . . . the representatives of the north have learnt to hold their own. . . . 'The British people have demonstrated in practical terms that among all colonial powers they are the best administrators. . . . It is a pity that in making that policy [self-government as soon as the people are ripe for it], the British government did not lay down set standards which a colonial territory must attain before the grant of self-government. One former British teacher of mine summed up very clearly what I am trying to explain in his introduction to a history book which he wrote: 'We do not expect an infant to show gratitude to a surgeon for saving its life. We hope however that when the infant grows to years of discretion he will realize that even though the surgeon draws his fee to make a living, it is his experience and advice which had put the patient on his legs again, and until the cure is permanent it is as well to have the doctor close at hand'. The child has now come of age, and would like to thank the surgeon and ask to be discharged.

' . . . It is the politicians and our newspapers who preach disunity for their own ends and thereby foster bitterness. For many years before 1945 Nigerian tribes were living happily together in peace because at that time political parties were not organized. . . . We must do all in our power to protect our country from the civil discord and strife into which some other countries - and here I am thinking of Indonesia - have fallen within a few years of achieving their independence'.

These words succeeded in matching the spirit of the house, but were neither so committal of his broader party at home nor so confident of the future as many readers of the contemporary headlines have supposed. The reference to the British not laying down set standards might have been a wistful recollection of a discussion with a Bauchi assistant district officer who five years before had admitted his own naïve supposition, while on the Devonshire training course and before the days of large programmes of development aid and technical co-operation from European treasuries, that self-government could hardly be contemplated until a territory had built and staffed, say, x dispensaries, y schools, z veterinary clinics and so forth per head of population, regardless of who would administer the policies. They had then agreed that officialdom

in Britain itself (where, according to a statistical survey, even in 1952 seven out of a hundred families had no plumbed-in lavatory, one in three no bath, seven-eighths no telephone, five-sixths no access to a motor car and only two percent of secondary school leavers went on to university) must admit that whatever values were assigned to such qualifying factors, there would always be some reason to add more items to the list and postpone change to another day; lines must be drawn and Gordian knots must be cut. But the convincing reason now was that Britain's home policy-makers were patently anxious to be (as Solaru had said) 'liberated' themselves, and neither the officials nor the conservative Africans who believed that the job was not yet done could conceive of more time being conceded. Trying now without success to persuade his schoolfellow Aliyu 'Dankyari (after a career in teaching, as chief scribe in Yawuri and now registrar to the chief alkali of Zaria) to accept party office, Abubakar had once more to concede that *'politicians are like bees floating on the open sea, one by one they all sink!'*

Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith in the north had not lost hope of leaving behind him a structural stability that would absorb the growing strains and pressures that threatened regional unity and the continued popular acceptability of the native authorities. Provincial issues moved upwards from the NAs through DOs and residents to the ministry for local government; political issues in Kaduna went down direct from ministers to emirs and prominent NA officials. These conduits were mutually exclusive. Co-ordination was frustrated as conflicting ideas orbited. With the governor-general's support he had been developing a concept of devolving authority to the twelve provinces, an idea which was now popularly known as the 'twelve pillars' policy. Sir James Robertson was now accustomed to learning that the Sardauna had quarrelled with someone and that his minister of transport had *'to go up to sort out a bit of trouble'*, if by grace the aeroplane were available. On one such of Malam Abubakar's visits to Kaduna, Sharwood-Smith was given two sheets of paper bearing Abubakar's own coincidental but rather more expensive and complicated thoughts on similar lines. Malam Abubakar also thought provincial councils should be set up with legislative powers like to, but more limited than, the regions', and so constituted as to strengthen the links between NAs and government. He listened once more with nods and soft Hausa ejaculations of agreement to the governor's repeated warnings against separatist fragmentation in the north, which could only subjugate it to the south and then lead directly to the destruction of Nigeria.

The following night Sharwood-Smith had a formal dinner-party, and wanted to ask Abubakar to join it, but was reluctant to make a direct approach to a man he recognized to be physically weary, in case the invitation were taken as a vice-regal command. He called in the deputy secretary to exco as a familiar go-between. Abubakar's reply at the catering rest house chalet was that he was pleased at the governor's consideration, and that he would indeed prefer a quiet evening: he enjoyed social occasions with friends, but was given few such opportunities to turn down the duty functions without giving offence. He went on to mention his own ideas for devolution: he thought it wrong that when most Nigerian provinces were larger than many colonies they should be treated like mere counties or local governments - *'If chief commissioners can become governors, I don't see why residents shouldn't be governors too!'* They did not know that the Sardauna was going to reject Sharwood-Smith's desire that 'district officers', as they lost their remaining executive powers to 'provincial authorities', should revert to the Lugardian title of 'assistant residents' with

its connotation of consultation and advice. The conversation ended when the emissary excused himself to go as parochial secretary to put the ribbons in the proper bible lesson places for the St Christopher's church evensong: 'Ah!', said Abubakar, '*It is a good thing to go to church*'.

At about this time Sir Bryan wrote to the colonial office that he had learnt from a close friend of Abubakar that while at 45 he appeared to be a fit and resilient man, under his robes there was in fact the wizened body of an old man. No medical explanation was given, but Sharwood-Smith suggested that Whitehall should not assume that his health could sustain for long the heavy burden of a prime minister. No more was heard of this, and the 'close friend' was talking nonsense, but Sir Bryan was much encouraged by Abubakar's robust thoughts of anticipating the creation of outright states. The inchoate 'twelve pillars' policy was finally defined and formulated on paper with the initial agreement of the Sardauna and other ministers, and the advice of Mr Rowland Hudson, head of the colonial office's African studies branch, and provision was eventually made for it in the constitution. Provincial authorities chaired by the resident, with a minority of chiefs and a majority of elected members, would act as 'cabinets'; they would be answerable to provincial councils, also including the chiefs, members nominated to speak for special interests, and a majority of elected members, which would be the local 'parliaments'. The provincial councils would approve budgets drawn from government and NA grants, advise the regional government on matters affecting the province, and pass by-laws (avoiding the present cumbersome practice of inducing many separate native authorities to make identical model by-laws); the provincial authorities would implement regional and provincial policies. DOs would continue to advise the various native authorities, who would however correspond directly with government, and no longer 'u.f.s' ['under flying seal', in the picturesque phrase inviting caricature] through the divisional offices as intermediaries. Malam Abubakar was convinced however that administrative officers needed the certainty of an honourable, valued and responsible part in the amended provincial structure, to prevent them thinking that the only future promotion worth having would be that to permanent secretary in Kaduna or Lagos.

When it came to the point, the emir of Kano and others of the more powerful chiefs perceived an infringement of their prerogatives, without the awareness that an attempt was being made to build them into the fabric of devolved democratic national government in a way that neither sole native authorities nor chiefs-in-council nor the house of chiefs itself had yet enjoyed. What was finally introduced was a toothless shadow of a bold endeavour to bring viable effective government, associating elected responsibility and tradition, closer to rural people. By that time Sharwood-Smith had gone and Abubakar had heavier preoccupations. In part the difficulty had been that the Hudson report implicitly expected expatriate residents to survive for ten to fifteen years; in part that Sharwood-Smith still instinctively believed in Margery Perham's pre-war theory of the provincial administration being, as advisers, a scaffolding which would one day be fully withdrawn from local government; and in part that emirs and chiefly-related ministers preferred to envisage residents, who were the symbol not only of British rule but also of central authority, being replaced by politicized indigenous northern administrative officers possessed of inherited aristocratic tact. The alternative Ilorin experiment (mentioned in the preceding chapter) was accused of failing because it had not been introduced in progressive stages from

the lowest level first, and because nobody had expected the incoming politicians to be quite so violently corrupt.

More overseas events now attracted attention. On 25 March the treaty of Rome created the European economic community; a French company was formed to exploit the minerals of the Sahara, enhancing northern politicians' conviction that the Nigerian geological survey had not tried hard enough; in Cyprus 'Colonel' Grivas was offered a free conduct back to Greece, and archbishop Makarios was offered his freedom anywhere but in Cyprus – both offers were refused; the Suez canal was officially declared clear of wrecks and other hazards; an imminent test explosion of Britain's hydrogen bomb was announced; and a US senator John F Kennedy provoked France by referring to the 'independent personality of Algeria'. At home the eastern region's finance bill clashed with the federation's efforts to draft a unified income tax ordinance, and its £2 per ton purchase tax on the federal coal corporation's produce called in doubt Enugu's understanding of economic and national needs. The western government surprised all the others by devoting £40,000 to research into the origins of the Yoruba people. Foley Newns produced his study of the relationship between ministers, ministries and departments, which was welcomed by politicians and administrators as evidence to support the final integration of the specialist services into the political government machine, a move that was still meeting some specialist professional resistance, particularly in the north. It had been at Malam Abubakar's suggestion that Newns had spent part of his leave in London studying the Whitehall practices, and he wrote the foreword to the committee's report which like the successive editions of Newns's *Office of the Council of Ministers – Practice & Procedure* received an ever-widening circulation around the developing commonwealth.

Ahaji Ahmadu, sardauna of Sokoto, had taken an initiative in February to prepare the political ground for the forthcoming postponed constitutional conference; in this he had had a preliminary brief consultation with Sharwood-Smith, whose lengthy relationship with him had again become civil and frank. Their rapprochement was partly the result of Abubakar's interventions, and partly because the governor's decision to seek retirement was now common knowledge: there was no longer reason to suspect that the governor might for some inscrutable reason try to discourage the premier from behaving as he imagined a national statesman should behave. NPC and AG had not spoken formally with each other since 1953. In the first instance the NPC and AG deputy leaders, Malam Abubakar and Sam Akintola, met secretly at three weekly meetings during March at the AG treasurer S O Gbadamosi's house in Ikorodu, where they agreed to commit their parties to supporting an independent commission which should hear claims that any scheme for a proposed new state would be viable; if it were so, then by plebiscite a majority of the state's notional residents could authorise its creation, provided that any ethnic group opposed would not be included, unless it would thereby form a surrounded 'island'. They also agreed with some difficulty that ethnic groups in one region might by majority vote realign their boundaries into a neighbouring region that was willing to accept them. The Sardauna then visited Awolowo with Muhammadu Ribadu at Ibadan and won his agreement to a 'summit' meeting with Dr Azikiwe and advisers, to minimise areas of party disagreement in London. He then went on to see Dr Azikiwe in Enugu and asked him to join him in a meeting with Chief Awolowo in Lagos.

There was a preliminary conclave of Malam Abubakar, makama of Bida

Aliyu (from Kaduna), Chief Akintola (federal AG), Messrs K O Mbadiwe and Kola Balogun (federal NCNC), who advised that the premiers should be bound by whatever they might agree together. After two days' discussion in mid-April the premiers did agree on a version of the Ikorodu proposals for creation of states, and that Chief Awolowo (who had the best party secretariat machine) should prepare a note of the meeting for all to initial, with a view to trying to carry the minority parties along with them when they reached London, where they should meet again. There was some indeterminate talk of revenue allocation.

The three premiers had thus reached at least a mutual understanding, before the house of representatives' debate, of what each would look for at the conference, and Zik in particular found no difficulty in coming to friendly terms with the NPC leader. Such rapprochement became rarer further down the party ladders (Zik however had internal party problems, to which chapter 26 will revert). Following on this 'summit', agreement was made on what the Nigerian politicians should place on the London agenda, at a working meeting between Abubakar and Aliyu, Akintola, and Mbadiwe and Kola Balogun. Research students accustomed to rummaging in European statesmen's private papers tend to regret that the records of many political meetings in the period of decolonization are inaccessible; they would do well to remember that, as in pre-Hankey days of the British cabinet, there may never have been any record, least of all of affairs organized from and in the north, and that secrets never committed to paper seldom leak, although they may later be garbled or creatively revised. The fact is that the wider northern establishment quickly shied off endorsement of the Lagos cross-party proposals for two-thirds majority referenda to determine the creation of new states, which were seen again as a threat to the NPC. Yet credit is given to Akintola for building a bridge over which in the future the AG might have co-operated with the northern ruling group.

The governor-general and other British officials were, however, totally immersed in preparing the armoury of 'position papers' and briefs, without which no Whitehall mandarin dare go into negotiatory combat. In days of telex, fax, 'xerox' and electronic document-processing it should not be forgotten that carbon copies, individual thermal duplication, expensive negative photostats and wax cyclostyle stencils were the limit of 1950s technology, and that most official minuting was still done painstakingly, nor always very legibly, in manuscript. Texts of coded telegrams were invariably corrupted, and confident action often had to await the confirmatory copy sent by 'bag'. The colonial office itself was seriously worried about urgent conference papers not being ready in time for Mr Ian Bancroft, the secretary-general lent from the cabinet office, because their office duplicating machine could not cope with the volume. Sir James, used to an even simpler Sudanese system, grumbled and, like his brethren, looked forward to this conference with concern and uncertainty. He was worried by his private conclusion that the only stable factors in Nigerian life were the family and the tribe, and that he still had, as it were, to encourage a Muslim to be a willing friend of an infidel and 'slave'; yet he did not fear the contempt that emirs had for southerners, it was the distrust that the northern middle class showed that was dangerous. He had also become irritated by NCNC federal ministers' inclination to meddle in western regional affairs, and by AG's interference in Lagos, even though Awo in his heart realized that the west could not keep the capital for itself.

Malam Abubakar himself, more affected by the British practice perhaps,

wrote to Sir Bryan privately and asked him as an adoptive northerner for two personal briefs: what were the essential requirements for a new nation aspiring to independence, and what should be the minimum safeguards that the north ought to demand before finally committing itself to independence? He still did not concede that he had agreed to '1959' irrevocably, and he was still worried about the possibility of the treasury and customs being controlled by ministers hostile to the north, particularly while there was only a handful of northerners in the federal service. The requests were less naïve than they may seem; he knew his own, and others', answers to the questions, but thought he could not compare too many answers if he were to reach an unappealable judgment. Sharwood-Smith warned him that any written constitutional safeguard could be rewritten or unwritten, and that a disciplined and loyal army and police force were the ultimate protection for the country and its government. Officers and men, and each specialized group, ought to be equally balanced between the country's various tribal and cultural divisions, and this was not at present so. He drew particular attention to the shortage of northerners among the officer and technical cadres. He also insisted that a multiplicity of regions would lead back to a unitarian Nigeria, which could only hurt the north's immediate interests.

As Abubakar was absorbing this advice, an unsuccessful attempt was alleged in Lagos to assassinate Dr Azikiwe outside government house, delaying his arrival at a meeting of governors, premiers and federal leaders, to whom he apologized: 'It is not my fault, they tried to assassinate me at the door of your office' (but the report had little effect on opinion, and Malam Abubakar considered it another '*put-up job*', although not necessarily Zik's own idea). At the same time the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was being formally created; and the South African prime minister Mr J G Strijdom announced that *God Save the Queen* would no longer be sung as a national anthem.

Most of the conference delegates travelled in the Elder Dempster line flagship, mv *Aureol*. On the wharf at Apapa a jolly crowd was dancing and singing in praise of Dr Azikiwe. Turning to his secretary, Malam Abubakar commented, '*Of course, all this is to play down Mbadiwe!*' By now his sensitivity to southern politics was as apparent as it was to the NPC's mercurial leadership. The excited shipload arrived in Britain to be fussed over by the British press, many of whom (like many civil servants in Whitehall outside the colonial office) thought that Azikiwe was the only important Nigerian, since they had never heard of any other; one BBC report even suggested that Malam Abubakar was Zik's minister of transport. Abubakar caught an earlier train from Liverpool and arrived unnoticed to stay at Reuben's Hotel. Fully forty Nigerians were recognized as having the right to take full part in the meetings, and as many again were in attendance (Nigeria was again in the hands of caretakers, the chief justice at the head of government, supported by Mr Jaja Wachuku and one other minister). The cheaper newspapers concentrated on what they impertinently called the 'fancy dress' of the visitors, and a virtual fashion parade description was given of Dr Azikiwe, Raymond Njoku, Adelabu, T O S Benson, the fon of Bali and others, but especially of Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, whose Itsekiri dress from Warri, like that of their rival Urhobo neighbours, but with a longer feather in his straw hat and a longer train to his lappa than ever before, was found especially endearing. Not all the Africans liked this journalistic fascination, but in the result it made for good public relations; they were attracting attention and they were not being ridiculed for their flamboyance. Britain's staidness was also

being helped on its way as the swinging sixties beckoned. Malam Aminu Kano, unselected, was already in Britain and remained on the fringe.

Malam Abubakar, in his restrained garb, overcame his weariness of body and spirit, and the strain of political conflict, to embark on his overseas visit to the international conference at the Hague to which his interest had given some impetus. Accompanied by his permanent secretary Michael Varvill and his private secretary Richard Kinsman, he flew to the Netherlands. By the time they landed at Schiphol airport near Amsterdam on 7 May, the Nedeco people had already been talking again to the French experts concerned with the Niger and Benue rivers flowing through the French west African federation, including Soudan, Niger and Cameroun. The Dutch had ruefully noted the evidently greater flow of French money into public works than in the British territory, but were again impressed by the Nigerian minister's sense of involvement. The Dutch minister of transport and waterways, Dr J Algera, and engineer A G Maris, the director-general of the public works department, were his principal hosts during the visit. In his formal speech he said that he was not prepared to agree that this should be the last of such conferences, which had been held periodically since the first at Yaoundé in 1954, and he looked to the French to build on these foundations of close co-operation. As well as new and improved craft belonging to the existing French and British companies, a Norwegian river transport enterprise was considering an addition to the river fleets, and he thought that major hydrological works could now be economically justified by the likely traffic.

He went on to refer to international law and the conventions. The conventions governed the operation of maritime ports for use by purely sea-going vessels; the Niger treaties only referred to rights of passage by the signatory powers. Since the law was silent on the right of purely river-going vessels in maritime ports, and also on deepwater fleets at upriver ports, apart from simple navigational procedures, Malam Abubakar gave the assurance that Nigeria would ensure equal treatment for all rivercraft, regardless of nationality, at any port. He did not think of the advent of far eastern sea-powers, it seems. He wanted to see his new inland waterways department's services extended to all the more difficult stretches of the Niger's delta and creeks, but mentioned lack of money and staff: perhaps the Dutch might help with training?

'Rivers have no respect for political frontiers. They are the common property of many peoples, and if they are to be harnessed to the service of mankind, it is essential that we should continue to consult together. . . . In the Niger and the Benue we have two of the great rivers of the world. Rivers and creeks and deltas are temperamental things, as wilful as living creatures, and their habits and vagaries must be carefully studied before we subject them to engineering controls. We must approach these problems with humility and circumspection. Above all, gentlemen, we must approach them together'.

For such set speeches his practice now was to give Varvill (or Kinsman if appropriate) some scratchpad jottings of disjointed points he wished to make, perhaps some personal stirring phrases, and then to 'top and tail' their coherent draft, generally making few material changes to the final body since his officials were now attuned to how he would speak. The tone of this particular 'tailing' might have fitted equally well in the constitutional conference.

Next day was busy, although Holland is a small flat country with fast communications, a sharp contrast with Nigeria, Britain or the United States.

Abubakar visited the hydraulics laboratory at Delft, and an international air survey training centre associated with KLM; then sped through Rotterdam to Zalkommel for a launch trip to Vlaardingen, down the Lek river towards the Hook of Holland, and back to the Hague. 10 May showed a very different form of water control from the Mississippi works that Abubakar had imagined transplanted to his own rivers; he travelled through Gouda and Utrecht to the edge of the Zuider Zee at Harderwijk, and after looking on the way at two pumping stations saw the Zuiderzee works exhibition at Leystad in east Flevoland; thence by launch across the Zee to Urk on the north-east polder (one of the country's principal reclamations below sea level), and to see the development around the polder's capital Emmeloord. After a night at Leuvenum, the party went on to inspect the Nigerian models at the open-air hydraulics laboratory of De Voorst, and discussed with Nedeco's managing director, engineer E W H Clason, and Coode & partners, their consulting engineers, the proposed mole at Escravos; on again through Lemmer to a tourist's 'typical Friesian lunch' at Terhorne, and across the 32 kilometre enclosing dam of the whole Zuiderzee, past Alkmaar, Haarlam and Bloemendaal to Zandvoort on the North Sea for dinner, and back to the Hague for a deep sleep.

The following day was a Sunday, but by the time the party had returned to London there had also been time for explanation of the river patrol system on the Rhine river, the canal system and the new Rhine delta plan, and the parts played by the Netherlands central and local governments in controlling inland waterways, for comparison with the freer American experience. He seemed to have mastered the knack of delivering five- to ten-minute after-dinner speeches without being ponderous. There had also been opportunity for snatches at leisure among tulips and Rembrandts. While Varvill paid a hasty visit to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Malam Abubakar preferred to relax in the car outside. Varvill came out to find a small blond schoolboy and Abubakar in his rags looking at each other in mutual admiration and incomprehension: 'I have been talking to the only Dutchman who can't speak English!' Constitutions seemed very remote, and ten days in London should now have been something of a deserved rest, were it not for conference preparations and a visit to the British hydrological laboratory at Wallingford south of Oxford, where there was a working model of Lagos harbour for the projected extension to Apapa wharf; but he also saw Lennox-Boyd, and with some charm did not deny that he had been talking about canals for the north's advantage in an independent Nigeria.

The northern peoples congress was reorganizing itself, its secretariat being divided into three departments, that for administration under D A Rafi the founder and paid manager, that for organization under Muhammadu King the chief organizing secretary who co-ordinated party activities, and that for publicity under Yusufu Dantsoho who had defected from NEPU. There were incidental troublesome moves by the latter two men, with some other officials, to reshape the party so that they and the membership should increase their authority over the central working committee (that is, the Sardauna backed by the northern executive council); they were not least anxious to influence the appointment of ministers, in which Sharwood-Smith's unpopular views on the need to include the middle belt had been crucial. It is not surprising either that these moves were ineffective or that they brought little retribution: the Sardauna knew whose advice he would listen to, and who would come to heel. The party officials made no contribution to the NPC's part in the conference,

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which was played by the ministers who claimed to know what would be good for the north and, in the case of Malam Abubakar, what might be least harmful to the federation, if it should survive.

The northern regional ministers who went as delegates to London were the sardauna Alhaji Ahmadu, Malam Muhammadu Ribadu, Alhaji Isa Kaita and the makama of Bida; their formal advisers were Abba Habib from Dikwa, George Ohikere the new minister from Okene (whose wing of the Igbirra tribal union was largely Roman catholic and in conflict with the other, mainly Muslim or CMS, wing which affected closer links with the traditional hard core of the NPC and retained some sentiment for the deposed attā of Igbirra and his family), and the distinguished waziri of Borno, Shettima Kashim. There were also 'additional' advisers included as a sop, mainly from the middle belt and Ilorin. The northern premier was insistent that his overseas civil service minister colleagues on exco should sit as full delegates in plenary sessions as if NPC stalwarts, although there was pressure from the south to keep them sitting outside, to be called in like expert witnesses if needed. Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's place was in the federal delegation, with the deputy speaker Malam Bello Dandago and his parliamentary secretary Bukar Dipcharima as advisers. All northern factions were confident in their capacity to achieve their aims by a stubborn repetitious redeployment of facts as they defined them; these, because they were supported by geography and population, they believed would give them overpowering strength in debate. This was in contrast with the AG, whose approach was most like Whitehall's, admirably academic; Chief Awolowo and his legal colleague Rotimi Williams (a member of the western house of chiefs, who never had to face election) had prepared many closely argued and painstaking papers, which most of their opponents scorned to read before making a visceral refutation. The NCNC memoranda disappointed the connoisseurs of conferences; but their members could always rely on spontaneity when on their feet to meet the spirit of the occasion.

The Sardauna had reconvened the premiers' 'summit', with the further inclusion of Dr Endeley, on arrival in London, and had gravely upset Chief Awolowo by refusing to endorse the papers (not the summit minutes) which Awo had prepared to lay before the conference as the 'agreed' joint intentions of all the premiers; this was in part because the NCNC had also prepared memoranda, apparently contrary to the spirit of the summit, but also because of the NPC's own second thoughts. All that he would endorse of the supposed package was 1959 for independence. The semblance of unity that had been concocted in April now evaporated.

Lennox-Boyd's private assessment when five weeks of talk opened at Lancaster House was firm, as he had explained it to his British cabinet colleagues: the leaders of two of the regions were only just about to launch out on internal self-government; the leader of the third, which was the largest, did not wish to receive that chalice for some time; the future of the country could not be treated in terms of a unit so long as its constituent parts, which were made up of many more than three social structures, were not in step; Nigeria had not therefore yet begun to take the strain of self-government, and her Majesty's government must have some idea as to how that strain would be taken before finally settling the issue of independence. But the British cabinet had agreed with the secretary of state that the constitution might be amended so as to permit the appointment of a federal prime minister at the centre; despite the risk of the north dominating the south, Nigeria must be held together. Not all British politicians were yet persuaded that the agreed principle of

self-government should be hurried; many (these reservations crossed party lines) still thought full independence could only be maintained in the modern world by the major dependencies, and there was also continuing doubt, not always clearly voiced, about enlarging the commonwealth to accommodate all potential ex-colonial territories, even if grouped together in strong economic and defensive federations. 'Slow and steady' still seemed to be the majority official British watchword, to the extent that this would not forfeit actual sturdy goodwill. Volatile demagogues, extremists and the ill-willed (whoever these might be thought to be) must not be allowed to press the secretary of state into moves which would weaken Britain's perceived responsibility, in her own and world interests, for ensuring the survival of stable governments wherever its influence might be withdrawn. All this amounted to a hope to retain adequate and effective central powers accessible to Nigeria's governor-general, and that implied no immediate independence. In fact Sir James opened the proceedings, unrehearsed because (like Abubakar once before him) unforeshadowed, with a courteous but pointed reminder that with the final splitting of the public services only four months old, they had only just finished introducing the last constitution.

On the Nigerian side, the colonial office's free bar in Lancaster House helped to oil the wheels of negotiation, and many religious backsliders took surprising advantage of the cognac and whisky, usually darkly disguised by cola (in Kaduna, the local brand when so fortified was known as *Krolan zamani*, or 'contemporary Krola'); Abubakar was as ever among those conspicuously to insist on orange juice. Against the alienating glitter of the venue and the ennui of the evening social engagements, there began to emerge, even among the vocal delegates, an urgency to forget their differences if only formulas could be devised to permit a penultimate step forward to statehood. Before the end, one elderly official was reminded of the apocryphal pre-war servant answering for his faults to a persistent master: 'Please sir, dismiss me, fine me, beat me. do anything you want with me but, sir, please stop asking me questions!' This effect was sublimated in the aftermath into a triumph of tolerance attributed mainly but not solely to Lennox-Boyd and Abubakar, but the reality was never far below the surface that politics was still a clash of tribalisms led by three impressive rival personalities. For the first time the Whitehall team of officials from cabinet and colonial offices took a considered view of the fourth personality, the federal minister of transport, and in particular of his relationship with the Sardauna (at Lyttelton's conferences they had not looked so deeply into future Nigerian nationhood). They now confirmed their opinion, based hitherto on British intelligence reports, that Malam Abubakar was a great deal more than 'the Sardauna's man in Lagos'. They had only known of his voice, restraint and dignity, but now they recognized that his intelligence and relaxed positive manners placed him on a par with all the others; in their Pall Mall clubland's estimation, he was uniquely able to balance his interest in the integrity of the north with the ability to command the widest confidence and loyalty. Surely, they thought, this was the embodiment of the solution to the problem of how to reconcile the traditional and Islamic north with the democratic - or at least demotic - south: unpompous, sensible, unbigoted and courageous.

They could not but detect some jealousy or resentment from Awo and Zik, who both expected to be prime minister one day by right: Awolowo was one of the first to popularize the solecism of referring to him as plain 'Balewa',

which at the time had pejorative overtones in northern ears (later the spreading practice led to him being indexed by *The Times* between Stanley Baldwin and A J Balfour, a curiously ambivalent compensation). Some of Whitehall's obedient servants also interestingly found a contemporary parallel in British politics to his position in the NPC; just as the most honourable the marquis of Salisbury and the old Tory hierarchy reluctantly accepted the minister of labour and national service Mr Iain Macleod for his ability, while despising his professional bridge-playing and his plebeian origins, so they affected to watch the honourable the sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu, and his set, regarding the clever dominie and bookworm Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. But it was an African's opinion that observed how hard the necessary change would be for the three powerful premiers, already too used to special loyalties to themselves, to take an active part in placing someone else at the country's political head. They all knew that in world opinion, whatever federal separation of powers might suggest, a prime minister came first. Consequently in a television interview the Sardauna agreed with Awo that in an independent Nigeria all the leaders would find their way to the centre; Awo maintained that it was wrong to see the regions as strong and the centre weak, and later announced to his own party's approval that he intended to go to the federal house, just as the NCNC gave Zik the call to do the same.

The conference secretariat, led by Ian Bancroft, and the home civil servants were reinforced by Malam Inuwa Wada's new permanent secretary, Peter Stallard, who could identify and interpret all the speakers. In the steering committee which managed the agenda, Malam Abubakar and Muhammadu Ribadu were successfully supported by Chiefs Awolowo and Rotimi Williams in arguing against Dr Azikiwe, Chief Adelabu and Malam Aminu Kano that the question of self-government for the regions must be settled first before federal independence could usefully be discussed. The NCNC and NEPU delegations gave way unwillingly to the secretary of state's insistence on flexible procedures, particularly since a steering committee could hardly decide policy.

There followed in the plenary, committee and informal sessions a prolonged argument about breaking up the regions into further separate 'states'. From the Sardauna and Malam Abubakar for the NPC there was the alternative scheme of provincial authorities on the Hudson model, which (as recorded earlier) was ultimately accepted and enshrined as a permissive power in the new constitution; they were opposed to any enabling provision for future creation of more regions. Aminu Kano and NEPU preferred that all regions be further subdivided into states. The Ilorin separatists only insisted that their province, or its southern part with Kabba division, be joined to the western region. The UMBC (of which the Tiv Joseph S Tarka was now president, his tribe being the largest in the middle belt, and he its leading educated man) demanded a central region – this should embody all of Ilorin, Niger, southern Zaria, Plateau, southern Bauchi (where Tafawa Balewa lay) Kabba, Benue and part of Adamawa, provinces – but they remained tactfully or confusedly vague on where its capital might be and what new west-east communications it would need across the grain of the country, or how this infrastructure might be financed and built. The AG wished Lagos to be returned to the west but, subject to many prerequisites and with NCNC backing, sought the creation of a mid-west state of the Benin and Delta (former Warri) provinces, with which the Yoruba were jealous of sharing their revenue, but where the Ijo and Itsekiri were suspicious of Edo-speakers' (Bini) domination (Awolowo personally wanted all three new states now, and provision for others in future

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(they were viable). A less homogeneous grouping wanted a Lagos state, to include adjacent parts of the western region; Ijo-speakers from both west and east wanted their own version of a rivers state; and Ogoja also had leaders who wanted to go it alone. The NCNC supported both rivers and Calabar states, while their broader local opposition supported an ill-defined but emotionally popular concept of a single 'COR' (Calabar-Ogoja-rivers) state (they also had a scheme for 17 states, which other parties derided as reducing the practical powers and status of regions to 'glorified local governments'). The southern Cameroonian were pointedly and contentedly left out of all such chaotic deliberation. Eventually Lennox-Boyd told the conference that the creation of any new regions (he would not speak of states) could not but take long administrative and organizational time; if the delegates would not accept a further finite but uncertain postponement of independence, then independence in 1960 must be on the basis of the existing regions. The choice being left to Nigerians, the AG opted for early independence rather than regional change, and there was unanimous agreement. The colonial office regretfully thought it too late to propose including Ikeja division in the federal territory after all.

In the event the grant of immediate eastern and western internal self-government was followed by agreement that *ex officio* executive council members (except the attorney general) should be dropped in the north. All future elections of 320 members to a yet further enlarged federal house should be by direct universal suffrage, except that in deference to Islamic tradition, women would not vote in the north. The police provisions were not easy to agree: the east had no local police forces beyond bailiffs and court messengers, and seemed not to want them, but the west, like the north, had local authority forces. Awo used the example of the British home secretary having direct control of the metropolitan police, but only an oversight of the county and city forces, to claim that police powers should be fully regionalized. The Sardauna was strongly inclined to support him, but Abubakar spoke up for what had to be done and against shibboleths, and persuaded him, and in the end the conference, to maintain a federal force, although introducing a close relationship between regional commissioners and the premiers. Sir James's comforting and consolidating voice had been heard continually in the lobbying; on paper he would still be personally responsible through the secretary of state to the British crown and parliament for all Nigeria's law and order, and he could not yield to the splitting of the force. At the centre a police commission would advise the governor-general on pay, promotions, appointments and discipline, and HE would also preside over a police council including the prime minister and the premiers, with the inspector-general and regional commissioners in attendance. In the light of Sharwood-Smith's advice to Abubakar about democratic constitutions needing the protection of a loyal detribalized but ethnically balanced army and police, it is ironic that the Sardauna's final comment aside was that they should run the army down and build up the police - a force dissipated through the country in small stations could never have a coup. However the only conference decision on that was to transfer control of the Nigerian military force from the Whitehall army council to the governor general, advised by a defence council.

Other matters could neither be settled summarily, even in five weary weeks, nor put away to fester in the registries. The resurfacing chauvinisms, and the unshared fears of ethnic overnightness shown in the long debate on states, had to be assuaged as much in the south as between the north and the north. It was decided to set up a minorities commission which would ascertain

the 'facts' and report to yet another resumed conference in 1958. Without withdrawing the secretary of state's warning that new regions would involve delayed independence, the terms of reference, which were laboriously drafted and redrafted, were sufficiently broad for enthusiasts to envisage one, but not more than one, new 'state' being carved out of each present region after all. To the south the prospect of a middle belt region was more appetising than either a mid-west or a COR. The conference's joint African political leadership was never wholly agreed on the need for this commission, but the Sardauna, Zik and Abubakar were at one in insisting that no specific areas be singled out for mention in the terms of reference. The other important body detailed to attend to vital minutiae was the fiscal commission: the distribution of powers between federation and strong regions had to be financed, without weakening the stability, solvency and creditworthiness of the country as a whole.

Meanwhile the conference settled that a federal senate should be introduced as a revising chamber, with provision for the added novelty of chiefs and an upper house in the east, and the Sardauna opted for northern regional internal self-government in 1959 (which with Sharwood-Smith's imminent retirement was likely to be a nominal delay since the CS and FS would now be vanishing, leaving the AG as the only British northern minister to sit with some new governor in exco). A third commission would delimit electoral boundaries. The position of Lagos and the future of the central marketing board were also matters left over. Sir James Robertson commented that, 'We have got around the difficulties – or we have shelved them'. There was to be a prime minister, who would advise the governor-general (still president of the council of ministers) on appointment of ministers; there would be no chief secretary or financial secretary. The actual date of independence led to some exchanges. The three premiers and Dr Endeley of the Cameroons specified 2 April 1960, but at the crucial point the sportsman and boxer Dr Azikiwe had gone to Paris with Chief Awolowo to see the easterner Hogan 'Kid' Bassey defeat Cherif Hamia for the world featherweight championship title, and in their absence the Sardauna spoke for all of them. Lennox-Boyd preferred to see what the commissioners would recommend on their remits, and whether the east and west could govern themselves competently; he would go no further towards signing a blank cheque than accepting 'a date in 1960'. The Sardauna expressed muted disappointment on behalf of the absent Awo and Zik, and those who were in attendance took note. Economists also took note that Nigeria was shortly going to fund nearly a thousand elected legislators and upwards of fifty ministers. Zik had a final dissatisfied comment to make: not only was there no fixed date for freedom, but the internal autonomy given to the federal government was too restrictive, and the internal self-government of the east and west was equally circumscribed – there would be no celebrations in the eastern region. He was taking back home no more than what his people had taken for granted. Yet bitterness quickly gave way to realization that some appearance of compromise and national unity had become necessary at home and abroad, and the NCNC leaders agreed on the homeward boat that they would now 'fraternise' with the British once more.

There had been other social interludes besides official refreshments and commercial hospitality. The Queen had received representatives, including Malam Abubakar, in the state apartments at Buckingham Palace; Dr Nkrumah had sent a message to the three premiers, which Awo and the Sardauna interpreted as insulting – he could only spare them fifteen minutes and hoped that they would arrive promptly, and so they rejected it (Zik thought discourtesy was unintended,

accepted, and had talks over lunch which he found 'fruitful'); and Malam Abubakar, the premiers and Dr Endeley visited the British prime minister, Mr Macmillan, at No 10 Downing Street. Malam Abubakar had addressed a two-day conference presided over by Lord Altrincham on 'a multi-racial commonwealth' at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, held jointly by the commonwealth council and the conservative political centre; his chairman was a Nigerian student of one of the Leicester colleges. He repeated his belief that the commonwealth, a quarter of the human race, was the only league of nations that had ever really worked, and referred to '*the peculiar genius of British people . . . [who] unlike [imperial Rome and] the French have never wished to turn Canadians or Indians or Africans into Englishmen with seats in the house of commons*'. He went on to say what, despite 'special lists', was still quite novel in 1957, that

'there is really no logical reason why professional officers should not serve under an African government after independence, and after the British service is withdrawn, provided of course that their prospects are properly safeguarded. In the past it has been too readily assumed that the granting of independence would automatically imply the immediate and complete withdrawal of the British overseas civil service. This is neither logical nor wise. . . . While Nigeria may be able to man a few key posts such as London or Washington, we shall have to rely on British or some other member of the commonwealth to represent our interests in a good many parts of the world. . . . [This would be] more in accord with the present time than the extreme nationalism of the nineteenth century. . . . What we do now in our own interests is therefore likely to set a new pattern in the evolution of the commonwealth in the African continent'.

Joining assistance in defence to diplomatic umbrellas, he also hoped that it would be possible to found in the commonwealth relations office a multi-racial civil service, by seconding and exchanging officers from African and other territories of the white, brown, black and island commonwealth to and from that department. This speech attracted wide attention among those British committed to the evolving commonwealth, but rather less among the political, bureaucratic and journalistic majorities. Shortly after it Mr Macmillan said in another speech, only selectively reported since then, that 'Most of our people have never had it so good. . . . Unless inflation is effectively checked, Britain's brief post-war prosperity could easily turn out to be too good to last. If that happens, we will be back in the old nightmare of unemployment. . . . The great mass of the country has for the time being been able to contract out of the effects of rising prices. But they will not be able to contract out forever'.

In his St James Court bedroom Malam Abubakar replied to a presumptuous private letter from the Kaduna executive council office about the polarizing of NPC radicals and impartial civil servants of all stripes: '*The conference has now ended. First, you are my personal friend and I take whatever advice you give me as purely personal and I never publicize my friends' advice. Rightly or wrongly we took what decisions we took, but I want to tell you one thing. Your people (the Scots) in particular worked hard and suffered to establish the Empire and I would expect that you as a Scot and a young man would regard the new situation as a challenge to you. You raised many points in your letter which I hope to answer when I see you in Kaduna. . . . Kindest regards. Your friend. [etc] P.S. Pl. excuse the terrible writing I am terribly busy'*. A month later a sterling crisis heralded the beginning of Britain's three decades of economic downturn and loss of world influence, but her friends (and those who misrepresented Macmillan) did not yet appreciate that the bubble had burst. On 27 June Malam Abubakar flew home in the same plane as Sharwood-Smith, and prepared to go on the holy pilgrimage.

24 Abubakar makes the pilgrimage: A comparative assessment

Da dama dama sarki bisa sa

Malam Abubakar's view of the annual pilgrimage, as the sardauna of Sokoto came to practise it, supplementing it at another time of the year by the optional simple visitation of the holy places known as 'umrah, has been quoted in chapter 22 as it was expressed to a British official. There must be some reservation about any Christian's interpretation of a devout Muslim's attitudes; but none would doubt that Malam Abubakar took a scholarly view, rather than that of a zealot or enthusiast. Yet it was one that was founded deeply in the conviction of faith. His knowledge of holy writ seems to have been greater than that of many educated northern men, but he never presumed to challenge the learning of an alkali or imam. Encountered in periods of silence, pondering his books, he would convey the impression of someone who might develop into a mystic; yet he never lost his practicality. He knew it was his duty to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime – whether by sea or by land made no difference in the traditional teaching. The aeroplane was an alternative not envisaged until the 1950s. To the simpler mind, the performance of the *hajj* presupposed harsh physical trial. The awareness of countless northerners in the past who had found themselves, like Shaihu Umar, inescapably trapped in the Sudan or elsewhere, on their way to or back from Arabia, was a lasting reminder of this. The simpler mind, for example that of Musa dan Matori, the leading but illiterate Bauchi trader and lorry-owner in the mid-1950s, now thought that the struggle to amass the wealth necessary for the air fare and agent's fees was an acceptable substitute; and there were none to quarrel with that. Malam Abubakar knew that it was unlawful for the pilgrim himself to take a loan, or a gift, or the proceeds of begging, to enable his passage. After six years of prudential saving, the minister of transport was able to finance his own pilgrimage, but although the obligation lies equally on women as on men, he was not accompanied by a wife. This, rather than Sharwood-Smith's recommendation of a 'real holiday', was what he knew his spirit and body needed.

The northern regional government had by now firmly established its liaison offices on the pilgrim route, and conditions were beginning to improve for the masses. More important pilgrims had certain advantages from the Saudi authorities. One party included Adegoke Oduola Akande Adelabu from Ibadan, who had long renounced the forename of Joseph. The *Al-Amirul-Hajj* of the northern party was Alhaji Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi. Malam Abubakar went in the personal company of Alhaji Isa Kaita, who had been leader of the 1955 pilgrimage when the sardauna Malam Ahmadu had first gone, and remained close to him throughout the rituals once they had arrived at Mecca's sacred mosque. Together they donned the two simple white cloths (or

ihram), with their heads shaven and uncovered, and all ornaments and perfume removed; they made the seven circuits of the Ka'aba; they ran between the two hillocks of as-Safa and al-Marwah; and they shared the same tent at Mount Arafat. Some, like the Sardauna, went up the mountain to pray; others no less pious, including Alhaji Isa and Malam Abubakar, said the same prayers in the 39°C temperature of their tent. Abubakar, whose books taken on the pilgrimage had all been Arabic texts, included a prayer which was to be granted, that he might die with all his senses intact. They performed the Qur'anic sacrifices of sheep or camels at Mina on their return to Mecca; they had also kissed the black stone in the Ka'aba wall, and cast stones at the Mina pillars in representation of the devil, as had the Holy Prophet. They were then free after the visit to Medina to return to normal custom, and might, according to the ancient law, again hunt and have sexual relations.

Malam Abubakar was now an alhaji. He never made another pilgrimage, nor does it seem that Alhaji Ahmadu the sardauna ever tried to persuade him to join what were to become his own virtual state progresses, when emirs, ministers and notables of all kinds vied to accompany him. Alhaji Ahmadu's *My Life* refers to the pilgrim securing more merit in the future life by making the journey more than once. There is general agreement that the emotional, spiritual and ritual effect of his first pilgrimage subtly changed the Sardauna's personality, and the sequel led him to feel a growing psychological need to renew that inspiration, if not the dependency, each year in a superregal environment; a need, perhaps, for both religious reassurance and confirmation of his reflected place in the worldly mirror of holiness. He also had his own human weaknesses to reconcile continuously with his faith. Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa experienced the same spiritual regeneration and exaltation, but found the one pilgrimage sufficient to fulfil and reinforce his duty in this life. He was content to be seen as a good Muslim, and never cared to dramatize himself as possibly a better one than any other believer, whether humble or ostentatious. The henna-dyed beard was not for him, although on occasions of high ceremony he might with a barest hint of self-mockery wear an Arabian head-dress brought back from Jeddah (He was more sensitive than many to his British friends' ambivalent feelings about their own civil uniforms and formal evening dress).

On his return to Nigeria, he had occasion to count his pennies again. His home in Bauchi was still the mud house, with the small country hut to which he would retreat out on his farm. Willing helpers in the federal public works department produced drawings in their spare time for an unpretentious cement-faced house, on a site given by the emir and district head of the town. The estimate was £6,000. He asked Michael Varvill to advise him on how to calculate what all his property and credits would be worth if he were to die that night: he had no debts that he knew of, except his motorcar advance. The considered conclusion was that he was worth £3,000, and that was the limit he set on the building works he would authorise. He was then encouraged to go to Barclays bank for a loan, and although few ministers were not at that time encumbered with advances and loans far in excess of £6,000, and it is not to be supposed that the bank would have refused him more, £3,000 was what he asked for and received. His old house in Bauchi was to remain his beloved mother's home. By now most ministers, and some other politicians from upcountry, were also beginning to invest in plots and private houses in Lagos: Alhaji Abubakar never had other than his official residence in the capital.

It was no more than a nominal disappointment for him to agree to the closing of the 'Bauchi light' railway link from Zaria to Jos, which had ceased to pay its way or serve much purpose, now that the main line and improved motor roads were carrying all the traffic. The surveyed extension of the new main line from south of Jos to Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi, Gombe and Maiduguri had been finally approved, and the Bauchi administrative officer Gerald Summerhayes, who was well-known in Alhaji Abubakar's birth district, was appointed to conduct the land acquisitions and settle disputes as the track was laid. All planning had been, and construction would be, in the hands of the corporation's deputy chief engineer, Hugh Alexander. Elsewhere under the ministry, the private secretary Richard Kinsman had had, since the Netherlands visit, to take over the ports schedule from a lady assistant secretary who had gone on leave (expatriate women administrative officers had been rare until recent years, but were seldom posted to provincial or district duty). This work involved negotiations with a Mr Patrick Osoba who was keen to set up a Nigerian shipping line to ply between the country's coastal ports. The minister eventually, and without conviction, agreed to southern pressure for a feasibility study and released Kinsman to guide a north England shipping consultant Percival on a survey from Sapele to Burutu, Warri, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Victoria and Tiko. Alhaji Abubakar was much more firm in his absolute backing of J E B Hall, who was temporarily replacing an ailing Dove in the chair of the ports authority: there had been inadequate financial control and excessive over-establishment in some units, and the remedies which he approved were going to dismay some of the senior European staff. It gave Abubakar more pleasure to look at the success of the government coastal agency, which his ministry had created out of relics of the old secretariat to manage the movements of official personnel and *matériel* in and out of the country's ports.

In July an all-day meeting was held to discuss the threat by the Nigerian branch of the British medical association (BMA) to withdraw all but charitable services, unless a provisional board were set up within a week to oversee the introduction of a skeleton health service. Grey, Abubakar, Mbadiwe, Wachuku, Sir Kofo Abayomi and BMA representatives (Dr Majekodunmi being its secretary) talked about contributions from government, employees and users, the forbidding of private practice in the service institutions, and permission to consultants to earn fees in their spare time only. They agreed in principle to a board being associated with the management of Lagos health institutions in the first place, and left it to the ministry to prepare details. The doctors' strike was called off.

Otherwise this was a period of preparation for the constitutional advance. The Queen signed the order-in-council introducing internal self-government for the eastern and western regions at a privy council, which was held unusually at Goodwood races in order to meet the undertaking not to delay longer than the draftsmen had needed to engross the instruments. Mr Kingsley Mbadiwe told the NCNC secretary, Kola Balogun, and Alhaji Abubakar, that in the interests of strength and unity for independence one of the two 'I AMs' at Lagos must submerge his ego, and that he, Mbadiwe, held the key but surrendered the federal leadership to the northerner.

Alhaji Abubakar's first secretary Larry Armstrong ceased to act as federal director of public works on promotion to be director in Sierra Leone; losing friends in such a way was less disappointing to him than when the departure was to sterile retirement. Another retirement was in prospect. The reader will recollect from chapter 20 a short-sighted political scheme to bring Abubakar

back north to 'handle' Sharwood-Smith; now Malam Bello Kano, the emir of Zaria and another chief privately asked the governor's wife to persuade Sharwood-Smith to stay on, as he was the only British officer who could 'handle' the Sardauna: 'This self-government, what does it mean? We do not want it. . . . You must tell your husband to stay with us, he will listen to you. We do not know what will happen if he goes.' Abubakar himself had politely hinted that Sharwood-Smith would be preferable to a stranger during the unsettling approach to independence. The curious truth about these contrasting pictures of potential manipulators is that by 1957 Sharwood-Smith had come to rely even more on Abubakar's acumen, in the private exchanges from which the Sardauna was often consciously excluded, than the minister of transport had on the advice he so often sought from the northern governor. In embarrassment, the Sharwood-Smiths kept silence on the approach. Clocks could not be turned back: in British Guiana Dr Cheddi Jagan's PPP had won an election and formed a government; in Malaya independence was about to be declared for another British-designed federation; the north was not an island.

In the federation of Nigeria the governor-general now had to appoint as prime minister the member of the house of representatives who seemed to be the most likely to command a majority in the house, and he in turn would nominate the ministers, who would virtually hold office at his discretion. The choice was no less obvious than it had been for many months. Alhaji Abubakar led the largest party in the house, he was widely respected, and disliked by none; the southern ministers in the council clearly looked up to him. Sir James Robertson, to nobody's surprise, appointed Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa prime minister of the federation of Nigeria, and the country accepted it warmly, even in those quarters that thought their own region more important than a Lagos-centred government that lacked certain crucial powers. Abubakar was reluctant to surrender transport, but agreed with Michael Varill that to keep it in his portfolio would be too demanding, with so many new challenges, such as the oversight of an embryo foreign service.

Lagos was to enjoy a public holiday on 3 September 1957, coincidentally the eighteenth anniversary of Britain's declaration of war on Germany, to let the people acclaim the nation's new leader. Four days later Sir James personally signed to each eligible federal officer a handsomely printed invitation to join the 'special list' of HMOCS and commit themselves under a generalized guarantee to serving a potentially independent Nigeria for as long as they were wanted. It still seemed ironic to southern nationalists that the Nigerian people who were least disposed to urge the withdrawal of the agents of an imperialist power might be its heirs. Sceptics among them noticed that although the Nigerianization officer, the adviser on training, and the standing committee on training all variously tried to 'co-ordinate' the award of scholarships by the social services ministries, the relevant work of the CS's establishments division, and the appointments of the PSC, none of them had any real authority over those executive bodies.

Part one ended with a characterisation of Abubakar on the verge of his public career. It may be useful now to compare him ten years on, at the mature age of 45, with a few of those principal peers of whom so much has been said in parts two and three, and who will be such important figures in the rest of this tale. There is nothing shameful in the thought that Nigerians from all parts of the country always wanted to be with the winner, and did not consider that tendency to be at all the same thing as condoning the successful man's faults,

be he an emir, a premier, a bishop, lorry-owner or prizefighter. It has not been the purpose of this story to tell why neither of the men who had expected to lead Nigeria out of dependency ever became prime minister; but enough has been said to deduce why Zik and Awo were now powerful men in their home regions rather than rivals negotiating for less secure power in the federal machine.

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, now 53, had been born in the north and educated in Lagos and the USA. He was the first Igbo university graduate, which gave him a position that no other Igbo could ever challenge, and gave his people a self-assurance among Nigeria's other peoples that they had never had in the days before educated development, and were now never prepared to relinquish. He was at ease in the outside western world where he was not unknown, had been an agitator and a banker, still wrote for journals, and owned newspapers. He had made a deep and lasting impression on Nkrumah in 1939. For 13 years he had led the only party that claimed to hold sway Nigeria-wide, a party he had founded himself. He had also been an active association and American footballer, boxer, track athlete and tennis-player, and was still an avid sports fan. Generous, and an enthusiastic socializer, he would keep any gathering lively. In private discussions he was cautious and courteous. As 'editor-in-chief' of the *Pilot* he had been able to blame lapses on phantom editors and sub-editors. An English reader might wish that Dickens could have made of him a character in a novel.

Those of his more debilitating political weaknesses which Alhaji Abubakar did not share may be said to be two. Despite his party the NCNC's support in parts of the west and from its allies in the north, it was strongly perceived by most non-Igbos to be predominantly the party of the Igbos; and because he was himself an Igbo, struggle though he might to present himself as a pan-Nigerian (let alone a pan-African on the Nkrumah model), he was simply seen as the Igbo leader. He only surmounted this handicap against the limited but gaudy backcloth of Lagos, which so many westerners considered to be part of their region and the source of their own political leadership; here he had very effectively supplanted their leaders of earlier days such as Macaulay, Adeyemi Alakija and Jones, and the founders of the NYM, Samuel Akinsanya, H O Davies, Ernest Ikoli and Dr J C Vaughn. Outside their own extended family groupings the Igbo were a people who aligned themselves with the successful, expected the successful to share their pickings with their kin, and banded together to bring down those who were resented as too successful, or too sparing with the fruits of their success. They did not care for governments of any kind, and Zik had erected his position on a practice of opposition to external authority, not on any concrete programmes for execution. Yet he successively quarrelled with all his strongest allies. It might be a fascinating thesis to assess the importance of the cultural division between the men whose advanced education had been acquired in modern stateside ways in America – Azikiwe, Mbadiwe and Ojike – and their peers and sometimes rivals who had had their intellects polished in British universities – Eyo Ita, Njoku, Arikpo and Nwapa. It was reflected in the frivolous sobriquets 'Silverwater' for the gin-drinking Zik and 'Goldwater' for whisky-loving Nwapa.

The other weakness, and it is not easy to assign cause and effect, was that Azikiwe did not generally trust the British, and mostly they did not trust him. He was an impatient democrat, who shut his eyes to any foresight of physical chaos, although his experience and education led him to expect, indeed to welcome, verbal conflict; whenever he sought to anticipate or evade that

conflict, the appearance could too easily be one of mischievous deviousness. Patient co-operation would not seem to him to be the path to freedom, nor to national unity. That he had a powerful personality, yet could relax and laugh, was quite inadequate reason for the north to follow him. The northerners felt that his interest in national unity would always depend on his being the national leader (and in this he reminded them of Nkrumah's personalized vision of pan-Africanism). He and Alhaji Abubakar never liked each other much, in truth, and hence they too did not trust each other; Abubakar's oracular word for him was '*shiny*', and he suspected him of having been in a notional personal race with Nkrumah and Sékou Touré to be the first head of a black unitary state, an ambition which seemed unseemly.

As an administrator he was weak indeed, slow to make up his mind, ever ready to change it, and then to countermand the last decision; his civil servants were always waiting for a contrary order, even if a seemingly definitive instruction had at last emerged. His ideas were grand, his plans of campaign obscure. A British political journalist might nevertheless judge him as an intelligent all-rounder in public life, as one who saw success in politics as the apex of worldly successes, and might possibly think of Harold Wilson. Yet, possibly because he was the first of the country's modern leaders, to whom most others had at some stage had to attach themselves, and also because he had been famous while they were still schoolboys, he was in the end acceptable to the west and the north as a token figurehead. Had he found confidence in himself as a Nigerian rather than as the Igbos' hero, his best features would have been realized to the full and to his country's benefit.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the southern Yoruba leader, also possessed at 48 great resilience and an aura of strength, despite the western aristocrats' view that he came from a family of pagan nobodies. Like Zik he was well able both by presence and by tactics to counter periodic internal party challenges to his authority, but his was a mien altogether more serious. Unlike Zik he was dedicated to detailed planning, and his determination was single-minded and unswerving. He attracted intellectuals, some of whom had the capacity to appeal to a broader swathe of humanity, and who by interpreting Awolowo could manufacture for him the popular attributes that in truth he lacked. He only found genuine sodality with the friends of his youth, while his later comrades in politics never became boon companions. His volatility in fact delayed his logical maturity for longer than has been credited to him. To set beside this, he was a methodist who neither drank nor smoked, and was lost among extraverts or at noisy social parties; his puritanism led him to refuse to introduce the partner of one of his ministers, a hardworking devotee of universal free primary education, to the Queen because the lady was not married to the gentleman. It would have required a Henry James to portray the complexities of his character in convincing fiction.

He also had founded the political party he led; but the differences were that until he had consolidated its Yoruba foundation he had been prepared to leave the Nigerian extension to a later time, and that he built his party from the top down, using the obas' fear of Azikiwe. Knowing that Churchill had failed until he was 66, he was never ready to give up his ambitions to come out as his own country's undisputed one national leader. More the administrative planner and theoretician, much less the opportunistic demagogue, he was the barrister who saw society in terms of the state, and individual enterprise in terms of its association with the ruling group. Alhaji Abubakar was never given to

the belief that a government could, or should, control life and production as well as provide the facilities or resources not naturally available to the common folk. He had known Awolowo in his London student days (where Awo had developed his youthful dislike of so many Europeans), observed his nervous breakdown there, and became impatient with him as a character. Abubakar was never to develop a two-way relationship with him, such as he had (very circumspectly) with Akintola, because they never served together in the same cabinet offices. Abubakar's instincts through the years, to seek discreet rapprochements with Awo, were always frustrated by the knowledge that any serious discussion would have leaked to the *Daily Service* or other AG journals. He conceded that Awo was in less of a hurry than Zik; each year that had passed had made the country wealthier, and the dates on the palm riper for the plucking. Awo never came to hate Abubakar personally, despite always regarding him as 'weak'; the prime minister-to-be was only an obstacle to his own succession to that office, although there was also an élitist attitude to notice, that of the graduate lawyer and journalist for a mere certificated teacher. Abubakar knew that Awo wanted to break up the north, and that he would prefer to employ legalism to this end, where possible; where stealth were needed, he believed that Awo's support for middle belt movements, founded on the AG's predatory intentions on Ilorin, would be the tool he would use to achieve it. Revolution he never expected.

The AG never rid itself of the semblance of a secret society, since superficial observers of their traditional ways tended to misjudge all Yorubas as being given to recondite conspiracies, and this coloured their views of its leader. Awo was much less well known in the Muslim north, and where he was known it was simply as the Yoruba leader, giving him a comparable handicap with Zik's, although most Yorubas were not ill-disposed to hierarchies and strong bosses. The British equivalent would be a ruthless intellectual puritan, whose failures led to obsessiveness, introspection and intolerance: a potential Cromwell, perhaps, to avoid naming living exemplars. He knew how to woo university dons, whose influence on undergraduates was incalculable. Never would Awolowo have been acceptable to the east or to the north even as a figurehead, and puppet he would never have agreed to be. It has been little recognized, because to most it was incredible, that he kept hidden a contempt for the northern premier. Nor did many northerners appreciate that the Ijebus, whence came Awolowo, were regarded as the people who had formed a nineteenth century barrier to the import of modern weaponry which might have allowed their more northerly Yoruba kinsmen to win back Ilorin and other territories for the old Oyo empire. Awolowo's support from all of the western provinces was always potentially insecure.

Zik disliked Awo and would have done anything to deny him power. Awo could put no trust in Abubakar, not as a man but as a politician, regarding him as an unwitting deceiver by reason of his party, as well as the symbolic stumbling block to his own achievement of power. Zik was the flexible diplomat, who would calculatingly give way in a tactic to risk gaining some vague strategic objective. Awo wanted all or nothing, was too proud to compromise, and calculated that to yield weakly was to lose hope of final power. Unlike them both, Abubakar was in fact a philosopher of humanity rather than a party man, the good administrator and chairman, giving a quiet lead through sheer force of character and having few personality warts to conceal. Like his future protégé Shehu Shagari, and unlike most political southerners and northern Christians, he never now regretted the lack of an

academic degree: the 'university of life' had taught him what he needed to know and how to fill any gaps in his knowledge. He never gave an order which he had not the power to enforce. Obviously it is those who believe that confrontation or absolutism are essential to progress who have found Alhaji Abubakar's way wanting. He could never have founded a destabilizing political party. But this was because, at its simplest, Awo and Zik were interested in social ideas rather than in individuals, whether those were known persons or representatives of the mass; Abubakar and the Sardauna saw most things in terms of their effect on actual, living people, rather than of secular ideology, although the Sardauna's perspective was restricted to those people within his own concept of a stable northern society.

Of the four, the one who lacked at all in generosity was Awolowo and when, long after the story in this book is over, Awo consciously tried to identify himself with the realities of the north, it was too late. He never observed that, whether north-south relations were in a state of rapprochement or of antipathy, at all times more individual northerners felt marginally happier with easterners and the NCNC than they did with westerners and the AG, despite the cultural appearances of religious and institutional similarity. It must never be overlooked, however, that Abubakar finally learnt his practical politics as a member of a council of ministers varyingly composed of Yorubas, Igbos, Itsekiris, Cameroonians, Hausas, Fulani, Kanuris, Scotsmen and Englishmen, and others. None of the other three ever had to sit permanently in council with such a widespread assortment of culturally mutual strangers.

More significant because, however improbable in fact, it has seemed easy to romantic hero-worshippers to imagine the sardauna Alhaji Ahmadu serving as a candidate in the federal council of ministers, and 'putting some uncompromising discipline into them', is this comparison of the scented and turbanned Sokoto aristocrat, in his silks and brocades and surrounded by retinues, with the solitary Bauchi commoner, wearing the simple cap, possibly wound with a modest white kerchief (in this Abubakar unconsciously copied the sultan and the emir of Katsina, the only great chiefs who preferred ordinarily to wear simple white apparel). Two Oxonian governors have seen them as if they were the respective products of 'Harrow and 'the House' and 'Manchester Grammar School and Balliol' - one was an autocrat who enjoyed his status and made his will known, the other a commoner who never sought public recognitions and was bound to seek compromises. Their seniors Zik and Awo outlived them both, by more than two decades, and will be remembered in the histories of emergent Nigeria, but perhaps as politicians rather than as persons - more as the kind of leaders about whom myths prevail. Abubakar and Ahmadu will be remembered too, but less so as politicians: the Sardauna is already more than a myth, he is a veritable legend, and his countrymen are not shy to decorate the legend; but the prime minister remains a human being, so that his memory is more subject to mortality. Ahmadu sprang directly from the colourful pages of any of Scott's 'historical' Waverley novels; Abubakar's like is found in the quietly realistic pages of Trollope. Everyone in the north expected the grandson of a sultan to be a great man; nobody in Nigeria made any assumptions about a Bauchi schoolmaster of lowly stock.

To redress the balance, one has to look at the ordinary flesh of the two, that became dust and ashes. Both have been variously remembered as believing in stability and obedience, order and discipline. To emphasize the essential difference between both of them and the two southern leaders, it is needful first

to grasp a nettle, Africans' relationship with British individuals in the colonial period. Azikiwe and Awolowo had interactions with many British officials and citizens, who were variously friends, neutrals, enemies, wise, average, foolish, sympathetic and indifferent; there are few claims made that any of those expatriates or UK residents had noticeable influence on the two great Africans, or that these Nigerian leaders made much use of their British acquaintance in achieving their ultimate careers. In part this was inevitable, because each came into politics, from the press or the law, directly to the public meeting and the legislative chamber. Their contacts with working district officers and secretariats had been at best sporadic, and mostly secondhand until they had attained prominence, and would then be damaged either by bureaucratic unease or by uncertainty of motives.

Northern politicians with few exceptions had entered public life through native authority schools and native administration offices, where British officers, whatever their predispositions, were familiar and ever available to observe, consult or lobby. Where southern schoolboys had been taught by missionary teachers, they were unlikely to have learnt to see their DOs as friends rather than as authorities. It is understandable that when the latter days of British dependencies are first reinterpreted, the part played by representative 'imperialists' should be discounted; in Britain many a statesman is credited with policies and legislation to which he contributed little more than his initials on the adviser's draft. If it should seem that too much is said here about Wright, Varvill and Stallard, Sharwood-Smith and Robertson, Jack Davies and some of Abubakar's secretaries, it may only be because Commander Carrow, Sharwood-Smith again, Terry Hopkins, Dick Greswell, Tim Johnston, Bruce Greatbatch, Hector Wrench, Muffett or Niven, as examples, have become more shadowy figures than they deserve wherever the Sardauna's nominal acts have been recorded in recent years. Nor should the deduction be made in too much haste from this that in policy and administration the southern leaders were all original thinkers, but that the northerners could be naught but puppets or mere regurgitators of digested European ideas. All knew how to pick and choose their working diets.

There were differences nevertheless. Alhaji Abubakar never hesitated, indeed was proud, to acknowledge the specific support and contributions his staff and official friends had made to whatever he did, and to disclaim credit where he felt that it was due to other colleagues; the Sardauna's thanks were more generalized, though warm enough. Alhaji Ahmadu was content to have responsibility attributed to himself for changes and reforms in northern institutions which, even had he failed to secure prompt rehabilitation from the clearly framed-up charge of embezzlement in 1943, and had found a more obscure future confined to Sokoto, would still have been initiated and implemented by others in indistinguishable form. Both were bounteous, but Abubakar's material gratitude lay within the limits of his salary or was hidden under a bushel. It could most acceptably be expressed in European style through a personal letter, or an invitation to visit him (local suitors of his daughters might hope for minor personal preferment, but little significant by way of bridal tokens); the Sardauna took overdrafts and boons as his right, and so was free with more costly presents – leather pouffes for Europeans and clothes for Africans (many of Abubakar's more beautifully embroidered robes, although less flamboyant than the donor's, were gifts from the northern premier, and worn out of politeness only in his presence). The Sardauna also accepted presents of all kinds, but never kept them for long; few of

his woven gowns were worn long enough to need laundering before being given away.

Abubakar's relationship with Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith as 'another northerner' had become one of the greatest mutual trust (as also now did that with Sir James Robertson - he however was conscious that his Sudan origins must make him appear to be pro-Muslim and so pro-northern, and he had too many scruples to risk any semblance of intimacy with a northern politician as such, rather than with his Nigerian prime minister); the Sardauna's relationship with Sharwood-Smith was a classical one of love-hate, in which the one example described in chapter 20 was calmed by Abubakar's reconciliation (Sharwood-Smith based his own relationship with the Sardauna on ungrudging admiration, coupled with a certainty that the premier must sometimes be restrained, in his own and his region's interest). There were to be other Sardauna tantrums, not least with the emir of Kano, that would also need the prime minister's intervention, but his storms were tropical, soon over and followed by sunshine. More generally, expatriates who knew Abubakar close at hand cared for him deeply, others seeing him more distantly found him austere and sphinxlike against Nigeria's more garish backgrounds: many British officers who had served in Sokoto admired the Sardauna as deeply, without that affection that goes beyond comradeship, but others found the regalism offensive and feared the associated growth of a self-indulgent cult figure. Although he might be happier relaxed in silence with his own age group, Abubakar would call uninvited for a social chat at the home of an officer he had known, and all his permanent secretaries or private secretaries were familiar with informal weekend working coffee breaks as much as with purely social dinner parties and games of scrabble with their children; Ahmadu sardauna would keep his silence for solitude, and preferred to summons his aides to his side, when they would never wholly relax, or he would throw a grand but overpowering banquet.

Perhaps the most revealing explanation of the differences, and of why so many expatriates found Abubakar so much more sympathetic than the three premiers, is the simple one: his temperament and upbringing had made him virtually the archetypal trusty, punctual and broad-minded civil servant or thoughtful manager, but Zik, Awo and the Sardauna were public politicians. The next most lucid illustration is that most politicians, and certainly those three, were ever free to their supporters and to the public whom they canvassed with promises which they had no immediate power to fulfil. Abubakar shared his hopes and aspirations with anyone who would hear, and won their support and respect thereby; but he never made purchases with idle undertakings, and so never lost his credit. His memory was powerful, if sometimes inaccurate, more powerful indeed than his intellect, and so he was seldom at a loss for a confident response. He also invariably spoke in measured tones and never gabbled or rushed out a comment.

Relationships with Nigerians were equally distinct. The only damaging criticism of Abubakar among the reactionary wing of the NPC had become that he was now too Nigerian and sat contentedly in broad-based councils of ministers. Alhaji Abubakar could see some good in almost all men, said that even his most difficult opponent probably had some right on his side, and could forgive those who had offended him; he knew how hard it was to be strong if everyone else was on the other side, and that he had to give way to some extent if he was to keep working with oppositions; he was now trying positively against the grain of his upbringing to be the Nigerian

indeed, while all the rest still only posed as Nigerians. The Sardauna was not disposed to tolerate oppositions that did not admit his superiority, and harboured a few, if not too many, lasting resentments; he was a revanchist who found it hard to restrain some bitterness against Aminu Kano, whom Abubakar understood and selectively admired, and if Alhaji Ahmadu ever imagined himself as a Nigerian *tout court*, it must have been as a future caliph or emperor, pavilioned with panoply and praise-singers. Like Lord Milverton, he had never been contradicted with impunity in office. The Sardauna, ever the dominant figure of any group, had been born to rule, to obey a few greater rulers in his youth, but to accept orders as something strange and repugnant in his maturity; Abubakar was essentially a lonely leader, born to obedience, yet one who accepted power when authority was freely vested in him by others. Abubakar's critics were doubters, but he had no enemies; the Sardauna made his critics afraid, and fear creates enemies. The Sardauna's stamina was greater, and he like Zik could work to the early hours of the morning on official papers. Abubakar's humour was quiet but real, his mirth expressed in a moderate hoot, and he could laugh at himself in private or limited company; the Sardauna's laughter was louder, his smile broader, at both jokes and events, but seldom at himself – his consciousness of dignity always prevailed. It is hard to think of Alhaji Ahmadu slipping quietly away on his own with a hotel porter just to see the sights.

Both of them had been ministers of works, but Abubakar had the youthful mind in the ageing body. His boyish inquisitiveness and anxiety to try to understand technicalities, even when they remained beyond his ken, had no parallel in the sardauna of Sokoto; the Sardauna only saw the products of engineering as resources for his people and tools for political power – just as the one took pleasure from driving himself, and the other from having a chauffeur at command in his unique Packard, or its costly replacement Cadillac, for both of which spares and maintenance were scarce or impossible. The minister of transport had recently said pointedly to his PS, sitting by his side in the back seat of his Chevrolet, *'Of course, as you know, I cannot manage to stand to have these Igbos around me'*; and the Igbo Matthew, who had driven him ever since he was selected from the PWD pool in 1952, exchanged smiles in the mirror: his police orderly was also often a southerner. The northern premier had a smart young Katsina constable as orderly. One day the northern commissioner decided that a change was needed, lest what was virtually prolonged personal domestic service should spoil the policeman for operational promotion; he was also anxious to demonstrate the federal nature of the force, so he posted a mature southerner to the state house, but there was a major tantrum and the posting was cancelled.

Too much had already been made by 1957 of the Sardauna's patronising and oft-repeated references to his 'lieutenant in Lagos', an apparent slur which Abubakar was to continue to suffer without too much overt grievance. There was no political subservience of the individual, and the federal minister or prime minister always spoke loyally in public of the northern premier, while voicing his own opinions stalwartly, and bluntly insisting that the regions did not and would not be permitted to meddle in federal subjects. Like driving a car, he wanted to make the constitution work by following the rules in the instruction manual. Once he had been to America he ceased to accept party directions from Kaduna on his own portfolio responsibilities. He did not quarrel with the Sardauna, but there were many differences of opinion; the

northern premier was not free of jealousies, and expected the many northerners who stood in reverence of him to effect his implicit wishes without specific dictation.

When it was a matter of persuading the Sardauna to be tactful or restrained, Abubakar would prefer to use a *kofa* (the Hausa word for 'door', or intermediary) first; he knew that Muhammadu Ribadu, boisterous former district head and *ma'aji* but a born commoner, and Inuwa Wada, belatedly circumspect establishment figure, held less studied or contrived parleys with the Sardauna than he himself might have. He would often use the former as the most effective go-between, while suspecting that both were acting as information agents to the party in Kaduna of all that he did and said. He wondered whether the latter might not be embroidering his information, in both directions. He was silently pleased whenever Malam Aminu Kano and his supporters took his side in the 'differences of opinion' with the Sardauna. Southern federal ministers never saw Alhaji Abubakar as Kaduna's 'blue-eyed boy', while they did see Malam Muhammadu Ribadu as the hatchet man. In return the Sardauna was much less likely to seek Abubakar's prior agreement to some purely northern initiative, and when he did use a go-between preferred to use Inuwa Wada; but in the last resort each recognized where the other's authority brooked no challenge, and respected whatever in the other they could not emulate. They might reluctantly use the telephone directly, but they very seldom exchanged substantial letters. This was not 'love-hate', but a mutual recognition of a reality which overlaid the prince and peasant fairy tale. Both were farmers, or owned farms, but Abubakar drove his own tractor when he escaped home. Both enjoyed sports they had learnt at school, the Sardauna frequently playing fives with not always willing conscripts from his cabinet and staff, Abubakar occasionally playing the equivalent of village cricket.

Abubakar was a family man, in that once this became practicable, he would telephone his people left behind in Bauchi during most evenings when he was away from them, and that so many visitors had the memory of him playing at trains on the floor with his children. His affection for his wives was evident, although he wished that at least one might have had enough education to appreciate the true importance of some of his visitors and of his own tales of world travel. Some friends were to speculate whether the two growing boys kept close at home in Ikoyi (whence they were to be sent abruptly to an English boarding school, inadequately prepared), when they might have been sent first (like the two children in Kaduna) to a mind-broadening kindergarten and primary school such as the Corona international school, might have found him preoccupied with public affairs and so somewhat remote. But his family life, although correctly Muslim, was not a secret; on the other hand the Sardauna's family life was very private indeed from his colleagues and staff, and only close relations knew much about his wives and daughters or the many wards in his care. Both delighted to see Scotsmen (like Jock Macpherson) wearing their national dress on festive occasions; but it was the Sardauna who once lost his temper with a culturally emancipated male stenotypist from Bauchi whom he castigated for 'indecently' wearing an unbeliever's shorts while crawling in the dust under his car to change the sump oil, while it was Alhaji Abubakar (who would not wear scout's uniform) who was to claim that the police were 'happy with their shorts' when rejecting a southern politician's desire to imitate the new Americanised Ghanaian constables' dress.

Neither appeared to know much of the decorative or architectural arts of Islam or of the western world; the Sardauna was more appreciative of court musicians, but neither responded to western music. Scholars from the near east did not find even the Sardauna's spoken Arabic impressive, while Abubakar had no pretensions in that direction. Both knew their scriptures well, but while the northern premier could talk familiarly about Islam with country leaders in Egypt, Arabia and Pakistan, Abubakar's reading gave him additional ready small talk in common with ex-soldiers, literary figures, amateur historians and those who believed in technological advances, in any English-speaking country. The former district officer Bauchi (who had failed to arouse any reaction from Abubakar to a record of Weber's most beautiful and simple operatic aria) had once lent him Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*, with an introduction by the Earl of Balfour; it was returned without other special comment than that it was 'very interesting', and it had certainly been read. One may only speculate on how much its reading might have reinforced Abubakar's own natural Bagehotian beliefs in gradual change, after first gaining wide public acceptance of the need for any change at all; in commonsense distrust of ideological theory; and in the worth of a wise minority, that should patiently educate the impetuous ignorant and encourage reverence for the dignified part of the constitution. It is very doubtful whether the Sardauna ever heard of Bagehot, or would have wished to see any separation between the 'dignified' and 'efficient' parts of any constitution in which he ruled. Yet where the Sardauna would only hint that emirs must one day be constitutional monarchs, Abubakar was outspoken of its ultimate inevitability.

The British historian would see a reflection of the Stuarts' trust in the divine right of kings in the Sardauna, and of Baldwin's middle-class, non-ideological commonsense in Abubakar. As for Azikiwe and Awolowo, it was only their political activities that made them engaging studies for outsiders.

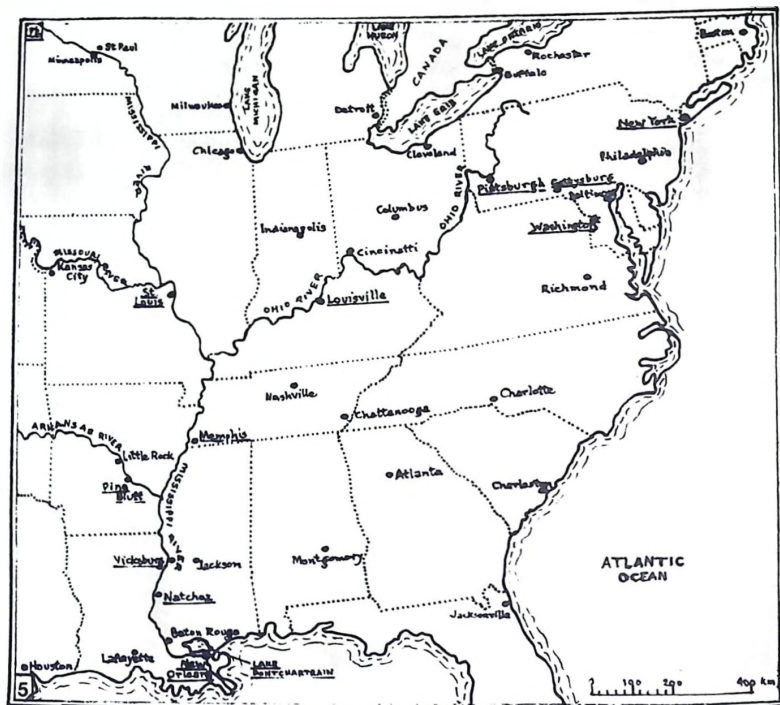
Much of this series of juxtapositions, like many of the anecdotes in the whole story, may only too easily be disparaged as trivial and gossipy. They may surely assist to show that two very different but equally great northern Nigerians could not have exchanged their rôles. The *karda*, such as the *sarakuna* who treat their duties almost as their hobby, inherit their status, and if affairs go wrong, they are forgiven for their human mistakes; but the *shigege* (those coarsely translated as 'interlopers') achieve their status by enlistment or election, are more serious, and their faults are blamed on their lack of *savoir faire*. The moderate intruder Abubakar might, with diplomacy and effort, if supported by a governor and encouraged by the younger NPC, have reconciled the emirs to a creative rôle in a democracy in which common men respected tradition, authority exercised its power openly and moderately, and merit received advancement; but the precipitate seigneur Ahmadu, sardauna of Sokoto, would never have acclimatized himself to multi-racial Lagos or to truly international affairs, and it is unlikely that, whoever the rest of the northern federal team might have been, he would have welded a truly Nigerian cabinet together. The Sardauna accepted 'one man, one vote', but like most of his regional ministers could also see no objection to a man who had defied them spending time in jail to mend his manners; that was further than many of the Lagos cabinet would go.

The Sardauna's middle-belt ministers, however warmly treated, never felt themselves as such close family members as did his appointments from the

first and second class emirates of the 'holy north'; indeed only the makama of Bida among them ever felt wholly relaxed and comfortable in his company, and some were perpetually scared of him. He lacked Abubakar's calm, and his colourful trappings and physical presence could never replace the unique puritanical integrity that commanded the respect of a federal council that was equally, but in very different ways, colourful. It is important not to conclude from any of these comments that the aristocrat was petty. His temper and dispositions had weaknesses, but he had ability, which he exercised in the grand manner, and he aroused enthusiasm as well as fear. The Sardauna also did not 'want my men to come from Kaduna to Lagos, build houses and become rich'. What the two alhajis shared, and what so many others lacked, was a belief in the over-riding power, will and glory of God; their worship was not lip-service, and His compassion and mercy were more real to them than the Christian God's redemption and forgiveness were to mere church-going conformists. The Sardauna used government as a resource to witness the potency of his religion; Abubakar used his faith to temper the failings of a secular government. In temporal terms they also shared the advantage that their followers, once having recognized their leaders, would never abandon them unless and until disappointment should become total.

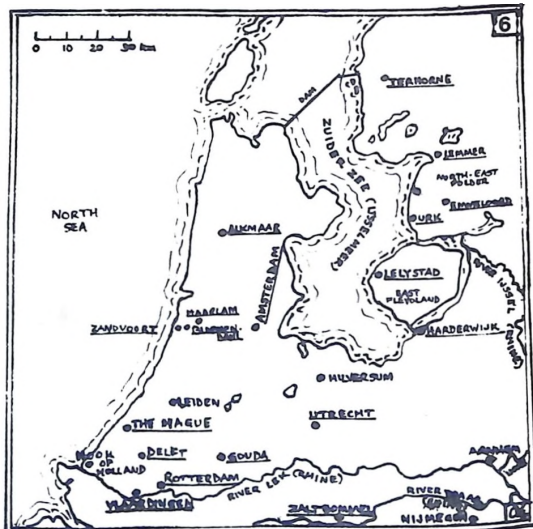
The commoner might have been ennobled. It is doubtful that this would have made any difference in his esteem to those Nigerians to whom these social differences were important; equally there are those who passionately deny that their hero could be so petty as to want a traditional appointment. The honorific title that even the sceptics admit was mooted was 'shettima', which was not a traditional Bauchi usage: *shetima* is a Kanuri word, used among other applications for one of the shehu of Borno's council members, and familiar in the name of Abubakar's most honoured first ministerial colleague Shettima Kashim. The concept might even have been improbably sparked by the idea that Yakubu dan Zala had a Bauchi forebear known as Malam Shettima. The emir who would have granted him a title, Adamu Jumba, remained discreet to all strangers' inquiries on the subject, but Malam Aminu Kano, the aristocrat whose own passion for democracy and the overturning of restrictive ancient institutions had estranged him from so many traditionalists, had already tried to persuade the emir to cloak the minister's quasi-servile origins. The Sardauna, as premier, used to mock Abubakar gently for being the only minister lacking a title, particularly after 'chiefs' in the south became as common as 'JPs' in England. Allegedly the premier mentioned the matter to the previous emir Yakubu III before his abdication. One of Abubakar's closest friends admits that in his earlier years of ministerial life he could well have been hoping for a title; it was helpful that the puzzled should remember the confusion in the mind of a child, brought up in the *ajiya*'s house in identical manner with any loved son of the district head, amid the blurrings of perceived relationships in a polygamous society where informal 'adoptions' and fosterings were common. In adulthood, when prejudices about precise inheritance could not be ignored, there must have been a reaction. The matter was raised again with the emir of Bauchi Adamu Jumba, very reticently, after the appointment as prime minister. The emir, reluctant to stir up the local hornets of protocol, remained reluctant and the matter was finally dropped. Henceforward 'Mr Balewa', as the ignorant British reporters still miscalled him, made his way on to the wider world stage with his origins cloaked in the British colonial prefix of 'the honourable' and the post-nominal letters of a commander of the most excellent order

of the British empire. He was not ashamed of these, and many in that progressive theatre would have expected less of a minor titular life peer, as it were, than from an explicitly common man elected to power. He had at least the princely virtues, lacking in some true princes, of punctuality and the fulfilment of every promise consciously made; and he could still say to one or two regional ministers in Kaduna, '*We are commoners together, let us walk out together!*' What some in the local stalls facing the stage could never forgive him was that despite strong criticism of particulars, he still chose to trust Britain and British people - until or unless they failed that trust.



Map 5:

Eastern United States, where Abubakar visited the Great Rivers & Waterways.



Map 6:

Part of the Netherlands, where Abubakar studied the Engineering Control of Sea & Rivers.

PART FOUR:

A dependent prime minister in Africa

1957–1960

*'Muna da niyyar mu je sama',
ya hau giginya*

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During this period even unsophisticated Nigerians began to discern when it was meaningful to describe themselves as 'Nigerians', despite the prompt imperatives to subcategorize more precisely. The British officialdom was beginning to flatter itself reassuringly that it had been in the business of 'nation-building'; the dissident, the reluctant and the diehard expatriates had by and large withdrawn from the scene, although this made their remnants the more obvious and open to political or journalistic obloquy. In this cheering development the overseas service was dimly reflecting its home country's (by no means enthusiastic) official anticipation of an ever-growing commonwealth of exotic countries, to whom it had donated the English language, judicial ways and civil institutions, and a controversial unilateral right of immigrant settlement. A pride in imperial fulfilment that was not wholly false was swelling towards a euphoric climax, which many in Britain would welcome as a relieving discharge.

There were plenty of official critics in the outside world who were not directly involved in Africa's emotions and well-being but were ready to pounce on any hint of hesitation in Britain's withdrawal; but most alien interests were disposed to let events take what all agreed to be their now inevitable course, as part of a peaceful evolution. The minority of visionaries who looked for the destabilization of capitalist or pluralist societies, and those Africans for whom the struggle against foreign rule had become the one guiding principle of life, began to consider what the logical subsequent further steps might be in the search for perpetual revolution. The expatriate agents ploughing their final furrow in the African field, all but a tiny few, consciously planned for new vocations and new vistas elsewhere.

Abubakar now found himself the lonely symbol of the consummate 'Nigerian', and like others that have greatness thrust upon them grew into the rôle until it fitted becomingly. There were not too many of his rivals or mentors who shared his growing concern that once the responsibility of one principality or power had been acquitted, it had to be resumed without respite by some other sovereignty, and that the burdens gratefully transferred would still grow, heavier and faster than ever before.

He was now being quietly encouraged to think forward, to a time when the whole African continent might show a need for his uncommon talents. This did not mean that he was being 'groomed' by the remaining British around him, any more than he could have been said to have been selected for audition by their forerunners in the years past. His own emergence continued to be inevitable, for reasons of history, geography and human nature. Not every African nationalist leader was happy to welcome the parallel emergence of Abubakar's country as 'the giant in the sun'; but few of the Nigerians who supported other Africans' sociological criticisms of the artificiality of colonial boundaries on the map ever criticized Britain for having created a Nigeria that was so vast.

25 Alhaji Abubakar the Prime minister: Another departure and a new era

Rai kan ga rai, Banufe ya ga koko

The lack of a Prime Minister (alternatively the reluctance of all, himself included, to identify the council president Sir James Robertson, like George II before Walpole, still less the chief secretary, as that personage) had been the last constitution's prime defect. So said those for whom 'history is about chaps' and the rate of the move to independence was the sole issue of importance. The euphoria that overpowered Lagos upon the new appointment and the announcement of the first 'cabinet' did not, surprisingly perhaps, lead to early public disillusionment, despite any internal party dissatisfactions. The three years that followed were not long enough for major doubts to run rife about the direction of events; indeed in retrospect the regular three year intervals between conspicuous changes, like a slowly ticking clock, might be read as a recipe for the least fraught progress towards the metaphorical goal - 1945 (peace) - 1948 (new governor) - 1951 (non-unitary constitution) - 1954 (full regionalization) - 1957 (virtual internal self-government) - 1960 (independence) - 1963 (republic): more than three years for each stage might have allowed the breathless bureaucrats and preoccupied politicians time to put bones and gristle instead of meat into the mincing machine whose product was looking wholesome. Such hindsight is very deceptive. No chef was following any well-tried recipe - instead a series of cooks and scullions had tasted the simmering pot and added trial ingredients while continually interchanging their functions in the kitchen.

At the time the inauguration arrangements were in the hands of Peter Stallard, who was officiating in the still provisional post of secretary to the prime minister. A public holiday, a broadcast to those of the nation with access to wireless sets or radio diffusion boxes, and a public appearance flanked by Akintola and Rosiji, made Alhaji Abubakar the local hero of the hour, with congratulatory messages and acknowledgments flying from the secretary of state and to Dr Nkrumah. His own private pride and joy, slightly abashing but justified as visible proof that a Nigerian had reached the top, was the prime minister's new official, grey, Rolls-Royce. This had been proposed by British officials and he had been back to Bewac to see it with his principal private secretary-designate some days before. Quite minor governors and ambassadors flew their flags on their countries' finest automotive product in the 1950s - in the interests of national trade repute rather than their own dignity, whatever the jealous might say. All other ministers had been quick to learn that under British protocol the senior passenger seat was behind the driver. Alhaji Abubakar insisted on the near-side place, and when Stallard, sitting beside him on tour, remonstrated, his half-serious response was, 'Ah! I

know that is your custom – that may be the seat of honour, but it is also the seat of danger!’ He still looked with diffident but deep interest at the secrets under the bonnet, as he had done ever since taking delivery of his Austin 16, while having something to say if the metal and enamel were not polished free of the red dust of Nigeria’s roads. The car with its council of ministers flag was soon a familiar sight to the Lagos crowds, who were happy to cheer it without envy. Made for European highways, it was not to lack troubles.

The creation of the cabinet had been no formality. Alhaji Abubakar said in the debate on the governor-general’s address from the throne at the re-assembly of the house of representatives, that

‘because of my firm belief in the need for national unity, I decided that the country ought to have a ‘national government’, so that the major political parties – the NCNC, the AG, the KNC and the NPC – will be closely associated with the making of policy and planning in preparation for 1960. . . . I regard the period between now and 1960 as one of national emergency, a period in which we should bury our political differences and work together as a team. . . . The main object of government, whether it be government of ourselves by ourselves, or government of ourselves by others, is to ensure the welfare and prosperity of all sections of the population . . . ’.

Backbench NCNC cavillers had seen no evidence of a ‘national emergency’ (such as had given rise to ‘national governments’ in Britain’s twentieth-century political history) when Zik and NPC leaders had discussed the concept at the fringe meetings in London; but Alhaji Abubakar had found Mr Mbadiwe and colleagues receptive when pursuing it since.

Other carpers, outside the government, were swift to claim that the semblance of unity so presented was artificial. Aminu Kano continued to maintain that the ‘unity’ of earlier councils was the result of the senior British officers’ presence rather than of Abubakar’s example, and looked at the AG ructions for proof: Abubakar’s now being the first to lead an African cabinet (under Sir James) only allowed him to *seem* to be the one who brought Nigerian politics together. But in fact Alhaji Abubakar had for some weeks been pressing Chief Rotimi Williams (AG minister of justice and local government of the western region) to show willingness for his party to be represented in the new council of ministers, at least until the house was dissolved in 1959; but Williams held back because, were the main opposition to be absorbed in the government, the house might lose the present public confidence it commanded – a good and effective opposition was in the public interest (as Aminu Kano’s intellectual supporters never ceased to insist in the northern region), and he made the exploratory counter-proposal of a ‘national independence committee’. However, despite Chief Awolowo’s strong personal opposition, the AG party executive overruled this resistance, and after many discussions the invitation was accepted at the last minute, on 28 August. It was no minor achievement to gain not only this, but also the NCNC’s agreement to it. As for the NPC, Alhaji Abubakar could not but agree with Malam Aminu Kano, that its federal representatives tended to be lazy, seeing parliament as a privilege and not a challenge to hard work: the only two beside himself who could cut the cackle and get things done were Muhammadu Ribadu and Bukar Dipcharima. It was always significant that those party members who gravitated towards Abubakar rather than the Sardauna were also those who, while still detesting NEPU, had respect for Aminu Kano. All of this was thoroughly discussed with Robertson, who listened and did not hesitate to comment on

which men best fitted which posts. The prime minister's choices for his first cabinet deserve some attention.

The leading piece on the chessboard was the self-styled NCNC 'I AM', Dr Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe, 42, the Igbo minister of commerce and industry who had held a portfolio since 1955. He had earned a BSc, an MA and an LLD from Lincoln and Columbia universities in the USA, having had his earlier schooling at Calabar, Arochuku and Lagos. He saw himself as the deputy prime minister, and had hopes of a convention that, amid the buried partisan conflicts, the prime minister would not exercise his powers without his unadmitted deputy's consent. To this Zik and others of his own party were jealously opposed; in the end he had to rely on Alhaji Abubakar's ever-readiness to keep his team informed. Remembering the meaning of *tafawa*, he addressed him chirpily as 'Rock!', and was ironically addressed in return as '*Speed and Magic!*' (it is a curious sidelight on this wordplay that it was a strict Muslim relative of Abubakar who, thinking of the doctrine of national unity, drew a parallel with St Peter, to whom once was said, 'Upon this rock I will build my church'). He had spoken so often with affection of his friendship for Abubakar that even those who might sneer that 'Mbadiwe is *everyone's* friend' had to concede its sincerity. The prime minister responded without too many reservations, and regularly called at his house which was popularly known as 'The People's Republic'. Despite the presence of several lawyer colleagues in cabinet, Mbadiwe played the game of purporting to be the president's legal adviser now that the attorney general was no longer a minister, and Sir James reciprocated the jest.

The most colourful of the four NCNC stalwarts was the noisily exuberant capitalist Chief Festus Samuel Okotie-Eboh, 45, the Itsekiri minister of labour and welfare, educated at Sapele, once a youthful clerk but now prominent in the trading world of Bata shoes, timber and rubber, a big man long before he came into politics. Bata had sent him to Czechoslovakia, where he had learnt to speak Czech and obtained diplomas in business administration and chiropody. He was a leader in Warri and Itsekiri cultural societies, and NCNC's national treasurer; he also owned strong commercial and secondary educational investments. He made much money for his party, and for himself, so was at the stage of being seen by civil servants as 'a rogue, but a likeable rogue so long as you watch him'; years in Lagos had brought Abubakar and Ribadu to share some of this amused scepticism. The dexterous minister of education was Mr Jaja Wachuku, 39, a former church of Scotland mission headmaster near Afikpo. His part in the 'SG' debates and in the NIP breakaway from the NCNC has been mentioned. As a schoolmaster himself he found that the prime minister also recognized that every adult always had more to learn ('*No, no, Jaja, I am not always a teacher*'). Mr Raymond Amanze Njoku, 42, was minister of transport. He came from Owerri, had studied at King's College, London, and been called to the bar at the Middle Temple. A member of the NCNC executive, his civil servants found him pleasant and undemanding. He was a strikingly extravagant dresser, but this concealed an entirely fearless nature which only became evident at the end of the first republic. These were the easterners and 'mid-westerner'.

The minister of research and information was the Yoruba from Oshogbo in the west, Chief Kolawole Balogun, youngest of the team at 35, national secretary of the NCNC, a former journalist for Zik, educated at Ibadan and University College, London, where he gained an LLB. He also was a barrister, and had been charged in 1951 with reorganizing the NCNC for efficiency. The minister of internal affairs was a Yoruba Lagosian, Mr J M Johnson, 45, one

of the very exceptional successful politicians who had served in the RWAFF during the second world war, in which he had received a certificate of merit from the GOC-in-C as a warrant officer instructor. He found it a pleasure to work with Abubakar: 'he is a man who respects the opinion of others - when you are at daggers drawn, he still concedes you have the right to disagree with him'. The AG incomers (the party executive having finally overcome even Awolowo's lingering objections after a visit to him in London by S O Gbadamosi) were the party's deputy leader and federal secretary: respectively these were Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, 47, the Yoruba baptist lay-preacher with the strident voice from Ogbomosho, who had been a teacher, journalist and barrister, minister of labour and health, reputed cause of the 1953 Kano riots and most recently leader of the federal opposition, and who now became minister of communications and aviation; and his lieutenant Chief Ayotunde Rosiji, 40, coming like Kola Balogun from Oshogbo, who had been educated at Ibadan, the Yaba higher college, and University College, London, gaining an LLB, and who was now leaving his legal practice to be minister of health. Rosiji's wife befriended one wife of the prime minister, who used to drive her over for a womanly session together, while gathering amicable political gossip himself from an Action Group source. The token southern Cameroonian was Mr Victor Eseminsongo Mukete, 39, the former general secretary of the Kamerun national congress, who had been a student at Umuahia and Yaba higher college before going overseas. He was made a minister of state, with no specific portfolio.

There were three places left for the north and the NPC. Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu MBE, 47, as a neutral in southern quarrels was given the portfolio of Lagos affairs, as well as that of lands, mines and power. 'Power' was a subject not always understood in the bush, except for its use in advertising *double entendre* as the consequence of drinking Guinness; it seemed appropriate to the man widely called 'Hardo', the title of any tough Fulani headman (indeed he was soon dubbed 'Power of powers'); he had not gone beyond 'Yola middle school, but the lamido of Adamawa had found him a strong district head and a determined treasurer. He was shrewd, too forthright to be a backstairs intriguer, unafraid of the Sardauna (who felt that it was to him that he owed the failure of NEPU in Adamawa), and Abubakar's closest remaining northern friend in Lagos. He took over the concepts, which Alhaji Abubakar and his officials had cradled, and actively oversaw their realization, that were to emerge later as the Ka'inji dam power project, and the development of the electricity corporation (ECN) into the eventual Nigerian electric power authority (NEPA) (this latter idea grew out of the awareness that the Jos plateau, dependent on tin and columbite, had enjoyed its economic stability in the days before any oil boom because its power was independent of ECN).

Alhaji Inuwa Wada, 40, reappointed minister of works and surveys, had passed from Kano middle school into Katsina college, and been successively a travelling scout commissioner, chief clerk of Kano NA electricity supply, NA information and adult education officer, Kano chief scribe and staff officer, and the Sardauna's parliamentary secretary. His putative part in the Kano riots was now forgotten or forgiven, and he was one of the four Kano emirate 'king-makers' or traditional selectors. Both of these ministers had accompanied the Sardauna on his first pilgrimage. The last of the new executive team was Alhaji Abubakar's own former parliamentary secretary, the vigorous and travelled Zanna Bukar Dipcharima, 40; he had passed out of the teachers' training college in Borno and although a Kanuri had been the token

'Hausa' as part of the NCNC delegation to Britain in 1947, but he had moved to the NPC in 1954. A combative person, he had quickly abandoned his profession and entered commerce in the service of John Holt's, and despite the earlier misunderstandings now carried the *cachet* of Shettima Kashim's conditional approval. Provisionally, he also was made a minister of state.

This was hardly a cabinet that was weighted in the north's favour. The prime minister temporarily held the finance portfolio in his own hands; the governor-general had been counselling prudence here. Such a carefully balanced government, scrupulously fair to the regions, the parties and those who feared northern reaction, was likely to keep administration of existing programmes moving steadily forward and to bank down disruptive enthusiasms. Its leader began to be spoken of outside Africa in the same breath as the aristocratic Tengku and the fastidious Harrovian Nehru, comparisons which still meant little in day-to-day Nigerian politics. The final list of names and portfolios was taken by Alhaji Abubakar to the governor-general at 9 o'clock on 30 August, as soon as he had assumed his duties in the former CS's refurbished office; on his return he gave the formal letters offering appointment to his new principal private secretary: Richard Kinsman, promoted from the desk of Abubakar's much-loved Nedeco and inland waterways schedule, went round and brought back the acceptances. The senior office of acting secretary to the prime minister had been formally given to the former principal assistant secretary, Peter Stallard; the governor-general had agreed with the CS (now deputy governor-general) on the administrative postings of permanent secretaries, and shown it to the prime minister-designate, who had accepted it without demur. News remained as secretary to the governor-general and council of ministers (and with Abubakar's formal approval continued to send copies of the council conclusions to the colonial office, not for comment but as a matter of trust to impress London with all that was being achieved; he also meticulously sent the PM the minutes of all the regular meetings of permanent secretaries, which he chaired, to avoid any thought of there being a second-tier shadow government). Alhaji Abubakar had regretfully agreed that it would not be practical to keep the transport portfolio, to which he had become so attached, in his own office; he was content that Varvill, urbane and thorough, weighing all sides of an argument conscientiously, would stay in transport to oversee his favourite projects. (As it turned out, shortly after appointment Njoku had to be flown to Britain for major surgery and was convalescent for several months; this resulted in Alhaji Abubakar once more administering the familiar portfolio which he had been loth to lose, Varvill sending the files to him directly, and at one Gilbertian stage receiving them back *en route* to his own relief Archie Muir when Varvill was standing in for Stallard).

Stallard's work as an assistant secretary at the last London conference had impressed Abubakar as that of a man possessed of an uncomplicated mind, quick to grasp the essentials and to reduce what had to be said or written to those essentials without agonizing over the minutiae. So began the last of the significant British partnerships: Sir James was still hovering as an apparently infallible source of wisdom, willing to be tapped whenever the prime minister called for an evening chat; now Peter Stallard was the ever-present amanuensis and junior partner, trying to smoothe foreseeable obstacles out of the procedural way and advising how to escape diplomatic or administrative *faux pas*, but hoping to assist the master and his team towards the best solution of their difficulties. Already it was difficult to forestall chauvinistic charges that

Stallard was manipulating the office, but the insiders who knew the partners well saw their functions as constitutionally proper and happily complementary; although the prime minister's secretary could be very protective of his master's engagement book and did not encourage too many private audiences with other officials. In the ministry of finance the former FS, Frank D C Williams, became Alhaji Abubakar's economic adviser for some months before being sent to the west Indies federation, and the former deputy George G Carlyle became his permanent secretary, who now also oversaw staff establishments.

As well as developing soft spots for the southerners he worked with, the prime minister was beginning to find a tolerance and a fixed smile for the expanding social whirl which never attracted but inevitably surrounded him. It was thought to be a clear duty to throw a cocktail party for Lagos's leading 400, of whom 600 decided to come on the night, and Alhaji Abubakar very much wanted to give it in the public rooms and garden of his new official residence at King George V Road on the Marina, which was scarcely completed: Stallard and Kinsman had to struggle to persuade him to use a public hall, not least because the rains had yet to cease. There in a light blue gown he made his way with smiles, handshakes and a few conventional words through the shouting crowd while the police band swamped conversation. A non-dancer as well as a non-drinker (and non-smoker in public places), he left his cocktail party and went on to the dance given by the staff of the house of representatives, where the steps were interestingly different from those of the Seyawa in Lere and the Miyawa in Ganjuwa, and he only left hurriedly when somebody suggested that he might make another speech. He also attended with apparent contentment the council of ministers' ball in his own honour at the Mainland hotel, and spent two hours up to midnight watching 150 couples happily dancing highlife. There had also been a formal banquet after the re-assembly of the house, at which Sir James said, 'In 1950 Alhaji Abubakar claimed that if it were not for the British, the north would have conquered all Nigeria up to the sea. Now, distinguished guests, imagine he has now fulfilled that ambition – in spite of the British!' Abubakar himself lost his head and spoke for 45 long minutes. There were also 800 hands to shake at a boringly traditional GH reception. Thus he came to know how public men's private life shrinks yet more when they reach the summit, and he accepted the duty. He had a technique for dispersing any guests reluctant to leave at the end of a 'duty' dinner party, if they included Muslims: he would quote the injunction from the scriptures, that when dining with the holy Prophet (on whom be peace), one should not waste his time.

The Sardauna of Sokoto and the emir of Bauchi had been principal among the forty guests from the north (and there were as many from the rest of the country) for whom hospitality had to be found during the formal opening of the house of representatives. The governor-general pointed to the disappearance of the *ex officio* members, announced the appointment from Britain of the chairmen of the three constitutional commissions, and the local progress made on new electoral rules and regulations; and after due expressions of confidence in Alhaji Abubakar he said that the peoples and leaders had the ball at their feet and it was for them to shoot the goal. He then withdrew to ponder his metaphor: how many feet could kick one goal? The prime minister was pleased that all now agreed that the federal system was '*under present conditions the only sure basis on which Nigeria can remain united*'. After repeating the argument he had used to Rotimi Williams in justifying a national government, he reminded the house of their forgotten predecessors who had sat in the

original Nigerian council and its successors since 1913. He thanked Azikiwe, Awolowo, Endeley and the Sardauna for their co-operation and support of his personal decision to form a national government, just as Britain had done when faced with an emergency in 1940.

He then typically gave a hostage to historical fortune, or to the devil he knew: *'The people of the UK [']s . . . system of democratic government has now become part of our own heritage, and we should be wise to maintain our institutions on the British model, though by this I do not mean that we should not make readjustments here and there to suit the peculiar circumstances of our country. Nigeria's economy has been closely linked with that of the UK, and we intend to strengthen that link to the advantage of both countries. After independence we shall continue to look first to Britain to supply those technical officers whose services we need so much'*. After repeating his formula of thanking past and present civil servants, missionaries, commercial firms and (a welcome new thought, possibly inspired by the work of the Ghanaian Joe Warmann in the ministry of transport) non-Nigerian Africans, he concluded that, *'it would promote unity if members would refrain as much as possible from criticizing on the floor of the house activities of the regional governments. . . . Our enemies would rejoice at our failure. . . . Nigeria can exert a great influence on the affairs of the world if she is united, and none if she is not'*.

There followed a series of contributions, euphoric and highly coloured, that would have flattered many into smugness and made other hearers jealous indeed. Mbadiwe repeated his hero-worship of 'Black Rock' and his willing surrender of the title to the Nigerian 'I AM'; Ribadu said they had succeeded in confounding the cynics by the fact that two parties with vastly differing ideologies had run the government smoothly and successfully; and Akintola said that an elephant winning over an ant did it without glory, but that if you entered a duel with Abubakar, with a measure of victory you could be sure that you had succeeded in an encounter with a hero.

The routine business became what an impresario would have called 'The Abubakar Show'; the prime minister and minister of finance dealt, with facility and to the casual eye virtually without notes (shaming the less experienced and newly voluble of his own party), with a veritable pot-pourri of topics – unwanted police advisory boards, untimely censuses, staff to promote Nigerianization, a mission from the international bank for reconstruction and development, anticipatory approval of balances to complete unexpectedly fast public works programmes, a moratorium on interest due from the southern Cameroons, a customary title-holder's stipend, legislative powers and privileges, railways provident fund, income tax amendment, business committee membership, avoidance of salary races between civil servants and elected members, police uniforms, statistics, the nationalization of the African Continental bank, diplomatic immunities and foreign service trainees. Even grudging occupants of the official box failed to mourn the absence of the CS and FS.

On the army he commented that, *'Our military forces are primarily here not to fight a war. I think a war occurs only if it is inevitable, and I cannot see how we shall have a war of our own so soon. They are here mainly for internal security'*; and on an unsuccessful motion for compulsory military service he was glad that Mr Kayode *'pointed out that this country should be ready to contribute to commonwealth defence, and that in any future war, armies in the form we know them to-day will not be as important as they used to be because of the inventions of new modern weapons. . . . We should not be mistaken that a Nigerian army would be able to go into battle single-handed, and all that we hope*

is that if there will be war, this country may be able to contribute to the defence of the commonwealth of which we hope to be a part. . . . The government . . . has some sympathy . . . about giving the country a type of discipline and a type of training which will equip the people to shoulder certain responsibilities'.

In the final adjournment motion, he met the UNIP suggestion of formally recognising an official opposition, so as to prevent the semblance of a totalitarian government, with this: *'The government is not to provide an opposition for the opposition, . . . but if he could give us the names of his opposition members, there is no reason why we should not consider it. . . . Of course I have already explained to the country why this is what I call a 'national government'. We have got a common purpose. I can remember during the conference in London the secretary of state asked us to go and assure him that we could work together. I was in Holland not long ago – they are very sensible people, . . . in a fight against the sea, all political parties in Holland are united. . . . I said, 'Well, look here, I wish this could be the same in my country; but whatever you say in the legislature here, that is democracy, whatever you say here, people will contribute'. . . . About 1953 Lord Chandos said, 'Well, if a politician says, "Without fear of contradiction", I think it is time he had better go and see a doctor'. . . . This is not a question of depriving the country of an opposition, and I am very sorry that in the cabinet of course we have not been able to get a UNIP member'. But to a journalist asking about the federation's future he later replied, 'I don't think it will be very easy because our work is the construction of a nation and that takes time. One is only too happy that things are going as well as they are'.* As the house rose he left to sleep for the first time in his new official lodge, which was at last completed.

The phrase 'end of an era' was much over-worked in September 1957, not least in respect of Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith's retirement, which made it most apposite. The governor of the north had not had an entirely happy conclusion to his commission. He could see that his hopes for Hudson's provincial authorities, which might have absorbed the energies and loyalties of the new northern officers who would in time replace the expatriate DOs of the provincial administration, and which were meant to tie native authorities and the regional executive together in bonds of mutual support, were not enthusing all of those who must consummate them. He had succeeded in leaving behind him an improved promotion structure ('the Sharwood bounty') for the provincial administration which gave overdue promotion to many bush officers who were looking sceptically at the rapid advancement of more bookish or cynical colleagues in the expanding Lagos and regional ministries; but not all politicians or professional officers shared his conviction that provincial labours among the NAs and rural masses were more important for the whole country than their own work.

He ensured that, as he and many others saw it, he would leave the strongest possible team of top civil servants in key ministry and provincial posts. In particular the most respected and intellectually able all-rounder of the senior residents, Tim Johnston, replaced Dick Greswell as secretary to the premier. There was a written protest that in contrast the governor-general had accepted the prime minister's suggested list of federal permsecs, an allegation which (except for informal consultations over Stallard) was the reverse of the truth. These circumstances had led to more than a little irritated ennui over the successive ceremonial and private leave-takings of the Sharwood-Smiths.

These were exacerbated by a last minute revolt over the future of Peter Guillum Scott, the FS. 'KP' Maddocks, like his federal counterpart, Grey, was to become deputy governor (who would preside in exco when the governor was absent), and Guillum Scott, like Williams, was to become non-statutory 'economic adviser'. Unfortunately the unspoken consequence leaked out that, as next senior officer, Scott would have to act as deputy governor when the latter was himself 'acting up': Scott committed the error of having a sign prepared for his garden entry, anticipating Sharwood-Smith's departure, reading 'Acting Deputy Governor', and it was prematurely installed by the PWD. It was too much to risk (to quote the words used by the Sardauna) 'a man of great industry and cleverness, unfortunately accompanied by a sarcastic tongue and a love of intrigue' emerging, from a nominal job where he could be ignored, to preside over their councils whenever 'KP' or a governor went sick or on tour. The advisory post was vetoed and Guillum Scott had to go.

This was the wearisome environment to Sharwood-Smith's farewell visit to Lagos. He was guest of honour at the government house dinner before the council of ministers' ball, and was seen uncharacteristically to pipe his eye when the prime minister spoke very emotionally about his gratitude for the support and advice he had had throughout his political life. The Sharwood-Smiths were much touched by the prime minister's gesture at making them his first acknowledged private dinner guests after taking official occupation of his new house, with its view over Lagos lagoon. He had had a guinea-pig to test out. The previous night David Williams, editor of *West Africa*, was entertained to a full meal; there were no alcoholic drinks, but Williams had accepted a couple of cigars to give his old gardener in Oxfordshire 'from a prime minister'. Mrs Norah Majekodunmi had later telephoned Williams for a confidential report on the standards of table service by the stewards and of the cook's cuisine.

Alhaji Abubakar insisted on carrying his open friendship with Sharwood-Smith through to the end, and went with Stallard and Kinsman to attend the final celebrations in Kaduna from 17 to 19 September as a guest; he had his coach attached behind the governor's when the train drew out of Kaduna station, and took with him Alhaji Isa Kaita, whom the Sardauna had deputed to 'represent' him with what the waziri of Katsina thought a weak excuse for not going himself. At Kano he slept in the train, as so often he was to do, telling Bello dan Amar that he preferred to avoid houses where people would ask, 'What do you want?', meaning guards, nightwatchmen and special attention. More tears were shed when the prime minister, Isa Kaita and the emir of Kano, with Bruce Greatbatch (now the resident), were at the foot of the aircraft steps on the Kano airport tarmac to bid final farewell, but the northern premier was not. The Sardauna had cast Sir Bryan in the symbolic rôle of British reluctance to change (in the sense of relinquishing influence to the new powers before the letter of the constitution required it); to others it was strange that Sir Bryan was blamed equally for not having restrained the Sardauna in his many extravagances of pride and self-importance. A fair opinion is that Sir Bryan, although strong-minded and confident of his own judgment of those he knew well, had a certain shyness which in latter years made him seem inaccessible to those who had not worked for him before or were unprepared to open their hearts fully to him. He never hid his wish that he might have left the north in the hands of someone more like Abubakar than was Ahmadu, sardauna. The institutional changes which the north had seen since 1951, not least the judicial reforms, were Sir Bryan's invisible monument. He believed that his administration had tried at all times and in all ways to anticipate the clock, and

those who worked with him had naturally agreed. His critics, and those who followed him, felt able to accept the Sardauna's appraisal at second hand.

Abubakar's era of pontifical speeches now began. The prime minister had already sent a message to the FAO cocoa study group's first meeting in Ibadan, hoping that they would harmonize the interests of both producer and consumer countries which had, within a single industry, tended to clash. He had to ask Chief Festus to deliver his prepared address vicariously to 200 young people from 60 countries at the seventh annual international students' conference, held this year at Trenchard Hall in Ibadan university, for which some supposedly ill-disposed delegates had been refused visas (there had been recent student unrest on the campus, in which one young man Patrick Chukwuma Nzeogwu had been prominent, in protest against the quality of food and the nature of some physical crime-preventive barriers). The message was typical:

'Nigeria has now reached the stage of a butterfly which has just emerged from her chrysalis, and which looks around the outside world, settling and preening her new-found wings and preparing for her first flight into the unknown. Slowly contacts with the outside world are made. Contacts which . . . have been made . . . through . . . the protecting power are now being transformed with warm personal contacts between Nigerian and non-Nigerian.

'At college or university a man is in danger of becoming a mere theoretician, a sponge which absorbs and arranges vast quantities of facts. But the usefulness of this knowledge will in the last resort depend upon an entirely different sort of ability - I mean his ability to understand or to tolerate the characters or beliefs of other men who may be, and probably are, quite different from himself. This, for many of you, perhaps for most of you, is your first visit to Africa, and the ways of Africa and her inhabitants are strange and new to you. Try to understand her, her virtues and her faults, her aspirations, her successes and her failures. . . . When at last you leave this country, remember that it is only a small part of this vast continent of Africa, and that east Africa and south Africa are no more like west Africa than Iceland is to Italy.'

He next had to attend a 'special' convention of the NPC at Zaria, where he said that his government had made inquiries through the British high commission at Accra about the deportation of two northern Nigerians allegedly ill-disposed to Nkrumah's régime. Not many weeks later Alhaji Abubakar was introduced by Sir James to the north's new governor Sir Gawain Bell, another former Sudan civil servant and lately British political agent in the Gulf states. He had been selected by Lennox-Boyd after interview in preference to the nobleman and the soldier who had been short-listed. Abubakar's first advice to Bell was that the country's unity was frail, and dependent on the goodwill of no more than a dozen party leaders. It would be necessary to work harmoniously with the Sardauna: *'You will judge him for yourself. He is a man of great influence and ability; I hope you and he will get along together and don't have quarrels, because if you do, it will make things very difficult'*.

As the year rolled to its end it became clear that the machine of routine Nigerian government did not require the continuous presence of its ministers in their offices, and the prime minister spent much time out and about, getting to know and be known. Even in the office he was distracted by the importunity of visiting MPs, the editors of *The New Statesman* and *Time* magazine, the colonial editor of *The Times* from London and an emissary from the US state department. Once when alone in his office with Foley Newns he described

administrative officers brought up in the eastern provinces (Newns himself was one such) as being individualists like the Igbo, and went on to say that emirs in the north tended to become very pompous. He then strutted up and down in front of the old chief secretary's desk like an emir, and capped it by adding that some of the northern administrative officers took on these characteristics and became pompous too.

Dr Majekodunmi's wife helped the PPS to organize many more dinner parties, including one for nearly 20 American residents; one for the international bank mission and one for Nedeco visitors; Lord Reith came to lunch, as did Sir Gawain Bell. There was the first official visit to the north, when an officer accompanying the regional minister of internal affairs greeted him at the airport with, 'Welcome back to the north, prime minister!', only to be gently rebuffed; *'Why welcome me to the north? I am a man of Nigeria'*. There was the moment of strained patience when the Sardauna announced in Lagos that he, leader of the NPC, would call regular meetings of the prime minister, regional premiers and the leader of government business in the southern Cameroons to discuss Nigerian affairs up to independence. There was also the moment of real surprise when Abubakar met genuine kindness without condescension at the hands of the sultan, during his first formal visit to Sokoto as the country's senior politician.

After a few weeks' weighing of the balance, the prime minister conveyed the finance portfolio to Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, while publicly confirming that the abolition of a financial secretary did not foreshadow any radical change in the handling of the country's money. A Yoruba friend in the judiciary asked him if he knew what many people thought of Festus: *'Yes, I know, and you know: but what else can I do?'* Although Carlyle had avoided overburdening the prime minister in his dual ministry, Festus began his own term by seeking Alhaji Abubakar's agreement to every decision he had to take. Gradually the prime minister discouraged this by slowly 'turning off the tap', but although Festus quickly gained confidence in his own portfolio, he gave the appearance for many months of going in awe of Abubakar. Festus's closest northern friend was Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu, a relationship which was later to harm Ribadu's reputation among those southerners who began to denounce the former's practices without acknowledging the latter's frankness. The prime minister told Carlyle directly that if he found himself in any difficulties with Chief Festus, he should come to him personally; Carlyle was pleased but embarrassed, because his service loyalty had to be to Festus, and he never took advantage of the PM's offer. On the contrary, when Chief Festus later took exception to an over-frank comment by Carlyle, such as Whitehall permanent secretaries under personal attack from their ministers would not regard as stepping over the mark, it was Festus who complained to the prime minister. Alhaji Abubakar rang Carlyle and asked him to come across, *'if you can spare the time'*: when Carlyle had given his version, the prime minister turned to Chief Festus and related a number of matters, unknown to Carlyle, in which the minister of finance had displeased him, and instructed him not to repeat them. It was a momentary consolation to George Carlyle, but sadly it broke one of the disciplinary rules of man-management, and made a reconciliation between the finance minister and his permsec impossible. The rift was aggravated when it fell to Carlyle, as the appropriate other fellow guest, to tell Festus that he was not excused when he tried at the last moment to duck out of an invitation to a formal prime ministerial dinner.

The first meeting of the Nigerian defence committee brought Abubakar and Awolowo formally together for the first time under the governor-general's

chairmanship. The national council on establishments (result of a western regional initiative) also met, under the prime minister, to try to keep Nigeria-wide public service conditions reasonably in step. Coincidentally Malam Shehu Shagari, a member of the federal scholarship board, sent him a memorandum on the lack of northerners in authority; Malam Shehu was sent by the PM on a tour of the north to rally recruits to the federal service. While Sir James went on a diplomatic foray to the neighbouring Spanish colonies of Fernando Póo and Rio Muni (technically a single country, Spanish equatorial Africa), hoping to see something for himself of the still disputed conditions of migrant Igbo labour there, some other foreign affairs drew attention. The Russians dispatched two sputniks round the world, the second bearing a bitch, Laika, whose bodily reactions were monitored by radio; the revolving satellites could be seen shining on a clear night, and many Nigerians whose certainty of western technical superiority had been absolute began to wonder, and to embarrass their British officers with questions they could not answer.

In French colonies there were political moves away from the previously accepted philosophy; the new suggestions were for two strong federations of west and equatorial Africa, linked with France but lacking representative deputies in Paris. The RDA held its second Bamako conference since 1946. Sir Hugh Foot, having presided over Jamaica's preparation for internal self-government, was sent to relieve Field-marshal Harding as governor of Cyprus; following on that, a resolution by Greece that Cyprus was entitled to self-determination failed to gain a two-thirds majority at the united nations. Elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Malta's legislative assembly resolved that the George Cross island owed no obligation to Britain unless employment was found for its now redundant naval dockyard workers. The Sierra Leone people's party (SLPP) elected a 47 year-old Albert Michael Margai, who had been male nurse and druggist before being called to the bar, as its leader with 22 votes; but he made way for his elder brother Milton who had received 21 votes. The Gambia, like Abubakar not seeing how it could have 'a war of its own', decided to replace its army's short-lived peacetime regiment with a special armed auxiliary police force. The international tin council imposed restrictions on tin production, which precipitated a 40% cut in both production and the labour force on the Jos plateau and in western Bauchi, and so a local slump. The Sardauna opened Kaduna Textiles Ltd's new mill, which was to employ many middle beltters from Tiv and the plateau, while coincidentally Tiv members of the UMBC were arguing at Gboko that when the Europeans left the northern region after self-government they could come and work for the new middle belt state, which would have its capital in the temperate climate of Jos. The Royal Empire Society in London decided to anticipate criticism by changing its name to the Royal Commonwealth Society.

In November the three groups of constitutional commissioners arrived and began their inquiries. Lord Merthyr was a deputy speaker of the house of lords, and his group had the least difficult task, of delimiting the 312 new constituency boundaries. Sir Jeremy Raisman, finance member of the government of India before partition and independence, now deputy chairman of Lloyds' bank, headed the fiscal commission which was to allocate revenue shares of a total of £80 millions between the several governments; Alhaji Abubakar gave him a quiet cocktail party and wished him well (in a duty whose arithmetic and logic nobody would understand and no government welcome; in the event the formulas were to give no region cause to work for the success of any

... (sic) agreed. The most controversial recommendations were inevitably to be seen in Sir Henry Willink's commission into the problems of minorities. The previous proposal was repeating to the political leaders Lennox-Boyd's warning that it was inadvisable the newly cooked administrative eggs could only postpone indefinitely since the British government was determined only to hand over an experiment that was seen to be working. Dr Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo were excited at an increase in the number of regions as one way to reduce the weight of the ungalvanic north, but as practical premiers, though unitarist and executive aggressively, they had reservations about splitting their own bases

... (sic) also had political preoccupations, as he found his hitherto unassailable executive challenged over his promises, still unfulfilled, of universal primary education for the east, to pay for which retrenchment and the reintroduction of what few alive class IV seemed inescapable (his promises would not have been made, had his executive council not been furnished with imaginary partisan sources, for the available official ministry figures would have prevented his resource coffers being emptied). The minorities commission at once deduced that Sir's reason for wanting a strong centralized Nigeria police force was that he still saw himself as the next federal prime minister. His lieutenant Dr Azikiwe made it clear to the commissioners that he wanted a strong centre in any event, and many 'states' - failing which, strong safeguards for minorities which must include the rejection of regionalization of police, judiciary, prisons and lunatic asylums; and that the federal coffers should subsidise regions, neither in accordance with derivation nor of revenue, but solely in accordance with their needs and, an interesting new point, their efficiency. The deputy governor-general commented that Itsekiris could not get on with Sobos, or Ijòs, or Ebum. Another interesting submission came to the Willink commission from the distinguished eastern physician Sir Francis (Dr Akanu) Ibiam, who lived on the pittance of a humble mission salary and spoke as president of the Christian council of Nigeria: he said that the imminence of self-government had led to a strong revival of Islam, and that the Christian missions in the north believed that, wittingly or unwittingly, this was encouraged by members of the British administration.

Ahaji Abubekar had a private interview with Willink on his own, and said that

It is wrong that when Britain has done so much to create Nigeria as a country, she should just before giving us independence cut the country into little bits. . . . If there is to be a new region . . . there would be great trouble and bloodshed, and it would destroy independence by seven years. . . . The UK is very lucky in its monarchy, and our emirs should continue to be given recognition and some political rights. . . . Some people have advised me not to make contact with the commission, but I think it my duty to do so, and I shall. . . . The commission should certainly visit Sokoto, Calabar, Borno and Bauchi. . . . I think it is certain that the operation of Muslim law will have to be limited to civil matters, all crime being dealt with on the basis of English law.

... (sic) remembers the Princess Royal spent twelve days in Nigeria, representing the Crown in recognition and celebration of the internal self-government of the eastern and western regions, which had been in effect since 8 August. She arrived in Lagos, where the prime minister was among the official welcoming party. She accompanied the entourage to Ibadan, watching the address in the

house of chiefs, into which the elected western assembly trooped to the bar like the commons summoned to the lords for the sovereign's opening of parliament; Abubakar wore a full turban and *alkyabba* burnous with the CBE neck badge and rose ribbon to complement HRH's pink gown and orders and the officials' civil uniforms. Preceded in his Rolls by a modest couple of police motor-cycle out-riders in white tunics, he had acknowledged his own cheers from the roadside crowds with smiles and waves, and also with *sotto voce* comments to his PPS and driver, 'Yes, what have I done for you, my friend?': to one hail of 'Prime minister!' he muttered 'Prime monster, you mean?' He was also present at the princess's opening of the university college teaching hospital, which had cost the huge sum of £4½ millions, and at a spectacular dancing display. Riots in Tiv country prevented HRH from visiting Makurdi during her less than comfortable subsidiary tour of the north.

At the beginning of December the prime minister spent six days travelling over a thousand tiring miles by car, touring the eastern region. This trip included a flight by Shell helicopter from Port Harcourt to Bonny, where he met Dr Azikiwe, and on to an oil-drilling barge in the waters and a rig on land. He received a souvenir bottle of Nigerian oil; hopes were higher than ever, but commercial quantity still evaded the prospector, who was now looking ever more southward and out to sea. He noted that the local Dutch manager at work in the delta had kept his heavy earth-moving equipment in store, knowing that severe usage, maintenance difficulty and non-availability of spares would soon make them unserviceable, and preferred to employ large numbers of healthy wage-earners with picks and shovels. Abubakar returned to learn sadly that Mr Chuku Nwapa, his entertaining fellow minister in 1951, had died, and to hear with surprise that Dr Nkrumah was at last married, to a young French-speaking Coptic Egyptian lady (rumour had it that a soothsayer had advised him to seek a bride from the north-east, and that he had had to go thus far to find one who was neither Muslim nor a peasant).

The reader who finds himself disappointed that the undertaking in chapter 10, only to quote speeches of importance for tracing Abubakar's developing thought, has still permitted so many extracts (and the many more that will follow), may now be looking for yet another reassurance. It would be as undesirable as impossible to record all his social and public engagements. Those mentioned in the chapters of the present part are merely here to remind any reader who may be bemused by too many journals of comment and daily political bulletins that a country's leader is not perpetually constrained by cabinet, parliament and policy argument; there are too many human activities that are neither 'dignified' nor 'efficient', but for which places have to be found in the engagement book and leisure diary, and which leave their mark on the individual. As an immediate example, one significant visit was that of the 69-year-old prime minister of the Sudan, Sayed Abdulla Bey Khalil, at the end of 1957.

Khalil was a rural Mahdist who had fought in the Egyptian army at Gallipoli in the great war, and had been a brigadier in the Sudan defence force, secretary of his Umma party, and minister of agriculture in Khartoum. Alhaji Abubakar had met a former leader of the Sudanese opposition, Mohammed Ahmed Mahgoub, when the latter had visited Bauchi a few years before, and had found him friendly and realistic; now he found the Sudanese PM as imperturbable and broad-minded, despite a heavy cold, as Sir James had remembered him. Abdulla Bey felt the Nigerian federation should be turned into a looser association. He was also reported as saying, 'In the Sudan we feel that we have

some obligation towards Nigeria', and in reference to Britain that, 'Ill-feeling was fabricated by propaganda. You could not tell the Sudanese, 'The British are very good people, but we want them out of the country'. It was necessary to say, 'We want them out because they are bad people'. Cause and effect had also lain in the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, which required all the British to have left within three years, after which the Sudanese could decide on their future, whether it be with Egypt or in total independence, or whatever else. The British foreign office was the responsible Whitehall ministry, not the colonial office. On his next visit to Kaduna, the Nigerian prime minister told the secretary to the executive council that Abdulla Bey had also warned him strongly in private. 'Do not make our mistake, of getting rid of all your British officers; we thought we could replace them with people like Americans and Yugoslavs, but they only came for the money and won't go out on tour. Now, when we try to get our old officers back, it is too late, they have all found other jobs. After the next election, I shall ask if we can come back into the commonwealth'. The visiting prime minister had also hinted that the Sudanese divisions were not those observable on the surface between Muslims and southern non-Muslims, but the fundamental ones pre-dating Muhammad and Christ, between the very different ethnic peoples of the north and the south.

26 A short flight and friendly conference

*Kowane mutum, a dakinsa, yaro ne.
Mun san juna kammu ya yi daidai*

The Prime Minister's 1958 new year's broadcast told those Nigerians who heard him that he would never stop asking them to realize the overwhelming importance of unity. His was still the lone voice: *'It is no good blaming the British any more when things go wrong: these days are gone, . . . we must blame ourselves, because we shall have made the wrong decision. And remember too that . . . the world is watching us, waiting to see whether we can rise to the occasion'*. In that world the European common market and atomic energy community were created on the same day, and the West Indies federation two days later (there had been expectation that the governor-generalship would have been given to Jamaica's recent governor Sir Hugh Foot, but Macmillan would not agree to an overseas civil service appointment, and Eden had already promised it to a political colleague). Britain was about to experience the launch of 'CND', an organized campaign for nuclear disarmament; the opening for inspection under a new public records act of secret government files that were fifty years old or more; the founding by Alec Dickson, from Nigeria's Man o' War Bay, of 'VSO', the voluntary service overseas movement that was to allow many young people now denied a full overseas service career the chance to work usefully for a time in an emerging nation; and London's first parking meters. The Canadian-born American economist J K Galbraith was publishing a book whose title was to haunt and infuriate a generation of the world's politicians, *The Affluent Society*, of which such meters were serried symbols. Mercedes-Benz trucks from Germany were also beginning to outnumber British Bedfords and Canadian Chevrolets on Nigerian trunk roads, but free roadside parking was still practicable in central Lagos.

On 2 January Abubakar met the minorities commission in privacy, demonstrating that his interests were nationwide. He told them that the Action Group would not want to lose the mid-west from their region unless they gained Ilorin, but were afraid of a splinter Muslim party based on Ilorin, which Adelabu was capable of building up; this meant that they had to support a mid-west state publicly in order to keep the votes in that area, but ridiculed it secretly among supporters in Yoruba heartlands. In his own view a mid-west without Asaba, Aboh, Warri and the Ijo of Akoko Edo made no sense: Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh was sincere in his wish for the state, but Adelabu was not, since the future for him without it was as hopeless as Enahoro's would be in the mid-west. As for Awolowo, Ijebus were highly unpopular with other Yorubas; Awo would only try to come to the centre if he believed he had the support of the west, the middle belt and parts of the mid-west and east. The

...Sardauna's problem was that it had no leader with the ability of Festus or Sardauna. He mentioned lightly that the NPC had 'taken Lagos from the AG', when the AG had failed to keep its side of a bargain; and regretted that it was General Willink's remit to include the old colony in the federal capital. He had himself come to favour a strong federation, but many in his party held to the old views and could not compromise with southerners. Although the Hudson propositions were too much for some, for himself he thought that provincial 'southern talking shops' would reduce the load on the Kaduna executive and legislature. He particularly regretted the regionalization of the judiciary and what seemed to be the impending regionalization of the police. As a parting shot he quizzically pointed out that when he met them as a party representative he might have to say other things.

One week later Alhaji Abubakar, protected by his single police orderly, went to Kano for the last ever convention of the NPC. He was accompanied by his brother-in-law Malam Ahmed Kari (who had left the experimental mixed farm in Bauchi, where he had been local NPC secretary, before attending a cadets' course at the Zaria institute of administration, and since August 1957 had become his private secretary, in effect his ADC). Again no new party officers were elected. The plans for reorganization, drawn up by the full-time secretaries, were rejected by the officers without any debate by the membership. When the general secretary, Abba Habib (minister for northern Cameroons affairs), mentioned that the NPC was short of money, a floor member asked the financial secretary Alhaji Isa Kaita (now minister of education in place of Alhaji Aliyu, makama of Bida, who had become northern minister of finance) for his annual report; the financial secretary and treasurer had last submitted one in 1954. Abubakar, who was in the chair as first vice-president, ruled arbitrarily that the financial position was not competent business for the convention. The Sardauna went on to refuse any discussion of the party secretariat's alleged inefficiency, which he had not covered in his president-general's address.

There are of course many political unions in all countries whose annual conference is tightly disciplined as a jamboree of the faithful, passing only those resolutions that are convenient. It may be more honest and economical to leave management to a central working committee, so long as the membership has no convincing criticism to voice of the leadership. It is not surprising, however, that the atrophy of the NPC convention attracted criticism from cultures that expect to find 'democracy' in all human institutions and not only in governments. What should not be wholly surprising is that the titular first vice-president (who like his colleague the second VP Muhammadu Ribadu was not a member of the Kaduna-based caucus) should regard government as more important than verbose schoolboy debates, and see no reason to flog the hide of a patently dead horse (or as he would say in Hausa, if the goat has been killed, skinning it won't hurt it). Still less had he the resources to lead the NPC away, as many hoped, from the paths that led close to the stronger emirs and natural autocrats. He needed the whole party more than the caucus realized that it needed him. The prime minister went home after the convention, spending a night at Kafin Madaki with his old friend Abubakar Garba, anxious to discuss the weaknesses of immature party politics and the position of those native authorities that were as nervous of a future ruled by the Sardauna as they might be of rule by commoners: though either would be preferable to southerners.

In Bauchi he found that Malam Sa'ad Zungur was finally succumbing to his mortal disease. The death of the former thorn in the flesh of colonial and emirate authority would pass without immediate notice in a country now gripping its political emancipation; later Aminu Kano and postgraduate students would establish his influence in local history. News also arrived that, at a time when NEPU supporters were being jailed, or whipped as juveniles, by native courts on charges of social misbehaviour, a prison sentence on Ibrahim Imam in Maiduguri for alleged bribery some years before had been quashed after the Borno resident's intervention. Malam Ibrahim Imam's own UMBC party, with NEPU support, had been agitating for his replacement as official leader of the northern opposition. Prison for him would have suited them. Nevertheless both Ibrahim Imam and the Borno youth movement were expelled from alliance with NEPU, and he crossed the carpet once more, this time to join the AG. Various individual BYM rank-and-file resorted instead to NEPU or even NPC.

The prime minister contrived to make time to talk at length in his mother's mud house in Bauchi with the new resident, Leith Watt, about the future of expatriates in the north: Abubakar's regular reassurances on this question from Lagos had not helped when a recently departed district officer, Hamo Sassoon, and the waziri of Bauchi (the title held since 1956 by Malam Yakubu Wanka) had fallen out over ill-taken badinage, and every would-be emollient intervention aggravated the friction. There were also problems to discuss involving alkalís and district heads, the NA police, and the wider implications of the emir of Katagum's heir apparent becoming a northern minister of state, or of emirs, as in Kano, appointing young sons to their own inner councils. A row followed in the emir of Bauchi's council over the resident's advice that one councillor, the galadima, should be dismissed outright for accepting bribes and making false claims for labour wages. The waziri and the madaki, irked by the resident's defence of his absent DO, countered with insistence that a final warning to the galadima was appropriate, and their patron the prime minister disconcertingly proved more concerned with the district head's criminal theft than with his traditional corruption. The compromise penalty reached was dismissal from the council with a consequential cut in salary, but not from the district headship. The atmosphere of unease was not dispelled by Alhaji Abubakar's gift of two cups for the secondary school's athletic competitions. There were still gaps between judgments of propriety and wickedness in the last years of indirect rule.

If there were gaps in local footbridges, they did not endanger stronger national bridges. Dr Kwame Nkrumah had agreed to exchange envoys with Russia, and was now in process of setting up with much publicity a foundation for mutual assistance south of the Sahara; a conversation about this with a British aide led Abubakar to comment on the arrogance of certain African politicians. His companion said in an access of studied fairness, 'Well, prime minister, for that matter many Africans feel that the British are arrogant'; 'Yes', he replied after a moment's thought, '*You British are certainly arrogant; but at least you have something to be arrogant about*'. There was a contemporary rumpus about the Israeli foreign minister Mrs Golda Meir's visit to repay that made to Tel Aviv by the western regional minister of development Chief (oba) C D Akran; the council of ministers decided in view of protests by the Saradauna that she should be discouraged from going to the north; the Action Group twisted this into support by Abubakar for 'the Arab bloc'. None of these demands of world and local controversy reduced Abubakar's mischievous sense

of the ridiculous, which so many lost on their attainment of high office. On the return to Lagos from Jos he had placed on the luggage rack a large basket of eggs pressed upon him at the last minute by his affectionate old mother. A jolt of the train had brought them smashing to the floor, revealing their age, and his staff were amused by his schoolboy jokes about the stench.

On a more serious matter, he accepted the Ghanaian interior minister Krobo Edusei's advice that he should direct a formal appeal to Nkrumah's cabinet to allow the two northern Nigerian deportees to return to Ghana; but in the event the affair faded from public notice. Abubakar found Mbadiwe a useful conversationalist at this stage when trying to unravel Nkrumah's hidden agenda at evening colloquies, and was always to consult him whenever Ghanaian affairs had come to the surface. More significantly, he went back to Port Harcourt to watch the first shipment of oil loaded on a Shell tanker, ss *Hemifusus*, for Rotterdam and Swansea; he pressed the button on 17 February to start the flow from Oloibiri and Afam, after 21 years' exploration, and his photograph with the ship's captain appeared in *The Times* newspaper of London.

The minister of health Rosiji had recently decided that the provisional health board approved by the chief secretary and ministerial colleagues in principle in July 1957 should not have executive functions, which would have cut across his civil servants' interests. He made the announcement now at the same time as anticipating doctors' renewed unrest by promising study leaves and other inducements. The BMA refused to take formal part in a purely advisory board, and bided its time. The prime minister, who had supported the original proposals, now remained on the sideline.

The governor-general, who had just had his commission extended indefinitely now that independence was certain, presided over an informal constitutional meeting to tidy up the conference's loose ends, concerning the electoral law and the federal marketing boards. The Sardauna announced there that the north had chosen 15 March 1959, the approximate anniversary of the taking of Sokoto by Lugard, for assumption of internal self-government, and that he had determined upon fully integrated Kaduna ministries, so that professional departmental heads in the north must decide to comply or retire (he took the prime minister's hint to invite the Lagos secretary to the council of ministers, Newns, to come up and advise: Newns, assisted by an ex-statistician Charles O Lawson now working in the governor-general's office, had been masterminding the integration of the Lagos ministries). Meanwhile there were worrying outbreaks of lawlessness, not only in 13 of the 29 eastern administrative divisions over the educational and other disputes, but also in the west, requiring the use of emergency powers by the police. These understandably had an effect on the thinking of the constitutional commissions.

The Sardauna, warmly supported by the prime minister and Muhammadu Ribadu, had placed his faith in a detailed submission to Willink's minorities commission from the northern regional government: the work of select expatriate civil servants, it was an innovation in the north as the first important official paper to reflect the clear wishes of the majority political party controlling the region, and was not a studiously balanced weighing of conflicting interests by officers who believed themselves to be impartial. Even among those administrative officers whose joys had been found in the emirates, there were many who sympathized with their colleagues, devoted to the middle belt, who regarded the document as partial and slanted to favour the NPC; like 'Audu in the bush' himself, they still had a naïve faith in the capacity of some higher power for subordination of party politicians to high moral principles.

Very few officers had been insincere in their own readiness to be subordinated to Nigerians as self-government approached; what they had not allowed their imaginations to play with was the chance that new policies might be *parti pris*, and not a matter of natural justice and economics.

At the end of March the northern premier, the prime minister and Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu appeared before the commission to present the NPC document officially. Alhaji Abubakar emphasized that 'Hausas' were no longer a 'tribe', and that it was now rare to meet a 'pure' Fulani. The myth of 'Fulani domination' was nonsense. As to Ilorin, while he had had to tell British officers that they were forcing unity on a whole country, in fact the Ilorin Yorubas were different from those in the south, and had of their own choice been part of the north since the 19th century, without any use of force on the part of the Fulani. Offa, Ode Oke and Ajassa had all had troubles, but these arose from internal chieftaincy disputes; all the calls for the transfer of Ilorin had been engineered from outside, as the Germans had arranged in Czech Sudetenland – why were the Yorubas in Dahomey not calling for union with Nigeria, and why were the Fulani not calling for the cession of the French territory opposite Katsina?

Two days later Abubakar appeared before them once more, this time as a federal minister in company with Dr K O Mbadiwe and Chief Sam Akintola. On this occasion he said that even in a coalition there were subjects on which ministers could only speak as individuals or with their party's voice; the police were such a subject, and his worry as a party man was whether a federal force would always enforce a regional law, especially since the army should only come in to enforce something as a very last resort. So he himself thought that a federal force must always be able to enforce law and order in a region. Akintola's more oblique view was that the governor-general should have the ultimate power to direct a regional police force in that event; otherwise if all the police were federal, an irresponsible regional government might pass heavy taxation, say, into law and leave it to the federal powers to deal with the resulting disturbances. 'K O' agreed with the prime minister, but thought that regions could still have local constabularies. Abubakar again spoke out against creation of new states, since he had committed himself to support of independence in 1960, but he agreed that some of the minorities' fears were justified and required safeguards in the written constitution – nevertheless regions could do much to allay fears by their own actions, as the north could set up provincial councils and the west might create a mid-west advisory council.

The Prime Minister made a statement about the southern disorders early in the budget session. Although excuses for totally disregarding normal constitutional methods of voicing grievances were, he said, entirely matters for the respective regional governments (or, he might have added, northern native authorities), the house could not remain aloof from a situation that had necessitated the grant of emergency power by the governor-general. The police had quickly restored control in the west, but reinforcements of two units from the west by road and eight by air from Lagos to the east had been an expensive diversion of resources, and all this could only damage Nigeria's reputation abroad (this regular reference to what the rest of the world might think – being, as it seemed to him, inclined to judge a would-be nation by aberrant incidents and individuals – was rarely echoed by his contemporaries). Later, after dealing with the disputed treatment of a policeman by a magistrate, he repeated the despairing plea of so many frustrated administrators who have had to listen to purely circumstantial complaints of corruption in police forces: 'Well, all

that I want to say is that it is bad form for members to make these allegations which they cannot substantiate'. In the course of dealing with speeches on the take-over from the British war office with some continuing subsidy, the Kaduna military training school, the new naval training school at Apapa, and the need to keep Nigerian officers' pay closer to that of local civil servants than to seconded British officers', he '... would like to assure the house that, being connected with our military forces since 1952, I think I know quite a bit of what I am talking about'. He thought it sensible to commute barrack feeding to ration allowance.

On the refusal of a passport to Chief Mrs Olofunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, still an adherent of radical theories at 58, he was blunt: *'The time has now passed when she is entitled to any further doubt on this matter, and her own actions have provided the strongest evidence against her. It can now be assumed that it is her intention to influence the various Nigerian women's organizations, with which she is connected, with communist ideas and policies'* (He then wrote as bluntly to the lady herself: *'I must tell you quite clearly that I and my colleagues are determined that while we are responsible for the government of the federation of Nigeria and for the welfare of its people, we shall use every means in our power to prevent the infiltration of communism and communistic ideas into Nigeria. In order to carry out our policy we shall seek to prevent Nigerians from visiting communist-controlled countries, especially if we have reason to believe that they are travelling for the purpose of indulging in communist activities'*).

He lost his usual verbal mastery in some technical exchanges during a firearms bill, but survived this trial by lawyers and went on to answer with aplomb about a dozen diplomatic service trainees, Britain's guarantee of the world bank's railway loan, withdrawal of support for the London west African students' union (which had not met the conditions imposed on its grant-in-aid), and Wachuku's insistence on better Nigerianization arrangements. In this last context he made a reference to the 'special list' (which only about 16% of those overseas officers eligible had applied to join, a matter of morale which Sir John Martin, deputy under-secretary from the colonial office was touring the country to investigate, developing a brief to discover how to 'pay to stay' rather than 'pay to go'): the federal service now had 503 senior Africans, 957 pensionable expatriates and 601 overseas contract officers. He emphasized that *'we criticized the civil servants because at the time the civil service were running the government; but now we the ministers are running the government, and if there is any criticism, the criticism should be levelled against us'*. He also went out of his way to pay more tribute to the testy Sir Ralf Emerson: *'I had the privilege of working with this very remarkable man. . . . At that time the railway was being criticized not only in Nigeria but in the UK and . . . US. Sir Ralf asked me to have patience. . . . He told me . . . that the Nigerians operating the Nigerian railway are as efficient as other railway people anywhere, that he thought that they could do the job'*. He also declared that he had samples of potential national flags, all safe and ready in his office.

Throughout the session he had kept a firm control of the house's business, which had tended, whatever the subject under debate, to be deflected towards preparations for '1960'. His principal private secretary saw that each week's legislative programme went to the council of ministers and the speaker; each day conferred with the speaker and the clerk of the house over the order paper; briefed the minister due to make the following week's statement of business; convened the ministerial committee on private members' motions and put their recommendations for government's responses (and the sequence on the order paper) to the council; and passed the conclusion to the clerk of the house for its

business committee to deal with in turn. As usual, the politicians tired towards the end, particularly the Muslims who were anxious to arrive home before the fast of Ramadan, and the last fifteen bills and five government motions went through very quickly, including the central bank bill. The governor of the bank of England, Sir Cameron Cobbold, was there to hear its passage and to see the prime minister.

Even had the Nigerianization office and a new committee not come under the prime minister (a sign on its temporary accommodation displayed an unfortunate ambiguity, 'Entrance by Back Door'), the pace of significant advancement was being publicly recognized. Sir Adetokunboh Ademola, son of the alake of Abeokuta and CJ of the western region, was selected to officiate as chief justice of the federation; a cultivated man with a quiet manner, he was wholly suited to become another of Abubakar's most trusted southern friends. Ademola took care as a judge not to become involved with politicians, or civil servants holding sensitive posts, but surrendered to Abubakar's overtures of genuine fellowship. Officially the prime minister insisted on respecting the judicial office, and expected the most eminent caller to make way if the chief justice arrived; but public punctilio and private rapport remained distinct. Another change, without emotional overtones, was that Francis Nwokedi became the first Nigerian to act in the capacity of a federal permanent secretary. Yet the old internal sores were unhealed. Awo and the Sardauna were exchanging letters about the northern government's removal of six hundred southerners from non-pensionable employment so as to enhance northernization, and Igala native authority's refusal on grounds of its fear of public disorder to allow Awo to hold meetings. (It was noted by the Sardauna's office that it was not long since a provincial engineer in Jos had appointed an Igbo road overseer to carry out a policy of raising gangs from the plateau villagers, yet one year later every single road labourer in his area was an Igbo). Awolowo for his side, and with his ear to hints about the 'special list', also declared his unwillingness to offer any further inducement to stay in the west to expatriates who had no sense of 'mission'. In an unhappy distraction, his opposition leader, Alhaji Adegoke Adelabu of the NCNC, Ibadan's 'lion of the west', was killed in a car accident on 25 March at the age of 43, and the deaths and disturbance which recurred as mindless protest in Ibadan resulted in the invocation of the riot damages and collective punishment ordinance. The prime minister and northern premier instructed Muhammadu Ribadu and Inuwa Wada to visit Adelabu's home to offer condolences and to pray at his grave. They were joined by Samuel Akintola. With the death of the man who had taken advantage of the Oyo-Ijebu rivalry, many Yorubas who had been fearful of Ijebu domination began to transfer support from NCNC to Akintola and the AG.

A Scotsman, Stanley Fingland, was now seconded from the commonwealth relations office as adviser on external affairs in the governor-general's office, an appointment with one precedent in Ghana, and many to follow in the west Indies, Kenya, the Pacific and elsewhere (such men were amiably dubbed 'John the Baptist' by their colleagues, a man crying in the wilderness to make straight the way for his greater successor); while E J V (John) Williams took charge of an embryo foreign affairs branch of the prime minister's office. Alhaji Abubakar took a personal interest in the selection, through the governor-general's office and the regional governments, of potential external affairs cadets from various branches of the country's services. Fingland's remit

was to advise both offices on future diplomatic machinery, and on training; this latter was achieved through liaison with the CRO and FO, which arranged special British university courses on international affairs, followed by periods of attachment to British missions at Rio de Janeiro, Canberra, Ottawa, Accra and Bonn. In this way about forty Nigerian cadets gained experience in the day-to-day work in, and organization of, such overseas missions. The future first Nigerian permanent secretary of external affairs, Lawrence Anionwu, was sent on the élite one year's course of the imperial defence college, which included demanding world travel and study. Not all likely candidates were attracted by the prospect of frequent postings overseas, northerners particularly being concerned about the effect on socially unprepared members of their immediate families. A regional balance was not easy to find. Finland's secondary task was to find suitable accommodation and locally employed staff for the future British high commission.

While the northern region was also looking abroad by sending two ministerial and official delegations, to Libya and Pakistan, and to the Sudan, to study how those countries had developed Islamic rule and justice to meet a diversity of racial origins and religious beliefs, Dr Nkrumah expressed the wish to visit the Nigerian prime minister and premiers. He was told diplomatically that Alhaji Abubakar, the Sardauna and Chief Awolowo 'would not find it convenient because of existing commitments'. The prime minister was also, legitimately, too busy to join Chief Festus and Mr Njoku in Washington to initial the international bank agreement, which Carlyle and Emerson had just finally negotiated to fund the \$28 millions Borno rail extension, but he sent Stallard to join them and represent himself on 'special duties'; in any case the governor-general's defence council was preoccupied with the hand-over from the war office.

In fact Nkrumah was host to an imminent conference of the eight independent African states ('CIAS') which were to meet in Accra (Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and UAR), and he had presumed to discover Nigeria's views, so that he might represent them to the other delegates. Only Zik had been agreeable, the others thinking it 'an egregious insult for a small country to essay to be Nigeria's spokesman'. Nkrumah withdrew his proposal and sent his minister of justice, Ako Adjei, and George Padmore, the 56-year old left-wing west Indian from Trinidad who advised him on black politics and had transferred his bureau of African affairs from London to Accra, to see Zik privately instead. Officially, Nigeria could afford to bide its time. The CIAS set up a small secretariat at UNO and proposed biennial conferences of all independent African governments. Malam Aminu Kano attended the Accra conference in April, and on his return exchanged friendly messages with the northern premier, thanking the Sardauna for helping his wife to be nominated for a British Council tour, and ambivalently congratulating him on making a successful tour of the eastern region while the minorities commission was taking evidence in Kano. The premier assured Aminu that he would be consulted over regional self-government ('ISG'), on which and also on independence 'Mallam' had promised his support for the Sardauna's views. Both of them looked forward to a realistic and objective set of inter-party talks at the end of May.

Events in Togo were to interest Alhaji Abubakar. The son of a Togolese mother and a Polish officer serving in the German army before the great war, Nicolas Grunitzky, had become a railway and construction engineer, supported de Gaulle in the second world war, and been rewarded by becoming Togo's

first prime minister under the French union. In April 1958 fresh elections were supervised by the UN, in which he was defeated by Sylvanus Epiphanio Olympio, at 56 eleven years his senior. Olympio came from Lomé, favoured a union of all the Ewe people (who spilled over into Ghana), and had been educated at Vienna and London's LSE. Although also opposed to the wartime Vichy French, he was now mayor of Lomé and rejected Grunitzky's leanings to Paris. His policy was to move towards a one party state, but he was also to encourage foreign investment.

Much more important than CIAS was the establishment on 29 April by the UN's 'Ecosoc' of the economic commission for Africa, ECA. Meanwhile in February Garfield Todd, premier of Southern Rhodesia since 1954, had been ousted over the matter of enfranchising Africans by Edgar Whitehead, a man slower in his pursuit of liberalism; the French had bombed a port in Tunisia; the Umma party had won the Sudanese elections; the nationalists had won a sweeping victory in South Africa; and the Labour party ministry had resigned in Malta, where the governor had had to assume the administration of the island. A state of emergency was about to be declared in Aden, and demonstrations by European *pieds noirs* in Algeria heralded insurrection in May and General de Gaulle's assumption of the prime ministership of France on 1 June. Britain was planning to have both Greek and Turkish involvement in the administration of Cyprus.

In April Richard Kinsman told the prime minister that he wanted to return to the northern region. Michael Varvill was officiating as secretary to the prime minister (SPM), and Alhaji Abubakar, ever unwilling to lose trusty familiars, asked that Kinsman continue as PPS for *'one more tour'*, and was disappointed; the hurt was assuaged when he learnt that the doctors had advised that the health of the Kinsmans' children, of about the same age as Abubakar's own, was suffering in Lagos conditions. It was also already very clear that by the time of independence there would be demands for fewer of the officials dancing attendance on the prime minister to be Europeans. The first senior replacement was an African, the indefatigable and likeable Ghanaian Mr Joe Warmann from the transport ministry, but he was soon succeeded by Stanley Wey for an eighteen month tour. Wey made a point of not wearing an African gown, lest any stranger to the office wonder who was the 'boss' and who the 'clerk'. Ahmed Kari usually looked after the political visits paid to Kaduna (to *'smooth things over'* with the Sardauna or *'make things right again'* in the party caucus on which Abubakar relied, as he explained them to the governor-general), and to Bauchi to rest.

The May northern political meeting was now held, to discuss law and order and the regional white paper on 'ISG'. Apart from Aminu Kano for NEPU, there were J S Tarka of UMBC, and IshaKu Gwamna an independent from Jos. There were complaints from AG and small minority parties at short notice or at being ignored: J S Olowoyin of AG, which the northern government refused to treat as a northern party, said his own omission proved that the NPC was reconciled to Ilorin and Kabba joining the west and having their NAs democratized. The Sardauna presided for the opening formalities; Aminu promised NEPU's co-operation in promoting northern progress, IshaKu uttered polite platitudes, and Tarka said he was pleased by the meeting but that they should still await the minorities commission report and the creation of a middle belt state. The Sardauna withdrew and left Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in the chair. Abba Habib (NPC), Tanko Yakasai (NEPU) and Patrick Dokotri (as

he now spelt it, UMBC) acted as joint secretaries, and all adjourned to study the white paper. Next day Abubakar assured Tarka that just as the east and west must wait, the NPC was bound to act without prejudice to the Willink commission's eventual advice. The NPC had doubts about the need for a deputy governor, but Aminu Kano persuaded them that continuity required such a post. There was a discussion of the position of overseas officers, and eventual agreement that although some would be seduced away by promise of lump sum compensation, they must be induced to stay by promises that future conditions of service would be no less good. Malam Aminu Kano was adamant that the civil service must be kept out of politics, and that membership of an executive public service commission should not be a reward for loyal party service; but that if many overseas officers did leave the north, the government should appeal to all the region's talent, regardless of philosophy, to come forward and serve. Abubakar and all agreed that success in self-government would not be the work of the ruling party alone, and renewed pledges of support. Tarka said he had now to go to Britain, but Dokotri would answer for him in any follow-up. The unanimity was spoilt by dissension from the many politicians who had come to the meeting without being invited and were denied travelling and subsistence allowances.

On one of his recuperative visits home early in June 1958 Alhaji Abubakar broke down some of the earlier stiffness between himself and the resident Watt, who had been watching the slow progress of the prime minister's new cement house in Bauchi town, as successive savings had been sent from Lagos to pay the contractor's bills. Abubakar admitted that despite some appearances the NPC were still concerned to retain expatriates in the north as the backstop to the northernization policy, and hinted (as Awolowo had) at knowledge of Whitehall's thoughts of extending the unsuccessful 'special list' scheme. He was still keen on the establishment of provincial authorities, but now gave voice to his doubts about their early introduction. He had no servant in his mud house and poured the squash himself. He drove out to Dass in his private car to return a courtesy call from the third class chief of that tiny chiefdom, but did not go the few miles further to Tafawa Balewa; and finally left to stay once more with the madaki Abubakar Garba before driving to Kaduna for the plane. The inspector-general of police, Kerr Bovell, who was now referring many more of his ideas directly to Abubakar, flew in to Bauchi on this occasion to see him about the restiveness in the south, but arrived after his departure. Flying was now the custom for the top people, Sharwood-Smith's northern communications flight having shown the way. The prime minister had just flown to Enugu before this northern tour, to preside over the second meeting of the national council on establishments and hear an address by Zik. This did not equal Dr Nkrumah's hiring for £17,000 of a BOAC *Argonaut* to tour Ethiopia and north Africa, where he chose Egypt in which to announce his intention to make Ghana a republic.

During Abubakar's return to Lagos he answered another letter from 'his friend', now on leave and contemplating the foreign office's first limited experiment of recruiting one or two diplomats from the overseas civil service:

I am sorry to say that your letter has depressed me. . . . I know what a big strain it is on you but I hope you will reconsider. We are passing through a very difficult time, and we want the co-operation of all our friends who are in a position to help us. The Sardauna promised me that he would be meeting you, and I am sorry to hear you were only able to see him half an hour

before your departure. I think things are changing for the better now, and I hope you will agree to come back to see the outcome of it all. I really do appreciate that there are difficulties, but I am to say that my colleagues in Kaduna have now realized the realities of the situation. Please agree to come back. . . . I want to arrive in England earlier than the delegates [to the resumed conference] so that I could have a chance of discussions with S. of S. MHM!!! I have really a very difficult job - trying to bring Nigeria into one. However, I am not unhappy and am doing the best I can. I hope to hear from you soon. . . .'

He heard that the only one held to possess the approved attributes for professional diplomacy among the dozen or more colonial candidates had not been his correspondent.

The council of ministers now made an 'unparalleled gesture' in offering a site for the future British high commission as a gift, together with a substantial contribution to the cost of a house for the high commissioner; the western region also offered a site for a deputy high commission in Ibadan, and it was announced that the north and east were also proving 'most helpful'. Although this incited some annoyance among stouter nationalists, it was a combined gesture which the British treasury was quick to treat as a precedent at which to hint when future grants of independence were made elsewhere. The treasury was also clearly hovering behind the parliamentary under-secretary of state who concurrently told the commons that, 'there are plans for the reinforcement of each [colonial territory] in the event of trouble arising which it is beyond the capacity of the local security forces to control. . . . It would be neither appropriate nor usual to offer assistance of this kind once a territory had achieved independence'. The Nigerian prime minister, not the Sardauna, now called a preliminary constitutional conference, at which he, the three premiers and the southern Cameroonian leader of government business agreed the date proposed by Whitehall for the full resumed conference, noted the agenda and progress already made, and agreed to meet quarterly by rotation in the capitals to keep further progress in view.

In other words, the routine of political administration was continuing, the work of government as recorded by those who interpret history in terms of trend and process. The parallel political story of personality and power continued also, enabling those in the NPC who saw virtue in stability to bite their lips happily once more at the divisions amongst their rivals. Under Macpherson and Robertson, and latterly also under Abubakar, there had developed the central political group which normally practised administrative consensus, melding a modest sense of duty with modest satisfaction at some of their practical achievements; the jealous dubbed it 'the Ikoyi clique' after the residential suburb where federal ministers lived, scattered among the houses and bungalows of senior functionaries and commercial managers. This was the political world where the 'man with the soft eyes and gentle voice, limp handshake and kind mouth', as a journalist who would become a future historian then described him, could become steely and even frightening, and confidently dominate the voluble members of his cabinet.

Now, as Bovell had been forewarning, the politics of power and tribe upset the comfortable routine. Whereas the NPC hierarchy could ignore its own officials' proposals for restructuring the party, the NCNC's tensions were

harder to conceal in a region where emotions were public and egalitarians were quick to try to drag down those who did not proceed to share the power they had acquired once they arrived at the top. Kola Balogun had been brought back to reorganize them in 1951, and a Mr O Bademosi had headed a commission to explain the NCNC's failure in the western region in 1956. Bademosi had reported, while all were preparing for the London conference, in a party atmosphere of doubt and recrimination. Dr Azikiwe, speaking at his Lagos party convention in April 1957 about his own relationship with other party stalwarts, and about the uncertain dividing lines, both between the hierarchy and the parliamentarians and between the latter and the full membership, had announced his wish not to be re-elected. Notwithstanding, his bluff was not called, he had been re-elected unopposed and *in absentia*, and at the Aba convention in October he had relieved Mbadiwe, Balogun and Adelabu of their party offices; like the assassination attempts and the bank scandal, his threats to resign always put armour on his popular support.

However this mass emotional reaction had not done anything to solve the major inconvenience of having to cancel a visit to Britain. The prime minister was also inconvenienced. His ministers, the honourable Messrs Mbadiwe and Balogun, with their parliamentary secretaries U O Ndem and Bademosi, agreed that 'Zik must go!', and tried to remove Zik at a national executive meeting, looking for support from those whom Zik had dropped after the last election. Although weakened to some extent by the loss of Adelabu, they sought to impeach Azikiwe on these several grounds – he had disloyally removed his lieutenant Mbonu Ojike from the Enugu finance portfolio before the report of the inquiry into Ojike's corruption had been received; he had not forewarned his executive colleagues of the secretary of state's concern over the bank scandal; the abolition of the electoral process within the NCNC had done damage to party morale; he had ignored a directive from a convention on separate states; the failure to introduce universal free primary education had brought about great public disorder; the founding of an American-style loan-grant university at his home, Nsukka (with the support of Michigan state university, which had provided the vice-chancellor), had been an error (although Mbadiwe had supported the concept); and he had lost interest in the party (or in other words was acting too much like an autocrat or sole native authority).

The consequence of a cabal, including not only Mbadiwe and Balogun but also the party trustees, dismissing the national president was that the majority then expelled them, upon which four of them rapidly reneged. The quarrel about style of leadership dragged on: Zik offered a settlement through a traditional Igbo 'covenant' (which T O S Benson and other non-Igbos spurned); Mbadiwe and the rump of his reform committee (which had some outside support) required an answer to the charge sheet before any plea-bargaining. Mbadiwe tried to implicate Okotie-Eboh and Wachuku in a formal prepared challenge to Zik at the Lagos convention, which had been withheld only because of the supposed assassination attempt. A contemporary difficulty for the party was a delegation of Igbo businessmen from the north, anxious to soften NCNC 'anti-emir' agitation in support of a middle belt state, lest the NPC take revenge on such as themselves. A meeting of Zik, with colleagues and Action Groupers in attendance, was arranged with the prime minister and Bovell the inspector-general: nobody had overtly wished to damage the federal government, but the inevitable effect had been the end of the sense of unity

which the 'national government' had fabricated. Muhammadu Ribadu offered to mediate between the two sides that were both unable to make the first move of reconciliation.

Zik's supporters hinted that Mbadiwe's true aim was to supplant Abubakar; Mbadiwe asserted that the NCNC needed 'a clean slate, free from the bad faith, false patriotism and mass deception' represented by the man he had helped to build up until, as he said, the scales fell away from his eyes. Significantly, when asked by the journalist turned historian, who has been twice quoted already, about dictatorial tendencies in the NCNC, the prime minister's sceptical answer was, '*Ask yourself, Mr Crowder, are you so sure that dictatorship would not be good for Nigeria?*' In the end the rebels formed another breakaway party, the Democratic Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons, which survived until defeated (and forgiven after some mediation from Dr Okpara) at the next general election. Alhaji Abubakar had as usual hoped there would be reconciliation, encouraged perhaps by certain overtures that Azikiwe had been making to the Sardauna, but he was forced meanwhile regretfully to recommend acceptance of Mbadiwe's and Balogun's resignations, and their portfolios went to the ministers of state, Bukar Dipcharima and Victor Mukete. He appointed Malam Shehu Shagari as his parliamentary secretary, just as 2nd lieutenant Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the short-serving assistant district officer, became the first Nigerian to receive a direct Nigerian (as opposed to Queen's or governor's) army commission after passing out from military college (which coincided with Mr Iain Macleod's announcement that national service in Britain was to end and the British army to be halved). In Zaria the first thirteen northern cadets passed out of the institute of administration and were posted to ADOs' work in divisions. Bauchi town still had no telecommunications beyond the telegraph wire from Jos to Maiduguri.

The globe continued to revolve, still with more pressing preoccupations than to watch a colony called Nigeria. The Sudan diverted the waters of the Nile, on which Egypt had depended for over six thousand years, as the first stage of a Managil project; South Africa resumed its full membership of the united nations (Verwoerd shortly afterwards succeeding Strijdom as its prime minister); in three near eastern crises King Feisal of Iraq was murdered during a revolution in Baghdad, President Chamoun invited US troops to come to Lebanon, and King Hussein invited British paratroops to land in Jordan; in the far east tension grew around the off-shore island of Quemoy; de Gaulle toured Africa and at Brazzaville unintentionally lit a fuze in the neighbouring Belgian Congo by offering Moyen Congo the choice between becoming an autonomous republic in the French community, or taking total independence; a 45-year old Joseph Kasavubu in the Congo created a cultural body aimed at unifying all the Bakongo people in the French and Belgian Congos and in Portuguese Angola (*l'association des Bakongo pour l'unification, l'expansion et la défense de la langue Kikongo* - ABAKO); a 33-year old Patrice Lumumba, president of an African staff organization in Stanleyville, founded a rival *mouvement national Congolais* (MNC) which demanded from the governor-general that he summon representative leaders to formulate a new policy to lead to early independence; at Bissau a new political party was founded, *Partido African da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC); and the Sierra Leonean chief minister's younger brother Albert Margai left his party to found a new national people's party (PNP) jointly with one Siaka Stevens. In the colony, Sir James was deputed to open a new quasi-diplomatic Nigeria House on leave in London.

Mr R P Fenton arrived in Lagos on secondment from the Bank of England to preside over the new Nigerian central bank, one of whose five Nigerian board directors from 1 June was, as promised, the waziri of Bauchi, who resigned from the house of representatives. The prime minister, joined by the minister of finance Chief Festus, spoke to the opening meeting. The Lagos chamber of commerce might be deploring the low profitability of small and large businesses alike (taking a sideways look at the further slump and unemployment caused in the plateau tinfields, already suffering from voluntary restrictions while Russia dumped its surplus on the market, in contrast to Kano groundnut farmers whose profits were rising by £2 a ton through doubling their planting of special grade nuts); but Alhaji Abubakar, who understood accounts a little better than he did monetary theory, uttered words which saw this act of creating a central bank as a very important stage in the country's emergence as a sovereign independent nation, providing the sound financial framework required for future development; the government would still bear the main responsibility, but through giving technical advice and its own activities the bank would have considerable contributions to make in assuring the continued prosperity of Nigeria. It was an autonomous statutory instrument deliberately divorced (like his favourite corporations) from political control, but the close connection between banking's monetary policy and government's fiscal economic policies would demand intimate co-operation based on mutual respect and understanding. He understood this amount of civil service jargon, and he believed it.

He also believed it when joining the governor-general at a ceremony setting up WAAC (Nigeria) Ltd, to become commercially known as Nigeria Airways; Ghana had withdrawn from West African Airways Corporation, its ruler being assured that an international airline, like a central bank, was another necessary symbol of sovereign emergence, and Nigeria was happy to rationalize the substantial remainder as its own flag-carrier. Abubakar was also more ready now to envisage an African pilot in the left hand command seat; if young men with education could command troops, they could drive aircraft. It was all a matter of early training: about this time he inspected a guard of honour at King's College Lagos from the school's cadet force, and at the following formal meeting of the board of governors reassured Fleming, Lagos's chief education officer who expressed concern that he must be overworking himself: *'But I like Education!'*

A short August meeting of the house of representatives should have evoked a searching debate on the kind of Nigeria on which the rising sun of independence would shine; but unlike that which preceded the 1957 London proceedings, and the recent budget debate in which all were concerned with spending money on festivities and the superficial trappings of defence and diplomacy, it was dull. Mr Fani-Kayode, AG member from Ife, moved a private member's motion that 2 April 1960 be the date of independence, as agreed by the leaders in London; to have freedom without fears, he said, they must create a nation out of peoples who in fact lacked the cement of nationhood, so they must take advantage of the peace which a calm transition to independence would give, so as to live in amity with each other. After the seconding, the prime minister quickly accepted the motion, with a warning that invited comment but gained little: reminding the house that Lennox-Boyd had only committed Britain to do everything possible to accede to their request, he added, *'I expect that the debate . . . will be a debate in which members will give advice to our delegates: 'These are the problems*

before you, and these are the solutions to the problems before you'. And when we come back in 1959 – those of us who survive in 1959! [recognising that the 'national coalition' would only be a memory] – when the new house passes its independence resolution, members will then be able to express their views on what they want Nigeria to be after attaining independence'. He saw no difficulty in settling the form of the new house, the second chamber, the reallocation of the governor-general's remaining powers and the continuing applicability of some Westminster acts that had force in dependencies. But he waited in vain for backbench wisdom on how to deal with a UN visiting mission's likely recommendations for a plebiscite on the political future of the trusteeship territory of the British Cameroons after Nigerian independence, on the remit of the fiscal commission and on generosity of heart in the face of whatever the minorities commission might recommend, when it reported in a few days' time. They thought the substance had been won, it seemed, and that the shadows would take care of themselves.

Instead, the house was enlivened by a gentle farce and a dark comedy. In imaginative debate on the gift of the marina site for the British high commission, which also touched on the commonwealth relations office's help in external affairs expertise, Mr Jaja Wachuku seemed to be worried that it would be a centre for 'bugging' and spying, being so close to, not to speak of the Apapa naval base, both parliament and the prime minister's lodge, where his 'goings-on' could be recorded. Alhaji Abubakar assured him that this new technique was now so advanced that someone who sneezed a thousand miles away was in quite as much danger of being recorded; however all the other embassies would be on Victoria Island, while Britain was a 'special case': *'He appeared to give the impression that we, when we became independent, would regard the UK as a purely foreign country. Now we have this club which is called the British commonwealth of nations, and it is our wish that we will continue in the British commonwealth even on our independence. Also we on our part do not believe that anyone in any commonwealth country will establish a high commissioner's office in Lagos in order to spy on the activities of a member commonwealth country'*. After announcing British gifts of a naval escort vessel and defence launch (and sale of two small mine-sweepers to tie up at Apapa), and donations of half a million pounds from Shell and BP to extend the training of technicians for expansion of the oil industry, he had to deal with Zik's latest threat of assassination.

Federal NCNC leaders, including Okotie-Eboh, Wachuku and their chief whip T O S Benson, had reported alleged plans to kill Azikiwe and others during his recent visit to Lagos, and complained to the inspector-general of police about imports of ammunition into the eastern region, claiming that a Dr Egesi of the Aba ex-servicemen's association was the potential murderer and that Mbadiwe and Balogun, the strays from the fold, knew about it. There was no evidence, apart from one unsupported statement. The letter of warning which Benson said Zik had had was never produced. The prime minister at first promised that he would ensure a thorough investigation into the allegations; but after Mbadiwe had moved as an adjournment topic a tale of police intimidation at Orlu in the wake of the story breaking, he stood on his dignity. He refused to recommend to the police any more investigations of rumours of assassinations and plots to kill people, once he had been reduced to refuting the reports in the *West African Pilot* of Benson's and Wachuku's allegations.

The only other characteristic Abubakar comment in the meeting, apart from an ironic undertaking to remain satisfied with his single present '*small*' motorcar

for the time being, was this: *'A good civil servant is a man who makes the service his career, and a man who is prepared to learn on the job. There is no point to bring a man from outside and say to him, 'Well, after two years you can leave if you like!' . . . As far as – those whom I know in the service now – are working longer hours than are fixed for them by government regulations'*. He was suspicious of contract officers motivated only by their income and savings, and he did not regard clock-watching or overtime payments as seemly for professional men in command of others; he had also objected once more, very strongly, to suggestions that ministers had comments on Nigerianization put into their heads: *'My colleagues and myself take full responsibility for all our actions and whatever we bring before this house'*.

On 27 August, a cold, bleak day, Alhaji Abubakar went to Heipang on the high plateau for *'the honour and high privilege'* of performing the quaint British customs of cutting a ribbon and turning the first sod of the 640 kilometre railway extension from Kuru to Maiduguri. *'I hope in a few years' time we shall once again be assembled in Maiduguri to witness the arrival of the first train'*. With his successor in the ministry Raymond Njoku by his side, he repeated his praise once more for Ralf Emerson's *'abiding mark on Nigeria's transport system'*. The governor-general's goodwill message gave Abubakar the major credit for the project, as did the northern premier in his. Inevitably, the next day he was back at home, breathing gratefully the fresh wood smoke and market scents in the late rains, so different from the rotting vegetation, drains and exhaust fumes of Lagos. There had been trouble in Bauchi town through the mob's reaction to 'provocation' from AG public meetings. The resident pointed out his difficulties: if the NPC would only ignore rudeness and abuse, and boycott such meetings, the AG would get weary and their caravan would move on; as it was, the AG could take every advantage from the publicity, and Watt could only expect the police and courts to treat NPC hooligans impartially and severely. The NPC first vice-president insisted that trouble was what the AG had intended, and that any action to keep the interlopers out was justified, since *'this sort of trouble is only just starting'*; he spoke his party's line, which was that Nigeria's national unity did not presuppose strangers and carpetbaggers trespassing on local estates. To be too literal was a worse folly than a little human inconsistency. Again, the resident had not found him wholly helpful.

The Willink commission's report was now published. The crucial parts were written in the main but unattributably by the brilliant Philip Mason, director of the British institute of race relations, who had described 'the men who ruled India'. This 'minorities' report remains a key document for all open-minded students of dependent Nigeria. The other members had been a former deputy governor of the Gold Coast and Cyprus, Sir Gordon Hadow, and a senior international bank manager. It contributed unwittingly to the weakening of such 'yes, but not in my back yard' views as those highlight in the last paragraph: one of the commission's long term motives had been to make it difficult for any tribally-based party to win an overall majority without acquiring at least some of the bases in foreign territory which their opponents might cherish. They had also perceived that within every clamant minority there were also other smaller and lesser minorities biting to get out; it had been estimated that 68% of the Action Group's executive was Yoruba; 32% of the NPC executive was town-Fulani and 19% Haġe 'Hausa'; and 49% of the NCNC 'top executive bodies' were Igbo. After listening to every grievance, and to such views as that of the educated Bi Rom woman who said that she did not want a vote

until all her sisters were ready for it too, the commission had concluded that not only would an increase in the number of states fragment and multiply the problem like the sorcerer's apprentice's broom, but that the grievances could be met without surgery; fundamental human rights could be entrenched in the independent constitution (ignoring Chandos's sturdy scepticism), future amendments to such protection could be prevented unless both those directly involved and the whole population gave prior agreement, and the police should certainly remain federal (it is interesting that at this time the Nigeria police consisted of 4,000 Igbos, 1,400 Yorubas, 700 Binis, 400 Ibibios, 400 from the southern Cameroons, 400 'Hausas' and nearly 400 Efiks).

They resolved their residual doubts by suggesting watchdog authorities or development bodies for the midwest, Calabar and rivers. They looked back at Sir John Macpherson's contribution to the middle belt arguments, when he had deputed one SDO each from the west and north to study the Ilorin-Kabba-Oyo-Ondo boundaries and cultural susceptibilities dispassionately – both these officers had advised no change, but pointed out that Offa town and the Igbominas were being overlooked by 'Kaduna'. Now the commission found that the middle belt's share of northern expenditure had doubled since then, and were emboldened to recommend a plebiscite in Ilorin and Kabba to decide on joining the western region. The very politicians who would have rejected Willink, had his report recommended more states immediately, contrary to the limits imposed by the conference (because that would have postponed independence), were often the ones who damned the commission a few years later for not doing that very thing. By then they had forgotten the 'humiliation' of Dr Nkrumah's winning the 'race'.

But such weakening of local chauvinism could not happen quickly: it must be remembered that, despite the efforts of the northern government, most northerners still never saw any weekly newspaper, and even in the south where literacy and commercial press distribution to the villages were much more advanced, the added political education of the radio was still limited – transistor sets that worked from torch batteries were a novelty only beginning to enter the top of the market in 1958. Much more significant for political misinformation were the activities of northern 'beggar minstrels', who were coming under the licensing control of native authorities, using regionally drafted model by-laws. The practice of their vocation should then become subject to the forbidding of the very slander and personal abuse which was what made their culture so popular among Hausa-speakers: but as with the comparably politicized lyrics of international 'pop' and urbanised electronic 'folk music' a generation later, what the authorities disliked in what they were able to interpret was less the rudeness than the personalized political vendettas that many of the minstrels aggravated (the Sarkin Magana whom Alhaji Abubakar favoured eschewed scurrility).

At the same time as a commonwealth trade and economics conference took place in Montreal, after which sterling once more became fully convertible, and his second ministerial secretary, Armitage, returned as assistant director (roads and airfields) in the federal works and surveys ministry (where the permanent secretary was now John O'Regan), the prime minister spoke to urban Nigerians (and to those elsewhere who could hear valve radios clipped to car batteries) about the resumed London conference. Insisting on the need to put party interests second, he looked back with good heart on the national government's record in building the diplomacy, finance and defence of a sovereign state; and while claiming for his hearers the birthright of freedom he reminded them that

a sovereign Nigeria would be judged by whether the law was upheld, whether the liberty of the subject was maintained, and whether the people could go about their lawful occasions in peace and safety. As to the burning wish to see independence in April 1960, the UK government was anxious to grant that wish, if the delegations agreed among themselves.

Alhaji Abubakar departed for a Britain which was frightened by the outbreak of something it had not previously known outside small enclaves around its seaports – racial disturbances, in Notting Hill Gate and Nottingham: looking for excuses, the country was ready to blame it on an unemployment rate of 1.3%. His plane had to circle in the fog for an hour before landing at Heathrow, and he had to submit with a resigned shrug to the tyranny of the 'media' when a BBC recorder failed and an interview had to be repeated *in toto*. Told that his Lagos broadcast had been quoted in the British press, he referred reporters to transcripts for his comments on the conference: '*I don't change my views overnight*'. He said they were '*geared*' for independence in 1960, parried questions about a republic with '*Not yet!*' and called a west African federation '*a big dream of a few people*', far from his thoughts at present. While Nigerian officials and Chief Akintola had gone out to greet him, no Nigerian students took the trouble, as they usually did for their favourite politician visitors. At a later interview he suggested that independence would bring to Nigerians a fuller realization of their country's problems, leaving the impression on his hearers that it would be a chilling douche for fantasy; he did not fear a conference deadlock as an obstacle to independence, since it would be impossible to secure agreement on every major problem: for example, his own forecast for women's franchise in the north was that wisdom lay with the growth of social and other education for men and women alike, leading on to a gradual shift of some political responsibility to women.

Another aside, answering a journalist's reference to President Nasser, was that the Egyptian was '*playing a dangerous game*', the implication being that his current activity was not in the best interest of Africa below the Sahara. Shortly before leaving Nigeria, Awolowo's political secretary, Alfred Rewane, was reported as alleging that Nasser and the NPC leadership had agreed to install a pro-Arab government in Lagos after the British withdrawal, and that Egypt had handed over a very large amount of money to pay for the 1959 elections. The Sardauna's cross retort had been that this was another AG attempt to bring Islam into disrepute and to insult the holy pilgrimage, and he had persuaded the prime minister to join him in a *démarche* to the governor-general, demanding an official inquiry and threatening legal proceedings: 'we can no longer tolerate a situation where a political party can with impunity say and do things without the slightest regard for truth and decency'. As usual, Sir James, not discouraged by Abubakar, had reduced heat and fury to their true proportions, but the suspicion and ill-feeling persisted; the Sardauna's exchanges with Nasser would certainly have been ambiguous, yet so many of the AG membership were themselves Muslims.

Despite the unresolved tensions at home, what had promised to be a fraught last conference (apart from any second thoughts) turned out to be the meeting most lacking in exchange of empty anger. There were no formal delegates from the federation, and the governor-general and governors represented the official governments in Nigeria; Abubakar's position was for once noticeably that of the second, though not the junior, in the NPC delegation. Stallard was again the man in the secretariat to keep the Whitehall men aware of who was speaking and why he might be saying it. Abubakar explained to the panel on his first live broadcast ordeal by 'Press Conference', which he faced with aplomb considering that for most dignitaries the BBC tradition of rehearsals and adherence to scripts was not yet ended, that the conference was not between governments but between the colonial office and Nigerian politicians, all of whom were agreed on '1960'. He and the Sardauna had already informally agreed with the secretary of state the date set for the north's internal self-government, which the conference would only formally confirm. For the first time he was publicly challenged, firmly although by a personally friendly journalist, over Nigerian political corruption and what he intended to do about it. Not for the last time, he said that if anyone produced any evidence as opposed to *wai wai* ('they say . . . , they say . . . ' in Hausa), he would know what to do, and as always those who did not have to prosecute in a British court thought it sounded weak; but the memory of the question remained with him. He was much more lively about the special aeroplane flight for which he had been angling since seeing the RAF *Meteors* during the Queen's visit. He showed his awareness of the medium's pitfalls with a dismissive, '*O well, I shall probably know what I have said when I see it to-morrow*', and subsequently appeared at seventh point in a London newspaper's weekly popularity poll for TV personalities.

Lennox-Boyd had formally reported to the British cabinet that the federal prime minister was sagacious and able, and relations between him and the governor-general were frank and cordial; he was openly anti-communist, and he was under no illusions about the difficulties of the task facing both himself and the country; and his policy was likely to be as pro-western as the narrow Muslim outlook of his principal northern supporters would allow, . . . in his party he was only deputy to the leader, the Sardauna. The secretary of state also told the cabinet that in his own talks with Abubakar it was clear that the date of 2 April 1960 was only advanced for bargaining purposes and that a date in the autumn would in fact be acceptable. Some of Lennox-Boyd's colleagues still saw the progress to independence as a cheaper alternative to maintaining the colonial office's efforts at orderly and peaceful development, and made no distinction between Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda in that economic context.

At the public part of the formal opening of the resumed conference, in surroundings now too familiar to intimidate or unduly impress, it was left for Abubakar to wind up, in which he emphasized the need for moral support and encouragement, so essential for stability and happiness, from the older members of the commonwealth, and urged Britain to show courage and good sense, to invest its external capital in Nigeria after independence. To the actual date of independence he gave a throwaway reference to the end of the agenda, but '*for myself, . . . it is not the shadow but the substance which we now see . . .*'

While the conference dispersed into the usual private working groups, but before its leaders met at the British PM's official country house, Chequers, for a version of the English weekend party, Alhaji Abubakar and a group were taken on 26 September by a chartered BEA Vickers *Viscount* to the English Electric

... several companies's airfield near Liverpool. The rest of the group returned by ... But the quietly dignified prime minister of Nigeria changed from fez and collar into regulation flying kit and clambered under instruction into an improvised seat next to Squires, the company's chief production test pilot, in a new Lockheed Constellation, of the type that had bombed Suez. He was flown back to Hatfield in twenty minutes, over 960 kilometres an hour. There was little time for casual conversation other than to ask the height and speed: 'Ten thou and three hundred [mph], . . . 22 and 500, . . .'. 'At what speed can you break the sound barrier?' 'At nearly 700 [1,120 kmph]'. 'Can we do it now?' 'No, it's too late. If you had mentioned it earlier we could have built up, but we have been flying for over ten minutes, and we are too near Hatfield now'. In fact the supersonic bang was a reason for avoiding such fast flight over inhabited land. It was still an experience to recount during the small talk with Macmillan and Lennox Boyd at Chequers, but it had been an unimaginative (undoubtedly deliberate and cautious) failure of somebody to plan that the world's first supersonic prime minister should be the one that so many contemporaries respected but found unexciting. He was himself pleased and excited, but did not think he had become more special himself for having taken an unusual journey.

The order of business was again left to a steering business committee, and Alhaji Abubakar felt no inhibition about leading the north's contributions. He had a ready grasp of what was at stake, and had the assistance of some whispers from the Sardauna's secretary Tim Johnston. The main conference then discussed the future federal house of representatives, an issue which led straight into the vexing recommendations of the minorities commission. The north made it plain that it would delay independence, if necessary, rather than accept the Ilorin-Kabba plebiscite, and Abubakar agreed. The wrangling progressed, although through banter rather than rancour, even when discussing the ways of alkalis' courts' dealings with Christians, or the control of police operations: but so many southern minds were still being focussed on the sheer size of the north and the short-term attractions of ethnic fragmentation. Abubakar finally thought back to his own black rock and Kobi, and in his most cultivated tones said, 'There is a hill in Bauchi. I am sure that before this conference is ended that hilltop will become a separate state. I know, because I come from there'. The British would not move against Willink or that gentle ridicule, and (apart from the plebiscite) the commission report was accepted, with the NCNC and NPC united against the AG. Lennox-Boyd, who believed more in the golden steadying voice of the north than in statutory instruments to keep a future Nigeria united, was relieved. There was no possibility that the British would create more states if the majority of Nigerians were not demanding them: after independence, it would not be their concern, but they would not leave it too easy to achieve.

The Delta development proposal aroused no enthusiasm except among those who lived on the rivers; a meeting of Macpherson, Pleass, Dingle Foot and Owen Duperon had agreed that, looking at the future prospects of oil, a more state would be happier inside a federation than trying to opt out like an Arab sheikhdom from Saudi. But it had a resonance in the 1960s contractual invitations to Nedeco (in which the prime minister was still involved), to extend its studies of the eastern Niger delta, and complete the outstanding data collection of the waters. Nedeco was also contracted to design a protective dam and power station site near Jebba upriver, and Richard Crabb Ltd to build the Benin breakwater to protect the Escravos shipping works. All was nicely marked by the award of an honorary OBE to

the Dutch engineer Hein Frijlink. Abubakar would not have stood against other landward delta development, whatever the difficulties that Sir James foresaw in finding the right men and the right remit. This hurdle overcome (or as Sir James again put it, 'shelved'), it became almost the ground rule that any disruptive proposal from the floor would be withdrawn once the secretary of state, the governor-general or the prime minister (who in fact took less part in the actual debating as the weeks rolled on) had summarized facts and given a reassurance that sounded honest: apart from ennui, the rule was assisted by the Nigerian debating habit of withdrawing motions rather than fighting them out to the humiliation of a vote which could certainly be lost (this habit was not a misunderstanding of the over-familiar house of lords practice - 'The motion was, by leave, withdrawn').

The discussion of the police was typical. The present consensus was that, while remaining parts of a strong federal force, which Abubakar, briefed on verbal compromises by the northern attorney-general Hedley Marshall, had convinced the Sardauna and his friends was essential, regional commissioners would be in command of everyday dispositions and operational control; this would include tactical dispositions to meet the regional governments' needs, but always be subject to the overriding authority of the governor-general (in other words, after independence, the prime minister). If regional commissioners could not meet their premiers' demands, the matter would be put to the governor-general or prime minister to settle, with or without recourse to the inspector-general or police council. Chief Awolowo doubted whether a prime minister of a different political complexion from a premier would always seem impartially co-operative. It was not exactly what Willink and Mason had envisaged. But sage men may make bad constitutions work, and narrow-minded men may wreck the best. Agreement was recorded, as it was to the Raisman commission's generous slicing of the cake in favour of the federal capital, which was to grow in proportion to the figures anyway, if not even more in response to the preferential financial treatment. The Merthyr delimitation of constituencies was accepted, based on the professional opinion of federal surveys, and it was again left to Robertson to preside over the consequential formal business of writing new federal electoral rules, to be for the first time uniform throughout the country, and the appointment in August of an independent electoral commission to register the country and conduct its elections. Approval was given in principle to the signing upon independence of public officers' agreements to safeguard pensions and benefits.

In 1958 there survived a tacit and unpublished mutual trust between most persons practically concerned with the security and defence of the commonwealth countries already independent: they had an understanding, implicit where not agreed on paper, that their secrets and their support were to be more readily shared and exchanged than with any foreign ally. It was a relationship more 'special' than that supposed to subsist between London and Washington, and those who enjoyed it hoped that as the commonwealth of nations expanded the protective cover of this convention might be elastic enough to survive without leaks or material abrasion. Alhaji Abubakar was aware of it by now, and shared the hope, as not all his colleagues did.

It was against this background that the British minister of defence, Duncan Sandys, persuaded the political leaders personally to initial a draft defence agreement, mooted since 1957 but to be kept in confidence like all details of military security. This was specifically intended to continue beyond 1960

the existing conventions of British training opportunities and mutual support, and of inter-service co-operation over training and development, without controversy; but it left some of the signatories' colleagues very suspicious (and in fact Robertson and the regional governors thought it might prove provocative). Chief Awolowo appeared to be strongly in favour of a defence agreement, however. The purpose of the single innovation in the understanding was a trouble-free facility for testing new aircraft in adverse tropical conditions at Kano and Lagos. The Sardauna and Alhaji Abubakar were only nervous lest some precedent be created whereby Nkrumah's Ghana, which Abubakar already regarded as only a nominal commonwealth ally, might also gain unrestricted overflight and air-staging rights in Nigeria, with waiver of customs formalities; Abubakar was finally reassured, and commented, '*OK, we are dealing with gentlemen*'. Not all African leaders used Abubakar's cosy language to describe the British connection. Coincidentally, there was one dramatic moment, when a southern delegate referred to a northerner as 'that bushman'. Lennox-Boyd said with quiet deliberation, 'I think I must make it quite clear that if this sort of language is going to be used, and we cannot conduct our affairs in a gentlemanly way, then I will postpone this meeting for a fortnight and you will all stay in London until you have learned some manners'. There was a devastating silence at this wish of the cane, until the offender said, 'I'm very sorry, secretary of state', but the effect on all present was educational.

As to the April date, it was accepted without dissent at the end of the month's parleying that if the newly elected Nigerian parliament passed a resolution early in 1960 asking for independence, it would not be practical for the new government, which would be barely settled in power, to finalize details with HMG, for the British parliament then to respond by passing a bill, or even for celebrations to be organized. The United Nations might still be haggling over the Cameroons. Besides, '2 April' had only been tortuously chosen so that a British governor-general should sign a general warrant on the first day of the financial year, for expenditure agreed in a budget passed by the last colonial house; Lagos's climate would then be at its worst; and the new hotel to house all the guests might not even be ready. 1 October 1960 was agreed amidst the self-satisfaction of commonsense, although some AG leaders issued an empty token statement that they reserved the right to pursue the matter further. Half the population of the British colonial empire had been given their *laissez passer*, without acrimony. One of the dampened firebrands from the eastern region turned to his solicitor-general and said, 'Ah, that is too soon. You should stay longer and oppress us. Then we should become united'. It was not clear just how far his tongue was in his cheek, but he had not perhaps yet learnt that while British field officers wanted to stay as long as they were locally welcome, British politicians and senior administrators far from the villages no longer had any will to stay where world opinion would not be ready to support them if an extension should depend on use of force. Nobody had shot, hanged, ambushed or mined any British soldier in Nigeria's decolonization, and nothing was worth risking the breaking of that happy record. Abubakar's only reservation at the end, to which he only admitted after independence, was that the constitution was '*too tight*'.

Alhaji Abubakar and the Premiers were received by the Queen at Buckingham Palace and by Mr Macmillan at No 10 Downing Street. The French government also invited Abubakar to Paris, but he decided that duty called him home. M Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire was still persuaded that a federal

relationship with France was preferable to independence, and Abubakar's comments might have sprinkled some salt on Gallic diplomatic courtesies. However he did meet the head of the Sénégal government, Mamadou Dia, who flew over from Paris as a tourist and, apart from discussing Nigeria's groundnut marketing arrangements with the produce marketing company's London agents, also met Zik and Awo. The francophone community was still recovering from Guinée's rejection of the French constitution offered in a referendum of the previous September, which had resulted in the immediate termination of metropolitan financial and administrative involvement and the creation of a 'democratic, secular and social republic' under the former prime minister M Sékou Touré. The Nigerian leaders had also attended the first televised state opening of parliament, on which their own ceremonial was based; and were given dinner by most of the British Labour party executive – Mr Aneurin Bevan, Mr James Callaghan, Mrs Barbara Castle, and Mr Morgan Phillips among others, but not the leader Mr Hugh Gaitskell, who had a TV engagement.

At a final press conference, Abubakar spoke briefly, the Sardauna at length, and Awo at very great length. Consternation overtook pressmen who again heard the Sardauna speak of 'one of my lieutenants', and later they challenged Lennox-Boyd, who had to laugh it off with, 'There are some questions a secretary of state learns better than to answer'. Finally at a meeting of the foreign press association, surrounded by the federal and regional commissioners in London, Alhaji Abubakar conceded that by 1960 their forty diplomats now in training would still be too young for all to become full ambassadors, and that commonwealth help in representation would still be needed. With a further assurance that countries with the courage to invest in Nigeria's future would never regret it, he again spoke for himself: *'The truth is, we are used to the British and their ways. We look upon ourselves as junior members of the family, and it is to other members of the family we shall look first for moral and material support and encouragement'*.

On 22 October the British cabinet nodded the Nigerian independence constitutional proposals through. This was in the course of an agenda that also looked at China's bombardments of the Taiwanese islands of Matsu and Quemoy, Faroese fishing rights, information services in Asia and Africa, and a caravan site in Egham. France's newly approved constitution, creating the fifth republic, doubtless seemed more significant.

Arriving home, Abubakar had spoken to his countrymen yet once more for himself: *'I am very happy and I wish Nigeria well. I ask for the prayers of all religious groups in the country because, as I have said in London, whatever government we may have in the future, that government must be based on the fear of God. There must be justice for everybody'*. It ought to need no emphasizing, but probably it does, that here in 1958 was a head of a parliamentary government, talking about the fear of God with total belief; and that whatever their interpretation of the supreme being might be, by far the most of those to whom he was speaking directly knew that he meant it and understood what he meant. Many Nigerian politicians were, like their European models, by now utterly secularized except when conforming to ritual custom; most lay Nigerians still had a strong faith, and could respond to a leader whose practice was neither selective nor bigoted. And of course this is also the simple explanation of Alhaji Abubakar's refusal to compromise either in politics or in diplomacy with declared or apparent communists, a stand which

some observers have found inexplicable: communists were atheists. To explain his yearning for conservative stability, one may look no further than his most favoured quotation: *'For about one thousand and four hundred years not a single word out of the nineteen thousand, three hundred, not a single 'fullstop' of the six thousand, three hundred and sixty-six, and not a single letter of the three hundred and twenty-three thousand, six hundred and seventy-one of the Holy Qur'ân has changed'*. To which he himself added that all the actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) were properly documented – this proved that the Islamic religion was simple and straightforward.

27 The end of the apprenticeship

Sai hali ya yi daidai a kan yi abuta

Between the end of the conference and the next budget session in Lagos a concatenation of overseas news items kept reminding Nigeria's prime minister that the responsibility to react on the country's behalf would soon be his alone; the British, for their part, were feeling that if there were little reason for the farsighted to be smug, yet in comparison with other 'new nations' they need not be ashamed of progress in Nigeria: 'at least it was going to be all right here'. Nigerians generally were now judged in European common rooms as unlikely to imitate Dr Nkrumah out of a false sense of community – the *osagyefo* was already beginning to remove the entrenched clauses from Ghana's constitution, and had just announced that he would form a nucleus of west African states in union with Guinée, which on becoming independent of France had elected Sékou Touré, the sole candidate, as its president. Nkrumah also summoned and opened a new all-African people's conference of nationalists from sovereign and colonial countries in December at Accra, chaired by Mr Tom Mboya from Kenya. Russia and China sent greetings from Mr Khrushchev and Mr Chou En-lai, and the United States sent them from vice-president Nixon who had attended the Ghanaian independence celebrations. The conference was as wary of those countries' (and their press corps') influences as of any from Europe, and it was noticeable that although Chiefs Rotimi Williams and Anthony Enahoro were sent by the AG, and Mr F S McEwen by the NCNC (who included the Zikist National Vanguard), nobody represented the NPC. Malam Ibrahim Imam was there from the north, and met a fiery Congolese ex-assistant postmaster and brewery worker from Kasai called Patrice Lumumba, mentioned in the last chapter, who had taken the place of his rival Joseph Kasavubu whose travel papers were not in order; the Tiv politician J S Tarka, aged 26, at once thought Lumumba to be possessed of charisma.

From a preparatory committee set up at this meeting there sprang the All-African people's organization ('AAPO'), which kept its office in Accra as a political stablemate of the CIAS also described in the last chapter. It was a body confined to non-governmental organizations, dedicated to encouraging independence movements and bolstering them once they were successful; a member of the NCNC was elected joint secretary. Not long afterwards the remaining French west African colonies reached provisional agreement on the formation of a federation within the French community. For his part, Lumumba took home enlivened ideas and language inimical to the Belgian practice of rigid paternalism, and in the first days of the new year called mass meetings to demand independence at once. This was promptly followed by the banning of the rival ABAKO, riots and the arrest of Kasavubu and others, who were all carried off from prison by the Brussels minister to Belgium for talks. In May the charges were dropped and Kasavubu came home as mayor of a town Dendale,

to reform ABAKO as simply *l'Alliance des Bakongo*. Their story will be taken up again.

However the events that had reverberated throughout the whole post-colonial world had been the imposition of martial law in Pakistan by General Ayub Khan, who became president, and the suppression of the Sudanese constitution by the army, with the assumption of power by the general Ibrahim Abboud, who had been called in by the prime minister with the admission that party political government had been ineffective. Abubakar and the regional NPC leaders commented ruefully that Abdulla Khalil had told them that the British expected Sudanese politicians to become still more 'liberal' after independence, despite their only having had experience of British liberalism for the last few years of British rule: the lesson was that democratic freedom depended on national discipline, not on hurriedly learnt and hastily donned liberal attitudes. Political observers at Nkrumah's conference claimed to be detecting a novel inclination among Africa's leaders to look hard at the work of the continent's new generals, and to resist pressures from backbenches and subalterns' messes for the premature Africanization of their officer cadres; but it must be said that apart from Alhaji Abubakar that inclination was not widely obvious in Nigeria; there was nothing peculiarly British in the belief that 'it can never happen here'. Resentment at Britain's logical intention, that under the umbrella of collective commonwealth security ex-colonies should carry their own defence burdens, was confined to a few thoughtful bourgeois; the masses were not asked, and did not know. Practical possibilities were demonstrated by the departure of the last British troops from Jordan, threats to the king seeming to have been lifted. Elsewhere, the French general Salan was made inspector-general of national defence in Algeria, and Roy Welensky, who had impressed Alhaji Abubakar as a reasonable white Rhodesian, led his united federal party to victory in the general election.

The federal electoral commission agreed by the London conference was duly created. It had to be appointed from among 'persons of neutral views', and its first chairman was a senior lecturer in public administration at Ibadan, R E Wraith, known to student administrative cadets on earlier Devonshire courses at the London school of economics. The regional members were the makama of Kano, Bello dan Amar, an eastern barrister Mr A Aniagolu, a senior lecturer in surgery from Ibadan Mr H Orishejolomi Thomas, Mr K A Bohu from the southern Cameroons, and a Lagosian Mr M A Sho-Silva.

The prime minister now finally made up his mind, and the governor-general formally confirmed Stallard as substantive SPM. They also acceded uneasily to a *démarche* by the minister of finance, that if his permanent secretary were not posted away, he would resign, which would have caused insuperable trouble within the NCNC. Abubakar made two more excuses to go home to Bauchi in November 1958, where a Malam Muhammadu Noma was now almost as close a confidant as the madaki. On the first visit he had another long discussion with the resident Leith Watt, who was protesting like all good field officers at the excess of sterile office work and the draining of his staff away to the expanding Kaduna ministries, for all Sharwood-Smith's efforts to reverse the tide. At last both had become able to relax into amicability. The topics were not new, but past lingering suspicion and reserve now melted, and Watt henceforward enjoyed greater personal confidence than Abubakar had shown to any other Bauchi resident. The prime minister had perhaps forgotten how an emir and his council lacked the supportive techniques and breadth of secretariat experience

that could turn a federal council of ministers modelled on Downing Street into an effective machine; the resident, too close on his side to unexpected everyday events, and whose professional years had been spent mostly in the provinces, had possibly not fully appreciated how the traditional local politics had been evolving – under the pressure of new regionally imposed policies that demanded planned change within time-tables, they had turned from a matter of juggling with personalities into something that would once have been quite unrecognizable.

The two now came to terms, admitting that if the actual substitute for a sole native authority merely turned out to be a decent but inadequately-supported emir-in-council in which the senior councillor (in Bauchi's case, the waziri) always got his own way, the evolution had been a step sideways rather than forwards. They agreed that certain disreputable NA officials should not be saved merely because they were also local NPC leaders. The prime minister acknowledged that it was not easy for a resident (unlike the governor-general, who presided in his council) to keep a native authority on the track of integrity now that his task was to advise men, who no longer saw themselves as pupils, on the practical meaning of each regionally imposed policy; but that the lack of a strong and reliable local administration rooted in tradition after independence would leave national governments without any firm foundation in times of crisis. These relaxed exchanges did not make Abubakar's subsequent handling of his colleagues on the emir's council easier; his protégé the waziri and his very old friend the madaki would hardly expect him to take sides with the resident, now that internal self-government was imminent. He promised to try to come back for four to six weeks to help to '*put things right*', as he also tried to do in NPC squabbles involving the Sardauna, but it was a promise never quite fulfilled.

Abubakar had been reading the newly published war memoirs of Field-marshal Montgomery, with their partisan view of American generalship, and he gave the book to Watt as a parting present. A few days later he flew back for a single day: the governor Sir Gawain was investing the emir of Bauchi with the CBE, and he felt it proper to give support since the northern premier was also there. Unlike the governor and resident, he did not parade on horseback; riding was a practice he left to others.

Returning to Lagos, where Njoku, the minister of transport, was again sick for much of the year, he virtually resumed the favourite portfolio; once, knowing the files of old, he sent for Varvill, settled a problem in the customary oral way with the minute, '*We spoke*', and asked, '*Why did we never have these difficulties?*' The answer was lacking in tact, but the prime minister agreed wryly that he had an idle, as well as an ailing, minister. Agreement was in fact reached at this time on the establishment of a Nigerian national shipping line, with Elder Dempster and the UAC's Palm lines acting as technical partners and trainers. Because he 'liked education', he joined the education minister Aja Nwachukwu and Sir Ralph Grey at the opening of the CMS grammar school's new buildings. At about the same time an officer in the American foreign service arranged an informal dinner in the flat of a coloured cultural affairs officer of the US information service: the guests were the prime minister, the Sardauna and the chief education officer for Lagos, M H V Fleming. Diplomatic talk inevitably turned to Islam, and Fleming unwisely essayed a few words in Arabic. This caused some difficulty, but it was covered neatly by Abubakar's tactful and economically truthful humility: '*You see, I don't*

cow traffic'. The conversation came later to discuss past northern *jihads* against hill pagans and others. The prime minister explained tolerantly how any non-Muslim who submitted was treated kindly by correct Muslims, which provoked Fleming to wonder whether 'it had all been a tea-party'. The premier of the north responded with a deep guffaw, which seemed adequate refutation and to require another swift change of subject.

A more significant ceremonial was the presence of the governor-general and prime minister at the dedication of the USA consulate-general and future embassy; it became clear that the Americans saw Nigeria as a firm base for their growing interest in African affairs, and this was not unwelcome, although it permitted their junior diplomats some early gaucheries, and the consul-general's very large stars-and-stripes fluttering from his limousine's guard, outclassing Sir James's and Abubakar's radiator flags, raised some eyebrows. They had a prompt lesson at this opening. The assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Mr Joseph C Satterthwaite, had been furnished with an ill-conceived and patronising speech telling Nigerians how helpful the USA would be to them in the future. Doubtless casting his mind back to his similar Washington experience, the prime minister took over the microphone for an impromptu reply, and thanked the British for bringing Nigeria forward peacefully and efficiently, so that they were in a position to welcome countries like the United States on equal terms. He returned to his place with the warm and confident approval of the Nigerians and British who were present, since he had spoken up for them both. It did not mean that he was not going to nurture very friendly personal relationships with American diplomats over the next few years. Yet it was becoming clear that in American eyes British imperialism was no longer a major threat to western civilization, now that it was in voluntary and regulated liquidation: their fear of Russian ideological expansionism was now dominant. After all, the Earl of Home had just announced that for the future 'Empire Day' would be celebrated as 'Commonwealth Day'.

St Andrew's night was as usual the occasion for all the many Scotsmen in Lagos to foregather in a Caledonian society to celebrate their national uniqueness with the whisky, haggis, tartan and dance which their non-patriated kinsmen were now taught to disparage at home. This year the prime minister was the guest of honour, and when asked to speak, looked down at Sir James Robertson and declared, '*Your excellency, all my life I have been fighting tribalism, and see now to what you have brought me where I am to-day!*' On Christmas eve Abubakar drove himself round in his Rolls to Majekodunmi, his driver sitting in the back seat with the children. After their usual chat, he suggested that his doctor friend should come into politics at the general election, when he expected to begin to lose some of his more respected sources of dispassionate advice; Majekodunmi reacted with a laugh, 'minister of health?', and was told, '*Yes, but that's only after I'm in charge, independence!*' There followed a major political tour of the far north to find the NPC faithful also that a federal general election was due later in the year; during this trip the Queen's new year's honours list included a knighthood (CBE) for the Sardauna, who made it the opportunity to restyle himself Sir Muhammadu Bello, a name intended to resonate like that of the shehu Usman dan Fodio's son Muhammadu Bello, the first sultan of Sokoto. Principal emirs had been knighted, but no African politician had ever been knighted while still in office. The dignity did not seem to be inappropriate to the man, but to many seemed to distinguish, indeed to elevate the northern premiership in a way that not all the country's leaders would understand; the possibility was one

that would have exercised Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, ever alive to northerners' esteem for chivalrous awards, but the carefully balanced consultations and final recommendations had fallen into the year after his departure, and it was not the last crumb of his farewell 'bounty'. Doubtless the titles Sir Nnamdi or Sir Obafemi were also considered, and no doubt if ever offered were rejected.

The prime minister did not respond jealously to the hints that his was the greater claim, as he travelled at his party caucus's bidding from Zungeru to Kontagora, Yauri, Birnin Kebbi, Argungu, Sokoto, back to Lagos for the first quarterly meeting of the new police council, and back to Kaduna again to preside over the national council on establishments. In between flying his flag for the party, amid rumours that the NPC and NCNC would ally themselves for the election in the interests of Azikiwe, or whispering, *'You know, I don't like this sort of thing'* to a European official while some emir's praise-singers with drummers and *algaita*-players were doing their best to create a spirit of festival, he may rather have been puzzled at heart by northern peasant producers' apparently quixotic new attitude to cash crop incomes – record exports of bagged cotton from the north, and the opening of gins and textile mills, were unaccountably coinciding with a heavy fall in the current cotton and groundnut crops. In his speeches he concentrated on repeating his recorded new year's messages: the welcome to the world bank loan for his railway, and still the need to work for unity – *'... like a community which co-operates to turn a piece of useless bush into fruitful farmland... we must clear away all the undergrowth of prejudice and sectional quarrels, and burn up the weeds of internal dissension... We cannot just sit down in the shade and wait for October the first 1960, and then expect independence to bring all sorts of blessings'*. He also dropped hints about the desirability of linking parts round lake Chad with the northern region. This was when insisting to a party meeting that the provision in the constitution for creating new states would only be used to admit neighbours who might wish to join an independent Nigeria; that might also, he thought, include the Cameroons.

Before leaving Kaduna the prime minister had lunch with engineer A G Maris, the director-general of the Dutch public works and waterways, who had been visiting Nigeria to inspect Nedeco's work on an invitation in return for Abubakar's tour of Holland. Nedeco had now been asked to discuss the contract to make a detailed project for the Onitsha bridge, and was studying a project to build a barrage for power, irrigation, and controlled navigation for larger ships over longer seasons downstream. Maris reminded him that in a country where only 10% of the 43,000 kilometres of all-season roads was tarmacked, and the rail tracks totalled 2,900 kilometres (soon to be 3,200), over 1,900 kilometres of navigable river were an important factor: the Rhine itself from Rotterdam to Basel was only 800 kilometres, and was a vital and economic freight route for several European countries. Nedeco's reports had just eased the transformation of the inland waterways section of the marine department into a full separate department. Thus reinforced in his internal transport convictions, the prime minister flew back to Bauchi (giving a lift to his building contractor), landed after contradictory warning telegrams just as a cricket match with a team from Jos was about to open batting on the runway, exchanged courtesies, apologized for missing the provincial council meeting at Gombe earlier in the week, spoke with NA and NPC officials, and regretted that he could not join the home team. He returned to Lagos in the same evening. All his touring in the north was in theory co-ordinated through the

Premier's office, although travel on purely federal affairs might quite properly
 been arranged by his own staff; and his personal courtesy usually
 the misunderstandings which the inattention or over-enthusiasm of
 bureaucratic machine created for those officers who were expected to wait
 at way stations and airfields in order to receive him with due protocol.
 Significant in this typical senior ministerial tour just described, mainly
 the official interludes, is how very small the prime minister's
 was, as compared with almost any of his peers: a driver,
 Abubakar Ahmed, once he was dressed, whether his
 might ask Ahmed, and locked up his papers and briefing
 packed as offered, aides and officials were called in
 as offered, aides and officials were called in, but there was
 on the move. This practice changed little

the north once more, this time
 federal ministers on a short visit
 the emir of Kano. The emir was
 to the provincial authorities
 to reinterpret them as a block
 had however been reimmersed
 his session, when trouble
 his story that he was not
 his home, his farm
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native courts to follow parallel lines, with a temporary provision for Muslims and non-Muslims to opt out of trial in native courts whose rules of evidence might plausibly be alleged to work to their disadvantage. There was also to be a *shari'a* court of appeal and a court of resolution to sit over the entire Muslim and customary native court system in the northern region, which would continue to administer personal law including marriage, divorce, inheritance and property; there would be new native courts, to be called provincial courts, to hear certain lower level appeals. Magistrates' courts would yield all their civil jurisdiction to new district courts. Alhaji Abubakar and his peers preferred these codified compromises to the lasting social danger he saw in calls for the abolition of customary courts or the admission of practitioners of English-based law to the traditional inquisitorial system.

Looking abroad once more for odious comparisons, there came in succession the election on 8 January of General de Gaulle as first president of the fifth French republic and head of the French community (which now succeeded the French union), and of its executive council which embraced the prime minister of France and the heads of governments of most of the former French overseas territories in Africa; disturbances in Léopoldville in the Belgian Congo (which also set reforms in their train); another confusing announcement from francophone Africa by the republics of Sénégal and Soudan that they would form a federal state of Mali; the reopening of the south African treason trial of 152 persons (including a Mr Nelson Mandela) which had originally opened in December 1956; the proclamation of Dr Fidel Castro as premier of Cuba, following on the overthrow of General Batista's government; an agreement by Britain, Greece, Turkey and the Greek and Turkish Cypriots on a future independent republic of Cyprus; disturbances and an emergency declared in Nyasaland; a month-long state of emergency in southern Rhodesia; and an Anglo-Egyptian agreement to settle claims arising from the Suez events. The Ghanaian prime minister Dr Kwame Nkrumah crowded the bulk of such events out of Nigerian awareness by paying a comprehensive visit to all the capitals and some other parts of Nigeria and the southern Cameroons. Abubakar, who had resented having to waste an hour at Ikeja airport because Nkrumah's plane was late, presented his ministers to him; the Ghanaian PM said in Kaduna that he might come back for the internal self-government celebrations; and the Sardauna obtained a provisional invitation to Ghana for the coming July. It had been a diplomatically sensible visit, because Nkrumah's party links had become restricted to NCNC and NEPU, and he was anxious to include all the premiers in some future west African gathering of leaders, which he would convoke. He finally assuaged northern indignation over the disputed deportations by admitting that there should have been some forewarning through the 'usual channels'.

What Nkrumah failed to do was to abandon the rôle of the condescending African father-figure who had beaten the amateur Nigerian politicians to the tape of freedom, and the premiers did not like the patronage. Alhaji Abubakar particularly retained his distaste for the *osagyefo*, who had been late for all of his appointments, including his own consul-general's reception, the Nigerian government reception (when the PM took pointed care to introduce his past British aides like Armitage) and the governor-general's dinner party. Abubakar had arrived on time for the first of these and returned at once in high dudgeon because Nkrumah had not been there at the time Nkrumah had appointed. Prominent Lagos gentlemen rudely expressed their resentment against Nkrumah at the government reception: 'Mr News, you have some far

better people in your council of ministers than this boma boy from Accra'. Sir James, who had met Nkrumah two years earlier when he was less exalted, and who had in his time been insulted by experts at that trade, was more tolerant. Nevertheless he found his own prime minister's remarks more congenial when he unveiled the distinguished Nigerian artist Mr Ben Enwonwu's statue of Queen Elizabeth II in Lagos on 5 February.

Two days later on a very different topic, Abubakar addressed the Nigerian Olympic, British empire and commonwealth games association: *'Nigeria has already been put on the world sports map by the 'man from Calabar', Hogan Basse, but we do not wish Nigerians to be known only by their ability to smash other people's faces into pulp! Athletics is another and gentler sphere in which we know we can do well. I cannot praise too much any organization in which men from different regions of Nigeria act together as one team, submerging all differences, whilst they strive for the honour of their beloved country'*.

The preoccupied Prime Minister left more to his ministers than had been his wont during the 'budget of responsibility' session of February 1959, but made his attitude known on five matters on which he felt strongly. He referred to foreign affairs: although all four regional and Cameroonian party leaders had played a full part in making arrangements for Nkrumah's reception, he insisted that during the election campaign the parties would have to explain their intended foreign policies if they were voted into federal power, because Nigeria's policy would then be her own and not be tied to Britain's. He made a stand during a debate on atomic explosions in the French deserts to the north, a possibility that was giving rise to much apprehension, none the less justified for the wide misconception that unimaginable genetic damage from radiation in fact meant impotence, which was only too readily imaginable: *'No one has ever suggested exploding a hydrogen bomb in the Sahara. . . . I think the mover of this motion is quite right to take an interest in any such proposal. . . . General de Gaulle has expressed the hope that France will become an atomic power, and will carry out an atomic bomb test in the Sahara. . . . The governor-general is willing to bring this . . . debate to the notice of the secretary of state and to ask him to arrange for the French government to be informed, if he considers this necessary. . . . The apprehension felt by the house, I hope, will be communicated to the French government'*; the constitutional tact was laboured, and although the motion was, by consent, withdrawn, it was not to be the end of the matter.

On the morality of strikes by public servants, he justified the reinstatement to their posts and salaries, but not to their lost pension rights, of some dismissed railway and posts & telegraphs strikers: *' . . . this house, I am sure, will do nothing to create an atmosphere which will make government employees regard strikes as useful methods of agitation. . . . the fact that government can dismiss strikers has done a lot to stop irresponsible strikers, . . . though of course legitimate strikers are all right, workers should not be allowed to go on strike without real and proper cause. . . . For example, the case of the P&T workers, government rejected one of their claims. The other claim was still under consideration. They knew about it but they still refused to listen and they went on strike. . . . I have no doubt that . . . this house will never like to see any government in a situation in which the workers can dictate by a threat of strike . . . '* He was not the first politician to distinguish between working for the state and working for an employer who sought profits, nor between misguided or ill-educated workers and their professional organizers; nor was he the last to find that contrary views would soon be taught to better educated workers

and organizers. On the question of localizing the officer cadres of the armed forces, he was again on the side of the professionals rather than the politicians: *'We took over our military forces in 1958. . . . I take very strong exception to any member referring to the army as 'ceremonial'. We cannot expect our army to fight a war every day, . . . I think it will be very very dangerous, simply because we want to Nigerianise, to promote a colonel to a major-general. That will be very very dangerous'*. And on yet another similar question which was to keep rising, he defended his closest remembrancer: *'The secretary to the prime minister can be anybody who can serve Nigeria best. The mere fact that we are becoming independent does not mean that we should have an inexperienced SPM! It does not mean we are not going to trust other people! Those people are already in the public service, and they are serving us well. I realize that we need Nigerians in all these important posts, but I do not like the honourable member every time making these remarks which people might view seriously, while we know he is not serious about them. . . . I must say, I do not like what the honourable member is talking about the members of the civil service'*.

Inter-party conflicts had clearly returned to the house of representatives, and the prime minister's hope that jealous rivalry would be set aside till after independence faded with the reality of a general election approaching, of which the success of Mr J N Foncha's secessionist KNDP in the current southern Cameroons election was a reminder. Alhaji Abubakar, like most Nigerians, could not understand the advantage to ordinary Cameroonians, as opposed to their political leaders, of not joining a Nigerian federation permanently, but quickly concluded that if that was their wish, the sooner the bonds were cut, the better. The result lent a certain piquancy to the federal finance minister's announcement that work on the Asaba-Onitsha bridge over the Niger, which would speed communications from Lagos and Benin to the whole south-east, including the Cameroons, would begin later in the year. Another occurrence with significance less readily recognized was the passage of the petroleum tax profits ordinance, which provided that the rewards would be shared equally between the oil company and the colonial government. Some more oil had been found in Degema, in the mangroves of the Sambriero just south-west of Port Harcourt, but the well at Ogoni was still dry at 3,000 metres: only a year later the total Nigerian oil production would reach 880,000 tons.

Against this background, the lack of local industrial, as opposed to trading, enterprise in the country was beginning belatedly to be noticed. Although the educational ethos had always recognized the need for crafts and trades at the village level, it was hard to identify any pedagogic trend, even in the federal college of arts, science and technology, that would guide the most intelligent and ambitious pupils and undergraduates away from the services, the professions and, above all, politics. Encouragement of productive investment was still in the hands of bureaucrats who were not natural corporatists or socialists. There was a bicycle assembly plant, a metal window-frame plant and the beginning of a plastic piping plant; a start had been made with soft shoes and simple textiles; there were of course the well-established plywood processers at Sapele, cigarette and mineral water factories and breweries, cotton ginneries and groundnut mills, but little else that could be called innovative; overseas makers of consumer goods remained stubbornly unconvinced that west African internal markets were sufficiently populous or cash-conscious to justify heavy local investment, and the Nigerian entrepreneurs remained distributors at heart like the market mummies. Only now, in the last full

year of colonialism, came the first Nigerian issue of shares by a public limited company, £175,000 in the Nigerian cement company at Nkalagu, Emene, and that was a joint enterprise involving the federal and eastern governments and the CDC as much as the Tunnel Portland cement company and other actual operators. Without intention, the colonial period had engendered a generation that assumed, as in welfare states, that all major change must come from government, spontaneously or in response to ill-defined social pressures, and that it was for the people to react to that kind of change and judge how best to gain benefit. It is not surprising that even educationists like the prime minister did not finally recognise why individual enterprise still looked for its rewards in the vocations where it saw the Europeans earning theirs, or in politics (in fact the independent federal government decided later to sell the cement company to the British operating consortium, but Dr Michael Okpara was to persuade the prime minister to dispose of it to the eastern regional government instead).

Alhaji Abubakar did have understanding relationships with senior commercial men; Jack Davies of UAC has been named before, and Leonard Daldry of Barclays Bank DCO (newly become Barclays Bank of Nigeria), the house's special member with banking interests, was another. He gave a dinner party before the 1959 budget session at which Daldry and Mr Cam Judd (then UAC's senior man in Lagos) were the only expatriate guests, and finding that Judd's wife had not been invited to the ceremonial opening to hear the governor-general's speech from the throne, sent his police orderly round next day with tickets and instructions to seat both Judds in the distinguished strangers' gallery next to the sardauna of Sokoto. Abubakar was much impressed when at this time Davies, as chairman of his group, explained to him UAC's new policy, which he proposed to implement over the next two years: this was nothing less than to withdraw the company entirely from both produce-buying and their country-wide involvement, through the local 'canteens' and stores, in retailing and semi-wholesaling.

UAC had decided on economic and political grounds that these were activities that Nigerians ought to do for themselves, and that in the shake-out the company could reinvest its capital and redeploy its manpower towards industrialization. The prime minister (and in their turn the premiers) welcomed the concept, but wondered who would replace, and what might happen to, the sixty managers and four thousand employees who would be redundant. Davies's response was that his company would encourage virtual 'management buy-outs': their most reliable buyers would be shown how to set up as produce buying agents on their own account, and their own general goods dealers would be backed with introductions to manufacturers, distributors and bankers, so that they would have sources of capital and stock. The UAC would retain a watching brief, and if marketing or distribution did break down in individual areas, it would move its staff and money back temporarily until other competent men were found to resume responsibility. But the politicians' eyes still filmed over at the prospect of Nigerians creating and running new industries, as opposed to sitting comfortably on boards of existing trading firms; as in Britain, engineers and research developers were still liable to be classed as uprated artisans, and the ministry officer placed at a ceremony behind the UAC manager might yet be heard to grumble flippantly about being seated below his grocer.

Buying agents might be taught to acquire capital by taking bank loans, but not all who hoped to amass capital believed that this possibility was open to

them, even among the few who might risk opening a workshop or factory. A senior federal minister had just been quoted as saying: 'Many of us find it expensive to get elected. To some that does not matter, but others take their seats or offices either in debt or feeling that they have been robbed, and they consider that some return is due. They may honestly intend to do no more than get that return, but once they have started, they cannot stop'. Such a frank rationalization spoke volumes about the Pandora's box to which the political reforms over which the British had presided since 1951 had been the key, and of which one day the prime minister would be assailed for being unable single-handedly to close the lid. Capital did now begin to be amassed, and most of it was amassed by politicians.

Manpower was another matter entirely. Even in the north, still so far behind the south, but just as in every other country where good men had sown the wind of mass primary education, the whirlwind was now being reaped of school-leavers who would not return to the farm and who flooded into the towns in search of jobs which did not yet exist for semi-literates, while employers could not find enough managers or experienced professionals except from overseas. The federal minister of education, Aja Nwachukwu, with Abubakar's and the governor-general's strong encouragement, had been prompted by his ministry to seek an authoritative estimate of the country's high-level manpower needs for the next twenty years. The Carnegie corporation of New York now offered a grant to fund a survey, and Sir Eric Ashby, the master of Clare college, Cambridge, supported by Dr Kenneth Dike, vice-chancellor of Ibadan, headed a commission of Nigerian, British and American scholars, advised among others by Shettima Kashim and a professor Fred Harbinson of Princeton. They toured the country, but were not diverted to the examination of the low-level manpower problem, which it was carelessly assumed would solve itself, once every subsistence farmer and cash-cropper had been to school and found himself with no alternative but to remain a literate peasant. A contemporary occurrence was the formation of a tentative trades union congress of Nigeria, aspiring to replace the rivals in the all-Nigeria trades union federation and in the trades union council.

Notable external affairs that followed the budget session included the return of archbishop Makarios from his exile in the Seychelles; the arrest of Dr Hastings Banda and other leaders of the Nyasaland African congress; deaths in a prison camp at Hola in Kenya, in the agonized aftermath of which (and the Nyasaland troubles) Lennox-Boyd offered his resignation to Macmillan as the secretary of state under whom distant junior prison officers had abused their powers, but had it refused (instead Mr Justice Devlin, an Irishman who was widely regarded as having been sent specifically to hear quasi-criminal charges against the public services, was chosen by the lord chancellor Kilmuir to conduct an inquiry for Macmillan into Nyasaland); the latest notional francophone reorganization, whereby the Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Haute Volta and Dahomey would now form a Sahel-Bénin union; the victory of the united federal party in the northern Rhodesian elections and the subsequent suppression of the African national congress; a report of an invasion by Cuba of Panama; the return from detention of Mr Jomo Kenyatta; a statement in Cairo by an Afro-Asian organization for economic co-operation that the USSR would be excluded; the re-election for the fourth time since 1943 of the honourable William Tubman, True Whig, as president of Liberia; the joint announcement by Nkrumah and Sékou Touré of 'the basic principles of the union of independent African states'; and, on

3 June 1959, the grant of internal self-government as a state to Singapore crown colony.

During this period a congress for cultural freedom held an international seminar in Ibadan on representative government and national progress, seeking a definition of 'African democracy'. The NPC's legal adviser Abdul Razaq and the AG's spokesman Alfred Rewane had defended the British system of multi-party parliamentary democracy, but Ibrahim Imam, again unofficial leader of the northern assembly's opposition in a BYM-AG alliance, had expressed preference for five to fifteen years of 'emergency coalition' on Abubakar lines after independence. However the conference took up a point that Nkrumah had consistently made during his recent visit, that strong government might be even more important for Africa than representative government. Such embarrassing questions were asked as whether a legitimate opposition might not be equated with treason? was not traditional consultation of the pre-British or indirect rule kind, leading to a decision to which all might be expected to adhere through mere traditional loyalty, still adequate for a modern state? and was democracy, however defined, any more non-African than some modified form of British parliamentary democracy? Another Ibadan conference was that of the general assembly of 'World University Service', to which Abubakar sent the message that self-government for the federation would provide a happy occasion for celebrating the unity in diversity of its 35 million people.

The formal introduction of northern internal self-government during the Ramadan fast and the heat of March had been eased by the advisory visit and report by Foley Newns, much discussed and prompted by the prime minister after further appeals for help from the Sardauna, to lubricate the integration of professional officers into unitary ministries (which was also finally introduced in the federal government on 1 April 1959); it was not only the touchy senior specialists in Kaduna who had to be reconciled to the psychological changes of political advance, but the less sensitive ministers who had yet to accept that their power of 'general direction' did not justify arbitrary interference with expert judgment and line management at working levels. Newns's report, like his earlier ones, was sent by the colonial office to other territories 'reaching towards a similar state of constitutional development'. The acquisition by the theoretically independent northern PSC of executive powers was accompanied by the forming of a political executive council committee to oversee the implementation of northernization.

The prime minister spent many weeks in the north during the early rains of 1959. He was in Bauchi, while the resident was on leave, from the beginning of March to the middle of April, '*putting things right*' (as he had promised) and resting, but without Watt as a catalyst; an urgent council of ministers meeting was contrived by a plane which collected Sir James Robertson from Enugu and Alhaji Abubakar from Bauchi, and restored the PM to his holiday the same night. He eventually returned to Lagos by train, after a stopover in Kaduna to talk to NPC colleagues; falling slightly sick from his chronic sinus trouble, he was settled in a rest house by the Sardauna, who drove to fetch Dr Majekodunmi, saying, 'I have imprisoned your friend, doctor!'. Shortly after the return south, another scholastic tradition began, borrowed from an offshoot of the international practice of academic freedom, when students of the Zaria branch of the Nigerian college of arts, science and technology were sent home until they apologized for, or proved they had no part in, uncouth demonstrations against the departure of a lecturer.

The federal electoral commission now proposed some technical improvements to the regulations controlling future elections, and these were submitted to the council of ministers for processing. There followed a political break, to facilitate the official celebrations of northern self-government, during which the premier had determined on a durbar to overshadow that planned by Sharwood-Smith and Greatbatch for the Queen's visit in 1956. In that ambition and the glitter of the other functions he was rewarded with success; 'accountability' to an unlettered plebs, as the word came to be understood in western political vocabulary, was in few people's minds. The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester represented the sovereign, and this time the northern ministers did not feel themselves to be relegated to the second row when surrounded by royal personages, governor-general and governor, secretary of state, prime minister and four premiers, and general officer commanding. The emir of Kano displayed a surprising individualism by riding, unrehearsed, on a camel instead of the horse agreed by all the other chiefs. The prime minister thought the children's pageant, portraying 'The Story of the Schools', the finest part of the celebrations; the play included a throwback to himself and the premier answering roll-call at Katsina college so many years before. The Sardauna, who had recently said in Tula to the people of Tangale Waja, who spoke little Hausa, '*Na aikad da wani yarona zuwa Ikko* [I have sent one of my boys to Lagos]', took another public opportunity to deny that he would be going to the federal house, since he had 'able lieutenants who could hold the reins of power at the centre'. Aminu Kano's biographer records his subject's visit to the state house to pay respects and formal congratulations to the Sardauna on regional self-government. Everyone from ministers downwards was seated on the floor, but 'Malam' sat on a chair. The Sardauna arrived, saw him, and sat down near him on a pouffe, exchanging quips about which was the more progressive. Then Alhaji Abubakar came in, kicked off his slippers as he always did in a house, and sat on the floor. To avoid odious comparisons, Aminu Kano made his escape. The episode was reported to southern ministers, who did not appreciate northern manners and thought the prime minister had demeaned himself. Abubakar found fuller pleasure in taking Dr Majekodunmi home to Bauchi to meet his old mother. There they used camp chairs.

In Lagos the duke and duchess had lunch with the prime minister, and Peter Stallard was deputed to bring Abubakar's two sons in afterwards for presentation. The duchess's royal foresight had provided her with two dinky toys to give the little boys. But with the conclusion of the northern pageantry the principal holder of the central reins was able to concentrate on the federal general election, to which the Sardauna was affectedly indifferent now that he was president of his own executive council and might consult Sir Gawain Bell as a constitutional courtesy only when he wished (although the governor still had the sovereign's right to see the cabinet papers and, if he chose, to advise and warn; and the interviews were regular). The party machines had sought to ensure that all their likely supporters were registered, and the appeals against omission or error of names were now in full swing, particularly in the urban areas: doubts about demographic accuracy were not yet widespread, and few challenged the conclusions that 80% of those eligible in the north had registered, 75% in the west, 70% in Lagos and over 60% in the east. Premier Foncha had refused to allow any new registration for federal purposes in the southern Cameroons, which might still have had eight seats. Nine million voters were listed for 312 Nigerian constituencies.

Routine work continued nevertheless. Each morning when Abubakar arrived in the office Stallard would join him and listen to his master's views on each of the files on his table. Sensitive to Wachuku's and many others' criticisms of his position, particularly to those who fantasized that the PM's normal minute, '*We spoke*', meant that Stallard had told him what to do, the secretary made a virtue of waiting to answer inquiries and of limiting his initiatives to suggestions of ways to achieve what the prime minister had already said he wanted. The note '*We spoke*' meant that Stallard, who rarely now needed scratchpad notes for speeches, understood the purpose and tone of the letter or speech he had to have drafted, or of the action to direct, and would come back with something that seldom required correction before signature. Each was fluent in the other's language, but knew when precision and avoidance of a patronizing element were essential: sometimes to get the meaning right Abubakar would relapse into Hausa, and Stallard would know to respond in English. Even if Abubakar said, '*It seems there are three courses of action open*', but SPM replied, 'Well, there is a fourth', the final decision was always the prime minister's. There was a curious occasion when Stallard, with tongue only half in cheek, suggested to him that an army was quite unnecessary (after all, who was going to attack Nigeria?); instead of wasting money, Nigeria could 'set a wonderful example to emergent nations by doing without an army'. The *jeu d'esprit* was not pursued, but gave subsequent occasion for wry thought.

The prime minister's technique in cabinet was slightly different: sitting in the middle of the table face-to-face with Sir James Robertson as the president, he would listen to all the points made and opposing contentions put forward, including any tactical leads suggested by HE if discussion faltered; then the mask would fall, he would state his own position and include it in a summary of the various views. The governor-general would inquire whether the council were agreed, hint at Abubakar's solution as a fair consensus, and in this way the PM's lead normally prevailed. He was never afraid to do his homework. Although there were still very many informal talks in the early evenings with Robertson at which nothing was barred, from problems with the Saradauna and the NPC to quarrels between southern ministers (subjects which were never raised with Stallard who would have found them improper), he rarely had a dry run with the president through any item on the cabinet agenda: but he would not allow gaps in understanding to survive.

As a typical example, in mid-1959 Chief Festus, minister of finance, failed to find any way of enabling council members to comprehend his memorandum on the levying of excise duty on beer: the present system was a specific rate of duty, the alternatives might be *ad valorem* or one based on the specific gravity of the worts. Festus and most of the others drank beer, but the excisemen's choices were too puzzling. Alhaji Abubakar, who did not drink, bypassed the top men in the ministry after the meeting, sent for the senior assistant secretary (revenue) who had drafted the memorandum, James Greig, and insisted on an explanation in layman's terms: Greig showed how it might be fairest to relate the duty to the alcoholic content, and explained that the decoction of fermenting malt in the brew, known as wort, was the source of the intoxicant. When Abubakar had the argument and the definitions word-perfect, if not the schoolboy chemistry, he said with a straight face but a glint in his eye that this was of course above the finance minister's head, but the prime minister must get it right.

And yet there were occasions when the prime minister took hold of the wrong end of the stick, and Sir James (who could hide his exasperation with

geniality but was occasionally able to thump the table for order if he thought the matter important enough to justify a little subdued passion) would find him sadly stubborn before he would ultimately admit that he had missed the crucial point. Abubakar shared unknowingly with Harold Macmillan a phrase of body language that both prime ministers' servants recognized: a tapping right foot was the signal to change an unwelcome argument. One problem not yet solved was what to do with parliamentary secretaries. Even in busier Britain, they were not yet given delegated executive ministerial responsibilities within their departments in the 1950s, except to understudy or take leading parts in debates. Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa asked Stallard to find some suitable occupation for Malam Shehu Shagari, and the parliamentary secretary was offered some files on citizenship to work on. Malam Shehu felt he was being treated as a supernumerary assistant secretary (an unpromoted administrative officer) and the experiment was not a success. It was not at all the same thing as being gazetted a 'temporary minister' when relieving a sick, overseas-travelling or holidaying portfolio-holder.

At this time council meetings were still held in the annexe to government house, but a new cabinet office was in course of erection incorporating the new office of the prime minister (Peter Stallard arranged his own desk in the new office block to face the window, overlooking the racecourse. One day Abubakar came through the open connecting door and, harking back to his exchange about where to sit in a motorcar, remonstrated in turn with his secretary: *'It is very risky to sit with one's back to the door!'*). Once the meetings had moved there Robertson made an occasional, and eventually regular, excuse not to attend, without signing the formal instrument making the deputy governor-general the governor-general's deputy (the terms were mutually exclusive), so that all could accustom themselves to getting on with business with Abubakar in the chair and without the comfortable presence of 'John Willie'. Foley Newns was then the only white man in the room, and he was silent unless spoken to, although Abubakar had discussed the agenda with him before he had issued it. Shortly afterwards Sir Ralph Grey left on appointment as governor of British Guiana, and the theoretical question of deputising in the presidency fell into abeyance, although the deputy governor-generalship was assumed by A G H Gardner-Brown. For the moment there was again a government founded in trust, and all its members shared in it. Above all, Alhaji Abubakar had finally realized that working with vociferous and sometimes ill-mannered southerners was very often preferable to dealing with opinionated or dogmatic Fulani.

28 The last election under imperialism: A subdued winner

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alienation between Russian and Maoist communism that was to last for a generation. In the Belgian Congo Lumumba's MNC was emerging as the more vocal of the groups that favoured a unitary state, while Kasavubu's *Alliance* was involved with other 'separatists' or federalists, including one Antoine Gizenga's *parti de la solidarité Africain* and an Albert Kalonji's splinter from the MNC in Kasai known as 'MNC-Kalonji', which in turn joined a group of the MNC's former central committee under a Joseph Iléo. In October the main MNC called a congress of other bodies, which all agreed to boycott the elections before independence. There were more riots, and on 1 November Lumumba was arrested and jailed. Kasavubu became finance member of the governor-general's executive college.

The external affair which did disturb Nigerian politicians and newspaper readers was the renewed threat of French atomic bombs exploding in the Sahara. Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa insisted that Nigerians had every right to protest, and hoped that the British government would renew their representations; he had begun to be worried that the scientific advice available to him, simplified into laymen's language, might be inadequate. Sir James could confidentially show him the diplomatic intelligence summaries and briefing notes sent by the colonial office, but on this topic Sir James was clearly no scientist (Peter Stallard had insisted that his own already difficult position would be prejudiced if he saw any papers with security gradings restricted to UK citizens, and refused to handle any high level background material which a dependent prime minister was not strictly entitled by Whitehall security classification rules to see).

Abubakar demanded to learn more, and while promises were made to make arrangements, some news from Bauchi pleased him. The emir, and the current DO Turner, were given the Queen's commendation for bravery, because of their personal intervention in the Tafawa Balewa riots. The NA was strengthened by the appointment of the new chief scribe as councillor for education, the replacement of the supervisor of works and the appointment of a native treasurer with full institute of administration qualifications. Three more district heads with good reputations for relationships with their people also joined the council, and six more laymen would shortly be elected to it from the outer council. In Lagos, the Nigerianization office gave a spin to the readiness of expatriates to take retirement benefits by creating 52 supernumerary promotion posts for local officers in the federal service who would 'shadow' senior members of HMOCS. Civil servants were also generally allowed for the first time to invest freely in government's joint enterprises or companies not operating in Nigeria, but still required official permission to acquire an interest in a local enterprise in which the federal government held no share.

But the prime minister was not distracted from his main worry about French bombs by these signs of progress. He told the last session of the house of representatives which had been elected in 1954 that *'the minister of state for colonial affairs [Lord Perth, who had watched the sultan of Sokoto laying the foundation stone of the national hall] was here only a few days ago and I took the opportunity to speak to him on the fears of Nigeria in the clearest way that he could understand, and I hope that he will convey these fears to his colleagues in the UK'*.

Looking back on five years, two of them under his leadership, he had much to be proud of. Challenged about imbalances in the armed forces, he admitted that, *'I do not like only one section of the federation to be overwhelmingly*

dominating the other sections if it is possible. . . . still, if people who present themselves to the army are from one section, and they have the qualifications, what can government do other than accept them?' But with independence only fourteen months distant, 'we have proved ourselves to be mature. In other countries the form of government has indeed been changed, but where else, I ask you, has it been done with the agreement of all concerned? In most cases you will find that a minority forced their will on their country, and that bloody revolution had left its legacy of bitterness. What we have done we have done willingly. I should like to pay a tribute to the help which we . . . received from Mr Lemnox-Boyd'.

He went on to show how as a creditworthy country Nigeria had negotiated first a £10 million loan from the international bank, and just now a further £15 millions from Britain; he referred proudly to the national economic council, the loans advisory council, the central bank and the newly circulated currency, as creditable institutions for a new nation. The council for technical co-operation south of the Sahara was moving its headquarters from London to Lagos, the international labour office was setting up its African field office, the world health organization its western area office, and UNICEF had already posted its area representative to Lagos two years before. It was not necessary for him to make the crude point that Nigeria had lost nothing internationally by not beating Ghana to the post. The Royal Nigerian Navy had just taken over its first real warship, the frigate HMNS *Nigeria*. No doubt he had not overlooked the weakness of WAAC and the coal corporation, and the controversies surrounding the Nigerian shipping line, but the electricity corporation, now under Professor Eni Njoku, was now an efficient utility. *'Critics say of countries such as ours that only a small minority wants independence, and the vast majority are ignorant of what is at stake. It is all the more necessary that the politically conscious should realize the burdens which we are bringing on ourselves'*.

While Lagos and the western region were intoxicated by Mr Enahoro's promises that they also were to enjoy television, and the council of ministers wavered over the electoral commission's advice concerning the political party symbols to be used on ballot boxes, and on what style of boxes to approve throughout the federation, Alhaji Abubakar paid a flying visit to Bauchi to induce the squabbling local NPC members to settle on a single party candidate for each constituency. The glittering prizes of electoral success were now seen to be such that as many as three quasi-independents were likely to stand for every seat; and although a successful candidate would surely declare for NPC once he had won, the danger of split votes letting in an unwelcome interloper was difficult to prove to those who were blinded by ambition or greed.

After some limited success in this advice, Abubakar went to Kaduna to attend the last recorded meeting of the NPC's executive committee, which was now permanently submerged by the Sardauna's personally chosen caucus, the central working committee, on which still no federal representative, not even the prime minister, served. A rump convention of the parliamentary members proposed and adopted the NPC's electoral manifesto, which had been seen by no other party body before its publication; the only novel policy embodied, though vague, was the rejection of 'neutralism'. It included opposition to the creation of more Nigerian states, but made reference to closer co-operation between African countries, without encouraging a west African union which would be 'premature', and it made suggestions of a medical insurance scheme and a Nigerian air force; but the truth was that the NPC still had no philosophical

policy such as a developed country's parties would recognise (which would be answerable to functional constituencies of supporters who shared some common institutionalized convictions). Subject to whatever temporary difficulties might be made by the Borno members, who were not ready to bow the back to the 'Fulani-Hausa', or by the middle belt members, who were reluctant to court humiliation, policy was what the Sardauna believed would benefit the existing northern structure. What the federal government did was of little consequence unless it conflicted with that belief. It seems likely that the 'CWC's subsequent decision this year that the NPC should have no dealings with Israel were never made formally known to Alhaji Abubakar: he was certainly to ignore it.

This created some personality difficulties for the prime minister, but it also gave him more freedom than has been generally admitted in manoeuvring his federal supporters in the Lagos house: if the Sardauna had no particular view of a matter (and his economic and organizational views were not wide), their votes were secure. The Sardauna was now at last firmly invited to visit Ghana for a few days, and took another opportunity to speak out of turn on Nigerian foreign policy, which was not a regional concern. Chief Kola Balogun was hurriedly appointed the federation's first commissioner to Ghana, with authority to speak.

There was little back-seat driving from the Sardauna during the prime minister's special journey to London towards the end of September, accompanied by some federal colleagues. It seemed to them that Abubakar was more passionate than on any other subject since entering Lagosian public life, and was determined to make Nigerian resentment at the proposed French Saharan tests known to his friend Lennox-Boyd, despite knowing that, however embarrassed, the secretary of state would be able to do nothing more than to pass the message on to the foreign office. It did not help either that French Africans, closer to any danger, seemed to be more agitated about events in Algeria than about bombs, and were even disposed to be affronted by British commonwealth incursions into their own internal affairs. Abubakar had lunch with Lennox-Boyd on the day of arrival, and was taken to see Macmillan in the evening. Lennox-Boyd had cancelled important constituency engagements while preparing for his own general election campaign, and announced after hours of talk that, 'We could not have treated this thing more seriously if London were the city that might be affected, rather than Lagos'. There was a press conference before the talks ended in which Abubakar surprised hardened reporters by his skill in balancing condemnation of France with local tact (*'I don't want anything I say to give the impression that the British government is indifferent'*); but he failed to satisfy a group of Nigerian students, who demanded action which he had no power to initiate, and who left the press with a sad impression of a divided country, disloyal to its leader while he was representing them all abroad.

However when he, Robertson the governor-general and the party were taken to the British atomic energy research establishment at Harwell to listen to Sir William Penney and other scientists explain that on the basis of information available to Britain there should be no ill-effects for Nigeria from the proposed tests of an early technological level, Abubakar remained hard to convince, although fascinated by all he was shown. He admitted that they had little choice but to accept what they were told, and the British government probably had to believe its own top scientists. He gave up any hope that Britain would support those independent African states that planned to move at the UN general assembly against French radio-active fall-out. He

was slightly mollified by promises that six monitoring stations would be set up at Sokoto, Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Lagos, and that two nuclear scientists would join a Nigerian team to measure any radio-activity. He was photographed outside No 10 Downing Street, visited the Earl of Home at the commonwealth relations office and saw Robertson's leave residence: but he insisted that he would continue to make representations. In the event, when the actual explosion took place, the fall-out was marginally greater than Penney had predicted, although it was still claimed to be far from dangerous to Nigerians; Abubakar concluded that the experts had not really known what to expect, and felt justified in his original stand and his renewed protests. He still respected Britain, but could never again justly be accused of thinking any of the British infallible.

Alhaji Abubakar had just opened the new headquarters of the *Daily Times* and *Sunday Times* in Lagos. Mr Cecil Harmsworth King of the British *Mirror* group, who was chairman of the controlling Nigerian printing and publishing company, presented him with a valuable antique illuminated manuscript of the Qur'an. The official policy of these newspapers was to support elected governments generally, but to be constructively critical. More important was the technical quality and distribution of the product, which spurred the wholly indigenous competitors to better presentation. In some ways the main sufferers from improved investment in a daily national newspaper were the northern papers of Gaskiya corporation, whose editors were also more likely to suffer rebuke by northern ministers when they presumed to make critical comment. Alhaji Abubakar, who also read the *AG Daily Service* and *Zik's Pilot*, had taught himself to find patience with the daily press despite his limited enjoyment of journalism as reading matter.

He also learnt, more enthusiastically, to play the word game 'Scrabble' after dinner from the schoolgirl daughter of J E B Hall, now in Dr Mbadiwe's ministry; it reminded him of learning the dictionary by heart. He enjoyed a journey to a Cap Nachtigal lighthouse centenary celebration in Victoria in the Cameroons, when Ahmed Kari had to restrain the prime minister's little son Mukhtar who clearly wanted to get out of the aircraft to play in the sea he was looking down upon. Abubakar returned to Bauchi in October to plan his election campaign and to give three NA councillors a joyride by plane to Lagos. He had no fear of losing his seat, and his plan was to let his opponents exhaust themselves and then travel quietly round south-west Bauchi on the principle that the last speaker had the advantage. His new house was now completed and had the province's first radio-telephone link installed, the furniture had been ordered from Britain, and he found a European-style cook. He offered Leith Watt an excellent dinner and a bottle of champagne to share with his wife, who had permission to invite those of Alhaji Abubakar's own wives who stayed in Bauchi to her 'educational' tea parties.

Alhaji Abubakar told Watt that he was upset by the news that Lennox-Boyd had retired from the house of commons at the general election (to take the chair of the Guinness family company) and had been succeeded by Mr Iain Macleod, aged 45 (and the man with whom he never knew that Whitehall had compared him himself). To the one he had written affectionately, '*Our only regret is that having come so far together we shall be denied the opportunity of having you with us as secretary of state at our independence celebrations. Nevertheless we shall welcome you back then*'; to the other he was more laboured: '*Solid gains have been made in commonwealth relationship by the last conservative*

government, but much remains to be done, particularly in Africa in the years that lie immediately ahead. I have no doubt that with the enthusiasm and capacity for hard work which was characteristic of you as minister of labour and national service, you will in your new office cut out a niche for yourself in the annals of the commonwealth'. Abubakar did not appreciate that Macleod, after his four years as minister of labour, was still the youngest, and in pure terms of years the least experienced, member of the British cabinet. A clever, calculating person, he was not seen by all his colleagues as a clever political practitioner. Like so many of his peers he lacked what the old hands called 'knowledge and understanding of Africa', but he did not regret this. He had never seen a colony, and his prime minister, who had thought little about colonies either until entering No 10 Downing Street, had given him no forewarning when he said unexpectedly, 'Iain, I've got the worst job of all for you'.

Macleod had however been hoping for the job. He and Quintin Hogg had been the most outraged in the cabinet when the news broke of Kenya's Hola prison camp deaths (and Mr Enoch Powell had made a famous speech in the commons in the early hours of the morning); but he had never thought that Lennox-Boyd should have insisted on resignation, for the ministerial responsibility had seemed too remote. Nevertheless from that time he had felt convinced that what he conceived to be the old methods of government all over Africa must be ended, and so the inescapable process towards independence must be hastened. He saw his only personal amendment to Britain's continuing policies, a thread running through Joseph Chamberlain and Creech Jones to Lennox-Boyd, as one of redefining the phrase, 'At the right time'. He had no special discussion with Macmillan or R A Butler, whom he found instinctively sympathetic, as indeed his whole party and the British press were at first; but he was to surprise them all with the actual speed of process he undertook in his two short but crucial years of office. He had no need to speed it in Nigeria.

Sir John Macpherson's retirement as permanent under-secretary of state in August had made less impact on Abubakar, as 'Jock' had deliberately distanced himself from Nigerian affairs since joining the colonial office. Watt now discovered in conversation some unsuspected prejudices: the prime minister did not trust the Syrian and Lebanese traders, and he did not like the recent attitudes of the association of senior civil servants, the staff association that was toying with more active trades unionism. About the Sardauna he was more circumspect with Watt, but he clearly disliked being expected to go on a political tour wherever and whenever 'the party' told him. Nonetheless he spent most of November touring the north for the party. The cleansing of corrupt native authority stables had not ended with Sharwood-Smith's departure, although the implications of each purgative intervention for the regional premier and the NPC's local position now tended to matter more than the wishes of the *talakawa*: the emir of Argungu had just resigned in response to charges of maladministration. The political campaign had begun to be unpleasant, with cross-accusations of intimidation, bribery and hypocrisy rife, and lorry-loads of thugs bearing matchets and broken bottles attending many meetings. The NPC were most incensed by the AG: Chief Awolowo had amassed party funds that allowed the costly hiring of an oil company's and a pest control company's helicopters, which his jealous and less wealthy opponents thought unfairly and unreasonably competitive. The makama of Bida even said that such invasions, frightening by reason of the strange noise of the rotor blades, and corrupting because of the technical attractions to the young, violated northern traditions, for which the AG would 'never be forgiven'.

The prime minister arrived in Okene shortly after such a political descent from the skies by Awo, and uttered the thought that extravagant ostentation would not win over the very intelligent Igbirra; these were a people who even though politically and religiously divided among themselves, and culturally no outright strangers to their Yoruba neighbours, had been educated under a former authoritarian but progressive chief to see themselves as a people with a future in the north out of all proportion to their numbers. The senior district officer was the former district officer in Bauchi and secretary to the cabinet in Kaduna who has been mentioned before. He had foreseen no long-term career enjoyment in the HMOCS special lists for Nigeria, although he had been one of the few to join the first version. Now he had to admit to the man who had dictated his lower standard Hausa test ten years before, that after supervising the local election he was being transferred to another colony which offered prospects of longer crown service. He had had the strange experience, after self-government and now just before independence, of being appointed by office as 'The Igbirra Native Authority'; civil discord and the NA's internal quarrels had made the new chief-and-council politically unacceptable to the Sardauna's government (to which the two main factions nonetheless pledged loyalty), and with popular support the SDO was exercising all the legal powers that a sole chief unencumbered by a council would have had in Lugard's early days, until the suspended NA could be decently replaced and the chief sit in an acceptable council. His advisers were his own provisional employees, the NA officials. For the moment everyone seemed absurdly happy. The prime minister also found this a whimsical situation, and once more repeated to a British friend his wish that people like him did not have to leave yet; but asked him to be his guest at his lodge in Lagos before embarking.

The SDO told him more about the ambiguities faced by British officers who were contented in their work and believed that they were still needed. Only the day before, he had listened in the market crowd to an AG lawyer preparing the way for Awo by ritual abuse of the colonial administration for its failures and its tyrannies. The lawyer, a complete stranger, had called upon him in the evening out of an old world courtesy, and had been told over a beer that his hopes were in part being met – the SDO was leaving for good in a few weeks. *'But why? We cannot replace you yet!'* – 'But I heard you tell them in the market not an hour ago that all the imperialists would soon be driven out!' – *'Yes, the bad ones, but not you, we still want you'*. It was always 'someone else', but the mud and the hurt touched everyone. Alhaji Abubakar took the tale in good humour and laughed gently: *'Yes, I know it is difficult, it is unfair. I understand that you want to stay in the service. I am sorry that you do not believe you can do it here much longer, but it is in good that you are still wanted somewhere else'*. He stayed one night in a bare Okene rest-house, talking to political allies and refusing a bedroom or hospitality himself: he departed in a motorcade of one, which was his own car, not the official Rolls. Later in the tour he was seen by the Kano resident, sitting quite alone in the airport transit lounge, waiting for a flight.

African trades unionism was making itself felt in a bitter clash that could only spread confusion. Under Dr Nkrumah's auspices a preparatory committee of an all-African trades union federation was meeting in Accra, looking for autonomy, free of interference from any other world body. At the same time the anti-communist international confederation of free trades unions was holding its second African regional conference at the Mainland hotel in Ebute-Metta, as a platform for the expression of the African personality, a concept

which Alhaji Abubakar still found hard to take seriously. Nevertheless he sent the conference a serious message: *'Nigeria's greatest resource, manpower, is at present largely illiterate and untrained. It is my hope that ICFTU through this regional organization will contribute towards trades union solidarity in this part of the world. . . . In your efforts to increase the standard of living of workers I am sure you will make every endeavour to see that such increase is matched by a similar increase in production. In maintaining a sense of balance between the two claims lies the true happiness and welfare of the workers'*.

Meanwhile the NCNC won Lagos town council from the AG, the anglican bishop having intervened to protest against a temporary breakdown of public order in the capital; Adele, the oba of Lagos, was shunned by the AG and he was given moral support by the NPC. More surprising was a substantial plebiscite vote in those areas of the northern Cameroons that were administered as parts of Borno, Adamawa and Benue provinces, in favour of separation from Nigeria and a postponement of a final decision on their future, which would require a further plebiscite. Such a decision had been grudgingly expected in the south, but that there was such submerged resentment, mainly against the Borno native administration and by the Adamawa pagans against the lamido, was a shock to the north. Sir Ahmadu Bello was infuriated, and the NPC complained wildly to the trusteeship council committee concerned that the British officers (who had been just as astonished) had used their influence to preserve their jobs and create a future imperial base for nuclear war in this remote district. The UN plebiscite commissioner, Dr Djalal Abdoh, remotely paraphrasing Oliver Cromwell's letter to the church of Scotland, said that the Sardauna (who particularly blamed the ex-Indian civil service plebiscite adviser, Sir John Dring, and his supervising officers seconded from the local provincial administration) was a 'great man, a statesman, but he could be misinformed'. Sir James Robertson, undisturbed, dissolved the house of representatives, to allow nominations for the election to proceed: the council of ministers remained in office until the results were known.

There were 950 candidates for the 312 federal seats, of which 174 were in the north. The AG and its allies put up 307 candidates; the NCNC and NEPU 303; the NPC and its allies only 202. The northerners in the NPC did not suppose that expense and effort outwith their own bailiwicks would bring any reward, although the Igbomina branch in Lagos which had been studying other parties' methods appealed to northern ministers to give contracts to Hausa businessmen, so that NPC members could afford to subsidise party campaigning. The westerners of the AG on the other hand hoped for some success in the east, but believed their own propaganda that free secret ballots would overthrow the oppressive bogeymen of the north, and generously shared their cash, lorries, cars, bicycles, radios, organizers and lawyers with their allies in the ITP and UMBC, as well as finding many local protégés elsewhere in the north. The purpose of the lawyers was to defend or seek bail for those who fell foul of the NA police or alKalis' courts, which they denounced as corrupt and backward in the same breath as they promised education and progress to people of whom they still knew too little; having no right of hearing in native courts, their applications were usually made to DOs' offices where limited powers of judicial review and advice remained. The NCNC easterners had identified some prospects in the west, but in the north they concentrated their efforts on rallying the Igbos in the urban stranger communities and on giving funds to their NEPU allies, on whom they could more often than not rely to avoid offending Islam while still boldly attacking the NA system and specific abuses.

At a Makurdi rally Dr Azikiwe announced that Dr Okpara would succeed him, which particularly irritated supporters of other aspirants, such as the Owerri people who preferred Raymond Njoku.

The AG made the greatest errors. The hired helicopter was accused of hovering over compounds housing purdah women while throwing out its leaflets, the gravest example being over the sultan of Sokoto's own palace. Making the prime minister's constituency a special target, they despatched five lawyers to Bauchi alone. Alhaji Abubakar arrived home for his final campaign to find Chief Awolowo about to take off in the helicopter for Tafawa Balewa with the AG candidate for Bauchi south-west, a Christian called Azi from the adjacent Jarawa tribe. Awolowo's visits to the north were seldom relaxed, because they were usually part of some strenuous political campaign in places where he never felt at home; on this visit a wild man fired an arrow from his bow at the AG flying machine, creating a fresh local crisis. There was a loudly insincere exchange of greetings of the 'Best of luck, old boy!' kind, and Awo was taunted with not having troubled to visit the prime minister's private house, but Abubakar saw no reason to fear Mr Azi any more than the NEPU candidate. Azi had knocked a boy down and been held in custody by the NA police on a charge of reckless driving without a licence. The alkali was bound by Muslim law to adjourn the case until the key witness had recovered from his injuries, and it was popularly assumed that having delayed matters till that point the Christian would then exercise his temporary option to demand trial by a magistrate. Watt, the resident, had wanted to force the issue by using his own powers to transfer the case at once, but the emir and his council had warned him that this would encourage the AG to claim that all Christians should opt out of alkalis' courts, or ought not to be brought before them at all; it might also look as though the resident was impugning the alkali's impartiality. The compromise had been that the alkali should grant bail, but it did seem that Awo would have wasted fewer resources had his party been more judicious in its nomination.

After complaints elsewhere about deaths in political riots the governor-general requested that Awo come to discuss his party agents' effect on peace and good order. Mrs Awolowo had taught Sir James to dance highlife, and the proconsul was ready to be friends. Her husband, who had little sense of Scottish pawkiness, assumed that HE accepted his assurances that the agents were simply educating the inexperienced northern commoners in the finer points of democratic politics. He also thought that 'by the grace of God' he would win many seats in the north, and two hundred in all: on the way down the stairs of government house he turned to Sir James and said with a winning smile but quite seriously, 'After I'm prime minister, I'll be coming up and down these stairs quite often!' Alhaji Abubakar's later comment on that was, 'Well, you know, he gets these sort of turns. When we were students in London, he had a nervous breakdown when working for his bar exams, and he became completely impossible'; he told Sir James that he thought Awo had had another of these attacks of irrationality.

In the final outcome the actual polls were comparatively peaceful. The arrangements of the local government expert expatriate Mr R E Wraith's electoral commission (which used the various provincial and departmental government officers wearing yet another assortment of hats as its local agents) had proven that illiterates could vote as secretly as sophisticates. Not all the commissioners had in their hearts actually wished every peasant to register and vote: they foresaw that this would produce the result which the NPC wanted,

and believed that Awolowo (who had encouraged the importation of the use of party symbols on distinct ballot boxes from the Indian model, which facilitated corrupt practices with the sealed boxes afterwards) would regret his dedication to 'one man, one vote'. In Bauchi all but one of the AG lost their deposits. The army troops who had been conducting local training exercises from canvas camps around the country, and the Nigeria police reinforcement to NA and local government forces, went home without being called in to quell disorders. There had been one casualty in Tafawa Balewa: a sturdily built AG polling agent complained that the polling officer had given him a black eye. As the polling officer was a schoolboy, this seemed strange but, 'Well, sir, he started interfering with the ballot box, so I hit him with it'. Alhaji Abubakar defeated both Azi and the NEPU candidate comfortably.

Before the final declarations came in from distant places it became clear that NPC would be the largest single party, with about 130 to 140 seats, but not an overall majority; NCNC next with perhaps 90; and AG would trail in with some 70 or more. The intelligence reports came into the governor-general that Zik and Awo were parleying through go-betweens about a possible coalition, in which their joint 160 would outnumber Abubakar's 140. The initiative had come from the AG, but despite Awo's affirmation to Sir James, the understanding was that Zik's own intent to become prime minister would be fulfilled, and Awolowo would be his deputy. However there were difficulties. Some of the more conservative NCNC, not least Okotie-Eboh from the mid-west, were very reluctant to lie in bed with AG party leaders who had supported their local electoral rivals, and were happy in the Ikoyi clique. There were also those among the AG, such as Akintola and Rosiji, who had personally found their earlier alliance with the NPC quite comfortable and were regarded as doubtful starters in what the calmer heads saw would precipitate a renewed schism with the north. Akintola and Rosiji went to see Abubakar, who offered AG a seat in the cabinet, but their leader rejected it. Later Awolowo claimed that his pre-condition for this coalition had been the creation of three new regions; and Azikiwe claimed that his doubts about such a coalition had been based on tales that the AG were also parleying with the NPC. Neither, not even Zik, seems at this stage to have stopped to consider what antagonist's part Sir Ahmadu or Alhaji Abubakar might have chosen to play in their scenarios. They would have certainly talked again of secession. All this also crossed Sir James's desk, and his chief fear was of that schism.

The constitution required the governor-general to appoint as prime minister whoever seemed most likely to command a majority. He also still had a prime minister in office to consult. He called him in, placed the facts and the reports before him, and expressed his own fear that the north, let alone the Sardauna, would not put up with a federation run entirely by southerners, and that the country might even now, at the last minute, break up: 'You are my prime minister and I am entitled to seek your advice even now, though you soon may not be my PM. This is the situation. Do you think you can find enough people from the other parties, or 'independents', or somewhere, to give you a majority? If you think you could find a number to join you, I could then make you PM now. Or would you prefer it if I waited a bit longer while you make inquiries or the situation clarifies?' Abubakar's answer was, 'Well, I think it would really be better if you appointed me now'. 'John Willie' appointed him straight away that evening, without consulting London, accepting the advice on the simple ground that a man with 140 seats was more likely to be able to form a government than a man with 90. Still less had Sir James consulted the Sardauna,

who was nevertheless later to grumble when thwarted, 'We put Abubakar in as prime minister, and he must remember who his patrons are'.

Abubakar held an early press conference next day, in which he said that there was no longer any question of any region wishing to secede, and that a coalition could not be ruled out: but the NPC would certainly not compromise on the leader of any other party becoming prime minister. In any event, he had been asked to form the government. Dr Azikiwe was gravely disappointed, and declared that the governor-general's action was 'premature and inept'. Nevertheless Zik flew up to Kaduna to apply pressure on the Sardauna: he knew that a federation in which the NPC did not have the major say would collapse, and Okpara was in full agreement (while picturing Zik as the eastern governor in place of Ibiam, if things did fall apart). The pressure failed. The Sardauna had taken a well-worn leaf from Zik's own book and announced after the elections that he would retire from politics as soon as the present political complications were settled (which he thought would be in 1961), and at a mass rally in Kaduna had handed over to the prime minister, in apparent token of future party leadership, a Qur'an, an *alkyabba* cloak and a gold watch. In an embarrassingly direct comparison with the shehu dan HoDiyo's renouncement of earthly powers in favour of his son Bello and brother Abdullahi, he had declaimed, 'I, too, will divide this country between my two trustworthy lieutenants when the current political battle [*my jihad*] is over'.

Neither Alhaji Abubakar nor Muhammadu Ribadu felt that any bond sealed thereby had been broken when within the week, again like Zik in response to telegrams, letters and delegations of protest, Sir Ahmadu renounced the intention 'as long as it is necessary or until I am called upon by my party to retire'. Certainly Zik and the Sardauna took the lead in discussing the ingredients of the coalition which Abubakar was to head, and the prime minister's wishes in the share-out of offices were less influential than they had been in 1957. In his heart he still hankered after a government of all the talents, including the Action Group, but for dissonant reasons excluding Awo and Zik. But the NPC team that negotiated the coalition terms with the NCNC was led by Muhammadu Ribadu, with Zanna Bukar Dipcharima and Inuwa Wada making weight. As significant an intervention at the celebratory Kaduna rally had been a rhetorical cry, repeated thrice, by someone on the rostrum intoxicated by the NPC's electoral triumph: 'When will this thing be taken from us? Who can ever take it from us?'. Alhaji Abubakar had stood up and replied (also in Hausa): '*I can give you the answer to your question! It will be taken away from us when we leave the path of God - when we leave the path of God, truth and justice, and become corrupt and unjust and oppressive*'.

Back in Lagos he sent for Stallard at half past nine on a Saturday night, gave him a scribbled paper setting out in Hausa the NCNC's terms as yielded by the Sardauna, and told him to take it to the governor-general for his confidential advice. The six conditions which he said had been demanded by the NCNC were, translated briefly: that '*that man*' (in Hausa, *mutumin nan* - Zik) should become governor-general from independence day; that the cutting-out of a mid-west state from the western region should be taken up; that the federal capital territory be extended; that no appointments be made without 'consultation'; that Mr Matthew Mbu (the former minister from the east, who had been removed from the embryo Washington embassy after allegations of financial and other irresponsibilities) should be reinstated; and that a new speaker be elected as soon as the new house sat. The mid-west and Lagos proposals were calculated to infuriate the westerners. Alhaji Abubakar was

in disagreement with much of what his colleagues had conceded, and at this late hour, both of the night and of constitutional progress, suddenly reverted to thoughts of northern separation: literally translated, his note asked: 'if we made our lamentation, would we be helped to divide this land? For in no way [can I agree]; if it should come about that the south did [after all] unite with one voice, then, we are in trouble. I am looking for counsel'. Peter Stallard had to rout Sir James out of a formal dinner-party with the inspector-general of police, preparing themselves for the annual police ball. Sir James's reaction was to play the ball at his feet straight back, probably with advice to 'sleep on it'.

The prime minister rang the governor-general next day and asked if he might bring Dr Azikiwe and Sir Ahmadu to see him. Sir James, who was getting ready to entertain the UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld to lunch, was disconcerted to see Abubakar come in between them, giving a fleeting impression of a schoolboy ushered in by tutor and nurse to recite his party piece. Abubakar read out the names of most of the proposed ministers to their approving nods (the NCNC names were virtually Dr Okpara's nominations), but Zik broke in excitedly to say that he was going to be president of the senate (which Sir James had already heard on his own grapevine was to be treated as an interim quasi-political appointment until Zik could replace him as governor-general: so far as his residual hopes of then becoming first minister of foreign affairs went, his bolt was clearly shot). Mr Jaja Wachuku, an Igbo much less tolerant of the British than the northerners, was to be speaker of the house. Everyone appeared content, and the Sardauna seemed to think that Zik had been finessed out of the political card-play, although no public announcement or admission was yet to be made about his future entry to government house. In Awolowo they would have for the first time an intelligent and determined leader of a true federal opposition, in the sense of a credible head of an alternative government if the electorate should change its allegiance, but they evidently believed that this presented no realistic dangers; none considered the consequences of other AG leaders finding opposition too uncomfortable a position to tolerate for long. Zik had not yet forgotten that the AG had squeezed him out in 1951. Despite his lamentations, Alhaji Abubakar recognized that politics were the art of the possible, and that he must react to people as they were, and not as they might have been. Later in the day Abubakar met Hammarskjöld, who was to comment on the prime minister, 'So shrewd, so prudent! Such a beautiful voice, and such sensitive hands!'

The final figure returned were NPC 142, NCNC 89 (21 of these in the west), AG 73 (24 in the north and 14 in the east), and NEPU a mere 8. There was no doubt that the election itself and the counting had been honest. NEPU had been sadly disappointed once more, for all its mistaken belief that the junior NA officials and wealthy merchants who had shown any overt sympathy with them would also vote for them in a secret ballot. There had been too much double insurance. They still had the ironic compensation that their alliance with NCNC resulted in their leader Aminu Kano, who enjoyed Abubakar's ambivalent friendship and the Sardauna's dislike, becoming federal government's deputy chief whip. Outside the Sardauna's fiefdom, Malam Aminu's only lasting quarrel with Alhaji Abubakar was over women's franchise, now that direct elections had been accepted; and Alhaji Abubakar was not disposed to quarrel with the Sardauna over the women. The NPC had done well in the northern Cameroons (which helped Andrew Cohen from the colonial office to persuade the general assembly that the plebiscite about ending trusteeship had been a

vote against a system of local administration rather than against unity with Nigeria, and that an outstanding inquiry under the perspicacious emir of Yauri would bring about the requisite reforms). Ibrahim Imam had failed to win Dikwa for the AG, but one of that party's northern successes had been in the wild remoteness of the nearby trusteeship territory at Gwoza. Alhaji Abubakar's NPC colleagues in the other Bauchi divisional seats were Sani Abubakar, sarkin tafarki (lord of the highway – road overseer) Adamu, Jibirin Nayayya and Balarabe Tafawa Balewa, who was no relation.

The former deputy governor-general's wife, Lady Grey, had launched a collier at Aberdeen in Scotland on the day of Abubakar's press conference; built to ply between Port Harcourt and Lagos, she had been invited to name it *Tafawa Balewa*. The prime minister would have been embarrassed, religiously and personally, had it been named *Abubakar Tafawa Balewa*, but the significance was that it was still an expatriate idea to commemorate him or his town of origin in such a way at all. He was respected, admired even, by those he captained in cabinet or committee, and his flag car would be cheered in the streets as a symbol, but those who did not judge him by debates or his interests were now openly speaking of him as none too exciting a leader. His new cabinet was seen as an imbalanced enlargement of the old one, with replacements for the lost AG members: ten from the north, three each from east and west, one from Lagos and someone yet to be added from the senate. It did seem rather weak in personality and nationalism. While Sir James remained in office, he was in a position to dispute, even to risk vetoing, names of ministers whom Zik and the Sardauna might press on him; but he had already seen that to dismiss them once in office, for faults that the public might consider venal, would upset more than an apple-cart. Apart from Johnson, Njoku, Nwachukwu, Wachuku and Okotie-Eboh, the principal newcomer was the former NCNC chief whip T O S Benson who would take the portfolio of information (including broadcasting).

The NCNC's new national president, Dr Michael Okpara was, like Sir Ahmadu, premier of a region; quite unlike his predecessor Nnamdi Azikiwe, he was a good workaday administrator, and a breath of fresh air to his civil servants who now received clear direction. Chief Akintola, new premier of the west, was also a man impressive in his determination, if not so much for his eye for detail; Awolowo had not wanted him to succeed, but Ogbomosho Central had fielded no opponent to Akintola in a by-election, and Enahoro had chosen to follow his leader to the federal house. Remi Fani-Kayode deserted the AG, to succeed as NCNC leader of the opposition in the western house, since Dennis Osadebay had become a senator. Of the old Lagos team Alhaji Abubakar promoted his parliamentary secretary, Shehu Shagari, to the ministry of economic development and natural resources, a backwater overshadowed by the ministry of finance and the central bank, and still more by the economic adviser to the government, now Dr Narayan Prasad. Under his successors economic planners were more and more to forget that their task was misleading, if they believed that governments could make people do whatever the planners wanted, and if they took the law and order which permitted stability too much for granted.

Malam Maitama Sule took the portfolio of mines and power: the Sardauna had told him that he was to be the NPC's first foreign minister, but when Ribadu had brought him down to Lagos the prime minister said that although he had at first wanted him to look after the embryo foreign affairs section in his own office, he had finally decided that it was best first to accustom oneself to running a ministry. Abubakar's current view of foreign affairs was also no



Abubakar being filmed on a Netherlands inland waterway.
Examining a hydrological model; and befriending two Dutch boys.



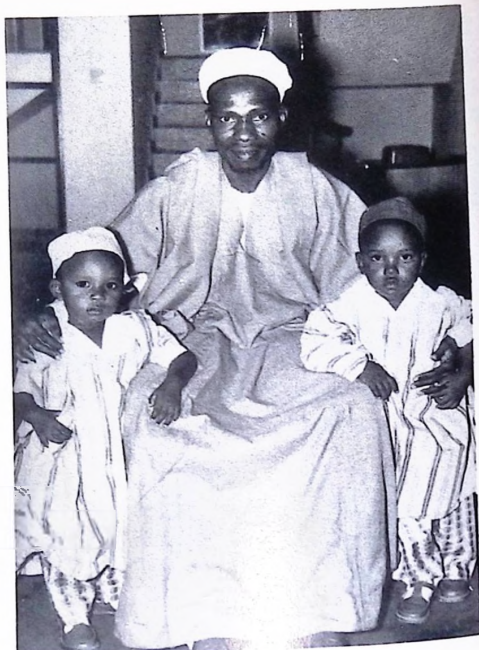
Abubakar and the Sardauna, between the Emirs of Kano and Katsina, at
Sharwood-Smith's final departure from Kaduna railway station.

[Photograph by Author]





Sorting groundnuts with Mukhtar and Saddik; and (right) posing for one of his own Christmas cards.



Robert Wright, in retirement, meets Abubakar again.

[Photograph by courtesy of Robert Wright]





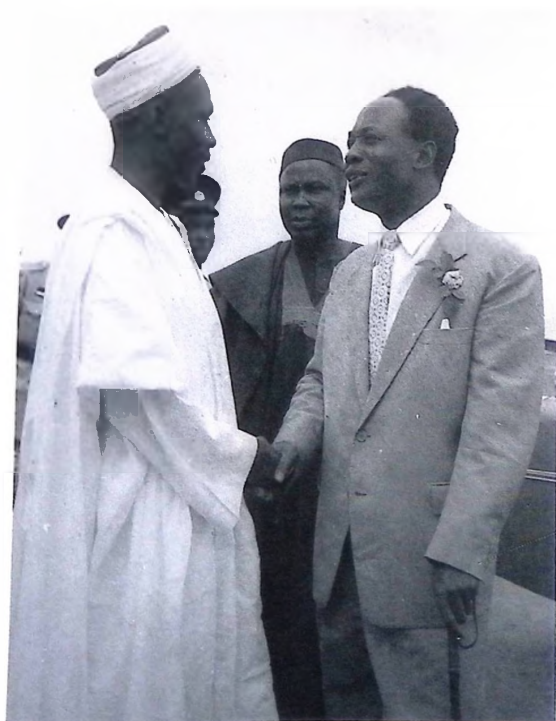
Abubakar at sea.

1958 conference. Inuwa Wada and Abubakar with Sardauna and Makaman Bida.





Abubakar, Sir James Robertson and Abdulla Bey Khalil of Sudan



Abubakar and Kwame
Nkrumah



Abubakar wearing his Sierra Leonean chief's robes, with Sir Foley News.

Abubakar meets Sir Roy Welensky and Verwoerd at PMs' conference.

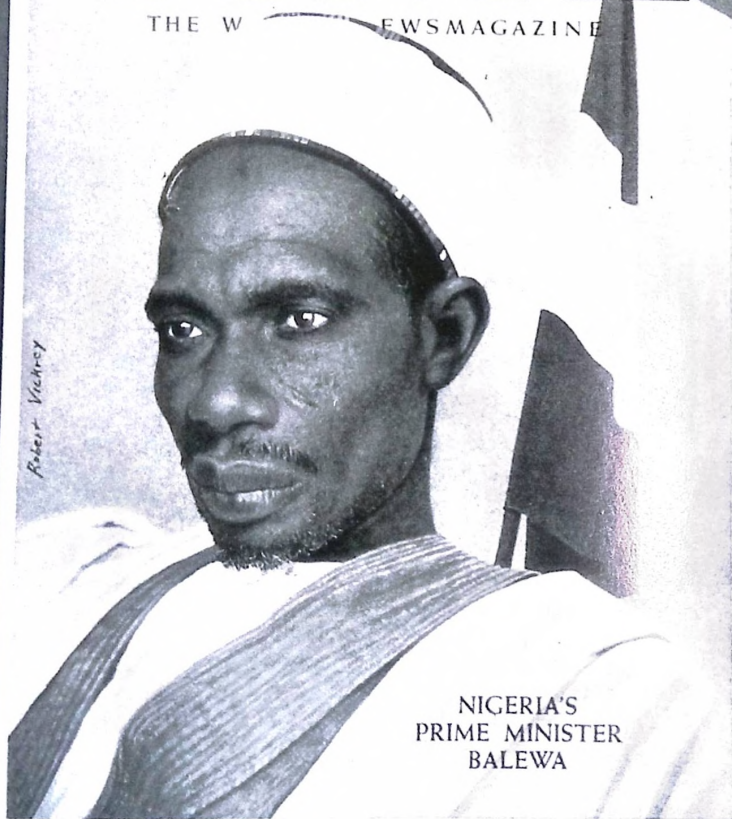


DECEMBER 3, 1966

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THE WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE



Robert Vichney

NIGERIA'S
PRIME MINISTER
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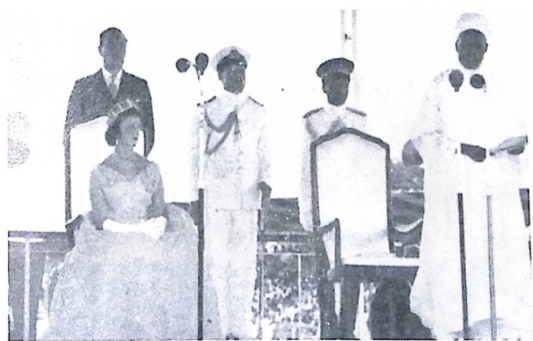
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[By Courtesy of Time Magazine]



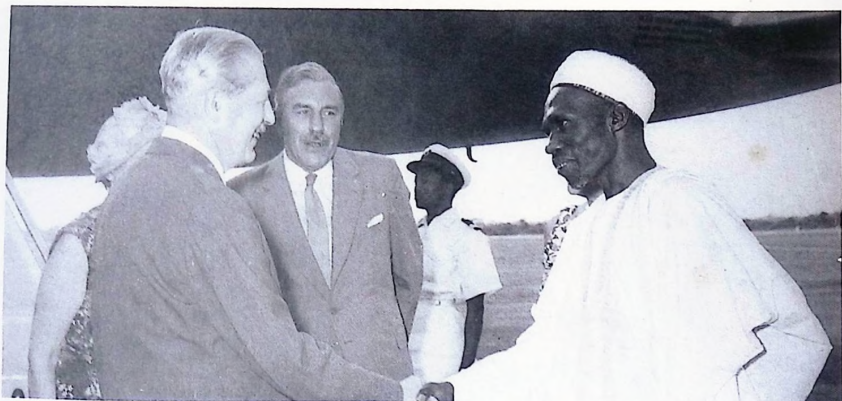
Princess Alexandra is welcomed at Ikeja airport by Abubakar and Sir James.



Princess Alexandra hands over the Independence Constitution.



Abubakar addresses the nation at the celebration.



Harold Macmillan, Robertson and Abubakar.



Hamani Diori (Niger), Abubakar and Maurice Yameogo (Haute Volta).
Abubakar, Azikiwe, Sir Francis Ibiyam and Dr Majekodunmi.



indication to strong nationalists of positive guidance, even of commonwealth conservatism: '*One cannot speak of a permanent alignment with any bloc at all; it is very difficult for a government to pursue a permanent policy*'. Nevertheless he now added to his commonwealth sympathies a hint that he would at last favour some closer association with the United States. He had just met the UN secretary-general during Hammarskjöld's visit to Lagos, and found the Swede a clever, impressive but very cool symbol of an institution created with good intentions.

While he brooded miserably over the responsibilities he still did not want, and to which he could see no proper heir, one of his few independent northern confidants, Malam Yahaya Gusau, left the federal public service commission to return to the north as secretary to the executive council. Abubakar tried to retain him by a promise of further promotion, but to no avail. Nor was he cheered by a sour and chauvinistic contribution by Zik's journalist secretary, Abdul Kareem Disu, to an eastern newspaper: 'There is little to commend the new federal government to the nationalists of Nigeria. . . . The late federal government was notable for its supineness to expatriate British officers. Now that government are all back. There is no virile blood. They would merit the OBE since we are going to be 'good boys' of the empire even after independence. Is it not ominous that neither Dr Azikiwe nor the NEPU leader Malam Aminu Kano is in the federal cabinet?' Yet Mr 'Easy Life' Disu would never admit that the rift between east and west was no less wide than that between south and north. Abubakar seemed a depressed host in the prime minister's lodge to the departing SDO Okene, who had also met Hammarskjöld at Robertson's family lunch party. However the SDO was delighted to send a congratulatory telegram from the mailboat when he heard on the ship's radio as they were leaving harbour that Alhaji Abubakar had been made a knight commander of the most excellent order of the British empire in the 1960 new year's honours list. To him at least Sir Abubakar had seemed less likely to be a good boy of the empire than an honest man in a globe of rogues.

29 The very last conference: 'We just call them "talks"'

*Dabara, da azanci, da wayo,
duka ba su kai mutum baɗi*

Alhaji Sir Abubakar's knighthood was seen by many as suiting him, and quotations from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* ('A knyght ther was, and that a worthy man, | . . . he loved chivalrie, | trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie | . . . and ever honoured for his worthynesse. | . . . He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde | in al his lyf unto no maner wight. | He was a verray, parfyt gentil knyght'.) were much used by English scholars in the administration. Others that heard them, such as the AG, thought the British a little too generous in recognizing the virtues of a politician who seemed to them at times altogether too tolerant of the British: how could a knight of the British empire be a true nationalist? The dignity was flanked by a CMG for his minister of finance, Chief Festus Sam Okotie-Eboh, whom some others again thought rather a rumbustious recipient of that most distinguished order, which usually hung from the necks of Britain's future ambassadors and more sedate senior colonial mandarins. For connoisseurs of the chivalrous system, both awards gave the pleasurable sign that stuffiness need not always prevail, and in the prime minister's case it was a formal London assurance that he would be trusted to lead his country without bringing dishonour on the decolonising power. He was about to be host to a master of protocol, the British prime minister Harold Macmillan, who with wicked punctilio enjoyed discomfoting the governor-general by consistently giving a courtier's neck bow to the Queen's representative each time they met.

Mr Macmillan was spending a month on visits to Ghana, Nigeria, the constituent parts of Rhodesia, and South Africa. Dr Nkrumah had just pronounced that, 'It is not the size of the house that matters, it is the quality of the house that counts', to which Sir Abubakar in his new year message had indirectly riposted: '*Nigeria has not only a right, but also a tremendous duty to become independent, so that she may play her proper part in the affairs of the nations. . . . As the country of the African continent having by far the largest population, we shall inevitably occupy an important position from the moment we become independent. . . . Our slightest act, our every word, will have repercussions on our neighbours, and I am confident that Nigeria will prove to be a stabilizing force in Africa, and that our example will induce conditions favourable to orderly progress and development*'.

Africa was indeed changing fast. The Nigerian broadcasting corporation, which had transmitted that message, was now planning to broadcast to the whole of Africa (and to transmit television to Lagos). The independent republic of (formerly French) Cameroun had been proclaimed on the first

day of 1960, amid continuing terrorism, although the British trust territory's future had yet to be decided. General de Gaulle had made up his mind to arrange finally for Mali's independence, and representatives were going to Paris from Madagascar to seek the same reward; the Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, Haute Volta and Niger continued to talk about their prospects as members of a French entente, while increasingly conscious of the siren calls of unfettered autarchy. Renewed unrest in Algeria was about to produce rioting by extremist *colons* and the erection of barricades in Algiers, following on the second meeting of the AAPO which had been summoned by Accra to Tunis; the NPC party and British Cameroons territory were both unrepresented at this gathering, but Malam Ibrahim Imam again attended, Chief Anthony Enahoro spoke for the AG and western region, and both met Lumumba and Amilcar Cabral, the nationalist from Portuguese Guiné & Cabo Verde (Malam Aminu Kano had called on Alhaji Sir Abubakar on his way, been told by the prime minister that his police sources assured him that the conference was cancelled, and sent him a pert telegram from Tunis in refutation). A London Lancaster House conference on specific constitutional change in Kenya was boycotted in its opening days by the elected African delegates (and another on Cyprus broke down entirely). In Egypt work began on the Aswan high dam, by virtue of technical and financial investment by Russia. A Brussels round table conference was about to agree on independence for the Belgian Congo in June, without being noticeably specific about the details.

Mr Macmillan had made a speech in Accra which attracted no attention whatever, in which he said, 'The wind of change is blowing right through Africa'. Two contrasts impressed him now that he was in Nigeria: one was with Dr Nkrumah, who had read a speech at him, well-written by the able Ghanaian head of his civil service but delivered with tedious indifference, unlike Sir Abubakar's scriptless and fluent welcome at Ikeja airport. The other was the discovery that whereas Nkrumah was surrounded by local enthusiasts and pan-African foreigners, all anxious to rewrite the continent's history and to rebuild its societies by force, those Nigerian politicians whom he met during his tour round the country's capitals were too preoccupied with their own internal worries over the conflict between regional selfishness and theoretical federalism to care for the details of constitutional development elsewhere, be they vague or specific. His commonwealth relations office adviser and speech-writer David Hunt, more sceptical than the colonial office colleagues who had briefed them that with the courteous and wise Sir Abubakar at the helm Nigeria's future would be stable and bright, found the smug atmosphere of the anticipated smooth passage towards independence 'all too good to be true'.

Sir Abubakar himself had no facile story for Macmillan when they met again at government house. He told the British prime minister of the bitterness that had been aroused by antagonistic carpet-baggers during the federal election campaign, and remarked with a sceptical smile that all the main parties had fought the election on the basis that each alone had the 'national' interest at heart; yet they all tried to gain ground in the other parties' home regions by exploiting tribal or religious differences. He still had to work hard, he said, to nurse the country into a true sense of national unity, just as he had been insisting in his speeches for several years; but he retained his hope that as the years passed the younger men might begin to think of themselves as Nigerians, and develop the same genuine patriotism for Nigeria as their country, that he

had been inducing himself to profess. *'One-ness will come with the years'*. There was no suggestion that these aspirations were the voice of those who flattered themselves that they had manipulated him on to his pedestal; once in charge, he was his own man.

He also made it clear that he hoped that the governor-general would accept his intention to advise the Queen that Robertson should remain as the constitutional monarch for at least one year, preferably two, after independence; this would be mainly to give Dr Azikiwe an exemplary and solid grounding in the Windsor conventions, but also perhaps to retain a discreet father-confessor for himself for a little longer. Robertson had been resisting this. It would count for little to argue that the 'white' dominions had only very recently come to expect their own nationals to be made vice-regal. It was because he foresaw not only possible resentment and jealousies of a surviving British symbol at the top, but also the certainty that the many who would never understand that a sovereign's representative, like the Queen herself, could only act or speak as the appropriate minister advised, would continue to allege his interference, and cast blame on him whenever the government did something not universally popular. The sensible way was self-evident, yet Sir James did not want to let Sir Abubakar down. He was relieved when the British prime minister took his part and persuaded the Nigerian prime minister that the Robertson foresight was clear and true: better to start guiding Zik himself now. They turned to other subjects, French tests, the future of the Cameroons, and above all the threat of staffing problems when pensionable overseas officers took their compensation and went home, and when independence perforce cut short the existing colonial development and welfare schemes. Sir Abubakar laughed off a mention of Dr Nkrumah's latest offer to surrender Ghana's sovereignty to an African union.

Later in the morning Mr Macmillan was invited to attend at the first meeting of the new Nigerian cabinet, and to speak. He chose to address Sir James, Sir Abubakar and the others on the value of the principle of corporate responsibility, and on the rôle of a cabinet secretariat. His own chief adviser, the British cabinet secretary Sir Norman Brook, was also asked by Sir Abubakar to say a few words. It was Foley Newns's last meeting as secretary. Whitehall's principal mandarin explained to an attentive audience the functions of London's own committees, departments and officials; his style brought into a new perspective the notes on administrative procedure which Newns had drafted from the same source before Nigeria's integrated ministries had been created. The following day a short meeting of the new house of representatives was opened in the unfinished national hall, where the bare breeze-blocks were hurriedly boarded over, and again Macmillan was expected to perform after the governor-general had formally opened the proceedings and taken his leave. Newns had led him and Brook in.

The Nigerian prime minister introduced Mr Macmillan and asked for the benefit of his public advice in a most serious matter. Obviously thinking of Indonesia, Pakistan, Sudan and prospects in Ghana, he said that,

'In the past few years we have seen quite a number of countries gain their independence and set off under a constitution based on the parliamentary system. We have been very sorry to see in a number of cases that after a few years of parliamentary democracy there has been a complete breakdown of government, and power has been seized by one section of the community. Now, it is quite clear that there has been a fault somewhere. It is easy enough to say that the countries affected

were not really ripe for independence, but I think that that is a poor argument. The truth lies elsewhere, and it seems to me that in those unhappy countries it is the political leaders who have failed their peoples. . . . Our fear is not that we shall fail; no, our fear is that we might disappoint the millions of our fellow countrymen who have confided to us the task of managing their affairs'.

The British prime minister, not yet unforgettably dubbed 'Supermac' by the naturalized cartoonist Vicky, but using the reassuring public tones which a British electorate found soothing, was perspiring in a dark suit since the air-conditioning was not yet working; but speaking easily and remembering Sir Abubakar's description of Nigerian elections, this was the advice that he had to give: 'In any federation there are bound to be stresses and strains which threaten unity, and this calls for an exceptional degree of understanding and forbearance. . . . When one loses [an election] one is tempted to think the whole thing ridiculous, the people are being misled by demagogues; but when you win, why then you say, 'I always knew the people were sound at heart'. Well, there it is. We should all have a sense of proportion and a sense of humour. In any case, so long as we value the freedom of speech, freedom to express our opinions within such licence as Mr Speaker in his wisdom is willing to allow us, I know of no better system than a fairly elected parliament for giving the people the sort of government they want. . . . Lord Lugard's place in your history's eye is assured, and the famous words he spoke about the "dual mandate" are as true to-day as when he spoke them: "first, to promote the moral and material welfare of the African peoples; and secondly, to develop the natural resources of Africa, not only for its people but for all mankind" '.

The doubts and self-criticism of the one, and the relaxed, Panglossian, synthetic Edwardianism of the other, minor characteristics which have reinforced the stereotypes drawn of these two leaders by those who chose to discount them both a generation later, had been well exemplified on this occasion (only a few years later the deeply respected Labour politician and Ibadan academic J P Mackintosh equated their moderation, cautious phrases, doubts about rash or rapid action, and the hint of underlying toughness). There was a press conference afterwards, at which Sir Abubakar reflected that he hoped that certain other countries were not becoming too ambitious to dominate the others: which one he meant, and its leader in particular, was clear. He insisted that he had not discussed the problems of south Africa, despite the final destination of Macmillan's tour. He told reporters that there was danger in always condemning the South African government, since this could lead to resentment and a hardening of hearts; but he made his first public move away from a purely gradualist view of continental politics, and added that the Afrikaner racial policies were bringing discredit on the commonwealth as a whole, and that while it was more effective to fight inside the family than out, the union of south Africa might do well to leave the commonwealth of nations if it were not prepared to stand criticism, and change its methods.

He gave a formal prime ministerial dinner party, to which the minister of works forgot that he had been invited, and of which he himself realized that he had overlooked the need for a token memento for the visitor: Stallard, who still felt bound to check the domestic economy, such as whether the refrigerator was stocked and the children kept in order, produced a pre-war local craftsman's cigarette box from his Kabba days. Macmillan left to visit the regional capitals (including Kaduna, where the Sardauna's splendour reminded him of Trollope's Duke of Omnium, whom the crofter's grandson also admired;

the difference being that the fictional duke had had to be cajoled into accepting the public obligations of nobility). He then flew on to Salisbury, Blantyre and Cape Town (where a repetition of the 'wind of change' phrase resonated across the world's chanceries and news desks, made the exiled Chief Luthuli exclaim, 'I could hardly believe my ears', and sadly began to encourage white southern Rhodesian men – and particularly their women – to retreat behind their own laager). Macmillan had been taken by surprise to hear the seemingly sincere reassurances from Chief Akintola, but still more from quite ordinary people, that Nigerians were grateful for all that they had received from Britain in the past; and this sentiment was to be symbolized for him in the future by his lasting respect for the memory of Sir Abubakar as an icon of Africa's innate generosity.

Meanwhile next day in the house Abubakar had moved that her Majesty's government be asked to legislate for Nigeria's independence: *'This is a solemn occasion. . . . On the two previous occasions [when the AG ministers had had to resign in chaos, and when the NPC had surprisingly assumed the lead in choosing 2 April 1960] the motion was a challenge to the UK government. This time it is the other way round. . . . The motion . . . is not a mere formality. . . . In future, whether the times be good or ill, [our countrymen] will not be entitled to rely on outside assistance as a matter of right. . . . It is a solemn undertaking given publicly to our countrymen that we feel confident of being able to manage our own affairs prudently and justly. I remember it being said in a previous debate that it is better to govern ourselves badly than to be governed well. Perhaps it is better – for those who do the governing. But we must think of those who are going to be governed by us. Will they be better off – or at least no worse off?'*

It was an irretrievable step, he said, there could be no return to dependency. The two remaining reserved subjects, defence and foreign affairs, were not to be accepted lightheartedly. There would be a lasting need for adequate military forces. Nor could any country afford to have an inflexible foreign policy, and Nigeria's would have to be capable of being adapted to the world's changing circumstances; in saying so he presented no challenge, either to Awolowo's theories of the common ground shared by democracies, or to Azikiwe's view of the advantages of continental non-alignment. There was also the now stereotyped but genuine tribute to all foreign missionaries, merchants, businessmen and administrators who had worked for Nigeria's advancement. More significantly, *' . . . Nigeria will be well advised to keep her written constitution intact. . . . Provided that we follow the provisions of our constitution, I myself cannot envisage any serious friction arising between the different governments in the federation'*. Dr Azikiwe was watching as a distinguished stranger; Chief Awolowo for once asked his supporters to refrain from criticizing the new government, for the motion was one on which the minds of all members and all the people were in perfect accord. The vote was unanimous, though not all present shared the mover's presentiments, and not all the country's newspaper columnists wanted the constitution to become sacrosanct.

The senate had been formally created. The primary criterion for membership was said to be not political, but an individual record of past ability and a 'sense of citizenship'. Some members selected by their regional legislatures were former representatives or assemblymen who no longer held their seats, including Dr E A Esin, a former eastern regional minister. One chosen at the joint meeting of chiefs and assembly in the north to represent Bauchi was

the prime minister's best friend, the madaki (or madawaki) Alhaji Abubakar Garba from Kafin Madaki; there had been a row at Kaduna when NEPU and the northern AG element had tried to insist on having some representation in the senate. The governor-general's three appointments to the upper house (out of the four permissible), made on the PM's advice to fill any gaps in that body's spectrum of broad interests, included Leonard Daldry of Barclays Bank DCO, and Dr Ade Majekodunmi, who was given leave from his civil service appointment as a senior specialist gynaecologist because his mature objectivity was thought to give him a ready grasp of public affairs generally. Majekodunmi became the senate's leader of the house. The senate duly nominated Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe to be its president, as the NPC and NCNC leadership had instructed, and Sir Abubakar promptly recommended the appointment of Dr Majekodunmi and Dr Esin as ministers of state, enlarging the cabinet to 19 members. He also made a fleeting visit to Monrovia, where besides President Tubman he met Sierra Leone's prime minister, the also recently knighted doctor Milton Margai.

There were many other changes in the supporting cast during 1960. On Mr Macmillan's departure, Foley Newns had left the council of ministers secretariat in January to become deputy governor of Sierra Leone, and the prime minister gave him a happy dinner party on the night before embarkation. He was succeeded as secretary to the governor-general by Martin Hall and, briefly, as secretary to the council of ministers (with the prime minister's agreement) by C O Lawson, who had just returned from the imperial defence college in London, whither S O Wey followed him on the next course. Charles Lawson also succeeded Wey as principal private secretary; he dealt with private papers, social and parliamentary matters, and it became his wife's turn to help with the PM's children (and in return the PM assisted him over certain personal service difficulties) until independence, when he became deputy secretary to the cabinet pending promotion next year to the permanent secretaryship of the health ministry. The eldest son of the alake of Abeokuta officiated again as federal chief justice, sparking off hints among anti-Zikists that as he was known to be a cultured man enjoying good relationships with the prime minister, he would be the first Nigerian governor-general after all.

Mr Jaja Wachuku, who had had a special room built in his house for his private library, often patronised by the prime minister, was unanimously elected, as agreed, to succeed Sir Frederic Metcalfe as speaker of the lower federal house; and Metcalfe too enjoyed a farewell dinner party, despite the prime minister's irritation at the freedom which he, like Fellowes before him, had given to Awo and the opposition generally during past debates (this was a typical occasion when Abubakar had told Stallard the gist of the message and left him to write the speech – the practice which had once given Stallard tongue-in-cheek cause to discuss with Sir Ralph Grey the moral question of whether to laugh when a speaker used the jokes one had written for him). Metcalfe was frank in his gentlemanly criticism over dinner of the haste with which Nigerian government business had been rushed through the house during the last five years, with ministers too anxious to return to their offices and members too anxious to return to the familiar comfort of their homes. Later in the year Michael Varvill was to retire and hand over the transport ministry to Joe Warmann. Other threatened changes were in fact avoided; these events included the purging of a contempt of court by the federal minister of information, Chief T O Shobowale Benson (through tendering his unqualified

apology), and election petitions against Sir Abubakar himself (this one was withdrawn), Chief Festus, and the same Chief 'ToS' Benson. A Dr Chike Obi, founder of a Dynamic Party loosely affiliated to the NCNC, was assisted to succeed Zik as MHA for Onitsha when the presidency of the senate was filled.

In February 1960 the governor-general handed over responsibility for the police and defence to the prime minister, and the related staff and branches were transferred from the governor-general's to the PM's office. Constitutionally his power to do so was more than doubtful, and there have been governors elsewhere, weaker and more nervous, who would have sought London's permission and then hedged such a delegation about with reservations, as cover against Whitehall blame should last minute things go wrong. Although personal pressures by southern politicians on individual southern policemen had become apparent since around 1959, Sir James had no qualms, and knew that nothing would be concealed from him. Dr Majekodunmi became minister of state for the army (now renamed the Royal Nigerian Military Force). One of the few northern assistant secretaries just transferred to Lagos, Ahmed Kurfi, joined the defence branch, where he remained throughout Abubakar's life. The practice of interchanging the infantry battalions between their garrison towns every three years was confirmed, and the establishment of cadet forces at the leading secondary schools was further encouraged. It was not long before some members of the national defence council belonging to the eastern region were pressing for the replacement of the British GOC by a local officer, although various other members hoped that Britain would second another on loan when the time came. In the chair Sir Abubakar said, *'I would vote for renewal of his appointment - it has been a long time since a British general has raised a coup d'état. We could leave major-general Ironsi [who was still a lieutenant-colonel] for another couple of years'*. Privately he told a Nigerian official that he thought the army might be Nigerianized by 1965. While retaining his fascination with the army, dimly reflected in his own growing collection of sports guns, and his pleasure in visiting army exercises and at then being offered the occasional chance to shoot, he did not interfere with Majekodunmi's routine ministerial duties.

However although he was to have another minister of state, Mr M A O Olowarewaju from Ilorin, to help him in similar routine police matters in the cabinet office, he retained a direct oversight of the police force. As chairman of the police council, which included the minister of state, the regional premiers and the chairman of the police service commission, together with all their principal secretaries and advisers, he regularly met the inspector-general and the regional commissioners in any event. He had been, like the Sardauna, a strong supporter of Bovell's supernumerary cadet sub-inspector scheme for educated boys to join the force as future leaders without overtly blocking in-service promotions to gazetted rank. He also believed in Bovell's deliberate separation of the familiar beat constables from the more para-military riot units. He furthermore supposed that the armed forces, should they ever cease to be an interesting but expensive national hobby (as the cynics hinted), would remain apolitical and have minds concentrated on externally based enemies: but the police seemed to him to be more susceptible to internal political influences.

This consideration led him to take particular notice of the intelligence activities of the special branch. The head of special branch (HSB) had always had 'direct access' to the governor-general, with the recorded privilege to see Sir James without always having to 'go through' or be accompanied by the deputy governor-general or the inspector-general of police. This right of access

was also confirmed to the prime minister, although strong suggestions were whispered that for HSB to side-track Sir James's watchdogs and Sir Abubakar's 'minders' would be undesirable. Once the prime minister had finally been convinced by access to the records that, unlike some past administrative reporting, special branch's interest was not in the doings of politicians and parties as such, but in active or potential subversion of legal government, 'direct access' was reinforced. In consequence the mutual confidence between prime minister and his police force became strong, and he became a bulwark against 'confusionist' opposition to its internal security duties from cabinet, parliament and press. A related, but structurally distinct, concern arose from Sir Abubakar's indignation that Dr Nkrumah's spies were interfering in Nigerian affairs. He asked the governor-general to seek help from Britain in setting up an external counter-espionage or 'secret service', to discover who the Ghanaian snoopers were. Advice and help were found for what Sir James at the time thought a naïve interest, of less value than straight internal security. The preoccupation strengthened for the moment the prime minister's support of the provisionally initialled defence agreement, which he imagined might one day be used to lever Britain into some counteraction against Ghana.

Sir Abubakar also regularly supported the NPF's side whenever ministers took umbrage because some policeman had omitted to give a salute or had held a flag car up, or when a favourite orderly was not promoted. Confidence was unconsciously assisted by tradition: relations between the Nigeria police force and nearly all members of the provincial administration and secretariats (the 'government' of the past) had been those of close reciprocal respect and trust. A difference that was not fully recognized until long after the colonial period ended was that the civilian services seldom had quite the equivalent social and professional contact with the army, except at the very highest levels. But the British military commanders came and went; their junior regimental officers had mostly been temporary indeed, many merely undergoing part of their postwar UK national service; and as Nigerianization progressed, African army officers lacked the inherited opportunity for social or cultural integration into all of the government circles that their civil administrative, professional and technical peers now took for granted. On the whole, soldiers were on the outside, looking in, and unfortunately their tactical leaders tended to be looked at from inside as stereotype uniformed figures in a loyally disciplined group rather than as actual individuals with thoughtful characters (much of this was the result of educational method and prejudice). Even an attempt in Enugu to seize control of the 1st battalion of the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment in 1960 attracted little national attention, and besides prompt return to duty merely earned a few easterners six months in jail. The prime minister was not given a specific alarm by this aberration.

Another of his interests was suffering managerial difficulties. The Nigerian railway corporation dismissed a hundred permanent staff and two hundred daily-paid employees, for failing to justify their part in some demonstrations, and the union of railwaymen threatened a strike. This trouble was enhanced by Enugu coalminers also demonstrating, against the dieselization of the railway, and protesting about a supplementary budget in the eastern region. Both the eastern premier, Dr Michael Okpara, and the leader of his opposition, Mr S G Ikoku, insisted that the matter had already been settled between the chairman of the coal corporation and the federal prime minister. New inquiries into both the coal and railway industries were promised. The Maiduguri railway extension

was by now beginning to be generally referred to as a hopeful development measure that truly might encourage increased agricultural production, by offering a new means of outward freightage, rather than as a guaranteed industrial investment in itself. Emerson admitted in a public comment that it had taken his former minister and himself three months and eighty foolscap pages to persuade the world bank to support it rather than further road and river improvements, even though it would be five years before profits might be seen. However 3 months, 80 pages and 5 years were petty figures, set beside other development projects that the bank would have to consider in years to come.

Emerson's own difficulty was that with this success behind him he was now regarded by many ministers and some administrators as an absentee landlord who appeared (because of the physical restrictions of his disability) to reside in England and make periodic trips to his estates like a Victorian Irish landowner. There was a desire to edge him out, which shortly came to a head when Mr Raymond Njoku brought a memorandum to the council of ministers suggesting that an easterner, Dr O Ikejiani, succeed him. Ikejiani had lost an appointment at the university college Ibadan because his doctorate had turned out not to be in the requisite subject of microbiology; but he had won a libel action against the AG newspaper *The Daily Service* which had denied him a doctorate at all, and the governor-general, choosing on this occasion not to leave the council presidency to Abubakar, made it clear that he believed Azikiwe was simply lobbying for a substitute job for him. The prime minister, although encouraged by some colleagues to oppose Njoku, was reluctant to intervene and was seen on this occasion to favour compromise over principle. Sir James, on the other hand, detecting submerged resistance, felt free to point out that the IMF had imposed the condition on the loan that there be consultation before replacing the general manager; although Chief Festus was quick to point out that to consult did not mean to seek permission (and that if Ikejiani had been at fault his own profession should have disciplined him). In the event Dr Ikejiani was to become chairman of the council of the university that had dismissed him (an appointment which Dr Azikiwe made unilaterally later in the year, once he had become governor-general, after statutory 'consultation' with the council of ministers, but without receiving ministerial consent, and certainly against the advice of the collegiate council, which voted 8-2 against his choice). As for Colonel (soon to be Sir Ralf) Emerson, who had related more easily with Abubakar than with many, once the Maiduguri extension was a firm commitment he was not irreplaceable; the prime minister's usual reluctance to part with trusty supporters was overcome with pangs that were more short-lived than usual.

A different kind of compromise solved a different problem. A joint venture, between the federal and northern governments, the colonial development corporation, and the Nigeria railway corporation, had agreed to fund and set up Nigeria Hotels Ltd. Prestige buildings became fashionable. Now a group of ministers led by Muhammadu Ribadu (wearing his 'Lagos affairs' hat) was excited by a plan to erect an impressive 100 metre high 25-storey office block which it was hoped to call Independence House, and would outshine the Action Group's 16-storey 'Western House' in Bread Street. The preferred site lay within the registered boundary of the racecourse which, quite apart from the protective bonds of public and sporting sentiment, it would require legislation to diminish; and it was too late to draft a bill and insert it into the legislative programme if completion date was to fit with independence. Sir

Abubakar consulted Stallard for ideas, and was amused by the suggestion of an administrative excambion of a similar area of the museum garden at the other end of the race course. This was typical of the level of Peter Stallard's actual influence at this time: very much less than a Whitehall cabinet secretary's - he was not recognized as head of the federal civil service (nor indeed, except in the most formal sense, had been the former deputy governor-general, since ceasing to be chief secretary; nor for that matter had anyone else), but was much misunderstood in Lagos. They never discussed personal matters or partisan politics, and so never disagreed (not all ministers' assistants were so discreet, or so fortunate). But Alhaji Sir Abubakar remained puzzled by Robertson's advice that, regardless of subordinate political or administrative posts created for supervision of civil service matters or establishments, in the last result a prime minister was always responsible for the civil service: was he then its 'head'? As a secretary Stallard was now used as a valued diplomat: when the chairman of one of the recent constitutional commissions was widowed at this time, Stallard was asked to draft a letter of sympathy, suitable for a distinguished Englishman to receive: the prime minister refused a faired typist's version, and copied out the condolences in his own longhand.

Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu had been making a new name for himself as a strong man in his own right, through the central Lagos slum clearance scheme and new housing projects. Working with the Lagos executive development board rather than the noisy town council, he was happy to take responsibility for eviction of shanty-dwellers in Surulere and elsewhere by using bulldozers and brute force, and was not abashed by their fierce defiance, which he attributed to Action Group agitators. He allowed it to be known that he would happily transfer Otta, Ikorodu and Badagry into the capital territory, and with the certain support of the Sardauna and the presumed acquiescence of the prime minister this had been sufficient to subdue the AG, who began to think of creating rival industrial estates instead at Ikeja and Ilupeju.

Dr Nkrumah's ideas for African union continued to attract journalists' attention; but M Sylvanus Olympio and the leader of the Togo opposition, M Nicolas Grunitzky, united in rejection of his renewed offer to their country as being one of 'a master and boy relationship'. He was now expounding his proposals for a republic, which it was supposed he might have discussed with the Queen when arranging the postponement of her visit until 1961, and would certainly have to have put to Mr Macmillan if he wished to remain in the commonwealth (which still had no central secretariat): it was clear that the Ghanaian parliament no longer enjoyed the sovereignty envisaged by the statute of Westminster or by the draftsmen of its independence. Sir Abubakar, who was already repeating his nervousness to some British friends about the prospects of Nigeria's own constitution being amended so as to weaken national unity if '*unreliable southerners*' were elected in sufficient strength in the future, gave his opinion on Nkrumah's ambition once more, this time to a west German newspaper commentator: '*It is much too early for this. We are naturally ready to discuss common problems with other African states; but we are not prepared to sacrifice our independence which we are, after all, just now gaining*'. After this interview the prime minister wished godspeed to trade delegations, which were leaving, full of enthusiasm but also of unsophisticated inexperience, for Hong Kong and Japan, and for Yugoslavia, and withdrew wearily for Bauchi to rest during the month of the Ramadan fast, reading and farming. His house now had a small generator, sufficient to power one air-conditioner as well as room-lighting. It

beginning to attract importunate clients, although not in the numbers that
induced the Sardauna or an emir in their palaces. He found that his election
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him to be run on administrative hysteria. Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu was the next VIP to arrive, from 'Yola, and Watt took him to Sir Abubakar's house for a chat. Harfo Ribadu snorted with sceptical amusement when Abubakar said that the emancipation of northern women could easily come about if the emirs were to set the example. Next day, seeing them both off, Watt was invited in his turn to stay with the prime minister when he passed through Lagos on retirement.

As Sir Abubakar arrived back in Lagos, a huge demonstration against pass laws in South Africa, following upon pass-burning protests by a radical pan-African congress which had supplemented the African national congress (ANC), led to the shooting of 67 Africans at a place called Sharpeville, and a state of emergency was proclaimed; even those disposed to find historical or cultural explanation for apartheid were now to find it very hard to articulate excuses, and people unafraid of illogical comparison began to count the years between the Amritsar shootings and Indian independence. Sir Abubakar had until recently been prepared to understand, if not accept, theoretical argument at a distance for separate development towards an ultimate but slow assimilation. He had known that, for example, animist Seyawa wearing goatskins (and owing their early introduction to education to fundamentalist Christian missionaries) had not been reconciled to, much less absorbed overnight into, a minority Muslim ruling caste, and still required special district council arrangements to forestall renewed rioting. Yet Seyawa who behaved themselves had never been restricted in their movements to areas where they were minority strangers; nor were indigenous organizations banned, nor their gatherings, unless ordinary law and good order, applicable to all alike, were clearly threatened. South Africa now banned both the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress.

The first few threads of the strained cord of patience, with which the postwar world had been hoping to haul the Afrikaners' wagon back to the main caravan route, began audibly to snap. People who were being taught, however poor or reluctant pupils they might be, to regard themselves as citizens of Europe with a common heritage found it increasingly difficult to understand how black men in one part of Africa could be less equipped to produce sophisticated leaders of governments and users of technology, fitted to take their part in a civilized world community, than those in another. Lord Monckton was sent to lead a commission to Salisbury, to study the Rhodesian problems. A London conference was recommending independence for Sierra Leone in April 1961, and Albert Margai with the PNP rejoined the SLPP, leaving Siaka Stevens to form a new 'all peoples' congress'. The creation of an independent republic of Togo from the French trust territory (the narrower British slice of the old German colony was now Ghanaian), merely enhanced the point. In Cameroun, barely two months after the physical excitement of independence, a referendum to approve M Ahmadou Ahidjo's constitution aroused limited intellectual enthusiasm: acquisition of freedom was more important than the details of how it was to be enjoyed. There were also more threats of violence.

African self-confidence was becoming impressive, and in Nigeria even the nervous doubters of the north were becoming muted (Kano city, home of reaction as much as of radicalism, found itself equipped with universal primary education). The prime minister's national establishments council overcame its irritation with the western region's refusal to co-operate with the Mbanefo commission and insistence on having its own separate 'Morgan' review. It was now brooding over Chief T T Solaru's 1959 backbench parliamentary committee

reports on 'from the top down' Nigerianization, with particular reference to the HMOCS special lists. The original list, that had attracted a few romantics with a vague promise of a full career if they renounced any claim to 'lump sum compensation', had been retitled special list 'A', and been supplemented by a new list 'B': this was designed to be hard to refuse, had been successfully negotiated by Ambler Thomas from the colonial office with the federal and northern governments, and been applied for by many overseas officers. Thomas had long had to advise colonial governments during Macpherson's time at the colonial office to exercise great care over recruiting new expatriate officers on permanent and pensionable terms. A typical difficulty was presented by Inuwa Wada's permanent secretary, which will be reverted to later: O'Regan had been transferred after service in ministries in Ceylon and Jamaica to the western region, but because regionalization had already been introduced there he could not subsequently claim any compensation for loss of further prospects after internal self-government – and he remained unentitled on transfer to the federal service, and so was guaranteed neither career nor enhanced compensation if prematurely retired, because he was not admissible to the special list 'B'.

The Lagos parliamentary criticism centred not on London's promises to British officers that when the time came the British government would endeavour to resettle them, thus ensuring their loyalty meanwhile to Nigeria without fear for the future; it was on the one-sided financial generosity that allowed members to draw additional quarters of their salary, until independence, as advances on their ultimate lump sum compensation for termination of career, and 90% of the residual balance upon independence, while retaining the employees' right so long as they served thereafter to give twelve months' notice of intention to quit, regardless of the government's continuing need for their services. The implication of the committee's findings, which Sir Abubakar had stoutly refuted, was that all were free-wheeling passengers whose redundancy was being unnecessarily delayed. Nevertheless he had residual doubts about the logic and even morality of the scheme itself. He now agreed in the council of ministers that the equation between skills and resources available for independence justified a ban on the creation of any new federal civil service posts without specific prior full cabinet approval; that the shrinking of expatriate specialist knowledge was now supportable; and that any vacancies for which recruits had already been lacking for two years should be frozen and left unfilled for two more years to 1962. Nationalistic maturity was also reflected in the council's agreement to buying an official residence in London for the future Nigerian high commissioner; Sir Abubakar thought it a pleasing coincidence that 34-36 Chapel Street, Westminster, was in fact the old family town house of his personal friend Alan Lennox-Boyd, who had at times entertained Nigerian students there.

The prime minister made a significant speech, almost a sermon, at this time to the first annual congress of the Nigeria Society, a non-political body formed to concern itself with 'the problems of living together in Nigeria' and to propagate the maintenance of absolute integrity in private and public life. In the course of it he had this to say:

' . . . Your chairman [Mr S L Durosaro] has just said that in order to promote Nigerian unity our leaders should be more friendly with one another. He said he saw no reason why Dr Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo should not attend a party given at my residence. I agree with him, but I must point out that we, the leaders, are more friendly to one another than the public thinks. . . . There are other ways of

building a united country. Intertribal marriage is one way. An inter-regional school is another. . . . But there is also the attitude of the individual. . . . I belong to one of the smallest tribes in the north. Most people with whom I have dealings do not discriminate against me because I belong to a minority tribe in the north. That is as it should be all over the country.

. . . The press has . . . a sacred duty to perform . . . by avoiding publishing trash which tends to disunite us. I told my colleagues the other day that I did not think much of the newspapers, whether national or provincial, which preach and excite tribal jealousy. Let us try to point out to them the disservice they are doing to the country. . . . In practical politics . . . I am convinced that some of the methods adopted during the last federal elections were bad, and should never be repeated. If we look on them a little bit more objectively, they were the signs of our immaturity in parliamentary democracy at the time. But we have now grown older, and things are getting more settled and orderly. So there is no reason why the opposition should not accept defeat and forget its bitterness. . . . So far both the leader of the opposition and I are doing our best to be on good terms. We smile at each other. He accepts my hospitality and I accept his. And I hope this will increase. . . . Let your society make a loud noise, . . . telling . . . the people . . . that every Igbo ought to respect the . . . ways of life of the Yoruba even if he does not believe in them. Similarly, let them know that the Yoruba should respect the views of the Hausa and so on. . . . No one ought to look down on the cultures and traditions of other people. Especially when he is ignorant of them.

Some of the smiles and hopes were soon to be dashed. He also took the opportunity to make two more points:

Among certain people to-day there is too much craving for wealth. Let us remember that money is not all. Money without integrity is dishonourable. If I have plenty of money, does it really mean that my children will not squander it? If they do, all the hoarding has been worthless. And if I acquire wealth dishonestly, the dishonour remains long after the wealth has been squandered.' And, 'Until recently . . . I was responsible for [immigration] allowing people into this country and for ordering them out. Lots of people . . . to my disappointment . . . were ready to plead for expatriates who had come to this country for the sole purpose of swindling our people. They come to set up companies, and they appoint one or two Nigerians as directors. These Nigerian directors know next to nothing about the business. . . . Under this camouflage they intend to sap our economic energy. For the mere pittance which they get as directors, these Nigerians are prepared to plead that I should let in the dishonest expatriate business man. It is a great shame. . . .'

And he concluded, as ever the practical administrator rather than the combatant politician:

'I have always believed in being frank with everybody, and even with our newspapers. My views may not be right. It may be the other person who is right and I am wrong. Therefore there is need for tolerance. More important, there is also need for the spirit of compromise. In this world compromise is the best solution to most problems.'

France chose to explode its second Saharan test bomb on 1 April 1960, just as the house of representatives was sitting. Sir James Robertson's speech from the throne, approved by the council of ministers in the Westminster style and symbolically handed to him in the chamber by Sir Abubakar to read, touched on the prime minister's other foreign interest: 'My government deplores the recent

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as potential officers, who were then being turned down as academically or medically unfit. If this went on, said an angry Sardauna, no emir's son would ever go forward for commissioning.

Abubakar returned to Lagos to face debate next day on 5 April which confirmed his practical control of foreign affairs, and that he had his own voice and was no diplomatic draftsman's dummy. He accepted an AG private member's motion condemning the French atomic test in the Sahara, which recommended that in the event of another explosion the government consider the suspension of trade and commerce between Nigeria and France forthwith, and the freezing of all French assets: *'I went to London with three ministers of the federal government. I had discussions with the secretary of state and the British prime minister. . . . I also went to Harwell atomic research centre . . . I went to see experts, who gave me an assurance, . . . but I and all my colleagues in England insisted that the best thing would be that France should not explode the bomb'*. He did not pursue the chimera of what external action could have prevented it; but he went beyond anything that any independent African leader had yet said, and without regard for Nigeria's economic risks, when he claimed that, *'we may impose more sanctions on France than is asked for in the motion'*. He then supported another motion on the banning of the import of south African goods. He was forthright in criticizing the mischievous naming in debate of individual south Africans still in the service of Nigeria; but while he reminded the house that Macmillan when in Africa had condemned in very clear terms the policies pursued by the union government, he sounded half-hearted in his explanation of the technical point behind Britain's abstention from condemning the union in UNO. It had been a procedural point that he was not alone in not appreciating.

Yet another private motion was accepted from Mr R B K Okafor. An echo of Awo's 'leak by knowing quotation of inspired rumour', this proposed that military alliances should be avoided unless with the prior approval of the legislature. But Sir Abubakar enlarged on his attack on Awo: *'I think the impression given to the house by the leader of the opposition on the debate on his excellency's speech from the throne was that his excellency the governor-general had entrusted me with the responsibility for defence so that I would commit Nigeria: that was the impression given. And, really, the regional premiers, and others, had discussions in London with the secretary of state'*. In fact this was an unplanned early Nigerian move away from the Westminster convention that, but for the vital control of supply, ways and means, parliament could not pre-empt ministerial use of the royal prerogative to control operational defence and treaty-making.

Interestingly, on the last day of the meeting Sir Abubakar did successfully oppose another similar motion, which was 'duly withdrawn', that the government should not enter into any trade agreement, or commercial or financial arrangement, with foreign governments or firms with foreign interests, without the prior approval of the house: *'No government can function with these restrictions'*. Meanwhile he had made clear in the principal budget debate that, *'the federal government cannot have a foreign policy now. . . . It is very important, at this stage especially, that we do not allow ourselves to be divided on major issues. . . . I do not like the idea of Nigeria being invited as a dependent country (although theoretically we are not independent); but those tiny countries which are now independent should concede to us our position. I want to assure the house that in future whenever there is any conference anywhere in Africa, if the Nigerian government is not invited we shall send a parliamentary delegation; it is*

my hope that we shall play our full part in all the affairs of the African continent. Referring incidentally to the third pan-African conference in Accra, he said that he had been asked by Nkrumah to take part in a current meeting to examine how to stop more French bombs; but later the Ghanaian had both changed the date and broadened the agenda. Abubakar had thought such an agenda would need long preparation, and had resented a proposal to limit Nigeria's voting delegates (Mbadiwe, who did go, thought that it was probably impossible to train any African volunteer brigade that might be sent to fight with the Algerians). He told the house in this context that he was *'rather surprised to hear . . . the two expressions . . . 'African personality' and 'Nigerian personality'. The Africans I regard as human beings, like any other race in the world, and when I speak of 'a personality' for the African, I speak of a human personality; and whatever we 'project', we in Nigeria are to 'project' a human personality.* Nonetheless the future ministry of foreign affairs would have a section to deal with all affairs of African countries, and Nigeria would be represented (even if not directly or all at once) in all dependent countries.

There had been another assertion of strength by the prime minister in a meeting which had otherwise been dominated by the preoccupations of those jockeying for future position. Chief Tony Enahoro had hinted that Sir Abubakar was under a political obligation to recommend to the Queen a particular individual to succeed Sir James Robertson, as *'the price of keeping his coalition government alive'*. The AG was anxious to deny the governor-generalship to Dr Azikiwe if it could, and Chief Awolowo made a not wholly fanciful suggestion that the office should revolve round *'paramount chiefs'* in turn: in fact the sultan of Selangor had recently been elected by his ruler peers to be king, or supreme head, of the federation of Malaysia for a five year term, and Awo himself was about to recommend the ooni of Ife as the next western regional governor. The weakness of this thought was that eligible first class chiefs could be found in the west and far north, but elsewhere *'paramount chiefs'* with wide influence or reputation had not evolved or were not wanted. Sir Abubakar *'laughed in his beard'* at Enahoro's half-truth, and said flatly that the nomination was his business: *'I will do my best to satisfy the country'*, and the next governor-general would be a popular Nigerian who commanded the respect of the nation. Putting the position into perspective (because the northerners also wanted to keep Zik away from any actual political power), he added that *'after independence I would not see what very big state secret there would be in the governor-general's office'*.

Abubakar felt confident enough to slip away for one more night in Bauchi, using the governor-general's aeroplane, before the meeting ended; his PPS was now a Mr S A Odukale, another southern civil servant who found his master to be a friend. He had first made a promise to the house, to make another extensive tour of east and west later in the year, and had rebutted criticism of alleged discrimination in army messes. He had also shared Chief Festus's enjoyment of delivering what was deliberately the longest budget speech in Nigeria's history, presenting a *'stability'* budget that should encourage national savings. The speech was given even while the high court was rejecting Festus's AG opponent Alfred Rewane's electoral petition against him, with costs. The arrangements for the independence celebrations, of which Abubakar had close oversight, were also coming to the boil on the back of the stove, with a plethora of committees as cooks. There were fewer reservations about local political involvement on the part of expatriate organizers than there had been in royal visit preparations (where even the least chauvinistic British officials

were inclined to interfere and nitpick for fear that Nigerians might not share their instincts on regal protocol); the retired army officer Eric Hefford who was brought in to co-ordinate matters at the level of the officials found himself taking Sir Abubakar's directions personally once or twice a week during all the few remaining months, without intervention by the PM's secretary. One curious change of programme was unfortunate – the Bournemouth symphony orchestra, one of Britain's less expensive but more vigorous major artistic bodies, had been expected since September 1959 to perform for independence, and had cancelled lucrative engagements in order to accept the honour. It had always been a capricious concept to play large scale western classical music in Lagos in the cultural climate of 1960, and now it was seen to be too costly and after all not appropriate. The orchestra's invitation was cancelled. Another change was in the event less unhappy: Princess Margaret had been deputed to represent her sister the Queen, who never attended such ceremonies herself, so that the centre of attention at independence might be kept where it belonged. Sir Abubakar was consulted through Sir James, and agreed with some puzzled sympathy that since the princess was now to marry on 6 May and should '*start her married life without interruption*', a less senior royal personage would be acceptable. The choice had fallen on the young and immensely popular Princess Alexandra of Kent.

The Royal wedding coincided conveniently with the commonwealth prime ministers' conference in London, the last in which those of European descent would have a majority. The South African prime minister was represented by his minister of external affairs Eric Louw, and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa remained on the outside of the discussions in the company of Sir James Robertson; he was already pursued by the political observers, although strictly he was only in London for the final independence conference with the secretary of state for the colonies, to tidy up the remaining loose ends and, as he quipped to the press, because '*I am going to a wedding*'. The other Nigerian leaders were less in the public eye than on earlier occasions. There was a reception at Nigeria House, and Sir Abubakar told the press there that he was in favour of the commonwealth taking strong measures against an offending member. Nigeria would now exclude all South Africans from its public service, except where existing terms of service assured tenure to present loyal members: this was stronger than his recent statement to the Lagos house, and did not offer renewed guarantees against moral pressures on serving officers.

He now declared, contrary to his earlier readiness to concede the force of history and to distinguish between groups and individuals, that if all the white south Africans who disliked their government's racial policies had united with each other and with the blacks, they could have forced that government out of office. Unhappy whites should not flee from the union, but should stay and fight it out, since change could only be brought about from within. He had absorbed much of his southern colleagues' emotion, not least Wachuku's, but still used it in his own way. The independent commonwealth leaders, whose public distress at south African affairs was notably unemotional, began to find their overt responses being compared with Sir Abubakar's. He insisted that although the *Observer* newspaper's correspondent Colin Legum might not find it hard to re-enter Nigeria, Nigeria would not only not employ another white south African, but would give refuge to none either. He hoped to meet the other prime ministers, he added, but did '*not think that it would be interesting*' to meet Mr Louw. Chief Akintola backed him up by confirming a policy of

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was bidden back to No 10 to wait in the withdrawing room before luncheon (as the British prime minister still termed the mid-day meal). The commonwealth prime ministers voted in favour of Nigeria joining the club as its eleventh member when she became independent on 1 October, and were taken upstairs to drink Sir Abubakar's and his country's health in a traditional, multi-racial but pagan toast. They had previously decided that it would be prudent to create a small committee of constitutional experts to look at any problems that might be thought to arise if and when a host of small ex-colonial nations should all apply to become full voting members (in the result, no problem was seen that might not be overcome by informal means). They also 'took note' that the Union of South Africa would hold a referendum on whether to become a republic, and that if it wished like India to remain in the commonwealth as a republic it must seek the agreement of the other members.

The Nigerian conference, or '*just talks*' as Sir Abubakar preferred to call them (since they were only concerned with draftsman's detail, there being nothing of substance left on these final of so many agenda), proved the anti-climax that all had expected. On the evening before the opening plenary session, the secretary of state held a reception in the celebrated Tate gallery of modern art, where circumstances dictated that to avoid upsetting the emir of Kano and other Muslims, nude statues such as Rodin's masterpiece *The Kiss* should be decently draped. However nothing could be done about the impressive old master oil painting in Lancaster House's great gallery where the plenary session took place: fortunately no protest was heard against obscene representation of living creatures such as classically unclad nymphs, shepherds and satyrs. Mr Iain Macleod had to familiarise himself with all the Nigerian politicians who were already disposed to regard him as of little importance to their futures – Azikiwe, Akintola, Dr Okpara with his ministers of finance and justice and his chief secretary Mr Jerome Upota Udoji from the 1947-48 Devonshire course (who had first served in the western provincial administration, just as his northern contemporary Abdulaziz Atta had been sent to the east), the Sardauna, the makama of Bida, George Ohikere and the NPC's legal adviser Abdul Razaq. They were there, not as negotiators but as governments, from a federation that had for two years been dependent on apron strings of gossamer; but Macleod had to pilot the independence bill through a British house that although anxious to shed burdens would not necessarily in moments of backbench legalism or party point-making remember that fact. The right of appeal to the judicial committee of the privy council, except in the case of electoral petitions, was confirmed. There was only one real worry, and Macleod took advantage of his being a newcomer with a clean broom, freshly invigorated by the Sierra Leone conference, to refer at once to the vexed 1958-59 confidential initialling of the heads of agreement for mutual defence arrangements. Most of the Nigerians concerned had now persuaded themselves that they had only accepted these because Britain might otherwise have withheld independence. Macleod thought 'independence' meant what it said, and had little time for the mutual back-scratching of commonwealth club sentimentality. He insisted that Nigeria would become independent 'without conditions or strings', and was rewarded with Sir Abubakar's prompt reassurance that he thought it was very important that Nigeria should remain in the commonwealth, and was happy that the other prime ministers had accepted her as an equal member.

A few days later Macleod told the house of commons that, 'it was thought originally [by *Duncan Sandys, who was not named*] a year or two ago, that it would be appropriate for Nigeria to lease some land to this country,

on which if we wanted we could construct additional facilities. We have decided not to ask for that, and that was very welcome by the Nigerian authorities'. A straightforward mutual defence agreement would be signed, after independence. This *ad hoc* decision did not inhibit the later creation of outright British sovereign bases for NATO in Cyprus on the lines of the US strategic bases in the Philippines, Panama and Cuba, nor did it after all damp down all antagonisms in Nigeria; Awo continued to make his hearers' flesh creep with convincingly precise 'might-have-beens', such as 60 hectares at Kano airport for 'facilities' and staging purposes, or 450 hectares for a new airfield in case Kano became 'unavailable', but even in these ideas there was no evidence that Sandys had imagined major 'bases'. The decision was fully in line with the general brief with which Macmillan had sent Macleod to the colonial office, which was that the risks to Britain of trying to delay the drive to independence in east and central Africa, despite the emotional appeals of notional 'kith and kin' among the white settlers, outweighed the risks of seeking merely to contain that drive; in west Africa there was no such complication to contain. (Macleod had just visited Nyasaland and ordered the release of Dr Hastings Banda, on which he had, in the teeth of official and political colleagues' advice, been determined since taking office. The state of emergency ended in June, and a happy constitutional conference followed, although unrest was growing in the Rhodesias).

There were still some British politicians, like one or two whom Chandos and Lennox-Boyd had known, who looked forward to major financial savings from dismantling the colonies. They might have been gratified that Sir Abubakar's headlined comments on South Africa crowded out Sir Ahmadu's appeals for outright grants to meet the northern region's 'gigantic needs' after independence; the Sardauna's doubts about balancing his budget showed that he had not yet learnt about deficit financing. However the commonwealth relations office was developing its theories of technical assistance to replace colonial development and welfare schemes: Mr Macleod was able to reassure the Nigerians that just as the treasury dam against help to colonies (which until then ought to have been self-sufficient if they enjoyed responsible government) had been breached in 1940, so the similar presumption of no subsidy without direct rule would now be further breached, twenty years later, in respect of the ordinary budgets of commonwealth friends who were wholly independent. The first commonwealth assistance loan would be of £12 millions. In these circumstances the 'talks' reached easy conclusions on such matters as where the governor-general's residual personal powers (in respect of recommendations for honours, for example) should finally go, and the process whereby regional governors' and federal ambassadors' names would be submitted for the Queen of Nigeria's signature on the commission. Conservative northern emirs made no demur, as it had been feared that they might, to structural changes in the administration of justice. Sir Ahmadu made a grand gesture by giving Dr Azikiwe a personal gold medal 'in recognition of his services in securing a stable government for Nigeria'. In the eastern region another honour was gained: the transport millionaire Louis Ojukwu was knighted.

Nigeria's prime minister ended this stay in London having watched a surrogate British tribal war in the defeat of Blackburn Rovers by Wolverhampton Wanderers by three goals to nil in the association football cup final; having received the accolade and insignia of his knighthood from the Queen at the palace on 11 May, in a series of audiences that also included Mr Eric Louw and the admission to her Majesty's privy council of Mr Roy Welensky (who

had been restored to good temper after misunderstanding early anticipations of Lord Monckton's findings on the central African federation, and also by the opening of the Kariba dam); having attended a Buckingham Palace ball, a private dinner with Lord Milverton and Sir John Macpherson, both equally proud of emergent Nigeria, and an audience with the Duchess of Kent, Princess Alexandra's mother; having enjoyed yet one more Downing Street luncheon together with senior colleagues from the 'talks', and a late evening reception at which most of the British government was summoned to meet him personally; and having faced a final dinner party given by the same British government for the Nigerian prime minister, premiers and governors. The Sardauna was indisposed and absent from the last. The wonder must be that Sir Abubakar's own more uncertain stamina lasted so long. This was the style of life which all professional politicians of the western world were expected to live when not at their desks, in their assemblies or back nursing their constituencies. In 1960 most of them still led it with only a single detective quietly by their sides while in office. Nor did becoming a 'VVIP' save Sir Abubakar from sitting patiently at Heathrow airport for twelve hours before returning home, while a fault in an aircraft engine was put right.

30 The tortoise and the hares: Independence comes in the year of Africa

*Aikin gona da wuya;
idan ya kare da dadin ci*

Marshall McLuhan's image of the global village had yet to be widely verbalized, but its meaning was now ripe for popular absorption. The first generation had become adult for whom it might seem true that, if only because every medium of communication placed political reporting and commentary in the forefront of every part of its product, there must be nothing that was not political. So much was happening in the world, of which everyone with a public conscience was made instantly aware (however rarely able to co-ordinate his reactions to it all), that even in the last few months of Nigeria's dependency it becomes hard to continue narrating outside events in strict sequence, as they added to Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's store of experience and touched on his own domestic policy. The many foreign happenings recorded in earlier pages had foretold him of the complications of a future when internal self-determination would by itself make worrisome external involvements inevitable; they had also made it easier for the foreigners' own preferences and preoccupations to ignore news from Nigeria.

Britain's exodus was now to bring Nigeria and the rest of the world face to face, and that meant much revision of comfortable assumptions on every side. These few months between the London conference and Princess Alexandra's ceremony – hindsight now permits our recognition that they formed the brief span over which three quite different policies fused together: Macmillan's resolve to abandon paternalism and gradualism by way of Macleod's so-called 'score of different, deliberate decisions'; de Gaulle's resolve to abandon *assimilation* as the way to cultural decolonization; and King Baudouin's advisers' accord that nine million Belgians anxious to protect their economic interests should not resist world pressures for political change, where ninety-five million British and French would not. They propelled the African continent into shaping its own future, and the 'scramble for Africa' was transmuted, as cynics put it, into the 'scram out of Africa'. The worried old guard minority in the colonial office, who felt that they had worn themselves out in trying to slow down the pace set by their masters, interpreted the official British mood as the result of ignorance, romanticism and wishful thinking, worked upon to some extent by people who did not wish Britain well.

The example of the Congo appeared at the time to bode least well for the future. It concerned Abubakar deeply, and has therefore had to be pursued in a little more detail than events in other parts of Africa. The Belgians as rulers had never shaken off the world's disfavour of the cruelties reported so graphically by British consuls and newspapermen in Léopold II's Congo free state before

1908; but as administrators they had also chosen, like Spaniards and Portuguese before them, to mend the fabric of their colony's social garments from the shoe-soles up. By 1960 the Belgian Congo had the highest literacy rate and school attendances in all black Africa outside the union; but less than almost any large African territory had it either economic or political unity. It had not one African doctor, engineer, commissioned officer or senior administrator. Emancipation now was evidently to mean an unphased withdrawal and sudden local promotions across the board. On 30 June 1960 it became an independent democratic republic, after provincial and general elections in which about forty inexperienced political parties, from two hundred ethnic groups, had competed against a background of unrest that erupted into strikes, arson, outrages against missionaries and nuns, and murders.

The provisional *loi fondamentale relative aux structures*, federal in form, had been drafted under the auspices of the parliament in Brussels. It would have been a model for Africa in the eyes of many of the worthy academics beginning to emerge in the developing world; but it had not been given the imprint of respectability by any working conference of Belgian officials and Congolese politicised teachers, priests and civil servants, although there had been a token 'round table conference' of sorts afterwards, from which Kasavubu had withdrawn when Belgium had withheld a provisional constituent assembly and he had had differences with his vice-president of the *Alliance des Bakongo*, Kanza. Kasavubu's alliance had twelve of the 137 seats, Lumumba's MNC 33; that left 92 others, a potential majority in the May election to the national assembly. In a compromise allegedly patched up by Israeli intervention and Ghanaian persuasion, President Joseph Kasavubu, head of one tribal party alliance, became elected head on 24 June of a central state with six provincial governments; he was vaguely perceived as a federalist. His prime political opponent Patrice Emery Lumumba, leader of the *mouvement national Congolais* (MNC) and emotionally perceived as a unitary centralist, placed his trust in an army of 25 thousand troops who were losing most of their officers; he emerged to become prime minister and minister of defence.

Such disastrous recipes of momentary reconciliation were to be tried again through the conceit of imported experts in other future decolonizations. M Lumumba had left jail just before attending the January round table, and was still an unknown figure to outside activists, except for those who had attended the last pan-African peoples' congress; but he was not unknown for long. The people who were planning Nigeria's own imminent £1,750,000 independence ceremonies were electrified to read that at the Léopoldville equivalent King Baudouin's personal ceremonial sword was torn from him by unpeaceful souvenir hunters; and Lumumba's hysterical rodomontade at the height of the celebration, directed against Belgium and imperialism, although it was retracted afterwards, seemed ill-timed to those calmer Nigerians who hoped to make more, rather than fewer foreign friends in the hard times ahead. Under a treaty of friendship signed on 29 June, the remaining Belgian troops would only be used outside their bases at the request of the Congolese minister of defence. However, although Lumumba needed his expatriate bureaucrats and service officers if he was to govern with interim continuity, the commander of the *force publique* reacted by resigning forthwith, to be replaced by a serjeant-major Lundula. On 5 July the Congolese soldiery and some police, still seeing white officers in command of themselves in accordance with Lumumba's and Kasavubu's compromise, but no improvement in their pay and conditions,

mutinied even whilst violence was breaking out between rival ethnic groups of Lulua and Baluba.

Foreigners fled *en masse* across the river as refugees to Brazzaville in the French Moyen Congo, and Belgian tacticians hurriedly planned a military return, hoping to restore basic order. This implicit psychological affront to Congolese leaders, and to most African politicians in general, outweighed all distastefulness at the sanguinary breakdown of law, and Lumumba appealed to Ghana and the united nations for help on 8 July. On 11 July the premier of the Katanga province, with its mineral riches and heavy presence of overseas technology and investment, who had just allowed Belgian paratroops to rescue some countrymen trapped for want of transport out of the country, became suspicious that amidst the confusion Lumumba was planning to turn to the USSR, declared independence, and appealed for the support of mercenaries: his name was Moïse Tshombe, aged 41, whose supporters had won eight of the seats in the national assembly, but 25 out of 60 in the Katanga provincial assembly. Albert Kalonji of Kasai province followed suit, but all went generally unrecognized by other nations. On 12 July Kasavubu asked for UN help. Three days later Lumumba, suspicious that Brussels had encouraged Katangan secession in order to re-establish control, cut off official relationships with Belgium and did ask for Russian aid against the Belgians, who promptly reinforced their troops; on the following day the first flight of 3,500 UN emergency troops arrived from Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco and Tunisia, with the Swedish detachment of 625 serving on the Gaza strip between Israel and Egypt, to try to establish peace and forestall Russian intrusion. Lumumba travelled widely abroad, to New York, Washington, Ottawa, eastern and northern Africa, and to London (where he became the occasion of demonstrations outside the Ritz hotel, and persons behaving riotously hurt the Ghanaian high commissioner).

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, anxious as ever to reinforce Nigeria's future position while only eleven weeks of colonial status remained, and suspicious of Nkrumah's finessing play (Ghana had offered a military contribution to the UN even before the security council had passed the necessary resolution), impressed on Sir James Robertson his keenness that Nigerian soldiers should be founder members of the emergency force. He was gravely disappointed that Whitehall diplomacy, nervous of deliberate anti-imperialist misinterpretations, forbade such a demonstration of his '*independence for all practical purposes*', and he had to fall back on public relations verbiage about '*exploring ways and means by which Nigeria could help the Congo*'. He contained his irritations at his own impotence while the united nations, taking their lead from the secretary-general, created a force from member nations who had no apparent colonial involvement, and rather less experience; this meant that the permanent members of the security council, whose resources held the organization together, had only a limited say in immediately succeeding Congolese events. In Kaduna Abubakar observed that the Sardauna had called a large assembly of expatriates together to reassure them that their safety could never be threatened by any similar upheaval: and that the attorney-general Marshall had commented that oral NPC attacks on overseas officers in the house of assembly did not help such confidence.

Early in August Hammarskjöld insisted on the evacuation of the remaining Belgian troops and technicians from the Congo. He was a serious romantic who had fallen in love with west Africans, calling them 'the young Puritans' of the UNO, and expecting all Africans to be alike. A few days later he accompanied his own troops as they at last entered Katanga, wishing to

enforce that province's adherence to the Belgian political creation. He and President Eisenhower were nervous of Khrushchev's threats to take 'resolute measures to curb the aggression', already demonstrated by the lending of Russian military planes, vehicles and equipment in support of Lumumba. Tshombe had nevertheless been elected 'head of state' of Katanga on 8 August. The last week of August found an *ad hoc* conference of independent African states meeting in Léopoldville, where Kasavubu and Lumumba failed to conceal their continuing differences: Dr Nkrumah had offered M Lumumba further help to drive the returning Belgians out if the UN failed. In fact the last Belgian troops left on 2 September, on the day when Lumumba, who had been threatening both at home and abroad to bring in Russians as well as their equipment (despite the clear objections of those African leaders who, apart from some in Guinée, feared King Stork replacing King Log), accepted a dozen Russian IL-14 aircraft for use against Katanga and a hundred trucks landed at Matadi. Since he had not been consulted, Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba on 5 September, and replaced him with M Joseph Iléo, president of the senate, from the MNC-Kalonji faction. Lumumba refused dismissal, and called on the people, the workers and the army to rise; the chamber of representatives purported to invalidate both dismissals on 7 September, after the council of ministers had accused Kasavubu of high treason; but next day the senate endorsed confidence in Lumumba while Kasavubu denied to either house the constitutional right to approve or disapprove of the head of state's decisions; and some ministers contrived to be members of both Lumumba's and Iléo's governments. On 11 September the presidents of both houses told the UN authorities that they supported Lumumba and 'annulled' Kasavubu's rulings. The UN closed all airfields to planes other than their own, including the Ilyushins.

At this early stage of muddle, Lumumba had forfeited most Nigerian newspaper sympathy, outside the NCNC, because of his declared hostility to UNO's Hammarskjöld. Nor were matters eased by the growing public friction between the UN high command and President Nkrumah, who managed to favour both Kasavubu and Lumumba by insisting on a purely African external involvement and African command of the emergency force; but all failed to detect the political significance of the emergence from the ranks of the '*force publique*', now *l'armée nationale Congolaise*, of the senior Congolese soldier, the recently promoted colonel Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, to military leadership in place of Lundula. The chaos in this country was not diminished by the reluctance of each successively superseded authority to concede that power had changed hands; but Mobutu effectively 'neutralized' them all on 14 September, appointed a 'college of high commissioners' or (*universitaires*) to govern, placed Lumumba under house arrest, and also expelled the Soviets and Czechs (who had taken up their positions to fill the vacuum left by the western decolonizers, and were insisting on direct intervention instead of channelling their aid and institutions through the UN). Kasavubu quickly wired to UNO to complain of its domestic interference, and to Nkrumah requesting him to recognize Iléo, but Iléo and he kept close to Mobutu. Mobutu decided to seek training for Congolese officers at Britain's Sandhurst military academy, but the UN authorities declared that this would be 'inappropriate', and Britain deferred any response. Sir Abubakar bided his time, and by mid-September Dr Majekodunmi had announced on the prime minister's sole initiative and authority that Hammarskjöld would gain a battalion of the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment, with supporting engineers, signallers and medical corps,

after independence day. By that time the UN were effectively providing all the government that the country was enjoying, but their organization was debarred from admitting it.

Abubakar's irritation over the Congo had been compounded by Britain's 'interventionism' and the involvement of a Nigerian battalion (including a Captain James Gowon) in the south-western Cameroons, where British trusteeship responsibility survived and danger was feared from the continuing rebellion across the French border. Because of this legal UK duty there were still some defence matters which the governor-general could not leave delegated in the prime minister's hands; although he tried to carry Sir Abubakar along with him, he had difficulty in persuading him that it was right that Nigerian police NCOs should still train Cameroon recruits at the new police school in Tiko after independence, even though their costs would be reimbursed as contract agents. At least the refusal to allow Nigerian fighting troops, who were still under nominal Whitehall rule, to go to the Congo was not aggravated by Nigerians continuing to maintain internal security in the Cameroons: that rôle was filled at British expense by the 1st battalion of the King's Own Border Regiment, which was withdrawn from other commitments and sent in on 31 August, thus satisfying both Dr Endeley who had wanted British substitutes if Nigeria refused military aid, and his rival Mr Foncha who had wanted no Nigerian troops in any circumstance. But while grudgingly allowing operationally vital customs officers and posts and telegraphs workers to remain temporarily behind (like the policemen, on repayment by the British treasury), Sir Abubakar insisted that all other civil servants except the handful of HMOCS expatriates be withdrawn from the southern Cameroons, in three monthly batches from June to August. This did not reduce the strain on the federal police special branch, which was monitoring the effects of residual overflows from the revolt in former French territory, on which he had still to be briefed. In anticipation of the plebiscite, most south Cameroonian eyes were turned east on Cameroun, where Ahmadou Ahidjo had now been formally elected president; a very few may also have noticed a precedent, that British Somaliland had now joined a former Italian territory to form Somalia (at the Somali celebrations in Mogadishu on 1 July, Mr Nyerere of Tanganyika said jealously to Alhaji Shehu Shagari, 'I'd like to come to Nigeria to see how with such a big and diverse country you can unite, when all east Africa, smaller than Nigeria, all speaking English and Swahili, sharing common services, still can't come together: it's a miracle!').

Elsewhere in French Africa the now customary confusion of purpose continued, so far as outsiders felt competent to judge at the time. It appeared for a while in May that a central African (or equatorial) union of the Moyen Congo with both a République Centrafricaine (the former Ubanghi Shari) and Tchad would now go forward, excluding Gabon, whose leaders could balance their budget and had not sought independence. To the west, Mali would have a single federal president. In June General de Gaulle offered to negotiate a ceasefire with the Algerian provisional government, to which the Muslim FLN was at first agreeable, but it later rejected certain of his conditions. In July it was finally agreed that Madagascar should become independent forthwith, followed by the four *conseil de l'entente* countries, which would however retain all the close economic and cultural links envisaged in that stillborn French community of states: Dahomey on 1 August, Niger on 3 August, and then Haute Volta and the Côte d'Ivoire. They would be followed progressively by Tchad, central Africa, Congo Brazzaville, and Gabon, and all would be republics: pragmatists

had suggested that ten celebrations all on the same day would have strained the decolonizing power's ceremonial and representational capacities. Mauritania's turn would come finally, as an Islamic republic, in November, and that would leave only French Somaliland (to become known as the territory of the Afars and the Issas) flying the tricolor beyond Algeria. The populations of all this flood of new francophone African countries totalled about 17 million, roughly that of the northern region of Nigeria alone at the last census. Lord Chandos commented caustically that they all produced one crop, and their leaders had everything they needed flown in from Paris with 'refugee money'. But by August the nineteen-month old Mali federation would have been dissolved because Soudan feared economic domination by Sénégal, and Sénégal would have inherited Dakar, the French capital of all west Africa, for itself; the French would then recognize the former Soudan alone as Mali, and sponsor both the separated Sénégal and Mali for UN membership.

Britain's 'different, deliberate decisions' continued less precipitately in places where the discords had been less philosophic than in most of the French territories; on 1 July agreement was reached with Cyprus over sovereign bases, and an uneasy new republic, with a majority Greek president, Archbishop Makarios, and a minority Turkish vice-president, became wholly independent on 16 August. A London conference to devise another constitution for Nyasaland was held in July, and the commonwealth African assistance plan was formally founded in September, when also the Monckton commission on Rhodesia finally reported. But in South Africa the bringing into force of a Bantu self-government act to enable 'independent homelands' to be created was widely seen as a practical hardening of 'separate development' as the English-speakers began to follow the Afrikaners into their *laager*.

Throughout these same months, while also dealing with Lagos routine and preparations for 1 October, the prime minister was mastering foreign affairs in the more practical way of more travel and more personal meetings with his overseas peers. Sir Abubakar stood beside the governor-general to receive the president of Liberia on a state tour of Nigeria on 27 June, watched Sir James hand a message from the Queen to the honourable Mr William Tubman, and gave him a formal banquet (at which more guests attended than had been invited, and Abubakar's private secretaries were banished from the table to the pantry to make room). They talked about the possibility of Nigerian labour being employed in Liberia, and Tubman mentioned that he had said in a public speech in Sierra Leone that Liberia had suffered from not having been a British colony. Alhaji Sir Abubakar did not choose to go as a dependent witness to the second CIAS conference of what were now eleven independent African states, held at Addis Ababa in July, prior to the Léopoldville gathering mentioned above: since the AG opposition were determined to go, he trusted his minister of mines and power Malam Maitama Sule to observe, and (*'Go and say anything, I know you will represent my views'*) to declare there once more that speculation about a united states of west Africa was 'premature', regardless of who might initiate it. Maitama also made a barely concealed reference to Nkrumah when talking of a potential 'Adolf Hitler'. The Algerian provisional government had been invited to this CIAS. The AAPO held its 1960 meeting in Cairo.

There had just previously been a significant split between the north and the federation, in a manner which snubbed those who still believed that the Sardauna's lieutenant took his orders from that brave captain. The federal

government had not only been looking for future assistance from the world bank and Britain: west Germany, USA and UNESCO had all received visits or shopping lists, encouraging more foreign investment with reassurances about overseas ownership and remittances, and Israel had been included. The minister of finance Okotie-Eboh had presided over the signing of a provisional economic aid agreement with Israel in June, and Tel Aviv was now interested in making more contacts in Ibadan and Enugu. There was a sterling £ for Israeli £ understanding, that for every pound of cash aid received for freely chosen development projects, the equivalent value would be purchased of Israeli air-conditioners, refrigerators and paint, not always meeting Nigeria's precise needs.

Sir Ahmadu Bello (or the NPC's central working committee, which amounted to the same thing) authorized a statement denouncing any export credits or loans from Israel, and the consequent press controversy made it clear that his objections were based in religion and a generalized pro-Arab or anti-Zionist sympathy: he also said, to reporters but off the record, 'Israel does not exist for me'. Sir Abubakar reacted very sharply, separating the issues with logic. He announced clearly at a monthly press conference that, *'the introduction of religion into politics will mean the end of happiness in Nigeria'*. As to development finance, he insisted that the federal government would offer friendship to all countries, would welcome *'genuine'* assistance from any country, and would not involve itself in the near eastern controversy between Israel and the Arab world, Jews or Muslims. Only the federal government had the constitutional power to borrow from overseas, the regions had no right to pass comment, and the federation would not force the north to accept any money it did not want. It was none the less patent that at last the concept of a colourless central services agency no longer hovered in the back of his mind.

After independence, when the issue was informally revived, Abubakar was to repeat, *'Well, that is [the Sardauna's] personal view; as far as I am concerned, Israel has an embassy here, and so we recognise them'*. Next year an Israeli loan of £3 millions materialized, and Abubakar was to say that *'The north does not need to take any of it'*. The reproof was needed: overseas delegations and commissioners or agents-general representing regional interests had not always confined themselves to goodwill, information and staff recruitment, and the three party leaders as premiers had discouraged no foreign host from treating them as heads of states. Now that the prime minister's office was placing trainee diplomats with British posts for practical experience, and hiving off the chrysalis ministry of foreign affairs and commonwealth relations, the rebuke was doubly needed, and Sir Abubakar did not fudge the issue. If the NPC's CWC did not consult him, then in his constitutional duties he certainly could ignore them, and could again refer to the British protocol of the prerogative for model and precedent.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar was one of many country leaders who did accept the invitation to the festivities surrounding the inception of Ghana's republican régime on 1 July 1960, despite President Tubman's state visit not having ended. He marked his arrival in Accra on 2 July, accompanied by a group of ministerial colleagues, with a polite formal hope that the friendly ties between Nigeria and Ghana would be further strengthened, and congratulated the newly inaugurated President Nkrumah on his change in title and style. He told the press that Nkrumah *'seemed to have agreed'* with him that any political union was for the present impracticable, but that after independence he hoped Nigeria would propose some basis for inter-African co-operation. The Ghanaian information

minister Kwaku Boateng hurriedly denied his president's seeming agreement. Next day Abubakar travelled on to Lomé for several days in Togo, where he told a cheering audience, who were still adjusting to their own independence after three months, and nervously conscious of their larger Ghanaian neighbour which still seemed bent on integration come what might, that, '*Our policy is to regard all countries in Africa, big or small, as equal. It is only on that basis that there will be peace in west Africa . . . [and] that we can work together in unity*'. When he reported back to his senior British confidant in Lagos, he said smilingly that he had met M Sékou Touré of Guinée in Accra, and liked him much better than his host; he had also particularly enjoyed meeting the Togo president, M Sylvanus Olympio, with whom he found much temperament and some interests in common.

The Nigerian leader was predisposed towards Olympio, with whom he had already tentatively been corresponding, for a number of reasons. It was not only Ghana's presumption, as a country one quarter of the area and one-seventh of the population of Nigeria, that irked him, because he did see the need for some organization of the countries in the African region. What was alarming him was the prospect of the Nkrumah mould hardening while the great majority of Africans remained quite ignorant of the circumstances of all of each others' countries. This ignorance, which he knew he had himself shared so recently, might turn directly into doctrinal suspicion or mutual hatred. Abubakar now saw Sylvanus as a likely focus for a broader and warmer beam of enlightenment. He was another leader, already independent, whose policy was to maintain tight bonds with the former imperial power; he had had education in English at the London school of economics, of which he was an honorary fellow; his working experience was that of a senior commercial agent of the United Africa company; he headed a government that used French; he spoke some German and Portuguese; he was better equipped than any other to relate to any of the continent's dignitaries, whether Lumumba or Luthuli, Roberto or Margai, Kenyatta or Senghor. Uniquely in west Africa he favoured low public expenditure, modest official salaries and establishments, and importation of inexpensive essentials rather than luxuries, even though such austerity might lead some of his people to look for richness in other ways.

That Nkrumah alone loathed him, because he stood out against pan-Ghanaism, was to his credit, extended by de Gaulle's resentment of his lack of *communautairisme*. Like Abubakar, he was seen as a down-to-earth administrator first, convinced that economic co-operation must precede imaginary cultural groupings built into shaky politics; he also faced an opposition convinced that he was insufficiently anti-imperialist. The clasping of these two hands created the first effective bridge between anglophones and francophones, and made possible all Alhaji Sir Abubakar's later moves in continental diplomacy. For the moment the two men were agreed that if the (relatively speaking) more conservative francophone countries could be encouraged to confer together first, the bringing into the wider fold of the mavericks Ghana, Guinée and UAR might be held over, or at least held apart.

At the end of August there was a three-day goodwill visit to Sierra Leone, accompanied by four ministers (Zanna Bukar Dipcharima of trade and industry, Chief J M Johnson of labour and welfare, T O S Benson and Maitama Sule), two officials and one orderly. A refuelling stop at Abidjan airport allowed a short meeting with M Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who was suspected by Nkrumah of having territorial designs on the country around his birthplace,

who agreed with Abubakar's views on future inter-state co-operation and sovereignty in Africa. This visit established his personal routine for all future overseas official visits. He would adhere to the letter and the minute of the Prime Minister's programme, and would occupy his private time primarily in reading up on background material, and making notes or drafts for his contributions to any conference. When that was done, he might indulge in private reading or writing, and more likely enjoy rest, prayer and the receiving of visitors. On this occasion he arrived with the acting governor Mr Foley Newns (who has been described often as his ally in the Lagos council of ministers office since 1952) at Fort Makenzie, Freetown's official proconsular seat. Not all Sierra Leoneans were looking forward to independence: the stories of trouble in the distant Congo were disturbing; the ambitious Dr Nkrumah had made disparaging remarks about home in a speech on 8 August when singling out Sierra Leone as one of the smaller countries who could not have any genuine independence; while the French had the border in Guinée, where the French had (although leaving behind no superstructure than had the Belgians) also left precipitately with little thought, many things were not yet going too well.

The ordinary peoples' feelings of apprehension and loneliness were shared by many of the cautious 65-year old Sir Milton Augustus Margai's ministers, and when Sir Abubakar's various messages brought a strong measure of confidence and tangible encouragement. The mayor, aldermen and councillors of Freetown city council gave a welcoming reception, at which he said, 'The political ideologies is moving towards Africa. . . . This must stop. . . . We must try to ensure that we are not to be robbed of our independence. . . . The people of Sierra Leone are more closely associated or related with us in Nigeria than any other territory in Africa. . . . We should do everything we can to assist this territory to progress in the orderly way in which things have been going on. . . . People have called this year the year of Africa. It is true, but if we are not careful in the present, Africa might turn into a very troublesome place, not only for us but for the whole world - and for us in Nigeria'.

At the state banquet Newns said that he was convinced in these turbulent times that the entry into international life of a large, stable, well-run, vitally alive country would be a force for immeasurable good in the continent. Responding, the country's prime minister made another of the spontaneous personal observations and judgments that gave gratuitous ammunition to his chauvinist opponents:

I have never thought that the acting governor would make a speech at this dinner, so I really taken quite unawares, but I don't think it is very difficult to reply to the remarks made by a friend who has been a friend for a very long time. . . . I have known you for some years. We have been together. We passed through very difficult times together, and I think in the end we came to regard ourselves as people who get through a crisis - and who get out of crisis very well. . . . It is really a pity that many of our officers who have served us faithfully find it necessary to leave us at times. Africans feel very much more than other peoples; and once we have our sincere friends, people genuinely interested in our well-being, we feel very much when they leave us, and honestly, I personally felt when you were coming to this place that it was not good that you were leaving us - but I thought we should allow people to go - the experience we had the advantage to have (and this I would like to say, Mrs Newns contributed quite a lot!).

Mr Sir Milton, in more ad hoc words prepared by no Stallard or Lawson, and him,

He is sincere and he speaks his mind. It is good to be frank, especially nowadays, because people regard one's mildness as content and cowardice. It is a pity that nowadays noise appears to be something which pays. . . . On my arrival I felt straight away that I am more than among friends, I am among brothers. The way I was received at the quay, how cheerfully everyone was at seeing me, really gave me more encouragement. . . . At one time Nigeria looked to Sierra Leone; a good number of Sierra Leoneans have assisted in our development. . . . It is our view that this association will continue'.

There was other, more forthright, material which was never reported. Margai was the first graduate from the protectorate, before whom all educated people had been Creoles or urbanized people from Freetown.

After a warm reference to Fourah Bay college, he echoed Margai's view about west Africa, significantly and for our purpose enlighteningly;

Now very often we hear people shouting for African unity, African union, African federation. Often we ourselves, who are directly affected, sometimes get confused about it, and I must confess that at times I find myself unable to understand what all this means. We know Africa must be united – Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Ghana and others should be united. But we should be united, not by a political fusion because that will bring confusion, and if we insist on one country swallowing another, we shall have no peace in Africa. I cannot think how Nigeria after attaining her independence will directly surrender that independence to any other country in the world. We do not say we want independence because we don't like our former colonial masters; we want independence so as to control our own destiny – to plan our own schemes in order to better our own people. We want to rule ourselves – to decide what we should do. It is not because we are better than the British, but we want to try our hands. It is definitely our policy after independence that we shall recognise all countries in Africa that exist to-day, . . . we shall treat them as equal in any national gathering because we feel it is only with respect of one another that we can have peace and stability. If we start to quarrel now about who will lead Africa, or west Africa, which is too vague a thing, our energies will be diverted. I often hear people say, 'Some people are not interested in meeting other people, but are interested in being heard at international gatherings'. It is madness to think that Nigeria will go to the united nations and blindly follow any other country. Our views are the same as yours: if you change, we shall have nothing but trouble. We must approach delicate problems like the problems in the Congo with care, caution and objectivity. We cannot start talking in the air. It won't help us at all. We must be objective.

At a press conference Sir Abubakar promised to appoint a Nigerian commission in Freetown under a Fourah Bay graduate (the first chargé d'affaires was George Dove-Edwin). On Nkrumah's claim that Ghana was willing to surrender its sovereignty in the interest of a political union, he observed that it was easy to say anything, but to fulfil it was another matter.

Let Ghana say to Sierra Leone, Nigeria or Liberia, I surrender Ghana's sovereignty to your country, then we will begin to work from there. . . . No doubt Ghana will surely kick against it. . . . No country can surrender its sovereignty and then have two heads of government.

But on economic union he was less sceptical:

It is an excellent idea. . . . We can come together and consider methods concerning our defences: we can come together to bring about understanding and peace in west Africa, find solutions to our economic problems; communications and transport facilities between our countries, immigration arrangements, exchange of scientific knowledge, preventive measures against human and animal diseases; the possibility of defence of west Africa, and methods of the kind. If we can do it under colonial rule, there is no reason why we cannot have economic and cultural union when we are independent.

There was also a party given by the local Nigerian community, and a private buffet lunch at Sir Milton Margai's house up on Hill Station. The police driver of the GH Daimler disappeared there to eat with his friends. Sir Abubakar talked solidly throughout with Sir Milton, who said that Lennox-Boyd (who had now grown nearly as fond of him as of Abubakar and the Tengku) had asked him. 'My dear friend, if you insist on having independence, you will have it - but do you really want it, and are you big enough?' Margai's simple reply had been. 'Our population is bigger than New Zealand's'. When Abubakar suggested an early departure to rest and recover his thoughts for the afternoon reception at Fourah Bay college, the driver was missing. 'Please', said Abubakar who so loved driving his Rolls-Royce round Lagos, 'Let me drive. I should love to drive my friends back to town'. HE and Mrs Newns sat in the back of the open car, and the driver in northern Nigerian robes, guided in the front by the ADC, attracted growing crowds of surprised and delighted townfolk in Pademba Road, and was also to draw attention from American newsmagazines. A police jeep carrying an agitated spare driver followed behind later. The final ceremony before the visiting prime minister returned home for five more weeks of colonial rule was his installation, wearing a locally woven cap and gown, as a Sierra Leonean paramount chief: this happy event included the presentation of six pretty young honorary wives, who gave rise to some pleasantries about reactions in Lagos or Bauchi ('What would my senior wife think if I brought home six young wives at my age?'). His silver-gilt first class chief's staff of office gave him amusingly ambivalent feelings: a shettima of Bauchi would not have been entitled to even the fifth and lowest class staff.

Economic and cultural union meant fair provisions for greater multilateral exchange of goods, services and ideas. Political sovereignty for countries that already existed meant adherence to the boundaries already drawn, and a recognition that nations had been built before true nationalism was felt. This paradox, which continues to split radical and pragmatic African politicians (and specialized students who treat Africa as a world of its own), is in truth nothing strange in any other continent. Nevertheless all countries' leaders have domestic preoccupations, even while international distractions like the Congo upheaval and goodwill visits to neighbours are plucking at the sleeves of their intellectual wrappings. Other Lagos routine during the summer had included watching the old Liverpool Unitarian family company John Holt's withdrawing from trade in merchandise, just as the UAC had been withdrawing from frontline produce buying; the court's nullification of Mr Olu Akinfosile's election at Okitipupa (but he appealed and eventually survived to be Sir Abubakar's NCNC minister of communications); and the jailing for six months for rioting and assault of a fanatical and irresponsible demagogue whose actions were ruthless, cruel and

vicious' – a contemporary judicial description of the president of the federated Nigerian union of railwaymen Mr Michael Imoudu. Divisions continued in the newly reformed trades union congress, with the general secretary of the railway and ports transport staff opposing Imoudu, and protesting to the prime minister and to the Ghana commissioner Mr Tay about interference on behalf of the Imoudu faction by a Mr John Tettegah, the general secretary of the Ghana TUC. There was also labour worry over the coal corporation's decisions to cut production, and to cut its employees by 1,200 men.

More cheerfully, Chief Festus, together with the northern and eastern ministers of finance, had gone off to London in May to sign an agreement on the British £12 millions loan with the chancellor of the exchequer Reginald Maudling. The prime minister gave him some political advice before he left, and was disconcerted at the end of their talk by a personal request. Festus, who still held Abubakar in some personal awe, said he had three daughters, and no son: did the alhaji think that the power of the north might be used to help Mrs Festus? The prime minister suggested that he had better seek the aid of his friend, Muhammadu Ribadu. Other departures requiring formalized good wishes were those of a detachment of the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment to take part in the royal tournament and provide band concerts in London's Hyde Park, and of the emirs of Bauchi and Misau, and the ohinoyi of Igbirra, to tour Britain. Two federal parliamentary delegations were announced, which would visit between them all the independent African states and perhaps widen mutual visions.

In the middle of the year the Ashby commission on post-school certificate and higher education in Nigeria delivered its report, *Investment in Education*, to the government in confidence. They recommended four universities now, including a non-residential one in Lagos which should include a medical school using overseas support, and more in the future, offering between them an entirely new pattern of education that would double the output of graduates and secondary passes. This demanded not a mere expansion of the framework but one that matched Nigerians' aspirations to replace all the expatriates, both immediately and when faced by new economies and technologies in the future, with their own sons; the report therefore looked outside for a dramatic international loan and educational aid programme. The branches of the college of arts, science and technology would be absorbed into their nearest university. The western region, which perceived Ibadan as still a federal institution (although secondary and technical education remained exclusively regional subjects), promptly insisted on its own university forthwith. Economists and administrators might still be expressing alarm about the lack of existing jobs for pre-school certificate children who were abandoning their families' farms and swarming into towns and cities that had developed in pre-war circumstances but were now physically unable to accommodate or serve these youths in decency; but politicians and educationists were quite unable to set a limit on those nationalist aspirations, which assumed a mighty reservoir of school certificates from which to make competitive selection on scholastic merit for higher learning, and which began by demanding half of the current federal and regional budgets.

Naturally, whether or not free as in the western region, or still subsidized by fees as in the east, that assumption also meant not only no limit to primary education in the south but also a huge extension in the north to match the southern proportions of output. It was an investment to which the prime minister, with his upbringing and background, certainly could see no

Alternative. 'Ashby' became a prime mover for the thought train of all planners, ministers on external aid, and finance ministries until republican days. 'Left-sociologists and economists averse to the supposedly narrow classical school of Oxbridge never forgave it for its 'ill-thought-out 'modernity', but educated non-intellectuals only suspected an impracticability in it. Both noticed that after independence adult education became the mainstay of the teaching family. 'Ashby's arrival in the ministries coincided with the appointment of Dr Kenneth Dike as the first African principal of the opening of the eastern region's university college at Ibadan by the Sardauna of the foundation stone of the Ahmadu Bello University in the delta province within the western region.

...the west for the AG in a vicious regional
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of his every detail. The prime minister might have been happier with another national government, with Akintola inside, but a true democracy had to have had an opposition one day.

Akintola becomes ever more significant as Abubakar's story unrolls, and it is timely to re-examine his nature, as other premiers have been scrutinized already. His much mocked thin voice could be shrill, he was wily and his wits sharp as a blade; but he had an affable charm, an over-sweet smile, and a readiness to develop personal affections for individuals as unlike as A C Nwapa and the makama of Bida. Able to converse in Hausa and Nupe as much as in Yoruba and English, he was gregarious but being naturally opposed to violence he was also a reluctant fighter; had it not been for pressure from his wife (who had her own strong opinions of rivals' spouses) and a human reluctance to lose face, he might never have challenged Awolowo. An 'Oyo Yoruba' born in Ogbomoso in 1910 to a successful trading family, he was a sincere baptist all his life while graduating from teaching to accountancy on the railway, to assisting Ernest Ikoli in the NYM and on the *Daily Service*, to becoming that paper's editor; there in 1945 he opposed the general strike, earning the lasting distrust of Tony Enahoro, an Ishan Edo from Uromi, who claimed that Akintola's guiding principle was, 'There is virtue in ambiguity', in never saying 'No'. Akintola followed the path of so many self-improving west Africans to London's inns of court, to study the colonial power's law and qualify in a lucrative profession without being shackled to the discipline of a university's timetabled curriculum. There he was another to come temporarily under the spell of George Padmore from Trinidad and to dip his toes in the waters of anti-imperialist communism, but the theories did not remain long with him after he was called to the bar in 1949 and returned home, although the practical targets stayed in his sights. He naturally identified himself more with the Lagos élite and the Egbe Omọ Oduduwa than the Ijebus, and came to see the function of governments as being to impose some degree of regulation for the improvement of communal relations; but where an individual's more spiritual needs were concerned, he believed that self-determination should be enabled within traditional custom by way of consensus and constitutionalism. Unsurprisingly he had by now learnt how to maintain civilized social relations with the sultan of Sokoto, the Sardauna, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar.

While theorists on the intellectual fringes of the NCNC, NEPU and certain like-minded officials of the Nigerian trades union movement had been toying since April with the thought of forming a new consciously activist socialist party, Dr Mbadiwe became reconciled with Dr Azikiwe, and shortly afterwards his Democratic Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons lapsed, allowing him to return to the inner circles. However in August the radicals founded the socialist workers and farmers party (SWAFP), with a recorded but discreet policy that revolutionary marxism be the basic condition for membership, and marxism its sole weapon. Nevertheless, considering the time not yet ripe for overt advocacy of class struggle and revolution, most of the membership or sympathizers also joined in the foundation of a Nigerian youth congress (NYC), led by a Lagos doctor Tunji Otegbeye. They were not to lapse, although the NYC was a movement, dedicated to the utter change of society, rather than a party, and in a sense was opposed even to the parties which its members supported until the revolution should come.

The visits to the north 'for consultations' since returning from London had also been reminders to Abubakar that the NPC's region was not being left behind.

The increase in world trade had meant that despite the Sardauna's declared
 worry for his future revenue, the north could spend two million pounds more
 on current items in the new budget. The panel of jurists, whose Sudan-based
 views of the local court system, welding a closer link between the year before, had
 and customary legal structures, had been agreed for foreign investment,
 realizing it thereby improved the attractions for foreign investment,
 a Pepsi-Cola plant and a Portuguese tin-smelter near Jos. Other
 of their travels. Malam Ibrahim Imam, at last recognized once
 of the northern opposition in the year before a new regional
 a commonwealth parliamentary association (CPA) course to
 any procedure he already knew rather well, and then on the
 APC sent two of its senior officials, Muhammadu King and
 the organization of political parties were showing untraditional
 Abubakar and were leading them to independence with
 all Zik had been in his place. However
 projected by Nkrumah and rejected by
 the party were commenting on how much more
 of the NPC becoming the Nigerian
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until after years of disciplined instruction had been imposed), they responded to overpopulation not by settling as immigrant tradesmen and artisans in distant places like the Igbo, but by clearing farmlands among resentful close neighbours, leading to violence with the Jukun, the Idoma, the people of Shendam and even the Igbo themselves.

What distressed the onlookers was that a people who had seemed to be forming a new coherence among themselves were now killing, not outsiders, but each other. Angered by AG interference in the north, Abubakar (who does not seem to have visited any Tiv stronghold) told the Sardauna's secretary Greatbatch in Kaduna that the police should not be afraid to open fire: '*We must be firm and ruthless – you must forget you are a bature, and act as an African would act!*' Forty of the assorted native authority police lent to Tiv NA to help to quell the riots were raw recruits under training from the northern police college, including some Bauchi men, and they performed well. In the event the official death roll resulting from civilian security forces' intervention was about six, with a dozen wounded, and again the Sardauna's government appointed an SDO to officiate as NA. The police however were keen to take further revenge for their own casualties, and although court processes were swung into action, little was done to reorganize local government to suit mass psychological reality.

On his last visit home while Leith Watt was still resident of Bauchi province, a very weary Sir Abubakar gave the Watts dinner once more, but as usual made sure of an early night; but he reminded them and the SDO in lighthearted conversation *à propos* of northern politics how his grandmother had always ended her homilies to him as a child, with instructions how to deal with the Fulani ('When you grow up, you must kill them all and drive them out!'). There may have been some talk of how his wives had taught Peggy Watt and another expatriate wife how to arrange African ladies' head-ties without fear of the full rigging collapsing. He was free also with his comments on the commonwealth prime ministers he had met, and was still tolerant of Sir Roy Welensky (who had just claimed that in ten years' time the only part of the African continent where the 'union jack' would still be flying would be the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland). A month later the Watts were in the prime minister's Lagos guest-house, on their way to the mailboat and retirement. Having only just flown back from his visit to Togo and Ghana, Sir Abubakar drove himself over to say goodbye finally. He thought Ghana's efficiency was now only eighty percent of what it had been, '*and I expect Nigeria to fall back even further after our independence*'. This was said not in gloom but as a realist. He was surprised and pleased to be given Watt's New Zealand green pana-shell cufflinks as a keepsake, and was soon on the Plateau Ltd train through Ilorin and Minna to Kaduna once again.

The August sitting of the house of representatives was its last before becoming a sovereign parliament. Although nobody now doubted that Dr Azikiwe would become governor-general, argument was still alive and formal statements were premature. Sir Abubakar told the house, '*When I recommend a governor-general I shall not ask for any undertaking, and the truth is that I do not recommend Chief Awolowo*'. The serious part of this was interpreted as referring to a presumed signed undertaking by the Queen's representative to quit politics, about which he was being deliberately diplomatic. To the press he enlarged on this: he would recommend to the Queen a governor-general who would '*fit in*', but clearly although a prime minister would take any

opinion of a leader of the opposition into account, it was only the PM who would be offering the effective advice. At Enugu the press picked up the present governor-general's adlibbed comment that it was good that Zik had been less prominent in politics since being made president of the senate. Interpreting this as a statement that Sir James's successor should abandon the announced forcefully that it was 'tactless and untimely', in an echo of the governor-general's invitation to Sir Abubakar to form a new

did however now tender his resignation from the national NCNC, which the deputy national secretary regretfully expressed feelings'. At the NCNC's annual conference the new Michael Okpara responded to the national secretary F about the Action Group's persecution of NCNC party would read prophetically yet strangely five years later: 'The human policy of persecuting its opponents, they persecuting against their supporters in the east. The persecutions of unity will receive a severe blow'. thought about it that not only northern

way to view the Rome Olympic games general in an independent Nigeria as a participant in politics. he promptly deplored all the action: he said would do a of Nigeria: 'I particularly provided for anyone to make the constitution, the recent the event the James would be would succeed

session. A Royal commander-in- including the ision was added the commander an emergency to the council an emergency. Army (as also arisms heard in in the Congo, also denounced Salisbury that confidence not answer Chief

Festus declared that no Russian loan had been sought – nor offered. In fact what amounted to a foreign policy statement was the high point and the conclusion of the meeting. It is only when a politician or functionary who has been concerned with domestic matters has for the first time to address himself to the deeds of other governments and their consequences, in a forum where his hearers wish to know what he intends to do to change the minds of the leaders of those other governments, that he realizes the limitations of his rhetoric, and the dangerous comfort of access to powerful weapons, or his weakness if he has access to none. Although he said nothing new, there is significance in the realism of what he felt able to say, and in the omission of much that others would have found irresistible.

The primary duty of those conducting external affairs would be to safeguard and promote the interest of the federation and its citizens. Nigeria intended to join both the commonwealth and the united nations. It was important to understand that all members of the commonwealth were autonomous communities, equal in status and in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs (this must have been one of the last conscious public recitations of the gist of the statute of Westminster). *'While benefiting greatly from the free interchange of ideas and consultation between the members of the commonwealth, and from their experience within the framework of the UN, we shall nevertheless have a free hand to select those policies which we consider to be most advantageous for Nigeria, subject always to our belief in the principles of the UN. We will endeavour to remain on friendly terms with all who recognise and respect our sovereignty, and we shall not blindly follow the lead of anyone. We consider it wrong for the federal government to associate itself as a matter of routine with any of the power blocs. Our policies will be based on Nigeria's interests and will be consistent with the moral and democratic principles on which our constitution is based'*. Whoever taught him about 'blocs' gave him a lesson he would never forget.

Very particular attention would be devoted to clear and practical policies on Africa. Nigeria would assist any African country to solve its problems and foster common understanding, and encourage common ties. Difficulties could be overcome by building on the cultural and economic links which already existed. This might be followed by some agreed plan for improvement of interterritorial communications and transport, and by pooling resources for higher education and scientific research. It was premature to think of a common market. . . . Although some boundaries were artificial, nevertheless they should be respected till the peoples decided of their own free will to change or merge. Nigeria would discourage any attempt to influence this by force. *'We are troubled by signs of the ideological war between the great powers creeping into Africa. We shall take steps to persuade African leaders to take serious note of this distressing trend, and try to unite our efforts and prevent Africa from becoming an area of crisis and world tension. . . . We shall not, however, allow our direct and primary interest in African affairs to blind us to the grave and vital issues which dominate the wider international scene. We shall strive always to maintain the observance of human rights which all our parties agree as fundamental, in particular freedom from racial discrimination'*.

Background criticisms had continued to rumble over the HMOCS special lists, and the unrefuted appearance that Whitehall had failed to care so practically for the conditions and reassurances of those overseas officers who wanted to serve on in Nigeria as for the needs of those who preferred to start a new

life at home with the help of their own resettlement bureau. To many directly involved it did not seem diplomatically wise, merely for purposes of British treasury accounting liturgy, to extract from a new nation an agreement to make to its expatriate employees payments in ways which stoked any fires of resentment, however illogical, merely in order to offer to give the money back, and more, in other unrelated forms of aid. The federal government was the only one of the four Nigerian governments to renege on the 1958 conference decision to sign a public officers' agreement on independence, and Sir Abubakar would justify this by refusing to concede the possibility that it might renege on any individual civil servant's just claims. In the last weeks of dependency the federal government issued its long-awaited comments on the Solaru Nigerianization committee. The acting Nigerianization officer Mr M O Ani gave reassurances to officers on special list 'B', and pointed out to impatient lobbyists that precipitate Nigerianization would only delay the process of true independence, since it would be those who should best be conducting the accelerated training of their own successors who would depart; and since premature promotions would only hold up the admission and advancement of the fully trained Nigerians who would not be long in appearing for recruitment.

A comparable dispute arose in the shadow ministry of defence: the assistant secretary who represented the ministry on an army selection board of potential officers became worried that before long one section of the population was going to dominate the officer cadre, as it already dominated the indigenous commissioned ranks - 24 of the 44 Nigerian officers were Igbos, there were six northerners, 15 westerners and 23 easterners. He wondered why the implicit, and unchallenged, quota system between north and south that had characterized the other ranks enlistment for so long, although in practice it divided the riflemen from the specialists, should not be as appropriate for the corps of officers. He put up a recommendation, which was not supported by his expatriate senior assistant secretary or the prospective permanent secretary (neither with northern experience); it went through Dr Majekodunmi to the prime minister and eventually the governor-general, and came back rejected.

There were other moral problems. Edward Gibbon once defined 'corruption' with perspicacious cynicism as 'the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty'. The prime minister's personal financial integrity was already much disturbed by the regular reports that some of his colleagues were less careful than he. Even then, one of his former secretaries did not see how, even through political intelligence systems or his own sensitivity, Sir Abubakar could have known of the complexities of, say, Akintola's corruption. He ought to have guessed that a politician in the works ministry, enterprisingly acquiring a fleet of heavy grade vehicles to transport groundnuts, would assume the director of public works' professional power to permit them to drive through the road barriers when closures were imposed on laterite surfaces after heavy rain; but if nobody complained, the prime minister would have had more pressing worries to weigh him down. Besides, the minister was wise enough not to draw his permanent secretary's attention to matters on which the 'permsec' must have given him unpalatable advice; and the permsec, whom his minister would tell how difficult it was to resist the claims made by friends, relatives and business associates, knew better than to trespass where he knew that the political or social pressures might be irresistible. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, the democratic civil servant *manqué*, always said, now and ever after, '*Bring me the evidence - on a file*'. It was not his fault that nobody ever did, nor that police special branch now felt obliged to interpret 'threats to national security' more

strictly than ever, and could hardly judge commercial corruption as susceptible to blackmail and therefore a security risk in local circumstances. In a foretaste of Gibbon, Laroche foucauld once claimed that a man is never so harmless as when in pursuit of money, and never so evil as when in pursuit of power. The political danger was when the two pursuits combined.

Yet in one case Sir James Robertson was made suspicious that all was not above board and that a contract had been improperly awarded because of bribery. He sent for the file from the ministry and asked the prime minister to have a look at it. Sir Abubakar read it through, cancelled the minister's decision and gave the contract to the lowest tenderer. There were other cases, some would say very many more cases, in which justifiable suspicions were not raised high enough or early enough. The Nedeco preliminary design for the Niger bridge at Asaba and Onitsha (the third of the river's 'mitigations', to add to the delta bars and the Jebba dam) had been completed but 'up front financing' was a difficulty. Armitage, now officiating as director of federal public works, had an in-house final design ready in the ministry, and the prominent engineering firm of Taylor Woodrow offered to build and finance on instalments, the government paying so much every six months for five years. The minister of works, Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa Wada, agreed to initial a note of intent, but while the contract was being finalized other firms gleaned hints and claimed that they could better the terms. Inuwa Wada agreed then to inviting tenders; a short list of five companies made competitive proposals to design, construct and finance the bridge; and consultants advised on their merits. The recommendations went to cabinet, where Chief Festus said, and later openly repeated, that the officials had not considered all the financial implications. The technology of the firm he favoured was not, thought the officials who did not favour it, of the most modern (it did not survive the civil war). What some of those officials did know was that Chief Festus's closest sonless relative was a director of the firm. The acting director of federal public works, who was being offered a four year extension by the chairman of the federal public service commission (now Sir Samuel Manuwa, former DMS), resigned. Although as Eddie Armitage he still enjoyed social chat at functions with his former 'master', who would inquire after 'the son' and 'the mother', as DFPW he no longer felt able to take a professional grievance over the heads of his current masters; at this level such things had become 'political', and most overseas civil servants felt the invisible barriers which imposed limits to what they could do.

Such considerations lent piquancy to the appointment of an attorney-general and minister of justice for an independent federation. The governor-general and prime minister had discussions and considered a list of qualified names. Dr Azikiwe was also involved and could raise no objection to the man who emerged as front runner, who was an old friend. He was the brother of a good friend of Chief Awolowo, and he was confirmed as *persona grata* by the Sardauna also, who knew the same brother well. In consequence Peter Stallard called on the director-general of the Oxford institute of commonwealth studies, Sir Richard Bullard, who took him into the study of one of the research fellows, Dr Taslim O Elias. Stallard told Elias that he had personally brought an important and unusual letter, to which he would expect a favourable reply. The political leaders' unanimity made it easy for Elias to accept, and by the end of September he had arrived in Lagos to take up his duties, with his assurance to Abubakar, Zik and the Sardauna that his personal loyalties would be subordinate to his loyalty to the country. Dr Elias took an early opportunity

to visit Enugu to see his regional attorney-general colleague Michael Ajegbo. Here he was amazed to see at the foot of the stairs after breakfast Captain Eneka Ojukwu in his army uniform, who reminded him ironically of their last meeting in Oxford, and of their exchanges about the future six years before, recorded in chapter 18.

And so the weeks ran out. Large firms donated large commemorative sums to create educational trusts, and governments and companies presented crystal, plate and statuary among other gifts in honour of independence, which went to decorate the official public rooms of government and prime minister. Sir Abubakar was present at the swearing-in of the one-time railway official, the ooni of Ife Sir Adesoji Aderemi, as governor of the western region to replace Sir John Rankine (in the east, the governor who had followed Sir Clement Pless's successor, Sir Robert Stapledon, was the missionary doctor Sir Francis Ibiām); he announced his intention to found an institute of international studies; he told a seminar of Nigerian lawyers, grant-aided by the Ford foundation to study constitutional problems of federation, that, '*The best may be the enemy of the good*'; he opened the new skyscraping head office of Barclays Bank DCO on Lagos marina, another step away from traditional colonial architecture with its central air-conditioning and for its foundation a concrete cellular raft floating on the lagoon's sandbank. He joined the governors and premiers at a meeting with colonial office officials to dot and cross ever smaller 'i's and 't's in the draft constitution, and noted that the official British representatives at the celebrations would be the lord chancellor Kilmuir, the minister of state for colonial affairs the Earl of Perth, and the minister of state for commonwealth relations Mr C J M Alport.

He heard with embarrassment that the aged Lord Milverton had told the house of lords, when the Nigeria (independence) bill was introduced by the new foreign secretary, the Earl of Home, that Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the greatest statesman that Africa had yet produced, and with puzzlement that Milverton had added that much of the unity to-day in Nigeria had been engendered by the war effort. He was loudly cheered at a large international press conference on foreign affairs, both for his masterly moderation on pan-Africanism and for his radical sympathies over Algeria and racialism, while recognising that his country contained half the remaining British colonial population and a quarter of the African continent's, but would have only one vote in international meetings. He continued to guide Eric Hefford with firm decisions in the final arrangements for 1 October, making the comment on the growing evidence of corruption that '*politics makes strange bed-fellows*'.

Despite this his own view on expenditure was, for once, more expansive than the officials'. Each of the regions, although they had already had their own self-government extravaganzas, should have £100,000. Lagos should have the squalid market by Carter Bridge cleared, better street lighting, and new amenities, which would survive for permanent use, such as a fountain in Tinubu square and the new Federal Palace hotel. Many British officers from the past should be invited back to share the pride and joy, Sharwood-Smith, J D Clarke and Shillingford, and Lady Bourdillon among them. There should also be British landladies of former colonial students. The Elder Dempster flagship, *mv Aureal*, should be chartered to transport the guests from Britain and act as a floating hotel. His nurse, Mrs O'Hara, would be his own house guest. He planned with care the celebratory private dinner party to which Princess Alexandra had agreed to be invited, and at which he was determined that his

beloved senior wife should be present for the first time at a formal western-style function in a household where the everyday diet was strictly northern Nigerian. Malama Inni might not have been overcome by the occasion, but she would have found the European food and habits at table strange and insipid. One week before the actual dinner Alhaji Sir Abubakar brought her round to Peter Stallard's flat for a rehearsed consumption of the identical menu that was to be served to the princess, and arranged that she and Stallard should sit together.

240 new cars, Mercedes-Benz, Chevrolet, Ford *Galaxy*, Jaguar, all would be painted in the national colours for guests to use (and one was almost driven home to his own country by one of the guests); all the drivers should have two tailored grey suits, caps, badges and buttons embossed with the federal arms, and uniform shoes, socks, shirts and ties. All drinks at the guests' hotels would be free: warned of the inevitable abuse, an enthused Abubakar said, *'You know the Islamic laws about hospitality – if a guest wants a bottle of brandy for breakfast, he can have it'*. Souvenir medallions for those playing parts in public shows, and handsome badges for all controlling officials, all was examined in detail. There were also the final 'blind' adjudications by the council of ministers of the winning entries to the open competitions for a flag and an anthem, to be kept secret until the last minute; and the reflection of Abubakar's concern for navigation on the international river systems in the silvery 'Y' of Niger and Benue in the new national armorial bearings. But while euphorically encouraging a display of generosity that would make Nigerians proud and visitors impressed, he still found occasional time to play with electric trains on the floor with his two young house-keeping sons.

At the final presiding by a governor-general over the council of ministers, Sir James Robertson gave three words of advice: that federal ministers should continue preaching the British proconsular gospel of unity throughout the federation; that statesmanship, and not short term party revenge, should colour their attitudes to the Action Group, a mid-west state and an enlarged Lagos; and that every minister, federal or regional, should avoid talking about any government's policy, especially foreign policy, when travelling abroad unless he had constitutional responsibility for it in his own portfolio. The full record, and of Sir Abubakar's and Chief Festus's replies, may be found in Sir James's memoirs, but one or two of Abubakar's comments earn repetition here. He said that he would never forget Robertson's saying to Mr Macmillan that, *'Nowadays, people can only trust in God and do their best'* – all ministers should have the duty to put away selfish interest and work for a united Nigeria. He also said of the AG (which had just committed itself to a 'democratic socialism' which combined quasi-Marxist nationalization of foreign businesses with pluralist subsidies to local private businesses) that the council should regard itself as the guardian of all the political parties in the country; as a Muslim, he believed that if he condemned others because they did not share his political beliefs, he would be accountable to God for such actions. In particular he said with every confidence that for the last two years the country had been technically independent.

Another of the special guests for the celebrations was Alan Lennox-Boyd, who was always to remember Abubakar's insistence, *'Don't expect too much of us – I know the world is watching us, and what worries me is that everyone expects too much of us'*, and his quotation of the Hausa proverb, *'He who is carried does not realize that the town is far off'*. Lennox-Boyd attended a lunch on the day before, where it emerged that Stallard had assumed that it would be politic to insert into the early drafting of the prime minister's independence

speech some fashionable reference to the removal of colonial shackles. *'I don't believe in all that stuff, I don't know what they mean'*, said Abubakar, who went on to talk again about the people from Britain who had helped Nigeria, *'but it's all very well to say so to you privately, but I want to say it publicly'*. Lennox-Boyd's colleague Lord Perth had learnt that Awo intended to boycott the ceremony: *'O, has he?'* said Abubakar, *'We'll see about that'*, and sent out a prompt message to see to it.

That night there was a state dinner for the princess, the leaders and the overseas guests, where a normally fluent Tony Shillingford shook his hand and said, *'This is a time when we can't talk – our feelings are too strong for words'*. At about the same time Sir William Gorell Barnes, who had occupied the key working seat in the colonial office during these decolonising years, was warning officials in the Canadian external affairs department: the general euphoria had reached Ottawa, where people believed that those who were, as they liked to see themselves, untainted with imperialism had a special insight. *'Wax lyrical about the prospects of Nigeria'*, he said, *'but it has probably the most difficult ethnic problems in Africa'*.

The exchange of flags took place at a floodlit tattoo on the racecourse in a midnight ceremony described by many others, including those who pointed out despondently that Zik and Awo were only spectators in prime seats in the stands. Sir James Robertson and Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa stood together on an illuminated dais beneath a searchlit union flag; the guards of honour from the Nigerian navy, army and police, the British navy and army, with a Rhodesian contingent, presented arms as massed bands played *'God Save The Queen'*. The lights went out, and when they returned the new, tastefully simple green and white flag of independent Nigeria was flying at the masthead. A new royal salute, for the Queen of Nigeria's representatives, accompanied by the new Nigerian national anthem, followed, and when Sir James turned to clasp Sir Abubakar's hand the prime minister was quivering with pride and openly weeping.

PART FIVE:

The Commonwealth African Statesman in A Monarchical Realm

1960 –1963

*Allah ya ba da kofar shiga;
ta fita, na yi da kaina*

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The independence of a large new country not only poses problems and demands for its leaders such as they, and even their enemies, had never imagined. It also imposes a shift in the external balance of forces. The resultant jealousies and redeployments are incommensurate to people who were used to having their own way while they lived in familiar but narrower fields. In 1960 there were foreign politicians and academics who distrusted or disliked the checks and balances inherent in any democratic federation; they criticized those who favoured Nigeria's being that kind of state, but they prescribed no viable alternative – unless, tacitly perhaps, rule by force. A large and powerful federation, which also seemed to be successful, was in any case an affront to the smaller one-party oligarchies and dictatorships elsewhere. One measure for identifying those Nigerians who were their country's mature leaders in the first phase of its established nationhood is to inquire – which of them were responsible for the growing respect in which that country was soon held in international relations? – and whom to arraign for reinforcing the internal divisions? The answers lie in the motivation of those who seek power for its own sake, and of those who merely use it for some wider good.

Thoughtful African farmers know that the roots of weeds should be starved, not fed. They also recognise that the cactus barriers which hedge remote and backward villages or fields have been planted to inhibit unwanted interchanges of alien people and produce; but these thorns also prevent the strangers from enjoying unfamiliar crops which might nourish both groups alike, and which might (after some fair market exchange) lead to a richer and more palatable diet for all – if the produce is fit for seed propagation or transplantation.

Born African traders are only interested in civic stability, and do not agonize over whether the peace that is its requisite comes through free elections or through the imposition of force.

'Professional' African politicians did not always share the wisdom of the farmers or traders who were their kinsmen, and it was becoming evident that easterners and 'mid-westerners' (as the people of Benin and Delta provinces were now generally known) were the more ready to enter fulltime politics than were many of their commercial and executive brethren in other parts of the land.

Abubakar's first years as head of a free and institutionally democratic government were marked by his determination to use and respect the model forms and tradition of the country that he knew best after his own. These precedents had been adopted in a federal constitution willingly developed and endorsed by his countrymen's professional politicians. It had its incidental anachronisms and dissonances, but no proper alternative was at first evident. The determination with which the majority had embraced this constitution, even if their purpose were only not to delay independence, estops any claim that they knew no better. It is significant that when it came under strain from the western region, the prime minister's reaction, of which his colleagues approved,

was not unlike that of a patient school classmaster who knows when his badly behaved class has taken things far enough, or of an old-time district officer who had taken action to restore good order to the very limit of what he thought the law (and his superiors) would excuse: both knew their ultimate accountability, and also that their immediate wrath must carry the tacit assent of the majority who were being justly disciplined. This might mean that some lesser naughtiness or disorderliness in the eastern and northern regions might not get all its just deserts; it might also reflect a greater inherited tolerance of quasi-martial law on the part of western Nigerians.

It was nevertheless during these same three years that the country which had afforded the models took its own first stumble away from the warm bath of the commonwealth towards the chillier attractions of the European 'economic' community; and that Nigeria in its own way reduced the commonwealth's credibility by making possible the Organization of African Unity. The importance of both moves became much clearer a generation later, when neither institution was any longer new or a focus for single-minded enthusiasts. More impressive at the time was the fact that even before the republic was declared Nigerians abroad had acquired a sense of identity and of self-confidence that gratified most of their former 'masters, leaders, partners or friends'; although touchy strangers who were jealous of the new country's influence sometimes saw this self-possession as arrogance. Abubakar symbolized the identity and softened the image.

At home, sadly, Nigerians were still inclined to assess progress in terms either of achievement of power by particular ethnic groups, or of its denial to them. At the end of this period, had they given Alhaji Sir Abubakar the supportive trust and stability that was just, his character and experience might have overcome his intellectual weaknesses, such as the doubters perceived them to be; he might then have had the secure bedrock on which to become black Africa's first world statesman. Britain's methods now exercised nostalgia for him, but its politics no longer had influence or authority.

There was also a symptom of internal debility in the uncertainties behind so many Nigerians' halfhearted support for his foreign policy. That policy was clear and civilised enough in itself – no interference in other countries' internal affairs; no use of force with the intention of changing even artificial national boundaries; low profile diplomatic lobbying and negotiation, rather than tub-thumping and megaphones, whenever searching for solutions to shared international problems; and opposition to militant revolutionary movements. The confusion of so many internal party policies, that disagreed with part or all of this and so led to the lack of a single multi-partisan foreign policy, suggested to some indigenous analysts that Nigeria might be a state, but that it was not yet a nation. There was however an incongruity in Abubakar's own growing concern that national security should be founded on firm law-enforcement.

It is curious also that so few public commentators anywhere at the time foresaw that Britain's progressive withdrawal from the African continent was creating ever more havens or sanctuaries for rebels (or freedom-fighters), where they could recoup or mobilize for military action against neighbouring régimes. Alhaji Sir Abubakar came quickly to the conclusion that if the western colonial powers had occupied Africa and other parts of the world for selfish reasons, equally the communist bloc had seen that ideological support for the 'enslaved peoples' would also serve long term alien interests. The arms, training facilities, money and indoctrination lavished by the Warsaw pact and China on revolutionary movements cast growing doubts in his mind on the

naïve continental belief that this interference was not neo-colonialism through the looking glass. Inevitably these doubts were reflected by those of the critics who questioned his capacity and will to struggle for materialist ends, but who would not concede that both nationalism and independent statehood were ideas learnt from the western imperialists themselves.

31 An unassuming character steps on to the world stage

Mai dadin kai ya fito daga Allah

The transfer of power on 1 October 1960 took place at a large open-air ceremony held at Lagos racecourse, henceforward to be named Tafawa Balewa Square. Ministers arrived in a motorcade of ascending order of seniority, culminating in Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa riding in an open car (his wives and children were left at home, nervously watching an ear-shattering RAF *Canberra* fly-past from the balcony of the PM's lodge). The chief justice, Sir Adetokunbo, administered the oath of office to Sir James as sovereign's resident representative in her independent monarchy of the federation of Nigeria, of which she was (as Sir James and Alhaji Sir Abubakar both put it) 'directly' queen. The term 'dominion' had quietly given way to 'realm' wherever the Queen still reigned. Princess Alexandra was last to arrive, escorted by northern NAs' mounted police, and handed the bound Nigeria independence act of the British parliament to the prime minister. In parts of a speech much excerpted and quoted round the outside world at which it was clearly then directed, and often repeated since, he had this to say in reply:

At last our great day has arrived, and Nigeria is now indeed an independent sovereign nation. Words cannot adequately express my joy and pride at being the Nigerian citizen privileged to accept from her Royal Highness these constitutional instruments which are the symbols of Nigeria's independence. . . . It gives me strength and courage as I dedicate my life to the service of our country. . . . This . . . day . . . is all the more wonderful because we have awaited it with increasing impatience, compelled to watch one country after another overtaking us on the road when we had so nearly reached our goal. . . . We, the elected representatives of the people of Nigeria, . . . were not to be allowed the selfish luxury of focussing our interest on our own homes. In these days of rapid communications we cannot live in isolation apart from the rest of the world, even if we wished to do so. . . .

This great country, which has now emerged without bitterness or bloodshed, finds that she must at once be ready to deal with grave international issues. This fact has of recent months been unhappily emphasized by the startling events which have occurred in this continent. . . . We are called upon immediately to . . . play an active part in maintaining the peace of the world and in preserving civilization, . . . and we come to this task better equipped than many. For this I pay tribute to the manner in which successive British governments have gradually transferred the burden of responsibility to our shoulders. The assistance and unfailing encouragement which we have received from each secretary of state for the colonies, and their intense personal interest in our development, has immeasurably lightened that burden. . . . To-day we have with us representatives of those who have made Nigeria -

representatives of the regional governments, of former central governments, of the missionary societies, and the banking and commercial enterprises. . . . To-day we are reaping the harvest which you sowed. . . . May God bless you all. This is an occasion when our hearts are filled with conflicting emotions. . . .

But do not mistake our pride for arrogance, . . . we are grateful to the British officers whom we have known, first as masters, and then as leaders, and finally as partners, but always as friends. . . .

The lack of any reference to any foreign guests was seen as deliberate. These guests included the governor of New York state, Nelson Rockefeller, representing the United States, and among the closer neighbours, M Houphouët-Boigny, Mr Foncha and the Dahomeyan prime minister, Hubert Maga, newly become a president; but not Olympio, Touré or Ahidjo, nor Nkrumah. The reference to 'the country' dealing with grave issues could only imply its elected executive leaders, and that was not fully understood by all that heard it.

In his later broadcast, directed inwardly to the people who had elected the leaders, the message was as typical; but it was on a different plane, closer to a Queen's Christmas Day message: *'This is a very important day. Although we are not always with you, your welfare is always in our minds. To-day is independence day. All of us who have been blessed to see this day have it as a duty to thank our Lord and pray Him to make this beginning of an era which He has ordained as a blessing to all the people of this land, men and women. It is a difficult task to conduct the government of a country, especially now, but if all of us show determination and have the fear of God in our hearts, acting with love for one another, with respect for law and justice, and with truth and honesty, I am sure God will grant us success. We should all congratulate one another to-day, and pray God to help us and give us his blessing'.*

There was a state opening of the new independent parliament, at which Princess Alexandra played the sovereign's part, receiving the speech from the prime minister's hands and delivering his government's words before returning the script to him: 'African unity begins by fostering such cultural and economic links as already exist, and the object is not political, but to raise living standards. My ministers believe that their primary task is to induce a climate of stability in Africa, so that the maximum amount of each nation's resources may be devoted to the carrying out of development schemes, and the minimum deflected into unproductive channels'. There was reference to modernization rather than expansion of the armed forces, and to an increasingly mobile and larger police force (for which the Tiv protests mentioned in the last chapter had shown the need).

But these few early days remained days for royal pleasure, although much interrupted by rain. Chief Festus's newest Itsekiri train worn at the state opening was almost the length of a cricket pitch (to his people the cloth that extended behind a gentleman was a measure of his wealth). At the state banquet Princess Alexandra was offered token dishes of Nigerian food, and tasted a token sample; the prime minister had ensured that they included northern examples, *tuwo* (cereal flour in gravy), *rogo* (cassava), *fura* (flour balls in sour milk) and *masara* (sweetcorn). Alhaji Sir Abubakar made time to open the new *iga Idunguran* at Isale Eko, the latest palace of Adele, the oba of Lagos (whom he had first met through their wives' joint physician Dr Majekodunmi, and of whom he had by now made a good friend, because of his personality rather than his public involvements). Abubakar thanked the oba

to the relative success of his rainmakers, who had received £1,000 to insure against unduly damp ceremonies. He also received many ceremonial gifts, and many return invitations from visitors to the celebrations, including one to be a guest in Rhodesia & Nyasaland in 1961. He successfully presided over his private party for the Princess, who shook hands with his two little boys. He, and the three regional premiers, were intrigued to receive congratulations from the communist party of Great Britain.

As in 1957 he had at first retained the key portfolio of finance for himself, so now he retained control of external affairs. Muhammadu Ribaḍu had taken over defence, passing Lagos affairs (where slum clearance became less disciplined and slower) to Shehu Shagari's shadow in establishments and pensions, Musa Yar'Adua. The next step, after inauguration of a new state and its parliament, was to join the United Nations. Sir James Robertson had had some last minute difficulty in persuading Alhaji Sir Abubakar, who was inclined to delegate the task to someone else, probably Mr Wachuku, that he was himself the best fitted to lead the delegation and to address the general assembly: the prime minister was also disappointed that Britain's sponsorship alone was not sufficient, and that in professional CRO diplomatic opinion it should be supported by some wholly foreign nation. He offered to include AG members in the team, and called Awolowo's statement '*to say mildly, foolish and ignorant*', when Awo refused to come on the grounds that no bi-partisan foreign policy had been agreed, and that when he had visited him together with Rosiji, Tarka and Enahoro to make the invitation, Abubakar would not 'clear' his draft speech with him.

As part of a subsequent prepared statement, Chief Awolowo announced that the AG would feel justified in participating - (i) if the foreign policy of the country were agreed between the government and the opposition; (ii) if the parliament had endorsed the government's foreign policy, and the AG approved that endorsement; and (iii) if the AG were privy to the statements which the PM intended to make and the PM undertook not to depart from them. If the AG disagreed with any statements made at the UN or elsewhere in the US, the party would feel obliged to say so on the spot: 'It is not difficult to imagine the serious blow to Nigeria's standing and prestige abroad if our internal political disagreements were thus dramatically projected on to the world stage'. It was indeed not difficult. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had assumed that Nigeria would inherit the contemporary British convention that HM's official opposition would not embarrass her Majesty's government on the world stage. The prime minister did include Jaja Wachuku, and also Malam Aminu Kano from NEPU, in the delegation that eventually left on the chartered *Britannia* airliner, with his PS Ahmed Kari to tend to domestic affairs and correspondence. Mr Duncan Sandys, now translated from defence and aviation to serve as secretary of state for commonwealth relations, met him at Heathrow for a formal exchange of courtesies, and made no reference to staging facilities at Kano.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar told reporters who were hoping to trap him into a grandiloquent headline that, '*if the other African countries find that we are really working in their interest, that we are constructive, they may regard us more or less their spokesman. But Nigeria would never impose itself on any other African country. . . . I do not want to say very much about the part we can play, because we do not know the game yet. We in Nigeria [here spoke the northerner still, perhaps] do not make noise for noise-making.*' He would try to

keep nuclear bases out of Africa, and deplored 'blocs'. *'I do not like the word 'neutrality', and I agree with Mr Nehru's statement that when a neutral country joins a neutral bloc it ceases to be neutral. We want to pursue an independent view, which is not the same as neutralism. . . . I do not like us being called to meetings to commit us before time. . . . We have [the word 'neutral'] in English, and I think it is a falsehood'*. And to some students who welcomed him with words about 'African personality', he repeated from the last budget session, and unwittingly from the teaching of Socrates of old, *'We Africans are human beings, as good as and just like other human beings. Let us speak then of human personality'*. The party continued to New York where the recently appointed secretary of state for foreign affairs, the Earl of Home, had already arrived in the company of Mr Harold Macmillan.

This fifteenth session was a unique meeting of the general assembly, which inevitably made its mark on all who attended it. It also made the accession of the 11th commonwealth nation as the 99th UN member more memorable than it might have been. Fourteen former French colonies and Cyprus had been admitted in anonymous mass groups less than a month before, together with the fraught democratic republic of Congo, which had however not yet formally taken its seat because the credentials committee was undecided whether to recognise President Kasavubu or prime minister Lumumba. It was an intimidating arena for even a professional gladiator to enter. Twenty-six heads of state, prime ministers and first secretaries of ruling communist parties had arrived to make the session a festival of summitry. They included Nikita Khrushchev, Antonín Novotný of Czechoslovakia, Wladyslaw Gomulka of Poland, Fidel Castro (who spoke for four and a half hours), Ahmed Sukarno, Marshal Tito, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abd-ul-Nasser, King Hussein of Jordan, Sékou Touré and Dwight D Eisenhower. It was the famous occasion, when Mr Khrushchev took his shoe off to use it as a gavel, of his bellowing interruptions at another speaker, and also of the eastern bloc's refusal to pay its share of UN peace-keeping forces, thus putting the whole UNO's viability in jeopardy. Alhaji Sir Abubakar witnessed the shoe-banging and was horrified at the Russian leader's lack of dignity: describing the incident after his return home, he said, *'He is an evil man, evil, evil'*. It was not enough for him that Khrushchev was showing a more human public face than had been possible under Stalinism.

Lord Home took personal pleasure in introducing Nigeria into the assembly as a nation in its own right. He had found its leader a refreshing contrast to what *The Times* was calling the 'grandiose cliché-mongerers of African personality' during this period of a 'flamboyant welter' of new nationalisms, and he contrasted his sobriety with those newcomers unused to the heady wine of power. While some of those leaders who followed his speech were quick to welcome Nigeria's emergence as 'another nail in the coffin of colonialism', he was grateful that many other speakers paid verbal tribute to Britain for 'a timely example of enlightened colonial policy'. His main gratitude was for Alhaji Sir Abubakar's own speech on 7 October, which surprised and impressed the most sceptical of those present. Its confidence and self-possession were striking, neither patronising nor diffident. It greatly encouraged those powers with whom Nigeria still had vital trading links. Embodying contribution from Wachuku, particularly on the Congo, as well as facts from his foreign affairs section and tentative suggestions from his private office, it sounded like robust commonsense; and although Karl Marx is alleged to have said that that quality was as poor a guide to public affairs as it would be to the question of whether

the earth moved round the sun, commonsense does inspire trust among the nervous. Abubakar told the general assembly that Nigeria would remain friends with all nations, would participate actively in UNO's work, and had absolutely no territorial or expansionist intentions. She would not forget her old friends, and was proud to have been accepted as a member of the commonwealth; nevertheless Nigerians did not intend to align themselves as a matter of routine with any of the other power blocs. They would work with other African states for the progress of Africa, and assist to bring all African territories to responsible independence.

He turned quickly to the subject of the Congo, which was monopolizing world attention, and said there could be no question of the UN administering it or imposing a trusteeship; it must be accepted that the Congo was independent, that its political business should be dealt with by African states, and that the UN should only assist and advise as agents, without infringing its infant sovereignty (he might have been talking to a post-reforms DO about his NA). The facts behind the Congolese splits were obscure, as also was the extent to which the Congolese people had been consulted on, or had accepted, their constitution, if at all. A fact-finding commission might, he hinted, provide a cooling-off period, but it should include none of the great powers. Then there should be discussions of a confederacy or a federation, in which the solution would be rooted in the revenue allocation. Real political life must start at the bottom with local and provincial authorities; preoccupation with events in Léopoldville was mistaken. It should be the African states that offered the Congo educational scholarships and intensive technical training. But once the Congolese had re-elected their own leaders freely, even if they seemed far from perfect, or objectionable, the UN should support them.

These latter points were Abubakar, not a speech-writer, speaking. He went on to say that in Africa,

'political independence is totally inadequate if it is not accompanied by stability and economic security, and if there is no genuine personal liberty with the freedom to express one's own views and to profess whatever faith one desires. . . . Economic weakness lays a new country open to every kind of pressure, in other countries depriving its people of the freedom to choose the government which suits them best. . . . Political propaganda or more insidious infiltration through technical assistance can rob an under-developed country of freedom. . . . The best way for advanced countries to assist us in reaching maturity is not by ideological propaganda, disguised, but helping us genuinely, with goodwill, to develop our resources and educate our human material'.

Turning to the philosophy of aid generally, he continued,

'I would not limit technical assistance to the united nations, but seriously suggest, in the best interest of world peace, for assistance from elsewhere to be given only to those countries which, though still underdeveloped, are politically stable and have a properly constituted government which is capable of understanding the risks of accepting aid from another country. I deprecate direct assistance by individual powers to countries that are not yet able to stand on their own feet, or are politically unstable, because such aid will only give rise to suspicions, and in the end the receiving country may find itself involved in an ideological war.

. . . We in Nigeria appreciate the advantages which the size of our country and population give us, but we shall never impose on any country. We will treat every African territory, big or small, as our equal because we honestly feel that it is

only on that basis of equality that peace can be maintained. However artificial the boundaries, the countries they created have come to regard themselves as units, independent of one another – therefore our policy is to leave them as they are and discourage adjustment.

Priority would be given to joint consultations in west, north and central Africa over non-political matters (such as transport and communications, research into natural resources, above all education – Nigeria would admit students freely from neighbouring countries). He did not rule out the possibility of some eventual unions, but for the present it was unrealistic to expect countries to give up the sovereignty which they had so recently acquired. It would be the greatest threat to peace if any country set out to undermine the authority of the properly chosen leaders of another state, with a view to imposing political union. It was wrong to impose, or to seek to hasten, a process unduly.

May I frankly say that we who have waited for admission have sometimes been concerned lest our older more powerful brethren are losing sight of the objects which in founding this organization they sought to serve. . . . I do not think it was ever the intention to turn it into an arena where party politics could be played at the highest level, where ideological differences would obscure the main objective of securing peace between the nations, and stability in the world at large. . . . One great advantage which we new nations have is that accession to independence makes a clean cut with our past, and presents us with the opportunity to enter the field of international relations untrammelled by prior commitments. It is probably the one occasion in the life of a nation when it is possible to choose policies for their inherent qualities of goodness. . . . Just one week ago, as the clocks were chiming midnight, and Nigeria was on the threshold of independence, there was a brief ceremony at which the leaders of three different faiths each said a brief prayer. . . . We realized that above all there is a divine providence, and I do honestly believe that one primary essential to international friendship and co-operation is for each man to be true to his religious beliefs'.

To a reader who has seen Abubakar's statements in this and the preceding chapter it may seem bizarre that he was later accused of having no clear foreign policy in Nigeria's early years, other than a submission to God's will; but what his critics resented was that in rejecting adherence to any artificial power blocs, and in remaining sympathetic with past friends, he chose equally to reject the synthetic alternative power bloc of a unified Arab Africa and black Africa such as Nkrumah, who denied that the Sahara divided them, still envisaged. The critics would rather that he had stood promptly and obediently in the shadow of Nasser, or even Nehru. For his part he had shown his hatred of the very idea of power blocs existing in the UN, which seemed to him a contradiction in terms. But readers must be few who can re-read these statements in the light of the years that have elapsed in Africa without experiencing some sense of irony.

Mr Wachuku remained in New York as permanent representative *pro tempore* to the UNO. The advisory committee on the Congo, composed of all the members who had sent troops there, appointed a conciliation committee on 19 November of its fifteen Afro-Asian members; this committee made Wachuku its chairman, and he was to fight hard in Abubakar's name for impartiality between Kasavubu and Lumumba. He tried hard to dissuade other Africans from descending to abusive language in arguments between these rival delegations. Aminu Kano also stayed behind, supposedly for three months; in

mature and dispassionate advice. Sir James Robertson, studiously adhering to his monarchical right to receive cabinet memoranda and conclusions so that he might advise, encourage and warn, but in fact refraining from further interference or gratuitous comment, was preoccupied with accompanying the prime minister to escort Princess Alexandra to Kano on her departure in mid-October, and then with his own farewell tour of the country.

Suspicious of personal conspiracies could of course be revived and transferred. Antony Head, the first British high commissioner, was at once identified by jealous observers as the obvious confidant who would succeed to the series of expatriates who had been supposed to mould Abubakar's developing thought to suit Albion's perfidious purposes. Much was made of how close the PM's and the British high commissioner (BHC)'s residences were to one another. Head, a politician himself, privy counsellor and former war minister, newly made a viscount and most recently a back-bencher expert on defence with personal memories of action in the Guards armoured division, was willing and anxious to develop close diplomatic relationships with the prime minister. He had toured Africa on losing office, and chanced to tell Macmillan on his return of his growing new interest in the continent. The British prime minister seized the opportunity to place a prominent politician who could be 'difficult', while Whitehall was toying with suitably safe professional names. He was not therefore a seasoned civil servant from youth, and could never have quite taken the place of Robert Wright, Bryan Sharwood-Smith or James Robertson. The friendship and admiration which he was to develop were genuine, but they sprang from different social roots; they could not be identified with the whole-hearted frankness of those men who had seen themselves as virtual colleagues in the same broad public service as Abubakar, and who from young adulthood had shared comparable 'bush' environments. Many Nigerians still so little understood their country's new diplomatic importance that, not realizing the opportunism behind the appointment, they found it easier to suppose so senior a man must have been chosen to be a shadow governor behind the scenes. Before long he and Abubakar decided to fake a public quarrel, the more convincingly to disabuse their critics of their mistake. Unfortunately they could not think of a suitable subject to quarrel about.

Head's deputy was Macmillan's speech-writer during the 'wind of change' tour, David Hunt. Stanley Fingland ceased to be John the Baptist, and became counsellor and head of chancery. None was able to disabuse the Nigerian prime minister of his conviction that the commonwealth relations office's doctrine was ill-founded, supposedly that (because a minority was tarred with some imperialist brush) former members of the overseas civil service and the old colonial office could never be absorbed acceptably into its own home-based service. Abubakar continued to tell retiring British officers, and returning visitors like Shillingford, that they could best represent Britain for the very reason that they understood Nigeria, and he could not understand when some said that they had already applied and been rejected.

Much was made in the latest conspiracy theory of the formal exchange of letters known to have been made between Head and Alhaji Sir Abubakar. Every transfer of power in Britain's decolonization from the 1950s to the 1970s involved a listing of such responsibilities as the treaty obligations and rights, conventional letters of understanding, and international agreements, memberships or representational duties which the United Kingdom had over so many years, deliberately or in some broad all-embracing action, adopted on behalf of the imperial possessions. Now the newly sovereign

state fell heir to such burdens and comforts. Air traffic and fishing rights, 'the Geneva convention', Vienna protocol, international red cross, law of the seas, extradition, multilateral treaties such as that on intergovernmental maritime consultation – the list ran lengthily on to include some matters that might seem trivial and obscure indeed to laymen. Much had been inevitably left with the details uncloaked by the conference report or the independence act, even after all the dotting of 'i's and crossing of 't's, and was rightly now for the new state to decide for itself; much of that would require careful and prolonged thought. It was self-evident that for the world to treat rationally with the new state, the presumptions must be that the *status quo ante* prevailed, unless and until formal modifications or changes were duly negotiated, made and properly notified to all concerned. There was no bond that might not be severed, but this must be done in due order. It was thoughtlessness, or ignorance, that built the routine exchange of letters on these matters into something 'highly significant and controversial': it could also have been conscious mischief-making. More controversial, yet quite open, were the published details of the mutual defence agreement, as re-initialled subject to further consultation, between Sir Abubakar and Lord Head. The agreement, in essence, was simply, 'to afford each other such assistance as may be necessary for mutual defence, and to consult together on the measures to be taken jointly or separately to ensure the closest co-operation between them for this purpose'. The possible constructive or fanciful interpretations of this were to prove the political problem.

Punctilious propriety coloured another embryo international relationship. A soviet history of Africa records that, 'official celebrations proclaiming the independence of Nigeria . . . were attended by a soviet government delegation. A message of the soviet government, addressed to the prime minister of Nigeria, stated that the soviet people voiced sincere joy at the attainment of independence by the African state with the largest population, and that they wholeheartedly wished the Nigerian people great success in independent development. Diplomatic relations were established between the USSR and the federation of Nigeria'. There is an omission before that last sentence. The head of the delegation, Mr Jakob Alexandrovich Malik, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the court of St James, did bring such a friendly letter from Nikita S Khrushchev, first secretary of the communist party of the soviet union and chairman of the council of ministers. Sir James and the prime minister had been offered vodka across the table by Mr Malik, although only the former had accepted it. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, remembering Mr Khrushchev's shoe-banging, told a press conference early in November that as well as expressing a wish for good relations, the letter had insisted on opening an embassy forthwith. He had told Mr Malik that, '*We will not be bullied. Protocol must be followed, and we will consider an application in the proper form*'. He now announced that they had subsequently received such a letter from the soviet ambassador to Ghana, and were dealing with all applications in due order, in accordance with Nigeria's interests; the Nigerian government would not tolerate what the British government had tolerated in the past ten years (protocol was followed, with deliberation, because few of the ministers felt warmly about the Russians, and agreement was reached at last, but on Nigeria's terms, in June 1961). Departing on a tangent from the line set by the reporters' inquisition on this topic, he went on to deplore the press's surviving '*colonial mentality of inferiority*': his government, he said, believed in freedom, not irresponsibility, and he proceeded to insist as an example that if political parties did not control their own extremists, there would be utter

confusion. The first actual embassies to open in Lagos were those of Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and UAR Egypt.

Sir James Robertson's six token weeks as Queen's representative, at the head of her independent Nigerian realm, ended with his embarkation in the mailboat to the traditional accompaniment of the former RWAFF's moving 'Hausa farewell' from the quayside. In his usual self-deprecatory way, he said that he had 'accomplished very little that one can really define', but the prime minister insisted in faltering tones that he had succeeded in '*bringing us together, . . . and guiding aright*' the council of ministers. Such was the emotional removal of all but the last imperial buttress, although one that had not been heavily leant upon since the last election. Robertson took his self-effacement still further by telling friends that he 'had had an easy ride - all the difficult decisions had been taken by [his] predecessor 'Jock''. It is a natural point at which to interrupt the story with a very brief general survey. It will not be another review of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's developing character, in which there was little that would now change. Pope John XXIII had just been congratulating the long procession of new African states during the year, whose Christianity under the French and Belgians had been largely Roman catholic, but the pope had also been warning them against 'illusions, the gravest of which would be to think that political independence solves all difficulties'. Muslim Abubakar, as has been shown, agreed. The interest now should perhaps be in the considerable potential economic strengths on which the unfamiliar man-made nationhood which he led might be developed. Abubakar did not believe that it would remain acceptable for long that his countrymen should be passively reconciled to being Africans, with the sole novel difference from other peoples that they could no longer blame European rule for their continent's disadvantages.

At independence 60% of Nigeria's gross national product, and 85% of its exports, were agricultural. It was the world's largest exporter of groundnuts and oil-palm products; and it grew one-seventh of the world's cocoa, which cash crop alone brought in almost £40 millions a year. Exports of oil, whose exploration has been touched on in some past chapters, were rising to about 800,000 tons a year. Britain was still the best customer, taking half of all exports and returning 46% of the imports. Export trade overall had more than doubled in value in a decade, having risen in volume by a half, and was now around an annual £350 millions; imports had quadrupled in both value and volume at the same time. Yet the shift away from agriculture, and hence one day from self-sufficiency, had begun before independence. Even in traditionally *entrepôt* Kano, symbol of the stereotyped north, there were now Hong Kong Chinese teaching the manufacture of enamelware, Danes teaching pig-farming, French experts improving on *Bin-el-Sudan* scents, Armenians instructing in production of household aluminiumware, silverplating and cutlery. There were factories, modest no doubt, for retreading tyres, making fizzy drinks and sweets, plastic footwear and steel furniture, tarpaulin, tiles and matting, soap, mirrors and dry ice. Singlets and blankets, textiles and tanneries, groundnuts and oil-milling, food-canning were all well-established, and a biscuit factory was imminent. The extrusion and moulding of plastic, and assembly of refrigerators and radios from imported parts, were also expected shortly. The same was true in other urban centres across the federation, and even Sokoto was trying (unsuccessfully) to produce cement.

Federal revenue exceeded £95 millions, of which £53 millions remained in the federal government's coffers, and the rest was allocated to the regions.

Federal recurrent expenditure was estimated at nearly £46 millions, which allowed over £6 millions to be added to the development fund. The former imbalance between north and south had greatly changed, but still did not reflect their estimated populations. For the seven million people of the western region, their government was spending £17 millions recurrent out of over £29 millions revenue, which included £6 millions federal allocation; half of the revenue came from cocoa exports. The eight million easterners had budgeted over £15 millions recurrent out of £16 millions revenue, of which over £10 millions came from the federation; palm-oil was the principal product. Eighteen million northerners would have under £18 millions recurrent spent on them out of a little more than £18 millions revenue; well over £12 millions of this was federal allocation; groundnuts and cotton still prevailed in the north. Of their development plans the west was spending over £16 millions in capital, the east nearly £7 millions and the north £10 millions in the financial year 1960-61. There was clearly still more than one place for mutual jealousies when these figures were compared.

It was equally difficult to claim that central expenditure had been curbed by a federal constitution which so many politicians had hoped would favour the regions. The federal capital programme, intended to be achieved by 1962, still had over £85 million to be found and disposed of: although only £30 million were available, still revenue surpluses ought to produce another £13 million, £34 million had been anticipated in loans (of which Britain was guaranteeing £15 million), and other smaller loans were confidently expected. Two new projects were added, however, £3.5 million for new currency, and £2 million for increased defence, which further widened the gap. Extra items which would have to be serviced were a UN special fund loan of £¼ million for the Niger dam survey, and £285 thousands from the USA for port development. An investment company, to which the colonial development corporation was now empowered by Westminster to contribute, had been set up with £5 million capital, substantially raised from British trading companies. The Ashby report had been officially published on independence, looking rather like a coming-of-age guidebook for the newly enfranchised government; but this great promise of expanded education had also yet to be budgeted for. All these figures, like the populations, looked large in 1960. Lagos officially housed 350,000 souls, Ibadan half a million, Onitsha 77,000, Kano 130,000. Unofficially, rural emigration and reduced child mortality encouraged the belief that Lagos had a million and Kano a quarter of a million, and other towns excesses over published figures in proportion.

For all that has been said, Nigeria was still at bottom an agricultural economy, subsistence living was far from unknown, and the prime minister's wide travels and growing familiarity with the thoughts of various heads of industrial nations had not yet lost him the traditional classroom teacher's fear of encouraging precocity. The influence he had been claiming that Nigeria would exercise in Africa and the world would have to be moral and diplomatic, without the backing of conventional economic or other force. As long as it was guided by him, it would be no less effective for being unlike the brashness which young contemporary Nigerians and so many other African leaders flaunted. Yet a thoughtful moderation was seen by too many as being the reverse of a virtue.

32 A complete untruth at the end of
independence year:
(Forward Digression I)
Nigeria's prime minister and the Congo

*Karya ta shekara karya;
gaskiya tana matsayinta*

During the rest of independence year both national and individuals' confidence grew, feeding on the euphoria of the moment. Although events in the Congo and elsewhere drew minds away from the cosier parochial preoccupations of the past, much wider public comment did begin to be heard on how many more senior civil service posts were still held by the British in Lagos and the north than elsewhere – in the west indeed most pensionable expatriates, not only the permanent secretaries, had disappeared. A temporary beneficiary of the southern departures was the Southern Cameroons, where a small detail of short-term British appointments, mostly from Nigeria but also from home and elsewhere, helped the united nations and the administering power to maintain an administration of sorts. However, general political opinion tended to polarise between excessive expectations of what Nigeria might now achieve externally, and blame of surviving internal expatriate influence for any imagined national failures. That querulousness apart, there were four major concerns which distracted the federal prime minister over the next three years: the Congo, the moves towards some corporate expression of continental African solidarity, the threats to national stability from the western region, and the institution of a republic. In an ideal world of stable day-to-day administration which allowed progress to evolve by consensus under God's guidance, he might have been able to concentrate on his pet hobbies, the railway towards Lake Chad and the control of the Niger's waters. The hobbies will continue to appear in the general stream of events, but those four cross-currents will have to be treated separately whenever some part of the main narrative creates an opportunity.

The Sardauna of Sokoto had something to say about civil servants and foreign policy as soon as Princess Alexandra had gone. Challenged by reporters, he said that where indigenous northerners were not 'adequate', he was beginning to think about readmitting southerners on terms, but that if west Indians offered themselves he would regard them as true brothers (a west Indian agricultural officer had been an admired pillar of the Sokoto provincial staff for years); to a resulting suggestion of recruiting US negroes, he retorted that they were not really interested in Africa. Pursued on his known interest in closer relations with the Niger republic, the Sardauna asserted that 'most of the country was once ours', and went on to say that 150 years ago he would have been leading the Sokoto army himself to help the Algerians. Once more he

refuted any suggestion of the possibility that he might disagree with Alhaji Sir Abubakar's foreign policy, since the prime minister held office by virtue of his NPC membership, and in that party was his lieutenant. This was not, of course, quite how the PM saw it, still less the PM's NCNC colleagues or the staff of the external affairs ministry. Mr Lawrence Anionwu was about to join this office as permanent secretary after, like Lawson and Wey before him, completing the course for top commonwealth public servants at London's imperial defence college: Malam Isa Wali, from whom Goble had demanded the NPC's records when it abandoned culture for politics in 1951, and who had since then been assistant clerk to the northern legislature and Hansard editor, was now in charge of the external affairs African section, and was no sub-lieutenant or lackey of the northern premier. Alhaji Sir Abubakar's reaction to the Sardauna was still governed by his currently reported view that, *'all of the governments of the federation are autonomous, each with . . . clearly defined functions, and that none could dissolve the other'*. The Sardauna's most frequent contacts with Lagos continued to be through Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu, and there was never an occasion when a conclusion on a cabinet issue was deferred on appearances that might have been further discussed with Kaduna. Informal references beforehand were not a matter of record.

Abubakar picked up another gauntlet at his regular monthly press conference, shortly before the first session of the independent parliament. Challenging those behind the running campaign to remove the remaining senior expatriates, he said that the personal attacks on Peter Stallard had come to the point where he *'must make it clear that my silence must not be mistaken for weakness'*; it was a sign of ingratitude for Nigerians to be discourteous to expatriate permanent secretaries who were serving the country so well – all aliens in Nigeria were in the country at the pleasure of the Nigerian people, but that did not mean they should be kicked out because the country was independent. He said it all again during visits to Ibadan and Benin: it was part of *'people's residual colonial mentality'* to suggest that he was being dictated to by his own official; any such suggestion could only mean that he and his fellow ministers were unfit to run the government, and his government would not tolerate some of the irresponsibility and personal abuse which the British had tolerated in the last ten years of their rule. The Sardauna was also heard to deplore press attacks on overseas officers.

Abubakar was as firm about localization when he visited the east. There Mr Samuel G Ikoku, the leader of the AG opposition in the Enugu house of assembly, was saying that it was *'unfortunate that the prime minister should be the main stumbling block to the complete Nigerianization of key posts'*, and the Zikist National Vanguard (surviving to Zik's occasional embarrassment as the *'youth wing'* of the NCNC) was still complaining that since Abubakar had never joined the nationalist struggle for independence he could not now understand the purpose of that struggle. Although the object of their scorn had brought them dull but solid substance without a colourful shadow, and though he could see that before long the country would be host to many more aliens than ever before, but far fewer of them as its direct and disciplinable servants, yet he did not choose to bandy words. He was content that other strong voices were turning upon the NCNC back-benchers clamouring for commercial nationalizations (*'It has never been one of the federal government policies'*) – Zik was positive (*'It is not good politics*

to scare away investors from Nigeria'), and the eastern region's Okpara blunt indeed ('Those who are advocating nationalization are communists, and they should have the moral courage to say so'); Chief Festus and the Sardauna echoed them. In fact the eastern region had been replacing its own expatriates steadily and without the upheavals to structures that had marked the west.

With Robertson's departure, Dr Azikiwe was sworn in traditionally as governor-general amidst some ceremony, although less perhaps than many nationalists would have liked. 'Government House' was restyled 'State House'; and although the official programme only allowed for a ten-minute speech, Zik delivered for three-quarters of an hour an address which the prime minister had neither advised upon nor drafted. Zik ranged over subjects from his disappointment at events in central and south Africa, and racialism generally, to the detention of Kenyatta, the failure of France, Portugal and Spain to sign the European convention on human rights, and Nigeria's objection to any involvement in NATO. He also urged the nation's leaders to join Alhaji Sir Abubakar and himself in the historic mission of reviving the stature of man in Africa. Shortly afterwards HE Dr Azikiwe was made a privy counsellor by the Queen and joined, coincidentally with Sir Roy Welensky, the select list of eminent politicians from independent monarchical countries of the commonwealth who shared that distinction with full cabinet ministers past and present of the United Kingdom. He was succeeded as president of the senate by Chief Dennis Osadebay of the NCNC, who had begun to theorize about the future desirability of a one-party state; and Mr Jaja Wachuku, who had been promoted while acting as head of the Nigerian UN delegation to be minister of economic development, was succeeded as elected speaker of the lower house by the waziri of Gombe Malam Jalo. Wachuku owed his successive positions to the need for a NCNC and ethnic balance in key posts, but while retaining an amused friendship with the prime minister, annoyed many other politicians with his wilfully independent policy-making. The eastern premier Dr Michael Okpara had been nominated at a Lagos party convention to be Zik's successor as national president of the NCNC; Chief T O S Benson had failed in a brave Yoruba effort to nominate Chief Odeleye Fadahunsi, after the general realization had prevailed that a head of government would be a stronger leader, and successful mediation had been undertaken by Kola Balogun (who was now acting high commissioner to Ghana, an appointment which Alhaji Sir Abubakar refused for some years to make substantive, to underline his discontent with the Nkrumah régime). The Buckingham Palace appointment of a deputy governor-general had of course lapsed entirely.

The first session of the independent parliament opened with a graceful tribute by Alhaji Sir Abubakar, with a point to it: *'Princess Alexandra had demonstrated to us that Nigeria has got quite a lot to do in keeping its own institutions - I particularly refer to the institutions of emirship or obaship or chieftaincy'*. The first major debate was on the motion proposed by Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu, the new minister of defence, and seconded by Okotie-Eboh, to give formal approval to the controversial defence agreement with Britain. Awolowo, leading the opposition, continued to attack the agreement by claiming that only the press criticism which he had inspired, and undergraduate protests in Ibadan, had brought about its watering-down, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar's riposte was heated:

I think either in Christianity or in Islam it is a sin for one to tell a lie. The leader of the opposition told this honourable house that four of us were bundled into No 10 Downing Street and were influenced to initial the heads of agreement. To use a mild word, this is completely untrue. We discussed [them] in Lancaster House. I was there from the beginning. . . . The independence of Nigeria was given without any conditions at all. . . . During the last meeting I said . . . that it is not in my habit to expose my friends. But to-day I am quite prepared to expose him. Responsible and sensible citizens of this country know some of the British ways. It is not in the nature of the British to force people in the manner that the leader of the opposition says.

'When we the premiers (though only one of them is a premier now), who were a party to the initialling of this agreement, were discussing these heads . . . in London, there were also present Sir James Robertson, Mr Lennox-Boyd, and Mr Duncan Sandys who was then the minister of defence. Now . . . at none of these discussions was the prime minister of the UK present The question of a military base for the UK armed forces was put before us. The leader of the opposition, if he is the good Christian that I think he is, if he fears God, . . . there at our meeting on the question of a military base I pointed out - it was only myself who made a comment, the minutes are available - I said that Kano aerodrome was a civilian aerodrome but that I would have no objection to the UK having another aerodrome somewhere else. And the leader of the opposition at our meeting said, 'If you cannot have it in Kano, come to the western region!' Honestly, I am telling the house the truth. At that time my honourable friend was dreaming that he might win the coming elections. . . . I am really ashamed and disappointed and most stirred that the leader of the opposition who was with me at these discussions could make the speech that he has made this morning. It is true that the original agreement contains a proposal for a military base [interruption] - the opposition can have their views, and we who are in the majority can have our way. . . . The leader of the opposition lives in a dream, and he will die before he realizes his dream. I will sit tight here and when I face another election again, they will put me back here. . . .

'It was arranged that the detailed agreements will be prepared and sent to the Nigerian government to be studied, to make whatever observation they will make, because the UK then knew very well that the four of us, the prime minister and the premiers, could not commit a future Nigerian government to an agreement of that nature. . . . We in the council of ministers, before the conference, appointed a ministerial committee to go into the details of the agreement, and it was as a result of the discussions in the ministerial committee that we have exactly the form of the agreement in which it is now before us. So there is no point in the leader of the opposition saying that it is because of the public outcry. He himself cannot constitute himself into the public.

It is no extravagance to suggest that Awolowo's personal attitude on this subject left Abubakar with less tolerance for all Yoruba extremism than he was ever to develop for general Igbo zealotry. There followed an ill-disciplined and bad-tempered debate, early in which Chief O B Akin-Olugbade said that he was not surprised that they were in this predicament, since the head of their government was a 'KCBE' [*sic*], a knight, not a nationalist, and he had been consistently so (but the chief was long after to become a good social friend of the knight). Many members were less than impressed that Nigeria's share of the bargain was access to British arms sales and military training in Britain, on better terms than seemed available elsewhere at the time. Nevertheless, the ayes had it, although the noes rumbled on to re-echo among the public

emotions of the less well-informed for another year, and Head and Hunt in the British high commission were quick to treat the agreement as an unnecessary embarrassment. Nobody was yet able to contemplate and assess the value of an agreement on mutual military support in the hypothetical event of a military mutiny.

Another graceful interlude followed, when Abubakar replied to a motion paying tribute to the government and himself for both the 1 October celebrations and the dignified and independent manner in which he had presented Nigeria's case 'before the bar of world opinion' at Lake Success. He was '*not in fighting mood*', despite some churlish opposition remarks, but using prescience he said, '*I think it is wrong during our lifetime – that is my personal view – it is wrong during one's lifetime for one to think that one has completed one's work, and I think the works of people are usually realized after they had left this earth. . . . As I said, I always feel that when we are living, we can be called great or something like that; but possibly after one has completed one's work, and other people have taken over, then one's worth is really seen and appreciated*'.

Foreign affairs were the second topic. He accepted an opposition motion to resuscitate the west African inter-territorial economic, technical and cultural organizations: '*I had the opportunity of discussing these matters with the president of the Ghana republic, the president of Liberia, the prime minister of Togoland and the president of the republic of Tchad, and so we have gone beyond initiating discussions. We are now at a stage of trying to put something into writing. . . . We in the government should not forget that in the past these inter-territorial organizations were introduced by the British in their west African territories*'.

The difficulty of staffing new embassies was touched on in a broader comment which he made during a contentious supplementary appropriation for his ministry of foreign affairs and commonwealth relations: '*You see, commonsense does not necessarily go with a university degree. . . . When the government makes appointment of its ambassadors abroad, it is the practice in all countries of the world that a parliament, which is a supreme body, should try to support such an individual – of course, if he behaves. . . . He has not started even to do the work, and they have started comparing and criticizing simply because of inferiority complex in the minds of some people. . . . The prime minister cannot be everywhere at the same time, . . . but I have been trying my best. I have visited quite a number of countries in Africa, and I am still travelling. After all, we started only a month or two ago and we have not done badly so far. I hope . . . to renew contact with some of those heads of state that I met in New York (some of them, I must tell you [with a grin], are quite interesting) whom I would like to know more about*'. On opening diplomatic relations with the eastern bloc, he had this to say about 'devils they knew': '*I hope that [the] house will appreciate that some of those countries that are opening [missions] are completely new to us, but others we have been in association with for a very long time*'.

A day or two later he moved the formal motion to approve the foreign policy as it had been set out in the speech written for Princess Alexandra on 3 October, based on his own earlier statement of 20 August: '*. . . good may come from the west, and good may come from the east, . . . [or from the] continent of Africa. . . . We will lead Nigeria along the path of truth; . . . it is not for us to go out to show to those smaller countries that we are big in size and population, and therefore they have to come trailing behind us. . . . I see no point at all in Nigeria having to station troops along the border between Nigeria and the*

Niger republic [he did not mention Cameroun]. There should be exchange in ideas between central African states and west African states, or between the south African states and those states in north Africa. . . . No one country should try to impose itself on the other countries. . . . The greatest problem is, as I see it quite clearly now, the problem of keeping our continent out of what I always call the ideological war. . . . We should try to keep out from Africa the evils which we believe are menacing not only Europe, not only Asia, not only south America, but the world as a whole'. He then could not resist another dig at Nkrumah.

'I had occasion to speak to 'a very important politician' in one of the countries in west Africa in 1957. He came to speak to me about the importance of political union between separate states, and he said that his country and another country would merge and would federate. I told the gentleman that . . . it is difficult for this idea to materialize, mainly because of the personal ambitions of individuals. . . . They had their independence, and they federated. What happened? The federation lasted for only a short time. . . . Because of the personal ambitions of individuals in two or three states, we think it is unnecessary and unwise for separate countries to federate. . . . The countries are all seeking to be seated in the united nations as separate countries. Now once a country has its own sovereignty, it would be difficult, in my view, for that country to surrender its sovereignty. . . . We are not going to ask to give advice, we are not going to ask to give assistance. We have to be approached. That, sir, is our policy, and I call it, 'Live and let live in Africa!'. He gave no comfort to would-be revisionist critics of artificially drawn boundaries.

Next day in his reply to the debate he enlarged with some reassurances on this: *'Though I am not in the house, I always listen to your debates [on the relay] in my room. Enahoro asked for an all-party committee on foreign policy. That is not practicable, because after all this is the house of representatives, where we have a government and an opposition, and the foreign policy of a government is for the government of the day. . . . If there is any very serious matter affecting Nigeria as a nation, I shall definitely consult the leader of the opposition [bi-partisanship no longer being taken as a Westminster due].*

'It is our policy to fight for the liberation of all states in Africa which are still under colonial rule; I am not omitting intentionally because I made no mention. On south Africa, it is an explosive subject and I do not want at all to embarrass my colleagues in the commonwealth, with whom I think this matter will be discussed. But . . . Nigeria has a duty to see that there is equality of treatment to all mankind' (clearly, in his vocabulary, 'duty' always existed even when not accepted, but a 'right' was something that had to be earned). Reverting to the defence agreement, 'All that we are concerned with is the security and safety of the Nigerian state'; and finally, to a comment about notable foreign absentees on 1 October, 'Nigeria is going to see to it that Red China is admitted into the united nations. . . . We cannot invite every country of the world to our independence'. He was hardly embarrassed that earlier in the meeting the house had voted a pension for federal prime ministers on retirement: the figure was £1,500.

When the house rose Alhaji Sir Abubakar at once showed himself as a statesman who no longer waited to be invited. Without public forewarning he flew to London *via* Rome, whence a Tunisian aircraft ferried him to Tunis, where he talked with President Habib Bourguiba about the continuing troubles of Algeria. He had concluded that a solution to its problems must be forced, less because of a common interest in Islamic social peace, than in order to forestall interference in Africa by the godless third parties from further east who were

supporting the *Front de la Libération Nationale* (FLN); and he had hopes that Bourguiba and he might persuade Britain, and thence indirectly the USA, to insist on French initiatives (Bourguiba was, if anything, more pro-west than, and certainly as anti-soviet as, Alhaji Sir Abubakar: his support for violence in anti-colonialism was nicely judged to minimise criticism from either extreme, assisted by advice from an Oxonian Lebanese Baptist). Abubakar arrived at Heathrow at about the same time as Sir James Robertson was disembarking, fancy-free, in Liverpool, and pressed his views on Mr Macmillan over another lunch at Admiralty House. There were also discussions with Iain Macleod and Lord Perth of the early versions of the British overseas services aid scheme, a gift horse which Nigeria was still persuading Sierra Leone to look in the mouth; pride and comparative wealth made it easier for Nigeria to insist that it would still undertake any 'topping-up' necessary to induce expatriates to serve her. They also spoke of the new British overseas services resettlement bureau, Nigeria's difficulties with the southern Cameroons, the need to release Jomo Kenyatta, the imminent refusal to grant Buganda independence from Uganda, the damage to the Commonwealth that a failure of the imminent Central African conference would cause, and the worse damage if South Africa remained in the commonwealth as a republic. Abubakar observed Gaitskell's troubles with Labour Party unilateral disarmers and the challenge to his leadership from Mr Harold Wilson. Revisiting Bourguiba on the way home, he was taken to see the ruins of Carthage, met the Algerian prime minister of the provisional government in exile, Ferhat Abbas from the FLN, and told the president that the phlegmatic British head of government seemed reluctant to ruffle the French, who were about to announce a referendum on Algeria's future in any event.

His return to Lagos was followed by the accolade that even the globe's most anti-western publicity-hungry politicians found it hard not to envy: his head and shoulders appeared on every important world bookstall, as the cover illustration to a profile story in *Time* magazine. It may have been this portrait of himself as a new and reassuring style of African politician, evidently more destined for world statesmanship than many names more widely recognized, that prompted him to set Peter Stallard what that diplomatic administrator found to be his most extraordinary task; nothing less than to draft a letter to Jomo Kenyatta (while still under the restriction order), telling him that the best contribution he could make in Africa's interest would be for him to step down and retire from active politics. Abubakar was of course mindful of the Mau Mau atrocities with which Kenyatta was still associated in official quarters. Stallard never knew whom Alhaji Sir Abubakar had consulted, still less whether such a letter was ever faired for signature or received.

The prime minister accepted an invitation to open an African conference of the international labour organization (ILO), whose director-general had said that he hoped the discussions would avoid political issues. Unabashed, Abubakar gently allowed the audience to know that labour problems were so closely related with politics that it was unrealistic to try to separate them. He then wearily prepared to go north with his latest private secretary Sunday A Uaboi (Ahmed Kari was about to succeed S A Odukale as principal private secretary). First he spent Christmas in Kaduna at the newly built prime minister's resthouse (which had obviated the regular stopgap need to borrow the northern speaker's residence or board with friends), when the emperor Hailé Selassié was expected to call on his way home from Brazil and Ghana; and then the new year at the Bauchi farm and with his friend Abubakar Garba

Kafin Madaki, driving his own, by now very battered old, Vauxhall *Velox*.

The emperor did not come because a short-lived but bloody revolution in Addis Ababa sent him post-haste to preside over its collapse (the élite imperial guard which had rebelled had the most efficient one-quarter of its strength serving in the Congo). Nor was the end of the month restful. The formation of a national front for the liberation of south Vietnam was no longer a distant matter of indifference to an African head of government. The leaders of Ghana and Guinée were joined by the now truncated republic of Mali's Modibo Keita in announcing yet another union of African states, in the course of which the *osagyefo* suggested a joint African high command, but made no mention of Nigeria: from his retreat Alhaji Sir Abubakar told inquirers that, '*because Nigeria is a very big country the smaller ones are afraid. It is an inferiority complex. I want to assure them that we have no aggressive feelings at all*'. There was a curiosity for him to observe, that the Rhodesia & Nyasaland federal review conference was being held (and swiftly adjourned) in London, with two overlapping and conflicting constitutional conferences – that for Southern Rhodesia presided over by the commonwealth relations secretary, Duncan Sandys, and that for Northern Rhodesia by his colleague the colonial secretary, Iain Macleod: these were two politicians with little philosophy in common, and both somewhat overshadowed in journalists' eyes by the superficially stronger personality of the federal prime minister, Sir Roy Welensky. In Nyasaland a mere working party was finding it much easier to devise a generally agreeable new franchise.

But then France exploded its third atomic bomb in the Sahara (by this time the USA had tested 166, the USSR 70 and the UK 20). The prime minister announced that he was shocked, and directed his staff by radio-telephone to summon the French ambassador to the foreign affairs department the next day. The minister of state for foreign affairs, senator Alhaji Nuhu Bamalli, who sat in the inner cabinet, was abroad. The minister of state, without cabinet rank (who normally dealt with commonwealth relations), Dr Esin presented an oral protest, demanded that France provide him with all the scientific data available on resulting fall-out as soon as available, and threatened a ban on all French ships or aircraft in Nigerian waters or airspace. It was a heady experience for a junior minister in a new nation; at least he did not have to do what a counterpart in another country newly independent was to have to do – to ask the former colonial power's resident representative what formalities had to be followed in order to break off diplomatic relations effectively with himself.

Immediately after Nigeria's introduction to UNO by the Earl of Home, Alhaji Sir Abubakar had sent his minister for foreign affairs, Nuhu Bamalli, to meet Kasavubu and Lumumba; he was to tell them that Abubakar wanted to see peace between all Congolese, but that in accordance with the UN resolutions he was ready to send in troops. Accordingly, in October 1960 the newly-promoted Lieutenant-colonel Aguiyi-Ironsi had paraded before his prime minister and led the advance party of two battalions of Nigerian troops with some ancillary units to join the Swedish-led 16,000-strong united nations force of 27 nationalities in the Congo. Brigade headquarters were set up at Albertville in north-east Katanga. Aguiyi-Ironsi's own 5th battalion (5QONR), which had been on internal security operations in the southern Cameroons until replaced by UK troops, and which included officers destined to win high rank, Yakubu (James) Pam, Largema and Maimalari, first went to Bukavu in Kivu province. Several British officers of the 3rd brigade were left desolately behind, for appearance's sake in another independent African land. 4 QONR followed to Kamina in western Katanga, later fighting their way through jolly but recalcitrant Baluba people to Manona in the east. What had been happening, and Abubakar's first thoughts as expressed to the UN general assembly, have been set out in chapters 30 and 31. It may now reduce confusion to look forward throughout the prime minister's leadership in relations with that unhappy country during the remaining years of this part, without purporting to tell an outline history of the early democratic republic of Congo, which must be sought elsewhere. On 8 November President Kasavubu was finally enabled to address the general assembly, and by 22 November the UN credentials committee had concluded that his delegation, which had been contested since September by M Patrice Lumumba's representatives, should be seated in UNO. The assembly agreed to this specific admission by 50 votes to 34, 13 abstaining. Lumumba himself was still in his Léopoldville home, protected by UN troops and watched by Congolese militia under command of the Colonel Mobutu who had ordered his arrest; his supporters were leaving Léopoldville, with the intent of setting themselves up in Stanleyville.

Nigeria's Mr Wachuku, because he was chairman of the conciliation committee (which Kasavubu and Mobutu would not allow to come to their country, since they doubted whether all its members were impartial), abstained from voting as head of Alhaji Sir Abubakar's delegation, in order to protect his own position as honest broker. His immediate reward for that was the resignation of the pro-Lumumban Malian and Guinean members of the conciliation group, and some radical abuse at home; but he was personally convinced that Lumumba had been properly and justifiably dismissed, even had he been fit for his position. On the same day as the UN vote favouring Kasavubu, the Congolese authorities expelled the Ghanaian envoy, Nathaniel Welbeck, for interfering with their affairs on Nkrumah's behalf. Unsurprisingly, by this time the *Pilot* in Nigeria had come out as a critic of Lumumba's personality, and the Action Group had begun a reevaluation of Tshombe as an anti-centrist and was moving towards a rejection of Kasavubu and canonization of Lumumba. Abubakar for once looked at the situation *de facto*, not as it might be *de jure*. It had already become clear to the farsighted that the Congo troubles were no longer a continuation of the old intellectual struggle for freedom against white men, but struggles between nationalist factions for control of an artificial new state, and between continental factions for leadership of the African segment of the *tiers monde*. Abubakar learnt about the reality of *weltpolitik* from the experience

... out in the remainder of this chapter; his opponents and critics saw the
 ... as a commonplace book from which to quote selectively in support of
 ... theories.

... ment Athaji Sir Abubakar struggled to understand the truth behind
 ... and gave his preliminary view: 'I would not have suggested fresh
 ... Congo, had there emerged from their elections even one single
 ... of the seats in the house. But this did not happen - all
 ... very small numbers. . . . I heard also that there was a
 ... the prime minister of Congo, but the vote was given
 ... which did not have a quorum. . . . This is the first
 ... taking part in this international measure towards
 ... I gave our troops one and single advice: 'You
 ... officers; nothing whatever you are told, just do
 ... interest was one of censure on the united
 ... UN, . . . Elsewhere he repeated that
 ... Lumumba; if only his party (or indeed
 ... quarter of the votes. His problem
 ... being a symbol of federal
 ... than constitutionality, law

... house to Port Francqui
 ... of education Pierre
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 ... Kasavubu,
 ... whites in
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 ... plotting with
 ... nationalized
 ... Orientale.
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 ... a company
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 ... command,

and to reconvene the scattered parliament. Khrushchev called Hammarskjöld 'the chief assassin'.

Muddle and uncertainty ensured lasting indecision, while ordinary Congolese people tried to carry on their normal lives. By the end of 1960 the general assembly could raise enough votes neither to endorse the organization's past policy on the Congo, if policy it was, nor to condemn its actions. ONUC lacked direction and self-confidence. Deputy prime minister Antoine Gizenga, supported by more soviet air power, claimed on 13 December to rule Kivu and Orientale provinces from Stanleyville in the name of the jailed Lumumba, and expelled non-communist consular officials; Albert Kalonji continued to rule in south Kasai, and Moïse Tshombe to hold out against Hammarskjöld's forces in Katanga; Kasavubu and Mobutu's supporters predominated in Léopoldville and quateur. Hammarskjöld's special representative in the Congo, Mr Rajeshwar Dayal, was not on good personal terms with President Kasavubu, and so lacked any practical influence. Many Congolese, unable to distinguish between other Europeans and Belgians who might be connected with the former stratified systems, could not understand why African troops in ONUC were impartial, or even gave protection to white missionaries and technicians. A Nigerian detachment made its way over Lake Tanganyika and through Ruanda-Urundi (where the Belgians were unhelpful) to Bukavu to free some international employees who had been incarcerated by Congolese troops; the resulting casualties led to bad blood and non-fraternization. Yet Abubakar's instructions through the staff were to build confidence, remove suspicions and dispel rumours: it was not easy, although there were a few happy cases of Nigerians rescuing nuns and priests from Congolese military harassment without prior conflict, usually after firm but ticklish negotiation.

In these circumstances the provision of a detachment of Nigerian police to help in maintaining civilian law and order in Léopoldville was a practical and welcome gleam of light which Alhaji Sir Abubakar was glad to shed. These smart disciplined men embarrassed the plethora of UN officials, whose inexperience in the exercise of responsibility for people and administration had left them ignorant of how best to use what were essentially unarmed constables. To begin with, the policemen were allocated beat duties in the commercial districts, where the northerners found a well-established *anguwar Hausawa* ('Hausas' ward) with its own chief or *sarki*. Some of the NPF officers were British, and all ranks found the remnants of the Congolese police force friendly; for want of any UN command guidelines, all the officers based their behaviour on that of expatriate advisers to a touchy pre-independence Nigerian native authority police force. This involved some tactful shutting of eyes: the courts were barely operative, and the Congolese police charge offices doled out fines, giving a receipt for a mulct of 500 francs, say, but letting the culprit off with 200 francs if he did not insist on the money being accounted for; in the case of apprehended thieves, the local force left them to the neighbours in the first instance – once they had recovered in hospital from community justice, the charge office would remand them indefinitely until whatever time the courts might reopen. Nigerian policemen found it hard to disapprove (they called it 'the Borno system'). The first Nigerian police commander in the Congo, Louis Edet, and his relief were sometimes to find personnel, as well as material, resources severely stretched in years to come.

It is fair to give other countries proper credit: Ashanti police from Ghana, also only armed with truncheons but connected by radio to Kumasi, did as well as their more numerous Nigerian counterparts; a Ghanaian also ran an efficient

...from the distinguished Akan royal family. The Tunisians
...the most highly thought of for reliability, and the Moroccans were
...essential to the protection of an American-supplied nuclear reactor;
...wealth members, including the Nigerians, had the immense
...language and procedures from a common heritage.
...members of international organizations watched in
...and white officers exchanged lighthearted stories of
...brown Indian, Pakistani and Malayan counterparts
...Alhaji Sir Abubakar learnt with satisfaction that the
...situation of civil disorder where every faction
...favoured no side must be its enemy; and
...from the destruction of their food crops
...interested to hear the comment of a
...who would give all the chiefs two
...should give his soldiers orders to
...out of their wits']. The GOC of
...came out in January 1961 to
...ever six months, that there would
...pay, and that some Nigerian

...a compromise coalition
...constitutional
...Kasavubu,
...although into senior
...Kalonji in a newly
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...Mocbil authority
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obligation (only to dismiss a prime minister after a specific parliamentary vote of no confidence) into a Congolese president's power, since that was now laid down very precisely under a Belgian-drafted *loi fondamentale*. Saddened that there had been that actual fighting involving Nigerian and Congolese troops in Kivu, the province lying between Stanleyville and Ruanda-Urundi, he now sent a shocked telegram about Lumumba's death to Hammarskjöld, who had been in South Africa to discuss *apartheid*: '*We deplore in the most emphatic terms all forms of mass destruction of human beings and the unnecessary killing of political opponents*'. Privately, and too idealistically, he now blamed the UN for not having taken on what he saw as the real task, which was to induce the Congolese people as a whole, not just their politicians, by education and direct administration to bear true responsibility themselves. Openly, remembering his rejection at Lake Success of any imposition of a new trusteeship, he said that he blamed east and west powers equally for the interference which had created the worst of the débâcle, and Africans as impartially for the violence before and after it.

The troubles came home, and there were violent disturbances in Lagos as mobs protested about Lumumba's murder in their own way. The Nigerian trades unions and youth congresses, effectively pro-Ghana and anti-Abubakar lobbies, and supporters of the Action Group, demanded the withdrawal of the country's contingents; persons and property at the Belgian and American embassies were damaged by demonstrators, exacerbated by the presence of some British officers among the police riot squads. Abubakar was resting briefly in Bauchi once more, and sent down an announcement '*greatly deploring the hooliganism which can only discredit Nigeria in the eyes of her friends all over the world*'. All processions and meetings were banned in Lagos for the time being. The prime minister gave warning that the capital territory's police counteraction had been '*too mild*', and that he hoped that they would in future '*take stern measures against demonstrations which get out of hand*'. He recognized that part of the opposition to his actions on the Congo was due to a fear that if events improved, some of the credit would accrue to himself. He had also come to terms with the ambivalence of the NCNC, which supported Wachuku and himself at the level of the cabinet, but elsewhere tended to support Nkrumahist views without aligning itself with Ghana.

The security council finally made a decision on 13 February 1961 to take all appropriate measures to 'prevent' civil war from occurring, including the use of force in the last resort, if necessary; to ensure the immediate withdrawal of Belgian personnel and all other advisers and mercenaries not under UN control, and to inquire into the circumstances of Lumumba's death. Mr Khrushchev promptly redoubled his overt campaign of non-recognition of Dag Hammarskjöld, with the plan to replace him with a 'troika' of one man from each of the three 'worlds' (a formula with which one or two Nigerians had toyed as the panacea for their own national disunity). Immediately after the general assembly had endorsed the security council resolution, he went on to demand a commission of African states to supervise the 'restoration of an independent Congo'. Nehru and 66 other delegates supported his call for a purely African force to replace ONUC. East Germany, Ghana and Yugoslavia followed Nasser's and Khrushchev's lead in recognising the Lumumbist rulers of Orientale. By this time the effective Congolese leaders were arriving for themselves at a half-hearted majority agreement on a confederacy under Kasavubu, and clashes between ONUC and most of the Congolese were beginning to dwindle. This was as well, as the 3rd battalion of the Ghana

army mutinied at Tshikapa in Kasai, and had to be sent home for disbandment, where one soldier (of Nigerian origin) was sentenced to death, two to life imprisonment and one to ten years. Opportunists were now seeing the Congo as a Tom Fiddler's ground for individuals on the make and for expansionist ideologies.

M Tshombe in Katanga, reliant on Belgians and *mercenaires* to mine the copper and command his soldiery, and still intent on removing Lumumbists from his province, rejected the security council's demands. But so also did Leopoldville, and Iléo, Kalonji and Tshombe signed a military alliance; this rapport suggested that Iléo's government no longer treated Katanga as having seceded. Gizenga in the north-east, although the communist bloc's protégé, added to the pervasive uncertainty by expelling all that second world's journalists as well as first world consuls who did not recognise his government as Lumumba's legitimate heir. Kasavubu's army drove Sudanese and Canadian support troops out of the river port of Matadi.

Although not all the first world countries were convinced of the realism of Hammarskjöld's aims, tension was reduced when the revenge killings which had been expected in pro-Lumumba Orientale and Kivu provinces (where the breakdown was now total except for Nigerian and other ONUC military patrolling) turned out to be comparatively few. Wachuku's UN conciliation commission recommended world recognition of Kasavubu's provisional central government, and Nigeria sponsored a resolution calling on the president to reconvene his parliament forthwith; but fate was against him and Wachuku found himself attacked for this pragmatism when press commentators expressed revulsion against a surprise removal of six pro-Lumumbists to south Kasai, where they were executed on charges of complicity in the previous year's violence and murders.

In the context of the March 1961 commonwealth conference, Alhaji Sir Abubakar said publicly that it would be irresponsible for any country with troops in the Congo to withdraw them from UN command: '*Our object in sending troops there is to restore peace and order - and this has not yet been achieved*'; and within the prime ministers' talks he found it awkward to accept too warmly the Canadian Mr John Diefenbaker's paradoxical statement that if the universal character of the UN were to be preserved, the UN force should be confined to non-white troops. He had to face a hostile audience of over a thousand hissing Nigerian students in Islington town hall, most of whom clearly resented the fact that their prime minister was a northerner. Over loud barracking he told them that if Nigeria had been independent a year earlier, it might have exercised quite a strong influence for good on the Congolese leaders, and things not have gone the way they had (he did not stress that Whitehall had not let him send in troops in anticipation of full independence). Nigeria's only interest was to help to maintain law and order there, supporting no faction except an independent republic: but in any event Nigeria was in no position to prevent foreign influences from pouring into the Congo, least of all by closing eyes to the real situation in that miserable country. The jeers and derision continued on the pavement outside, to the astonishment of the watching policemen, long after the meeting had broken up in disorder.

A number of the Congolese leaders now escaped to a round table in the tranquillity of Antananarivo in the democratic republic of Madagascar, where Iléo and Tshombe arrived at a fuller mutual comprehension, and some understanding with Gizenga seemed possible, with the tripartite aim

of removing the UN force and constituting a confederation of sovereign states under Kasavubu as president. Kasavubu's subsequent announcement on 17 April that he was ready to co-operate with UNO, and to accept the February security council resolution, wrecked this fragile coming to terms.

In April 1961 Abubakar told parliament of his conclusions so far. He knew that his troops had had to fight both Mobutu and the Lumumbists, in support of basic peace and orderliness. It is not hard to read into his speeches the underlying thought that had imperialist philosophies been differently applied, the Congo's story might have been Nigeria's. Speaking on the budget as minister of foreign affairs and commonwealth relations, he passed on Hammarskjöld's message of gratitude for the Nigerians' efforts in the Congo, and reminded the house that their unarmed policemen patrolling the capital had made 'a tremendous impression on people who always connected the forces of law and order with brutal methods of suppression'. Reports showed that some African states had interfered in domestic concerns, with the result that the country was now divided. The Congo police were quick, he said, to learn the advantages of humane behaviour. In the interests of their own men, members should weigh their words carefully before saying anything, because it was very disheartening for soldiers whenever they read statements that they should be recalled because they were not serving any useful purpose. Members tended to think the neighbouring Congo the pre-eminent threat to the peace of the world, but there were other distant threats, as in south-east Asia (which the commonwealth leaders had just been discussing). To a private motion regretting the failure of the UN's intervention, he moved an amendment to press for the continuance of measures for peace and order, and rejected any idea of withdrawing Nigeria's contingents. This was the last reference to the Congo which he made personally in parliament for four years (and the next was to be in the context of an attack on Nkrumah); but it was a summary with which many who saw the Congo as an object lesson rather than an opportunity for ideological experiment were ready to agree, whatever misunderstanding it showed of events in Brussels before Belgium's withdrawal:

The Congo had been run by Belgium on a military basis, and there was no attempt by the colonial power to bring together the provinces of the Congo republic. There seemed to be no serious and countrywide consultations with the people of the Congo before the constitution which gave them independence was arrived at. Therefore when some people agreed that the Congo should be independent, we did not think they knew exactly what they were saying, and possibly forgot that men at times like to get together and plan something big, while they forget that ambitions could break them into bits. So they had a constitution which the colonial power suggested should be a provisional one, just to start them off, and they could sit down by themselves and draw up a new one to their liking. As soon as it started, some countries within and outside Africa suddenly became interested in the affairs of the Congo republic. Instead of allowing the Congolese, who were not prepared to shoulder the responsibility of independence – instead of allowing them to be by themselves, to have time to think and to understand themselves and their country – some people started to put into the heads of Congolese leaders that they should do this, should do that. As a result, opinion was divided. Maybe one should blame the former colonial power, maybe some of the great powers, maybe some independent African countries

A head of state, legally appointed, had dismissed a prime minister, who was also legal. One man broke away and said his province was a separate state. Another, in the same province, said his own portion had become a state. And so on. The

state of Congo under the federal capital of Léopoldville. Once safely back in Katanga, Tshombe announced on 3 July that he had only meant an economic, not a political reunion; on 4 July the president of the Katangan chamber of deputies told the lower house that Tshombe had only signed the Léopoldville agreement under duress, in order to gain his liberty.

At the Monrovia conference (described in the 'digression' from the following chapter) Alhaji Sir Abubakar had supported the UN, called for reconciliation between Kasavubu and Gizenga, and advised caution in any third party's support for anti-colonial rebels, lest the result be '*more Congos*'. The conference agreed not to take sides in the internal quarrels, and Kasavubu began to negotiate with Gizenga and other Lumumbists. Mr Dayal resigned in May, to be succeeded by the Irish political adviser to the secretary-general, Mr Conor Cruise O'Brien. Hammarskjöld began to exercise more direct control from New York, taking his principal strategic advice from those 19 members of the mainly Afro-Asian advisory committee (civilians, including Wachuku) whose states manned ONUC. The Nigerian civil servant Francis Nwokedi now held an official UN position in the Congo. The Congolese parliament reassembled in July under UN guards, without Tshombe or any other Katangan present, one year after the hectic mob had grabbed King Baudouin's sword, and a 40-year old M Cyrille Adoula was duly empowered as prime minister to lead a government of national unity on 2 August. Gizenga joined as deputy PM, assuming that Lumumbists would soon dominate the government, and dissolved his Stanleyville base. Adoula, seeming to be a socialist neutralist, assured the UN that he would quell Katanga's secession. This coincided with the arrival of the 3rd battalion of the Queen's Own Nigeria regiment for a tour of duty in the Congo. Shortly afterwards the newly promoted brigadier Aguiyi-Ironsi (who through an embarrassing mistake had been wrongly announced as recipient of an MBE in the new year's honours list) left the Congo, where he had commanded troops of twelve UN member states, to become adviser on military affairs to the Nigerian high commission in London; there he would be attending the imperial defence college (where he never made his way into the library), and undergo a short training attachment at Camberley staff college. The police commander Edet also returned home on promotion to commissioner of police for the capital territory of Lagos.

Tshombe was thereupon told by the UN to remove the five hundred non-Congolese personnel in his forces, and Hammarskjöld sent troops in on 28 August to try to disarm them, but these were met with effective resistance. On 1 September the UN broke off what formal relations it had with Katanga and attempted to arrest its government. While heavy fighting went on in Élisabethville and Jadotville, Tshombe agreed to talk on neutral ground about peace terms to the secretary-general, who flew to Ndola in Northern Rhodesia for that purpose, but died when his aircraft crashed *en route* on 17 or 18 September. Speculation over the crash has continued: but with one individual focus of controversy removed, Tshombe and Mahmoud Khiari of ONUC became able to settle on a provisional ceasefire on 21 September. This did not bring an end to all the violent divisions. In November Mobutu reacted to reports of Katangan bombing of his central forces by making another effort to end secession by force, assisted by Gizenga, and occupied Albertville in north Katanga, thus bisecting the province.

While UNO was pondering its commission's report, just published, which shared the blame for Lumumba's death between Kasavubu and Tshombe, Antoine Gizenga reverted to Stanleyville, and his supposedly pro-central

troops mutinied and dismembered 13 ONUC Italian airmen under the alleged misapprehension that they were Belgians; and Katangans assaulted two UNO officials and killed an ONUC Indian soldier. The hitherto equivocal security council now on 24 November positively resolved to end secession. It authorised Hammarskjöld's relief the Burmese Buddhist acting secretary-general U Thant to arrest all mercenaries and foreign advisers serving Katanga; U Thant's first move, as a pacifist, was to offer to appoint a special representative to oversee a reconciliation, provided that the central government were to take the initiative in asking him to do so; to which Tshombe's prompt response was to call for an all-out scorched earth defence of Katanga against UN invaders. Fighting broke out in Élisabethville. O'Brien resigned from both the Irish foreign service and the UNO; he publicly accused Britain and France of collusively giving covert support to Katanga in its economically selfish secession, while overtly supporting the USA and the Afro-Asian members of the commonwealth in backing a fictitious Congolese unity. Britain, which was in fact about to supply 1,000 lb bombs for use against Katanga, delayed their delivery, and the acting secretary-general later withdrew Hammarskjöld's request for them.

Fighting continued between Katangan forces and ONUC units, each blaming the other for violating the ceasefire, and trying to remove their opponents' roadblocks, but on 18 December the UN command called another temporary ceasefire while Tshombe went to Léopoldville to talk to Adoula. Tshombe had appealed to the American president Kennedy to mediate with Adoula and to guarantee his own safety, but now agreed to accept both the republican basic law and the UN resolutions, with a view to a constitutional revision in 1962. Again he first went home and then equivocated: his national assembly would, he said, first have to ratify his acceptance. Next, on the other side, central troops in northern Katanga killed twenty missionaries. Tshombe made an eight-point declaration at a meeting in Kitona, reflecting the *status quo*, after receiving a delegation from Adoula and ONUC.

1962 still saw the Lumumba faction strong in the north-east and surrounding areas, which were opposed to control from Léopoldville; Tshombe strong, backed by the mining interests, in the south-east; and Mobutu's forces from the capital alternately challenging both of these sectors, and then having to fall back. And throughout all this time of violent confusion the Nigerian army and civilian police were playing their part, devoted as much to simple law and order, freedom of movement for themselves, and often direct self-defence, as to implementing the equivocal UN strategy. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was still proud of their showing of the green-and-white flag, ashamed for Africa of the shambles surrounding them, and more conscious than many of his peers that the costs of the operations were not being met by the member states who had most to say on their purpose.

One corner of the Léopoldville-Stanleyville-Élisabethville triangle of forces was weakened when the chamber of deputies turned against Gizenga, his party split, and he was successively deprived of office, stripped of parliamentary immunity, and arrested with 300 followers on 14 January on charges of rebellion. On 16 February Adoula asked Tshombe to come to Léopoldville to turn the Kitona talks into action, and on 18 March Tshombe came and told Adoula, who had just met Alhaji Sir Abubakar at a friendly but fruitless session during the meeting of heads of state in Lagos (described in next chapter's 'digression'), that his Katangan assembly had now accepted their agreement and that he too would negotiate again - if the UN assured his personal safety.

The talks were inconclusive, but the Nigerian troops secured his departure home against intervention by hostile central authorities; this impartial action by black foreign soldiers somewhat reduced the deep Katangan distrust of the UN, although it angered those Nigerians at home who wished to see Tshombe hanged for Lumumba's murder. Adoula's supporters had now lost their faith in the UN, for the different reason that the organization seemed unequipped to replace the remaining Belgian technicians, and indeed seemed under ONUC's new Ghanaian UN civil servant head Robert Gardiner to contemplate bringing some experienced Belgians back to work for the country they already knew.

The new Nigerian GOC, Major-general Welby-Everard, paid the first of his regular quarterly visits to his brigade in the Congo, using an air force plane allocated to the army for his personal use. He concluded that Brigadier Femi ('Baba') Ogun-dipe was doing very well, an assessment endorsed when later Ogun-dipe became chief of staff of ONUC. The Nigerian contingent was however threatened by troubles at home in May 1962: at a time (to be covered in chapter 34's 'digression') when the western regional premier in Ibadan had been arguably dismissed and was justifying his refusal to vacate his office, the first battalion of the Queen's Own Nigeria regiment was in transit back from Kasai to its headquarters in Enugu, and the fourth battalion was on its way out of Ibadan to relieve the first. 5QONR, whose home barracks were in Kaduna, was stationed in Léopoldville. In the event the sister third battalion, by this time back in Kaduna, moved down to Ibadan, and all was, for the moment, well; but that Nigeria's own internal security was severely strained was only too evident.

Adoula and Tshombe met yet again in May, but an understanding to reintegrate Mobutu's army with Katanga's (which was still speciously called a *gendarmerie*) fell to the ground when they proved unable to agree the wording of the communiqué, and the talks failed on 26 June. Katanga's forces continued to be strengthened with outside support and by the Belgian holding company Union Minière. A week after a threat by his finance minister to stop all copper production if the royalties were to go to the central government, Tshombe then precipitately offered to help Léopoldville with subventions; and when his troops staged a grand parade through Elisabethville on 11 July to celebrate two years of secession, ONUC erected new roadblocks against any repetition. This action brought a mass attack upon themselves from, by one count, 10,000 pro-Tshombe women. In desperation U Thant sought sanctions by Belgium, Britain, France and USA to bring Tshombe to heel, but although all these countries agreed to apply peaceful pressure, Britain led those that were reluctant to join the USA in coercive intervention. The sceptical international copper interests ignored U Thant's offer to give them military protection if they paid their royalties and taxes directly to the central government over the heads of the provincial government, whereupon Adoula imposed sanctions on Katanga's communications. On 1 July the small neighbouring Belgian trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi became independent as the constitutional monarchy of Burundi and the republic of Rwanda.

The acting secretary-general responded to Adoula's request for constitutional advice by calling on four commissioners from member countries which enjoyed federal or confederate systems or a union of states: Canada, India, Nigeria and Switzerland. He also proposed in August, with Adoula's agreement, an equal division of revenues between Katanga and the central government, and reintegration of the armies within two months – which failing, a UN trade ban on Katanga, and in the last resort one more forceful end to secession to be imposed by ONUC. Tshombe threatened guerrilla war against integration, and

would not contemplate Katangan mineral revenue directly financing the centre. His next bid, while appearing to surrender to the principle of reconciliation, was to repeat his offer to Léopoldville of any revenue that was surplus to Elisabethville's needs, to insist on strong 'states' rights' in any constitution (specifically, the same status for Katanga as that of a USSR autonomous republic), and to take no further action on any reunion meanwhile. On 29 July Adoula conceded to Tshombe the possibility of a federation of 21 provinces. On 16 October Adoula produced such a constitution, with major exclusive and concurrent lists of subjects on which the central authority might legislate, and consequently limited provincial power: but Tshombe was not there to support it. Kalonji, who had earlier been detained, escaped from custody and a revolt broke out in southern Kasai.

By now ONUC had grown to 14,000 troops and 3,000 air and support personnel: India supplied one third, and Nigeria, Malaya and Ethiopia were the next largest contingents, currently supplemented by Ghanaian, Irish, Liberian, Sierra Leonean, Swedish and Tunisian forces, with paramilitary support from Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Pakistan. India seemed likely to withdraw because of its preoccupation with the border dispute with China, which gave much concern. Few serious voices could now be heard arguing for the imposition of a unitary state, whether by force or by negotiation, now that even this polyglot force, so much more numerous than the long resident Belgian rulers had been, had failed. The secretary-general's initiative was dead, and Tshombe was bombing his opposition in north Katanga. Nevertheless U Thant asked the USA on 19 December for a mission to estimate the resources necessary to defeat Tshombe, and at Kolwezi Tshombe took this American 'military intervention' as excuse to declare a new 'scorched earth' policy. This time ONUC, attacking 'in self defence', succeeded in capturing Elisabethville at the end of 1962, and Tshombe called on Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to protest against the killings committed by UN-led troops. Abubakar's response was that Tshombe was responsible for the fighting and that bloodshed would end if secession ended. Tshombe then fled to Southern Rhodesia (his mercenaries went to Angola), but he returned to reorganize Katangan resistance on new year's eve. But it was clearly not UN diplomacy, nor Adoula's doing, that had finally closed the endless tunnel of 'negotiation' with Tshombe: the kudos belonged in the end to UN soldiers and the American 'presence'.

1963 thus bought in the end of the beginning, and the UN economic commission for Africa (ECA) felt able to meet in February for its fifth session at Léopoldville, where it received a goodwill message from the Nigerian prime minister. Adoula had confirmed Kasavubu's amnesty for Katanga. On 3 January ONUC had occupied Jadotville, and apart from some minor sabotage Katangan resistance suddenly collapsed. L'Union Minière agreed on a division of tax revenue with Léopoldville. Moïse Tshombe, one week after yet more talk of scorched earths, unexpectedly announced from Kolwezi that he was now prepared to abandon total secession on 15 January, to cease interference with ONUC, and to take part in U Thant's scheme for national reconciliation as mere head of a provincial administration. ONUC walked into Kolwezi. By the end of January Tshombe's gendarmerie was powerless, most of his remaining mercenaries had left by way of Angola, and he himself departed for several weeks' medical attention in Europe. Jack Gowon had joined the third Nigerian brigade HQ at Luluabourg as brigade-major, after

completing his staff course at Camberley (and acting as best man to his Igbo friend and fellow officer Arthur Unekbe in London). U Thant, anxious to cut UNO's military expenses and to boost its civilian programmes, especially in education, reported that ONUC's commitment to preventing civil war and expelling Katanga's foreigners had been met in the main, and that the forces could now be progressively scaled down.

This was premature. In February there was renewed terrorism in Katanga and a revolt in South Kasai. However after discussions with U Thant about training to produce a disciplined Congolese army which would enjoy properly qualified leadership, Adoula preferred to negotiate bilateral technical assistance with various countries directly: Belgium, Canada, Israel, Italy, Norway and USA all offered to finance this, while those African countries who wished to participate found themselves unable to afford the necessary resources, despite their resentment of Belgian and distrust of American involvement. Mobutu had visited Nigeria to discuss military training and had attended at Dr Azikiwe's speech from the throne to parliament (and was impressed that it was delivered, not in gubernatorial plumes but in field-marshal's uniform by a titular C-in-C). He was followed in May by Adoula, who had just reshuffled his cabinet to include Katangans and pro-Lumumbists (Major Gowon had just personally taken the surrender of the last Katangan rebel detachment). Abubakar and Adoula issued a communiqué, in which they jointly hoped that the UN rôle in the Congo would now be modified to reflect the changed situation in that country. They had discussed African unity and noted their governments' 'complete identity of views' on such important problems: the Nigerian prime minister would pay a return visit to the Congolese republic.

Adoula returned home and redivided north and south Katanga into four, while the whole country remained unsettled for three more months. Tshombe had also come home in mid-March, by way of Salisbury, but now had no province of his own and returned passportless to his Paris clinic to recuperate after an initial detention, still a survivor but for the moment not a political one; he was forced to resign on 25 June. Adoula then visited Britain to restore good relations and to take the proffered aid which the Congo had previously rejected. He also accepted Belgium's offer to service his country's debts, but was unable to turn aside other African countries' opposition to his receiving western countries' military training; this was in spite of continuing civil disobedience in the face of U Thant's insistence on withdrawing the UN forces, and despite USA, Belgium and Britain all joining in his own warnings against too precipitate a rundown.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa paid Adoula a three-day visit in September, and concluded that the Congo still had enormous potential and had, to his great surprise, enjoyed much industrial development before independence. He discussed the possibility of direct marketing to break up Africa's Eurocentric web of trade, and (as he had done with his francophone friends to the west) of a telecommunications link. However, when asked whether Nigeria would give the Congo more military aid if the UN did withdraw its force, he admitted that that would be very difficult and that he prayed that the ONUC with its existing Nigerian component would remain. He was willing to train Congolese policemen. On his return his own inspector-general of police mentioned casually that he must have observed the large number of easterners in key combat positions in the Nigerian army – commander, staff officers and signallers (Aguiyi-Ironsi had just been posted to return to the Congo in overall command of the UN contingent as an acting major-general): Abubakar replied

that he was well aware of this, but *'the man behind the rifle is a northerner'*. This remark lacked his usual percipience, unless he was jesting in order to provoke some reaction; that 'northerner' was rarely a Muslim from an emirate with any natural loyalty to the party led by the Sardauna, even assuming that he was politically awakened; and the key men were learning fast from their regular interchanges between peacetime soldiering at home and active service among sophisticated international comrades in the Congo. Civil war and terrorism taught different lessons from those learnt by the mainly illiterate Royal West African Frontier Force in the British Fourteenth Army and Fifteenth Indian Corps or the 'Chindits' during the 1940s.

It is the time to return from this perplexing diversion, since future events in the Congo belong as a diminishing element in the background of this book. It has not been an irrelevance. The reader will have deduced, even before considering his successive other worries yet to be described, that these three years had broadened Alhaji Sir Abubakar's already weighty senses of responsibility and of proportion. At independence Nigerian leaders had been anxious to spread their wings, and the neighbouring Congolese chaos had seemed to offer an opening to demonstrate how much better fitted they were than European powers to put things right in Africa. Abubakar had at first looked for African leadership under cover of a purely decorative UN parasol. Others, safe in their civilian clothes, had wanted an excuse to use African-directed uniformed force against outsiders. Neither view had supposed that civil disorders would need more than a smart police action, as if against a temporarily upset and recalcitrant NA; still less that Congolese of all factions would resent being patronised by other Africans quite as much as they had resented it at the hands of Belgians or of Hammarskjöld.

As the crisis dragged on, and the true material strength of the opposing interests which emergent Africa was challenging became apparent, so Abubakar became content to leave personal involvement in the everyday routine of external affairs to the Lagos ministries and offices, and to accept that what was a tragedy for many of the fifteen millions of Congolese was not after all a threat to world peace in a nuclear age, and must take its due place in the ever-widening span of problems that Nigeria had to treat. Once he had shed the portfolio of external affairs, his attitude was that of the head of a corporately responsible cabinet, a position which was never to save him from the personal recrimination of those who would always see Patrice Lumumba as an archetypal African martyr to imperialism, and who would not forgive Abubakar for his lack of partisanship towards internal Congolese schisms. The northerner striving harder than ever to be a Nigerian, he looked for traces of the same lack of parochial jingoism in others, but rarely with success. The nearest he might admit to partisanship might be found in his awareness that Tshombe as head of a province struck sympathetic regional chords in Nigerian federalist leaders' ears, and in his rueful recognition that the Katangan, despite his infuriating prevarications and untrustworthy opportunism, was a genuinely popular leader in the eyes of most of his own people.

That most of Alhaji Sir Abubakar's own countrymen also now found the Congo more and more tiresome when set beside their other difficulties will become understandable from later chapters. Parliamentary institutions were losing their magic; the old guard in the Soviet Union had evidently been anxious to take the place of the departing European imperialists; and powerful organizations with money were ever ready to make even more with nature's raw materials. The other dispiriting lesson was that although clerical officers

and serjeants-major might be unafraid to assume the mantles and powers of mandarins and generals, their experience seldom gave them the wisdom to know what the purpose of such dangerous powers ought to be. A contingent tragedy was that refugees of all classes from the country's murderous violence lent strength to the forces of reaction in Southern Rhodesia, buttressed by the superficial appearance that tough measures in Portuguese territories and in the republic of South Africa ensured security; and Rhodesia is to loom large later in this story. What was little referred to was how much less interest would have been shown in the Congo by members of NATO, by members of the Warsaw pact, and by the people's republic of China, if there had not been concern about who would ultimately have access to and control over the country's uranium mines. In that context Lumumba and Tshombe were petty nobodies, but Tshombe had seen on which side his bread might better have been buttered.

Meanwhile the Nigerian units were still patrolling Congolese towns, and Abubakar's government continued to seek for moderation, to hope that political compromise and a unified country would emerge from among the Congolese leaders themselves, and to support any actions upon which the United Nations organization might reach formal agreement. Just before the establishment of the republic of Nigeria, when touring the port and industrial sites of Léopoldville and inspecting his own troops under UN command, Abubakar said, *'Whatever assistance we gave to the Congo was an assistance from brother to brother'*. Mr Adoula commented in his after-dinner speech that, 'One becomes aware of all the qualities which in him make up this entity: sincere faith, rectitude, honour and nationalism. . . . We are only ratifying a pact sealed between our two peoples in the brotherhood of combat'.

33 Commonwealth conference, foreign affairs and security (Forward Digression II) Nigeria's prime minister and African unity

Sai an gama a kan san babba

1961 began with the inauguration of the US president John F Kennedy, elected in November 1960, and also with the renowned Casablanca conference of eight independent African heads of state: this concluded on its fourth day with seven signatures to the 'Charter of African States' of which Nkrumah had been the guiding light. A similar meeting of former French colonies had just taken place in the republic of Congo (the ex-French Moyen Congo, still confused by many with the ex-Belgian Congolese republic, or democratic republic of Congo). They had drafted a rival charter, and were soon to be known as 'the Brazzaville Twelve'; in turn, they and the other countries which had not attended in Morocco came to refer to the rival six (who invited the Algerian provisional government to join them) as 'the Casablanca group'. The Brazzaville declaration opposed political unions, but dedicated its members to the creation of regional institutions for educational and other non-political co-operation. The Casablanca charter insisted that signatories should be loyally consistent in their attitudes, avoid alignment with power blocs, and seek to create some form of mutual consultative institution to co-ordinate their defence, economic, political and cultural interests. All those that had troops in ONUC, bar Ghana which believed in putting pressure on Hammarskjöld from within, made it clear that they wished to bring their men home, but would not withhold other co-operation with the UN in settling the Congo turmoil.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar saw no reason to regret Nigeria's absence from Casablanca when he considered the vocal virulence in their anti-colonialism and anti-neo-colonialism (an expression which he thought to smack of '*cringing inferiority*'), their premature support for the Algerian 'rebels', and their pan-Africanist obsession. He had himself had three irreconcilable invitations to the conference - one from President Nasser of UAR (Egypt) on 18 December, naming 28 December as the due date; one from King Mohammed of Morocco, as host nation, on 20 December, followed by another next day changing the date to 3 January; and one again on 22 December from Sékou Touré, who had confined the matter for discussion to the single subject of the Congo. When Egypt, Mali and Morocco did withdraw from the Congo (Guinée's peculiar position was mentioned in the previous chapter's 'forward digression'), he felt justified in having regarded the Casablanca affair as confused and unworthy of support. In this most of the Nigerian press agreed. He later told his parliament that, '*I do not believe that we can have an effective conference, with trade*

unionists, politicians, ministers and all sorts of people without any aim in view, and then arrive at any conclusion or any fruitful result'.

He was more overtly concerned with the French Saharan explosions, Angolan riots in Luanda, the imminent northern Cameroons plebiscite foreshadowed in Chapter 28, and his forthcoming first commonwealth prime ministers' conference. Looking forward to the latter, he said that it would be wrong for him to attend with preconceived ideas before he had heard for himself what a leader of the future republic of South Africa might have to say; but although India and Pakistan saw some virtue in Duncan Sandys's assertion that the Commonwealth was an association of peoples, not of governments, he expected no change in Afrikaner attitudes, and, *'I fear that there will be an explosion'.*

As to relations with General de Gaulle (who had been assured in the Algerian cease-fire agreement that Saharan tests might continue for some years, and had just received massive support from the French people in his referendum on self-determination for Algeria, despite the abstention of 40% of resident Algerian voters), Abubakar personally followed up Dr Esin's démarche. At half past seven in the morning, after returning from Bauchi, he ordered the withdrawal of the French ambassador M Raymond Offroy and his embassy staff from Lagos; he barred all French aircraft and ships; and he denied them all rights of transit. The Frenchmen found their telephones disconnected the next day, and left by unescorted cars for Dahomey within the 48 hours set in the ultimatum. One unforeseen consequence was a dearth of liquid petroleum gas for Ghanaian lamps and stoves, since LPG was carried up the coast in French cargo vessels. The people who were to be hurt most were the citizens of Nigeria's francophone neighbours in Niger, Dahomey and elsewhere. A more hypothetical result was to be suggested seven years later, when M Offroy was to be a prominent leader of the anti-federal-government, pro-Biafran, lobby in Paris, and President de Gaulle to incline to favour Igbo secession. At the time the Nigerian press and politicians were ecstatic, although their colleagues in Dahomey, Niger and Tchad were distressed. No other country broke off diplomatic relations with France over Saharan nuclear testing, resting content with shouting slogans. In unintentional celebration of such true but impetuous independence the local motorcar agents, Bewac, presented the prime minister with a new replacement Rolls-Royce; and the prime minister agreed that the governor-general, with regal rather than vice-regal precedent, should assume the ranks of a field-marshal in the Royal Nigerian Army and an admiral of the fleet in the Royal Nigerian Navy.

When Dr Azikiwe went to London to be sworn in as member of her Majesty's privy council, Peter Stallard advised that there was no necessity to appoint an acting governor-general, since no ceremonial duty was likely to crop up during such a short absence: but Abubakar went ahead and recommended the signing of an instrument in favour of the next in precedence, who was Zik's genial and widely respected successor as president of the senate, Chief Dennis Osadebay from the NCNC opposition in the western region. Osadebay tried to make a token entry to the state house, but was offended to find it shut and the official study locked. This was one occasion on which the prime minister said afterwards, *'I wish I'd taken your advice!'* Alhaji Sir Abubakar himself made a triumphal tour of the eastern region, from Onitsha to Owerri, Aba, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Umuahia, Awgu and Nsukka, beginning with a seven mile drive through generously cheering crowds from the airport to Enugu. Enthusiastic Onitsha dignitaries asked for a federal airport, but were told with a

chuckle that they should first build themselves a reasonable town hall. His sense of humour, his willingness (as Mbadiwe would put it) to 'forgive and forget', his receptiveness of the new political styles emerging in the early self-assurance of independence, all combined to ensure him warm receptions, in the west as much as in the east. He reduced a meeting of the national economic council held to discuss the Niger river harnessing proposals at this time to schoolboy hysteria by responding to Bukar Dipcharima's reference to 'this dam business' with, '*Mind your language, Mr Minister!*'

Britain as the administering authority in the Cameroons UUKT ('under UK trusteeship') had been ostentatiously impartial under Iain Macleod's guidance over the manner of conducting an 'enlightenment campaign' and preparing the plebiscite under UN supervision. The Sardauna however had made sure that the complacency or subversion which he had detected behind the former 'error' was not repeated on the part of field administrative and native authority staff in the northern strips (formerly known as the Northern Cameroons) adjoining Benue, Adamawa and Borno; but there had been no comparable federal counter to the local political campaigning in the southern districts of Cameroons and Bamenda provinces. Alhaji Sir Abubakar's radio broadcast on the eve of the poll came too late, and was heard by too few, to have practical influence as a last warning: '*Instead of peace and prosperity, instead of more schools and hospitals and improved communications, which you may genuinely expect from reunion with Nigeria, you will risk losing everything. . . . I emphasize this word 'rejoin', because until last October we had been together for forty years. . . . In every single year from 1922 until 1949 the central government subsidized the southern Cameroons. . . . This small country, with a population of under a million, will have the full status of a region, . . . the full allowance of twelve senators will be accorded, just the same as the north, east and west. . . . Nothing could give us greater pleasure than to welcome them home again. . . . You would throw in your lot with a country whose government had made no firm promises to you and has given no undertaking, a country which unfortunately has been torn in recent years by civil war. . . . I cannot see how you can avoid living a life of poverty and hardship, and under the constant shadow of violence which the government cannot control.*'

He continued to give detailed figures of how generous Nigeria had been to the Cameroons while Britain had administered them together from 1922 to 1958, but his hearers could neither absorb statistics nor, despite their suspicions of Ahidjo, forget their distrust of Enugu. He may have seen a reflection of the British electorate's reaction to Churchill's doomsday warnings in 1945, when on plebiscite day the southern Cameroons voted for union with Cameroun as the West Cameroon state, with a subordinate government; but the northern parts voted resoundingly to return, and the separate strips from Adamawa to Dikwa were promptly made a thirteenth northern regional province, to take effect on the formal reunion date of 1 June, and to bear the novel name of Sardauna province. This gain was outweighed by Nigeria's imminent loss of many able and likeable citizens to a bilingual and bicultural republic whose president (Ahmadou Ahidjo) was not to resign for nearly twenty-two years. Ahidjo's personal cultural and religious ties were, ironically, with the north, and his opponents were related closely with the new half-reluctant adherents between Victoria and Bamenda.

There was an incidental diplomatic marathon behind the scenes, led by the minister of state Nuhu Bamalli, seeking to dampen down opposition to the

return of Sardauna province to Nigeria, from the thirteen-strong Arab bloc at UNO who were aroused by strong resentment at the spectacle of Jaja Wachuku enjoying luncheon with his Israeli counterpart, Mrs Golda Meir. Nuhu had rung Lagos, and instructions had been sent to recall Jaja on the first available plane. The prime minister now chose to leave the Cameroons to history, and to look forward again. Yet he and his ministers did not easily forget that while France and Israel had been lobbying strongly in the UN for opposition to any part of the Cameroons joining Nigeria, Britain had been perceived to be doing nothing in return to back her newest commonwealth partner's claims.

In the midst of all these concerns Alhaji Sir Abubakar found time to make a revealing opening address to a Lagos congress of the international commission of jurists, assembled to discuss the rule of law. Despite help from Dr Taslim O Elias, the attorney-general and minister of justice about to become a Queen's Counsel, who now officially belonged (like Dr Majekodunmi) to no party, there are typical personal touches:

'The equivalent of my name in English is Black Stone; this will explain why I appear to be so much at home here [Blackstone having been the 18th century first Vinerian professor of law at Oxford and author of the great authoritative academic commentaries]. . . . I think it was the emperor Justinian who reduced the whole doctrine of law to three principles – that we should live honestly, should hurt nobody, and should render to everyone his due. . . . In their brevity and their directness they are, after all, rather wonderful. It is a remarkable feat to be able to sum up the rules which should guide our lives, if we are to be counted as civilized beings, in those three short sentences. . . . During the constitutional discussions . . . it was pointed out that most of those [fundamental human] rights were already included in the laws of Nigeria. . . . People should know better than to make capital out of these fundamental rights by misrepresenting them to others, and not explaining that the[ir] exercise is always subject to the provisions of the law. It is a great pity that people should deliberately cause confusion about such a vital matter.

. . . Elsewhere we have witnessed all too frequently the ease with which governments representing only a sectional interest have been able to twist and change the shape of their laws and to deprive even a majority of their citizens of their rights. In some cases this deprivation of rights has been carried out methodically and in cold blood, but in other cases resort has been had to the excuse that government severity justified the action. . . . I do really wish that I could be present and take part in the whole of this conference. It is a subject very dear to my heart, and I am always mindful of that terrible saying, that power corrupts. We who find ourselves in positions of authority have a responsibility to preserve law and order, and at the same time to guard the laws of external justice even while we are being guarded by them – and how difficult it can be in practice, as opposed to theory!

Dr Elias had just been invited to act as adviser to the National Democratic Party of the central African federation (CAF), in the way in which he had previously helped Dr Hastings Banda of Nyasaland. At the last minute he cancelled his visit, the CAF high commissioner in Lagos having been instructed to protest against a friendly Commonwealth law officer being involved in another, less independent, member's internal politics: it was the kind of argument in which Nigeria's senior minister for commonwealth relations, Abubakar himself, was still bound to take the cautious side, being the born administrator with acquired legalistic leanings. No doubt some affected to see Stallard's imperialist hand in the cancellation, for the pressure for the SPM's removal was still heavy, notably

the Lagos press - with the sudden exception of the *Daily Times*, because
 King in London (who also owned the influential, independently edited
 well-informed weekly journal *West Africa*) had instructed the editor to drop
 (the *Daily Times* had never called Alhaji Sir Abubakar's government
 'socialist'). But Peter Stallard had now decided that by staying on as
 secretary he was creating more political danger for him than
 by any amount of loyal or, it might be, efficient service.
 of personal conversation with the British high commissioner
 Norman Brook, secretary to the British cabinet, inquiring
 of the national economic adviser to the federal government
 Stallard was not reserved for British officials. Mr
 of the joint economic committee of related
 the national economic council, had brought
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 and welcome for the poet nationalist
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an embassy, with a staff limited to ten, as and when it could find suitable accommodation.

Refreshed, Abubakar set off for London with three ministers, Ribadu, Njoku (transport and aviation) and Benson, secretaries Stallard and Ahmed Kari, and Anionwu the official head of foreign affairs. He was met by the high commissioner Alhaji Abdulmaliki Atta (of the deposed Igbirra royal family), and Wachuku from New York, and all of them watched him deal coolly with the Heathrow press corps at an early hour of the morning. He was still ready to distinguish between a proper loathing of Afrikaner policies and the visceral reaction that the best way to deal with them was ostracism and expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth, about which he was still uncertain (*'kicking them out does not solve the problem'*). He insisted that, as in the Congo, African leaders only wanted to be left alone, and that racial strife touched only some of Africa, and Nigeria not at all. However on hearing the South African Prime Minister Mr H F Verwoerd's suggestion that 'apartheid is a form of good neighbourliness', he could only retort, *'That is an insult'*. He settled in with Abdulmaliki in the high commissioner's residence, which as we have seen was at Lennox-Boyd's old home (he now learnt that Lennox-Boyd had virtually had to order his family estate to make the lease to a new diplomatic tenant). Next morning he had an audience with the Queen in the company of Mr Macmillan and Mr R G Menzies of Australia. Pandit Nehru spoke first at the conference opening session, Dr Nkrumah came in late, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar received the warmest welcome of all.

Some writers have attributed to Abubakar personally all credit for taking the leading part in the conference of commonwealth prime ministers that led to South Africa's departure, some doubt how far he merely followed the lead of Nehru and Nkrumah, and his detractors, who had wondered that he had ever invited the union to be represented at his country's independence gathering, naturally deny him any effective influence on the outcome. His customary anxiety to be, and to be seen to be, fair and unemotional, and his view (as expressed to Lord Perth) that, *'It is the responsibility of Africans like myself to prove to all white South Africans that they have nothing to fear from us'*, would encourage the deduction that his contribution was bland. Observers of politicians forget that even public firebrands learn to moderate their mien in privacy, where the atmosphere has been made formal by the unfamiliar miscellany of the company. Even so, he claimed truthfully that, *'I gave it hot to South Africa, and they gave it back to me during the sharp exchanges across the conference table'*. Verwoerd had formally informed his colleagues at Lancaster House of his country's decision to become a republic but, like India (and Ghana, which had in addition purported since 1958 to join a union of foreign states, and was proposing to widen that union now), of its wish to remain a commonwealth member. In the usual diplomatic form of words, 'with his consent' the meeting also discussed the supposedly domestic matter of his racial policy. Macmillan hoped for some compromise, but lectures on racial morality forced Verwoerd on to the defensive and stiffened his resistance.

The most anxious to drum the Boers out was in fact prime minister John G Diefenbaker, who felt himself under pressure from an antipathetic Canadian home press. The others, including both Prime Minister Nehru and President Nkrumah up to the last moment, wanted a modification of the Afrikaner racial policy, and then for South Africa to remain in the club. It was Abubakar who spoke of withdrawing himself, if that was not achieved; but all were also

unconscious of the still dependent chief minister Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika
ing said that if South Africa remained a member he would not apply to
he Commonwealth on independence. Finally it was Nkrumah who pushed
rd into the corner with the direct question, whether he would accept
ishment of African ambassadors and high commissioners in Pretoria,
eir own residences in a white diplomatic area. When Verwoerd said,
e was cast, and on 15 March he announced that, 'in the light
nd intentions expressed on behalf of other members', he had
draw his application, and that on becoming a republic on 31
would leave the Commonwealth; this news overshadowed
ital of 28 black South Africans in the treason trial, and was
Africa's new 'Commonwealth Day'. It was news which won
ous acclaim at home, with his admission that, 'I could
not fight the racial policy of South Africa, . . . there
is the possibility of sanctions,

the republic of Cyprus
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in Admiralty
historic model

When he and Muhammadu Ribadu spoke to the noisy students in Islington, he had other robust points to make than those already recorded about the Congo: Verwoerd's withdrawal had been a blessing in disguise, he said, by saving embarrassment to a great family of nations; it was true that the new Nigerian recruitment agency in London included some people whose interpretation of recruitment policies on qualifications and experience worked against the interests of young Nigerians applying for posts at home, and he would take immediate action; and on no account should any African country be so ambitious as to use force to eat up another African country. Challenged to say who his secretary was, he said that he was an Englishman, and when he could make himself heard above the rumpus shouted, *'You don't kick people out for emotional reasons'*. At that the catcalls became so piercing that he had to sit down to restore dignity, but he did not divulge Sandys's unwelcome confidence. The president and secretary of the Nigerian union of students joined in the rowdy disrespect. But he had been cheered, equally loudly, when he had declared, *'No matter where the African is - in south Africa, in Britain, or anywhere else - if he is discriminated against, I feel it as if I am discriminated against personally. . . . Whether South Africa is in or out of the commonwealth, we will continue to fight South Africa's racial policy'*. After less than six months of experience of international treatment as an equal (and only days after his Heathrow diplomacy), he no longer needed to set up his instinctive fair-play response of *audi alteram partem* against the emotional reasoning of his southern and radical compatriots in this context. He returned home looking taller than his five feet eight and a half inches, while HMG was announcing the establishment of a department to administer overseas aid, and some Labour MPs, fearful of a renewed need for conscription, were asking that the British armed forces should recruit in the colonies.

Preparations for the first Nigerian budget session of independence were made in a continuing state of national excitement. Nigeria had now formally joined the IBRD and IMF. Backbench and district members of NCNC (now restyled the National Council of Nigerian Citizens, since the Cameroons decision to secede) had been attacking AG leaders with allegations of a breakdown of law and order in the west. They were spreading rumours that if new regions were created, the truncated old ones would also be regarded as 'new', and would be taken over and administered by the federal government until new institutions were created and elected. Sir Kerr Bovell for the police, and the western chief justice, reassured the prime minister that law and order were still safe. The governor-general and northern premier concluded a personal rapprochement in Kaduna over all past conflicts between NCNC and NPC; and the Fulani Sardauna gave the Igbo Zik a horse in token of this new bond. The north's finance minister coincidentally decreed the end of northern civil servants' motorcar purchase advances, leaving them to use commercial bank loans, or horses. The north's new *shari'a* court of appeal borrowed the high court chambers for its first sitting. By Abubakar's desire the radical Aminu Kano was appointed to be deputy government chief whip in the federal parliament, an appointment which in Westminster would have precluded all participation in debate but in Lagos did not silence his NEPU opinions.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar took the Sardauna's part, pressed strongly by Muhammadu Ribadu, when it came to appointing a permanent chairman of a federal executive public service commission, which Sir James Robertson had supposed would remain in the hands of the respected doctor Sir Samuel

Ayinka Ayodeji Manuwa, who was still only 58. The north insisted on the
 assurance that its sons would not be prejudiced in taking up the slack
 representation in the federal service, and Malam Sule Katagum,
 northern public servant from Azare, was made chairman over
 Alhaji's head, taking up his formal duties in March; in consolation for
 the loss, Abubakar offered Manuwa the alternative post of a very
 important position, but it was declined in favour of continuing as a mere
 member of the council. Alhaji was also a CMG and an MBE, was also
 a member of Ibadan university and chairman of its regional PSC in
 the north. He had been made chairman of the northern regional PSC in
 the north, whom the Prime Minister particularly wanted
 to be permanent head of the transfer of such dynamic Lagos
 officers without suggestions that only those with first or second
 class honours should be considered for the post. Alhaji's demonstrated ability
 in the north was well known, and he was a very successful administrator
 in the north. His suggestions were made, which Ribadu
 had not taken into account. The general failure to realize
 the entry ticket was only the competence and did not

Ribadu's competence for army officers was
 referred to some time while
 he was still opposed to
 preference for a
 pressure from the
 day might soon
 that with future
 that not all his
 at heart, and
 Muhammadu
 he was quicker
 and became
 order to argue
 ing committee
 Sharima, Shehu
 be read in the
 made their own
 riers were no
 de's difficulties

attention to
 of personal
 (Bayis) who
 ss with a gift
 intment in an
 forbade it on

the grounds of his nominal relationship; he finally gave way, but only after so many had learnt of the fuss that nobody thereafter would have dared to compromise or embarrass any party. The other instance, much more drawn out, was that of Malam Balarabe Tafawa Balewa, who also was no blood relative but had been more or less brought up by Abubakar since schooldays and was treated by those misled by the name as another of his sons. Abubakar had never ceased to persuade him to take up teaching during his progress through Katsina college and Ibadan university college, although the boy's own inclinations were first towards medicine, then to economics and finally the federal civil service. Abubakar did encourage him to win a federal parliamentary seat, but refused to make him a parliamentary secretary when that was mooted. The prime minister finally gave way, provided that Balarabe was going to join the civil service in order to carry on teaching, and it was only the firm advice of the PSC chairman Sule Katagum that convinced him to permit his recruitment to the foreign service. Even then he refused to intervene on questions of salary grading, incremental credits or in-service training courses. Malam Balarabe was made to learn how to become an ambassador on his own merits and by his own efforts.

The heat was now taken out of the pot that had threatened to boil over: as the session opened, it was made known that later in the year Peter Stallard was to be appointed governor of British Honduras, a territory with the population of Abeokuta. A patronizing young colonial office functionary did comment that, 'We managed to get Stallard a minor governorship', but it did not set an end to his particular *cursus honorum*, nor were more senior alternative posts available. Stallard had no part in the selection which Alhaji Sir Abubakar approved of his successor, Stanley Olabode Wey, the westerner who long before had studied public administration with Isa Kaita at Exeter, who had proven himself an able and personable civil servant who truckled to nobody, and who had just joined the delegation to the Commonwealth conference, having like Anionwu passed through the testing and wide-ranging British imperial defence college course (which included much international travel study). Wey had been assured by Francis Nwokedi, a man of charm and successful will-power whom some had thought likely to receive the appointment, that he would work loyally with him, and that he knew that Wey had not been angling for the job. The northern prime minister saw something of a kindred spirit in his Yoruba adjutant, who was concerned for the moral and religious interpretation of life, and who preferred his private home, purchased with a civil service scheme loan, to any official government quarter. Wey refused to live nearby, as he also rejected the British service patois of referring to his minister as his 'master' (the word had overtones), but undertook always to be there within fifteen minutes of a telephone call, through the traffic of the 60s.

All the other national controversies received their publicity in the house of representatives debates; these centred on a budget which Chief Festus hoped would turn Nigeria into the workshop of west Africa, as nineteenth century Britain had been the workshop of the world. A new five year plan from 1962 included £67 millions investment in the Niger dam project to produce cheap electricity, industrialization and agricultural irrigation, where the prime minister's true long-term interests lay. This was impossible without foreign aid; but there was hope of raising £19 million by internal loans, despite a fall in world prices for Nigerian exports and a rise in tax-evasion and smuggling of cigarettes, all of which reduced the budget surplus to under a million

ounds. Shell's huge expenditure on new oil exploration, and the Bonny
ninal and bar dredging, still did not yield significant new revenue, while
shby educational recommendations had now been costed at £150 million,
ital and half recurrent, up to 1970. Britain would make a grant towards
olleges and technical institutes in all the regions, and a university at
SCO offered help for a federal university in Lagos; and the Ford
ophesying shortage of manpower rather than of finance, and a
r more rather than fewer expatriates, made other educational
llion railway extension from Bauchi to Borno remained a firm

omic infrastructure essential for social stability and
nteresting to the legislators than political power. The
nterth was involved on the first day of the session in
nterth: Yoruba discrimination in the public services:
nterth: I am working for the interest of the country
nterth: every small minority tribe. There had been
nterth: a spoiling from the throne, but the
nterth: and promptly accepted, an NCNC
nterth: for the creation of a mid-west
nterth: Otu Edo and the mid-west
nterth: a spoiling of rivers chiefs and
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for the Edo, they sought
since 1955, but
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ctions, why a

regional 'trunk road B' had not yet been built from town X to town Y in his own area.

Another significant intervention came during a private member's motion on an anti-bribery movement, that called for action, not vague generalizations, so as not to give the world the impression that all Nigeria was corrupt. Recalling, perhaps, that even Nkrumah's frequent condemnation of ostentatious wealth and consumption, hoarding of imported consumer goods by public officials (and their wives and relations), and widespread corruption at high levels, had still had little practical effect in Ghana, Abubakar thought back to an inquisition by David Williams and said,

I remember a television interview in London in 1958, when some pressmen asked me whether it was true that one had to buy everything in Nigeria; that to get things one had to pay money. I said to them that I did not know why they asked me the question. What did they expect me to say? to say 'yes', or to say 'no'? In all countries of the world, in England, in America, anywhere, one hears of corruption in any part of the world. . . . We must really speak in a way that the world should not regard us as people who are living in the dirt all the time.

(That interview had been the first, but far from the last, time when he had asked to be given hard facts on a file, which nobody ever brought him). He also referred to an American newsmagazine's suggestion that officials of the Nigerian government were corrupt, and boldly refuted it: '*Most of us, who have religions to which we belong, know very well that it is really very sinful and, apart from our religious beliefs, you cannot allow yourself to be bought; your intelligence, your position and everything – to be bought by a small sum of money? – or by nice words? They are also bribery.*'

One of his Nigerian principal private secretaries had not long before had to wait for an hour for an urgent reference to the prime minister: eventually on going in he saw one of the few members of the cabinet whom he knew for certain to be corrupt, who was prostrate and weeping. He hurriedly closed the door and left, but discreetly sought an explanation shortly after. Abubakar said, '*Yes, a foreign company was going to establish itself here, they needed licences, this man took bribes, they told their ambassador, he told his home government, they complained directly to me . . .*'. And yet when the inspector-general of police later drew his attention to the hard fact of one of his principal colleagues, whose wife was managing a shirt- and dress-making factory employing several unregistered workers in the official ministerial residence, and taking all her electricity for the machines free, Abubakar's weary and mortified comment was, '*Yes, I know he is a rogue, but he has brains, and I must try to use them.*' It was Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu who made similar excuses for his more corrupt colleagues to the Sardauna. It was the civil servants, and the journalists in private, but never in print, who recognized that if, for example, Okotie-Eboh were dismissed, the NCNC would withdraw and the delicately balanced federal government would collapse.

In the wake of an announcement on 11 April of a total boycott on all trade with South Africa, Abubakar gave the house a report on the recent prime ministers' conference. South Africa's withdrawal, he said, had purged and strengthened the commonwealth: it had not been interference in the internal affairs of another country, because their policies constituted a threat to the peace of the world. Members should not think the Congo the pre-eminent threat to the peace of the world either: '*unfortunately there are two other areas*

almost equally explosive – New Guinea, where fighting could break out between Indonesia and Holland [the Tengku was mediating without prior reference, he added, but was reporting periodically to his fellow-commonwealth PMs], and Laos. On disarmament, he claimed that the USSR feared inspection and control as covers for espionage, and that the west feared it as a pretext for removing American troops from Europe; there was an unwelcome increase in the use of the UN general assembly for purely propaganda speeches.

To a suggestion that he should appoint a separate minister for foreign affairs, he said, *There is a PM somewhere else who is very much older than myself. I think he is his own foreign minister. I think this is not uncommon. . . . So I think, if the house will agree, I think I am strong enough to carry the burden that I am carrying. I hope to continue*. He further denied that there were any plans for a republic; announced the future creation of new police frontier posts and military action to tighten security on the eastern region's boundary with Cameroon, because of terrorist activities on the other side following reintegration (*We do not like undesirable people to be pouring into Nigeria*); moved the second reading of the Niger delta development board bill that the minorities commission had recommended; and told a heckler that, yes, he was a chief – a paramount chief – of Sierra Leone. He left it to Shehu Shagari to explain why a sovereign Nigeria could not accept Britain's offer to pay the salaries of essential British officers as a form of technical assistance.

Mr Enahoro of AG and the deputy government chief whip Aminu Kano (independently NEPU) challenged Lord Head's right as British high commissioner to 'interfere in Nigerian affairs' by inquiring from journalists what kind of government they would want if they did not have a federation. Alhaji Sir Abubakar refuted the implication: *It is inferiority complex, it is wrong to have inferiority complex on these matters. We on this side feel that we are independent*. Alhaji Aminu interjected, 'If an ambassador of a foreign country wants to write a letter, he should direct it to the government or prime minister', but was told, *This is very very wrong. In diplomatic relations, I think it is unnecessary – if something is very important and really necessary, yes. But this is a friendly letter . . . and I think it is very unbecoming of the receiver of the letter even not to let me know of it before it should be brought to the floor of this house*. He took another opportunity to *. . . regard it as shameful for Nigeria to try to compete with Ghana in any way. . . . If it is football, sports, yes, . . . even little Ghana is stealing the show from us*. His parliamentary secretary, Salihu Lana from Ibadan, accepted a final adjournment motion congratulating Abubakar for his tours of the regions and on his 'dignified and humorous manner'.

On the day after the house rose, Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere, leader of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), arrived in Lagos for a three-day visit and was welcomed by the prime minister. Nyerere declared to newsmen that when Tanganyika was independent, neutrality would be absurd: an independent policy did not necessarily mean neutrality. Macleod had just visited his country, talked to governor and leaders, and announced that on 1 May the officials would leave the council of ministers, chief minister Nyerere would become prime minister and foreign minister designate, and full independence would follow in December. Mr James Callaghan, Labour 'shadow' colonial secretary, had sent Macleod his good wishes and personal hope that he would 'push' Tanganyika; Mr Macleod, confident that a Tory secretary of state could move faster than a socialist, because the opposition would not oppose him, and determined not to truckle to backwoods peers

or revolting backbenchers, had done just that. Tanganyika, like Nigeria, moved peacefully towards independence without force or reaction to force, and unlike Algeria where a million men were on the brink of being required to fight each other. Nyerere and Abubakar, both professional teachers, saw eye to eye over South Africa now, and (like Macleod) thought that similar pressures would lead white minorities in Kenya and central Africa to enjoy tranquillity in African-run countries where majority frustrations had been removed. Nyerere won Abubakar's regard, and learnt much in his short stay, which was treated virtually as a full state visit, about a new nation's assumption of responsibility for its external affairs; but he lacked among his supporters the wealth of worldly-wise advisers and critics that Alhaji Sir Abubakar enjoyed in Lagos. Nyerere's next stop after Lagos was in Accra. Mr Harry Nkumbula, a less successful politician from central Africa, was not so lucky: he waited for a week in Lagos, but was not given an appointment by Alhaji Sir Abubakar. Joshua Nkomo was also becoming a not infrequent, and slightly more successful, visitor.

Current external affairs were busy and bewildering, even for sophisticates. The general assembly had just condemned *apartheid*, and also South African policies in south-west Africa; UN's investigating committee was being refused re-entry permits to what the Pretoria government treated as a purely nominal, if not time-expired, league of nations mandate, but which the international court at the Hague had ruled was now subject to the UN trusteeship system. Renewed terrorism had broken out in Angola, coincident with the first conscious attempt to force the Portuguese out as Holden Roberto, the local newcomer to the galaxy of worldwide nationalists, led an invasion by his popular movement UPA from bases established across the border in the democratic republic of Congo; Jomo Kenyatta had been transferred from his desert confinement closer to Nairobi, and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) had agreed to form a government, provided that a house was built for Jomo in his Kiambu home village. Generalissimo Trujillo, who had ruled the Dominican republic since 1930, was assassinated; in Ceylon the replacement of English by Sinhalese as official language, and the consequential minority Tamil protests, led to a state of emergency; President Kennedy had to face the fiasco of the 'Bay of Pigs' invasion of Cuba from Miami by 1,500 exiles who had fled from Castro. The UN called for elections in the Belgian trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi, where the provisional government of Ruanda had declared itself a republic, unrecognized by Belgium, but itself still acknowledging the Belgian trust from the UN; the Bahutu majority saw many of the Batutsi minority, hitherto politically dominant, flee into Uganda and Urundi as refugees; while the kingdom of Urundi, led by strongly nationalist Batutsi but here with the support of the Bahutu, retained its status for the time being (and reached independence in July 1962 as the kingdom of Burundi, although keeping economic links with what was to become Rwanda on the same date). The French army's commanders raised a short-lived revolt in Algeria, and long afterwards its leader General Salan was sentenced to death *in absentia*.

Fortunately England's pre-independence work as 'John the Baptist' had enabled the external affairs office under Anionwu to demonstrate its sophistication. The permanent secretary answered to a minister of state each for Commonwealth relations and for foreign affairs as well as to the prime minister, whose invariable practice still was to have frank discussions of alternatives with his officials and ministers, or study conflicting views on the file and then withdraw, to think in private before reaching a considered

conflict between the press and foreign affairs, the editors office for clarification. There is no doubt of the country's independence since the early days of independence. The early politicians supposed, for their own, but as the nucleus of the new direction, would process and support at policy and

his country's resources in representation, which few establishments from his own) are seen in the fact agreed during 1961: (), India, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Africa, in Cameroun, Senegal, Sudan (also Egypt) and Fernando Póo; several republic, Italy and respect for the relationship for francophone as well as Africa were to counteract

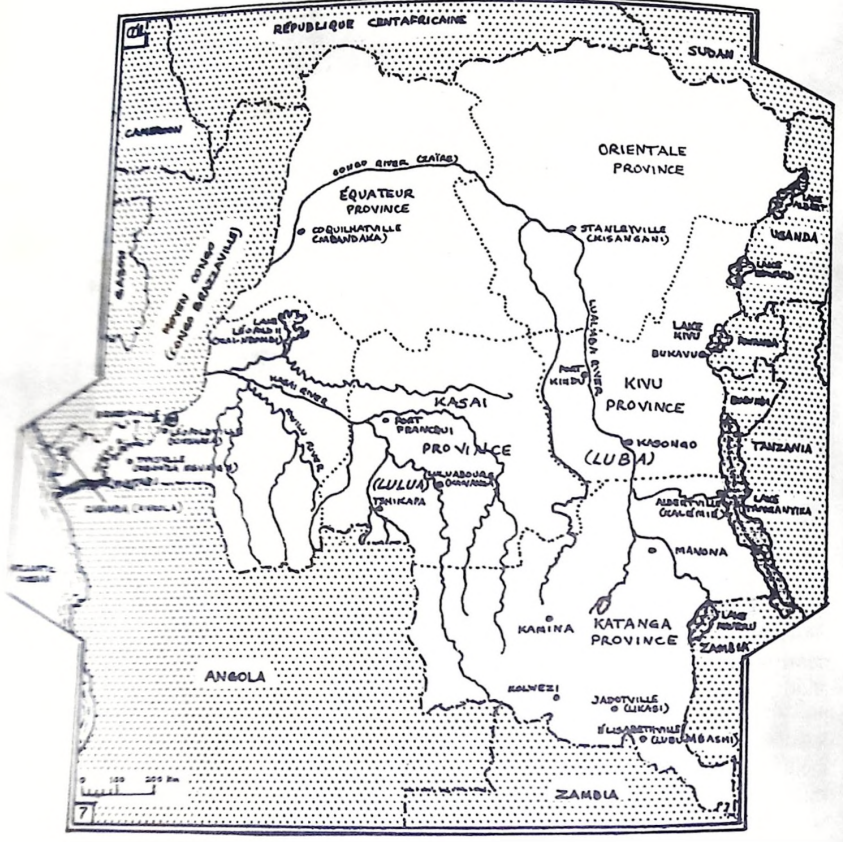
his perception of the country's standing with those policies, offering *matériel*

of criticisms that his colonialist' western world. However as agreements were made (arrangements with) and, and trade missions. Sékou Toure did not budge and would not allow the issue of Patrice Lumumba here to Marxist-Leninist as a dedicated and and therefore because of this. Accordingly, once all but serious acts of Russian and Czech agents, with the unsophisticated financial, technical and with the new threats: they be confined within good relations with any kind of an intelligence 'agent', and was gravely disappointed in his London days,

It was a pleasure to attend the Sierra Leonean independence celebrations, in the company of Dr Michael Okpara of the eastern region (the Action Group in the west were alleging that NPC, NCNC and NEPU had had a conspiracy to allow the Sardauna to win the northern regional election in May, without which Alhaji Sir Abubakar would supposedly not be free to go abroad and Aminu Kano would have been more active – that election's result could in fact largely be attributed to the NPC's new reliance on central party funding of organization, transport and activists throughout the rural areas, rather than on traditional NA headmen). In Freetown Abubakar noticed that Lyttelton's and Lennox-Boyd's private secretary Jack Johnston was now the first British high commissioner. Sir Milton Margai, who was showing a readiness to be ruthless alongside his familiarly cautious courtesy, had declared a formal, though hardly noticeable, state of emergency to counterpoint the ceremonies. He had borrowed much of Nigeria's independence equipment, and also employed the same Colonel Hefford who was now set on a full second career of organizing the official festivities of Britain's decolonizations. (Alhaji Sir Abubakar had advised Margai not to let his deputy governor Foley Newns go, and the Sierra Leonean minister of finance had come as delegate of the whole cabinet to ask Newns to remain as adviser with his former deputy governor's salary, house and secretary. Newns remained in Freetown for two-and-a half years, with direct access to the Sierra Leonean prime minister, governor-general and cabinet papers, and a very close confidential relationship to Sir Milton Margai, even on his sometimes uncertain political relationship with ministerial colleagues).

Elsewhere on the west coast Dr Nkrumah took over total control of the CPP as general secretary and chairman of its central committee, and moved the bureau of budget into his own office (simultaneously demoting the finance minister Gbedemah to the health portfolio). On that very day Mr Nyerere became prime minister of an internally self-governing Tanganyika, and Alan Shepherd made a sub-orbital flight and re-entry into the atmosphere as a first step towards American manned space flight. On his return from Freetown Alhaji Sir Abubakar returned to the northern region to prepare for a famous meeting in Monrovia. This is a point at which another forward diversion is needed, to follow through his pre-republican interests and activities in continental African movements, without interruption.

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Map 7:
THE CONGO
Where Abubakar sent Nigerian
Soldiers and Policemen

Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's view of regional (internationally speaking) institutions grew, as the reader will have deduced, out of his attitude to two contemporaries who had preceded him on to the international stage, coupled with his personal regard for a third. He rejected Kwame Nkrumah's apocalyptic vision of pan-Africanism based on a union of large political units, especially in the light of the *osagyefo's* dictatorial approach within Ghana itself and evident conviction that pan-Africa should be led by himself, south of the Sahara at least. The growing conversion of an acceptably sentimental dream of 'negritude' into a megalomaniac rewriting of history, to deny all origins of world culture to races that were not truly black, was offensive to a history teacher who still read widely and tried to understand the self-perception of each new person and civilisation of which he became aware. Nor did Abubakar accept that small countries in receipt of international aid were mere neo-colonies. He shared Félix Houphouët-Boigny's pragmatic confidence that an organic African union would emerge naturally out of initially friendly economic and cultural relations, without refusal of friendly foreign co-operation; he saw corroborative signs of this in the *conseil de l'étente*, the loose union of Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, Niger and Haute Volta which involved no denial of their individual sovereignty. He accepted with a knowing smile Houphouët-Boigny's *bon mot* that if he sent a son to university in Paris, he would come home a communist – and if he sent him to Moscow, he would return a conservative. Finally, he liked Sylvanus Olympio of little Togo, probably more than he did any other African leader outside Nigeria, as a sympathetic friend: Olympio was developing an image of a 'Benin' union, of Togo, Dahomey and Nigeria, and his hopes of this were dependent therefore on Nigerian rather than francophone (still less Nkrumah's) direction.

Nkrumah might say, 'We are all Africans', to justify his emotional passion; but although Abubakar was conscious that impoverished Dahomey, much of which had once been ruled from Oyo, was funded by France and lay in between Nigeria and Togo, he had only to point at the lack of successful pan-Europeanism even after the lapse of two millennia between Julius Caesar and Napoleon, or Hitler, to bring matters back to earth. Nor could he see any move towards pan-Mongolianism in Asia. He was perpetually accused of being 'out of touch', and justly so – but what he was out of touch with were other men's fantasies. He had not sought his position as Nigeria's leader, but now that he held it he could see no alternative to offering Africa, if it wished to accept, the constructive leadership of a country that was too big to be accused of further expansionist ambitions. There was also his own interpretation of independence: he still admired the British meticulous attention to detail, but saw Britain's capacity for constructive political guidance as exhausted. Nor did he deny that he foresaw happy prosperity in those countries that chose to nurture individualist enterprise rather than social revolution.

The meeting of independent African states at Monrovia from 8 to 13 May 1961, in the wake of the Casablanca conference four months before, was the result of no single initiative, although it was motivated by a consensus that the continent's leadership should be brought back to a liberal middle of the road. The travels, visits and letters of Houphouët-Boigny, Léopold Senghor, Olympio and Abubakar had amounted to an unwitting canvassing, from which the idea simply emerged. Senghor had suggested to begin with that the 'uncommitted countries', like Togo, Liberia and Nigeria, should organize a more effective conference, at which all African states (excluding South Africa and the volatile post-Lumumba Congo itself) should try to find a common policy on the Congo, but the concept grew beyond that. Of the actual sponsors, Liberia agreed to be

the host; Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroun would invite the other Brazzaville powers (Sierra Leone, Somalia, Ethiopia and Tunisia); Nigeria and Togo would invite all the others committed to neither 'Casablanca' nor 'Brazzaville'; and Mali and Guinée would invite the other Casablanca members. In the end neither the Casablanca sponsors nor invitees attended, asserting that because too few actual heads of state could come, the concept was after all premature; Sudan refused, asserting that the invitation to Mauritania prejudged Morocco's claim to that territory; but once 23 out of 26 countries had formally accepted, the proceedings had to go forward. In the event fifteen country leaders were actually present, and five other countries had lesser representatives.

It will not surprise readers that Alhaji Sir Abubakar did not include any members of the Action Group in his own Nigerian entourage; the AG played no part in the federation's government. What did surprise all participants, and observers who still expected any African gathering to be a 'flamboyant welter', was that Alhaji Sir Abubakar, supported by his delegation which included Mr Mbadiwe but in no way its dependant, set the tone for the meeting. In years to come his friends would say that he confessed to but three worldly ambitions: on the content of two of those, all were agreed - to see the Borno railway completed, and to see the completion of the Niger water control measures at the Ka'inji dam by Bussa; on the third they were not to be quite unanimous, but most would guess that it was to make a success of the organization of African unity. If true, the seed was sown when Nkrumah, Touré and Mali's Modibo Keita crowned their decision not to come to Monrovia with a fresh announcement of the formation of a 'Union of African States'; this encouraged Abubakar to emphasize to the conference the dangers of any state giving comfort to subversion by disgruntled elements in another, and of indiscriminate aid to 'nationalists' who were set on an abrupt termination to, rather than a gradual, planned and freely agreed transition from, colonial rule. In fact the Casablanca group, except for Libya, ratified its charter at their conference in Cairo in the same month as the Monrovia summit, and agreed to set up a joint military command as well as its civil co-ordinating institutions.

Without doubt it was Alhaji Sir Abubakar and his team who were more successful in preparing the rival conference's agenda during the steering stages. Somalia had a claim on Ethiopian territory and was importunately demanding examination of border disputes: Abubakar moved for a break in the arguments 'to clear the air', and it was then accepted that such individual disputes would not be discussed at Monrovia, on the understanding that other opportunities would be made. Ex-French territories objected to discussion of Saharan atom-bomb tests: on this subject Abubakar was insistent that the French tests should be referred to. But throughout the proceedings he managed personally to evade the rocks and to steer the disputants into the harbours of compromise.

The Monrovia summit was thus enabled to conclude as Alhaji Sir Abubakar had wished, by echoing much of what he had been saying in the past year. The conference agreed on the absolute equality of all African and Malagasy states, regardless of their geographical size, their density of population or inherent wealth; on non-interference with each others' internal affairs, mutual respect for sovereignty, and each state's inalienable right to exist and to develop its own 'personality'; on unqualified condemnation of subversive action directed by neighbouring states; and on achieving continental co-operation through tolerance, solidarity, good neighbourliness, regular exchange of views and 'non-acceptance of any leadership'. For the present, unity should not be that of

'political integration of sovereign states', but that of aspirations and of action, as seen from the misty viewpoint of 'African social solidarity and political identity'. This more pragmatic but still obscure 'unity' would be pursued through a commission which would sketch out a framework for common services of cultural, scientific and technical co-operation. Meanwhile the members issued the prescribed denunciations of colonialism, of the French tests and general amassing of nuclear weapons, and of apartheid; suggested another commission to settle inter-African disputes, such as the Somali-Ethiopian rivalry, peacefully; and regretted the absence of the states that had not come.

President William Vacanarat Shadrach Tubman announced joyfully that he was 'happy as a bug in a rug' about these results, having played a central but restrained part himself in encouraging the acceptance of Abubakar's version of Houphouët-Boigny's prescription. Houphouët-Boigny himself began to share Abubakar's fear that too much emphasis on the francophile Brazzaville group might only lead to the permanent Balkanization of Africa, largely on linguistic lines. Togo, where Olympio had just been re-elected president, was distracted by an opposition movement 'Juvento' and a plot organized with Ghanaian complicity, and confined its direct involvement to the post-Monrovia technical conferences. All looked forward to the renewed conference planned in Lagos, and hoped for no absentees there, and for the prospect of 'Casablanca' and 'Monrovia' coalescing.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar had just formally broadened the foundations of his information sources, and consciously disarmed some of his anti-British or anti-first world critics, by appointing Mr K O Mbadiwe to be his personal adviser on African affairs; but he also let his opinion be known to British journalists that Europe had not divided Africa – it had united squabbling villages and made nations of them. After quietly lifting the ban on French transport rights, he presented the conference to Nigeria's radio listeners as a success for his federal government whose policies, he said, received universal support; the object of the conference in Liberia had not been to settle any differences, but to create the right atmosphere for co-operation in political, economic, cultural and scientific interests:

Considering the diversity of those twenty nations, and the enormous distances which separate some of us, I think that it was truly amazing how we reached agreement without difficulty on such a wide variety of subjects. . . . We must put an end to this cultural isolation, because by understanding the cultures of the other African nations, we shall better understand their people. . . . Better communications are absolutely essential. . . . It was generally agreed that as well as its national or official language, each country should encourage the teaching of the French and English languages, in order to make it easier to exchange ideas. . . . I can speak on the telephone to the Nigerian high commissioner in London, or to the Nigerian representatives at the united nations in New York, but I cannot talk by telephone to my friend Sylvanus Olympio, although he lives only about one hundred miles away in Lomé. . . . It is the same with the other forms of communication.

On Saharan bomb tests he added, 'I am really very happy about this particular item, and I am sure that it was worthwhile waiting for this conference in order to get an agreed policy towards such tests'. On equality and territorial integrity, he had this very personal comment to make: 'It is also vital that every state shall refrain from interfering openly or secretly in the internal affairs of any other state.'

If this principle is not strictly observed, there can be no real co-operation and no real progress. . . . Monrovia was only a start, . . . [it will be] our pleasure to welcome the participants here in Lagos in order to carry on. . . . [We shall be] very glad if those who did not attend . . . will decide to accept our invitation to come to Lagos'. A little later, while officials and experts were meeting in Dakar to formulate concrete proposals for implementation of the resolutions, he strongly refuted Awolowo's echoing of the Ghanaian and journalistic critics who were claiming that the Monrovia conference had been financed, if not actually inspired, by western powers: apart from the wider insult, the allegation was grossly unfair to the major personal contribution made to the organization and its success by his trusted friend President Tubman, he said. This did not stop Awo from calling on him to attach Nigeria to the Ghana-Guinée-Mali 'union'.

In July 1961 Alhaji Sir Abubakar yielded to realism, as well as to much political and some official pressure, and appointed a separate senior minister of foreign affairs and commonwealth relations. Mr Jaja Wachuku's duties at the United Nations and over the Congo 'conciliation', and his evident knowledge of international affairs, had raised his stature outside Nigeria, but had left him little time to pay attention to his ministry of economic development (where he was succeeded by the health minister Malam Waziri Ibrahim, who was replaced in turn by Dr Majekodunmi from the army portfolio, as he had been jokingly promised in the late colonial days). Wachuku had been no close friend of Britain and her officials before independence, quarrelling with Grey over Nigerianization of the civil service, and until now still sniping at Stallard. Ministerial independence and the official co-ordinator Stallard's promotion away were to free him to pursue a liberated line as his own man in foreign affairs, respecting and informing Abubakar, but not always counselling him first. His bookishness helped him to share his prime minister's perception of the legalistic and historical aspects of international and racial differences, and this did not always make him popular with those whose politics were founded in emotion or socio-economics. He strongly endorsed Abubakar's firm and subtly interknit opinions on the necessity of Africa sharing responsibility for the world, of Africans dealing with African affairs, and of no individual presuming to lead, or to speak for, all of Africa.

The officials' preparation for the renewed conference went ahead quietly and more or less continuously, but the political leaders' initiatives only began to become public late in 1961. Alhaji Sir Abubakar visited Sir Milton Margai in Freetown at the beginning of December, once the latter had ceased to be preoccupied with a visit from the Queen, and went on to Conakry in Guinée. Hoping to seduce Nkrumah into some response, he had told the Ghanaian press at Takoradi that there was no fundamental difference between the Casablanca and Monrovia powers, and that he would like to see them come together to discuss common problems. Sir Milton made his own canvassing journeys, to Brazzaville and Dar-es-Salaam. Abubakar for his part insisted that he was only underlining the need for frequent exchanges and personal contacts between black leaders, so as to foster understanding. He and Sékou Touré, brothers in Islam although the Guinean was more disposed towards a secular socialism, made an anodyne announcement of their fundamental belief in democratic principles, both being determined to raise the living standards of their peoples, and in the need for co-operation as a gradualist prerequisite to political unity. A French colour could be seen in the references to the 'essential elements which conditioned the harmonious and peaceful development of young states': and an

anglophile flavour in the recipe for that essence – 'liquidation of imperialism, mutual respect of sovereignty, non-intervention in others' domestic affairs, and sincere co-operation in absolute equality and reciprocity for big or small'. Sékou Touré still thought that the Monrovia leaders ignored basic differences of opinion in favour of vague generalities. He was anxious to see direct telecommunications and postal links between Guinée and Nigeria.

All this to-ing and fro-ing was in fact to rally support for the Monrovia group before their reassembling on 25 January 1962 in responses to the formal invitations now issued. All the African heads of state were asked, including Tanganyika which had just become independent, and their foreign ministers were called to a preliminary meeting two days beforehand. Mr Jaja Wachuku, who had supervised the invitations in the name of the other members, seemed not to anticipate the reactions to his omission of the Algerian provisional government, who were invariably included in CIAS, AAPO and 'Casablanca' official and press listings; while Alhaji Sir Abubakar was already accustomed to commonwealth prime ministers' gatherings where full independence was a prerequisite (and Rhodesia had been the anomaly that somehow proved the rule), without affronting those expecting to be admitted, but not just yet. If Abubakar had had an objection on principle, it would not have been to Arab nationalism but to its proponents' methods. The Côte d'Ivoire and other UAM countries would have had the more positive reason that they did not wish to offend France, but 'Casablanca' cast the blame on Nigeria for failing to pull its weight.

The francophone UAM (Afro-Malagasy union) members met first at Cotonou, the port of Dahomey, and then moved en bloc down the road to Lagos in January 1962 for the foreign ministers' meeting. Alhaji Sir Abubakar probably still cast his mind back to Stanley Wey's thoughts of bringing the French into west African inter-territoriality rather than uniting the scattered elements of Casablanca and Monrovia. By this time it was clear that the main Casablanca 'five' would still not come, nor Tunisia and Libya, partly indeed because of the provisional Algerians' absence but principally because the Monrovia group was still being treated as a reactionary reaction to the militants. Sénégal came too late, but produced a formula to save the situation: this was to ask all the absentees and the Algerians to join the foreign ministers' conference, which should then be extended to overlap with the heads of government, if those heads were agreeable to the device. In the event most of the Casabancans still remained away. A caucus meeting at Accra for which Dr Nkrumah was spokesman had decided privately that the two groups' 'charters' should first be harmonized, and that the invitation should then be issued by the two blocs jointly; but the formal excuses it offered were that they had not been consulted on the Lagos venue and agenda, and that the Algerians ought to have been included at what was a critical stage in their struggle for political survival and national independence. The ending of the unpopular defence agreement between Nigeria and Britain (to be discussed later in Chapter 36) had had no success in enticing them, it appeared.

Even so, twenty of the twenty-eight independent African states were represented – sixteen of them by full heads of state or prime ministers (including Adoula from the Congolese democratic republic, whose arrival after its shaky preliminaries strengthened some half-hearted delegates' confidence in the meeting's importance). The world recognized the significance of the Lagos conference and its host, and the louder minority Casablanca group had ultimately to take notice. It was an achievement that Morocco itself attended at

least the initial stages, contrary to forecasts, since its refusal to invite Mauritania to a recent Rabat conference on broadcasting had effectively wrecked that gathering. Five of the Casablanca foreign ministers (Egypt, Ghana, Guinée, Mali and Morocco) did accede to the Senegalese compromise formula, but kept away from the main meeting, as did Tunisia, Libya and Sudan (which fell in line with them over the Algerian issue). Tanganyika's effective presence was frustrated by Mr Julius Nyerere's temporary withdrawal from governmental politics to reorganize his party. Nyerere's own solution to the Algerian dilemma, which Abubakar turned aside by ignoring it, was known however; seeking to offset nationalism against internationalism, he resorted to paradox by declaring that the African national state was an instrument for the unification of Africa, not for dividing it; and commented that African nationalism was meaningless, dangerous and anachronistic if it were not at the same time pan-Africanism. Nevertheless Dr Nkrumah went so far as at last to admit openly that 'Casablanca' and 'Monrovia' were in basic agreement on the desirability, indeed the necessity, of African unity, so there was progress of a kind.

The visiting dignitaries were received with full pomp, the soldiers in the guards of honour still dressed in their striking pre-independence (indeed pre-war) full ceremonial outfits, and some of the more sensitive guests wondered at the presence on parade of one or two British staff officers. The few Casablanca delegates and those from UAM were also puzzled when the governor-general Dr Azikiwe, whom they regarded as *chef d'état*, proposed the loyal toast to the Queen at a formal occasion ('*La reine? d'Angleterre?*'). It was hard for them as strangers to the commonwealth to picture the Queen of Nigeria. Zik's opening address to the conference lacked all vice-regal circumspection. He made an acid point of the Casablanca powers having decided not to attend at Monrovia, and having repeated their tactics on the very eve of this Lagos conference. He emphasized that, despite the many new points of verbal agreement, the two groups still had a basic ideological difference: Casablanca had conspicuously not declared its acceptance of Monrovia's principles of absolute legal equality of weak states, of self-determination however small the claimant, of right to freedom from internal subversion by supposed friends, and of inviolability by external aggression; something more than lip service to the UN charter, which might appear to guarantee these principles, was necessary. In speaking in his own forceful language as a pan-Africanist himself, he was also using the argument of Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Jaja Wachuku. It was a gauntlet, angrily hurled.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar gave an after-dinner speech to the delegates that nicely epitomized his private opinion, which was beginning to persuade his hearers as much as his hosts on his travels:

'Africa, with its ancient civilizations, has been blessed for centuries with rich cultural traditions, which give it the necessary social cohesion for economic and political development. But Africa to-day is confronted with various threats and dangers. . . . I have particularly in mind the danger of economic exploitation by outside powers. . . . If we would pool our wisdom, vision and experience, there is no doubt that we should be able to convert the misfortunes of the past into the greatest benefits of the future. We must be prepared, with the true African spirit of brotherly love, to concede to the other fellow the right to his own point of view, and to give him the benefit of the doubt; we must make no room in our minds for acrimony, and rehearsal of past wounds and bitterness.

'Among the basic sources of strength in our favour may be mentioned:

- 1. a common historical experience of the impact of western Europe;*
- 2. a similar cultural heritage in art and craft, no less than in social and cultural values;*
- 3. a readiness to welcome and accommodate new ideas, a burning desire for progress, and a profound belief in the efficacy of human effort;*
- 4. a natural candour, which is allied to a strong sense of fair play and justice;*
- 5. a capacity for surviving arduous conditions, even where these include the deliberate infliction of hardship and cruelty;*
- 6. above all, an irrepressible sense of humour and gaiety, of charity and hope.*

If we would dwell more on these common bonds of brotherhood and social identity, we should be readier in our common endeavours to revive all that is good in Africa'.

This did not drown out the rodomontade of Casablanca, but it touched chords which harmonized with the thoughts of those old friends of his country who still believed that Africa could be vibrant without fostering hate. On another occasion he again broached the target of '1970' as a date for the end of colonization in Africa, a suggestion which, as will be seen later, had already caused controversy in the UN forum; but it was quietly dropped, without formally disowning Wachuku's espousal of it.

The Lagos 'Monrovia' may then have failed to achieve instant African unity, but it did adopt in outline a revised charter for the inter-African and Malagasy organization, which was specifically defined as being formed of states, not of peoples. This was another restrained move towards co-operation, without integration, in an educational and cultural council, an organization for health, nutrition, labour and social affairs, and various commissions for economics, policy and diplomacy; it was the result of the work of a committee chaired by Nigeria's attorney-general Dr T O Elias. Defences should be built up to preserve territorial integrity. There should be a general secretariat to service a biennial representative assembly of heads of state and governments; an annual council of foreign ministers, an Afro-Malagasy economic co-operation and development association; and a permanent conciliation commission for settlement of disputes. There were resolutions in favour of an African development bank and a private investment guarantee fund. French and English should be joint official languages, and within three months a meeting should draft the treaties necessary and begin implementation. Decisions would variously be made by simple or two-thirds majorities. The charter would come into force thirty days after two-thirds of the signatories had ratified it. No sanctions were envisaged against defaulters.

It was a brave effort and again reflected Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's philosophy and efforts. If critics thought there was a weak-kneed avoidance of the obvious controversies, yet it had remained open to Casablanca to join in, however late. All present but Somalia admitted that their mere sympathy with the Algerian rebels did not empower a provisional government to participate legally and effectively as a sovereign state. No formal reference was made to the controversial current Nigerian UN resolution, calling for independence for all remaining African colonies by 1970, although President Tsiranana of the Malagasy republic advised caution, lest premature freedom create a repetition of the Congolese chaos. However in Nigeria itself NCNC

radicals, the AG, the trades union congresses and student groups concentrated on the 'blunder' of failing to invite the Algerians. In Ghana it was naturally Dr Azikiwe's speech which caused most comment, the CPP bureau of African affairs claiming remarkably that it had been written in London. The exchange of newspaper abuse between Lagos and Accra effectively deepened the breach between the two countries, and hence that between Monrovia and Casablanca.

Even so, Morocco at once issued an invitation to Alhaji Sir Abubakar to pay a visit, and he in turn commended Sékou Touré for having tried to bring the two groups together. President Olympio of Togo now flew a second kite for a 'Benin union' of Nigeria, Dahomey and Togo, possibly even extending to Ghana. Wachuku was heard in warm support, but Abubakar was more guarded: he was certainly opposed to anything smacking of the Ghana-Guinée-Mali union, which '*exists only in Accra*'. Yet he was willing to negotiate a common customs convention with Dahomey, face-to-face customs posts on the frontier, and liaison to curb smuggling.

For the rest of 1962 the novice diplomats continued to work in their discreet desk ways towards the next stage, while their political masters increasingly savoured the joys of airborne statecraft. The Lagos charter was never in fact implemented. Alhaji Sir Abubakar now left all parliamentary statements and most public comments on foreign affairs to his foreign minister, but his presence in the background remained influential. Particular pronouncements of his at this time included one that, '*Nigeria is big enough, and does not need to join others; but if others wish to join Nigeria, their position would be made clear to them in such a union*'; and another that, '*many small countries are living freely, why should African countries join together? They may join together if their people wish it – but the pan-African state is not for this generation*'. Indirect reference to the European common market produced, '*An African common market will solve a lot of our headaches*', with among its tasks the aims of accelerating industrial development, protecting Africa's own export products and enhancing development funds.

The 1963 Addis Ababa Conference was the great occasion of formalizing a charter for OAU. By the time that it was imminent Abubakar was more convinced than ever that nothing was to be gained from intellectual dishonesty in continental affairs, however acute the predisposing emotional pangs. His junior minister of state for foreign affairs felt that, strongly as the Prime Minister still wanted to turn the wrangling federation into a single country of the Nigerians, in which he and his official political adviser admitted that his rôle was 'monumental', even more now did he want to see Africa united – but into a single fellowship. His burning ambition was to see Africa, taking practical steps through a joint league of economic, scientific and cultural co-operation, carve out its own image in international politics. The end had at last been seen of the western countries' habit of regarding Africa as a mere source of raw materials, and now he wanted a foundation on which Africans might stabilize and industrialize their economies, just as Europeans had once done in Europe. He had no time for Dr Nkrumah's latest rhetoric of rejecting modern technology as the source of a materialistic re-enslavement. It did not perturb him that the world outside still preferred to look at the continent's ideologues and sabre-rattlers for clues to the leadership's motivation. In fact Abubakar was leading with pragmatism and persuasion through (and not in reaction to) his ministers and diplomats in the Lagos foreign affairs department. As for Guinée and Mali, some people outside Africa were observing a recognition even there

that despite their nominal non-alignment and mutual gestures of friendship with the 'second world', it was the western powers which were offering more by way of trade, peaceful aid and capital investment; and that the UAM, from which Guinée and Mali excluded themselves, was the most efficient African grouping, with its regular meetings that had control of an effective secretariat, its own economic co-operative agency, tourist agency, airline, defence agreement and coherent UN diplomatic group. By now also Algeria's problem had been solved by de Gaulle's declaration of its independence, and the difference between UAM and Casablanca over means to a common end in north Africa had lost its point. The anglophone countries seemed, in comparison, to be quite lacking in mutual accord.

The head of state of the host nation, the emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, issued the invitations in April 1963. They went out to all but one of the leaders of independent African and Malagasy states (not counting South Africa), bidding them to attend a summit meeting during the following month in the lavish headquarters of the UN economic commission for Africa (ECA) at Addis Ababa. A year of hard work behind the scenes had meant that for the first time since the Accra conference in 1958 the rival groupings came formally together. Dr Nkrumah made a forcing bid by sending yet another plan for a 'union government of Africa' to the preliminary meeting of foreign ministers called for 15 May; he had sent a representative, uninvited, to discuss a draft with an unimpressed Alhaji Sir Abubakar two months earlier. This scheme pictured an Africa united by a joint foreign policy and defence system, a shared diplomatic service, a continental economic-industrial plan, and a common currency, monetary policy and central bank, 'along the lines of the USA or USSR' (he might have compared it with Milnerite dreams before 1914 for the British empire or Monnet's for Europe). He enclosed it in a personal circular despatch to all other heads of government, which argued further for a central political agency with an upper and a lower house, and magisterially warned its recipients that any alternative would spell failure for the conference. The immediate result was that M Sékou Touré rejected it as a clear expression of will to promote Nkrumah's personal ambitions, and that a few days later Touré announced the dissolution of the Ghana-Guinée-Mali union.

The only absentee from the opening ceremonies on 22 May was Togo: Nigeria, supported by Guinée, had opposed the attendance of its president Nicolas Grunitzky, because the public inquiries into the assassination of his predecessor M Sylvanus Olympio in January 1963 had not persuaded them of the legitimacy of his government. Abubakar had taken Olympio's murder very personally, and was insistent that truth should out and justice be manifestly done before he would be comforted; it had been the one overseas event which had justified his conscience in taking action which could be interpreted as interference in another country's, or *de facto* government's, domestic affairs. The king of Morocco once again refused to come in person, because he still could not acknowledge the president of Mauritania as a head of state, and despite a personal appeal to him from Alhaji Sir Abubakar his delegation withdrew before the practical proceedings began.

Some goodwill was also dissipated by the president of the Somali republic, who insisted repeatedly on squabbling with Ethiopia, with claims to territory in Kenya and French Somaliland as well as Ethiopia; Ethiopia's prime minister Aklilu Habta-Wäld brought the meeting to its senses by pointing out that, 'If we were to redraw the map of Africa on the basis of religion, race and language, I fear that many states will cease to exist'. Mali's president Modibo Keita added,

'The colonial system divided Africa, but it permitted nations to be born – the present frontiers must be respected, and the sovereignty of each state must be consecrated by a multilateral non-aggression pact'. Both statements might well have been drafted and uttered by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. This time representatives from dependent territories (Kenya, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and others) and of 'liberation movements' were also present, who were invited to make a formal report as an advisory committee. Emperor Haile Selassie gave a warning in his opening address, while explaining the challenge that future history threw to them: 'It would be worse than folly to weaken the one effective world organization which exists to-day [UNO]'.

Four topics overshadowed all others during the three full working days. One was Togo's right to be present in the person of the bitterly disappointed Grunitzky, and that remained unsolved, because of Alhaji Sir Abubakar's co-operation and development, which resulted in a set of resolutions that read like a diluted form of Nkrumah's propositions: study groups should be set up in liaison with ECA to consider the practicability of a free trade area, common tariffs and commodity stabilization funds, transport co-ordination, an African payments clearing house, loosening national currencies from external linkages, an African monetary zone, and support for the African development bank and ECA's institute of economic development and planning at Dakar.

The third was the question of support for the sundry independence movements in Portuguese and British territories and in southern Africa. This was treated more emotionally, by some delegations at least. President Kasavubu and his prime minister Cyrille Adoula were, for example, reluctant to commit their government too publicly to the 'liberation struggle' in Angola and South Africa. They were turned upon by the intransigent Algerian leader Ahmed ben Bella who (despite discreet calls for moderation from Abubakar, who was concerned for peaceful settlements without subversion, and whose party found street level Algerian nationalists repugnant to their own culture), cried out, 'I do not give a scrap for your charter – what concerns me is the sincerity of this conference towards the final liberation of Africa'; the charter was a dead letter, like all others based in fine speeches without concrete decisions, he declared, such as some practical commitment to unconditional support for the peoples of Angola, south Africa and Mozambique: 'Let us all agree to die a little, so that those under colonial domination may be free and 'African unity' may not be a vain word'.

In the end the recommendations were that all nations with friendship for African peoples should break off diplomatic relations with South Africa and Portugal, and that all members should contribute to a £1 million fund to subsidize national liberation movements. Based in Dar-es-Salaam and controlled by Algeria, democratic republic of Congo Léopoldville, Ethiopia, Guinée, Nigeria, Sénégal, UAR and Uganda (but significantly not Ghana), it was not immediately clear whether this fund, to be replenished annually, would be used to eradicate colonialism by giving active support to armed bodies; but the effective point was that henceforward no African country had any legalistic compunction about denouncing any white authorities in South Africa, Portugal or Southern Rhodesia. It also meant that any Nigerian aid to 'freedom fighters' need no longer be so secret.

The main topic was of course the charter. The draft document produced from the working levels, chaired by Dr Elias, was very close to the still unratified

Lagos charter for an African and Malagasy organization, and vindicated Abubakar's policy of giving a more muted dynamic lead on African questions by way of functional co-operation as a basis for joint action. His views of building up from regional bases had gained the support of Hailé Selassié, Touré and Tubman; once Nasser and ben Bella had joined them, the 'less moderate' leaders could hold out no longer. Tsiranana of Malagasy, Senghor of Sénégal and Bourguiba of Tunisia all advised against haste, and Nyerere, who had yet to lose his confidence in the east African community, also spoke of a 'step by step' approach. This left Nkrumah in a minority of one, after having been supported by Obote of Uganda in his first appeal on 24 May. The artificiality of national boundaries and ethnic divisions, which existed less obviously in other groupings like the organization of American states, and which African politicians deplored but did nothing to amend, might fade in regional co-operation. The new charter deserves a summary in a life of Alhaji Sir Abubakar, but first some trenchant extracts should be noted from his own address, which followed many other eloquent speeches but surprised the audience more:

I am pleased to say that from now on there will be no question of the so-called Monrovia and Casablanca 'blocs'. We all belong to Africa. . . . It has been pointed out many times that the smaller states in Africa have no right to exist, because they are too small. We in Nigeria do not agree with this view. It was unfortunate that . . . in some cases a single tribe has been broken up into four different states. You might find a section in Guinea, a section in Mali, a section in Sierra Leone and perhaps a section in Liberia. That was not our fault, because for over sixty years these different units have been existing, and any attempt on the part of any African country to disregard this fact might bring trouble to this continent. This is the thing we want to avoid, and for this reason Nigeria recognises all existing boundaries in Africa, and recognises the existence of all countries in Africa.

(. . . The other day the president of Malagasy said he could not contact Lagos by telephone from Cotonou. This is no longer the case. Now he can speak direct. . . . We are discussing with Cameroun and Tchad, Congo Léopoldville, with Dahomey, and also we have direct link with Togo). . . .

We cannot achieve this African unity as long as some African countries continue to carry on subversive activities in other African countries. . . . I think it was the president of Malagasy who said that we in Africa do not want to speak the truth. . . . We in Nigeria are prepared to do anything towards the liberation of all African countries. . . . If we assist any dependent country in Africa, we must see to it that we do not attach conditions to our assistance. . . . We find it absolutely necessary to rely on outsiders for the development of the African territories. . . . Our countries can be colonised economically, if we are not careful. . . . I always tell people that I do not believe in African personality, but in human personality. . . . I think any talk of African personality is based on inferiority complex. . . . We should have an African common market based on certain groupings: a north African which will include Sudan, a west African which will extend to the river Congo, and an east African which will include almost all the central African countries. . . . My fear of being colonised will disappear if we are able to establish this African common market.

. . . The mere fact that Africa has been declared a nuclear-free zone will not make Africa free in the event of a world war. . . . We should not be talking about an arms race. All we should talk about is how to stop it. . . . I must tell the conference that we in Nigeria hate the idea of 'blocs', and we do not like it. If we can find some kind of name for it, such as African 'committee', or an African 'something', it will be

much better, because the whole idea of 'blocs' is revolting. . . . It is time now that we find a permanent small secretariat for such an African committee in New York (and here he reflected Wachuku's and Mbadiwe's views). . . . It is absolutely essential that the African continent must have more appropriate representation in the security council and all the bodies of the united nations. . . . It is important that when we meet on an occasion like this we try to tell each other the hard facts, the truth about matters, instead of speaking about them behind. It is most important that we become frank in Africa.

It was the first time that many of this continental audience had heard Abubakar for themselves, few having been present at Lake Success when he addressed the assembly.

The charter adopted the following main points, in brief:

Principles Member states solemnly affirmed and declared their adherence to the principles of sovereign equality of all member states; non-interference in each other's affairs; respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for each other's inalienable right to independent existence; peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration; unreserved condemnation of political assassination as well as other subversive activities on the part of neighbouring or any other states; absolute dedication to the total emancipation of African territories still dependent; affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs.

Purposes To promote the unity and solidarity of African states; to co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa; to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity; to eradicate all forms of colonialism. To these ends member states undertook to co-ordinate and harmonize their political, economic, educational, health, welfare, scientific and defence policies.

Institutions The assembly of the heads of states and governments, meeting once a year, to be the supreme organ of the organization, each member state to have one vote; all resolutions, except on procedure, to require a two-thirds majority. The council of ministers, consisting of foreign ministers or their representatives, to be responsible to the assembly and to meet twice a year. The general secretariat to be administered by a secretary-general, appointed by the general assembly on the recommendation of the council of ministers, assisted by one or more assistants similarly appointed. Member states undertook to settle all disputes among themselves by peaceful means, and to this end decided to establish a commission of mediation, conciliation and arbitration. Specialized commissions were to be appointed by the assembly, including: an economic and social commission; an educational and cultural commission; a health, sanitation and nutritional commission; a defence commission; and a scientific, technical and research commission.

Budget Member states to make contributions on the same scale as their UN assessment, provided that none was assessed in excess of 20% of the organization's annual budget.

Ratification The charter to be open for signature by all independent African states, and to be ratified in accordance with their constitutional processes. The original instrument to be drawn up, if possible, in African languages and in English and French.

And so the organization of African unity (OAU) was created, unlike UNO in not having one or two principal paymasters; and it was signed by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, to the surprise of some. Abubakar had concluded that the practical approach of *'trying hard to get the Africans to understand themselves before embarking on the more complicated and more difficult arrangement of political union'* was preferred by the majority of the delegations, including 'Casablanca', to political fusion: *'I am glad to say that the stand we have taken right from the beginning is the stand of nearly almost all the countries in this conference'*. The condemnation of political assassination allowed a calming of attitudes towards the presence of Grunitzky's spokesmen. All thirty-two nations, including Morocco and (later) Togo, signed and ultimately ratified the charter: Nigeria's parliament resolved on Abubakar's motion to approve ratification on 1 August 1963, and the emperor of Ethiopia deposited the original document with the UN in October while on a state visit to the USA. Although the conference failed to find immediate answers to the Moroccan-Mauritanian trouble or the Somali claims, mediation began early on an Algerian-Moroccan border disagreement, and Ghana undertook to enforce its own rules that forbade refugees to engage in politics. Among other side issues, the conference had voted in favour of non-alignment; of making Africa a denuclearised zone and abolishing all military bases and foreign military pacts; of total disarmament under international control; and of gestures of respect to UNO and the Afro-Asian grouping (or bloc) there. Abubakar presumed on his new world status to make a personal appeal to President ben Bella and King Hassan *'... as an African brother . . . to prevent a further intensification of open conflict and to reach agreement and a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Algeria and Morocco. . . . Continued deterioration of the present situation will bring no credit to the cause of African unity, and no real advantage to anyone'*.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar returned in a truly popular triumph to Lagos. He had given Alhaji Maitama Sule an important resolution to move, as part of his training in foreign affairs. Not all that part of the radical press that was still disposed to lionise Nkrumah was warm in its comment. He said to reporters, *'We are all one now. . . . Nkrumah and I exchanged views on certain topics, but the mere fact that our policies may differ does not necessarily mean that we are enemies'*. In an immediate broadcast to his people, he reported that, *'there was unanimity in our determination to take all practicable measures to ensure the liberation of the remaining countries of Africa from colonialism. . . . It was therefore not surprising that the conference took far-reaching decisions on how to assist our fellow Africans, who are now fighting in Angola, Mozambique and South Africa and other parts of the continent, to regain their lost freedom. . . . The conference appointed the 25th of May, the day the charter of African unity was signed, as Africa Liberation Day. . . . This charter . . . defines Africa to include all the continental African states, Madagascar and all the islands surrounding Africa'*. He concluded by mentioning the move for a world conference on trade and development, and a decision to retain a commission for technical co-operation south of the Sahara as an instrument for technical, scientific and cultural co-operation, and for industrial progress.

Monrovia's language had smothered the jealousies of individual Casablancon and Monrovia commanders. It is hard for an outsider not to see that Nigeria, on the verge of becoming a republic, was led by a practical, often gloomy but momentarily exhilarated, Africanist whose credit with his international peers must reflect on his fellow nationals. Yet to this day rosy-hued or rewritten

histories of that time play down Abubakar's realism, and revive the illusions of the many who were young and rawly innocent, and who thought that Africa could be a model of rational single-mindedness for the rest of the world. The philosophy of pan-Africanism faded as the practical majority of the continent's educated citizens accepted that the prime concern of most African leaders was, if not for their own position, then for that of their states; and as without acknowledging the source they adopted the originally lonely view of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, finally embodied in the OAU claim that African unity must be based on the sovereignty of all African countries, whatever their size, population and social level. The Organization of American States, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe, all use the same premise. The OAU for long felt overshadowed by ECA. The UN body saw economics as the key, and was led by a Ghanaian Dr Robert Gardiner, who was popular in and fully understood the developed world. OAU's chief official was a radical socialist from Guinée, Diallo Telli, aged 35, whose interest was in defeating colonialism, and when that had been achieved, then neo-colonialism. By origin he was a nomadic Peul (or western Fulani) who had been the first African to attend the *École Nationale (de la France d'Outre-Mer)* and at one time *chef du cabinet* to France's high commissioner for west Africa. He wanted political aims to control economic means, but had to accept his council of ministers' priorities. To see how Nigeria's internal politics still muddied and cracked the mirror in which Abubakar's world image might be reflected, the narrative must resume where it was interrupted.

34 After Monrovia: recognition in
USA, privy counsellorship, and a
people's conference
(Forward Digression III)
The first western regional troubles

Bakar inuwa gwamma rana da ke

After the Monrovia conference in May 1961 a stream of foreign affairs flowed over the Prime Minister's desk from in-tray to out-tray, to remind him that even an Africa united in non-political co-operation would have to take account of events in a wider world. The French government and the Algerian nationalists began two, ultimately unsuccessful, months of talks at Évian. Cyprus became the 16th member of the council of Europe. The Tengku made proposals for a greater Malaysian federation. Egypt broke off relations with South Africa, and when that country left the commonwealth next day (31 May) under President Swart, Ghana refused to recognize it. June opened with lengthy riots during Zanzibar's elections. President Kennedy and first secretary Khrushchev had sharp disagreement in Vienna over the status of Berlin, the disarmament stalemate and nuclear test bans. Dr Nkrumah diplomatically reprieved his mutinous Nigerian soldier from the Congo, whose sentence was recorded in Chapter 32's 'digression'. The security council called on Portugal to refrain from repressive measures in Angola. Britain abrogated its 1899 agreement to 'protect' Kuwait, so that its independence should be patent for all to see, and negotiated a new understanding of its sovereign status; Kuwait was then free to join the Arab league, but Russia vetoed its admission to UNO, and Iraq's prime minister claimed it as an integral part of his country; the crisis brought British troops in, as allied defenders rather than protectors, until tempers cooled in August. Ghana and Haute Volta removed their mutual but token customs 'barriers'.

More disorder broke out in Algeria in July. Dr Nkrumah undertook a visit to USSR, Eastern Europe and China. Sir Ralph Grey oversaw the gazetting of an internally self-governing constitution for British Guiana, the only colony for which the USA was not pressing Macmillan and Macleod towards an early independence. Fighting broke out against the French in Tunis, and the UN ordered a ceasefire. A referendum in Southern Rhodesia supported the new constitution which a conference had devised with (at first) all parties' agreement; creating an 'A' electoral roll for 50 seats representing those voters (mainly European at present) who had fairly high educational and property qualifications, and a 'B' roll for 15 seats whose voters would have low qualifications and be principally African, it included a declaration of

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rights, and also checks on discriminatory legislation – since these set barriers to extremist views on all sides, for that very reason it failed to win the support of most active politicians and the National Democratic Party (NDP), the successor to the banned ANC, changed its mind. The scheme might have been successful in 1957, but now it was too late: it was clear that it might take twenty years for enough Africans to qualify for a majority on the 'A' roll. In Northern Rhodesia Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP party began action, intended to be non-violent, against a watered-down version of the same approach, intended to move more rapidly towards African majority rule in that territory.

In London the new department of technical co-operation (DTC) was set up in July under its first minister Dennis Vosper, with the hope of prising away from the foreign, colonial and commonwealth relations offices control not only of all day-to-day technical assistance, the Commonwealth African assistance plan and the resettlement bureau for redundant British overseas civil servants, but of the oversight of the still controversial new policies of giving British aid to the undeveloped world generally, regardless of past commonwealth connections. It was also a last resting place for such of the old colonial office's irreplaceable expertise as had not already begun to disperse into other departments. Sir Andrew Cohen was the DTC's first director-general, being replaced at the trusteeship council by Sir Hugh Foot. It was Lord Head in Lagos, with David Hunt as his draftsman, who was credited with having caused this to happen. He had made a forceful submission in April, arguing from the achievements of the 1951 Colombo plan in Asia and of the colonial development corporation, and suggested that aid as a tool of international relations should have its own staff and direction; doubtless his despatch to Sandys gave the final impetus, and his regular discussions of decolonization and the hidden meaning of 'neo-colonialism' with Abubakar the incentive for that. He could observe that in Nigeria's first year of independence visible aid had also come from Australia, Canada, West Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan and the USA. The omissions from this list of donors were obvious. Eastern bloc priorities were shown when Russia's Major Titov circled the globe seventeen times in a 'spaceship', and later Yuri Gagarin toured the world's capitals as an attractive hero. The first hasty construction of the Berlin wall, separating the Russian and western allies' occupied zones of the German city, also took place in mid-August.

In June the sardauna of Sokoto was reported at Karachi as having made another public call for a conference to plan a political confederation of Islamic states, which angered many Nigerian southerners. The northern premier continued his progress to Tehran, Kuwait and Beirut, and the religious drive in his politics received a boost when he became a vice-president of the World Muslim League. The southern press demanded that the prime minister should repudiate him, and Abubakar once more had to find the diplomatic middle of the road. The prime minister agreed with the principle of a summit meeting of Muslim heads of government, but denied the practicality of a confederation in view of the participants' geographical separation; he did not refute outright a regional government's prerogative to issue invitations to such heads of state, provided that the federal government first gave its agreement after due consultation, but he was glad of the opportunity to reprove the press for vexatious stirring of the pot, since he was sure, he said, the Sardauna had said no such thing (and later the Sardauna prudently denied it).

Meanwhile in Northern Rhodesia UNIP's vigorous opposition to Macleod's constitutional proposals, which by now had alienated whites and blacks alike,

had escalated to sabotage, and led to a partial ban of the party; Macleod promised both Kaunda and the white Northern Rhodesian leader Moffat that if violence was first ended, he would reconsider details, thus irritating Welensky who hoped that the federation would be made to work. But in Nyasaland Dr Hastings Banda's Malawi congress party won all of the wider franchise seats at a general election, and a quarter of the more restricted 'upper roll' too; at once Banda announced that he no longer had any quarrel with Europeans, but that he still opposed the federation. In Kenya Mr Jomo Kenyatta was released from his eight years' detention, although some Mau Mau oath-taking revived and a new radical land reform organization was banned. Dr Jagan's PPP party returned to power in British Guiana, and Mr Burnham's PNC walked out when the governor Sir Ralph Grey refused to be bound by the opposition's nominations to the senate. De Gaulle, who seemed to be more worried about the Berlin crisis and the cold war, was threatening to regroup Frenchmen and Francophile Algerians in an enclave and to abandon the rest of Algeria; there Ferhat Abbas was replaced by a younger left-winger Youseff ben Khedda as prime minister of the provisional government, who continued to seek a negotiated settlement. The last Spanish troops evacuated the western Sahara, south of Morocco, at the end of August.

But matters closer to home were as exercising, even after Monrovia. That conference was curiously interpreted, by those who would have liked their own favourite regional party to run a strong federal administration, as a proof of Alhaji Sir Abubakar's weakness, instead of a demonstration of his positive leadership. The regional divisions that threatened stability were emphasized when the NPC swept home in the northern general election in May, leaving a mere nine AG seats and one NEPU to cobble together a political opposition to an essentially administratively-minded governing party, and four independents. It was commonly accepted that on this occasion there had been little pressure from NA officials to engineer a heavy poll in the hope of ensuring a rural rejection of institutional or social change. It therefore became significant for the country's history over the next five years that the official northern opposition, however small, was seen substantially to be the Tiv. The Sardauna had been returned unopposed (a precedent which regrettably too many were to want to emulate), the Borno youth movement (BYM) and AG had decided to support NEPU in some seats, and Aminu Kano had played no part in the campaign; but AG's UMBC ally Mr J S Tarka and four supporters were finally arrested on charges of treasonable felony arising out of the Tiv troubles that had broken out just before independence. The Sardauna spoke pointedly of the capital penalty for those who abetted treachery by giving evidence for the defence, nor did he exclude expatriate administrative officers from the threat. While NPC spokesmen claimed that the election result finally and for all time eliminated both a merger of Ilorin and west Kabba with the western region, and the resection of a separate middle belt out of the northern region, Mr Patrick Dokotri of Jos still insisted that the middle belt was 'an article of faith which no power on earth could stop'. The Borno NA was taking its final action against the BYM, whose creator Ibrahim Imam had moved to Jos since 1959, and it was effectively wound up. Tarka had been willing to help Ibrahim to find an electoral seat in Tiv, for all that he was no son of the soil.

Strangely, the endless suggestions that the federal NPC were dominated by direction from Kaduna were seldom paralleled by comment on Enugu's domination of NCNC members in other parts of Nigeria, which was at the

CNC national president
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legislation, which was complex (and generally as unintelligible as most pensions law). O'Regan was enabled to join the special list 'B', with its pecuniary advantages over list 'A' (which the UK treasury's failure to guarantee had effectively disabled), and continued to serve Inuwa Wada until the following year. This concern for his acquaintance, contrasted with others' furthering of family interests, was as strong for the humble. A month or two before, while his master was preoccupied with the budget session, Alhaji Sir Abubakar's plump little steward Momoh suffered from an acute bladder stricture at three o'clock in the morning; he was taken to the general hospital in great pain by the family friend and neighbour, the reluctant politician Dr Majekodunmi, who had made an emergency telephone call for a surgeon to operate. The busy prime minister again made time to visit Momoh on admission and while recuperating, and his compassion when the doctor showed him the condition of all the other patients in the hospital was affecting.

Domestic arrangements had settled down since the prime minister's household had moved from No 11 Marina. Ordinary official hospitality was handled by government stewards augmenting his personal servants, but large events were contracted out to major reputable hotels and were carefully vetted by the PPS and the security forces. The most intimate or important occasions might still be arranged by Mrs Norah Majekodunmi, even now with *West Africa's* David Williams as a guinea-pig for the rehearsal if he was in Lagos. There were now three ladies to look after housekeeping on the permanent staff: Mrs Aly Khan, wife of a Pakistani works officer and originally recruited for the high commissioner in London; a black American, Miss King, who had been transferred from the governor-general's residence; and the waziri of Katsina, Alhaji Isa Kaita's wife, a former nurse educated with Yakubu Gowon at Wusasa – she had pined for an occupation, and when her husband had suggested this to Abubakar, the prime minister had insisted that she be interviewed by the chairman of the PSC in the correct way. The American lived in a government flat, but the other two had their own quarters in the compound; Mrs Khan paid most attention to Alhaji Sir Abubakar's family's private needs, and Hajiya Kaita to the management of cooks, washermen and stewards, and the guest rooms for foreign visitors. Between them they found out what was wanted and ordered the necessary provisions from market or stores. The little boys' uncle Ahmed Kari watched from a suitable distance.

Special occasions or functions were one thing; just as when at the farm in Bauchi a wife would cook his meal in the town and have it sent out to him, so still here in the grandeur of Lagos the Prime Minister's wives cooked his ordinary simple food whenever there was no guest to entertain, and bought the ingredients for him and the children with the cash he gave them from his own pocket. He relied for services for the most part on his own personal 'boys': the aforementioned Momoh and Audu Pankshin as stewards, Audu Kombit the cook, and the washermen Maidawa and Iliya. The police orderly serjeant, Kaftan Topolomiyo, originally from Nangasu in French territory, was becoming an established family figure. The only time most of the official household saw Abubakar in his own rooms was when he gave all his staff a Christmas office party in the expatriate tradition. However by now he was rarely seen shopping privately, or out seeing sights on his own. When he was not busy he was tired, and he valued privacy above security.

The retirement of the acting director of federal public works, Abubakar's former secretary Eddie Armitage, was an occasion for a review of building plans in Lagos and elsewhere, some of which were therefore of interest to

Abubakar the politician and educationist. There had been a security scare and even the prime minister's new lodge on King George V Avenue in Onikan, with its guest house overlooking Five Cowrie creek and Victoria island, began to seem unsafe from suppositional saboteurs and spies. Armitage had suggested to Alhaji Inuwa Wada that a new residence be built on a small artificial island in Lagos lagoon, easily defended and with access from the northern part of Ikoyi. The principle was officially agreed, but it was expensive and no prime ministerial decision was taken. A senior architect, Mr Egbor, was studying plans of other countries' modern parliament buildings. A foreign architect was being sought for a new stock exchange, since the ministry of works lacked such expertise 'in house'. The Shell-BP independence gift for training technicians was to be deflected to new buildings for Yaba technical institute; there were other constructional implications for the Ashby-inspired assignment of the constituents of the Nigerian college of arts, science & technology, at Ibadan to the university of Ife, at Enugu to the university of Nigeria at Nsukka, and at Zaria to the new northern university, once a date for the latter was settled. There was also official disquiet about the new deferred-payment (or extended-credit) terms with interest for contractor-financed projects: some advisers had more faith in international soft loans.

Peter Stallard's departure was more significant. He and the prime minister had been in almost daily contact for three-and-a-half years; he was now the only friend left who, because he was uninvolved in local relationships and was not a compatriot, could be trusted with any confidence without the danger that at another time or place it might unwittingly or otherwise be uncovered to the wrong person. Roman statesmen must so have valued the Greek secretaries they owned. Stallard had invaluable relationships with two of his regional counterparts whenever subtle civil service undertones were necessary: the Sardauna's secretary Bruce Greatbatch and he had been comrades as RWAFF gunner officers together in Burma; Simeon Adebo, now head of the western regional service, and he had been fellows in a peacetime joint battle, waged some time before by Adebo in the financial secretary's office and by Stallard as principal assistant secretary (political), against some malfeasance in the prisons department; unfortunately Stallard's equal respect for, and would-be co-operation with, their counterpart in the east Jerome Udoji were frustrated by the influence of the federal Igbo ministers who had encouraged the Lagos campaign against himself. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had reconciled himself to his going, and was grateful for the tactful timing of its ordering. He organized a farewell dinner, making sure that the Stallards' personal friends were amongst the guests. Stallard responded to Abubakar's farewell speech, which for once he had not drafted, with a nice reference to an English schoolgirl who had told him that her school motto was 'No Fussing, and No Bossing', which made its point with the listening former schoolmaster. He also referred to the prime minister's quiet, good-humoured faith. He had a less formal farewell in Bauchi, where the senior wife Hajija A'ishatu Jummai came out to say good-bye also, and as a token he left for Abubakar his copy of a book *The Religions of the World*.

By the end of 1961 Stallard had arrived in British Honduras, and his successor Stanley Wey was firmly established in his shoes, with the understanding that in private they might 'forget we are prime minister and secretary', and with the reputation for appearing as the clock chimed the exact hour of his appointment ('Well done!'). There were no more British officers who could convincingly be categorized as props or struts behind the scenes, although Lord Head's

noticeable liking for Alhaji Sir Abubakar as a person still left the door open for mischievous gossipers. Coincidentally, Madame Tussaud's in London put on show a waxwork of Abubakar among the other commonwealth statesmen, the original modelling of which had begun during the March conference. No fundamentalists complained of the irreligiousness of the image, an icon as powerful as the *Time* magazine cover, though seen by fewer, and it was generally thought to be as good a likeness as its neighbours in the display.

Hence it was as an internationally recognized African, surrounded by no British henchmen or minders, that Alhaji Sir Abubakar took an hour or two out of a working local leave on his farm to listen to a British minister of labour, John Hare (a previous minister of state for the colonies). Hare explained how the UK's application to join the European community, approved by parliament in August, would if successful affect her Commonwealth partners. While using different language, Abubakar shared Nkrumah's reactions for once; the purpose appeared to be to protect European industry while restricting African partners to the old economy of primary production and consumption of European manufactures, however favourable the eventual tariff arrangements might be. Abubakar refused to allow Nigeria to seek associate membership, announced that she would be badly affected if Britain did join, and promised to protect Nigerian industry. British pro-market politicians were disappointed, seeing this as a rejection of pragmatism where they had supposed that independence would remove the basis for purely emotional analysis of events; surely, they thought, the promise of the continuance of some of the marginal benefits of an old imperial preference was worthwhile, since Britain was casting off its old shackles and looking to a bright future in a fused western Europe? It did not help their argument in Africa that the anti-marketiers sounded more frank about the emerging commonwealth's allotted reciprocal rôle as provider of raw materials and markets. Abubakar had no doubt that Nigeria should move from clienthood towards self-sufficiency, and produce surpluses for sale.

It was also as an international and independent figure that, accompanied by his new minister for foreign affairs and their officials, and also by Mr Kingsley Mbadiwe, Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu and Chief T O S Benson, he honoured President Kennedy's invitation to Washington. '*Here we are again*', he had told the British press when changing flights at Heathrow, '*No, I don't take shopping lists when I'm a guest*'; he had gone on to question whether all the African peoples involved in the accelerating rate at which countries were becoming independent would benefit from the process, in view of their different degrees of preparedness. Once he had crossed the Atlantic the Americans spared nothing in proving that this new nation was important to them. The prime minister was given the compliment, still rare, of the opportunity to address a joint meeting of the congress, and took it with style and some unforeseen particularity: '*Our affinity with the United States is two-fold – a history of common struggle to achieve freedom from anything that is oppressive to the human spirit; also, a blood affinity – between our two countries there resides the largest concentration of peoples with African blood*'.

He mentioned the fashionable liberation philosophy with his usual tutored caution: '*We shall endeavour with every means at our command to make certain that in our own country the freedom which we have attained and which we do dearly cherish shall extend to all who are still under the domination of other people. The preparation of a people for freedom and nationhood in the modern world requires some effort and sense of purpose among those on whom the freedom is to be conferred. . . . Some planning and training are always*

necessary for the establishment of a successful independent state'. He thanked the Americans for supporting the Ashby recommendations, and added, *'The most effective way of creating understanding . . . is by closer association of peoples at all levels, by exchange of ideas and by personal contact . . . in ordinary day-to-day life'*. He hoped for a restructuring of UNO and an effective voice for independent Africa in the security council, and explained the hopes raised at Monrovia. *'Independence brings with it much excitement, and the hopes raised power from colonial régimes to self-rule is not always very easy, because not all the colonial powers are of the same temperament'*.

He met Kennedy on equal terms in the White House oval office, and talked about world peace and the world order, *'without which any plans for social and economic development would be meaningless'*. The secretary of state Dean Rusk joined them to discuss disarmament, Berlin, Angola and the Congo, and France's recent forceful reoccupation of the port of Bizerta (in response to Tunisian retraction of an agreement amid demands for evacuation of the French base). Abubakar again deplored the existence of 'blocs', although *'nations, like persons, have the gregarious instinct'*. He also took the chance of emphasizing that the Niger multi-purpose dam could be as significant as the Tennessee authority (TVA), and would also provide cheap electricity, flood and erosion control, irrigation and a navigable waterway; six years since his Mississippi visit had not changed his dream. The president and he issued a joint statement that the USA was prepared in principle to give 'substantial' social and economic aid to Nigeria, following on a US special mission in May which had discussed the latest development plan without detailing a 'shopping list' (The mission had praised Nigeria's commitment of its own resources to well-conceived plans that absorbed foreign assistance and also furthered social justice). They also agreed that Africa should have greater representation at the UN, provided that this did not compromise the effectiveness of the organization.

Abubakar spoke to the national press club in Washington, where he said that France's action in Bizerta had been *'a shameful thing'*, and again insisted that all African countries must respect each others' existing boundaries, and only agree to one being absorbed by another with the express free will of the smaller country. Nigeria would not take part in the conference of 'uncommitted nations', called in Belgrade by presidents Tito, Nasser and Sukarno after a preparatory meeting in Cairo – he did not believe in power blocs, and obviously if 'neutrals' formed a group, they were just another bloc: Nigeria already hoped for peaceful co-existence and national independence, and needed no conference to say so. He did want all discussions on world problems to be widened, to include smaller nations as active participants. The party then visited the TVA at Knoxville, and the northwestern university, including its programme of African studies at the Deering library, in Chicago, before meeting M Mongi Slim of Tunisia, other members of the Afro-Asian group and Hammarskjöld at the UN. The university of New York was pleased to award Alhaji Sir Abubakar an honorary doctorate of laws, and both Chicago and New York added honorary citizenship to that of New Orleans gained six years before.

During a few days in London on the way home northern students entertained the Nigerian ministers to a dance in Fulham and Mr Macmillan gave them another lunch at Admiralty House with Duncan Sandys and Dennis Vosper. Comment was made that the federal government's newly purchased American Grumman *Gulfstream* 'executive' aircraft for ministers' use would have British Rolls-Royce *Dart* engines (this appeared to take the sting out of the sardauna of Sokoto's recent rejection of a Rolls-Royce car because, as the British were

told, its luxurious air-conditioning system puffed red laterite powder from the road surfaces all over him).

Before leaving London Alhaji Sir Abubakar received the highest formal recognition given to him by British prerogative. He was admitted to, and sworn in as a member of, her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council. Like Dr Nkrumah and Dr Azikiwe before him, he was now entitled to the prefix 'The Right Honourable' (hence in part the title of this book) and the post-nominal letters 'PC'. In England Privy Counsellors ranked in precedence at the head of all commoners except Knights of the Garter, and were invariably referred to in parliament as 'The Right Honourable Gentleman'; such dignities were rarely used in Nigerian practice.

Reporting to the Nigerian radio audience on his travels, Abubakar made no reference to his latest honours, but said that he would gladly accept any technical assistance from any source so long as behind it there was *'a genuine desire to make life happier for mankind'*. He also told his hearers that there could be no world peace till all the remaining colonial nations changed their *'dangerous theory that some parts of Africa are integral parts of the metropolitan powers'*, and that the equally dangerous *apartheid* theory in South Africa could not be practised for long without disrupting peace.

Although foreign affairs were made to dominate public discussion, one or two internal matters were noteworthy in the summer of 1961. Mr J S Tarka was acquitted on the long-pending charge of having levied war against her Majesty the Queen, a form of English legal words sounding archaic enough even in northern ears to make proof of treason harder to establish; for the time being he helped to reconcile his people, in which activity the local NPC and the regional government was to be less than whole-hearted. Tarka never lost his certainty that the NPC would frame him, but his acquittal reinforced his public reputation for generosity, personality and reason, while failing to dispel the doubts of his opponents who saw him as an incendiary behind the scenes. Nevertheless the young northern ADOs who went round the Tiv to collect the riot levy imposed were able to raise it sufficiently smoothly. There was also the embarrassment of the National Bank of Nigeria case. For all its name, it was privately owned. Despite ambiguous memories of Zik's African Continental Bank case in 1956, Alhaji Sir Abubakar's government had ordered an inquiry into the affairs of the National Bank, which stood accused of being supported with public funds by the western regional government, and of subsidizing the AG party therewith in return. In May the Lagos high court, from whom the bank (which held a federal certificate of competence) had sought relief, declared that such an inquiry could not legally be held under the powers that the government purported to exercise. The government proceeded under a new act, to set up a special tribunal which would be put beyond any challenge in the courts and would have powers of imprisonment. This act was itself challenged in the high court and its constitutionality failed to be ruled upon in the federal supreme court later in the year.

This wrangling overshadowed the centenary celebrations of king Dosunmu ('Docemo')'s cession of Lagos (effectively converted by history into a 99-year lease like Hong Kong's New Territories), and the appointment of a northerner from land-locked Igbirra, George Uru Ohikere, as chairman of the ports authority. The establishment by an influential group of retired expatriates in London of a Britain-Nigeria association (BNA) had the warm support of Abubakar and other dignitaries in the country, but attracted limited wider

interest. More notice was taken of an attack on the EEC made by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the minister who led the Nigerian delegation to the commonwealth parliamentary association (CPA) meeting during the summer recess.

Stanley Wey was unafraid to grasp the nettle of who 'headed' the civil service. His prime minister was answerable for its ultimate policy, he was that prime minister's principal civil service adviser, and he had been sworn in as both secretary to the prime minister and secretary to the council of ministers and so as custodian of all policy and executive secrets. If he received two conflicting cabinet memoranda, he held a permanent secretaries' discussion, and then in their place a single memorandum over the prime minister's initials was entered on the agenda. The chairman of the PSC might appoint or promote particular individuals to grades of economic or other influence, but the SPM would see to their actual postings and day-to-day supervision. If others saw confusion, Wey was not confused about his factual responsibility, encouraging Abubakar in his efforts to find inter-ethnic consensus, and counselling him where and how to avoid inter-tribal myopia. Like Stallard's, his anxiety to protect the prime minister from avoidable worries gave him the unfair repute for preventing any outsiders from talking to him at all. Because of the lost argument over army officers' quotas, Wey was never too happy about some of Ribadu's opinions.

Dr Mbadiwe, the prime minister's newly appointed adviser on African affairs, was given the task of organizing an *ad hoc* all-Nigerian people's conference, with the ultimate intention of creating a permanent 'All-Nigeria People's Council', which should bring the public's thoughts together on their country's rôle in Africa. Marking its opening Alhaji Sir Abubakar's office sent his fulsome congratulations to Jomo Kenyatta on his final release from restrictions in Kenya, as 'a grand victory of African nationalism and a glowing tribute to your devotion to the cause of African freedom', a rather different message from that which he had once told Stallard to draft (his concurrent concern for tightening security on the border with Cameroon was more pragmatic, with the withdrawal of the British administrative and military presence in the former Southern Cameroons now imminent). The 'ANPC' conference was consciously intended to give to all the lawful radical groups in the land an opportunity to express their views in a structured way on the allegedly perceived backwardness of Nigeria and its leader, in comparison with what still seemed to younger nationalists to be the enviable pre-eminence of Ghana and the *osagyefo*. It considered Abubakar's summons and the report of a 21-man steering committee, and it came back with a very critical response. The prime minister had asked them, with the whole diplomatic corps in attendance, for frank discussion: he would not (he had said) put ideas to them, but some of the questions for them to answer might be, how to assist the remaining countries to attain independence shortly, and how could African states obtain aid from the outside world and yet remain free of domination by one or another world power?

The collected representatives of anti-imperialists, socialists, Nigerian youth congress (from which the NCNC had now told the Zikist movement and its own members to distance themselves), Zikist national Vanguard, various party radical wings and others in the broad spectrum of thinkers agreed on a series of recommendations, heavy and lightweight. They were opposed to neo-colonialist agencies' like the US peace corps, the holding of conferences of foreigners (American regional diplomats had just held a joint meeting in Lagos as a convenient centre), and the withholding of equal representational rights from USSR (which was limited to ten diplomats and ten distinctive car

registration plates, where Britain and USA were allowed virtually unlimited staffs and a hundred car plates each). Kenyatta, Nkrumah and Khrushchev should be invited to pay state visits; diplomats' houses, particularly the British high commissioner's, should be removed from proximity to the prime minister's residence; Nigeria should go to the Belgrade conference, Zik and Abubakar should visit all African states, the Algerian provisional government and all pan-Africanists, especially 'Casablanca', should be supported and the central African federation be boycotted in favour of the east German democratic republic; the £300 millions sterling balances should be liquidated and repatriated, and the European community (which Britain had just formally applied to join after failing to persuade any commonwealth country of its desirability) should be avoided. A committee should try to settle the differences between the Nigerian Trades Union Congress and the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria. Cable and Wireless should be nationalized, and the familiar vague principle of the unity of African states on a continental basis be reaffirmed. Some participants called for a republic and an end to Westminster ceremonial in parliament (but Mbadiwe himself even proposed the re-establishment of the British west African institutions which Abubakar had admired, and which might foster at least regional unity - West African Airways Corporation, West African Court of Appeal, West African Currency Board, the Royal West African Frontier Force). There was also an attack on supposed intelligence reporting by British civil servants in Nigeria, and doubts were given voice of the checks made on British diplomats who looked after Nigeria's interests in posts where she had as yet no embassy.

What effect this had on Alhaji Sir Abubakar and his policies may be deduced from the anticipatory diversions on the Congo and the OAU in the two preceding chapters. What clearly was effective on parliamentary and government opinion was the conference's discussion of whether the defence agreement with Britain (referred to in chapters 26, 29 and 31) was a mountain or a molehill. The conclusion of long-term hindsight has been that, with Britain's dwindling economy and consequence in the world, more obvious to the analytical than to the political mind of the day, the agreement spelt out no more than that, if a conflict broke out involving both parties, they would behave towards each other as old friends always do; while the specific provisions, which offered no facilities for combat troops or ships and were always to be subject to prior consultation in any event, could all be achieved by negotiation and executive action without the need for a covering treaty. Dr Azikiwe himself had been re-emphasizing that this molehill was never a condition of Nigeria's independence. Dr Okpara was now saying that if it was after all so unimportant, and yet caused so much misunderstanding, it might as well be abrogated. The Sardauna left it to his lieutenant, and Chief Awolowo alone among the leaders (and signatories) continued to find sinister ingredients. Alhaji Sir Abubakar (whose only original worry had been whether precedents were being created for Ghana to overfly Nigeria) remained inclined to leave well alone, but he and his advisers took note of the growing creative interpretation of such a token commonwealth link with Britain as being incompatible with both the Casablanca view of non-alignment and the emotions of many of the younger Nigerian intelligentsia. However illogically, it was becoming a true liability in the development of Nigerian political unity. In its final plenary session the conference demanded that the agreement be denounced as a mountain indeed. In the wake of this Abubakar merely commented that, while acknowledging the credit given to him and his supporters for convening the conference in the first

... its importance was that it gave a good cross-section of the people of the
 ... the opportunity to express their views on the problems of Africa'.
 ANPC's interest in Russia and Khrushchev had been expressed at a time
 ... British newspapers were carrying tales of long-term Muscovite plots to
 ... Africa by dint of indoctrinating her students. The prime minister's
 ... that was, 'I really laughed'. The finance minister Okotie-Eboh
 ... siously, publicly at least, by remarking that of the three dozen
 ... students already in Russia hardly one had an authorized
 ... foreign minister than his official advisers, opened a debate
 ... speeches at the end of August 1961 with a strong
 ... policy so far pursued by Alhaji Sir Abubakar.
 ... determination to build cultural and economic
 ... ties, and to demolish all artificial
 ... would not be complete till the whole
 ... and practical, he said, not fatuous
 ... the nerves of the people', but
 ... to no other commonwealth
 ... that also had obligations
 ... as against South Africa in the
 ... shown by her partial
 ... with conditions for the
 ... South Africa's insistence that
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The causes of the State of Emergency

It has been shown how Alhaji Sir Abubakar had been gaining moral stature in the eyes of the English-speaking world, and was making a firm impression on most of the African continent – first through his calm and reasoned attitudes to the Congo, which had won him a more than grudging respect; and then in the wider moves which were to culminate in the OAU, which he did not create but which would have been very different without him. Physical forces inside his own country were ultimately to prove too strong for one lonely character to overcome. Although their immediate resolutions were seen by Nigerians as the first credible evidence of the national prime minister's determination, the rumbling undercurrent of violent and noisy events in the western region was a forewarning. There were several tiers to the domestic troubles. Some observers continued to seek out awkwardness between the federal NPC prime minister and his party superior the northern premier, without contrasting the obvious mirror-image of a western AG premier subordinate in party terms to his head, the leader of the federal opposition (or also, as has been hinted, the Zik-Okpara relationship).

But Akintola and Awolowo had deeper differences than had the two northerners. Yorubas had cultural rivalries, as between the northern Oyo and the southern Ijebu. A very superficial sign was Awolowo's readiness to listen to argument from J Oladeju Adigun in favour of splitting off Oshun division, including Ogbomoso, from the old Ibadan province. Awolowo had refused to answer Akintola when asked what he proposed to do if he did not become prime minister; now that he was freed of executive governmental duties, he had been trying to develop the Action Group from a Yoruba-based, not to say (like himself) Ijebu-based, regional party into something national. He declared this by expounding a radical socialist philosophy, even if it might have to soften in practice into a diffused democratic socialism, such as would appeal to the young and the nationalists alike. Akintola of Oshun, still having to grapple with the realities of responsibility, had settled for the security of being supported by traditional rulers and businessmen, and was less interested in international anti-European postures; he and they were more concerned with future contracts and patronage from the federation, and present-day employment opportunities, land apportionment, licences, franchises and subsidies.

Akintola also understood the northern region. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello and Chief Akintola were all, in very different personal ways, concerned to exercise the power that had been transferred to them in order to maintain such stability as had been transferred with it. Chief Awolowo's search for power aimed at effecting wider institutional change than that which he had already achieved unilaterally in the west: the supporters of Akintola were weary of dogmatic austerity and of propping up the Action Group with money and influence without the returns of material reward for their investment. The enthusiasts for Awolowo's visions generally had little practical to offer beyond youthful energy and the high moral tone of persons not yet great enough to be susceptible to major corruption: for them it was sufficient that Awo had created the AG, and they were blind to the fact that it was Akintola's personality and humour, while content till now to be formally in the second place, that had built the party up from a tribal club of intellectuals to a people's band wagon. Few could be insensitive to the tensions on formal occasions when the premier and his lady took precedence of Chief Awolowo and his wife.

The eastern leader, Dr Okpara, was as ready as any other opponent of

inter-party squabbling in the 'mid-west' in the AG. He returned from an overseas tour where western controversies were enough to

bring 'a state of emergency' in the region. Affairs had not reached that stage.

At the time Akintola was still ready to see industrial development office in New York. His rebuke: 'I consider it is not open to me to

represent agent-general in the UK can be Nigerian, or indeed by any, regional agent-general. It is surprising that he also had been surprised

to see Akintola publicly accepted this at its face value. His acceptance of the Sardana's

action. The evidence from the federal power commission which the broad narrative has

superintendent-general of its action on and had deferred be brought

to the attention of Awolowo's promise to assist the government to allow the

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should write to the premier to point that out to him. . . . The premier has not replied to my letter. I am expecting a reply from him. . . . I must say that, since the appointment of this gentleman as superintendent-general, the Nigeria police have found it very difficult to co-operate with the local government police forces'.

The wider rumbles were exposed in a second private motion, based on a stream of newspaper reports of incidents and private complaints alleging 'a grave state of law and order in the west'. Alhaji Sir Abubakar tried to sound statesmanlike, with one eye on the outside world's opinion of Africa since the Congo had torn itself apart:

'It would be wrong for us to try to create an impression that here we live in a place where law and order is said to have broken down in one area, and the opposition party in another area say, 'O, it is also broken down in our area'. . . . I heard many times that the party in power, which is the AG, was out to destroy all opposition – people being beaten up, people being heavily assessed in taxes, customary courts being used, local government forces being used against political opponents. I was also given a lot of documents and many photographs concerning these atrocities in the western region. Before I went on my visit to the US, I asked to see the commissioner of police, western region. . . . He told me . . . the difficulties which the Nigeria police are having in the western region. The Nigeria police find it difficult, because they cannot have anything to do in the sense of a policeman's duty with the customary courts, and short of fighting local government police forces in the western region, they can hardly be very effective. . . . Always the blame is on the Nigeria police, while people forget the question of law and order is on the concurrent list. . . . On my return . . . I asked the IGP to make a report about the situation. . . . The appointment of the SGLGP in the western region has got a lot to do with the difficulty which the NPF are having in bringing about a happy relationship between them and the LGPF. . . . For six years the LGPF was under the control of the NPF, but that has surely been taken away. I do not quarrel with that, but I quarrel with the appointment of a police officer who appeared to be employed by the regional government, working on a regional basis on top of the other local police forces.

We must put our heads together to know exactly what to do in the case of a government going out of the way (if it should happen) and stirring up trouble as a result of the action, and the local government police forces were being unable to handle the situation. To what extent would such a government expect the federal government to come to its assistance? . . . Honourable members of this house are also not always willing to co-operate with the Nigeria police. For example, I as prime minister will receive a telephone call from the western region. . . . I do not know the man. I am the PM, and on the spot at that place there is a NP officer, and that honourable member refuses to go and tell that Nigeria police officer on the spot, but instead he will ring the PM . . . ! . . . I think that it is now time that we, the federal and regional governments, put our heads together. I am thinking of calling an emergency meeting of the police council. . . . My greatest concern is the impression we give to the outside world, . . . they might think that such and such a country is turning into another Congo. . . . We can still look after ourselves, and I think we can still trust ourselves to be able to maintain law and order in this country'.

Later in the meeting he made a statement about the counterclaims of discrimination and intimidation by the Action Group, and of the lack of action

and impartiality on the part of the Nigeria police:

I have discussed this matter with the premier of the western region and hope to have further discussions with him. . . . While appreciating the genuine sense of grievance under which opponents of the AG are labouring in western Nigeria, it can only do harm to the reputation of this country if exaggerated reports alleging a total breakdown of law and order in the region, and a state of terror existing there, are made. If a person is in fear of his life, the obvious solution is to report the fact to the NP and request protective measures . . . on the spot rather than come to Lagos. . . . Any action, including co-ordination of effort, or indeed of training, which tends to bring the forces under regional governmental control is a move contrary to the spirit and the intention of the constitution. . . . I therefore appeal to this house and to the public to support the Nigeria police'.

Chief Awolowo then addressed a students' meeting in London with as unrestrained an attack on his country's prime minister Abubakar as any made on the colonial power before independence. Lord Head was the *de facto* ruler of Nigeria, he cried; NATO still had exclusive use of certain wireless frequencies in the country; Nigeria was a submissive British subaltern or satellite; 'Balewa' never took a stand until after a chance of personal contact with Mr Macmillan or one of his lieutenants; he had only teamed up with the radicals from Malaya, Ghana and Canada at the last moment over South Africa; Monrovia was inspired by the western bloc; he was now committed over the EEC instead of attacking it; he was led into a blind alley by his western masters and mentors over aid; he had let the British and Americans see the next five years' economic plans, but not his own nation; he had put obstacles in the way of a Russian embassy. Awo was censured for this in parliament's next meeting, but it did nothing to quell anti-AG feeling among NPC or NCNC supporters, who had all been annoyed by Sir Kerr Bovell's reassurances that he did not think the overall security situation in the western region was unusual, that there was no general breakdown of law and order, and that the police could still guarantee peace.

Nevertheless the promised emergency meeting of the police council held in Kaduna in September 1961, after a 'full and frank discussion' about the superintendent-general and internal security, recognized the ultimate overriding responsibility of the prime minister for law and order throughout the federation. The council discussed the control and recruitment of both the 13,000 strong Nigeria police and the 9,000 strong various local government forces, and deferred possible future changes to another meeting. The need for closest co-operation between NPF and NA or LG forces was re-emphasized. In other words, no decision was taken. Police special branch reports came to the prime minister that certain 'elements' in the Action Group were considering how a coup d'état might be engineered: the police were embarrassed by their duty also to supply security intelligence to the regional governments, but accepted Alhaji Sir Abubakar's firm reminder that in any conflict of loyalty the federal government came first. For the moment public concern became quieter and Bovell's sanguine professional opinion, that most people in most parts of the region were enjoying peaceful lives, prevailed. Essentially it was true.

However there was soon a procedural hiccup. The federal supreme court ruled in October against the federal government over the bedevilled National Bank of Nigeria inquiry. As already mentioned, the federal government, at official as well as political levels, had given weight to some allegations, springing mainly from NCNC, about the past conduct of the bank's affairs

and its liquidity, but being conscious that some of these were political had held back from a straightforward police investigation and likely consequential prosecution. Instead, with the precedent of a colonial secretary of state's bank inquiry behind them, the council of ministers had settled on another similar inquiry, only to have its method of appointment and statutory competence struck down by the Lagos high court; determined to uncover enough scandal to justify some action, whatever that might be, against the western regional authorities, the cabinet had then concluded that, instead of starting again with punctilious care for the details, it should have a special commissions and tribunals of enquiry act passed by parliament. In drafting this bill the attorney general Dr Elias, a non-party man, had purported to take any related action by the prime minister out of the jurisdiction of any court. Since the bank had now been acquired or nationalized by the regional government, although it sought to operate beyond the western boundaries, the Action Group party went to court again, and the supreme court's ruling now was that the act was beyond the federal parliament's powers, and a denial of the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the constitution. The inquiry was suspended again, while an embarrassed Alhaji Sir Abubakar weighed the remaining alternatives. He had relied on clever lawyers to find a rocklike foundation as means to an end in strong action that he might still find justifiable in moral terms, and wily lawyers had undermined it before impartial judges. He held a press conference at which he said dispassionately of the latter, *'They have done their duty'*; but with a passing regret for the dynamism of unwritten constitutions he admitted that he was already considering a revision of the *'rigid'* constitution he so much respected, but a revision that would only be conducted after wide discussion and penetrating examination.

In private he reassured his friend the chief justice that he was a strict constitutionalist: if the constitution proved erratic or ineffective, it might be amended, but meanwhile it must be obeyed. Before the press conference he had asked Sir Adetokunbo to say when he would be available for a quick word, and told him, *'Chief justice, I am glad you gave that judgment, because I want you to feel free, if I commit a crime or do wrong in your opinion, to say so. . . . If I am brought before you, send me to jail - this is the way I want the judiciary to perform. You will never waver from the truth'*. Nevertheless, believing that Dr Elias's bill had in no way been repressive of humans, and that on the contrary the inquiry under it was intended to search out aspects of repression, Abubakar was considerably irked.

Awo lost no time in berating the government for what he termed the dangerous decline in moral values, with a premium placed on mediocrity in the appointment of unqualified persons to official boards, and people earning more pay for less work. He demanded a campaign against bribery, corruption and nepotism, and no doubt meant this to apply to all regions, each of which was disposed to see motes in the others' eyes. After an unsuccessful parliamentary motion to nationalize foreign enterprises, Awo went on to supervise the preparation of a set of party policy papers by a youthful 'national reconstruction group' which would explain to the people (or at least the best educated) the significance of 'democratic socialism': socialism at home and anti-neo-colonialism overseas should win electoral votes. These papers were studied by the AG federal executive in December and mocked by Akintola for their naivety; this theorizing, he insisted, would not win votes, which were the only way to power, in the west, let alone in the wider federation which

these young radicals (who included no businessmen, no agriculturalists and no traditional leaders) wished to reform. Nevertheless it must not be forgotten that Akintola's cabinet was still in essence that which Awolowo had bequeathed to him, that Awo's projects were still being pursued, even those that no longer made economic sense, and that Awo's interference in daily detail were a far cry from Zik's personal concern for Okpara's broad policies, or the Sardauna's comments on Abubakar's federal activities.

The split between Akintola and Awolowo became public at the AG's national congress, held at Jos in February 1962 in the hope of appearing to be a national and not a parochial party. Tarka and the UMBC, Ibrahim Imam and the BYM, and some NEPU adherents all took part. Stories were spread of a secret agreement that Akintola would support the sardauna of Sokoto in a bid for an elected federal presidency if a republic were declared (Awolowo was thought to favour Azikiwe, if that would result in splitting the NCNC-NPC understanding). More open was the resentment of Oyo Yorubas against the survival of the Ijebu appointees to Awolowo's state corporations and their preference in winning loans from the National bank. Awolowo was now recognising that support from university academics and undergraduates, with their news value to the media, far outweighed their numerical strength, and was beginning to dilute his socialist language to accord with the interests and theories of Ife and Ibadan and to sound more like Wilson's British Labour party. Naturally even this did not appeal to those of Akintola's supporters who enjoyed, say, forestry concessions or other privileges over once communal land. Akintola did not reject democratic socialism, but was pragmatic about whom to attract to his side.

Awo's shafts were directed at those initiatives for which the premier had not sought approval: school fees, tax cuts, waiver of women's poll tax, following the northern premier's precedent of using police motorcycle outriders, and trying to appoint the honourable and apolitical mandarin Adebo as deputy governor in place of a party hack; he made no mention of the economic decisions having followed a disastrous cocoa market slump and agreement in both regional party executive and cabinet, nor of his own policies having drained the marketing board funds which had also made irrecoverable loans to a National Investment & Properties company headed by his political secretary Alfred Rewane, which was in debt to the tune of £6.5 millions. Akintola anticipated defeat in a well-packed party congress by spending its first day in private with Rosiji and Adigun, discussing things with the Sardauna who was opening Sultan Bello hall at Ibadan university; Nigeria's later tribulations have been attributed to the 'friendship' which now grew between the western and northern premiers. He finally walked out of the party meeting, together with the federal secretary Chief Ayo Rosiji, who had been arguing for a merger of all three regional parties in a united front (something which was anathema to the radical socialist element of the NCNC).

The congress, swollen by unentitled members and inflamed by Akintola's air of independence and of having influential friends in the north, enabled Awolowo to amend the party constitution to allow the federal executive to dismiss any senior office-holder; it re-elected Awo as national president, elected Enahoro and Ibrahim Imam as vice-presidents, but retitled Akintola as deputy leader, not deputy president. However Rosiji (a friendly cabinet colleague of Abubakar's in 1957, and a discreet informant about matters important to the nation since then, and through mutual friendship with B A S dan Bappa) quickly became personally reconciled with Awolowo; he was permitted to

resign rather than have the ignominy of being dismissed, to be replaced by Sam Ikoku. Yoruba grandees in alarm arranged a superficial public resolution of the personal differences on 10 April, but the divisions of age, class, clanship and tribe in the AG remained.

For all his annoyance with Akintola's separatism, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's own sympathies with the western premier rather than with Awolowo were obvious. Once when rehearsing Akintola's redeeming features to the oba of Lagos, Abubakar was reminded by the oba (a Yoruba himself) in a rueful reference to his people's stereotyped reputation among prejudiced strangers for untrustworthiness that, 'Well, Mr prime minister, Akintola is a Yoruba!' Both knew him also to be a sincere Baptist. The Yoruba grandees' effort to bring the factions together failed. It was clear that western obas could now no more control the Action Group than northern emirs could control the NPC.

The pressure on the Action Group grew. The northern legislature had by now voted in favour of the carving-out of a mid-west region, and although the federal house of representatives had already purported to pass a similar resolution 'unanimously', this did not appear in legal opinion to meet the letter of the constitutional requirements of a specific majority of the legislators in a majority of the various houses. In order to achieve a formal count, the prime minister moved another formal resolution at the end of March 1962. This gave Chief Awolowo the opening to move an amendment calling for nine other regions. Prompted to say whether he was startled by that number, Abubakar interjected, 'I was!', and after Chief Enahoro had seconded Awo, he successfully opposed them: *'At one time I had misgivings about what was going on in the so-called mid-west area, because the political parties appeared to be bitterly opposed to one another, and I did not like it. I hope that the AG and the NCNC will come together to see that . . . all arrangements . . . are made in the most peaceful atmosphere possible, because I do not want to be saddled again with another question of the breaking down of law and order. I really want us to behave in such a way that people will really praise us outside'*. Speaking of recent election tuggery, he said that, *'all parties are to be blamed . . . but I understand it is the AG that has more hooligans than any other party'*. Later he added, *'I would like to make absolutely clear my stand, the stand of the federal government and the NPC in this matter. We are always opposed to the creation of new states, . . . but if a particular tribe is foolish enough, . . . we shall always see to it that they are broken up into bits'*. Some younger NCNC members began to seek their party's dissociation from the stand against any more new states.

It was exceptional to hear Chief Enahoro (whose own origins were in the mid-west) saying in the actual debate on the mid-west region bill that, *' . . . one of the cementing factors (and I say it with all sincerity) has been the person of the prime minister. If we had had someone else - one of our friends across the floor - in that position, it is doubtful whether this federation would have been one to-day. But the prime minister will not be there forever. I do not think that he himself would desire to be there forever. What is going to happen when we have other persons who have not the qualities which this prime minister has brought to his office?'*. A few minutes later Alhaji Sir Abubakar repeated once more that, *'I myself belong to a very small group. I am not Hausa'*. It will be remembered that at this time 'Monrovia' had had its successful meeting in Lagos, and Nigeria's and Abubakar's names rode high in the Congo. Enahoro's was, sadly, the last personal hand of friendship proffered across the parliament floor. After this, rapport was suddenly lost, not only with Chief Awolowo its

leader but also with many more of the radical AG. It is worth recalling at this point that although Alhaji Sir Abubakar was a practical politician, he was never a plotter: he would always find time to talk about private affairs (the latest books he had read, with his officials or with political friends (Abubakar Imam to Alan Lennox-Boyd), yet he could never have been actually to plan the downfall of the Action Group or of Awo. In such thin was reactive, not pro-active.

Early in May Chief Festus was still saying that the prime minister was calling a conference of all political leaders in the mid-west, hoping to get them to co-operation in setting up the new region. But the western premier Akintola blew on a smouldering fuze by taking steps to replace Alhaji Rewane in his most important appointment as chairman of the western regional development corporation. Awolowo had already been applying pressure on some of Akintola's cabinet whom he had originally appointed himself. Executives of the AG in both the Yoruba heartland and the mid-west province met under him at Ibadan on 10 May to consider how to remove Akintola's 'maladministration, and anti-party activities and gross indiscipline'. Akintola, for want of being given any further or better particulars to which he might respond with facts, admitted that Awolowo had always preferred Festus Williams, Enahoro and Akran to himself, but insisted that Awolowo had interfered to prevent the prime minister visiting his region (as also, at times, the governor general), and crudely suggested that Awolowo and his wife were jealous of the western premier's motorcades and praise-singers outnumbering their own, and of the leader of the regional opposition given an official residence in Ibadan. He rejected an offer of the token of deputy governor, and his new post of the deputy party leader was abolished. Enahoro's seventeen-year old dislike of Akintola bubbled over when he called for the premier's resignation was passed by a three-to-one majority. The difficulty was not only that Akintola still refused to resign as a condition but that to force a general election while the party was split might well benefit the NCNC. A counterswell of support for him began to spread outwards from Oshun, Ibadan, Oyo and some Egba areas.

A subtle device was engineered. Chief Akintola had followed the premier by asking his governor, Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the ooni of Ife, for a conference in order to lay before the electorate both the crisis that had developed and the rival claims of the two AG factions to a majority of public support in their own case for co-operation with the federation and concentration of interests; but the ooni refused, on the somewhat abstract grounds that the electorate had made a decision only two years before. At the same time Akintola asked the speaker of the western house of assembly, Prince Adedoyin, once of the NCNC, to convene a meeting two days later in order to consider a motion of confidence. The speaker, another Awolowo supporter, also refused. On the contrary, the governor accepted a petition for the removal of the AG executive and signed by 62 legislators (a majority of the lower western house's members), recording no confidence in the premier and requesting his removal. In a manner surprising to those who had known the ooni's soothing reconciliations in the old Macpherson constitution, Bode Thomas and others, but probably based as much on a realistic assessment of the regional party situation as on a desire to remove the leader of the opposition.

present. The commissioner was asked personally to deliver a sealed governor's letter to the premier, which seemed to him an unusual procedure.

The terms of the letter dismissed the premier, but by a curious mistake it was dated 21 August instead of May. As soon as he received it Chief Akintola wrote to Alhaji Sir Abubakar asking that the Queen be advised to remove Sir Adesoji, and lodged a motion in the high court, challenging the governor's power to dismiss him except after an actual vote taken in the lobbies of the house. The document was received for filing after formal office hours. The attorney general, discovering the wrong date on the purported dismissal, asked the commissioner what should be done, but the commissioner now knew more of the circumstances and washed his hands of the affair. The motion was certainly filed by opening of court business the next day. Also on 22 May Akintola forced his way into the premier's office which had been locked against him, and told a press conference why he was not standing down. The Sardauna declared that Akintola was a sincere nationalist who favoured Nigerians living in amity together. The western governor meanwhile proceeded to appoint Chief Alhaji Dawuda Soroye Adegbenro as premier (who promptly announced the replacement of eight ministers, including Akran and Adigun), and the speaker proceeded at Awolowo's request to summon the house of assembly for 25 May. The house of chiefs was also called. Chief justice Quashie-Idun invited the ooni and Akintola to explain the situation to him. Adegbenro was a Muslim, of limited education or rhetorical capacity, with a large family but no material resources, a late developer who was well-liked in his party but held no office and had never been perceived as a leader. It was now publicly evident that the sole issue was between Awolowo and Akintola, and Akran spoke for those who could not see opposition to Awo as also opposition to the Action Group.

Dr Michael Okpara in the east announced that he would not recognize Adegbenro, and repeated his opinion of nine months earlier that the federal government would be right to declare a state of emergency in view of the political tumult pervading the western government. When Adegbenro sought to assert his authority at the house by introducing his cabinet and asking for a vote of confidence, the NCNC opposition under Fani-Kayode combined with Akintola's ten loyal supporters to create such uncontrollable disorder, ringing a handbell, using the chairs as blunt instruments and breaking the mace, that the anti-riot police had to move in to disperse the members, releasing impartial tear gas with which they had presciently equipped themselves. Someone standing on a table was oracularly shouting, 'Fire on the mountain!' Apologists insist that only a dozen members actually fought and that the rumpus began and ended within a minute: the fact that the police had been forewarned is no evidence, even set against Adegbenro's followers' ostentatiously orderly behaviour, that their political superiors had planned the violence. Enough personal and material damage was left behind to smother any regret that the constables had prevented it from lasting longer and spreading more widely. That the violence itself was premeditated by some politicians on the spot was obvious, whether or not some glance from Akintola was interpreted as a secret sign, and also that any intentional hurt was greater than the petty staged bruises and abrasions often designed to bamboozle gullible administrative officers or court members in a frame-up. Chairs were thrown at Awo and Rewane in the gallery, and they like all took to their heels.

Chiefs Awolowo and Adegbenro immediately telephoned Alhaji Sir Abubakar, asking him to allow the assembly to reconvene in the undamaged house of chiefs' chamber, but under guard of the police, who had the duty

to act on the speaker's instructions and to remove any members who tried to frustrate a parliamentary meeting. Abubakar agreed with the principle, but added that the federal government would not recognize any decision that might not be free, because it had been taken while fully equipped policemen were present in the chamber and open to allegations of pressurizing members into conformity or restraint. The police commissioner was already in contact with the prime minister's office through the inspector-general, and his clear instructions, backed by national police council authority, were to recognize neither side but to take his orders from Lagos; those orders were not to place his men in the chamber unless the speaker specifically requested it, but that if any further disturbance then took place he should disperse the members, lock up, and keep the keys. Chief Akintola telephoned too, but his message was that it would be unwise and risky to allow any further meeting. Abubakar felt impelled in his alarm to make an immediate public statement:

'The two factions in the Action Group have contacted the prime minister regarding the holding of another meeting of the western Nigeria house of assembly to-day. The prime minister cannot stop the meeting from taking place, but because of the fight which has broken out in the house this morning, if the parties decide to hold a meeting of the house of assembly they may do so. It must be on the strict understanding that there will be no police protection within the chamber. If, however, any party insists on being afforded police protection within the chamber the police may be so present, but the federal government will not accept any decision reached as a result of such proceedings in the chamber. If in spite of all efforts of the police there should be an outbreak of violence or any disorder, the police have authority to clear the chamber and lock up'.

Shortly after this clarification of the rules the inspector-general reported that an attempt had indeed been made to hold a meeting, and by request it had been under police protection, but that it had resulted in a far greater uproar than the earlier one, so the chamber had been cleared and locked. The council of ministers met to decide what should be done next. Two things are undeniable: that both NCNC and NPC politicians wanted to break Awolowo's personal hold on the west and his threat to their concepts of how Nigeria should be ruled; and that Abubakar himself, while now satisfied that some of the AG were thinking of extra-parliamentary ways to achieve power, and that Awo's ambition was incompatible with his own hopes of a unity in plurality, was as always heavily dependent on legal advice to interpret the written constitution which he placed above doctrine and personality. All members of the cabinet had throughout been in no doubt of Akintola's own political assessments, as also his loss of many AG politicians' support, nor of his confidence that in the last resort they would support him against the (so they were unanimously advised) self-evident unconstitutionality of his dismissal. Whatever the legality of his premiership, there was *de facto* no functioning government, however. They decided to reimpose stability. Abubakar explained why and how this would be done in a broadcast that evening, observing incidentally that, '*No responsible government of the federation could allow an explosive situation such as that which now exists in western Nigeria to continue without taking adequate measures to ensure that there is an early return to the region of peace, order and good government*'. It is fair to say that it was only after the event that either he and his colleagues, or regional leaders and potential dissidents, came fully to understand, and some then to fear, the unexpected power of the federal weapon

which could be unsheathed against regional adversaries. Sauce for one goose might be sauce for three ganders, and perhaps no regional premier could ever again go it alone. Once national security was called in question, no region could be self-contained. A delegation of obas and western chiefs came to plead for more time on 27 May, but to no avail. Azikiwe returned in haste from Nsukka to Lagos.

Despite the logistical problems of the army, which was transferring most of its battalions between the Congo and home depots, a token number of troops and armoured vehicles went to Ibadan to back up the police if necessary. The GOC of the army (Welby-Everard) caused an administrative sensation by moving his tactical headquarters to Ibadan and setting up a joint 'pol-mil' HQ with the IGP Bovell. It was unprecedented. Some AG members asked Chief Anthony Enahoro to go abroad to tell the world of a threat to democracy. On 29 May the house of representatives met, to hear Alhaji the Rt Hon Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa move that in pursuance of the relevant section of the constitution it be declared that a state of public emergency existed, to remain in force until the end of 1962:

'Members know the reasons why parliament has reassembled to-day. . . . I would like to recapitulate briefly the events which have led to this impasse, and in doing so I would like to emphasize that the federal government had been motivated solely by the desire to ensure that peace, order and tranquillity are maintained throughout parts of the federation'.

He went on to recount in detail much of what has been recorded here, and continued:

'I said a few moments ago that for the past week or so there does not seem to have been any validly constituted government in western Nigeria. In the light of the violent incidents on May 25th which badly shattered both houses of assembly, it is difficult to see how the public affairs of the western region could possibly be carried on in an atmosphere of warring factions of a party in power, so sadly rent asunder in the old world struggle that will ultimately do nobody any good inside and outside western Nigeria. This is the background against which I ask honourable members to assess the situation and to authorise the government . . . to take . . . measures in accordance with . . . our constitution.

Allegations of conspiracy have been made against the federal government, that it has planned the whole crisis in order to take over the western Nigeria government. It has also been said in certain quarters that the parliament would be abusing its powers were it to declare a state of emergency, because the sad and unfortunate occurrences had not extended beyond the precincts of the legislature of the western region. Nothing could be farther from the truth. We are surely not responsible for the chain of events that led to the party and personal wrangles and the attempted by-passing of the western legislature and to the mutual dismissal and counter-dismissal between the governor and premier. The question at issue is whether in the absence of a duly constituted government in western Nigeria, the federal government have no responsibility for ensuring peace, order and good government in that region. The main purpose of this resolution is to seek parliament's approval . . . to ensure an early return to western Nigeria of peace, order and good government.

I ask all Nigerians to co-operate and support the federal government at this momentous turning point in our national history. It is not yet two years since we began the adventurous but arduous task of nation-building. The eyes of the

was misuse of the money put into the bank. But the court, by the action of these same people, stopped us, they said we could not go ahead. We had to listen to the court and obey the court. We did not go ahead. We could easily go ahead but we did not. We called a meeting of parliament; parliament gave us approval to go ahead and we did. When we appointed the inquiry again, the inquiry sat for only fifty minutes and the court stopped us. We did not disobey, we had to wait. I may ask, Mr Speaker, why could the governor of western Nigeria and the Action Group not wait if they really had any regard for the court? Why could they not wait? . . . One side cannot say that they do not wish to respect the court or the constitution and because the federal government is taking certain action they regard the federal government as trying to 'kill democracy', in the way they put it. On the other hand I think we are trying to preserve democracy in this country by taking the action which we are proposing to take, and there should be respect for the courts in the manner which we have demonstrated.

Apart from all that, the damage which that fight, the free fight in the house of assembly, has done to this country is very great. That alone is enough to justify our action. We want to build a name for Nigeria and here we are faced with a fight breaking out in the legislative house of a region! The whole house was shattered, every bit of furniture there was broken, the people broke their heads. Some persons were stabbed and if you really look into it all, you will see that quite a large number of people should really regard themselves as irresponsible, and they and ourselves should all be ashamed of it. Also the leader of the opposition said, the prime minister said he would not give police protection; he, the leader of the opposition, thought the speaker could always invite outsiders to be in the house. What happened was, the first meeting ended in a fight. They wanted to meet immediately and I said - 'No, it would be wrong, if they want to meet why can they not wait for a week or for another ten days? If they meet now they will also fight'. I was told that if the police were to protect the members of the house of assembly from another fight, there would have to be a policeman behind every member of the house in the chamber. How could that be called a meeting of the house of assembly? That is the reason why I insisted that if they met under the situation it would be wrong for us in the federal government to accept what they decided upon.

When I said that, I never meant to suggest that we had any right either to approve or disapprove of measures decided upon by the regional house of assembly. But we would be called upon to deal with a government of the western region, and it would be very difficult for us to know whether the legislature voted in the way that the other faction wanted us to believe would be acceptable to us. I want to say that this is a very serious situation. We have many times heard people saying that the federal government is not effective, the federal government is this or that. We are well aware of that, and are trying to do what we can. But, I must say now, and I hope everybody will take it as a warning, that we in the federal government are determined to assert our authority, and we are also determined to deal severely with any individual or group of individuals who want to damage the name of Nigeria' (Later in the senate he repeated that, We were dragged to court on the bank inquiry, and now we are being dragged on the mid-west. . . . People will soon come to laugh at the courts').

The question was put, the house divided, and the motion passed by 232 to 44. The prime minister made what Chief Enahoro, in contrast to all that he had already said in apparently penitent dismay at the turn of events, called a 'laconic' statement, covering the thirteen 'draconian' sets of regulations to deal with the state of public emergency. These had already been made by the governor-general on the advice of the council of ministers, and brought into force by a gazette notice that same night. The interesting implication was

drawn that these had obviously been drafted long beforehand and, in view of the government's notorious slowness in other matters, that this proved prior collusion. All responsible governments hold emergency legislation ready in secret draft, with which to meet unforeseen calamities; and although such potential powers seem undemocratic and evil to investigative journalists when they are leaked while times are still normal, despite the prior knowledge when becoming helpful to criminals and subversive adversaries, governments are the first to be criticized if an emergency breaks out and they are unprepared for the immediate legislative and executive response. Unlike politicians, law draftsmen and government printers are also expected to polish and print from rough sketches and proofs in very short order.

Parliament approved the emergency regulations, which created the post of administrator western region, and gave the holder powers to nominate commissioners to exercise ministerial powers under his direction, to make any orders necessary in the absence of any other laws adequate to restore law and order and good government, and to amalgamate the local government police forces into the Nigeria police. He could imprison anyone spreading misleading reports, prohibit processions and meetings, detain or restrict persons in the interests of public order, and search premises without a warrant. Politics were effectively banned by relieving the governor, premier, ministers, president of the house of chiefs, speaker of the house of assembly, and the controversial superintendent-general of local government police, of their powers. The house of assembly was dismissed, although it could be recalled from limbo. At this point the nine UMBC members of the federal house cut loose from the opposition, seven others resorted to NPC, two to NCNC, three became 'independents' and declared their readiness to join the federal coalition and so made it virtually 'all-party'.

Yet, nervous for the future, the prime minister ordered in a hand-written minute that the Hansard record and a number of relevant political pamphlets and telegrams bearing on the crisis should be kept safely by his PPS for historical archives. Scholars blest with hindsight have found it easy to decry the definition of a rumpus in a debating chamber and the co-existence of two premiers as an 'emergency'; but lawyers have been at a loss to suggest a more successful formula for solving the upheaval of the time, which was much more than a squabble. As it turned out, the western high court decided that Akintola was the lawful premier.

Direct Rule and Treason Charges

Alhaji Sir Abubakar exercised his new prerogative to appoint his doctor friend Senator Chief Moses Adekoyejo Majekodunmi, the minister of health who still belonged to no party, as administrator. He had never given a moment's thought to appointing Akintola, as a ludicrous rumour alleged. Stanley Wey and others would have rather that for appearances' sake the administrator had not been so obviously a personal friend of the PM, but held their peace. Dr Majekodunmi had in fact proposed the federal chief justice Ademola, but Abubakar had commented that this would permanently compromise his judicial position, and on the spur of the moment responded, 'What about you?' The doctor, still determined to see to the opening of the Lagos university medical college, agreed provided that, to universal inconvenience, he retained his full federal portfolio. Majekodunmi, like Adegbenro an Egba Yoruba from the Abeokuta

area south of Oyo and west of Ijebu, came of a chiefly family, and had been a friend in student days of H O Davies and Bode Thomas, but never of Awolowo. He and Abubakar hoped that, if the new powers were used by subordinates with tact, and if nobody exulted over the vanquished, it would be possible to confine restraint to those politicians who might be disposed to create wide public trouble. If nonetheless all this seemed to the critics of the government and of the two stronger parties to be using a blunderbuss rather than a selective sword, it has never been clear what constitutional and statutory alternative was at hand, other than possibly to stand back as events unfolded unpredictably but chaotically after Adegbenro had won his vote in a rioting house; that would have satisfied Awo and the majority faction of the AG's elected members, but not have restored national respect or regional stability, the aspects which Abubakar saw as greater than any other consideration.

Dr Majekodunmi was quoted reassuringly as saying, 'Nigeria is fortunate at this time to be led by a God-fearing, fair-minded and cool-headed prime minister. The federal government over which he presides will never take advantage of the present unhappy situation to introduce a tyrannical régime in the western region'. He and his 24-year old ADC Captain Murtala Ramat Muhammad, brought back from the Congo, were welcomed by crowds lining the streets. He began by restricting Awolowo, Akintola, Adegbenro, Rotimi Williams and other lesser men, about forty in all, to places remote from Ibadan. The managing editor of Allied newspapers, Latif Jakande, and the editorial director of Amalgamated Press of Nigeria, Bisi Onabanjo, were also included. Jakande was a member of the British journal *The Economist's* international board, and its editor protested unsuccessfully to Alhaji Sir Abubakar. Awolowo, taken away from an AG meeting at Ikeja, put up with his disgraceful waterlogged detention conditions at the Lekki lagoon east of Lagos, which were for some time unknown to Majekodunmi; in philosophical mood, he commented to reporters that he 'would have no objection to serving under Sir Abubakar personally; but it would be an unreal coalition since the AG and the NPC disagreed basically on foreign policy as well as on some domestic matters'. Akintola, restricted to a forest reserve by Olokomeji, directly answered their questions: 'Awolowo as party leader demanded that I as premier should give him more details about the workings of the government than I was myself prepared to demand from my ministers. I was not defying the party or its policies. I was simply thinking of the needs of ordinary administration'.

Sam Ikoku, Adebajo and others 'chose exile' in Ghana, where many underwent training in guerrilla camps. Dr Nkrumah addressed a conference of 'freedom fighters' in Accra which was held coincidentally early in June 1962 and attracted Nigerian attention, mostly but not all antipathetic. An international row quickly developed as Ghanaian newspapers now sympathetic with Awolowo's Action Group abused Alhaji Sir Abubakar as 'a dark-skinned Englishman', and drew counterblasts from the NCNC Nigerian press. Mr Wachuku called a major press conference to denounce 'black imperialism'. In one of his discreet conversations with his friend Sir Adetokunbo about western regional matters, to which the chief justice responded even more discreetly, the prime minister commented, '*If they don't want me here again, all I want is three hours' notice - I will pack my things and go away*'.

Dr Majekodunmi was not bound to consult anyone, but rather like an old-time district officer appointed to be caretaker native authority when a recalcitrant body was dissolved, he knew that his task was to heal wounds and set examples in impartial but unsentimentally strict justice. He enjoyed total

rapport with the prime minister, and sought his private counsel frequently
 difficulties. To the dismay of activists he received a warm welcome from bo
 ble people, weary of power-seekers, and the civil service, an experien
 ared with some such past DOs. It was ironic that those who though
 ld benefit most lived in the preponderance of the region which ha
 relatively undisturbed throughout, but who feared that the violenc
 ad been about to spread from the centres to their villages. H
 ional chief justice, Sir Samuel Quashie-Idun (a Gold Coast
 and many of the laws, which he promulgated
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 many for future elected governments.
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that to assess the material grounds of a need for such a declaration. He won freedom from personal restriction, as the evidence for that was not strong enough to make the order 'reasonably justifiable', but was restricted again, in more convenient environs, on a fresh warrant with new evidence served while the supreme court was on vacation, and for various practical personal reasons he did not appeal.

Adegbenro's cases were more notorious. In that against the attorney-general over his own restriction, which further urged that parliament had made its declaration in bad faith, the judges reaffirmed that a resolution of both federal houses of parliament was all the evidence of a state of emergency that was needed, and that there were ample grounds for his restriction. In the other, in which Akintola had challenged his involvement in the ooni's action of dismissing a premier on a petition without satisfying himself of the authenticity of the signatures, the federal supreme court held in Akintola's favour (the British judge Sir Lionel Brett dissenting), and Adegbenro appealed to the judicial committee of the UK privy council. With more than a little insensitivity in an independent country not lacking in an abundance of its own lawyers, the AG had brought out Dingle Foot, a British Liberal QC and Sir Hugh Foot's brother, to argue Adegbenro's case, particularly about the legality of the emergency regulations. The northern premier, the Sardauna, was only one of many who criticized the federal government for allowing this, and Foot was ordered out of the country, although he had first been admitted years before to the Nigerian bar to appear in other cases that appeared to involve human rights or political bias. His instructing solicitor Mr Colthorpe was also expelled. Other cases remained on the books in which Akintola sued Awolowo and the AG executive, while the Action Group expelled various individuals, such as Chief Awosika for saying, 'I am convinced that the party has deviated from its policy of democracy and the creation of a welfare state, to communism under the guise of democratic socialism'.

But the true lasting public interest was in the Coker commission. Mr Justice Coker's tribunal was formally restricted to the allegations of corruption and maladministration in the six western regional public corporations. Opinion urged it to spread its inquiries (as Muffett's was to in Kano – see chapter 36 below) so that new western elections could take place and, God willing, the emergency be forgotten. It was inevitably seen by the AG's opponents as an inquiry into the party's integrity and competence, and by its supporters as an attack on the very leadership and solidarity that they were bound by emotion and culture loyally to defend. As a result, even before the incidental evidence mounted, tending to show how the fabric of the AG drew all its strength from its central presidency, how it monopolized all the western region's economic nodes, how public money was channelled into its accounts, and how once Akintola and Rosiji had become federal ministers they only learnt as much as Awo, Rewane and others chose to let them know, as well as investigating the deeds of its placemen in public bodies, minds had already been made up. The Foster-Sutton paradox over the African Continental bank was repeated, in that the more an ethnic leadership was tainted, the more its followers rallied in support, and some public sympathy tended to swing from Akintola to Awolowo. The western high court made an interim order enjoining Chief Awolowo from operating the AG's bank account just as the prime minister returned from holiday to visit Ibadan himself, where he declared that he was not planning to reinstall Akintola as premier, since the people would decide on that once a general election had been held after the emergency ended. But

sounded as if I'd committed our side to something, or if it had led to, er, to murder?!

Chief Awolowo, still kept at Lekki except for his confidential talks with discreet mediators in Lagos, heard that his house at Ikenne had been searched in vain while his private secretary was present, but that on returning later the police had found four bullets, and some burnt papers in his garden. He hinted at fabrication, but was formally arrested and charged with treasonable felony, which put paid to the PM's subtle attempts at reconciliation. Awo was thereafter confined in Ikoyi, but was still allowed to speak to Ademola: the CJ reported this to Abubakar, who merely showed him some of the impounded firearms, at which he judiciously washed his hands of any further involvement in what must be settled in open court before another judge; and the prime minister scrupulously avoided further communication with the judges till the trial and appeals were over. It was little comfort to Awolowo that in October the Action Group won control of the Lagos municipal council by 27 seats to the NCNC's 15, since Akintola's wing (now becoming known as the United Progressive Party or UPP) offered no candidates. The AG, desperate for powerful friends, offered to keep the NCNC's national secretary F S McEwen as chairman of the town council, but only found a few scattered foul-weather friends in that quarter. The problem seemed to be that although the federation might be showing itself stronger than the regions, this was not any proof that tribalism was weakened. London's *Financial Times* asked whether Nigeria's stability was simply the old guard's inheritance from the colonial period, and whether they could hang on long enough for a smooth transition to a new guard without first being swept away by militant revolutionaries. The world was indeed revising its judgement of Nigeria.

Internally for the moment such a revolutionary threat seemed remote. In November Chief Awolowo and (originally) 26 others faced a criminal court, accused on three counts which amounted to the charge of planning to overthrow the federal government on the specific date of 22 September 1962, for which purpose he and an inner group of the AG, the 'tactical committee', had sent men to be trained in Ghana, had intended to bribe certain army officers, and had imported arms into Nigeria. The trial lasted nine months, by the end of which no reasonable man doubted the essential truth of the allegations about overseas training and amassing of some weapons. In fact security penetration of the conspiracy had been so complete that by the time the leader had decided to float the revolt there was more information on police files (and therefore in the prime minister's briefing) than any single one of the conspirators could have divulged. The police searches and detentions all had to be done within the tight bonds of the law, highlit by the jealous attitude of defence lawyers to the strictly irrelevant background of the emergency regulations; but it was gratifying that nobody questioned the objectivity of a Yoruba attorney-general or an Igbo solicitor-general in their advisory duties. The prime minister had also said, in a broadcast which referred to the antecedents of the trial, that members of the public had greatly assisted the police; and yet, as with Aminu Kano, the police were cautiously conscious that Abubakar, for all the personal antagonism, had a residual respect for Awo's intellectual attainments and private as opposed to political integrity.

Awolowo had had a British QC Mr Gratiaen briefed to defend him, but he like Dingle Foot before him had been banned, as were other British QCs who were members of the Nigerian bar. The ban, on which the minister of internal affairs, now Alhaji Shehu Shagari, had been adamant, was challenged

in court, which helped to drag the proceedings out, just as news came from London of Enahoro's arrest. Coincidentally the Coker commission had the last of its 62 highly technical sittings, a laudable achievement in economy of time for the judge, his colleague Justice Kassim from the east, and the Lagos chartered accountant Mr Akintola Williams. Advance notice of its findings to the prime minister suggested that Awolowo, for all his personal fastidiousness, was planning the use of public funds to create a power structure in which he would be dominant. The commission thought that he had failed to adhere to the standards of conduct required of a premier (another echo of Stafford Foster-Sutton's verdict on Zik), but that there was not enough evidence to say the same of Akintola, who should be absolved on all grounds. Of course Akintola was now a premier although suspended, and Awolowo in custody no longer was. Awo had organized the National Investment and Properties Co Ltd, which had received £3.7 million from public funds and paid them on in effect to the Action Group party, which should now refund them to the regional marketing board. Loyal party men at this moment stood astonished at their own moderation rather than shamed by such findings, and there was to be some hypocrisy in their rivals' gloating. Federal ministers were unanimous in thinking that although money had always passed through other persons' hands, Awolowo had known about the large sums of bank and investment money passing into his party's accounts.

The knowledge of Coker's work did however give strength to the prime minister's confidence when he announced on 29 December that the emergency would not be extended, and that the western region would therefore revert to parliamentary government on 1 January 1963. Chief Akintola resumed the office of premier which the regulations had suspended, there being no legal alternative. He lost no opportunity of seeking to appease Adegbenro and AG members, in the hope of reforming the old party without Awolowo at the head. But now that he headed the UPP, although a party machine had still to be built, he had no ultimate difficulty in forming a new cabinet with the support of the followers of Chief R A Fani-Kayode ('Fani-Power'), the leader of the NCNC's western wing, who had defected from the AG in 1959 because Awolowo thought him 'brash', and who now left the opposition in order to become deputy premier. There had in fact been an earlier difficulty: a faction of the NCNC, led by the federal minister Chief Benson, had questioned the propriety of any coalition before an early election could show whether it was Akintola's or Awo's side that now had the true majority support. The inconsistency was that Awolowo and Akintola deserved equal credit for building up the Action Group, which was popularly thought to be the natural party for all Yoruba to support. At this point Alhaji Sir Abubakar gave Benson no encouragement, and told the allies of the NPC who were exploring the chances of organizing a Southern People's Congress in Ibadan (one of his own parliamentary secretaries, a westerner, was involved) to devote their energies to the UPP as a Trojan horse to help NCNC to defeat AG in the west.

Opposition to the coalition faded away, and Dr Okpara gave his blessing on the assumption that a UPP dominated by the western NCNC's tactics would provide a sober and liberal government capable of protecting those whom the AG had opposed or had deprived of access to the rewards of power. Okpara also, not wanting to stir up 'Free Awo!' activists, easily discouraged Fani-Kayode from nourishing any lingering desire to be reconciled with the AG. Dr Majekodunmi and his commissioners, who were happy and relieved

to hand over, received wide acclaim for their exemplary service, which had shown as ever how contented Nigerians could be for limited periods under moderately non-partisan rule. The minister of health's last emergency act was to direct Akintola to advise the Queen to appoint Chief Joseph Fadahunsi as governor (he shortly afterwards became Sir Odeleye Fadahunsi). He had also had the seating in the Ibadan legislature replaced by furniture fixed immovably to the floor, and had the mace, which had also served its historical purpose as a bludgeon, repaired.

Chief Anthony Enahoro's extradition proved to be a continuing distraction. He had been traced, where Lagos special branch had said he would be, by the British police who advised on the precise sequence of accurate procedure necessary to ensure a smooth process. The new inspector-general, John Hodge, had gone on leave after scrupulous briefing of all concerned, and had assured Alhaji Sir Abubakar that the deputy not only could, but must be seen to, implement it. A best-laid plan went awry. Two crown counsel arrived in London, bearing evidence that amounted to little more than a cutting from a Lagos newspaper, and the result was typical of the mishandled extradition cases that have enlivened civil rights arguments in British courts over the years. Eventually, after three successive upward appeals, the order was definitively upheld, which allowed British MPs in turn, now highly suspicious of Nigeria, to indulge their histrionic mistrust of friendly countries' administration of justice. The house of commons debates hurt Abubakar, who had seen the gaining of independence on the Westminster model, allied with English judicial systems, as an expression of mutual confidence. British MPs made much of his broadcast talk having prejudged Enahoro, whom they interviewed in Brixton jail.

The home secretary Henry Brooke was hotly criticized for signing the deportation order before the matter had been debated in parliament, and there was uproar when a vote of censure was denied. Uncertainty whether a possible death sentence was involved complicated the arguments still further (under the halfway house to abolition in the British homicide act of 1957, due for a review of its effect at this time, 'capital murders' had been distinguished from other homicides, but together with high treason were still subject in theory to a death penalty that depended on a politician's decision on whether to advise commutation, and were therefore a continuing matter of lively political and social British controversy). Mr Macmillan required Lord Head in Lagos to report the official Nigerian position. Alhaji Sir Abubakar told Head that he and his colleagues would not accept the humiliating posture of giving any reassurances, such as that no charge would carry the death penalty: but in their opinion, as advised by their law officers, the capital sentence did not apply to the charges at present laid.

The second complication was over defence counsel, and the answer was equally couched in terms that with bare politeness implied British politics were interfering unacceptably in a friend's sovereign affair. Abubakar assured Head that successive undertakings, given by his government's legal representatives to the divisional court and to the appeal committee of the house of lords, clearly meant that if the Nigerian federal chief justice gave his certificate for a particular English barrister to appear for Chief Enahoro, the executive branches would not refuse him entry on the sole ground that he was to defend Enahoro; they would bar him only if in his personal case there were other good reasons. In the cases of the Ipswich MP Dingle Foot, and Gratiaen, they thought good reasons did exist; but Brooke told the House of Commons that he was satisfied from Nigeria's prime minister that Enahoro would be allowed counsel of his

own choice in the Lagos trial. The dispute gave gossipy ammunition to those who still wished to portray Lord Head as Alhaji Sir Abubakar's puppeteer, but more accurate reports were spread that Head was warning London that a British refusal to return Enahoro unconditionally might result in the Nigerian cabinet deciding to leave the Commonwealth. Enahoro was returned in May 1963 and appeared in the Lagos high court before Mr Justice Sigismund Lambo. By then other 'treason trials' were also being held in the republics of Tchad and Sénégal (which had just revised their constitutions in favour of executive presidencies), Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo (whose president had been assassinated), and British interest in the specific Nigerian example dwindled within a liberal disillusionment with Africa's politics.

Internal controversy centred on purely circumstantial AG allegations – that the presumptive trial judge, Charles Dade Onyeama (an Igbo in fact), had been deliberately taken away to act as a supreme court judge because he had been too independent in the National Bank case; that the relief trial judge (ironically, a Yoruba), Mr Justice Shodeinde Soweimimo, had been chosen for his federal sympathies; that better than ordinary remand jail conditions were not available to the accused or their lawyers in preparing the defence cases; that only Enahoro was permitted an English lawyer; and that the witnesses were criminals, political turncoats (including the opposition northerners Ibrahim Imam, who was widely believed to have been promised a contract by the northern regional government, and Patrick Dokotri), accomplices or otherwise tainted. It should not have been surprising that prosecution witnesses from Oyo outnumbered those from Ijebu. Enahoro's apparent handwriting on crucial documents was doubted by experts. Awolowo produced letters for constructive reinterpretation that had passed between Abubakar and himself about ways of resolving the 1962 emergency amicably. The impression was fostered that all that had been intended was the same effective self-defence in an aggressive civil environment that any effective political parties would be bound to adopt, and that the force mustered 'might not have been enough to hold up a large bank' (although those of Nigeria's small army of 9,000 who were not in the Congo were mostly not in Lagos either). Awo admitted that he had hoped to make an alliance with some elements in the NCNC, in hopes of taking over the federal government and rendering the NPC powerless, both politically and nationally. But his personal demeanour before the court was too cut and dried. He seemed to be divorced from the real community, and looked to worldly observers as though he had something to hide. Where had all the money come from? What was all this talk about 'Nkrumah's £60,000'? Nevertheless the central facts were proven beyond all doubt that men had been sent abroad (to Ghana) for military training, and that illegal weapons had been brought in. As Mr Jaja Wachuku commented, the material evidence produced could not have been manufactured in a Nigerian backyard.

Just after Enahoro's return the judicial committee of the UK privy council delivered itself of a majority opinion that on a strict interpretation of the constitutional words about *appearing* to command majority support, the ooni of Ife had after all had the right to dismiss Akintola without a prior formal vote of no confidence being passed in the lobbies of the house. Without the presence of its attorney-general, the western house of assembly hastened to resolve, through a bill that had retrospective intent, that a governor could only dismiss a premier on a majority vote taken in a formal sitting of the legislature. The bill had been drafted well in advance *ex abundanti cautela*, and an amused British journalist

observed it clutched in the hands of regional lawyers waiting at the end of a telephone to hear the privy council's opinion, ready to go into action should it be adverse. Before Adegbenro could effectively challenge this in court, the federal house of representatives was summoned to an emergency meeting on 3 June to consent under the constitution to this regional constitution amendment law. Once more Alhaji Sir Abubakar's own words are best evidence of his government's view of events in the west, and of his own sense of judicious constitutionality:

'It is my painful but inescapable duty once again to address parliament regarding the affairs of western Nigeria. Honourable members will recall that about this time last year we had occasion in this august assembly to declare a state of emergency in the western region as a means of ensuring peace, order and good government there. This was, in due course, followed by a clear majority ruling (three to one) of the federal supreme court that, on a true interpretation the governor could not validly remove premier Akintola from office, except as a result of an adverse vote secured on the floor of the house of assembly that the premier no longer enjoyed the confidence of a majority of its members. When in accordance with its original undertaking the federal government brought the state of emergency in western Nigeria to an end, it at the same time restored the suspended executive and legislative organs of the region. The post-emergency Akintola government has since assumed the huge responsibility for the implementation of the recommendation of the report of the Coker commission of inquiry into the affairs of six statutory corporations of western Nigeria.

Since Alhaji Adegbenro appealed from the judgment of the federal supreme court to her Majesty's judicial committee of the privy council some ten months ago, the constitutional and political situation in western Nigeria has remarkably altered. In the first place, the Action Group's claim to the allegiance of 66 members of the house of assembly, whose alleged signatures had been collected outside the house and made the basis of the governor's action in removing Chief Akintola from his premiership, has been falsified by two successive votes of implicit confidence in premier Akintola cast last April by 79 and 80 members respectively out of the total of 117 in the house. In the second place, her Majesty the Queen has seen fit to appoint Chief Joseph Fadahunsi, as he then was, to be governor of western Nigeria on the advice of premier Akintola, even though she was well aware of Alhaji Adegbenro's pending appeal before her Majesty's judicial committee of the privy council at that time; and it is not an unfair presumption that the Queen's official acts are to be deemed to have been regularly performed.'

The lawyer draftsman's careful words were also a diplomat's: he did not encourage speculation on the dilemmas and conundrums facing the Queen's embarrassed advisers. He went on,

'It is against this background that this sitting of the house of representatives, to give its consent to the Constitution of Western Nigeria (Amendment) Law 1963 having effect, must be viewed. . . . From what I have said so far, it can be seen quite clearly that the opinion of the judicial committee in the Adegbenro versus Akintola appeal has been overtaken by events, some of which have already been briefly indicated. To attempt to implement it can only lead to more confusion in the already complex situation of the western region. For instance, were her Majesty the Queen to sign the necessary order-in-council bringing the judicial committee's opinion into force, she would in logic be obliged to comply with Alhaji Adegbenro's letter, sent direct to her, nominating another candidate for the office of governor. There would then be in

the system of a central government and two premiers with all their complications...
...be left with no alternative but to declare another state of emergency in
...Such a course must involve not only western Nigeria but also the entire
...and never to avert such a disaster by the course now proposed,
...the local political realities of which the opinion of the judicial
...Nigeria must be regarded as unfortunate, since it holds
...can exercise a power to dismiss a premier at will whereas
...in identical terms in all the regional as well
...governor-general would similarly be entitled to collect
...some people as a means of determining that
...the support of a majority of members of the

interjected that
minister echoed
He went on, after
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to adopt from Britain. To
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defective register of 1959. A general election on the basis of the new register had resulted in the defeat of the leading party, one of the defeated candidates of which challenged the validity of the law establishing the new register. The supreme court of The Gambia upheld the law, but when the case was taken on appeal the west African court of appeal had declared the 1961 law invalid on a literal interpretation of an imprecise phrase in it. This had the effect of invalidating the electoral register and the majority of the membership of the house of representatives. The secretary of state for commonwealth relations, Mr Duncan Sandys, in his explanation to the British parliament . . . said that the Gambian and British governments had two courses open to them, either to dissolve the house and order fresh elections or to amend the 1961 law with retrospective effect: and that acting on the basis of the legal advice available, the British government has chosen the latter course and amended retrospectively the imprecise phrase in the law, since the Gambian house of representatives had not been properly constituted to do the exercise itself.

Honourable members will thus see that what we are trying to do here this morning is no more than what the British government thought right to do less than twelve days ago in almost identical constitutional and legal situations. It is interesting to recall that when faced with the argument from the opposition benches, that what the British government had done amounted to a violation of the rule of law, Mr Duncan Sandys's reply on May was, I quote with your permission, Mr Speaker: It is all very well for members opposite to say that we are setting aside the law. This is not the first time that elections which have been shown to be invalid have been validated. It has happened in this house of commons within the memory of those sitting there. There is nothing improper in it. Our own answer to any suggestion that we are trying to set aside the opinion of the privy council must be the same. There is nothing wrong in enacting retrospective legislation to avoid political or economic chaos.

Honourable members will readily call to mind our enactment in this house during the budget sitting last April of retrospective legislation regarding produce in the regions. The only kind of retrospective legislation forbidden by our constitution is one imposing penalties for offences. Indeed, examples abound in other commonwealth countries of retrospective legislation to invalidate rulings of the judicial committee on constitutional or legal issues whenever it was considered expedient to do so. Just now we are conducting a nation-wide census; the referendum for the creation of the mid-west region is almost upon us: registers for the general as well as the regional elections due next year have yet to be compiled. In these circumstances the federal government feels that, after all the recent upheavals, western region deserves a stable and enlightened government to foster the well-being and prosperity of its inhabitants, as well as the growth of democratic processes and institutions. More, that this is the constitutional duty of the federal government, to take all appropriate steps in the national interest to ensure national unity and the continuance of federal government in Nigeria. Mr Speaker, our cause is just; our intention honourable.'

The imminent matters he had mentioned were to bring worries as great.

He moved successfully, as Mr Briggs of Degema, who was (with Chief Akin-Olugbade for Egba south) wearing Awo's and Enahoro's federal mantles, failed with his amendment which doubted the validity of the original Ibadan constitutional amendment. Not long afterwards the national plebiscite necessary to establish the mid-west region showed 89% of the registered electorate in favour. For mid-westerners the prospect of attracting new local powers and rewards that would not have to be shared was irresistible, as it would always be. Whether or not all voters understood the implications (a 'majority' of regions supporting constitutional changes would in the future have to be three out of four rather than two out of three, for example), this was the end of the Action

Group as such as an effective national party, for it also had ceased to oppose the new region. The prime minister said at a contemporary press conference that he remained convinced that sooner or later Nigeria would have an all-party government: *'There would even be such a time when we would have a unitary government in Nigeria. It may be after me, but I am certain it will certainly happen. No useful purpose can be served by leaving one group in the cold too long'*. The AG's spokesman complained sourly from his virtual quietus that Abubakar had been singing this song since 1960, but had never taken any concrete steps.

In mid-1963 it was already apparent that the western region's political cracks had only been papered over. Akintola and Awo's shadow, Adegbenro, suggested on 1 July that the UPP and AG might be reconciled, to the irritation of Fani-Kayode and Benson. However Fani-Kayode hurriedly declared that in fact all three parties, the NCNC western wing also, were reconciled; but that the coalition government would carry on. All that this seemed to mean was that all three parties were unsure of mass support, and all wished the Yoruba people to stay in the national game. The national NCNC working committee would have nothing of 'unilateral and clandestine' deals with the hated AG, which for them must remain, like the Yoruba generally, a permanent minority opposition. Akintola denied that he was contriving a nominal liquidation of the western NCNC, and on 8 July UPP and NCNC announced that the idea of a tripartite union had been dropped. Nevertheless Akintola knew that he relied on the favour of the federal government to nourish the conditions in which the majority of the people of the west might favour him in future elections. From now until early next year he and Fani-Kayode kept hoping that a new united western party might emerge, while keeping their hopes secret from Okpara and the Igbos, whom they despised as simple opportunists. Akintola's other dilemma was that in supporting the creation of a mid-west region which would cut the number of Awolowo's supporters in a smaller Ibadan assembly, he had to watch Fani-Kayode try to win the new region for NCNC and to see the COR region, the *quid pro quo*, fade into the future.

The treason trial ended on 31 July, with twenty-one findings of guilt, and sentences were pronounced on 7 September, just as Ibadan and Abeokuta suffered the worst floods in memory. Awolowo, who had gained some additional popular sympathy when his son was killed in a car accident, was sentenced to ten years in jail. The judge's summing-up mentioned Awo's frustration because he had made no provision for any alternative to his obsession, to which he had given voice during the trial, with becoming prime minister of Nigeria. Enahoro was given fifteen years. Mr Cecil King of *Daily Mirror* newspapers was forced to reconsider his characterization of Awolowo, which had caused his brief rift with Sir John Macpherson. Dr Azikiwe, who might only exercise royal clemency on advice, announced that the government was giving immediate consideration to the question of an amnesty for 'certain prisoners' on Republic Day. Alhaji Sir Abubakar thought of the facts of the conspiracy and said, *'It is a very sad event for Nigeria, and I feel distressed about it'*, but made no reference to individuals or to this broad hint. J S Tarka and Alfred Rewane had been found not guilty; Dr Chike Obi had been freed when no evidence was given against him.

Much later the prime minister was to comment, *'One thing I don't understand and have never understood is how Awolowo could have been so childish. . . . I did not believe he would be so foolish. How could he think that he could give a man training in three weeks - just three weeks! - and then expect him*

to overthrow the whole government? There were appeals, and four lesser sentences were later quashed, the supreme court taking the view that no evidence had been adduced to implicate those convicted. But although the release of Chief Awolowo became more and more an issue of raw politics than of abstract justice during the remaining years of civilian government, and the place of Yorubas in the multi-cultural federation remained as crucial a factor as ever, he and Enahoro played no further part from the cells in the present story. Practical consequences were that the easterners of the NCNC felt freed to reassess their party's relationship with the unweakened legions of the north, and that with the separation of the mid-west the Yorubas' internal political strains were localized. What was, unhappily, known in official confidence but left publicly to mere surmise and speculation was the background support given to the plot by Dr Nkrumah and his bureau of African affairs, who were also finding targets in Cameroun. One Action Group delegation had gone to seek Dr Nkrumah's personal grant of military help. Nkrumah had sympathy with the training of revolutionary invasion forces, but gave way to the advice of a civil servant and poet, Michael Dei-Anang, who warmly counselled against armed support for a political party against the government of Alhaji Sir Abubakar. An even more unhappy consequence was that although the plot had failed, it encouraged the conception of less ramshackle plots in minds that had previously consigned such thoughts to the worlds of fiction or of futile foreigners.

This long section in two parts has illustrated Abubakar's attitude to cultural value-concepts such as 'fundamental human rights', and to sedition. He accepted the broad liberal definitions in philosophical debate, but came close to the common man in particular instances. The self-styled possessor of ordinary 'commonsense' looks to the immediate consequences of any hindrance or mischief, and supports any move to cure it; he does not let an appeal to some higher doctrine prick his conscience for long. Those who claim justification for an inconvenient means to some lofty end tend to be regarded as awkward and blinkered individualists, single-mindedly anxious to challenge the established order, or to have a devious ulterior purpose for wanting to be provocative, and as deserving of little sympathy if they lose their case. Prime minister Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa may have seemed a gentle revolutionary fifteen years before, but now he would agree with the common man who does not want to spend his life in a struggle to kick eternally against a never-ending succession of pricks.

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35 The end of the first full year

*Shari'a ba ki da ratse;
kowa ya karkace ki, ki taka shi*

At the end of the short Lagos parliamentary meeting in early September 1961 Mr Khrushchev's scientists exploded a nuclear device. He had just arranged for the erection of the Berlin wall, to keep East Germans out of the western enclave. This lent spice not only to the ANPC's report but even more to the meeting of uncommitted nations, which was held at Belgrade under the joint auspices of Pandit Nehru, who led 360 million Indians, and Dr Nkrumah, who led four million Ghanaians. There Nehru said, 'Classical colonialism is gone and is dead', and with the support of Burma and Cyprus tried to persuade the non-aligned movement that its up-to-date purpose must be not to fight colonialism but to try to reduce the cold war; he was opposed by Egypt, Indonesia and Yugoslavia. Khrushchev went boldly on to approve another detonation, of a 50-megaton bomb, and to remove Stalin's body from Lenin's tomb. Nigeria was not invited to Belgrade because the UK-Nigerian defence agreement, of which Alhaji Sir Abubakar and most of the NPC remained unrepentant, allegedly and speciously tied her to NATO. The slight only became an embarrassment when later the press and opposition alleged that Abubakar had 'refused' to send representatives. Nehru asked the conference for, and secured from it, a brief statement on the danger of war and an appeal for peace; Nkrumah sought a very long declaration demanding 'positive neutralism', an immediate end to nuclear testing, colonialism and apartheid, non-interference in Cuba and the Congo, general disarmament, a larger security council, and equitable distribution of jobs in the UN secretariat. His was also accepted, shorn of three references to support for '1962' as the specific date for all decolonization, to Africa becoming a nuclear-free zone, and to separate peace treaties with two sovereign Germanies (which Khrushchev was threatening to conclude unilaterally). Nehru and Nkrumah flew separately to Moscow with their messages, bearing an appeal for another Khrushchev-Kennedy meeting; Sukarno and Modibo Keita went on a similar errand to Washington. In fact Kennedy, who had met Khrushchev only three months before, planned that his next international meeting should be with Macmillan. A less dramatic conference coincided at Arusha in Tanganyika, to discuss the preservation of African wildlife, with more lasting effect.

Abubakar's main comment on Belgrade was to agree with its dissociation from Russia's plan to replace Hammarskjöld by a 'troika' of joint UN secretaries-general, representing east, west and non-aligned interests: '*I feel sure there should be only one, and a first-class man, who is able, honest and sincere, who will have other assistants widely representative of the other nations as much as possible*'. Dr Kenneth David Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia visited Lagos this month, where he was met by Wachuku and Mbadiwe, and had little trouble persuading the Nigerian government to support the United National

Independence party (UNIP)'s policy of insistence on constitutional changes for the infant Rhodesian federation; brought to the prime minister, he heard much Nigerian advice on how to win an election without having much money, how to stay on the right side of the constitution and the rule of law, how to evade British MPs' advice to rely on liberal whites, and how to oppose his rivals without using violence. Jamaica held a referendum on the question of seceding from the West Indies, and so inevitably breaking up another federation. Syria seceded from the United Arab Republic. Nkrumah placed the leading members of the Ghanaian opposition in detention. It was clearly time for a Nigerian leader to insist on unity in diversity.

Kaunda had an internal Northern Rhodesia problem as well. Macleod had offered him, as has been seen, a form of constitution that fell short of the Tanganyikan and Nyasaland models of majority rule, provided that peace was restored first; Julius Nyerere had advised him to reject it; yet because Welensky was equally hostile, it seemed to many Africans that it must have virtue. Abubakar's advice was clear and firm: accept the offer, and fight an election (Mr Joshua Nkomo intemperately accused Nigeria of 'aggression against the African people'). In Britain Mr Macleod now ended his two controversial years as colonial secretary (had his pace been too fast, or was greater safety to be gained by going even faster?); in October he became leader of the house of commons and chairman of the Conservative party in place of Mr Butler, and was succeeded by the able but less incisive Mr Reginald Maudling from the board of trade. Macleod had assessed the average colonial office staff as being less impressive than those in his former ministry of labour, but believed that the 'high fliers', who all sat at the most difficult desks, were the best of Britain's home civil service. His main regret was that, having brought the five states of colonial emergency which he had inherited to a quick end, he had just had to sanction a fresh one in Sierra Leone, where Siaka Stevens had refused to sign the independence conference papers in the name of the opposition, and had been arrested. Macleod told the commons with pride, after the two hardest but most satisfying years of his life, that in 1945 Britain had ruled 516 million dependent people; at the last general election, 80 million; already these were only 43 million, and 13 million of them had already signed their agreed papers of independence. But that still left 30 millions in small territories in five continents or archipelagoes. Macleod's private opinion was that these should all become internally self-governing, but allow the nearest big commonwealth brother to look after their defence and foreign affairs in mutual family support; this marked a change from his earlier contempt for ties of sentimentality, but presumed that big and small brothers would always share the same dedication to party choice within parliamentary democracy.

In a small reshuffle of his cabinet Alhaji Sir Abubakar appointed Dr Majekodunmi as minister of health, Mr Jacob C Obande succeeding him as army minister. The governor-general accepted a knighthood in the order of St John of Jerusalem, an honour which provided breast and collar badges for ceremonial occasions but no civil title, and committed him to support of the voluntary first aid and ambulance service throughout the commonwealth. The prime minister looked back on the first year of independence at the beginning of October, and in a broadcast gave what was probably the last major address in which his spirit of tolerant reason demonstrated total self-confidence to his listeners. His politician's oratory was devoted largely to human attitudes instead of sloganeering or ideology, and appealed to thinkers but not to those who thirsted for personal rewards:

'I regard it as an achievement for Nigeria to operate successfully a federal system of government. Though a federal system is a complicated one anywhere, I believe that here in Nigeria it has created unity, and has brought about a closer understanding and satisfaction to our diverse communities. The federal government . . . has shown to the world that with tolerance, Nigeria is specializing in doing what others think impossible, creating in this vast and commercially important country a versatile young nation. It argues a reasonable conviction that what affects Nigeria may likely affect other neighbouring countries in Africa.

Let us therefore examine our way of life afresh. It will only have value if it reveals itself in the distinctive expression of our genius and customs – for example, in our literature and art, in housekeeping, in the bringing up of children, in conversation and festivals, in clothes and food and business, in all those things which make the stamp of us as one people different from another. To our well-known spirit of tolerance let us add flexibility of outlook. . . . Herein lies the secret of progress, for no material consideration will then be able to rob us of our way of life. As a society of free men and women we shall then be continuously giving our service for the benefit of all. . . . Relations between all the integral parts of the federation are improving. True national spirit has been generated and fostered. . . . The most important thing is now to forecast the future, and in doing this we should not disregard the past nor forget the present. Emotion or sentiment has never been a characteristic of us Nigerians. Our way of life is based on principles which extend beyond life itself. Its activities are based on a realistic approach, and it has a direction consistent with what we believe to be supreme values. So long as we keep our own criteria of character intact and independent, we should have nothing to fear'.

Apart from such 'fireside chat' for the literate, he thought back to Belgrade and had comment to make on other people's ideology:

'The primary danger to . . . peace lies not in the advent of nuclear weapons, but in the fears engendered by the division between the so-called capitalist and communist states. The grave international situation makes it necessary for us at home to be more united, so that we may present a really effective voice in the UN. . . . I have always considered freedom to be a right. Therefore I didn't think, when we had it, of indulging in a mere wholesale condemnation of imperialism and colonialism. I thought that the tasks that lay ahead were heavy and more exciting, and that instead of engaging in violent speeches against those '-isms', we should direct our energies to shouldering our new responsibilities. My thought still remains the same. Nigeria has an important duty to perform. We are irrevocably committed to seeing that all territories under colonial domination are freed. . . . I do not believe that mere emotional or sentimental vituperation will help us. We need to be constructive and cultivate the right attitude of mind. We must not exploit the political division in the world, but bridge the gap by practical measures'.

He mentioned the Congo, Angola, South Africa, Bizerta, Algeria, Berlin and the UN's administrative problem that would now follow Hammarskjöld's death; he added, 'We shall enter our second year of freedom with a lot of problems', a comment to which the three last chapters' glances at the near future lend weight.

The second twelve months of independence began with the final formal farewell to the Southern Cameroons, which merged on 1 October with Cameroun to form the federal republic of Cameroon. C O Ojukwu, now a major, organized the military aspects of the northern region's independence anniversary

celebrations on the same day (the Sardauna had upset another Igbo, 'Kaduna' Nzeogwu, when visiting the British royal military academy at Sandhurst by asking the Nigerian cadets, in Hausa, about their ethnic origins). A Nigerian trade mission under Okotie-Eboh was on the second stage of a far eastern tour (Festus had been disappointed that an administrative officer, recently transferred from Nigeria, was in no position as a supposed 'representative of the British government' to supply an individual chauffeured car in Hong Kong for each of its several members); Abubakar's policy was to attract investment capital and aid from those countries and organizations most likely to repay his interest in them. This was reflected in some more polite public differences with the sardauna of Sokoto, who said at this time that he had lost confidence in the UN: the prime minister noted quietly that everyone was entitled to his own opinion, even when it was not shared by the government. The northern premier also condemned the USA over reports that Kennedy was considering a resumption of atomic tests in the atmosphere; the prime minister stated bluntly that, '*in view of Soviet testing, it would have been unwise of the American people to have decided otherwise*'. The Nevada desert was not the Sahara.

To France, where de Gaulle was in no hurry to restore formal relations with Nigeria, he made a small gesture: '*It is a matter of national prestige, and if France wants to reopen its embassy, it will have to apply to Nigeria to do so. We want them to come, so that we can open one in France too*'. The French diplomatic vacuum weakened the links with francophone countries also (Togo's interests were now being looked after by Switzerland). Chief H O Davies, who had been employed in a diplomatic capacity at UNO in harness with Aminu Kano, was sent to test the French waters discreetly. He came back from a visit to Paris and French-speaking countries with the opinion that President Houphouët-Boigny would be the best go-between. Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Davies saw the president at Ikeja airport, and left the further prompting to him. The French did now resume their air traffic through Nigeria, there being a tacit assurance that there would be no more Saharan tests. They had found a substitute in a Pacific atoll, even more distant than Nevada. The experience of losing face-to-face contacts had made Abubakar wary of future visceral demands to break off relations with other countries that might annoy his own. The Americans had their own representational subtleties. As well as offering the community development services of the new US Peace Corps (which Abubakar happily accepted as something akin to Dickson's Man o' War bay community development training described in Chapter 15, to the indignation of student groups), they were experimenting with the emotional potentials of posting black diplomats and their secretaries to Lagos: the intelligence advantages gained proved minimal.

Duncan Sandys, the British commonwealth relations secretary, had a talk in Lagos on 5 October with the prime minister, who still regarded their joint defence agreement as an insignificant matter, but was now coming to terms with the antagonistic political feeling. Sandys was returning from a visit to discuss the Queen's forthcoming tour and her security with Nkrumah in Accra, where 50 more Ghanaians had just been placed in preventive detention; Mr Gbedemah and Kojo Botsio had resigned as ministers, together with Geoffrey Bing, the British Labour politician who was Ghana's attorney-general. The general officer commanding, a major-general Alexander seconded from the British army, had been summarily replaced (and his career thereby unexpectedly blighted).

Relieved that Sandys's obvious problems were not his, Alhaji Sir Abubakar travelled 1,300 kilometres in the sparkling white VVIP railway coach to Tafawa

Balewa and Bauchi, to open his home towns' new stations and the first 160 kilometre extension from Kuru. 16 October 1961 marked just over three years since the first sod had been turned. The premier of the northern region and many dignitaries were in attendance. So far £20 million were committed to the line, half from the international bank loan towards the 1962 five-year plan. Abubakar insisted to the reporters on his coach, including Abdullahi Khalil from *Gaskiya* and the *Citizen*, that while he was pleased the track had reached his home town, he was not to be given any personal credit for that incidental result. The line was now openly recognized as a purely social investment – there were still people for whom Nigeria was an abstract concept representing 'that part of Africa served by the Nigerian railway'; the railway was again running at a loss, and little was heard any longer of future exports from Tchad through Apapa or Port Harcourt.

With the coincidental opening of an electricity supply in Bauchi town, Bauchi ceased to be a remote resting place on the road to the even more distant destinations of Maiduguri or 'Yola, and local trade cattle began to be freighted to Bukuru instead of trekking. There was now an incentive to regional government town planners to advise on the expansion of Tafawa Balewa and to create a fresh layout for Bauchi's *sabon gari* ('new town' for immigrant strangers, it will be remembered). The Bauchi native authority was in good heart. The northern government had recently moved to exercise strict, and unwelcome, financial control over all the native treasuries, but the Bauchi-Dass NT had met all the new conditions and recovered its grading of 'A'. The need to contribute to a new national provident fund for their employees had embarrassed many other NAs. The prime minister was for once pleased with his official visit to his native authority, and with yet another excuse to see to the final harvesting on his farm. He also attended the Bauchi provincial council, whose secretary was the Bauchi SDO, now John F Ross. Ross's wife had met Abubakar more than once at Ralf Emerson's house when working in Lagos. The prime minister teased Ross gently about his Hausa intonation.

He returned to Lagos to meet another 'insignificant' controversy. One of the first US Peace Corps girls had posted a card on which she had recorded her first juvenile and, while in culture shock, unfavourable impressions of western Nigeria. It had been picked up in a post office by an unfriendly student who affected to be scandalized, and the furore was reported throughout the world's press. Abubakar spoke to the local reporters about mountains and molehills: the US government could not possibly be held responsible for a mere girl's indiscreet postcard – '*If government made a noise about an act of a minor individual, nobody would take Nigeria seriously*', besides which, he had always been brought up to believe that reading other people's mail or tampering with the post was not generally approved (the incident fortunately led to improved training and orientation for naïve westerners with narrow or sheltered upbringing sent out on future development aid projects nursing preconceptions of either guilt or superiority). He took questions about Ghana slightly more seriously, recalling that in welcoming Nigeria's admission to UNO, the Ghanaian representative had impertinently and imaginatively suggested that Nigeria had once been part of the ancient Ghana empire. He categorically denounced fresh editorial allegations that Viscount Head was influential in Nigerian affairs, and complained that the press did not wish to give moral guidance in its coverage of public affairs, instancing their indifference to government's concern that there was a steady trickle of young men who were finding their way to the forbidden fruit of communist countries.

In shrugging off a suggestion that he should follow Nkrumah's example and probe his own ministers' private finances, he was pre-echoing comments made some weeks later by his finance minister Festus Okotie-Eboh who was, whatever else he might be, a tirelessly hard worker. They were in the context of reported plans by both the NCNC and the AG executives to make leading members of their parties disclose financial interests, on the lines of the confidential disclosures by ministers to the cabinet president and secretary. Chief Festus's well-informed personal view was that there were four categories of 'motley people' who made allegations of political corruption: knowledgeable ex-ministers with past experience of the award of contracts, who could trust no one; private ne'er-do-wells who wanted to become public figures overnight as social reformers; men-about-town and contact-men who used ministers' names without their knowledge or consent in order to dupe innocents; and representatives of overseas companies who sent false reports to their head offices or clients, and put the 'bribes' into their own pockets. If there were any inquiries, Festus said, they should start from 1951, and should include the affairs of all the wives, children, cousins, agents, companies and political societies of the principals. They should look at the mansions and 'palaces of the people' in some of the home towns of the highest in the land. Festus was well-placed to pass judgement. That the prime minister himself would grant the essential truth behind the cynicism was no evidence that he had become more tolerant of corruption as it proceeded to grow; merely that stronger than circumstantial evidence was becoming harder to entice, and that he despaired of the democratic process throwing up more honest replacements for the otherwise able men he might offend the party bosses and weaken authority by dismissing. He could also point to a present minister whose profit from a £2½ million contract was the present of a select fountain pen with which to sign it. If others saw the promise of cash as a way to replenish exhausted political party coffers, there were parallels in at least one great foreign democracy.

Abubakar also told journalists that he saw no need for any audits of politicians' bank accounts or property, but if there were to be any they should certainly also cover senior civil servants – and journalists. The number of key expatriates in the public service was now dwindling fast (the total in the federal list was down to 400, most in middle ranks); the government was noting that the traditional overseas contractors and suppliers might once have kept their hands clean, in the knowledge that they had a natural advantage through the assumption that British patterns of goods and services were preferable because familiar, besides the claim that they were 'best'; but that the roisterous commercial newcomers from all parts of the world now displayed an unsophisticated shamelessness in their seduction of the more robust dispensers of patronage. Nor was British workmanship what it had been.

The other foreign events of 1961 that interested Nigerians, apart from the lead-up to the Lagos 'Monrovia', are quickly told in sequence. The Uganda constitutional conference ended with the promise of internal self-government in November 1962. Nasser confiscated the wealth of some Egyptians. Mauritania joined the united nations, together with the people's republic of Mongolia (which had been recognized as independent of China in 1952 and come under USSR domination). A political editor then estimated that of the twelve independent west African countries, only Nigeria and Ghana still had any opposition members sitting in parliament, and only in Nigeria's were all of them free men: Mauritania, like Dahomey, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinée, Mali, Niger and

Haute Volta, had no legal opposition in their legislatures at all, while Ghana, Sénégal, Sierra Leone, Togo and all Nigeria's regions had one dominant party – which left the federal Lagos house unique. As meaningful was the realization that one quarter of the seats in UNO were now African, and the numbers would rise further. Algeria ended its seventh year of nationalist resistance with more bloodshed.

In Britain Mr Rab Butler, the new home secretary, introduced an immigration bill in response to the perceived consequence of free entry for citizens of India, Pakistan and the west Indies. Butler was also head of the British ministerial group that now began the formal negotiations in Brussels to join the EEC. The Queen spent a month in west Africa, visiting Ghana (where the president was disturbed to find himself unaccustomedly overshadowed), Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia, as well as enjoying Senegalese hospitality from the president at Dakar airport. Mr Garfield Todd inaugurated the Rhodesian New African party. Britain agreed with proposals for yet another new federation, this time of Malaysia. The UN general assembly resolved to treat Africa as a 'denuclearized zone', and the use of nuclear weapons as a direct violation of its charter; it also called for the independence of the remaining colonial peoples, not 'immediately' as the Russians had moved, nor 'by 1970' as Mr Jaja Wachuku (with Alhaji Sir Abubakar's firm approval of a 'realistic' date) had tabled but withdrawn under pressure, but indeterminately. President Olympio of Togo blamed an assassination plot against him on persons who hatched it in Ghana. In Barbados the Labour party of Grantley Adams (the prime minister of the WI federation) lost some seats in elections, and in Trinidad Eric Williams's People's National Movement returned to power.

Wachuku, with Liberian support, argued for admission of the Chinese people's republic to the UN, without the expulsion of the Taiwanese nationalist China on which Peking insisted as a precondition. A fresh constitution was published for Southern Rhodesia, to come into force after new elections. Tanganyika became independent on 9 December and joined the commonwealth, while Russia broke off relations with Albania. Pandit Nehru announced that the situation in Portuguese Goa was critical, sent his troops in a week later against its token forces, and accepted its surrender the next day. The USA thought back to the Nile high dam at Aswan, and gave Ghana a loan to fund the Volta river project, to supplement the British and IBRD finances already approved. Indonesia publicized plans to 'liberate' western New Guinea, which the Netherlands had been preparing to surrender to an international administration. On the last day of the year there was an attempted right-wing coup in Lebanon.

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe had made an important speech to his university of Nigeria at Nsukka on his 57th birthday in November. Another aspect will be reverted to in a later chapter, but the principal issue was the minimal power open to the constitutional figurehead of the state, be that the Queen or her personal representative. The governor-general argued that it was dangerous for all true power of national leadership, as well as responsibility for the stability of the government in power, to be in the prime minister's hands; that at least the non-political agencies such as the judicial service, the public service and the electoral commissions, the audit directorate and, less precisely, the ultimate 'safety of the state' should be in the hands of the head of state; and he should be elected by simple majority of a joint meeting of the two federal houses (which with four regions equally represented in the senate would incidentally remove

the present northern majority). As Zik's love of epithetic, even Bagehotian, language phrased it, to 'save Nigeria from the scourge of revolution and . . . insulate Nigerians from the lust of power', his powers should be 'statutory, appointive, prerogative, ceremonial and emergency' and their exercise variously 'discretionary, consultative and mandatory . . . as a counterbalance to . . . the executive arm'. He did not deny that a president's hands, like a prime minister's, might equally be a partisan politician's.

Theoreticians took note, while a general election in the eastern region demonstrated where executive powers lay in the dominant NCNC which Zik had founded. There had been some redistribution of boundaries as single member constituencies were made uniform. A large number of displaced members who had not been reelected by the party's central working committee stood as nominal independents, confident in their local personal support and that their known loyalty would ensure their continuance in NCNC membership. In the result the AG was heavily defeated, though not eliminated, and Dr Okpara was able to punish the twenty (one quarter) of these 'independents' who had been successful, by denying them formal readmission to the party. Despite all but one of them consistently voting with him and avoiding controversial criticism, he did not allow them to rejoin until shortly before the next federal election, when unreliability would have to be forestalled; meanwhile they had to form an 'independence' group that hardly amounted to a party. He had himself promised an end to development, with all its side-attractions, in those areas which did not vote the NCNC back, not least in parts of the non-Igbo areas around Calabar, Ogoja and the rivers. It was not a clean election. Cars were burnt, young toughs spread terror, affrays broke out between rival campaign groups, and Mr E O Eyo, the AG leader, was found in possession of firearms during a major disturbance in which Dr Okpara believed that shots had been aimed to kill himself. Mr Eyo was, after appeal, imprisoned for eight years. Hooliganism in the east did nothing to desensitise the federal government's allergy to violence from the western region. In the wake of his triumph, the eastern premier demanded amendment to the constitution, somehow 'to make subversion impossible', and positively to prevent 'certain rascals' from going to Russia and Ghana, whence they would only return to engage in subversion.

The prime minister gave one of his semi-formal dinner parties with Sir Kerr Bovell, who was nearing the end of his appointment as inspector-general of police, as a principal guest: the guest of honour was the governor-general Dr Azikiwe. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had commented to Bovell that, '*When there is trouble you can always tell it because Zik will not be there - he will be in England, or America, or somewhere*'. This time Zik was late, and there was a slight fuss at the front door as the governor-general was almost smuggled in between two stalwart aides. Abubakar whispered, '*He always thinks he is going to be assassinated, but he won't be*', and said out loud with a smile, '*Your excellency, I am a Muslim, and if it is the will of God for me to be shot, I'll be shot*'. To this Dr Azikiwe had no reply.

The prime minister now offered Chief H O Davies the chairmanship of the new federal organ, the Nigerian National Press, on the understanding that this would not mean the Chief's return to active partisan politics, or interfere with his law practice. He also wrote an introduction to a book by Davies entitled *Nigeria: the Prospects of Democracy*.

The east had a potential for an embarrassing involvement in foreign affairs, which was never taken up by its government's leaders, unlike the great men of the north who had pan-Islamic interests and those of the west with their

aspirations for direct overseas diplomatic representation. Fernando Póo (part of Spanish equatorial Guinea, not yet renamed Macias Nguema, nor Bioco or Biyogo) remained a virtual Spanish colony, although legally now part of a province of metropolitan Spain, and its cocoa plantations still relied wholly on immigrant labour. Investigative reporting on their working conditions fomented an apparent popular demand that Nigeria should annexe it by force. Both the prime minister and his friend the federal minister of labour, Mr J M Johnson, remained convinced that civilized negotiation would meet the circumstances, in view of the employment and cash income that the system gave to the eastern region's economy. The negotiations proved satisfactory, for the present, and in 1961 97% of the labourers willingly renewed their contracts. So far from encouraging expansionism, nearly seventeen hundred Nigerians settled in Fernando Póo this year, never questioning their own status as migrant foreigners (although some Cameroonians came to wonder whether they might not have a claim on an off-shore island). Circumstances were only to change many years later, beyond the scope of this book.

Parliament met in Lagos following the eastern regional election. The prime minister's only substantial contribution was to make a statement on the lifting of a ban, imposed in 1955, on the importation of thirty-three specific items of subversive literature. '*Nigerian people*', he announced, '*have the maturity and self-confidence not to be misled by literature of this sort. . . . We shall retain, and not hesitate to use, our power . . . if we find that our faith is misplaced*'. During other debates the foreign minister Wachuku resisted back-bench claims that Nigeria was allowing itself to drift away from friendship with Ghana, whose excited reception of the Queen suggested that the people themselves were unchanged underneath their new political *Kente* cloths. It was the contrary, he said, thinking of governments rather than societies, it was Ghana that was refusing to co-operate with Nigeria. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, now the minister of economic development, was heard to concede an argument that in his official sphere the government was powerless against the influence of expatriate interests, which were already less and less preponderantly British. The principal controversy however arose in the senate over the effect of the northern region's new penal code and civil procedure laws; this entailed an amendment to the constitution to permit the grand kadi, the president of the northern Islamic *shari'a* court of appeal, to sit as a member of the northern high court in civil cases involving Muslims, despite his not having the qualifications laid down for a judge of English law. Such a judge of course might well be totally ignorant of Maliki personal law, on which the evidence of expert witnesses might be in danger of challenge or rejection.

There was only one other occasion on which the senate, with its noteworthy number of members who were university graduates, and its southern majority, flexed its muscles; indeed its dignity (Shettima Kashim was now a typical member), lack of newsworthiness, and superficial readiness to despatch government business with subservient obedience attracted incremental doubts among the government's critics. Even some of its own members asked whether its function as a revising house (with powers of six months delay, except on finance bills certified by the speaker) justified its expense. The present topic however revived southerners' past perceptions of strangers' experience in unfamiliar alqalis' courts, and also the lawyers' strong resentment of being excluded from native courts where their knowledge of native law and custom was no more than other mortals'. In face of such opposition, the government

temporarily withdrew the measure, with a view to negotiations. The sardauna of Sokoto was angered. He took the opportunity to attack the Nigeria broadcasting service for spreading derogatory news as 'information' about the northern region, and failing to give the north any credit for its advances and reforms, of which the modernization of its judicial system and partial integration of two dissimilar legal traditions was a remarkable example, facilitated by the work of the visiting expert advisers on Muslim law and the attorney general Hedley Marshall. In the event a promise that the NPC would do nothing to hinder the smooth passage of the legislation for a mid-west region solved everything, enhanced by one of the prime minister's unminuted interventions to straighten matters out with the premier and his party in Kaduna.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar ended the year as he had begun it, by lecturing lawyers on justice. After a premiers' conference at which on Dr Okpara's initiative he discussed with the three party leaders their common problem of controlling potentially subversive oppositions, and the possibility of preventive detention was first broached, and before setting out on his travels to attract support for the Lagos 'Monrovia' conference recorded in Chapter 33, he gave an address to a conference for Africa and Asia on 'world peace through law'. Elias and Wey's office draftsmen succeeded in verbalizing his own basic thoughts in mannered but relevant form:

'Throughout the history of mankind organizations, whether social, economic or political, have tended to grow bigger and bigger. We do not need to despair of this tendency, which often brings in its train and in varying degrees curtailment of personal freedom and national sovereignty – so long as we keep steadily before us respect for the dignity of the individual and the securing of the betterment of mankind. These worthwhile ideals are enshrined in the concept of the Rule of Law, which all nations of the world will do well to exemplify in their actions. An essential ingredient of this concept is equality before the law, whether as individuals within a state, or as individual states within the world community. . . . It does not seem to me that all nations are giving of their best to [the UN] organization and its various agencies. At Monrovia . . . we affirmed it to be our aim . . . to enlarge the areas of agreement between [the east and the west], and to confront them with the economic and industrial problems of to-day, which can be solved only by the joint efforts of both the East and the West and indeed of the whole world'.

36 A turbulent year: Economic
weakness and a drift away from Britain
(Forward Digression IV)
Nigeria's prime minister comes to
favour a republic

Dadin zama shi ya kan kawo bege

1962 was marked, as this and the next chapter will show, by the consequences of Britain's move towards the European community, Nigeria's shift of opinion favouring a republic, and dissension over a population census. The reader will not have forgotten that important events in the Congo, in the move towards an African organization, and above all in the western region, which have already been recorded, were contemporaneous. During the first quarter of an exhausting year events in other parts of the world that could not be ignored by any new commonwealth leader included: Western Samoa becoming the first independent Polynesian island state; President Sukarno's unilateral proclamation of West New Guinea's 'independence' as a province of Indonesia, and Dutch gunboats' subsequent firing on his motor torpedo-boats; Julius Nyerere's resignation as prime minister in favour of Rashidi Kawawa, to concentrate on organizing his TANU party in order to fit it for managing a virtual one-party republic; the expulsion of Cuba from the organization of American states (OAS), meeting in Uruguay; a prolonged Kenya constitutional conference in London, at which Reginald Maudling ultimately had to press for a form of federation, to accommodate the KADU party's fears of domination by Kikuyu and Luo under KANU; a decision by Maudling on Northern Rhodesia's constitution; riots against Jagan's government in Georgetown, British Guiana; a decision in the UN trusteeship committee to study the legitimacy of Southern Rhodesia's self-government; more terrorism in Algeria; King Hussein of Jordan's cancellation of a visit to Nigeria; Uganda's internal self-government under Benedict Kiwanuka as premier; the Burmese prime minister's arrest by his own army in a seizure of power; Britain's applications to join the European coal and steel community and 'Euratom'; the death of 111 people in a British air crash in Cameroun; a ceasefire in Algeria with the establishment of a provisional FLN government (which received Abubakar's congratulations, but not his government's formal recognition), followed by French troops attacking Salan's *organisation de l'armée secrète* (another OAS), and Muslim French troops killing 41 European demonstrators; and other armies overthrowing their governments in Syria and Argentina. Those who have chided Abubakar for paying more attention to the outside world than to domestic dissatisfaction in his last years may well ponder what statesmen have to absorb while selfish parochialists think only of their

local cares – all this fell within three months.

In February a new British GOC arrived to take command of the Nigerian army. Major-general Norman Foster, a gunner, had been psychologically ill-adapted to rubbing along with Muhammadu Ribadu: Head might describe the minister of defence in good-humoured chaff as 'that old cattle-thief', but Foster's reactions to his buccaneering ways were taken as signs that the general did not take well to Nigeria's independence. Major-general Christopher Welby-Everard has been mentioned in connection with the Congo and the first western troubles. He had been chief of staff to NATO in Oslo, and his appointment was deliberately made on contract: he was not seconded from the British army. He found people busily occupied in designing new uniforms, and since he was effectively chief of the general defence staff, he decided to appoint an army chief of staff in order to take the purely military administrative load off his shoulders: this would give him room to concentrate on what he saw as the essentially political task of Nigerianizing 180 British officers and fifty to sixty BNCOs within three years. He also had to cope with temporary command difficulties. Foster's interim relief, a brigadier Frank Goulson, had just been killed in a car smash (only too common an event – Shettima Kashim had recently been injured on the roads); Mackenzie, the brigadier in the north, had had to stand in, but was suspected by politicians of being biased against southerners. Welby-Everard supported earlier British professional advice, against internal political pressure, and confirmed the siting of the defence academy, the defence industrial corporation, and the main wing of the fledgling air force, including the training school, at Kaduna for sound non-tribal reasons of weather, operational convenience, logistics and land costs. The second air force wing was to be at Oshogbo; one infantry brigade was spread over Kano, Kaduna and Enugu, the other between Ibadan and Lagos; the artillery were at Abeokuta, the support & supply depots at Yaba with the principal military hospital, and the federal guard at Obalende on Ikoyi island. With the navy on the coast, the key forces were scattered widely, a factor eventually to be significant.

Early in 1962 the well-informed knew that the Nigerian government had already raised the continuing mutual value of the 'Sandys' defence agreement with the British government. It has been seen how this had bedevilled all discussions of foreign policy and African non-aligned unity, and had left the opportunity for any opposition to maintain a running barrage in harassment of Alhaji Sir Abubakar's government. This had now reached the extent that the leader of the federal opposition virtually believed that he had never initialled the agreement, and the other signatory premiers from the independence conference preferred to think that their hearts had not been in it. The result had been a curious division of publicly expressed opinion, between those who had in duty to understand the small print and to assess the material realities that would lie behind any invocation of its implementation – in other words ministers, senior civil servants and those who trusted them, and lingering anglophile sentimentalists – and a highly volatile but vociferous grouping of politicians out of office, students, journalists and cross-party backbenchers. In politics, as ever, popular perceptions prevailed over judicious diagnosis, and the generally accepted perception was not of a comforting commonwealth handclasp but of a remaining imperial shackle, however symbolic, binding Nigeria to a bogeyman, necessary to the perpetuation of myths. The overt consequence of a series of exchanges between the prime minister, marginally briefed by Jaja Wachuku, Muhammadu Ribadu and their staffs, and the

British high commissioner, supplemented by contacts between the Nigerian high commissioner in London, Alhaji Abdulmaliki Atta from Okene, and the British commonwealth relations office, was an official abrogation three days before the Monrovia powers conferred in Lagos:

The British and Nigerian governments have been consulting together about the Anglo-Nigerian defence agreement. They have noted with concern that the scope and purposes of the agreement have been widely misunderstood. In particular, fears have arisen that in consequence of the agreement, Nigeria's freedom of action might be impaired, and that she might even be drawn into hostilities against her wishes. The text of the agreement shows that these and other anxieties which have been expressed are wholly without foundation. Nevertheless, in order to end misunderstanding, the two governments have thought it wise to reconsider the need for a formal agreement. As a result they have decided to abrogate the agreement. Each government will, however, endeavour to afford to the other at all times such assistance and facilities in defence matters as are appropriate between partners in the commonwealth.

All was translated from obnoxious paper into gentlemanly oral understanding, but nothing practical was changed. Pro-government circles blamed extremist critics for the scaremongering which had made the adjustment propitious, without denouncing them so strongly as to weaken the impact on the Afro-Malagasy conference; but the circumstances allowed the Action Group to continue its insistence that the military alliance with Britain was not yet completely broken, and to hint at even more sinister secret understandings, while confirming some independent minds in their contempt for all governments. The move chanced however to leave the field uncluttered with any distractions by the more obvious symbolic neo-colonialist chains, so that activist theoreticians could concentrate on the emotional appeal of a republic; and it allowed the prime minister to tell *The Times* correspondent reassuringly that despite personal difficulties at the top, which appeared to be opening up threats of opportunist tribalism, 'On the whole I don't think we're doing badly'. The internal policy paper, adopting non-alignment as 'a matter of routine', but rejecting the total break with old friends, had been a joint effort by Abubakar, Wachuku and Dr Elias. Jaja Wachuku's personal view was of some interest. Born in the 'protectorate', since first learning to analyse such matters he had never seen himself as a 'subject' of the British sovereign, whose ministers had in his assessment only ever had purely formal tutelary responsibility for most Nigerians' defence and foreign relations; and as long as the Europeans behaved as hosts in Britain and guests in Nigeria, he claimed to feel no bitterness towards them.

The announcement of the abrogation came after a speech by Alhaji Sir Abubakar at the opening of a Canadian trade fair in Lagos, at which he had reiterated that, 'As members of the commonwealth we share a lot of things in common. In these days when technology and the search for security are inexorably bringing together the nations of the world . . . it brings about an awareness that all people of the world are one, working towards the fulfilment of all that is best in man'. This familiar text coincided with a gradualist address by Dr Michael Okpara to the annual convention of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens, which wholly reflected Abubakar's thinking; and Dr Mbadiwe's advice. The path to African unity must be by stages; separate cultural and technical conferences in the north, south, east, west and

centres of the continent, preceding conferences on political federations by those regions, followed eventually by integration into an all-African super-federation (Dissident NCNC followers, ambiguously sharing the AG's regard for a fuzzy welfarism, felt free to comment at this convention that their federal ministers behaved like boot-lickers to the prime minister – if it might do them good – and that Abubakar merely sat back amused; but they were whipped into line when they admitted the party's lip-service to 'pragmatic socialism').

In comparable vein the prime minister opened the Nigerian broadcasting corporation's first external service with a reference to the need for good neighbourliness and respect for others (*'We also believe in following the path of truth, wherever it may lead'*), and a little later told the American Friends Committee: *'Leadership is not assessed by mere noise-making [a term he now used about both pan-Africanists and Action Groupers]. It is by our . . . sympathy to other African nations that we would be highly regarded as worthy of emulation. It is wrong for us to shout of leadership over others or force ourselves on others just because of our size and population'*. But he tacitly recognized that world and internal opinion took it for granted that size and population exacted leadership regardless of any shouting. *'Nigeria is big enough and does not need to join others – but if others wish to join Nigeria, their position would be made clear to them in such a union'*.

Taking formal delivery of the trading firm SCOA's independence gift to the federation of eight ambulances and an air-conditioned bus, delayed by technical hitches, the prime minister gave a further reassurance of preferring stability to noise: *'Private investors need not entertain fears about the safety of investment in Nigeria. We have pledged and given our word to safeguard your interests. There is plenty of scope for private enterprise in Nigeria, and it is only by encouragement from long-established firms that local businessmen will also help to build Nigeria's economy'*.

The truth ignored by the noise-makers was that Nigeria's foreign reserves were now depleted, and doubts were rife about how at least half of the new five-year development plan was to be financed, at a time when export prices were weakening and the balance of trade, except with Britain, was worsening. The oil industry was now the largest single organization in Nigeria, discounting the major general trading company UAC, but it was as yet only the producer of 5% of the exports. Amid talk of the moral need for austerity, and reduction of material rewards to full time 'professional' politicians, the governor-general Dr Azikiwe was heard, while anxiously denying that he himself believed any such thing, to quote the prevailing press complaints that the senate was a dispensable luxury, that the government would rather like to dispense also with the elected parliament which it summoned no more often than it had to, and that once it was assembled legislative business was rushed through. The dilemma remained to plague those who would prefer to enjoy democracy at the hands of quietly decisive part-time law-makers, devoting most of their lives to real jobs and constituents' queries at home; but who had to make do with noisy ranters who soon lost interest and, once they had earned enough subsistence allowances from their attendance, only wanted to go home to be heard orating in their constituency's public meeting places. In practice, so long as federal economic and financial practice did not interfere with regional autonomy, and the eastern and northern premiers remained generally content to leave the handling of the Lagos parliament to consultation and briefing through party channels between meetings, such moralists could be ignored.

Unsuccessful attempts were being made once more to bring Michael Imoudu's NTUC (still sending informal observers to WFTU) and Alhaji Adebola's TUCN (affiliated to ICFTU) together, while the country watched the AG precipitating the western region's troubles with its Jos schism described in the previous chapter. Alhaji Sir Abubakar improved the hour with a warning to students at the university college at Ibadan. Nigeria was not yet ripe for true unity: *'the time may come, after understanding one another better, and without one tribe dominating the others, when we can hope for a unitary form of government, but not now'*. But difficulties in any one part of the federation were difficulties of them all, and students should not undermine the country or its leaders; incessant criticism might be justified, but excessive criticism amounted to *'abuse of fundamental rights'*.

He retained his unfashionably stiff moral stance in foreign affairs. Khrushchev suggested that he attend an 'eighteen powers' disarmament meeting, but Abubakar's response was that he would rather see some area of agreement reached by countries' professional representatives first, before any such meeting of heads of governments was called: and at last it was agreed that a Nigerian mission should be established in Moscow (Shehu Shagari had been strongly pressed at an ECA meeting in Addis Ababa by the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia on the matter of reciprocal embassies). He conceded later that it was good that other smaller nations would participate in the Geneva talks in March (which eventually seventeen attended): *'In this way we younger nations shall be able to know who is sincere, instead of both sides accusing each other'*. But when the USA announced that it would resume atomic tests above ground because Russia had not agreed to a test ban, Abubakar declared that although Nigeria deplored all nuclear testing, *'President Kennedy had no alternative. What keeps an uncertain peace in the world is the fact that both east and western powers are in possession of nuclear weapons. If by chance the balance is allowed to shift in favour of one side, it will certainly be a calamity for the world'*. He said it yet again after the budget session. Unsurprisingly the Action Group heard this as further proof that the federal government's foreign policy was neither neutral nor independent, but 'British-American-dictated'.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar's moral principles prevailed in dealing with personal cases, nevertheless. A ruling and a principle that derived directly from Mr Attlee's post-war British government practice had never been rescinded: normal vetting apart, no person having direct connections with communist or fascist parties should be officially employed. Some students had gone, as has been mentioned, to Ghana without nationality papers, and the authorities there had conjured them out *via* Guinea to Moscow for further education. There Wachuku and Okotie-Eboh had met them on visits, where being passportless they were stranded and faced problems over coming home. Dr Majekodunmi arranged that they be issued with Nigerian passports, Abubakar agreeing that it was more dangerous to leave them indefinitely to be absorbed permanently by eastern bloc thought processes. The passport office was transferred from the police to the external affairs ministry, and future issues were normally endorsed as valid for all parts of the world. Yet the prime minister insisted that because *'Nigerians who want to go to certain countries for perhaps evil intentions . . . run away . . . to certain neighbouring countries to get passports to certain places'*, . . . there was still *'a very large number of undesirables in and outside this country whom we should like to restrict their movements'*. Dr Okpara also had security problems over a former Zikist movement member's employment on a government newspaper, who had very noticeably travelled in eastern Europe,

the soviet union and China. Abubakar stepped in on his behalf, on Okpara's personal assurance that national security would not be endangered.

The budget meeting of parliament in 1962, and the following emergency meeting in May, were heavily coloured by the western crisis and moves for a fourth region, and by the first formal discussions of a republic, topics dealt with in Chapter 34 and hereafter. Okotie-Eboh presented the second national development plan, hoping to see £676 million divided among all the governments, of which he had to find £400 million. The USA had already offered £80 millions of the total £500 million sought from foreign investment, Britain its £15 million on top of various tranches of technical assistance, and West Germany (£9 million), Czechoslovakia and the world bank (£5 million for Lagos port improvements) had already been committed. So far the internal development plan loan had raised £19 million in three years. There was the prestige prospect of a £30 million iron and steel mill, but which region would enjoy it remained undecided and a cause of envious rivalry among party members who would have been hard pressed to say what happened inside such a mill. The plan even so perpetuated the discredited practice of stitching together four governments' separate aspirations, and now spoke of the nation achieving 'self-sustaining growth' only by the end of the third, or even the fourth plan of a series. There was some optimism that the work of a new federal manpower board, and the dividends of its elaborate education system emerging from the Ashby proposals, might ensure that at least the development staff would be largely Nigerian by that time.

The fundamental weaknesses however were that the race for universal primary education in the south had produced too many unemployables too soon before some industrial revolution could mop them up; and that the scale of foreign contributions had been estimated with aspiration too great to be wise. It was a fact that too many shunned, that in 1956 the joint marketing board reserves had been £67 million, and now were £8 million; the regions' reserves had also been reduced from £42 million in 1957 to half that sum. Token funds were found to subscribe to a United Nations bond issue, as befitted the country that bore the largest African share of UNO's budget. The finance minister also announced new powers to be taken to control prices, balance of payments and growth rate, through placing all the nation's external reserves under the central bank's regulation, as well as fixing commercial banks' interest rates, liquidity ratios and asset assessment, and through influencing marketing boards' purchase pricing.

Dr Kingsley Mbadiwe had returned as an NCNC member, unopposed at a by-election in Orlu, and foreign affairs were one other of the session's topics. Anti-American feeling was currently based on the preponderance of American commercial investment over aid from the eastern bloc, and on racial snubs detected by Nigerian visitors to the USA, but it was taken to absurdity when an opposition member protested that the Nigerian ambassador at Washington, Mr J M Udochi, had named his son 'John', supposedly after President Kennedy. More awkward was a motion by a government whip, Mr D N Abii, seconded by Malam Aminu Kano the deputy chief whip, and strongly backed by Dr Mbadiwe, to set up a parliamentary committee on foreign affairs. Their purpose was to 'purify the government's heart' in the matter of non-alignment, with secondary support from backbenchers who thought that the external affairs office was being filled by easterners. Aminu Kano was also upset that 'there [were] thousands of Americans flooding into Nigeria, but . . . Russians [had]

difficulty in getting in'. Mr Wachuku, now like his prime minister a strong exponent of state prerogative (without always being aware of its origin in Westminster's quarrels with the Stuart kings, and in Blackstone), succeeded in defeating the motion by a forceful attack on attempts to appropriate the proper powers of ministers, who after all always explained themselves directly to the full house.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar said nothing, although he now regarded Wachuku as a true friend, just as he also let Wachuku defend himself against the NPC chief whip sarkin Bai Muhammad Muhtari's motion of censure, later withdrawn, for not having consulted his cabinet colleagues before erecting '1970' as the target for colonial freedom in Africa (Abubakar had just proposed the same date himself to the Lagos 'Monrovia', without drawing the fire which Wachuku's less emollient practices attracted). Abubakar's contributions were on less doctrinaire issues: *'The federal government received a request from the UN for assistance to Dahomey because of the famine which some parts of that country were having. . . . I thought that Dahomey, being very close to us, could easily have asked for our assistance direct. . . . And so we have decided to send 200 tons of groundnuts to Dahomey . . . and 150 tons of groundnuts to Togo'*. He thanked the northern regional marketing board for selling the groundnuts to the government. The minister for economic development, Waziri Ibrahim, defended acceptance of American (rather than Russian) assistance because Americans were democratic; and the minister of commerce and industry, Zanna Bukar Dipcharima, refused to say whether any Russian experts had ever been asked for, rather than German or American.

The calls for austerity were heeded. The prime minister (like the premiers in the regions) was *'pleased to be able to announce to the house certain voluntary sacrifices which have already been accepted by those concerned as a measure of their determination to play their full part in making possible the success of the development plan'*, and explained various ten percent cuts in senior politicians' salaries and a closer control of allowances, to be followed by a reduction in overseas touring, and allied salary cuts and abolition of certain allowances for senior civil servants (none of whom had any memories of the levies of the 30s). Offering a judicious display of sympathy with the victims, he added, *'I cannot afford my salary being cut by 20% - even the 10% cut I agree to very reluctantly'*. Chief Enahoro, who had the talents to turn to other sources of income, thought more should be done, and demanded truly nationwide austerity, to be led by cutting the numbers of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and political provincial commissioners, and by increasing efficiency in the public services. Abubakar pointed out that such cuts were largely a matter for regional governments, but agreed that sharing responsibility widely among ministers was a good thing; he thought that most of the service had redoubled its efforts since independence, even if the posts and telegraphs were now sometimes slow to respond. A kite was flown in favour of fortnightly payment of wages, which would be more economical for treasuries; it was doomed to be grounded, like former such flights, by patronizing or paternalistic concern for the fecklessness of the workers, who were alleged to be unfit to 'budget' or to be trusted not to spend everything over the first weekend. Abubakar also found time to pay final tribute to Sir Kerr Bovell, who was now departing. Bovell prided himself on having some success in convincing his police force that while politicians would come and go now and in the future, their own senior officers remained in command. At his final hospitality to Bovell the prime minister told him that what the Nigeria police was to-day was the

outcome of his six years of hard work, just as the force was one of the country's excellent heritages of British rule. Bovell was succeeded by Mr John E Hodge.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar had told parliament that he had accepted an invitation, so far only in principle, from Sir Roy Welensky to visit Rhodesia (he still had a liking for Welensky's blunt manner, despite the weakening in the Rhodesian's boldness outside his own territory). This reaction renewed speculation about Abubakar's stand on South Africa. He said that he had not received any invitation from Pretoria, but if he did he would naturally '*consider it*', just as he would an exchange of diplomats: this should not be regarded, he said, as any change in his views, but it might turn out to be an attempt to solve '*certain burning problems*'. Dr Verwoerd promptly smashed back the gentle serve in unmistakable Afrikaner style – South Africa would not invite Abubakar Tafawa Balewa: 'I have met Balewa and spoken to him for quite a time and tried to get a fair outlook from him on the South African situation, particularly in preparation for the discussions at the prime ministers' conference. He is not a moderate, as so often suggested, on the question of white and non-white relations. He is a fanatic in his own cause. I do not blame him for that. Many of us are fanatics in our own cause'. Abubakar returned a deep volley: '*Apartheid is considered as a 'religious dogma' in south Africa. The pity is that Dr Verwoerd and his government and people see nothing wrong in it. They speak about it with so much honesty and sincerity that they never think anything wrong about it. Dr Verwoerd is entitled to his opinion. We knew each other in London . . . and he knew my strong opposition to his government's segregation policy*'.

The rally was discounted by Abubakar's radical opponents, who preferred to pick on the announcement made after a meeting with the visiting Angolan nationalist leader Holden Roberto, whose Union of Angolan Peoples was now operating in the democratic republic of Congo under the new name of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola. Conscious of the confusion that there was another leader escaped into exile with comparable aims but a distinct following and a presence in Portugal itself, Agostinho Neto and his Popular Movement for the Liberation of the Angolan Peoples, and that yet others again acclaimed Mario de Andrade as the one true Angolan leader, Alhaji Sir Abubakar said that Nigeria could help to train administrative and medical staff for a provisional government of Angola based in Léopoldville; but could not assure Roberto of training their armed police and military forces, '*because it will mean that we are training you to fight your African brothers in the south*'. He was also thinking of Ghana training Yorubas to fight Igbos and Hausas. With the same circumspection he announced an offer by the USSR of 45 scholarships to Nigerian students; without any outright acceptance he politely acknowledged the Russian generosity and said that the regional governments would be informed, but that the federal government would have to satisfy itself that the type of training to be received would be useful to the country.

13 May 1962 may be seen in retrospect as the day when the hope of 'unity', in the form that Abubakar hoped might peacefully evolve, was destroyed. It was the official day of the census count, an expensive (£1½ millions) operation based on the latest techniques and the detailed record of experience of ten years before. Overseas experts were still tolerated where a capable Nigerian would otherwise have to be spared from some key generalist post. The official in charge, a Mr J J Warren, treated it as an administration of logistics, which must first be tested against the UN demographers' knowledge of African fertility and then against scientists' awareness of nature's limitations on live births from base

populations of women of child-bearing age. Yet on the census figures would depend the balance of the next cohort of governments; on the nature and stability of those governments would depend the international support for the national development plan; but on the relative population figures would depend the ultimate directions of federal spending and the different amounts of revenue available for regions. There was not the same on-site supervision and double-checking of ten years before: enumerators asked questions, wrote something on their forms and went away, and by now both local government officials and civil servants knew how much they were beholden to the regional premiers. Matters were distorted by 'census migration' as people tried, or were encouraged, to return to be counted, 'everyone into his own city'. Aliens using hindsight came too late to wonder how politicians and civil servants might have been so naive as still to have supposed that a decennial census would be a routine administrative necessity. By now no government activity was not politicized. The shrewdest suddenly woke up a week or two before 13 May to the realization that the public was behaving as though it were another election, and that abuse and social havoc were as certain as night and day. The consequences will follow in the next chapter, but while the four topics which receive separate treatment in this part (the Congo, the advance to a co-ordinated Africa, the western regional troubles, and the move to a republic) all continued to disturb the prime minister during the summer and autumn, the census and the European community predominated.

Minor concerns involved Shehu Shagari and Aminu Kano. The latter's post as permanent delegate to UNO encouraged him to hope for a wider Washington-based roving embassy, perhaps inspired by Wachuku's previous dual responsibility for economic development; when rejected, 'Malam' blamed opposition from the Sardauna and the emir of Kano, but there is no reason to think that Abubakar needed their advice to recognize that Aminu was fully occupied already. Alhaji Shehu had been sent by Alhaji Sir Abubakar with a message to Sierra Leone to persuade Margai to follow Nigeria's line of rejecting Britain's overseas aid scheme incentive with its offer of enhancing expatriate salaries, and to promise the funding of a Nigeria hall of residence at Fourah Bay college; he had failed in the first task, but was now despatched to study civil service training methods in India and Pakistan. In the event administrative cadets were sent to staff colleges in both countries, but Muhammadu Ribadu would only agree to army officers being trained in India, where there had not yet been any military coups.

In June the prime minister made an official tour with his latest assistant private secretary, Lawal Abubakar, visiting much of the federation under the auspices of the Nigeria railway corporation, which took meticulous care to adhere to the precise timing set out for each small station passed on the specially printed timetable. He travelled stage by stage to Ibadan, Ilorin, Minna, Kaduna junction, Kafanchan and Kuru, where he met the Sardauna late at night; thence from Heipang, *via* Foram, Bakin Kogi, Maijuju and Zongo to Tafawa Balewa, Bununu (Dass), Liman Katagum and Bauchi, arriving despite everything a day late. There followed another break on the farm. John Ross, still the SDO, came out one day with his wife and baby son to say good-bye. It was Mrs Ross who had been confounded years ago to discover that the minister of transport was reading Karl Marx, to learn for himself what the truth was of the thought that lay behind communist utterances. He was driving his tractor in a shabby gown that might once have looked silken, helped by his police orderly who was wearing very much peasant's working clothes. The prime minister produced a

tinned Dundee cake and tea on a tray in the mud-and-thatch bush round house which he used on the farm, and with yet another cry to a retiring official of 'O, *why do you have to go?*' told the PS to make sure that the Rosses also were met at Iddo station, housed in the PM's Ikoyi guest house and seen safely on to the mailboat for home. He was weary, and looked very depressed.

Before this visit the waziri of Bauchi, Alhaji Yakubu Wanka, who had always seen himself as a local adviser and 'son' to the prime minister, but rarely presumed on confidential friendship, had nevertheless concluded that relationships were close enough to consider seeking the hand of a daughter. The giving away of a daughter is in all stable societies a sign of trust, and in many is also a strategic reinforcement of family alliances. An interesting sidelight on the nature of such relationships is that one minister mentioned in these pages who 'worshipped' Abubakar but came from another emirate, thought of paying court and believed his working relationship just as close as Yakubu's, but 'could never have risked accepting his daughter'. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had agreed that there was a daughter, his fourth, suitable and possibly agreeable, but she was in Kaduna where she had been brought up in the Sardauna's household since she was small, and the premier must be brought in on the negotiations. All had in fact gone well, and Binta (sometimes called Fatima)'s marriage was now celebrated (another daughter Sa'adatu was to marry the Bauchi senior primary headmaster Malam Abubakar Maikobi). Abubakar returned south by rail after five weeks, when he had been away from the Lagos routine but not shielded from information mail or long term worry about the matters listed at this chapter's opening. Nor was it encouraging to hear on arrival that even the United Africa company group had made a heavy trading loss in Nigeria for the first half of the year.

Events abroad during this summer again form a catalogue to overwhelm a mere newspaper-reader, let alone a now internationally-minded prime minister, most of whose supporters remained parochial in their interests. The reader has to reflect that while nearly all Nigerian politicians still paid more attention to local than to external affairs, because without the local power base from which to weaken their rivals they were chaff in the wind, yet Abubakar now kept his own local concerns in the background. In France de Gaulle won over 90% support in a referendum on peace in Algeria, and arrested his rebel general Salan (who was now sentenced to life imprisonment); Mr Alex Bustamente formed a Labour party administration in Jamaica, and the Cayman Islands, which wanted no part in an independent Jamaica, was made a separate new crown colony; British politicians admitted that the west Indies federation was doomed; Dr Nkrumah announced yet more measures against corruption but released 160 detainees; elections in the central African federation returned the united federal party in a pyrrhic victory against a boycott by all the African parties and the white oppositions; a Mozambique freedom movement FRELIMO was formed in Dar-es-Salaam; yet more violence, the last against alien rule, broke out in Algeria, where an underground nuclear test was also carried out by the French; there were mining strikes in Northern Rhodesia; South African law was amended to make sabotage punishable by death; American forces briefly landed in Thailand to protect their allies from incursions out of Laos; an American 'astronaut' orbited the globe three times; Barbados and the Windward and Leeward islands suggested that a 'little eight' might form a small new west Indies federation; a Nazi, Eichmann, was hanged for war crimes after trial in Israel; Field-marshal Ayub Khan ended martial law in Pakistan; Nkrumah

released another 162; three Laotian princes of markedly differing political bents formed a coalition in hope of securing independent neutrality under a Geneva agreement; Britain began to implement the Commonwealth immigration act; France proclaimed Algeria to be independent on 3 July; the first direct radio picture from the Telstar satellite was relayed to domestic television screens in Europe; Chinese soldiers fired on Indians in Ladakh; firm agreement was reached that Britain should create a wider Malaysian federation; a rally in Cameroun (British 'Camerouns' and post-independence 'Cameroon' were now officially obsolete names) against moves to a one-party régime resulted in its first prime minister and others being imprisoned; and the BBC doubled its daily Hausa transmission to equal Russia's one hour (but not Cairo's ninety minutes).

The central African federation (CAF) was now permitted to establish a high commission in Lagos, to the dismay of Nigerians unsympathetic with white Rhodesian dominance there. Abubakar asked the black high commissioner accredited, Mr Masotsha Hove, *'You have an uneasy federation, unlike ours here. Why don't you break it up and divide the assets, if the component parts don't want it, instead of forcing it on them?'* The provisional answer was that Nyasaland had not the resources to repay her share of the overseas development loans, from which the whole federation had been benefiting through a redistributive sharing of wealth. Mr Wachuku then aggravated matters by suggesting at the United Nations that sixty-four of the Southern Rhodesian parliamentary seats be shared equally between Rhodesian blacks and Rhodesian whites, with a sixty-fifth held by an expatriate Britisher holding the balance of power. There was an outcry in Lagos, but although Abubakar distanced himself from his foreign minister's original personal opinion, he would not upset the balance between NCNC and NPC by disciplining him in any way. Both were incidentally gratified that within two years of independence Nigeria had become able to support so many overseas posts of its own, totalling three high commissions, thirteen embassies, a permanent mission at UNO and four separate consulates-general or consulates.

Britain had its own interesting troubles for Nigerian politicians to study, following on the trial of a spy in the admiralty called Vassall and the creation of a tribunal on security under Lord Radcliffe. Mr Macmillan in a government reconstruction dubbed 'the night of the long knives' replaced seven of his most senior cabinet ministers and many juniors; Mr R A Butler became the first titular deputy prime minister and the first First Secretary of State, to oversee both the new Central Africa office and the EEC negotiations; Mr Duncan Sandys was to bring the offices of commonwealth relations and colonial affairs together as their joint secretary of state (he had just become joint vice-president with Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of the recently established Britain-Nigeria association); the treasury was reorganized into three divisions to take more account of public expenditure control, and the secretary to the cabinet ceased to be head of the home civil service. The cabinet's colonial policy committee, set up by Eden less than seven years before, had just been allowed to lapse through acknowledged ineffectuality: secretaries of state and their offices had not needed it at a time when departments were smaller and working ministers fewer than they were to become.

August began with the report of an assassination attempt against Nkrumah; Mr Nelson Mandela was arrested in South Africa; Jamaica became independent and a Commonwealth nation; Russians orbited the earth in some numbers; Nkrumah expelled the Anglican archbishop of west Africa, and also the bishop of Accra who had criticized the politicization of the 'young pioneers'

that had compulsorily replaced more traditional uniformed but non-military youth movements; the Netherlands conceded the transfer of Dutch west New Guinea to Indonesia within nine months; Britain conceded the transfer of Aden to a federation of south Arabia; Malta's failure to win promise of all the financial aid sought from Britain resulted in a request for independence in the commonwealth; Nkrumah imprisoned his ministers of foreign affairs and information under a preventive detention act; Trinidad & Tobago became independent; Singapore and North Borneo agreed in referenda to join the new Malaysian federation; another attempt to assassinate Nkrumah was alleged; and in Britain Sandys announced that after a review of the colonial development corporation's terms and commitments (it still managed Lagos's Bristol hotel at arms' length, and had not moved its west African regional office out of independent Nigeria), and in view of the wave of independences in the west Indies, it would now become a Commonwealth development corporation and would work substantively in sovereign countries as well as simply finishing off projects begun while they were still colonies. As a preoccupied President Nkrumah was regretting his inability to attend the next Commonwealth prime ministers' conference, Alhaji Sir Abubakar made another anti-corruption gesture by refusing to accept a gift from a Nigerian firm of what was alleged to be a 'diamond' radio set, doubly unwelcome because pressmen had been called to witness the intended ceremony.

The London PMs' conference dominated news throughout September because of the European community controversy. The EC was still purely an economic treaty organization, and 'EEC' was the usual shorthand. Partly because of the coming together of the Casablanca and Monrovia blocs, partly because the Algerian boil was now lanced, the sixteen francophone countries found it easier to come to some common terms on the acceptance of association with the EEC under part IV of the Rome treaty. Strangely, it was the continuing rift between Nigeria and Ghana that made a common anglophone front impossible to achieve; yet paradoxically the individual doubts and suspicions still coalesced into a general negative opposition, reinforced by the commodity producers from the old Commonwealth, instead of inspiring dogged negotiation for a better alternative relationship with the community for themselves. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had been taking the line that Britain was trying to drag her ex-colonies into the EEC in defiance of Nigeria's wish to be non-aligned internationally, when she should have been looking for a Commonwealth dimension; but he had no alternative formula to offer in support. He ensured that his cabinet secretary Wey added a full civil service perspective to the external affairs experts' opinion by intensive inquiries from the British high commission about Whitehall's purpose; but he also began to suspect that Britain's less than forthright stance against French Saharan bomb tests was a symptom of anxiety to cajole Paris over the community entry application.

The position reached by Britain, concurrent with a none too successful new wave of diplomatic persuasion of commonwealth members, was a provisional outline agreement. She would gradually apply the community's external tariff on imported manufactures from Australia, Canada and New Zealand, with consultative reviews in 1966 and 1969; a special timetable would be negotiated with Ceylon, India and Pakistan, and the community would negotiate all-embracing trade agreements with them by 1967, including a nil tariff on tea and maintenance of textile imports, but with some protection for European textile producers; and 'temperate' foodstuffs (of particular concern

to Australia, Canada and New Zealand) would in principle be subject to worldwide commodity agreements, satisfactory levels of trade and 'reasonable price' policies. Commonwealth countries in Africa and the west Indies, and remaining dependencies, would be offered 'association'. Other matters like the emergent common agricultural policy (CAP) are of no concern here, but there was a vulgar political consensus that de Gaulle and west Germany's chancellor Adenauer saw the community, and eventual political union, as a contrivance to submerge the Britain that both old men distrusted. This was widely thought to lend some strength to the opposition voiced to Britain's application in the name of Nigeria's interests (and others', including Ghana, Sierra Leone and Tanganyika).

British ministers remained stubbornly convinced that association within the tariff wall was in the best interests of their African and West Indian brethren, just as it was advantageous to the French '16'. Whitehall was therefore upset when the Nigerian prime minister told the press at Heathrow on 4 September that he *'could not see how Britain, the oldest member of the commonwealth, and the root from which all commonwealth countries sprang, could throw us away and join the common market. . . . With all the complications, it is difficult for me to see how we could be an associate member. I think it is a bit unfair for me to say now what standards Nigeria is aiming for, until the conference opens. Britain is in a difficult position, and people seem to think the only solution would be for her to join the common market. But my belief is that there may be other alternatives. The commonwealth is growing into a very interesting organization. We have the diversity, although of course we are located in far-off places. But still I think the commonwealth countries in the course of time could provide a very economic entity. . . . Nigeria could not agree to the smallest sign of surrendering that independence. . . . There is a political aspect to it. . . . I think it is quite possible not to be an associate [which would interfere with non-alignment], but to negotiate the same terms as the associate members'*. He had lunch with Macmillan and Lord Head at Admiralty House two days later. He still respected Mr Harold Macmillan, but saw him as an equal and did not budge. Nor he did he waver when NPC-supporting students invited him to a dance and their committee presented him, tongues in cheeks, with a volume from Chancery Lane entitled *Common Market Law*. His fellow guests included Njoku, Mbu, Wachuku, Dipcharima, Pius Okigbo, Brigadier Aguiyi-Ironsi and David Williams. He also met Mr Edward Heath, lord privy seal in the foreign office and chief ministerial negotiator for Britain's entry under Mr Butler and Lord Home. All the British could see that if his warm feelings for the bonds of Commonwealth were cooling, it was at least as true of the other leading members.

The conference itself, the eleventh since the war, opened on 10 September, and its proceedings rapidly became more permeably public than those of its more tightly managed predecessors. It now had seventeen principal participants, supported by other representatives from eight dependencies as 'advisers', and close-knit confidentiality was no longer *de rigueur*. Its work on constitutional developments within the Commonwealth and on international affairs and disarmament was routine. The 'primary object' was to review Britain's progress into the EEC, and Westminster still hoped to persuade other members that accession on satisfactory terms would strengthen Britain, the Commonwealth and Europe all at once. In fact each other member made some attack on the British assessment. The criticisms would have seemed less simply destructive and self-centred

if there had been any modest unanimity on a forward-looking alternative blueprint.

The underlying weakness had been spelt out ruthlessly by the Indian defence minister a month or two before: 'What is there left in common? . . . Beside the historical background and the fact that we harbour no ill feelings against our old masters, there is nothing. . . . There is no question of 'preserving' the commonwealth – how can you preserve something which is deteriorating? . . . Do you realize that there have been only two issues . . . where Britain and India have been on the same side – Korea and Indochina? . . . The commonwealth . . . is indefinable, it's not a community of ideology, or belief in liberty'. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was forced to rethink some of his long-held nostalgic premises on external relations, although he had gone into the meetings telling newsmen that, '*I do not foresee a breakdown of the commonwealth over the common market business*', and while bridling at the status of an 'associated overseas territory' was always ready to talk about trade and tariff proposals. His own address to the conference on the third day, composed by his advisers and revised by himself at the last minute, left no doubts. Duncan Sandys, who was present at the conference, seemed still to think that developing countries were destined to supply raw materials for ever. Such ideas had to be refuted. This was a conference of equals.

Wearing a simple red fez, encircled in the Borno style with a white kerchief, Abubakar said that for developing countries the issue of association was relatively insignificant. It had solved none of their problems and was likely to make them more dependent. They had depended on exporting primary produce and now, like Britain, must come to terms with world realities. The significant question was how Britain's entry could be used to facilitate, not retard that. '*The developing countries are to-day caught in a vicious trap – the prices of their exports are declining steadily and have now reached a level below that of the worst period of the 1957-58 recession; and at the same time the level of prices of their imports from the developed countries continue to rise*'. In this way Nigeria's losses had outweighed her receipt of overseas aid. When she had tried to offset this by diversifying exports and industrializing, resistance was encountered from the developed world: '*the trade policies of the EEC towards the developing countries are, to say the least, perplexing*'.

To Mr Macmillan and his hope that Britain's entry would infuse Europe with a liberal outward-looking spirit, he declared, '*I cannot easily persuade myself to optimism on this subject, and can only pray that you succeed. No one who recalls the readiness with which treaties, agreements and institutions which no longer served the narrow individual needs of these countries were abandoned or disregarded can easily accept the assurances of good faith which they now seem to offer*'. He quoted the emasculation of the GATT. As for the commonwealth, would the sterling area continue, or what would replace it? On what terms would its members enjoy access to London's capital market? Would not substantial investment be diverted away from it? Nigeria simply wished fair competition when exporting to Europe, and would be content for the EEC preferential tariffs on tropical products like cocoa, vegetable oils and hard woods, and its quotas, to be discarded. '*We have no desire to compete with the associated territories of Africa in the distribution of the development fund. We would be satisfied with . . . stabilizing world prices of agricultural commodities, coupled with assured markets. . . .*'. Nigeria was prepared to sacrifice the tariff preferences she had long enjoyed in the British market, provided that these preferences were not turned against Nigeria.

So much for 'the good boy of the empire'; it was also a telling contribution to the lesson for Westminster and Whitehall that the mother of parliaments must no longer assume that the weaker members of the family would want to clutch her apron-strings for long. Despite the economic gloom, Alhaji Sir Abubakar had spoken with equal self-confidence to the Overseas Development Institute, using Wey's briefing papers, succinctly and sharply. So far only Britain and the USA had promised any aid towards Nigeria's development plan, even though she had gone to much trouble over the last six years, *'at the express request of our friends in the west'*, in drawing up the plan for public and semi-public expenditure; *'I am quite sure that you will appreciate the kind of feelings we have at this time, when we find ourselves paralysed by lack of positive indications or assistance from those friends. If nothing is forthcoming in the future, we shall therefore have no alternative but to consider how best we can go forward with this plan on our own'*. The World Bank had established a consultative group of willing countries. Nigeria had had nothing from Russia because she had no knowledge of any eastern bloc aid programme; if offered and suitable, it would be accepted, but *'we really need genuine aid'*, because whatever people said, all aid did have some strings attached. He had envisaged loans rather than grants in looking for £300 million of foreign aid. A country that took too many grants could be treated like a baby, constantly being fed, and unable to feed itself when grown up. The private sector and Nigerians would take up an increasing part, through the creation of advisory services, training facilities, technical and marketing information, as well as by investment of additional capital.

Challenged on the gap between poor and rich in the new countries, he gave an honest answer: *'I have been thinking about it myself, and I wish I had the courage to downgrade all salaries to the level which we could afford to pay, but neither I nor my colleagues have, or are likely to have, such courage'*; and he won the heart of one reporter by refraining from politicians' equivocation when answering a rather technical question with the admission that he knew nothing about the subject. He also had an audience with the Queen, and was an impressive figure at the state dinner and in the palace group photograph. This faded splendour of a nostalgic empire did not dissuade him from sending a strong nationalistic message to the inaugural meeting of the Nigerian sports council in Lagos, deploring the disgraceful standards to which certain aspects of sport had fallen through poor administration and inadequate training. On another day he met on the Marlborough House stairs a former district officer, Christopher Rounthwaite, now working in the CRO news department. Rounthwaite had had Leith Watt to stay with him, and Abubakar's face lit up: *'Mr Watt - abokina kwarai [very much indeed my friend]'*; but by then Watt had gone home to New Zealand.

The final unenthusiastic communiqué accepted that Britain had tried to make the Brussels Eurocrats understand the Commonwealth's problems, and had the right to make her own decisions; but it then dwelt on the other members' anxieties. They feared it might *'weaken the cohesion of the Commonwealth and its influence for peace and progress in the world'*. The east Africans, and Ghana and Nigeria, rejected associated status; Trinidad & Tobago and the faltering federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland were prepared to accept it, but Jamaica and Sierra Leone were only willing to *'consider it further'*. Ceylon, India and Pakistan were worried that changes to their trading patterns with Britain without concurrent adjustments elsewhere would hurt their foreign exchange earnings and investment in export industries at a pivotal stage of their development plans. Producers of both temperate and tropical foodstuffs were

equally disturbed. It became evident that Alhaji Sir Abubakar might still have his faith undiminished in his own remaining British friends and former tutors from the past, but that after this argument he would be strained to trust Whitehall to negotiate again on Nigeria's behalf. The reason was clear to him: the Westminster enthusiasts for the common market had not tried to identify or promote any option beyond the *idée fixe* of 'association'; most of Whitehall and its diplomats had never thought of the new commonwealth partners before independence as anything more than mysterious abstractions. The indefinable commonwealth ethos remained dear to him, but he could not place his country on the European side of the fence which was being erected against other developing economies like Brazil, Burma or Indonesia, and which must hinder worldwide commodity agreements; he now had no doubts that his federal political colleagues and his official advisers were right.

Abubakar returned to Lagos on 19 September, taking particular leave of Jawaharlal Nehru who would be returning to India through Paris, Accra and Lagos. For a second time he came home from a Commonwealth conference to be lionised, with ministers, students and troupes of dancers all celebrating at the airport. Wachuku ordered the security forces to let leading undergraduates into the VIP lounge, and cheering crowds lined the long road from Ikeja to Ikoyi. For once the Nigerian union of students lauded their prime minister for taking a strong line, and 'saving the country's soul'. He announced that Nigerian interests had compelled him to reject the European proposals outright, and that he would now work vigorously towards the establishment of a useful African common market, founded on local co-operation and harmonization of the continent's economies. A few days later he addressed parliament: *'Although we were assured that Britain's entry would not involve any African country in the political objectives of western Europe, yet we are unable to dissociate economic ties with military and political associations. Our bargaining position is not so weak as to oblige us to accept the full political and economic implications, of which neither the members of the European community nor the UK can at this stage foresee. . . . It is possible Nigeria may have to go through a period of great difficulty. The country may not succeed in attracting the foreign aid hoped for from common market countries'*. He trusted that Britain and the community would pursue liberal policies with the countries which were not 'associated', but patently he believed that the year's diplomatic activity and British ministerial persuasion had started from the base line assumptions that Britain was still strong and the Commonwealth's leader, and that Nigeria could not afford not to follow. He also affirmed to parliament that his government's study of associate status had been serious: refusal might mean commodities, such as groundnuts or tin, becoming subject to discriminatory tariffs or quotas, and greater competition from willing associates; also less trade with Britain and no access after a qualifying five years to European development funds.

But Nigeria was like Latin America, its urgency was for a large enough internal market to absorb its own growing industrial products; and its trade with Europe was not barred outright, while diplomacy could always aim to modify tariffs. His economics remained straightforward, but he had ceased to be bewildered by other economists' verbiage and jargon. He could also see that the upsurge of direct capital investment and industrialization from Italian, French and west German sources was not only making government economic policy more complex, it was also reducing its reliance on Britain, and introducing novel business practices into the bargain.

The Prime Minister, like all ordinary parents, was having to come to terms with his family growing up. Bala, the eldest son, had come perhaps a little too old to the timetabled life of the Kaduna capital school (where Binta had flourished), but equally life in the Sardauna's household may have been too unstructured and a little softening. An egalitarian school by day might also have been confusing when the virtually adoptive domestic background in the evenings expected older commoners humbly to follow the lead of younger aristocrats. His father now placed him in St John's college, a voluntary agency secondary school in Kaduna, but he still could not settle happily. The Sardauna arranged for a year at a senior primary school in Sokoto, after which the boy was better equipped to enter the government college at Keffi. Abubakar continued to use every opportunity to do his fatherly duty, while Bala was learning the social realities in the Sardauna's private community. When on holiday in Lagos, the teenager heard about John F Kennedy and his dreams for the American people, but also the contrast between that people with their 'impossible' ways and contaminated culture, and the very same polyglot people who had consciously forgotten their pasts and roots in order to build a new future by developing a single new culture together.

The smaller ones listened to their father's tales and entertained him with their simple balloons and toys; the girls heard with fascination what he had to tell of Queen Elizabeth, her carriages and jewels (Yalwa never abandoned the doll queen he gave her). His particular treasures, Mukhtar and Saddik, played with him on the floor of his study, from which they were never barred, and were personally bathed and put to bed by him in the housekeeper Mrs Khan's quarters, where they usually slept until she became full-time manageress of the government visitors' guest house. The boys also listened agog to the police ADC Kaftan Topolomiyo's old soldier's tales of his wartime experiences in the west African expeditionary force, not omitting his perception of incidents of poor leadership and indiscipline. By now Kaftan had been joined by a second orderly serjeant, Maxwell Orukpabo.

The boys also learnt that limits should be set to the conversion of imagination into practice: soon after the arrival of the new wonder of television, they were fascinated by an American movie that featured the novelties of snow and Red Indian smoke signals. In an interesting attempt to reproduce both in their room, they emptied great quantities of talcum powder (a consumer good of the time popular for its faint scent) over the floor, and lit a fire in the middle to experiment with the collection and release of smoke under a blanket. When they almost burnt the house down, they underwent the awesome trial, shared by very few, of hearing their father for the only time in their lives shouting at them in real unbridled anger.

The second anniversary of independence was heralded by the decision to sell the Royal Navy's gift of the escort vessel HMNS *Nigeria*, which was refitting in Britain and required £140 thousand more in repairs. Dr Mbadiwe was summoned to rejoice what he called 'this Abubakarian government' at the same time, saying of the man he still called 'Black Rock!', 'Nobody is more revolutionary in his own God-given way, when the occasion dictates, than Abubakar'. The official celebrations of independence day began with the prime minister attending a service in Lagos central mosque, followed next day by the governor-general worshipping in the methodist church. Dr Azikiwe referred in a speech to the abrogation of the defence pact, to Alhaji Sir Abubakar's lending of stature to Nigeria as a non-aligned state at the commonwealth conference,

and to the appointment in June of a Nigerian, Shettima, now known as Kashim Ibrahim, as governor of the northern region on the retirement of the last of the British governors, Sir Gawain Bell. Abubakar's own national broadcast reminded a few pensive listeners that it was many years since a prime minister had offered leadership, not through allurements but by promising toil, tears and sweat. He again reviewed the Lagos conference, the EEC discussions, and the western region. His public comments on the Commonwealth modified for the listeners his private disappointment:

'I discerned in the course of the conference a new pattern for the future, and returned convinced that Nigeria has to adapt itself. I saw fading away the idea that the commonwealth might form a closer economic unit to meet the challenge of our times. . . . Because the commonwealth ideals and traditions stand for the fundamental unity of mankind, it will long endure after technology and mechanization have been put in proper perspective in the world's search for the happiness of mankind. But the greatest need to-day is to secure the end of strained relations between the communist and western blocs. It is my belief that the best way to achieve this end is to accelerate the process of bringing the world together through the development of trade and commerce. . . . The aim should always be to reduce the gap between the poor and the rich countries, and thus obviate the most potential source of war in the world to-day.'

But the key phrases were these:

'I do not look at the years ahead with ease. . . . We also need foreign assistance. . . . Our agriculture [will] have to go through a period of readjustment. There is in evidence a fundamental reshaping of world trade. . . . Nigeria, which has hitherto depended on the exports of primary agricultural products must come to terms with the realities of the present world situation, and seek outlets for her exports in all parts of the world, if she is to survive. . . . Uncertainty about the extent of foreign assistance, we can expect. . . . I am therefore asking you all to do your duty and to be prepared for toil and some inconvenience. . . . The gigantic education scheme we are embarking upon will provide supervisors, technicians, administrators and managers, and also an informed electorate. . . . Nigeria has been born at a very difficult time. When I accepted the office of prime minister of the federation, I did not expect things to be easy. But the strength of the prime minister of any country derives from the encouragement and support he can get from his fellow countrymen. I have received such support and encouragement from the generality of the people. And I hope I will continue to receive it in the difficult task of nation-building to which we are all dedicated'

These last words, addressed to the generality of the people, did not prick the consciences of some of the particularity of his countrymen for long.

The move towards a republic form of constitution now loomed large in the minds of the nation-builders; if a little less so among the pure power-seekers and lawyers, who were preoccupied with increasing the number of other states or preserving their own region inviolate, yet rather more among the theorists and teachers. It had still to mean much to villagers, except as a distinction with small differences. It is as well to see how the process gathered weight, and look forward to its introduction. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had led his country into independence in the full knowledge that the nation was artificial, that there was no simple model for state leadership in Africa, but that a king with ultimate powers, supported by wise advisers, was common; and that an African king by custom inspired loyalty, even afar off; indeed that extended family groupings were likely to be envious of the prestige and colour of neighbouring chieftaincies, and that historic chiefdoms' subjects generally scorned the democracy of less developed but egalitarian tribes. That the absolute powers should be minimal, while trapped out with impressive and lovable ceremonial, and the wise men themselves expendable, seemed self-evident; that a king's reign might in some cultures be limited, it might be with three wise men responsible for religion, justice and policy bound at some stage to bring him a symbol (a parrot's egg, say) as indication that he must now exchange this life for a better one, was a choice Abubakar knew of, but it was not part of his immediate human experience; nevertheless there was much to be said for a reasonably civilized way of ensuring that a reign could be ended, while still giving the ruler moral influence over his otherwise pre-eminent advisers while yet in office.

A distant white queen, pictured on postage stamps wearing a crown, praised in an anthem that most had sung with coy comprehension at school, the central figure in an improbable but romantic progress still warm in memory, could be presented to the generality as an ikon, now shared by many other fabulous countries as well as the departed masters; but she could no longer be convincingly displayed, particularly to visiting foreigners, as the fount of honour, law-giving and law-making within one's own black country. Her personal representative, chosen in private consultation with the country's chief political leader, was a visible substitute, and most of the leaders, unable to persuade their peers of a better alternative (and more interested themselves in arriving at prime ministerial or premiers' positions), had been content at the time to accept it as a provisional constitutional device, flattering to the interested British no doubt, but unobjectionable to the unpoliticized. As has been seen, Abubakar's gradualism and belief in tutorship by example had led him to hope that Robertson might fill the rôle, modestly upstage, for the first run of the play. A view of the British Commonwealth and empire of nations, in which home and dominion citizens dimly felt that their ultimate ruler was Victoria, Edward or George, had however given way to one in which voters in the other realms knew very well that Britain was ruled by Attlee or Eden and their attendant wise men bearing symbols; and with the white realms also beginning to prefer their own nationals to sit in their government houses, he had inevitably to accept '*mutumin nan*', as noted in chapter 28. Relationships between governor-general and prime minister remained civilized, because neither was at all devoid of good humour or good manners, and Abubakar believed that the constitutional restrictions on the other's freedom to give orders could hardly be ignored. The convention that royalty and vice-regal representatives confined themselves to blandly imprecise, however dignified and uplifting, public thoughts was not written on the tablets.

The first serious hint of reformist opinion emerging from the pleasure of independence for its own sake was that given at the all-Nigerian people's conference (ANPC) in August 1961. It will also be remembered that Dr Azikiwe had raised the question of a republic in November of that year, doubtless with himself in mind, when speaking to the undergraduates of his university at Nsukka about the virtues of a strong presidential system. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had been given no warning, could not overlook this, and took an opportunity at his next monthly press conference to show how his usual pragmatism had begun to prevail. He had already given his first state-of-the-nation review, with its emphasis on tolerance and its rejection of sentimentality. At last he said that he accepted as a '*sensible suggestion*' a move to discuss with the premiers the need for a republic. He could no longer verbalize excuses for resisting external or internal disapproval of British imperial formulas. His declared reason was that he now understood that no Asian or African country could permanently remain a 'dominion', because foreign countries obstinately found it difficult to determine their status: her Majesty the Queen still formally appointed her Nigerian ambassadors to other countries, and the governor-general might not always find himself treated by ignorant, over-punctilious or deliberately hurtful governments abroad as a head of state should be.

Apart from adding that any president who had more than very limited powers would have to be selected by popular vote, Abubakar then let the matter rest publicly. Although his views on France and the EEC were weakening his resolve, he saw no need for hurry: not least, for the first important time he felt bound to persuade and carry the northern premier with him. The northern 'establishment' understood and had no objection to the rationale behind the myth of the British Commonwealth international headship: but it had every objection to a Nigerian headship that might be interpreted as an internal ethnic headship. More than this, the older generation of northern leaders, suspicious of rivals' long-term motives, were not all compliant. In reducing the British connection, what were the southerners really seeking, and would Nigerians visiting Britain not now be treated less as amiable cousins and more as formal allies? They did not believe that anything practical of benefit to the ordinary people would follow from republican status. These extinct volcanoes saw the move as evidence that the smooth institutional relationship between north and south of recent years was shallow and trickling away; and that the anarchic spirit behind the 'SG Now!' slogans of the 50s might not rest content, even after this ultimate achievement. The Sardauna was heard, oracularly perhaps, to liken the issue to a *jihad*, and said that when the wishes of the people were sought he would call upon all northerners, men and women, to cast their votes (women did not yet have the vote on any issue).

In private and among officials however the question occupied some of Abubakar's attention despite the Lagos conference, a fourth region, the development plan, the army in the Congo and austerity also demanding concentration. Various other political leaders, if challenged, were finding it prudent to say that personally they were in favour of a republic. A request to India for a constitutional adviser demonstrated that the precedent that would be most closely studied would be that of a figurehead, not an executive. The lack of anything more than reactive public comment from other leaders after Zik's Nsukka speech was a reflection of the uncertain implications for 'the big three', but also of the actual leadership of Alhaji Sir Abubakar (which they affected to disparage among their companions). That Azikiwe wanted to be a

president with power needed no repetition, but a change of title that left the shadow and the substance as they were was not an irresistible attraction for the others; Awolowo was certainly in favour of holding on until the federal election which he believed he would win, was past; and the Sardauna was indifferent to the title, but would never accept a head of state possessing any real power if that person might be a southerner. By May 1962 Abubakar had quietly formed his own views, and let it be known that he would be placing proposals for the creation of a republic, first before his own ministers, then before regional executive councils, and finally to parliament. To keep the interested public happy (which largely meant the press) he appointed a national honour committee under the minister of justice Dr Elias's chairmanship, to canvass proposals from the citizenry for the institution of a new system, distinct from the British monarch's semi-annual lists of knighthoods, CMGs and MBEs.

In August after his Bauchi holiday, the prime minister told inquirers that a white paper on republican status would be issued, and the governor-general said at Enugu that they had both agreed on certain fundamental issues concerning the formula to be sought. The months continued to pass, with some paperwork behind the scenes interleaved with greater matters, but only speculation in public. Opinions were coloured by their holders' varying attitudes to the Awolowo treason trial, to the Akintola-Adegbenro court cases, to the judicial committee of her Majesty's privy council's supposed insensitive legalism in hearing appeals that had political overtones, and to the scarcely dissimilar doubts of others that judges who were free from political control might not be free of personal political prejudice either. By April 1963 there was an informal consensus that a federation in which residual powers belonged to the regions could not invest its head of state with greater powers than the former governor-general had wielded. This was the position which premiers heading party groupings that were still in essence, whatever new protestations might be made, tribally and regionally rooted, were not going to surrender. The various governments exercised their powers in parallel, and did so jealously; and whatever the lessons of the federal government's treatment of the western regional crisis, there would always be important differences between their solutions to common problems on the exclusive legislative lists, and they must not embarrass the international representatives of them all. A straight reflection of this consensus in the *London Times* led to a complaint by Dr Azikiwe that their correspondent was sowing dissension.

After an informal promise early in the budget session, Alhaji Sir Abubakar announced that a republic would be instituted by the third anniversary of independence in October 1963, as agreed by the federal government in consultation with the regional premiers: *'The time has come for a review of the present position in order to reflect the realization of sovereignty and independence. . . . The leaders of this country decided of their own volition to maintain the formal link with the Queen as head of state. This position, it will be generally agreed, was useful in the early stages of independence, and was regarded as an interim arrangement. . . . His excellency the governor-general has communicated this wish of the government and people of Nigeria to her Majesty the Queen. At the same time I have informed all heads of government in the commonwealth'*. The responses from all quarters had been favourable, so now the statement could be made, on 29 April. *'We do not intend to abandon the commonwealth'*, he added in a subdued afterthought, and the long promised white paper would soon be published. The statement in

parliament was received with cheers and thumping of desks from all sides of the house.

An Anglo-Saxon chicken was incidentally returning to roost in political and journalistic discussion. An unwritten British constitution enjoying strong conventions had always proven hard to translate into transpantine terms wherever there were doubts whether ministers and their advisers would willingly perpetuate British self-restraint. 'The usual channels', and awareness of the danger of setting precedents for one's opponents to follow when the pendulum brought them into power, discouraged Downing Street from appointing outrageously partisan judges to the bench, chief constables to counties (and bishops to sees); but these taboos were not enforceable at law. Their effect was achieved in the new realms by extending the model of the civil service commission, and new nations were equipped with judicial service commissions and police service commissions (but not established churches). The eastern regional chief justice, Sir Louis Mbanefo, had recently spoken for his brother judges: 'There is no fear of the judiciary losing its independence in Nigeria so long as its independence is guaranteed in the constitution'. But politicians could manufacture fear that a judge, because of his ethnic or situational antecedents, might have institutionalized prejudices. The argument became fashionable that some of these service commissions must be colonialistic relics: after all (and so the wheel of argument turned full circle) did not the British prime minister advise the Queen to appoint high court judges? Why should not an independent Nigerian president be so advised? Most southern lawyers, and the press which they influenced, were opposed to change, but Alhaji Sir Abubakar's recent executive experience of the courts, and his native preference for systems and judges sworn to discover the truth rather than to weigh contrary adversarial arguments against precedents and procedure, inclined him despite the risks to favour a practice which might allow the choice of a wise man of honour rather than a learned man with whom his professional peers could find no fault.

At the beginning of a customary break at home in the north (he never holidayed in Paris or Venice, as some colleagues had begun to do), the prime minister presided over a three-hour closed-door meeting of national politicians in Jos at the end of June 1963, to talk about the republican constitution. The law officers' drafting instructions that were agreed included the unanimous wish, for the avoidance of doubt, that neither the president nor any governor should be given any executive powers. It was to acquire significance that when this was questioned during the 1965 constitutional dispute it was the eastern premier's chief secretary, Chief Jerome Udoji, who emphasized that he was directed that the heads of state, both federal and regional, should not be vested with executive (that is, political) authority. Abubakar then held two press conferences, the first in Kaduna towards the end of his retreat, at which he said that there would be an all-party meeting in Lagos on 26 July to review the necessary changes; there would be ten representatives each from the NPC and NCNC at the federal level, six from the united people's party (UPP, Chief Akintola's faction from the AG), four from the AG (a rump, but still active), and two each from other federal and regional parties that had won electoral seats. Recent events, he said, had shown the necessity for Nigeria to develop its own kind of democracy in the course of time, as distinct from the pattern inherited from Britain. He gave a small hostage to fortune in words that could be variously interpreted: the first president would not be a figurehead: *'he is always the father of the nation'*. Although the western region's history had not had an adverse effect

on foreign investments, *'I regret that instead of devoting time to construction, it is being wasted in settling political crises'*. Shortly afterwards he spoke again at a Lagos briefing of the desirability of all-party government in the republican context: *'We want stability, and this is one of the most practical ways to achieve the much desired peace and unity we advocate'*. He would be talking to his cabinet colleagues again about Nigeria evolving her own pattern of democracy.

Events in public now moved quickly. The intellectual row over judicial appointments suddenly shrank in importance when Dr Okpara let it be known that the premiers had agreed to a scheme to provide for preventive detention. All knew, he said, that subversion was prevalent, that weapons were being smuggled into the country, and that the nation must be able to defend itself. It was not the Action Group only that protested vigorously; the NCNC's own newspaper the *West African Pilot* and many party members, not confined to lawyers, reacted strongly. The Sardauna publicly reiterated his support for the idea, but then they all foregathered to make the decisions.

The all-party constitutional conference largely confirmed the federal proposals laid before it. These rehearsed the two opposing views that had been canvassed by the academics and the individually ambitious for so long: the one looking for a 'constitutional' or 'parliamentary' president who would continue to act in familiar accordance with the advice of a cabinet led by a prime minister (which would accord with the practice of the Indian union, the new Commonwealth's sole successful freely elected democracy, as the constitutional adviser had explained it); and the other which contemplated the powerful presidency of a United States, a French Union or a Ghana, leading on to a bewildering kaleidoscope of possible checks and balances to that power, from among which constitution-makers would have to make a further choice. The conference was assured that the prime minister and premiers, the governor-general and governors, Nigerians typical of the country's predominant influences, *'were not oblivious of the respective merits and demerits of the two principal kinds of republic, when they unanimously agreed that, with respect to the inauguration of the republic of Nigeria, the one better suited to the contemporary needs and aspirations of our country and people is that which would involve the minimum amount of change from the existing constitutional framework'*. So the president should continue to exercise, after the change, those powers vested in him as governor-general under the present constitution, which would be adapted *'in a dynamic way'* to fit the new status of the country as an autonomous, independent republic. That it was the easier option did not make it the worse one in an increasingly confusing world.

There was almost unanimous agreement among journalists and observers that the conference was open and fair, excluding no voice that might have a plausible claim to be represented, and that no suggestion put forward failed to receive a fair judgment; Alhaji Sir Abubakar was praised for his readiness to listen and to make concessions to logic or conviction. Nevertheless a series of detailed changes, each of which might have inspired an argumentative filibuster, was skilfully handled through an agenda that was completed in two short days. An authoritative lead, frank and civilized, was still effective when the broad purpose was already accepted and the content essentially verbal. The pragmatists saw in the limitations to dynamic change a reflection of the maxim that *'if it's working, don't mend it'*. The romantics were nourished by the adoption of a historical explanation of the preamble, which deserves quotation:

In keeping with the new status of the country as an independent republic no longer owing any allegiance to her Majesty the Queen, Nigeria must give expression to the sovereign will of its people by converting the existing constitution of the federation from its character as an order-in-council of her Majesty into that of an independent instrument established for the purpose of constituting a new political entity. It is necessary, not only to emphasize the principle of political autonomy of the new republic, but also that of the constitutional autochthony. The entirely indigenous character of the new instrument of government, fashioned by Nigerians in Nigeria for Nigerians must be emphasized, as against the form of the existing constitution which was only a personal decree of an alien monarch for the governance of her subjects in Nigeria. This is best reflected in the preamble to the constitution:

*Having firmly resolved to establish the federal republic of Nigeria;
With a view to ensuring the unity of our people and faith in our fatherland;
For the purpose of promoting inter-African co-operation and solidarity;
In order to assure world peace and international understanding; and
So as to further the ends of liberty, equality and justice both in our country and in the world at large;
We the people of Nigeria, here in parliament assembled this . . . day of . . . , 1963,
hereby declare, enact and give to ourselves this constitution.*

This language combined the civil servicers of the United Nations with a hark-back to the American enthusiasm of 1776, but it lacked quite the inspirational philosophy of the latter. The purpose was undeniably noble, although it also presumed to give the country extra-territorial powers. The proposals went on into the detail.

The president would continue, as had the governor-general, to have vested in his formal office the executive authority of the federation. and to be titular commander-in-chief of the armed forces; to exercise his powers directly or through subordinates; and to have any of these powers conferred by parliament on some other person or authority. However he would be elected for five years by secret ballot, from among consenting candidates nominated by at least three MPs to the president of the senate; and he must be a Nigerian citizen aged 40 or more, qualified for election to the house of representatives. The electoral college would be the senate and house of representatives, using a formula for progressive knock-out votes intended to ensure that an unopposed candidate had a simple majority of the whole college, or that the eventual winner had a two-thirds majority over the unsuccessful. He could be re-elected, but might not retain any other political or public office, government or local. He could be removed under a parliamentary procedure not unlike that used to remove a high court judge in Britain, but including a joint investigatory committee of both houses, superficially reminiscent of American impeachment, into the underlying allegations of misconduct or of inability to discharge his office efficiently. He might only exercise any of these powers in accordance with ministerial advice under the constitution, and could not even go abroad without prior cabinet approval. He would exercise the prerogative of mercy on the advice of the advisory committee, but in his own name, not on behalf of her Majesty.

The provisions for the executive authorities would now require that a region's powers be not exercised so as to impede or prejudice the governments of the republic or to endanger the continuance of the federation. The president might not remove the prime minister except on his losing a vote of confidence on the floor of the lower house, nor other ministers except on the prime minister's

advice: but he might authorize another minister to act whenever the prime minister was abroad or was for any reason unable to perform his functions. The office of federal attorney general, as minister of justice, was to be expressly established (this had so far been taken for granted), his discretion in instructing the director of public prosecutions would remain personal and excluded from corporate cabinet responsibility, and the DPP must only act under the AG's directions and no longer enjoy the same protection from dismissal as a judge.

No region might create a native authority or local government police force to be employed beyond its own provincial boundary, or a law-enforcement administration on a regional basis. Little change was foreseen to public service provisions (the director of audit, unlike the DPP, would retain his judge-like protection against arbitrary dismissal), but much was made of the removal of the irritants that diplomats were appointed, and bills assented to, in the Queen's name. For the legislatures the only significant change was to be the ending of the possibility of selecting non-Nigerians as senators to speak for special interests. The mechanisms of delimiting new constituencies and their numbers, or of adding new regions, would be untouched.

The political rulers' wish, now unwavering, to be rid of the judicial commissions received reasoned, however heated, opposition from the AG members of the conference, but from few others except on the margin; the AG's support was counter-productive to the lawyers' cause. Abubakar remained a strict constitutionalist; but he was happy that the constitution might be changed, if that were done openly by agreement among the people's constitutional representatives. The judicial changes began in practice from the top: the removal of the Queen's nominal involvement in appointing viceroys and envoys would logically be paralleled by removing the right of all final appeal from Nigeria to the judicial committee of her Majesty's privy council in the UK, a body largely interchangeable with the lords of appeal in ordinary sitting nominally under the lord high chancellor as the house of lords in its appellate jurisdiction. The ultimate argument had always been that the 'privy council', which also included holders of 'high judicial office' from many other parts of the Commonwealth (including Nigeria itself), encouraged a uniformity of approach to vital principles of common law and statutory interpretation, by way of its authoritative judgments on appeal from commonwealth countries that had inherited the English common law and legal system. Its opinions were quoted in persuasive argument in parallel common law jurisdictions such as the United States. Supranational jurisprudence no longer had its attractions for political laymen.

As now the final court of appeal, the supreme court would include at least one judge recommended to the president by the premier of each region. All chief justices and judges of the supreme court of Nigeria and the high court of Lagos would be appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister, who might first consult whomsoever he might deem necessary. Regions might have their own appeal courts. Magistrates would be the responsibility of the public service commission like other civil servants (as in colonial days, when most magistrates, although holding limited powers, had been district officers sitting in their own administrative stations), and justices of the peace be created by the attorney general (and minister of justice). Instead of the prime minister advising the governor-general to set up a special tribunal to inquire into allegations of misconduct or incapacity of a judge, and reference thereafter to the judicial committee of the privy council for determination, an address would

be made to the president for his removal supported by two-thirds of all members of both houses of parliament. Thus the practice and convention of Britain would be followed, on the surface.

There was a rift during the second session of the conference: the question of preventive detention was floated, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar readily agreed that he, Dr Okpara, Chief Akintola and the Sardauna all favoured it, and had long done so. Subversive elements, he repeated, were known to be plotting, but the police could do nothing to invoke the law and intervention by the courts until there was valid evidence that active attempts had actually been made to subvert the constitution (by when the stable door was open). Okpara was embarrassed when Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, Mr R A Fani-Kayode and Chief Olu Akinfosile, all of his own party, expressed hostility; they were supported by Dr Chike Obi (Dynamic party), Abubakar Jalingo (UMBC) and Abubakar Zukogi (NEPU), as well as by Bola Ige and Dauda Adegbenro of AG. The Sardauna began to equivocate, none too tactfully – he said it might indeed be a necessary power to invoke in the south, although it seemed unnecessary in the law-abiding north; but he agreed to respect public and nervous backbench opinion when the prime minister deferred putting it to a resolution until the end of the conference. Abubakar discussed it further with the premiers in private, and in fact the matter was dropped. For once the country's press and second-line political leaders were to a certain degree united against the federal and regional rulers, and prevailed.

All reference would be removed to the UK interpretation act of 1889, which was used as a common base by other Commonwealth realms for resolving constitutional doubts as to the meaning of legal terms; it would be replaced by Nigeria's own interpretation act. Changes corresponding to all these provisions would be made uniformly to regional constitutions also, as might be relevant. Regional governors would be appointed by the president for five year periods on the advice of the premier, after consultation with the prime minister, and no longer in accordance with resolutions from joint legislative sittings; in the absence of any formal relief, the president of the appropriate house of chiefs would officiate as governor *pro tem*. The agreed proposals appeared as the promised white paper three days later, and this was approved in a brief debate on the last day (7 August) of the same short meeting of the house of representatives at which the OAU charter had been ratified. Little response was given to the continuing criticisms from the bench and bar of the judicial provisions, and no response by any minister. The prime minister merely summarized the popular view: *'We did not come across anything which was bad in our relations with the UK by virtue of having the Queen as our monarch, but we thought that in our African setting it would be much better if we had a head of state, a Nigerian in Nigeria, exercising all the functions of a head of state'*. A constituent assembly was unnecessary, as the federal legislators had the full power to amend the constitution.

It was too late for Abubakar to heed a prescient contemporary comment by Sir Milton Margai in Sierra Leone, explaining his continued preference for a monarchical system: 'If a man is called 'governor-general', everybody knows (and he knows himself) that he has no political power. If he's called president, even if his powers are those of a governor-general, since we are surrounded by presidents with complete power, sooner or later other people (and he himself)

will assume that he's got some power – and there would be trouble between him and his prime minister'.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar felt bound to respond to the one wider public uneasiness, and attacked the press and radio for their part in spreading this:

'I should mention a very controversial matter which was discussed at the all-party conference, also at the meeting of the prime minister and premiers at Jos, that is the question of what people call a preventive detention act. . . . As far back as 1957 . . . I thought – and I said it at the time – that the Nigerian constitution was too rigid. It did not give the government the opportunity to deal with very difficult situations, short of declaring an emergency. . . . We cannot deal with groups of individuals who engage in subversion. We cannot stop and we cannot forestall people who are planning evil. . . . That was why . . . we should find some means by which the government should be empowered, through this parliament, to curtail the liberty of a Nigerian citizen. . . . We cannot hold anybody for more than twenty-four hours – that is the criminal code. We are well aware that people are being trained for subversion abroad. . . . Should we allow a small group of people to disturb the peace? . . . The sad thing about the whole issue is that it is not Nigerian brains, it is outside brains which are organizing all these things in this country, that is the sad thing about it. Nigerians who are traitors to their country, and Nigerians with ambition who want to disturb the peace of their country, must really be severely dealt with'.

The idea of preventive detention had of course been dropped, but Abubakar still wanted the members, he said, in view of events in other countries, to think of ways in which the country could be saved from outside subversion. It is important to notice that he always raised the matter in the context of constitutional and patriotic discussions, and that he asked them what alternative there was to such an act if they agreed that it was the government's duty to safeguard its citizens; also that he never referred to Dr Nkrumah's use of a preventive detention act in the new Ghana.

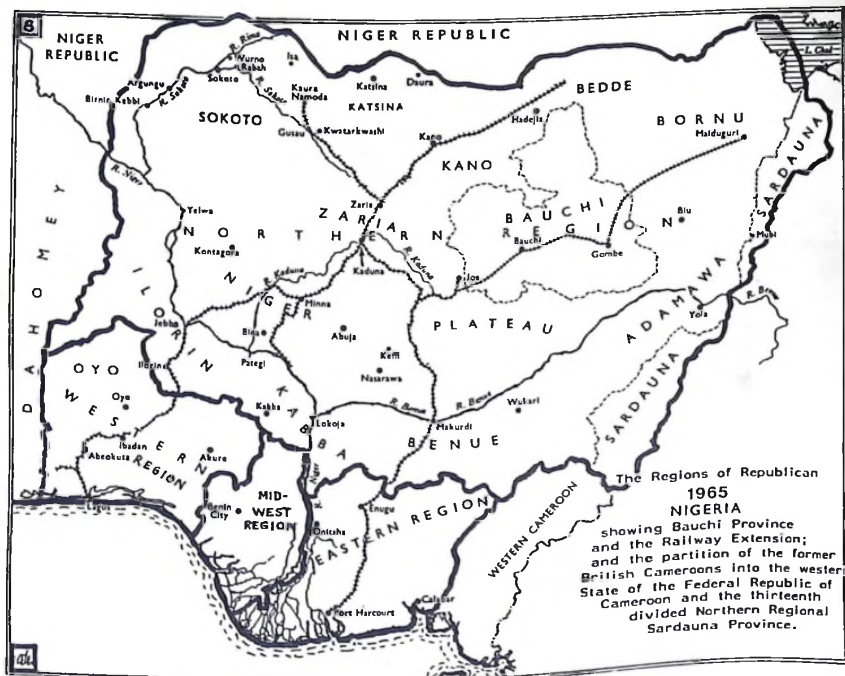
The federal chief justice, Sir Adetokunbo Ademola, continued to express dismay, whenever he spoke to the Britain-Nigeria association or elsewhere, at the demise of the JSC, and at the cut of the links with the privy council of which during this year he had joined Zik and Abubakar as an honoured member. Chief F R A Williams, who like some others had renounced politics and had himself reverted to being a practising QC, reminded the western house of chiefs and the bar association of Dr Elias's recent speech to the international commission of jurists, when as attorney general he had lauded the JSC; he also spoke against importing regional judges into the supreme court and giving regions new tiers of appeal courts. In the northern house of assembly Ibrahim Imam thought that the changes justified a five year extension of parliament's life, 'to enable an orderly evolution from the monarchical to the republican system of government'. But there was little popular doubt, and little popular awareness of practical change. The house of representatives met again on 18 September to hear Alhaji Sir Abubakar formally move the second reading of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria bill. There were some small amendments to the white paper's intentions: for example, the regional appeal courts were absent; if a prime minister who had lost a vote of confidence refused to resign or seek a dissolution, the president must dissolve parliament; and to quell further judicial meddling with bank scandal or similar investigations, federal and regional governments would have the

right to hold tribunals of inquiry into any matters within their legislatures' competence. The Action Group, a baker's dozen strong, divided the house on the provisions for dismissing a prime minister and dissolution, and on the DPP's losing his independence. Mr W O Briggs of Degema rather improbably called the abolition of the judicial service commission 'the twin brother of preventive detention act', but the bill was quickly passed unscathed.

Outside the house the prime minister had rejected the name of 'Songhai' as a republican replacement for the country's appellation: '*The name 'Nigeria' is nice enough*'. The northern premier's contemporary opinion of what made a unity of Nigeria was notable, since it suggested so little interest in the individual human investments or dividends. Reading a speech, containing a few English thoughts hastily produced under pressure and in no way expanded by the Hausa translator whose actual duty it was to draft, the Sardauna was content that the country shared the Niger and Benue rivers, a system of roads, railways and communications, and openings to the outside world through the seaports of Port Harcourt and Apapa and the airport of Kano; that each part of the country depended on the others for exchanging one service or another, one type of produce or another; and as an afterthought, that even the number of years they had been formally together had produced 'a great and wonderfully unifying effect'. That was all.

On the Friday following the passage of the bill the official gazette announced that 'Nnamdi Azikiwe shall be deemed to be elected president of the republic on the date of the commencement of this constitution'. On 1 October 1963, as Lagos was formally designated Nigeria's first 'city', the new president sent his prime minister a letter expressing his 'deep appreciation of our happy and fruitful association', and acknowledging that they had 'worked together as a team on the basis of mutual respect and unity'. References in the (council of ministers') cabinet conclusions to the 'president' (of the council) had now all to be spelt out and clarified as being to 'the president of the council'. 'Speeches from the throne' would become 'president's (or governor's) speeches at the budget session of the legislature'.

But there are other, less trivial, matters in the background still to be told.



The Regions of Republican
 1965
 NIGERIA
 showing Bauchi Province
 and the Railway Extension;
 and the partition of the former
 British Cameroons into the western
 State of the Federal Republic of
 Cameroon and the thirteenth
 divided Northern Regional
 Sardauna Province.

37 A count of polls threatens future democracy

In Karshe ya zo babu makawa

The theme of the prime minister's second anniversary talk to the nation had been this: *The primary aim of government is security, in the sense of protection of life and property. . . . The cardinal aim of those in government is to achieve their objectives by persuasion – I repeat, by persuasion, which is a higher art than compulsion. . . . Our problems in Nigeria can no longer be considered in isolation – our country can easily be reached from any corner of the earth*'. There are happenings in the last twelve months before the republic, yet to be recorded, to which that theme is relevant. The first takes us back to the northern region, where the provincial council system had just been strengthened, from the NPC's point of view but to the chagrin of the fast northernising administrative civil service), by the appointment of political provincial commissioners holding ministerial rank on a model introduced in the eastern region. These party men were to preside over co-ordination of the native authorities and all liaison with the regional government; in most cases the superseded resident supported the new PC from the new post of provincial secretary, ranking as a permanent secretary. It fell short of the Hudson – Sharwood-Smith vision of twelve pillars, which would have introduced virtual statehood under a co-ordinating but non-interventionist regional authority.

The emir of Kano's support for the Sardauna in 1943, and his acceptance of Sir Ahmadu's favour in taking him on visits to the middle east in 1958 and to America in 1960 (where journalists had given him the greater coverage), and in making him acting governor during Bell's 1961 leave, only reinforced the evidence of those who accused him of arrogance. He seemed to them to be convinced that the premier's friendship would protect him from ever being reined in. The Kano native authority finances had largely broken down, and in September 1962 could meet neither its monthly staff wages bill nor its other debts; the water supply undertaking and the purchase-of-corn local industry in particular were now unaudited because virtually unauditable. The provincial administration, rebuffed and frustrated, had swamped the ministry for local government and the premier's office with statements and evidence. The Sardauna, like the prime minister, had hoped for some initiative from Kano NA councillors that might blunt the feelings of provocation on both sides, but the hostile NA officials had the upper hand and there was no chance of spontaneous local change. Bruce Greatbatch, secretary to the premier, and the Kaduna administration, their files full of arrogant Kano NA correspondence rejecting what it termed 'servile mentality' and abusing their colleagues (both Nigerian and British), felt bound to warn Sir Ahmadu in writing that the time had come to show who the government were, or Kano would have become virtually independent; and that financial maladministration was the occasion for

intervention to make it clear that no emir was above the law, nor incidentally above the regional ministers.

The administrative advice had been coloured by the belief that the emir was employing ancient ways to mishandle customary landholding, and that he gave judgments affecting lands and inheritance in his court in contradiction of the *shari'a*: but the true issue was whether it was the emir, or the regional cabinet through the provincial commissioner, who controlled political government in the most populous and wealthy province. The Sardauna brooked no man's superiority, and the provincial commissioners took official precedence over all men in their provinces, whatever the token courtesies.

The northern government appointed Mr David Muffett, by now a very senior and case-hardened administrative officer among those expatriates preferred by the Sardauna, to be a sole commissioner into the Kano NA's financial affairs. He also looked well beyond his terms of reference, and with equal vigour, into much wider aspects of maladministration that might reflect the emir's interference, his obstructiveness or his indifference; this is the mark of the generalist administrator who takes the broad view and rejects tunnel vision, who opens every one of an interlocking set of Chinese boxes placed before him, and who consequently earns the hatred of the scholarly specialist and political apologist alike. He incidentally used his own intelligence skills to defeat a preposterous effort on the part of the emir's supporters to trap the commissioner himself in a false accusation of impropriety.

Muffett had to face strong political resistance from the influential Kano factions, made the more piquant because the PC (magajin gari Aliyu) was a Sokoto man and the minister for local government (Sule Gaya, who thought the facts disclosed far from cut and dried) came from Kano himself. There was an interim report, an ineffective attempt by an exco with cold feet to guide the commissioner back into the narrower financial field, a reluctant government loan to guarantee a heavier native treasury overdraft, and a series of arrests or suspensions of NA officials, before the emir himself finally gave evidence; but the northern cabinet, fully supported by its administration, reached the determination to see the process through, however bitter the end.

The northern federal ministers in Lagos, less directly or personally challenged, saw things very differently. Inuwa Wada, with memories of the 1953 riots (Chapter 16), had every reason to know that Kano was always a dry tinderbox, even though he also had been belittled by Sanusi. Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Muhammadu Ribadu, nervous of what renewed riots in Kano would signify for the country's reputation on top of the mortifying internecine Yoruba strife, urged the Sardauna to be more cautious (Abubakar had before now counselled the Sardauna in the strongest terms against giving grounds for popular suspicions that he intended to move against the sultan of Sokoto and the shehu of Borno); Shehu Shagari, Maitama Sule and Bukar Dipcharima tended to agree. So, more strongly, did the governor, Sir Kashim Ibrahim. As for Aminu Kano, the Sardauna consulted him but distrusted what he heard.

Sir Ahmadu Bello, although torn two ways, remained determined that come what may a Sokoto-led NPC should rule the traditional rulers. He was heartened by mass defections to the NPC from UMBC and BYM members who were disillusioned by recent events in the AG, and hoped that this rallying to the flag of success would be reflected in the Kano mob's behaviour. In the event the Muffett inquiry, the most celebrated of the king-breaking series that went back to Sharwood-Smith in Adamawa a decade before, temporarily added a slang word like *Harragin* or *Gorsuch* to the rich Hausa tongue: 'an yi masa

Muffett [he's been Muffed] for a while marked the fate of lesser men than emirs who were also caught out and disposed of. Drastic reforms were required, although the central culprits among the council seemed to escape, and a white paper was published; Alhaji Isa Kaita was deputed to explain to Alhaji Sir Abubakar and his northern Lagos colleagues that the decision had been firmly taken to dethrone Muhammadu Sanusi and send him into exile with adequate allowances; the process could not be halted. *'You can't do it, Kano will be on fire'*, Abubakar said, backed by Ribadu and Inuwa Wada. The Katsina emissary told them that the Sardauna would not change his mind; it was the region's constitutional responsibility, not the federation's, Abubakar's own frequent argument in reverse.

The north went ahead, but took care to have Kano surrounded by two battalions of federal soldiers. Much to the governor's surprise, the emir accepted his destiny fatalistically without any overt argument, and resigned after Sir Kashim had consulted the council of chiefs; had his own faults all been venial, he should still have known and prevented those of others, while those who might have warned him feared his unbending will. The emir's son Aminu Sanusi, a member of the foreign service who had been serving in Cairo, approached the prime minister to intervene on the question of exile. Alhaji Sir Abubakar discussed this with Alhaji Sir Ahmadu, and the choice settled on Azare, headquarters of the Katagum emirate in northern Bauchi province, due east of Kano. Nationally the NPC's divided opinion closed ranks, but the northern premier's residual personal regrets remained and local Kano politics nurtured a pro-Sanusu faction. Sanusi's successor Inuwa died after less than a year, and was followed in turn by Sanusi's brother Ado Bayero, the ambassador to Sénégal, at the time the Nigerian republic was created. Some who were at a loss to account for the turn of events speculated whether God might not have preordained that Inuwa should reign, however briefly.

While the Kano 'deposition' was in progress the country's leaders attended the opening of the university of Lagos medical school in the mainland hospital. Major foreign affairs continued to erupt. Nehru's visit to Nigeria after the Commonwealth conference in September 1962 coincided with renewed clashes on his border with China, which were to culminate in a state of emergency being declared in India; Britain and the United States persuaded Ayub Khan of Pakistan not to take advantage of Nehru's Chinese troubles, or of India's internal difficulties in Kashmir, Nagaland and Madras. Alhaji Sir Abubakar pledged his support and followed up with an important and self-revelatory public reply to a written approach from Pandit Nehru:

'Since the first Chinese aggression in Ladakh five years ago, I have watched with great admiration and respect the rôle which you have played, entirely on your own, to use persuasion in place of retaliation to contain the aggressive tendencies of China. . . . Nigeria's sympathy lies with India. We cannot view the border dispute in isolation, and we consider that its peaceful solution is very important for the preservation of world peace. Your magnanimity in supporting China's claim to admission at the united nations has won for you deep respect in the world community. Although she is not represented at the UN, every pressure will be brought to bear upon China to withdraw her forces . . . to the status quo. . . . I agree entirely . . . that the issue is not merely that of territorial adjustments . . . if civilization is to endure. . . . The Chinese theory of 'might is right' cannot be tenable, and any country that embraces it should stand condemned'.

Coincidentally Dr Nkrumah was castigating Mr Macmillan for sending aid to India, but the UN general assembly voted against communist China's admission by 56 to 42, with 12 abstentions (32 of the 110 members were now African, and 23 were Asian).

Events elsewhere in late 1962 included Southern Rhodesia declaring ZAPU an unlawful body, shortly before holding a general election. ZAPU's leader Joshua Nkomo paid one of his several visits to Nigeria, after which Abubakar commented to the police inspector-general Hodge that he still could not understand the difficulties of settling Rhodesia's problem: he would welcome a visit from the federal Rhodesian prime minister Welensky, to advise him on ways to inspire reconciliation between all factions. Ahmed ben Bella was elected constitutional premier of Algeria and received telegraphic congratulations from Abubakar; the army seized power in Yemen; there were dangerous German protests and riots over the Berlin wall; Uganda became independent on 9 October; Foot resigned as Britain's permanent representative to the UN on colonial questions, because he disagreed with Macmillan's and Butler's view that Southern Rhodesia had long had prescriptive right to internal self-government; the UN general assembly asked Britain to suspend the new Southern Rhodesian constitution, the day before it came into force; China invaded India; and the end of October 1962 will always be remembered for the world crisis and Kennedy-Khrushchev confrontation over the soviet missiles, landed in Cuba, presumably to be targeted at America, but finally dismantled and returned to Russia.

Russia despatched a peaceful photographic spacecraft in the direction of Mars on 2 November; a francophone west African monetary union of Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, Haute Volta, Mauritania, Niger and Sénégal was created (Mali having resigned after signing the treaty); the presidents of Mauritania and Niger visited Kaduna; Julius Nyerere was elected president-designate of Tanganyika; a British Guianan constitutional conference broke down in London, in the wake of an official report that that year's Georgetown riots had arisen out of simple political rivalries and not from violent sedition; delegates of the commonwealth parliamentary association visited Nigeria; the deposed imam of Yemen appealed for world support; Nkrumah allowed his bishop Roseveare to return to Accra; China ordered a ceasefire with India and withdrew its troops on 1 December; the British and the French agreed to develop a joint supersonic airliner, to be given the French version of its name, *Concorde*; a rebellion in Brunei was put down by British and Gurkha troops; Tanganyika became independent on 9 December; Sénégal's prime minister Mamadou Dia failed in an attempt to oust his president Léopold Senghor, after seventeen years of stable collaboration between them; Kenneth Kaunda took the lead in Northern Rhodesia's first African-dominated government, allying his UNIP with the ANC to outnumber the liberal white united federal party; the UPP under Edgar Whitehead was in turn defeated in Southern Rhodesia by the right-wing Rhodesian front party led by one Winston Field (Whitehead had been the last white leader likely to be able to negotiate a form of multi-racial independence freely); Field demanded independence on the *status quo*, but was rebuffed by Whitehall; Britain then conceded Nyasaland's right to secede from the federation, at a constitutional conference in London which agreed on terms for its self-government; India and Pakistan began negotiations over Kashmir; Kennedy and Macmillan met at Nassau in the Bahamas; and it will be recalled that the year ended with heavy fighting in Katanga. Morocco had defeated Nigeria in a UN vote on filling the conventional 'middle eastern/African' seat on the security council, despite all the African states' support; Wachuku

called this, 'a defeat for Africa', since he regarded the Maghreb as essentially middle-eastern.

Most striking comment of the period was a universally reported and universally repeated speech by the US adviser to President Kennedy, former secretary of state Dean Acheson, made to military cadets at West Point academy: 'Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a rôle. . . . [The rôle] based on being the head of a 'commonwealth' which has no political structure, or unity, or strength, and enjoys a fragile and precarious economic relationship by means of the sterling area and preferences in the British market . . . is about to be played out'. This cold prediction reverberated in the minds of those who had attended the recent commonwealth gathering. It happened to coincide with a respected non-political British periodical, *New Commonwealth*, which had started life many years before as *Crown Colonist*, ceasing publication.

At home the prime minister's constituency of south-west Bauchi was newly delimited as the emirate districts of Lere and Bula together with the tiny chiefdom of Dass. It was a technicality. Bauchi province now of course had its own provincial commissioner, Malam Dauda Jamtari Belel, the galadima of Mubi from Adamawa, who was complaining like the British resident before him that the emir of Bauchi still had too often to take the initiative before any NA councillors or departmental heads would implement their own council's decisions. Adamu Jumba, as emir, had given up the portfolio of judicial affairs in the Bauchi NA council, but the translation of the magajin gari Yakubu Lame to be PC Niger had inflicted an injury on the NA's administration. The prime minister's one-time 'ward' Adamu Tafawa Balewa was officiating as PC Plateau, and was later to do the same in Ilorin. Good news was that the native treasury was still in no danger of losing the 'grade A' status which it had regained, and once more needed no regional government or provincial administration detailed guidance: this was marked in practice by no longer requiring a bank overdraft to bridge the period before the *haraji* tax came in after harvest. The prime minister noted wryly that expanding education, local provision for a Nigeria police detachment, and the increased federal import duties, all made the balancing of local budgets harder for his home civic government.

The urban parts of the country were basking in Dick (Richard Itehu) Tiger's winning the world middleweight boxing championship at San Francisco in October, having already become commonwealth champion. The chief domestic occurrence in October was the Lagos international trade fair, which had been directed by the same public works officials as the 1960 independence exhibition. At the formal opening Alhaji Sir Abubakar spoke of the much publicized but still unpublished development programme, and reminded the visitors that Nigeria welcomed investors and offered financial inducement to any who would set up approved new industries: '*As the prosperity and purchasing power of the developing countries improve, so we can buy more manufactured goods. If however we remain poor, we can buy little of what the industrialized nations produce. Commercially we are members one of another. Prosperity, as well as peace, is indivisible*'. Official presents to the prime minister from visiting dignitaries and at ceremonies were becoming an embarrassment; it became Ahmed Kari's duty to parcel them up to the Lagos museum for storage or display.

He welcomed his old Kano friend the makama, Alhaji Bello dan Amar, to private hospitality during the fair: the conversation and cold drinks were

shattered when the prime minister's hefty 6'3" Ijò police orderly serjeant-major irrupted with apologies, distraught by news that his daughter had drowned in the lagoon. Dan Amar made his excuses to leave at the call to prayer, but Abubakar's own concern was solely for his aide. It was this policeman, selected by John Hodge at the same time as the six foot northern ex-serviceman serjeant-major to be PM's orderlies, who had once had a bad cough while in Bauchi, about which he and his master had exchanged chaff; but one night Abubakar had wanted to leave his bedroom and found himself unable to open the door. The big Ijò was sleeping across the door, so that nobody might enter and disturb his charge, and the northern night air had given him his cold. The devotion that the prime minister had earned from his bodyguard from the coastal creeks affected him deeply.

The northern regional premier, who had just been proud to view the first northern television service, now saw the northern college formally re-opened as Ahmadu Bello university, of which he would be first chancellor. The occasion was doubly memorable: it was the first time that all the regional premiers had been seen together in the north since the opening of the Zaria institute of administration out of which this university had grown since 1954. But the Sardauna repeated a discordant comment in the context of the boost which the trade fair was giving to development plan financing: 'Festus's financial arrangements with Israel have come to us as a surprise'; northern Nigeria wished to dissociate itself from any acceptance of aid in any way from the Israeli government. The prime minister's reaction was as it had been before, with a reassured glance at the rich promise of a record northern cotton crop. It did not concern him that the Sardauna now referred to his Lagos NPC colleagues as 'Yan Carter Bridge', people in the capital separated by that physical crossing from mainland Nigeria. President Nasser had invited Abubakar to Cairo to study internal security, but he had just sent Alhaji Shehu Shagari in his place, with a northerner senior assistant secretary; on arrival this renewed Israeli complication distracted their studies.

Nor was he anxious to attend the Commonwealth parliamentary association's meeting himself, which was held in Lagos in November, but his colleagues Muhammadu Ribadu and Shehu Shagari (back from Cairo) frustrated his intention to plead a subsequent engagement; they managed to arrange a technical hitch which grounded the official aircraft in which he had meant to escape. He had to make an address after all to what he saw as this assembly of self-indulgent backbench legislators enjoying a free holiday: *'I have attended the conference of the commonwealth prime ministers twice now, and I was . . . impressed with the . . . frank and family atmosphere. . . . Only some days ago it appeared [a reference to Cuba and Berlin] as if we had almost reached the end, when mankind was about to destroy himself and civilization. . . . India is engaged in a bitter struggle. . . . We never believed that might is right. . . . We are not neutral, but . . . there should be at least some people who could tell either side that they are wrong or they are right . . . fearlessly. . . . Nigeria will find itself in the camp of truth'*. Shehu Shagari and Pius Okigbo from the east took on the task of repeating to the meeting both the host country's rejection of 'association' with the European community, and Abubakar's continuing search for an African free trade area unconnected with the francophone arrangements (Shehu had by now become Abubakar's virtual permanent representative at the UN ECA (economic commission for Africa) as well, and was already engaged to go to Kuala Lumpur for the next CPA meeting). At home Abubakar tried to calm labour by giving some recognition to the new ULC (united labour

congress), which was regarded as 'moderate' because it included no professed marxists and remained affiliated with the ICFTU.

An unrelated cabinet reshuffle was forced on the prime minister by the translation of the minister of internal affairs, Alhaji Usman Sarki, to become Etsu Nupe (a first class chief, the emir of Bida): Shehu Shagari succeeded him reluctantly (there were messy corruption scandals over immigration for him to grapple with). It was doubtless a coincidence that just before losing his portfolio of economic development, Alhaji Shehu had counselled the prime minister to be very chary of committing US\$80 millions to the Ka'inji dam, in case things went wrong and no alternative new revenue was visible. The minister of state for the army Mr J C Obande took another place, and Alhaji Ibrahim Tako, the galadima of Nupe, took the army post. It was soon announced by a minister of state that a Nigerian would command the Royal Nigerian Navy by 1964, and that all senior army and naval appointments would be Nigerianized by 1965.

Dr Okpara of the east and the NCNC now made a remarkable statement to Dr Azikiwe's university of Nigeria at Nsukka, which had decided to award the prime minister his third honorary doctorate: he adopted one of Abubakar's leading motifs and called for neither a coalition government nor a one-party state, but for a united front government from all the political parties. In Okpara's version this would presuppose some revised constitution, which would see the country through to the end of the three or four more development plans still necessary to produce the self-sustaining economic growth which even dyed-in-the-wool political planners now saw as the sole key to true sovereignty. The notion was lost to sight in the crisis which had exploded only a week before, the seminal national disgrace of the 1962 census, in which virtually everyone became a willing liar of the first magnitude.

Rumours had begun to spread shortly before Okpara's speech on 17 December that the census result in the eastern region had been inflated and that the north was 're-enumerating' as a result. In fact the figures for those regions had been under sceptical scrutiny in Lagos ever since July. The north had shown an increase of about 30% over 1952; the east about 71%, with five divisions (Awka, Brass, Degema, Eket and Opobo) reaching between 120% and 200%, despite anecdotal evidence that some were actually in decline. These areas, long ago the aristocrats of the old slave trade, had been so conscious of their loss of population and status that the scheming had gone much too far; but their aim had merely been to restore their own position against the power of 'Enugu', not to challenge other regions.

When the western figures came in somewhat later, they also showed a rise, of over 70%. Mr Warren and the demographers had agonized over history, science and received wisdom, and had finally reported, officially but in confidence, that the northern and federal figures were 'reasonable', if one were to assume a 5% undercount in 1952 and a mere 2% annual increase since; but that self-evidently the figures from elsewhere were 'grossly inflated' (they were explicable only if nearly three-quarters of all adults had been missing from decade upon decade of tax registers; but still incredible in that the enumerated women of child-bearing age could not have physically given birth to the recorded increase in children aged under 5, amounting in one area to 65% of the total). No experienced demographer had expected a total exceeding 41 million, and that allowed for a higher annual growth rate in the south than in the north: even if the arbitrary decision in the 1960 Ghana census, that the last colonial count had fallen short by 20%, were followed blindly through the whole of Nigeria,

the valid growth rates could not have taken the total beyond 45.5 million. To rescue the costly census, verification checks were necessary: these would have to be done by the same staff whom, politically, it would be impossible to impugn, but Warren believed that checks, made under his supervision and using sophisticated demographic double-tests, would produce reasonably honest results all over. This did not take into account the attitude of those who were asking, 'Who won the census?', as though it had truly been an election.

Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, now the federal minister of economic development, was charged with responsibility for the census. The dilemma was discussed by the NPC leaders in Kaduna, where an initial sense of self-righteousness yielded to opportunism as they guessed that anyone who had once faked figures was unlikely to reduce them by much unilaterally on a recount. The apologetic mitigation was urged that the wild fluctuations within the east reflected the purely local desires alluded to above, to win more development in divisions remote from the Igbo heartland, rather than generally to boost the east and south over the north. At the time it received scant respect, even among those percipient enough to see that it was always the less populous areas which received more deliberate development in order to boost their electoral enthusiasm. Too many people in the south were unready to believe that the scattered north could outnumber the crowded remainder, but the hard evidence still had to be produced; others saw that the vital objective should be that their (undivided) region be ranked as the second largest.

The early NPC reaction, which Alhaji Sir Abubakar, tired and disillusioned, did nothing to resist, was to follow suit. The godly among them persuaded themselves that they would be trying, through the 'NA' system, to arrive at something like the true figures, much as a touring officer, district head, NT mallam and emir's representative would have bargained with a Fulani *hardo* over how many cows he had still hidden from their head count for the *jangali* (cattle tax). There was pressure to remove the northern census superintendent, a seconded administrative officer Mr Tony Lobban, reminiscent of the move against the overseers of the first northern Cameroons plebiscite, for 'letting the north down' - he had refused to tell his staff to 'go on counting for a few more days': the secretary to the premier, Bruce Greatbatch, held out against this, but concluded that for the future expatriates would no longer be apposite holders of any senior posts that had political overtones. He began the preparations to engineer a hand-over of his own post to a Nigerian. Ahmadu Coomassie refused, and Ahmed Talib demurred that there were already Borno men in abundance in high office. In the end the choice fell on Malam Ali Akilu, an outstandingly popular and competent officer of quiet disposition, who sought emotionally to avoid the honour of promotion to the premier's side.

The prime minister and other northern ministers agreed there must be verification, and decided on a straight head count in statistically random selected districts. It fell to the makama of Bida, Alhaji Aliyu, to speak secretly to supervisors and chosen pockets of enumerators on what to do in the north. Waziri Ibrahim won Dr Majekodunmi's and Dr Okpara's agreement, and arranged to return all the original enumeration records to their regions of origin. Then confidentiality was broken, and with it all public hope of the 'unity' for which Okpara himself was about to call at Nsukka, and which Abubakar had been seeking since 1957. Okpara went to Lagos and gave instant credibility to all of the rumours by declaring in public that the original count in the eastern region had been 12.4 million, and that from that figure he would not budge. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was finding Dr Okpara's boisterous personality, taking

frankness too often to the point of rudeness which he had never received from Azikiwe, Awolowo, or even Bode Thomas, hard to take any longer. The western emergency administrator, the prime minister's friend and senator Majekodunmi, was not inclined to deny his region's declared total either. Parliament met, and on 5 December Waziri Ibrahim announced the receipt of the federal census officer Mr Warren's July report. The census minister's 'haughty' style, as Mbadiwe and others saw it, did not help matters. He refused to quote what he called the 'false figures', but quoted selectively, including Warren's deduction that the figures from the north seemed to be 'entirely reliable', while some from the east were 'evidently inflated'.

Tempers between NPC and NCNC were inflamed, and although the federal coalition members held together and suggested a conciliatory NCNC parliamentary meeting, when the speaker refused a debate a large number of eastern backbenchers and the AG rump 'walked out', crying 'an insult to the east' and 'Warren must go'. Alhaji Sir Abubakar privately rebuked his minister for tactlessness, and on 10 December told the house, whose truants had come back after two days, that he would take the census under his personal control and review the position himself. At the time he treated it publicly as if what was at stake was a crisis in the British administrative tradition, arising from a minister's regrettable breach of official secrecy: *'What passes between a minister and one of his officials in the normal intercourse of ministerial duties must surely be deemed to be confidential. One wonders how many of us would really be happy, were some of the minutes or report written or made by us to our senior officials, or vice versa, to be exposed to public debate. I have made it a cardinal principle of my policy and practice never to allow anything derogatory to be said or done about any other government and people in the federation. It is my firm resolve to maintain this'*.

He still had the continuing private moral dilemma to face: he knew that the figures had been rigged, and would now continue to be – much reasoned compromise was consonant with integrity, but where did compromise shade into irregularity? He could use his authority, but resistance to the pressures from his coalition colleagues, from the NCNC generally, and from the reactive alarm of the other parties would threaten the federation. It was a weakness that only the cloistered would have the effrontery to attack, where the electorate itself remained indifferent. It did so remain.

In fact the verification went ahead, without Mr Warren playing any further part; a few months later he returned home, contract expired and his reconsidered professional views unsought. The northern officials and enumerators enlarged on the terms of reference which the makama had explained to them, in the light of what they now believed to have happened in the south. In the final tests of the final figures, 49 northern samples failed totally, 27 partially, and 99 passed; 15 eastern failed, 5 in part and 53 passed; 17 western failed, 10 in part, and 20 failed; 4 of the mid-west failed, 3 in part and 8 passed; and Lagos was unchallenged. The subsequently 'verified' northern figures came out under Waziri Ibrahim's oversight at 31 millions (there was never any question of the 'middle belt' not behaving like 'true northerners' in this context), the eastern were unchanged, as were the western of 10.07 and Lagos of 0.675 millions: in a single decade Nigerians had apparently increased (allowing for the departed southern Cameroons) from about 30.4 million to over 54 million.

Since this explained neither the blatant discrepancies which Warren had noted, nor why Warren had approved the original northern total, Abubakar

called in the surviving senior officials, and after investigation cancelled the whole extravagant proceedings in order to begin all over again, as will be seen. The eastern region took the federal government unsuccessfully to the supreme court. There were no records of how the questionable figures had been produced, and politicians and officials alike have never spoken frankly of this. How the original blatant discrepancies were produced is a matter for both sophisticated and crude speculation; nobody familiar with the traditional indigenous systems of administration in the north and west doubts how in a reaction any generalized hint to make doubly sure, and if in doubt to round figures up to allow for omissions, would once have been interpreted. Although the indigenous western 'NA' tradition was crumbling by now, in the east the party machines were supreme. In Lagos alone was cheating too easy to detect. Okpara having committed himself to his own first figures never forgave the NPC for their increase, and his was the only government never formally to accept the verified figures.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister delivered a *coup de grâce* to the Action Group's pretensions in this parliament: *'It is quite plain that at present, as far as we are concerned in this government, with the present state of the parties, we do not recognise anybody as leader of the opposition. The 'opposition party', which was originally the Action Group, has now 20 members, the new party, the United Progressive Party, has 25. . . . The UMBC does not know where it is - it is just a party in suspension - has nine members, and there are three members sitting on the fence. . . . The whole idea of an opposition, I think, is that the opposition should provide an alternative government. . . . A handful of twenty people here cannot provide an alternative government. . . . We would like very much to have an opposition - an effective one. Well, we hope we shall get one before long'*. And so with the withdrawal of recognition, which he insisted was a matter of convention, not constitutional law, there followed the withdrawal of the opposition leader's salary and perquisites. The Action Group, weakened by desertion and imprisonment, and soon to be reduced further in number to 13, could only find a spokesman to say sourly that Abubakar should 'come clean' and admit to the public that he intended to recognise Chief Ayo Rosiji, the federal UPP leader.

38 The strident overture to the republic

*Wai an ce da akwiya, 'Sarkin pawa ya mutu':
ta ce, 'Oho! ya mutu da wuƙar yanka ne?'*

Alhaji Sir Abubakar's new year's day broadcast to the nation on 1 January 1963 was less evangelical than his recent annual reviews. He looked back on the matters which have been examined in this part: *'I would like especially to praise the rôle of our army and police, particularly in the Congo under unfamiliar and difficult conditions. . . . We shall not keep them there longer than is necessary. . . . In . . . the prime ministers' conference . . . momentous matters were discussed . . . which led to the withdrawal of the republic of South Africa from the commonwealth. Then in May Africa tried an international experiment in Monrovia. . . . In Knoxville we learnt much from the Tennessee valley authority which has harnessed a river to turn a poverty-stricken area of the United States to one of the foremost developed areas. Last month at the invitation of President Sékou Touré I visited the republic of Guinea. . . . The president is determined that both men and women should participate in the government of their country, and that various associations, particularly in the cultural field, should be nurtured and fostered so that a new African individualism in art and culture may be revived, improved and demonstrated to the world as the African contribution to human progress'*.

The early days of 1963 witnessed Kennedy and Khrushchev jointly reassuring the secretary-general U Thant that the Cuban crisis was over; and in a move that was eventually to reshape Europe's future, de Gaulle and Adenauer signed a pact of military and political co-operation between France and Germany. This good news was immediately overcast in west Africa when Sylvanus Olympio, the 60-year old president of Togo was shot down on 13 January, while mounting the steps of the American embassy in Lomé to seek refuge. His immediate forebears had been returned migrants from Brazil, but he had older connections with the Ewe of the south and of Ghana. The Nigerian leaders knew that, barely a week before, Nkrumah had sent a severe warning to Olympio against encouraging Ghanaian dissidents who sheltered in Togo, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Jaja Wachuku had promptly sent their friend Sylvanus a message of support. Although 'military insurgents' of Togo's minute army, which had grievances against him, were directly responsible, and although apologists claimed that the firing was 'almost accidental', official Lagos remained convinced that the blame lay squarely with Accra. Little attention was paid to the resentment of ex-servicemen from the old French colonial forces, whom Olympio's necessary austerity in public expenditure had made it impossible to transfer to the national army, and who had found friends among the rebels. The Togolese insurgents, led by a Kabré serjeant from the north,

Grassingbé Eyadéma, realized that they must find a competent alternative authority and turned to Olympio's predecessor Nicolas Grunitzky, who had left for Côte d'Ivoire in 1962 to be a businessman, to form a government: he agreed to return, dissolved the assembly and asked for international recognition, which was given by Sénégal and Ghana alone. France continued to support him from the diplomatic background.

Abubakar and Wachuku, already deeply involved in the diplomacy laying the ground for the Addis Ababa congress, called a conference of foreign ministers to Lagos, saying meanwhile that a precipitate recognition of Grunitzky would be an unfriendly act. Although no official mourning was declared in Nigeria and no Nigerian representative attended Olympio's funeral, Wachuku spoke of 'encirclement' and added that Nigeria's 'security boundary' was officially extended through Dahomey and Togo to the Ghanaian border. Ghana's newspapers promptly called Wachuku a 'neo-colonialist agent', and Nkrumah refused to extradite Ikoku and Adebajo to face the treason trial. Once more Abubakar told a minister to be more circumspect in public statements with which he might in private agree: it was another sign that although a cabinet of self-confident, sometimes overweening, ministers still gave the prime minister unique moral respect, they did not now fear his discipline and power in the way that other African politicians thought twice, or cringed, before committing their masters. Characteristically, in his soft public rebuke, which had been given in response to reporters at Ikeja airport, he also emphasized that his foreign minister was a courageous man, very faithful in his duties and *'in fact, doing well'*. As *'father of all'*, the expression he had once used of the office of president, Abubakar said he took responsibility for all the actions of all his ministers, even when one carried out his duties *'erroneously'*; it was quite natural for people to *'go wrong at times, but all the same one must be a little guarded on delicate issues'*.

The assembled foreign ministers faced a dilemma. Sylvanus Olympio's style and firmness had attracted the admiration of many more than Abubakar and Mbadiwe (whose Africa House in New York, opened by Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt and Mary Macleod Bethune, had supported Olympio with lawyers and file registries in his anti-colonial days). He had been talked of as a successor to U Thant, but his pragmatism over conserving the links with France estranged radical thinkers; yet radicals were also afraid that to appear to sympathize with his assassins or his replacement might give heart to malcontents in their own countries, all of which harboured men, whether native-born or refugee, envious of their own present leaders' powers. The meeting ended without unanimity, but with a majority call for the murderers' punishment and an independent commission of inquiry to be sent to Togo. The ministers also called on the provisional government to restore the rule of law under the Togolese constitution and to release political prisoners; and asked for help in drafting a treaty of mutual defence and security for Addis Ababa, whereby any internal subversion engineered by an external state would result in the severing of diplomatic relations by all members of an 'inter-African Malagasy organization' (a Monrovia concept, not to be confused with UAM).

Abubakar, whose fond regard for Olympio was not understood by all his colleagues, was shocked and permanently discomposed. In a cynical new world where personal wealth, arrogant intolerance and arbitrary rule were beginning to supersede the kind of leadership that had originally been elected, it was becoming noticeable that when a good man fell from office, the people's wails were muted and brief, and the surviving statesmen's condolences shallow.

Personal sentiment aside, Abubakar still thought that Togo should have a presence at Addis Ababa, but Wachuku insisted that that must depend on prior recognition by the leading Monroviens. The soldiers supporting Grunitzky refused to accept either the foreign ministers' call or the fraternal inquiry into Olympio's death. Whether or not Togo would gravitate back to the Brazzaville grouping, there was a commentators' consensus that she would now be rejoining the class of new nations with inflated prices, and consequential high incomes for the minorities who held power.

General de Gaulle told the world on 14 January that Britain was 'not yet ready' to join his vision for the European community, and in almost the same breath rejected the possible use for France's defence of the American *Polaris* missile. Two weeks later Britain's EEC application was formally thwarted in Brussels by the general's veto. The commonwealth opponents of her entry did little to redirect any of their tentative thoughts of reinsurance, because a Britain which could not export more to Europe would probably also become a poorer importer of Commonwealth goods, and a poorer provider of aid or investment as well. Mr Macmillan made a token gesture by flying on Nigeria Airways to Rome for a meeting. Britain's Labour party was bereft by the death of its leader Mr Hugh Gaitskell, who was succeeded after a month by Mr Harold Wilson, defeating George Brown and James Callaghan in successive party polls: Alhaji Sir Abubakar, no lover of Labour policies, said that Britain had been '*robbed of a statesman whose leadership was a credit to his party*'. Elsewhere Aden colony acceded to the federation of south Arabia, comprising seventeen sultanates and emirates which remained for a time under British protection. Nyasaland was granted internal self-government under Dr Banda's chief ministership, and Whitehall accepted that the central African federation must be dissolved. Ba'ath socialists in Iraq backed a military overthrow and the 'execution' of their government.

Abubakar accepted an invitation to visit Dakar, and then escaped yet again at the end of February from files and telegrams to his farm and home town friendships. Thither he was pursued by Chief Festus and other southern ministers, in order to come to agreed terms on the census problem. The federation could not function unless all governments accepted all the figures, whatever they might be. Realities were faced by all, and it was decided to nullify the whole discredited census and its verification, with the prime minister retaining overall ministerial control but the premiers, Sardauna, Okpara and Akintola, taking personal regional responsibilities for a new £2 millions effort later in the year.

Back in Lagos, he presided at a meeting of the police council to discuss the estimates. Stanley Wey, Hodge the IGP, and the regional commissioners were in attendance, and as usual each premier brought his own secretary. After lunch a western minister suggested that the army might become too powerful. Abubakar's response was that so long as the police were properly cared for, the army would not worry him, since the police had much greater manpower. Chief Akintola commented on transport and suggested the provision of armoured cars. Others were surprised and the PM asked him why. Akintola explained that there was still danger for himself and his ministers because of party politicking. Slowly, quietly, Alhaji Sir Abubakar said, '*Mr premier, if ever I thought I would need an armoured car to go anywhere in Nigeria, I would resign. Next item, please*'. The wise, loyal and by now invaluable Wey took note. Louis Edet had finally been nominated, as deputy inspector-general, to be prospective

future successor to John Hodge; but four of the six commissioners, four of the six deputies, twelve of the seventeen assistant commissioners, half of the senior superintendents and seventeen of the forty superintendents of the force were still expatriates. Nevertheless the special branch, on which Abubakar had come to rely for fair and accurate security reporting, was increasingly influenced by Mr M D Yusufu.

A federal ('national') television service opened in Lagos at last, the three original regions having already found the prestige funds for their own stations. A coincidental turbulent dock strike against the Nigerian ports authority (in effect against the federal government, although both the 'moderate' and the Marxist-led 'independent' trades union congresses failed to extend it into a general strike) demanded a doubling of wages, at a time when estimated revenue income had fallen. This was an unfortunate background to an all-Africa conference called in Lagos in March 1963 of ministers charged with responsibility for labour matters. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, never a friend of public service indiscipline, confined himself to a generalized statement in support of the ILO. It was also an act of bland diplomacy, done on advice, that made him send a message asking that the intended public executions of five murderers (of a member of the Burundi royal family), who had been imprisoned for the crime before that country's independence, be cancelled on humanitarian grounds; he had nothing to say on the legality of double sentencing.

President Senghor of Sénégal made a pronouncement now of interest to both Abubakar and Zik. After his own prime minister's mounting of the coup that had misfired in December, he declared that, in Africa at least, a national executive shared between two men was an impossibility. He introduced an executive presidency on the French model of de Gaulle, and opened a period of growing liberality for democratic political parties. Nearby, a meeting of the UAM was held at Ouagadougou in Haute Volta, from which Togo remained excluded; and further afield, the Somali republic broke off diplomatic relations with Britain because the latter refused to allow the Kenyan northern frontier district (NFD) to secede; the British government was shaken by a scandal involving a minister and others in stories of spies, sex and opportunities for blackmail; Indonesia made its first overt military attack on Malaya; Egypt, Syria and Iraq made one more attempt to form a federal union in the United Arab Republic; party supporters of the late Sylvanus Olympio were arrested in Togo over an alleged plot; a prolonged strike began in British Guiana, leading to yet more rioting and terrorism; and Italy (followed by the Dutch who had always had doubts about the effectiveness or validity of 'association') refused to ratify the agreement drawn up between the European community six and the eighteen associate states - largely in reaction against de Gaulle's veto of Britain's entry.

The 1963 budget session of parliament was the opportunity for the prime minister to announce the appointment of an ambassador to the EEC, whose chief assignment would be to examine the best form of relationship with the common market for promotion of Nigerian trade. His other contributions to debates were more or less closely related to the growing international interest in Nigerian political corruption, which was feeding on indigenous detractors who spoke under parliamentary privilege:

'The census board which I am going to appoint is to be completely, and purely, composed of officials; and there is no question of politicians having any hand in it at all. . . . The very moment we [ministers or MPs] begin to think of ourselves as

permanent in our posts, then that is the end of democracy. . . . There are some of the ministers who have had their properties before they ever went into politics. Some honourable members have got properties, and they are men of substance. Now, if they happen to be ministers in a month or two, does that mean that we have to take their properties away from them? . . . If there [are] no amenities in ministers' constituencies, then there is no need to enact a law which will limit their term of office to ten years, which is two tours – they will just come back for one tour, and no more. I hope the committee [of supply, debating the cabinet office] understands very well what I am trying to get at?

The committee understood very well, and laughed, but a week later there was an AG motion of censure against Chief Festus, calling on him to resign for raising the import duty on shoes to 3s 6d a pair, to the presumed benefit of his own Omimi shoe factory in Sapele. Again Abubakar looked at the issue forthrightly, in a way that would not later be interpreted as he would have wished: *'I think we had better face realities. . . . He disclosed to me all his business interests, and I did not see why I should ask him to sever his connexions with all private interests. . . . I as prime minister cannot accept that whenever a man is appointed a minister, such a man has to sever his connexions with all private interests. I will not accept it'*. He was applauded, and the motion was lost. It was as clear a public indication as any yet made that an honest but practical man who, attuned by Macpherson, Robertson and Stallard, could appreciate 'Westminster' to the full, and try to make it work, nevertheless once returned and endowed with authority by his African continental peers could not enforce the Downing Street puritanism that had (in strictly relative terms) impoverished Lyttelton and Macleod; and once again that the government's survival depended on support from politicians who were more concerned to defeat the Action Group than to be puritanical. It is always instructive to consider the ultimate fate of those later Nigerian leaders who fought corruption head on.

The prime minister's other intervention in the session was strictly negative. Senator Majekodunmi had returned from being administrator of the west. His lack of partisan support and constituency experience as non-party minister of health, coupled with his success as 'district officer i/c western region', had blinded some of his advisers to the need to win vocal support among parliamentarians for a Lagos health service bill which would provide 'free' health centre treatment at the point of need for all the townfolk, whose contributions would be matched both by government and by salaried employees. Doctors' age-old rights of clinical independence and freedom to practise their skills were alleged to be at stake. Federal medical officers, who would man the scheme, knew of the plan and of the intention to deny them their limited private practice rights; but private doctors, who feared having either to enlist in the service or to lose the income from their private patients, were not consulted. The bill itself, as usual, came as a surprise to the interested literate public, which knew nothing until it was gazetted. Opposition was built up, first among other professions who disliked 'socialist' public services, then in the town council which foresaw bureaucratic competition with its own municipal approach to environmental health, and ultimately among provincial politicians jealous of more expenditure on a pampered capital.

The NCNC, susceptible to all these pressure groups, was led by Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya in opposing the bill in parliament, and the prime minister and cabinet sat back and watched their friend and colleague

ring. Ogunsanya sat for Ikorodu, which being in the western region was excluded from the federal capital territory and any benefit from it. Finally Majekodunmi had to accept adjournment for fuller consultation and publicity. There were meetings with the deeply respected 67-year old respected leader of the profession, Sir Kofoworola Adekunle Abayomi, Nigerian medical association; Abayomi had been a Great War Warfarmer in the Cameroons campaign before graduating at Edinburgh, had married Dr J C Vaughn as president of the Nigerian youth movement in the 1930s, and had qualified as an ophthalmological specialist during the world war. Promises were made to pay compensation for loss of private income and to suspend certain contributions for three years. These offers were being made, and since no political effort was made by any party leader to whip them through, by the middle of the year the bill was abandoned, largely on Ribadu's advice that the damage was already done.

On the cabinet decision to withdraw it, Dr Majekodunmi informed Alhaji Sir Abubakar that he would resign, and when told that the resignation would be published, he said he would write it all up in the press. Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu called on him as he left to go home, and Majekodunmi called in on Ribadu at his cabinet office, to be told that if he went, the PM would go too; it was not that the cabinet had lost its belief in the bill, but the backbenchers, especially the opposition members, resented more money being spent on Lagos, and now the opposition members had been heavily lobbied and was also against it. The doctor went to see Sir Kofu Abayomi again, who warned him of the risk of being regarded as a bad loser. Another, wholly routine, medical measure involving the mechanics of registration was almost lost in the wake of the row, merely because Sir Abubakar made it plain that if he had thought it vital to the country he would have ensured the passage of his friend's legislation. It was however a unique defeat for a government proposal, and the loss resulted from the wreck: part of the wider scheme had been a new health centre for Lagos's eleven wards, for which an anticipatory capital budget had been voted. The ministry of works went ahead regardless, with the lavatories being built to state-of-the-art American all-electrical designs in which Majekodunmi cancelled the remainder, and a local design without lavatories or high technology was substituted, some examples of which had been partially completed. Abubakar refrained from personal involvement in the legislation to reduce total ministry management of nurses and pharmacists, and of pharmacy, was passed during the months that followed, and the old colonial service was dismantled.

While affairs in the northern region took on a decisively new appearance, the Kano people's party (KPP) was formed, involving many people who had been associated with the deposed emir. This body was eventually to coalesce with the U, UMBC and some mushroom bodies including the northern youth movement (which had broken away from within the NPC), the Zamfara People's party, the Nigeria tin mines workers' union and the northern workers' union of labour, to present a common opposition front. However it was starved of oxygen at birth when in June the KPP's whole executive was dissolved by an alkali's court for abusing the Sardauna. With the defeat of Kano behind him, the Sardauna faced no further threat either

from natural rulers or from organized party politicians. The premier took Sir Kashim Ibrahim with him for what was the governor's first holy pilgrimage to Mecca, paying their respects to King Sa'ud and President Nasser on the journey. It was from this time that Sir Ahmadu Bello, the sardauna of Sokoto, was seen to have responded to an ever more urgent mission as the leader of the north, to preach and encourage conversion to Islam among the Christians and animists, a task for which part of the public service found it increasingly convenient to pave the way. It was not seen by those of other faiths as helping the prime minister in his efforts for national unity, although he welcomed voluntary conversions; and it redoubled southerners' fears of supposed Islamic confederations; but it did mean that the Kaduna administration often found less energy or occasion to intervene in federal business.

By this time Alhaji Ahmed Kari, the PM's principal private secretary, had been seconded from the northern public service for six years, and the Sardauna wanted him to return to become secretary of the northern regional marketing board. '*He's not up to it*', said Alhaji Sir Abubakar, to whom the garkuwa of Bauchi seemed by now irreplaceable; 'It was you who recommended him for a senior service appointment', riposted the premier, and Abubakar had to admit he was being selfish. His brother-in-law, young Mukhtar's 'Uncle Ahmed', left the household at last. Despite his relationship, he had been kept as a civil servant scrupulously out of politics, introducing visiting politicians into the presence, but withdrawing if it were party business. Sunday Uaboi was promoted PPS in his place, and the new private secretary was now Malam Adamu Yusuf. Nobody has ever known what Abubakar really thought in his innermost heart of his succession of secretaries of all races, ranks and titles. Doubtless this accounts for their uniform loyalty and declared devotion.

President Sékou Touré paid a visit to Lagos before the OAU conference anticipated in Chapter 33, which seemed to some commentators to make the announcement of the arrangement for a republic timely. Abubakar and he, who still shared a certain religious affinity, talked at length with their officials, and issued a communiqué confirming that Nigeria and Guinée had entered into a trade agreement, underpinning direct airline and postal routes and cultural and educational exchanges. After the stereotyped call for the final liquidation of imperialist and colonialist practices in all forms on the continent, they added that they had touched on the recent events that had disturbed political life in Africa, but saw the need yet again to reaffirm their belief in the necessity for strict non-interference by African countries in the internal affairs of the others. Despite Nigeria's own needs, a loan of £3 million was promised to Guinea.

After Addis Ababa, and the opening of the first aluminium rolling mill in west Africa at Port Harcourt, Alhaji Sir Abubakar summoned a 'round table' conference of political leaders from the inchoate mid-west region. He also opened the country's first law school in Lagos, to reduce the necessity for sending so many students to the inns of court in London and the crammers in Guildford and elsewhere in England. '*As Nigerian society becomes more complicated*', he said, '*its laws will become different from those of other nations*'. Then he gave himself another seven weeks' break at home. When travelling by train, he would plan for a brief halt at Kaduna junction, or a lengthy one, depending on whether or not the Sardauna were in town and available for discussion; this time there was the census, the republic, the division of the western region, and attitudes to the Action Group's opponents, upon which to exchange their current thoughts. There were stories abroad, as hinted at the

end of chapter 34's forward look, that Akintola's UPP and Yoruba members of NCNC were planning a new party, to be called simply Yoruba Parap which however proved still-born (although Dr Majekodunmi, Sir Adetokun Ademola and Chief H O Davies followed with a new cultural body, Egl Omọ Yoruba, suspected by some as a deliberate distancing of the less partisan Yoruba leaders from the imprisoned Awolowo); but that the federal ministers of communications Chief Olu Akinfosile, an NCNC Yoruba, was himself sympathetic with the AG in its troubles and doubtful about the NPC coalition. Two concurrent external opinions on economic development, of very different ideological sources, might have had their attention. Dr Nkrumah confessed the traditional custom of land tenure made collateral against loans impossible to secure, and so frustrated productive investment. The international economists with socialist sympathies and scholarly rigour, Colin Clark, cast doubt on the FAO's new 'freedom from hunger' campaign by suggesting that it had been planned first, with the facts to support it left to be sought afterwards. He claimed that less than 15% of the world was hungry, mostly in India and China - where the causes were not agricultural but political, 'caste and communism'.

In June Yakubu Gowon and Emeka Ojukwu were promoted lieutenant-colonel, as adjutant-general and quartermaster-general respectively. Ojukwu thought that 'AG' sounded better than 'QMG', and that responsibility for administering such things as postings and promotions might be preferable to logistics and *matériel*. However Gowon gave no encouragement to the hint that they might suggest an exchange to Ribadu and Welby-Everard before the gazette notification became public.

The summer rolled by, while the 'Kennedy round' began of negotiations under the GATT to reduce tariffs; west Irian was occupied by Indonesia; Grunitzky was elected as leader of a one-party state in Togo, still unrecognized either by Wachuku (on Abubakar's instructions) or by Sékou Touré; talks on Kashmir broke down between India and Pakistan; Jomo Kenyatta was sworn in on 1 June as prime minister of Kenya after KANU had won the last colonial general election; Sukarno declared himself president of Indonesia for life; Pope John XXIII died; Buddhists began to practise self-immolation as political demonstrations in south Vietnam; the first negro students were escorted to attend classes in the university of Alabama. However Togo's government was finally acknowledged by Nigeria and Guinée on 13 June, and Abubakar sent a belated personal note to Grunitzky. China and Russia had inconclusive talks on their ideological differences; a London conference agreed on independence for Malta, not later than 31 May 1964; agreement was reached on internal self-government for British Guiana, also in 1964; a conference in June and July at Victoria Falls at last engineered the dismantling of the central African federation; Britain, USA and USSR initialled a nuclear test-ban treaty; eighteen African nations finally signed the convention of association with the EEC at Yaoundé, and established reciprocal trade preferences; the UAM admitted Togo, which was now formally able to sign the OAU charter, and France sought a rapprochement with Grunitzky; in the republic of Congo Brazzaville, President Abbé Fulbert Youlou resigned his powers to the army after de Gaulle refused to support him further with French troops; Ngo Dinh Diem declared martial law in south Vietnam; and a negro freedom march on Washington attracted world attention. National pride was warmed by invitations to Dr Majekodunmi to be chairman of the annual assembly of the world health organization, and to his federal minister colleague J M Johnson to preside over the international labour organization in Geneva.

By the time Abubakar had returned to Lagos to prepare for the short August meeting of parliament, he had cut two days out of his holiday to take the chair of a national economic council at Kaduna; the university at Nsukka had awarded Nigeria's first 150 degrees that were not dependent on external accreditation; another £1 million textile factory had opened in Kaduna; a tin smelter had been commissioned in Jos; he had happily presided over the opening of the Bauchi-Gombe sector of the railway extension; and he had visited his old Bauchi NA colleague Yakubu Lame as provincial commissioner Niger, where he boldly identified the provincial secretary, a one-time northern graduate in archaeology at the Ife diggings, Liman Ciroma, as a Bolewa from Fika in Borno by his facial markings. At Aminu Kano's request he arranged for an American friend Dr Feinstein (eventually 'Malam's' biographer) to be guest of the government in the official leader of the opposition's Lagos quarters, the regular occupant being in custody. His press secretary agreed to an inquisitive reporter that not only had Abubakar adhered to the voluntary cut in his official salary of £5,000, he had not drawn any travelling or other allowance beyond the civil service basic motor car allowance since 1957: he even took his own rations with him on tour or when journeying home.

Apart from ratifying the OAU charter, his main business before the house of representatives was to move the second reading of the mid-west region (transitional provisions) bill, which would allow the federation to install an interim official administration for six months, pending the election of a fourth regional government. The man chosen was Chief Dennis Osadebay, who would have an advisory council; the Lagos high court would administer justice until new courts were set up (one seat on the mid-west bench was to go to Chief Arthur Prest, one of the first central ministers), and local customary courts would remain active. The laws would be those of the west until amended, and a cash grant from the federation would cover costs until the undivided west's assets and liabilities had been determined and redistributed. Another expense incidentally announced was that the new federal census board would spend £2½ million, a million more than the aborted 1962 census, using a mixed team from all four regions to check each others' figures: a census was still essential to any governments that apportioned benefits. The governments met in September and decided to have a blitz head-count under regional auspices between 5 and 8 November, with each region sending inspectors to observe and check on what was done in all the others. The scientific tests bequeathed by Mr Warren and the professional demographers would be wielded on the figures submitted to Lagos.

Foreign relations were briefly noticed again as excitement grew over the approaching republican celebrations. Alhaji Sir Abubakar boarded the US naval tracking ship *Kings Port* in Lagos harbour, and as part of a worldwide half-hour inaugural programme of the telecommunications satellite 'Syncom Two' spoke to Mr John F Kennedy in the White House: the president hoped that he would visit America again, and the prime minister said he intended to do so, soon. He had just been disappointed by the Russians: he had accepted Khrushchev's invitation to visit Moscow in August, but was now told that they were 'very busy at this time', and the visit would have to be delayed a little. The Ghanaian foreign minister Kojo Botsio came to rebuild bridges after OAU, and said of Abubakar, 'He really knows what is going on in Africa, and the world as a whole - and also has the courage to face it'; Botsio even spoke of reverting to a common west African Commonwealth currency, shared transport lines and exchange visits. News from elsewhere was more mixed. Verwoerd amazed the

Commonwealth by offering the three high commission territories admission as self-governing bantustans within the republic (Mr Wachuku had been toying with a new proposal, for a southern African federation of black and white states, with equal racial representation in a central senate, of which Abubakar took no formal view). Kennedy brought under federal control the Alabama national guard that governor Wallace had mobilized to enforce segregation. Prime minister Ahmed ben Bella was elected president of Algeria. Malaya, Singapore, Sabah (British North Borneo) and Sarawak formed the federation of Malaysia, and Indonesian demonstrators attacked the British embassy in Jakarta; next day, 7 September, the new Malaysia broke off relations with Indonesia. The president of the Dominican republic was deposed by a military junta. A special committee of UNO called for the prohibition of arms and petroleum traffic with the republic of South Africa. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, as recorded in Chapter 32, visited the democratic republic of Congo (Léopoldville) where, when asked about the recognition of the post-Youlou provisional government in Congo Brazzaville, he said, *'Let them settle down first!'* As calmly he said of the British use of a veto in a revived security council dispute over Southern Rhodesia, *'The resolution was on rumoured intention - how could anybody file a resolution on a mere rumour? The British veto was mere politics.'*

The one black cloud that might be thought to offer real threats hung visibly in the labour sky. The two main limbs of the trades unions, separated by international ideologies, remained formally apart. The would-be marxists, it will be remembered, had united under the umbrella title of the Nigeria Trade Union Congress, although now the ULC had helped to set up a joint action committee (JAC). However in a sentimental gesture Abubakar's government unwittingly opened a window of opportunity for organized discontent. All employers in Nigeria who were not tied to the rule-books of a large organization had throughout the century been inured to paying an advance of wages to trusty workers who had some particular domestic celebration to anticipate or unforeseen catastrophe to overcome: many of the best employment relationships had paradoxically always been cemented by debt, and pay days were generally adjusted to precede, rather than follow, Christmas or 'big *salla*'. A decision to give all employees their month's wages or salary in advance, so that they might mark republic day with more effective private enjoyment as well as public gaiety, made it possible for the workers to afford a general strike. The JAC of all the major unions had come together while workers' minds were full of the dock strike, in unanimity on the need for a major general increase in wages to meet the rising cost of an urban lifestyle, which (as it appeared to them) politicians and senior civil servants could find other ways of their own to maintain. There was an undertone of protest against official extravagance, ministerial self-indulgence and corruption, however much tinged with simple envy. The federal cabinet, which still conducted its executive business soberly enough on the basis of the memoranda on the agenda, and not of party or regional lobbies, refused to contemplate any rise, but the minister Chief Johnson did agree to talk to the union leaders.

When the appointed time came he had chosen instead to join the customary welcoming party to go out to Ikeja to greet the prime minister on his return from the Congo and the Bauchi farm. The colonial custom of all available ministers attending the formal departures and arrivals of a governor travelling on state business, modelled on earlier British court ceremonial, had shifted downwards to cabinet levels, though some premiers were more tolerant of excuses for absence than others, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar discouraged those

who should have had better things to do. It may be that Johnson did so because he now treated Abubakar as a close personal friend, but he thus also had the opportunity to brief him at once on the situation. Unfortunately, it also gave the union leaders the opportunity to take studied offence and refuse a substitute appointment. The dilemma meant that the JAC saw no alternative to calling a general strike, which brought the routine of government offices and the statutory corporations to a virtual halt, but had little effect on the private sector. Abubakar took action and on the promise of a thorough commission of inquiry into minimum wages throughout the federation under the chief justice of the Lagos high court, Mr Adeyinka Morgan, the strike was called off after three days, on the evening of 30 September.

It had been, in a way, a fresh example of Alhaji Sir Abubakar's style of leadership: Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu had not the temperament to cajole a motley group of opposing interests into reconciliation, and did not always signal clearly on which side he would come down when his moment for decisive action arrived; while the prime minister, his stamina permitting, would tend to say, *'All right, gentlemen, it's not the end of the world, we will see'*, and despite his clear vision of what was just, he would find a way towards the compromise implicit in any federal system. To the broader criticism from those blessed with hindsight, that neither Alhaji Sir Abubakar nor the colonial service attempted to prepare organized labour for an integrated and constructive class rôle in a modern democracy, it would still have been legitimate for him to reply that he could not understand their language; in a country still heavily dominated even now by villagers dependent upon an agricultural peasant economy, the thought that a faceless body of unionized wage-earning townfolk had a key place in the national structure remained bizarre – they were individuals, to whom fair treatment under providence and the law was patently due, but not the right to bend law or fair employers to their will.

Republic day was therefore to dawn, three years after independence, with an undoubted head of state in Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, known overseas as a person by all who concerned themselves with Africa, and accepted internally as a symbol of unity: the head of government, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was now held in high respect worldwide wherever international relations were of significance, and won intense loyalty from countless individuals, but only a puzzled admiration from most diffuse sections of Nigerian society. With the snapping of the last silken imperial strand, each at last looked like a Nigerian in radical eyes. Both leaders now knew that public life and government was a string ball of knots, no tangle ever quite unravelled before the next bundle had to be tackled. They knew that, for example, the rise in institutional unemployment was the result of the inflationary drift to the towns, made worse by population growth (regardless of false counting), by the destabilization of traditional society through its enthusiastic dilution by education, by the growing disparity of rural and urban wealth, and by most new investment being capital-intensive. They saw no substance in the fear that the Sardauna might carry off the greater part of the country into some Islamic commonwealth, but they also knew that some other less obvious knots were worse than Gordian: much of the development plan was proving impossible to finance; the country's communications, especially during the rains, remained a costly morass of unreliability; there was a reversion to armed banditry, not confined to the west or to Tiv country, and a systematized undermining of established and civilizing authority in parts of daily life; politicians were held in low esteem, but their

seats were not challenged by newcomers or better men, and superficial public attitudes to the corruption that was becoming more overt were seldom backed by the kind of selfless public spirit that Abubakar still exhibited as the lonely chairman. Behind the smiles and joyful noise that Africa exhibits even when times are tough, the alienated were easily distinguished, because they were not peculiar to Nigeria: apart from the age-old dissidents always to be found in the ranks of bursaried students, they were to be found among unpromoted civil servants, disillusioned professional practitioners, junior university lecturers, minority races, wage-earning townfolk, and school-leavers for whom the only summons would be for their cheap unskilled labour. Another difficulty was that so few of the executive politicians were as used to straightforward administration as Abubakar had always been: they waited for their ministry staff to suggest policy in draft submissions, which they might choose to accept or reject, sometimes at their merest whim.

These weaknesses were braced by a few contrary indicators. Fiscal discipline and joint partnerships with foreign investors had by now transformed Ikeja, Port Harcourt and Kaduna: although built for internal consumption, there were manufacturing and assembly plants that may have been ordered but had not been there three years before, producing more textiles, furniture, stationery, tyres, soft drinks (to excess), paint, asbestos, aluminium, stout ('porter'), sheet metal, bitumen, glassware, candles, sweetmeats, rubber, flour, simple pharmaceuticals, sugar, radios, air-conditioners and motors from imported parts; and there was the promise of the iron and steel rolling-mill, and a BP oil refinery to save the patriotic shame of Nigerian output being processed at Tema in Ghana. The slow start to the development plan was a probable advantage, so long as the casualties were only to be the grandiose schemes. Intellectual youth, while rejecting practical politics, was beginning to think in terms of theoretical ideology, which was at least cross-tribal even when destructive. The adverse balance of trade was beginning to fall, despite a lesser but still substantial drop in total foreign trade, which was the combined result of Festus's tariffs, local production, and export price fluctuations. Britain still took well over 40% of the exports and supplied somewhat under 40% of imports; the next trading partners were now, in order of magnitude, Japan, USA and west Germany. Cocoa still headed the list of exports in value and tonnage, closely followed by groundnuts; palm products, though falling, came third and were now at last closely followed by crude petroleum oil; timber was fifth, and Nigeria still sold 95% of the world's columbite.

The economists now calculated this wealth, added to the customary elements of subsistence and exchange, as creating a national income of £1,185 million, or £29.12s a head on pre-census estimates; if the population truly exceeded 40 million, then the related increased estimates of production of food, crafts and rural constructions would increase the national income, but would make the individual's average share poorer. Still only one million people were in formal waged employment (only 66 thousand of them working in factories that employed more than ten pairs of hands), but they created 8% of the gross domestic product. 600 thousand of these worked in establishments that employed over ten persons, of whom 342 thousand were employees of governments (90 thousands of those being in public corporations). The larger the population, the smaller the proportion that all these workers represented, and the less significant the concept of a 'working class'.

The aforementioned disaffected, as in smaller countries, spoke darkly among themselves of the virtues that would come out of a one-party system, and

ignored the consequences under it of having a British-style electoral structure in which the winner had the power to take all, without the conscientious restraint of the political pendulum swinging at future polls. Yet they had so recently seen implicit one-party systems send elected ministers to jail in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinée, Mali and Niger, and succumb to military coups in Dahomey and Togo. Others went to jail in Liberia, which had no recognizable elections (after an assassination plot before the 1963 presidential 'campaign', the commander of the Liberian national guard had been one of five arrested), and Mamadou Dia had staged a coup himself in Sénégal. Monocultural societies with underdeveloped economies might well not need the luxury of rival parties and choice of legislative policies, but probably did not need the complications of politics and constitutions either. Plural societies like Nigeria seemed inevitably to produce regional parties, which meant that a British tick-tock pendulum was an impossibility. The British had been temperamentally unable to solve tribalism by introducing totalitarianism, and the large question mark remained at the foot of the last page they had edited. The coalition, at 30 September 1963, worked under Abubakar's benign and honest brokership by dint of seeking the highest common factors of NPC and NCNC attitudes to federal subjects, which made a boring style inevitable. It did nothing to weaken tribalism. The intellectuals hated that word, but everybody else used it every day. It was not that the south disliked, still less hated, the north, but it undoubtedly feared it. So long as the advantages of education outweighed those of sheer numbers, well and good, but once a greater number of northerners had had the same western education, the discomfort of having to compete for superiority would be perpetual.

Looking at the country as a whole, tribalism was certainly triumphant. Already three of the five universities were ostentatiously regional. The police force, for all its federal pride, was organized more regionally than Willink's 1958 minorities commission had envisaged. Although only three expatriate federal permanent secretaries remained to witness Republic Day, there was still tribal anger at the imbalance in senior government posts: the majority of the post-holders at last called themselves 'Nigerians', but those who complained that only 5% of the senior home civil and foreign service appointments came from the north continued to label them with ethnic descriptions. There was renewed controversy over 'qualifications' versus 'experience': two of the 'northern' permanent secretaries, Sule Kolo and Abdul Aziz Atta, the latter a 43-year old Balliol man, were good honours graduates, but Isa Koto, Musa Daggash and Abdurrahman Mora (returned from consular duty as pilgrims officer in Saudi Arabia to the ministry of Lagos affairs), although professionally qualified otherwise, were not. Muhammadu Ribadu went to the prime minister and half-seriously expostulated: 'You and I must pack up and go back to the north! We are not qualified to stay and work in Lagos. You are academically the same as Alhaji Mora and Alhaji Koto!' In fact Alhaji Sir Abubakar had strongly recommended Alhaji Abdurrahman's permanent transfer from the northern service; he told the Kaduna PSC chairman, Alhaji Abubakar Imam, that he wanted to see what he considered an honourable man without local involvements at the head of a fraught ministry which was bedevilled with land polemics. When a subsequent inquiry into Lagos troubles reported, the choice was vindicated. It was seldom remembered that on independence more of the newly posted northern permanent secretaries had had some paper qualification than of the sitting southerners who had come up through the Lagos ranks.

In the military service there were counter-complaints that the entry standards

for army commissions were now being deliberately manipulated, just as the preference remained for recruitment of other ranks from what were still thought to be more 'martial' sources (although these were more rarely to be found voluntarily in the major emirates). It was a fact that Muhammadu Ribadu, bluntly but without being high-handed, was openly pressing for more educated northerners to seek entry into the officer cadre, of which the quotas were being re-examined to allow for the fourth region, and for truly literate northerners to join the ranks. The AAG Jack Gowon was sent on a largely fruitless recruiting mission to encourage transfer into the army of good northern civil servants. The Sardauna was also advising his friends among the aristocracy and the mallams to take their sons' ambitions away from the ministries and institutions of learning and into the military. His deputy secretary John Smith, an honorary member of the brigade mess, regularly pressed briefing notes upon northern ministers to make them aware of the dangers lurking in the thoughts of the commissioned ranks.

To balance these pressures, the prime minister insisted, as he had to Chief Remi Fani-Kayode when the westerner complained that reverse discrimination was less effective in the army than in ministry staffing, that, *'if you have the men, bring them! We have places in the army for all qualified young Nigerians: we do not discriminate, it is not our policy'*; young Yorubas were in fact coming in to dilute the many Igbo subalterns and captains. And yet the unspoken message now being received by the NPC Kaduna hierarchy was that their contract with the NCNC was at an end. There the perceived image was of an eastern party that finally knew it would never govern Nigeria through the ballot, and appeared to be filling the officer corps instead, and to be contemplating the removal of Akintola by violence. How this perceived 'conspiracy' was managed was not demonstrated.

Nigeria entered upon the first republic, then, with much the same nominal political leadership that it had enjoyed since the elections to the institutions with which the second part of this story began. As the institutions developed and grew, those leaders had been joined by some businessmen and professional people, and some of the elderly had passed on; but a new generation had yet to blossom. There were new local party opinion-formers in the lower ranks of teachers, clerks, traders and local government or NA officials, but they seemed content to remain in the shadow of the long-established figures. The 1963 house of representatives was far larger, but it was no more homogeneous, than the legislative council of 1947. It still bore no psychological resemblance to the house of commons whose practice it followed. While coldly impartial critics of Britain's evident addiction to creating federations as a solution to the difficulties of decolonization (rather than the Mountbatten or Belgian 'cold turkey' models) regarded Nigeria's political system as trembling in the balance, they admitted that were Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, worn out as he frequently seemed to be, not there to preside in the federal cabinet, it was an open question whether it could survive; Ribadu was tough and Mbadiwe a natural survivor, Inuwa Wada took power for granted and Wachuku was never shy of making clever suggestions, but none deliberately shook off his origins. Such cold observers also saw the republican issue as a cosmetic nicety, a distraction from fundamentals. In Nigeria it was seen as a warming and stimulating new tonic, suggesting that there would always be something progressive and improved in the offing to celebrate, even if not forever in regular three year cycles. The army, no longer royal and its infantry no

more the Queen's own, also marked the occasion by donning its entirely new ceremonial uniforms, temperate and more militaristic in style, and with only a lingering hint of the British traditions that had blended boyish swagger with conscious self-mockery. That out-dated spirit might have conquered Italians and Japanese and impressed the Congolese, but it was objectionable to young newcomers whose serious ambition crushed any redeeming sense of humour in the face of human frailty.



PART SIX

The Lonely Leader of a Short-Lived Republic

1963–1966

An ci sadaka an hana maye: ya ce 'A sake'



Nigeria's effervescent activists had demanded self-government and freedom from Britain: Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had been the country's shepherd as it grazed, peacefully and happily, on to both pastures – three or four years later than a few bell-wethers had been crying for, no doubt, but such a delay was already seen to have been a mere blip on the screen of history.

They had demanded instant demonstrations of Nigeria's effective presence in the outside world – and Alhaji Sir Abubakar had involved them in the UN's attempts to restore some stability to the democratic republic of Congo, and had been credited with the republic of South Africa's leaving the commonwealth.

They had demanded that Nigeria give a lead to pan-Africanism – and the OAU had been created with unanimity, in the form for which Abubakar had pressed.

They had demanded that a reality be made out of the unity in diversity which Nigeria professed while Nigerians insisted on ever more balkanization – and he had shown willingness to strike down regional forces that threatened the federation.

They had demanded a republic – and Abubakar had enabled it. Somehow all this was still not enough, and when credit for giving the country what it was said to have wanted was apportioned, somehow that credit was quickly assumed by the party to which the individual man actually responsible belonged.

This final part cannot pretend to explain to posterity's satisfaction why what a British governor called 'the most far reaching *experiment* [this author's italics] in parliamentary democracy ever to be undertaken in tropical Africa collapsed in ruins'; but much of the evidence for a juror to examine in search of probability and absence of reasonable doubt is here, and largely to be found in the organic disunity of the western region, as much as in the sheer numbers of the north and its leadership which frightened the south. Abubakar himself is believed, by those closest to him in blood and sympathy, to have foretold during this period that all would end violently; to have admitted that despite all his hard work Nigeria's progress had produced much ingratitude, myopia and political shallowness, which hindered the power-wielders' emergence out of simple greed into maturity; but to have conceded that pessimism was repressed by his faith that he had helped to lay the foundations which might survive to carry the coming strains – the country's material communications, power supplies and resources of energy. Like Lugard, he had tried to lay his bricks straight. Unfortunately his grasp of international political practicality was not matched by an informed personal control of the financing of an overweening economic development plan.

For every practical purpose the old-style expatriate advisers on policy had

vanished from the scene in this period, and the old-established commercial firms had localized much of their key management and board memberships. The influence was also growing of international organizations and new overseas enterprises which employed unaccustomed practices. New buildings and improved infrastructures were visible everywhere, some of them impressive. This should have led to healthy and creative innovation. Britain's original pride in Nigeria's independence had already been shaken however by the western regional upheaval and the Awolowo treason trial; while in all other continents, regardless of national ideologies, governments were adjusting their perceptions of Africa, as one by one *coups d'état*, and one-party systems deemed by their own triumphant leaders to be more suited to African races, took the place of liberal democracies on the western European model. Alhaji Sir Abubakar's own character was imagined by some of his more sentimental admirers to have encouraged Whitehall to expect too much of his counterparts and to become too confident of the general wisdom of Britain's African policy; but in truth he was regarded in London as unique. It was not his fault that the British press and parliament had already ceased to speak of his country as a 'showpiece' of decolonization or a 'paragon' of the third world. Nigeria was now seen as just another very large country with typically large problems, populated by ordinary human beings with typical imperfections; but still neither a coup nor a single party were foreseen as a likely desperate solution to them. At least Abubakar never wished any of his countrymen to be seen as other than a human being.

The institutions through which a federal prime minister had to work had to be understood. A yearning to achieve total federal power through public politicking motivated most leaders of the regionally-based and ethnically-inspired parties. None of the premiers saw the federation as a shared inspiration – rather it was a device to be manipulated for their own region's selfish purposes. This tended to dilute their proper concentration on matters of purely regional public concern. That meant in turn that the regional permanent officials continued, as they had been trained, to make their submissions, to offer draft cabinet memoranda, but to be surprised if they ever received a ministerial minute embodying a new policy directive or demanding specific civil service action (except on cases involving known individuals or amenity needs). Hints in office discussion, or sheaves of press cuttings from reported political statements by their masters, were not clearcut policy directives. This was largely true even in the north, where the premier had specific hopes not shared by his peers elsewhere; and in the west, where Awolowo's direct demands upon first 'Spud' Murphy and then Simeon Adebó, his senior civil servants, had ended when he became leader of the federal opposition in Lagos. The federal service had much the same experience; in consequence the error took root in the minds of soldiers and academics that permanent secretaries might run the country without ministers, without conceding that this was a leap back to pre-1951 machinery. The error lay in their failure to notice that civil servants operating a British model could run the country on their own, only so long as they too did not conflict with the social customs that any freely elected ministers would have observed instinctively; and that the origins of every major economic achievement in these years lay in decisions taken before 1960 – the oil wells and refinery, the road network, the Onitsha and the second Lagos bridges, the improved power supplies, and the localization of all services. There was no original domestic thinking in the 1960s. Even the steel industry had been discussed before then, although it was not to be till 1966 that a visiting soviet



Jaja Wachuku, Abubakar and Dr Azikiwe.
Abubakar and Dr Michael Okpara.

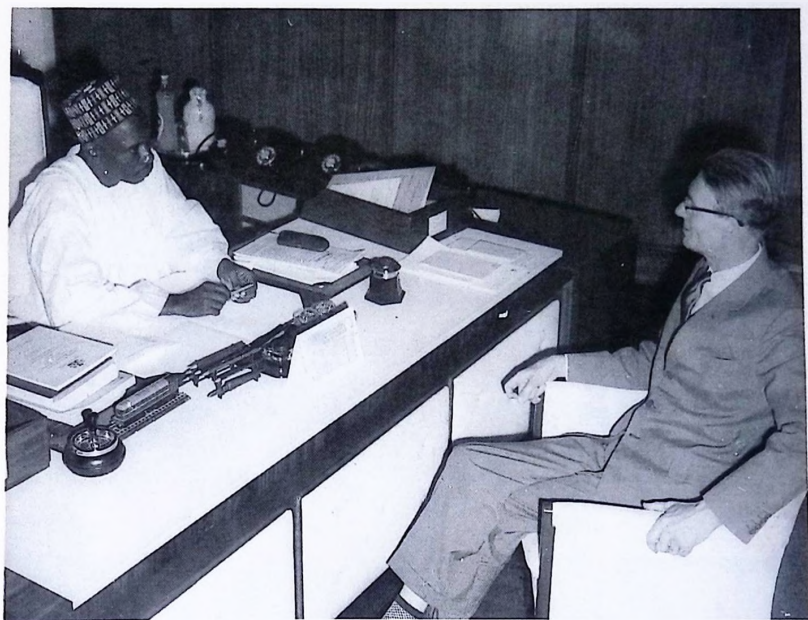




Abubakar, Sekou Toure and Azikiwe, after receiving Guinea National Honours.

Dr Hastings Banda (Malawi) is welcomed by Abubakar.





Abubakar and British High Commissioner Cumming-Bruce.
Cumming-Bruce, Harold Wilson and Abubakar.





Senghor (Senegal) and Abubakar at OAU.



Abubakar signing OAU Charter.

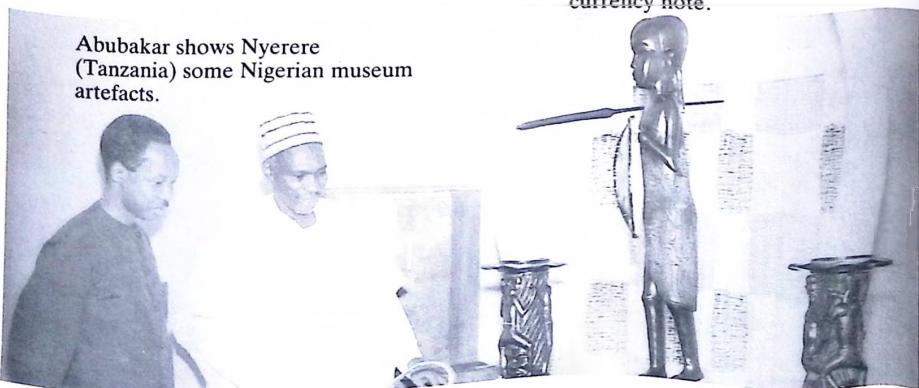


Abubakar with Olympio (Togo).



Effigy of Abubakar on modern currency note.

Abubakar shows Nyerere (Tanzania) some Nigerian museum artefacts.





Eisenhower and Abubakar at the White House.

Abubakar addresses the United Nations: and meets Khrushchev.





Greeting Mobutu (right) and being embraced by Adoula.



Abubakar in the Congo inspecting Nigerian troops.



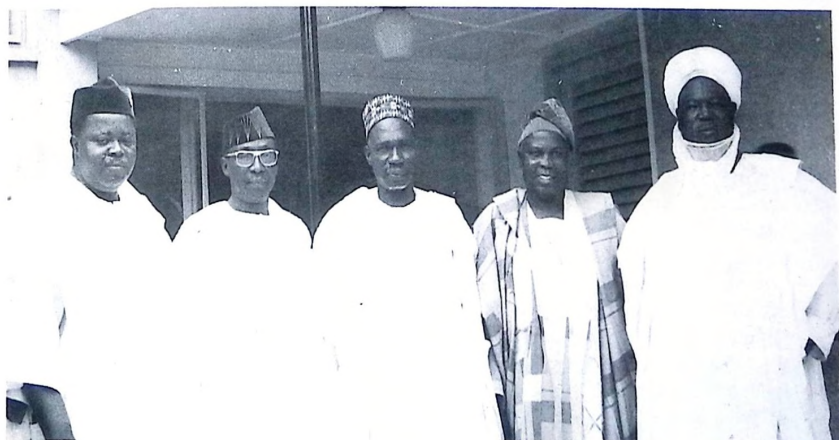


Cabinet Ministers: Raymond Njoku, Abubakar the Prime Minister, Inuwa Wada, Festus Okotie-Eboh, and Aja Nwachukwu.



Abubakar and Jawara (The Gambia).

Premiers Okpara, Osadebay, PM Abubakar, Akintola and Sardauna.





Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Azikiwe and Abubakar.



Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

Chief Samuel Akintola, Zanna Bukar Dipcharima and Alhaji Sir Abubakar.



mission looked for a part to play and told every region that it would secure the plums.

This was a country where an excess of political education had centred on immediate material gains which would give advantages to individuals, groups and areas over their rivals, on traffic in jobs, scholarships and local amenities, but not on national economic strategy. The prime minister's actual powers to deal with such a country were those of Westminster – the rights to command a majority in the house (many of which majority would dutifully look to their regional party leader before supporting their national prime minister); to choose his ministers (but with due attention to the susceptibilities of all of his coalition's party leaders outside); and to give patronage (always a two-edged weapon in the hands of a man determined to seem fair at the expense of personal advantage). A bully might make the most of these powers, but even a bully would meet trouble. A most distinguished West Indian political scientist drew an oblique comparison at this time: elsewhere in west Africa the power, prestige and money that adhered to state leaders were all incredible, he said, where *soi-disants* democrats demanded to be treated like Egyptian Pharaohs – 'almost any charming rogue can get himself written up in political journals of the western world, and Africa's best friends say nothing for fear of offending'. Abubakar had neither the power nor the desire to be such a leader, and was excluded from the comparison. When he seemed indecisive, it was because he knew he was the only person on his side of the argument.

His sense of duty, and reluctance to instigate fundamental change for fear of uncovering something worse, kept him going through the mounting demoralization. His personal relationship with colleagues in the southern political parties could still often be one of the warmest friendship; but the studied absence of personal backing from their party machines could not but exaggerate the false perception of so many journalists that, in spite of complaint from mediocre supporters in the NPC that he gave the south too many favours, he was indeed only the Sardauna's lieutenant. Unwittingly no doubt, these insular and internally divided parties, working within a federal constitution that presumed in favour of regional rights, robbed the federal leader of the power to maintain unity by his example of moral strength alone. More wittingly, the leaders of the minority organized labour movement in Lagos and the largest towns, who understood the appeal of alien socialist doctrine, encouraged the destruction of national confidence in individual politician rulers, but so opened the gates to thirteen undemocratic years of military rule by another professional minority.

The strain of unending reconciliation took Abubakar's energies away from imaginary new lines of economic and institutional development, just as chauvinist politics hampered the four premiers' own chances. Furthermore the emasculation of the Action Group, although the inevitable result of its own leaders' deliberate gamble and monumental folly, had only shown the unity between the NPC and the NCNC at the centre also to be false. The party labels changed, and realignments were inescapable: these were only to highlight the headlines and underline the keywords in Nigeria's ballooning press, and prove that the power game alone was in play.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa seems to have been the one character on the stage who looked to God for the gift of power, and for His guidance on how to use it for the good of mortal men. Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the sardauna, now looked for more power, in order to use it in the service of God. The majority of Nigerians, who while essentially religious by nature themselves,

did not recognize the two northerners' motivations, naturally could not detect this subtle difference between the two. This is not to disparage the sectarian or inherited cultural beliefs of other rival leaders; but it does suggest a major lack of understanding on the part of secularized people, whose behaviour and prejudices in turn gave other, even more secularized, individuals an excuse for taking the far-reaching experiment to its ruinous collapse.

One of the ministers serving Abubakar during the last years still says that the troubles came 'because we are not a nation, and cannot be'. Another has described Nigeria as a begging bowl, holding doles of *gero*, *masara* and *shinkafa* [millet, maize and rice]: these seeds will never mix into good cooked *tuwo* [porridge] for men, but the birds will feed on it. Abubakar himself said, '*We are brothers indeed, but not all of the same age; we can't always eat from the same dish . . . It is difficult to convince my southern brethren about many of the aspects of life in the north*'. One of his civil servants commented that the people were always vociferous about their rulers' corruption, but were less happy to see them actually punished, least of all when they were their own kinsmen or benefactors. Abubakar could not have conceived of asking his honest civil servants, with support from the armed forces, to remove power from the corrupt and to exercise it under his own benevolent dictatorship. He knew that power and patronage went together, making a basis for political party funds.

It is hardly surprising that in the last years we find Abubakar giving more superficial attention to foreign ventures which held out opportunities of success, rather than to intractable domestic issues. To the end, especially where his influence was still strong, he did what he believed would be pronounced right at the day of judgement. Yet even while accepting him as a true republican Nigerian in international affairs, too many of his people still suspected that Nkrumah's way was stronger and would in the end prevail; and as the western region (whose people had the conviction shared by home-keeping Scotsmen that alone in all the world they possessed the dominant virtues) became more disorderly internally and more disruptive externally, and as the eastern region became more intransigent because of its superiority in educational attainments, the domestic challenge that grew out of the north's sheer size was too great. In plural African societies no institution within which because A wins all, B must lose all, and where 'democracy' is believed to be a licence for populist majorities to monopolize the rewards of power, can survive for ever.

An American pessimist capped the west Indian professor by saying that Africa plainly demonstrated man's seeming impotence to plan and administer wisely. Everyone, not least the UN, seemed to have his finger in the broth, but nowhere did the cooks not spoil it. So many pre-packaged nations were bubbling indeterminately, or boiling violently over, while additives were devised in the hope that they might be more palatable to the tribal tastes of bewildered people than either the sophistications of European democracy or the unknown stock of revolutionary communism. Yet the lesson for the moment in the 1960s appeared to be that as Africans surrendered their trust to one-party governments and physically strong leaders, their next solution to the inevitable continuation of disappointment was simply to rid themselves violently of that leadership in turn.

Because it was a giant, Nigeria's version of this scenario was, naturally, unique. Throughout this final part despair was growing as the charabanc accelerated downhill.

39 An avoidable cancer: Census revision redoubles the threat to democracy

*Banza girman mahaukaci,
karamin mai lafiya ya fi shi*

President Azikiwe was sworn in as head of the federal republican state on 1 October 1963, the day on which (to the lasting regret of Chief Enahoro and some other westerners, but not Akintola) the right of appeal to the judicial committee of the privy council was abolished. The national honours committee had devised two new orders, the Order of the Federal Republic and the Order of the Niger, and it was a matter of discreet controversy, not hidden from the press, whether the president and the prime minister should acquire new titles befitting their dignity. In the event the first two citizens to be recognized were the chief justice and the attorney-general, who became CFR. With great reluctance from doctrinaire republicans, all Nigerians knighted by the British crown were permitted to retain their titles of 'Sir', but for the future no Nigerian would be allowed to accept knighthood. Leading barristers ceased to be Queen's Counsel (QCs) eight months later, after a struggle, but became Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs). Zik and Abubakar received no new decoration in fact, although Sénégal had honoured Alhaji Sir Abubakar with the grand cross of its national order, Liberia with the Most Venerable order of Companions of Liberia, and the republic of Niger with its highest state award. A renewed oath of office was administered to the prime minister on 10 October.

Soon afterwards Alhaji Sir Abubakar again gave public vent to his view of fair impartiality being won by cutting the political cake among a 'national government'. This became a practical impossibility if it were also to be kept efficiently compact, once the new mid-west region had an additional claim. Apart from himself, Abubakar's own party was content to enjoy its majority and to hold what it regarded as the most important portfolios for the north. Abubakar had no mind to hand dominant powers to any minority in the south, but he once more let his readiness be known to offer a few posts around, if that would inhibit the continuing factiousness. The Action Group sulkily rejected the thought out of hand, and parts of the NCNC would have none of it either. His own charity was shown in his response to an interventionist letter from the romantic left-wing British politician Fenner Brockway in Britain: *'Since 1954 I have been doing everything in my power to defend my political opponents, in the interests of unity. As regards the recent [AG] convictions, I would be only too glad to give the question of conciliation serious consideration – if only there was a change of heart. I will keep an open mind on the question; and you may rest assured that I will continue, as before, to be tolerant towards them. I deeply appreciate this letter, coming from a friend of Nigeria like yourself.'*

The western premier Akintola denounced a story that 60 of the 94 legislators

in his house of assembly held government office: 'The people demand it', he said, while pointing out that the number of ministers and parliamentary secretaries was not so great, and came in part from the house of chiefs. Furthermore, 'while the 'socialists' talk about economic progress, some of us have been actually achieving it'. Nevertheless he now found himself ordered by the federal supreme court to pay Adegbenro's costs in their famous lawsuit, what time one of the prime minister's own parliamentary secretaries, Abubakar Isandu, was calling for the outright banning of the AG. Politics in the mid-west were no less unsettled, demonstrating that partitions and devolutions merely magnify the remaining differences. D C Osadebay of the NCNC was appointed administrator in August for the first six months, pending the first regional elections, and was succeeded as president of the senate by Dr A A Nwafor Orizu. Now he faced a mid-west democratic front (MDF) set up to oppose his own party. The MDF embraced the local UPP (to whom virtually all the mid-west AG had defected) and the mid-west people's congress (MPC, which the Sardauna had authorized Apostle John Edokpolor to form as an NPC associate as long before as September 1962, and which had since been struggling to recruit from among the godly and righteous within the Action Group).

Although Osadebay made Apostle John a commissioner in his interim administration, the MDF managed to defeat Osadebay's NCNC protégé at a federal by-election in Urhobo west, where a federal minister personally led their campaign against the administrator's. An interesting echo was heard when the Niger Delta Congress, another NPC associate (which had been authorized since 1959), demanded at a contemporary meeting in Kano that as soon as the BP-Shell Petroleum Refining Co Ltd had been in effect 'nationalized' as the Nigerian Petroleum Refining Co Ltd, by having six of its directors appointed by the federal government, the local people in whose area the oil was extracted should provide two directors, additional if need be. This request was passed down to the prime minister, and noted in the ministry files. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was more concerned with a delegation that was demanding a separate rivers state, while in the background Okpara was lending his voice to those supporters of new states who included Calabar in their lists; like Awolowo, his hope was that his own party would rule two regions outright.

The re-run of the census count was, not surprisingly, heralded by a revival of all the familiar inter-regional jealousies and suspicions in those newspapers and public meetings which placed politics above friendly citizenship. The prime minister had taken overall responsibility, but the premiers were still responsible for what happened in their regions. Since the enumeration was intended to be of visible heads only, both the prime minister and the northern premier made appeals through the press and broadcast notices that all families who kept women in purdah should co-operate to the full with the census officials. Abubakar said over the radio, *'I do not need to go over the story of the failure, . . . the controversy . . . and the reason which led to my ordering the cancellation It is an unfortunate and costly experience, but it has however taught us useful lessons. . . . There is one other reason. . . . The life of the present federal parliament ends in 1964, and it is my intention to have a general election as soon as possible. . . . The census will be used in compiling a new electoral register. . . . It is essential that the inspectors [from other regions] should be well and properly treated. . . . I appeal to you to make them happy and at home wherever they may be'*.

The east sent some female inspectors to the north, in hope of overcoming

purdah problems. But stories were spread of lorry-loads of imposters being run from the Niger republic into the northern region; Akintola claimed that the west had been grossly undercounted before by expatriate officials who had applied 'certain European principles [which he did not specify] which might not be acceptable in Nigeria'; and Okafor, the parliamentary secretary in the ministry of justice, threatened that all the three regions of the south would secede if the census should collapse as the result of any 'intrigue' in the north. Nobody appeared to take notice of the news that an up-to-date census in unitary Sierra Leone showed a rise of only 8½-9% over the 1952 figures. The poll-count went ahead between 5 and 8 November, and the results took time to collate. Each single dishonest addition sowed a cell of malignancy, programmed to attack the body politic.

Public attention was momentarily distracted on all sides by Wachuku's determined independence of mind. He had yet to be forgiven by some northerners for his apparent support for Israel. When Golda Meir had come to deliver some lectures, the wives of certain Arab ambassadors wrote to protest, but after informing the prime minister (during one of his rests in Bauchi) that he intended to take the chair at Randle Hall in Lagos himself, he had written to say that he accepted *démarches* from ambassadors, not their wives (Abubakar's query, '*Taja, why do you worry?*', had received the response, 'But they are ladies! The age of chivalry is not over!' and he had, as he used to say so often, laughed in his beard). This time Wachuku was attacked on all sides, not least by his own party, for saying that he saw no useful purpose being served by the expulsion of South Africa from UNO, and that he did not absolutely condemn the concept behind the country's 'bantustans'. Matters were made worse when it was noticed that the external affairs department had done nothing to prevent a second secretary from the Portuguese embassy attending its farewell party for Lord Head, who was about to depart, later to become high commissioner to Malaysia: relations with Portugal's ambassador had been broken off. Wachuku was not sent to an OAU foreign ministers' conference in Addis Ababa, Nuhu Bamalli going in his place to avoid recrimination.

In the middle of November Alhaji Sir Abubakar spent two days at Ibadan, where in the course of being installed as the first chancellor of the now autonomous university, and receiving an honorary doctorate of laws, he had some significant things to say in Trenchard Hall. His words of wisdom anticipated later misconceptions in other lands' places of learning: '*On a day like this fifteen years ago this university was founded in modest surroundings. I am deeply appreciative of the fact that this university, which was established to serve the higher educational needs of all Nigeria, became from the very first one of the focal points in Nigerian unity. I would like to pay tribute to universities of the USA, and in particular to the great American humanitarian foundations – Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie – which since independence have given much in men and material to aid the development of Ibadan*'. He also spoke of the need for co-operation between all the Nigerian universities if a general institution was to develop, and did not forget to thank the university of London for its stout support and tender ministrations at the start. The private thoughts followed.

'The economic distance between the advanced and the non-developed countries is widening. Worse still, we are told that this widening springs mainly from the intensified development of education, science and technology in advanced countries; and that even if we run three times as fast as we do to-day, we might still not be able even to maintain the distance, still less reduce it. . . . Sometimes I cannot help

wishing that we had entered the world at a time when we did not have to deal with so many problems at the same time. We therefore need the kind of education which will enable us to produce men and women who know how to think – and knowing how, do it. University students should not expect to have knowledge poured into them; and must not be lacking in ability and the will to study for themselves. The universities' unique function is to stimulate the clash in thinking between orthodox and dissentient views. But I must observe that in Nigeria to-day there is a common belief of parents, students and critics that universities are solely places for professional training'.

At the formal opening of the campus mosque, Abubakar said that Islam was a religion of tolerance, and should harbour no discrimination: *'Only the good spiritual disposition of the congregation of the mosque, and not its architectural beauty, is acceptable to God'*. He immediately went to Zaria for the similar festivities, which however lasted five full days, attendant on the installation of Sir Ahmadu Bello as first chancellor of the university named after himself, of which Sir Kashim Ibrahim was chairman of council. There too the prime minister was awarded an honorary doctorate, his fifth. At the same time Dr Azikiwe, on his 59th birthday, was laying the foundation stone of a new eastern regional legislative building, and saying that political institutions might be called democratic if the majority party could absorb criticism – purposeless criticism based only in bitterness was a drawback, as it merely embarrassed the leaders and complicated forward planning. Next day Zik unveiled the statue of himself which Onitsha district council had commissioned from Mr Ben Enwonwu. Unfortunately the president then made a short tour of the north, and reacted to local Igbo claims of victimization by criticizing the standards he found three emirs went on a verbal counter-offensive, and the general recriminations embarrassed the leaders gravely. Zik's next act as a reluctant figurehead, who would not confine himself to ceremonial and multi-partisan words drafted by his official advisers, was to comment on the world-tormenting assassination of President John F Kennedy of the USA: in his message to the new president, Lyndon B Johnson, he stepped beyond protocol on such occasions to say *'New African states must ponder seriously before deciding whether to trust a government elected by the American electorate, because it is now crystal clear that certain influential sections of the American public neither respect human dignity nor regard the black race as human beings who deserve to be treated with respect, decency and equality'*. The prime minister, who had his own views on the timeliness of apposite criticism and advice between nations, sent his more personal condolences to Johnson, and a message of grief to the widow Mrs Jacqueline Kennedy.

A civilised hint was dropped that there were other things worth contemplating in public life than party politics when *West Africa* published a scholarly 'profile' of a Nigerian nightclub musician. Sadly, the party politics continued to confuse everyone who was concerned with happiness and peaceful progress. The sole political simplification was in the north: NEPU, which was demoralized and disorganized, and UMBC, which was financially beggared, came together at Jos in December to merge as a northern opposition united party under Malam Aminu Kano as president and J S Tarka as general secretary; and they were joined within weeks by the Zamfara Commoners' party from south Sokoto, the Borno People's party, and the Kano Peoples' party (still sworn to restore Sanusi or a son as emir), to form a 'Northern Progressive Front' with faith in winning

major electoral victories in 1964. Their individual party titles and labels were not abandoned.

Southern party developments baffled succinct, indeed any, analysis. NCNC's Osadebay and AG's Adegbenro had met at the end of November, and the mid-west administrator had declared that the time had come for these, the two most progressive parties, to join in a struggle against the conservatives of the north. The NCNC leaders in the west and mid-west spoke as if they must ally with both the AG and the UPP, without knowing how to entice the latter back from their affinity with the MDF. The mid-west UPP rejected the concept, while the MDF leadership said slyly that the NCNC only negotiated with the AG when it was in dire straits, but had always dropped the AG again whenever it suited, as it had done in order to join with the NPC in December 1959 or with UPP in the 1962 western emergency. The NCNC's central working committee did not follow their colleagues' concept through; Okotie-Eboh spoke disparagingly of marriages of convenience; Fani-Kayode (the western party leader and deputy premier) and Akinfosile (western working committee chairman and federal minister) regretted that the party had been embarrassed; and Benson (first vice-president and federal minister) objected colourfully that the party's formal bodies were left in ignorance – with her reputed bonds with NEPU in the north, UPP in the west, NPC at the centre, and now AG in the mid-west, how could a woman with four husbands be respected? Benson and Fani-Kayode were seen to be moving towards Akintola's version of pan-Yorubaism.

The prime minister at least knew that the most the AG could expect was an acknowledgment from NCNC that it would help AG to win the mid-west, partly by splitting the opposition votes; whereas Okotie-Eboh (and Omo-Osagie of Benin) would never formalize a union with their old foemen, and were too familiar with the advantages of the NPC partnership. The NPC could afford to be complacent so long as all the southerners who feared or resented them seemed to be thrashing in a quicksand of dissension: Okpara accused the *Pilot's* editor of being hostile to him ever since he assumed Zik's party mantle; trades unionists and minority politicians such as the Socialist Workers and Farmers party (SWAFP) turned their guns on well-heeled office-holders generally; and a federal parliamentary secretary, D C Ugwu, made loud allegations of high level corruption throughout the federal government. Alhaji Sir Abubakar summoned Ugwu and insisted that he give him detailed chapter and verse, if he could, and no more was heard – but the public damage was done. Southern sectarianism and the popular belief in general political depravity did not solve the rulers' conundrum: those with the voting power were seen as (and perceived themselves to be) different from all the others – so how could they all be simply Nigerians?

During the republic's first three months, overseas events continued to multiply, over and above the transcending shock of the shooting of Kennedy. On 20 October, unrest still being widespread in the Congo, President Kasavubu declared a state of emergency. Nigeria signed formal trade agreements with Israel and UAR (Egypt), the first of which the northern premier said parliament should not ratify (which was no constitutional concern of his, or indeed of parliament's). Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sent to the second of two meetings at Niamey, at which the nine countries bordering on the Niger river, under the OAU's umbrella, agreed on replacements for the local provisions of the Berlin general instrument of 1885, the Brussels general instrument of 1890, and the St Germain-en-Laye convention of 1919 concerning riverine navigation and

co-operation, all the treaties which Abubakar had made it his business to master in 1955; sovereignty and legal clarity were achieved, but Alhaji Shehu found the conduct of the conference itself a disaster. The UN trusteeship committee bade Britain not to transfer the federal armed forces to Southern Rhodesia on dissolution of the central African federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and the security council voted a partial embargo on arms sales to South Africa, where the intelligence and security forces had gravely disrupted the ANC's military wing, *umkhonto we sizwe*; King Frederick Mutesa, the kabaka with whom Macleod and Cohen had never learnt to cope, became first president of Uganda; and the UN general assembly finally condemned South African oppression by 105 votes to one. The army seized power in Dahomey, in the wake of interference by politicians in the process of a poisoning trial, but then tried to make use of alternative leading politicians for the country's administration, including the deposed president Maga. This was the third west African overthrow in ten months, and underlined the dangers of malcontent minorities seeing themselves as deprived of benefit whenever rulers tended to move towards formal or *de facto* one-party government. Shortly afterwards many thousands of Dahomeyans living in Niger were summarily ordered home, upon which Dahomey closed its frontier and threatened to prevent land transportation of freight between Niger and other territories. In an attempt to mediate, Alhaji Sir Abubakar met delegations from both countries, but relations still deteriorated and the proposed rail links between Dahomey and Niger were indefinitely postponed.

Mr Macmillan suddenly resigned on his sickbed in Britain, and was succeeded after a week by the Earl of Home, who proceeded to renounce his title, win a by-election caused by a loyally arranged resignation, and (being a Knight of the Thistle) became Sir Alec Douglas-Home MP; the other likely contenders, Butler, Hailsham (who also renounced his title) and Maudling, accepted office under Douglas-Home, but two highly individualistic intellectuals who lacked the party's unalloyed trust, Iain Macleod and Enoch Powell, would not; Alhaji Sir Abubakar sent warm congratulations to Home, the man who had introduced him and Nigeria to the UN. Nigeria gave *de facto* recognition to Holden Roberto's Angolan government-in-exile; Ghana's ruler renewed its five-year-old preventive detention act, and also suggested that Abubakar would be visiting him soon; Iraq experienced a counter-revolution; Milton Obote chose to spend part of his honeymoon broadening his experience in Nigeria; the promised Tanganyikan legislation to enforce a one-party state was introduced, amid growing aversion in Uganda, as also in newly independent Kenya and Zanzibar, to earlier sporadic support for developing the east African common services organization into a new federation; Cameroun had its application to the Hague court, to set aside the UK's plebiscite in Sardauna province and the UN's subsequent decision to unite it with Nigeria, set aside; Nigeria's first ambassador arrived in Moscow, even as African students were rioting in Red Square over a fellow Ghanaian's death; two accused were sentenced to death in Ghana's second treason conspiracy trial, arising out of the bombings and the attack in 1962 on Nkrumah, but three politicians were found not guilty - these were immediately detained, and next day Nkrumah revoked the CJ Sir Arku Korsah's appointment. At the very end of the year, and of an 'African session' which the OAU had lobbied in search of greater influence, the UN security council was enlarged from 11 to 15, to harbour three specifically African seats. Greeks and Turks clashed in Cyprus, but a neutral zone was quickly agreed; and Kenya's first independent actions were to declare a state of emergency in the

disputed Somali areas of its north-eastern region (where Somalia still claimed the old northern frontier district) and to conclude a mutual defence pact with Ethiopia, which also had dissident Somali areas.

The dissolution on the last day of 1963 of the central African federation, and the consequent withdrawal of its diplomatic representative in Lagos (alluded to in chapter 36), offers an opportunity to spell out the joint minority view still held at this time by the prime minister and his external affairs minister on Southern Rhodesia. Abubakar's modest regard for Welensky has been mentioned more than once; a federal prime minister himself, with a knowledge of US history on secession, he could not but see the logic of Welensky's assertion that Britain had 'pulled the props from under [him] nearly five years ago', and had broken faith by agreeing to Nyasaland's secession and the dissolution without first obtaining the federal and all three territorial governments' approval; although he had no objection to a voluntary division of assets, in this Abubakar shared the view of Chandos in his retirement, puzzled that the eminent lawyers of the Monckton commission could possibly suppose that a federation might be strengthened by allowing a constituent unilaterally to secede (Chandos had believed that through pressing progressive liberalism upon Winston Field and the white southern Rhodesians, Welensky's federation would become a barrier to the spread of Afrikaner *broederbond* philosophies north of the Limpopo, and an emollient to the blind hatreds that opposed them).

For the moment Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Dr Jaja Wachuku looked on the future of Southern Rhodesia more broadly than did most African politicians. Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, as protectorates, had few immigrant settler whites of political significance; Southern Rhodesia as a true colony had many, who had come with the intent for themselves and their families of permanent citizenship – not only an appreciable number from South Africa where they had been acculturated to belonging to a prime minority that wielded the power, but also sundry others who had good reason to believe that the pre-war and post-war British governments, which had encouraged them to go out and invest their all, would support them. Whatever the moral issues and dilemmas, which were vexed, realism insisted that the human problem of the colony which had existed unchallenged and internally self-governing for forty years was patently different from that of the wholly African territories newly enjoying responsible government. Few African politicians could concede this, still less the further reality that there were still many ethnic differences, and potential for many new partisan rivalries, within every purely African population; but Abubakar and Wachuku felt impelled to admit that, however stubborn or myopic, these colonists who had contributed to their chosen land must have their fears allayed or, while multi-racialism remained a dream, have their material and subjective losses properly compensated – but compensated by the British taxpayer as the sovereign power. If the solution was not to be found by naked force, still the moral responsibility lay with the mother country alone. The prime minister was angry with those who thought it conservative or weak to struggle to avoid bloodshed; without abandoning his own forthrightness in face of violent domestic challenges, he would remind them that people who did want to shed blood did not expect to shed their own.

In a similar vein he told three Algerians visiting him at his home that at their present stage of development African countries could not afford to be in serious conflict with each other: *'We in Africa have a lot to do to improve the lot of our people and work for unity; having struggled for eight years, it is now time for Algerians to settle down to their country's reconstruction'*. Looking at the

border dispute between them and Morocco, he said, '*There is no reason why both countries should resort to warfare, because they are brothers*'.

If the most important domestic event at the end of 1963 was the striking of oil by the Gulf oil exploration unit off-shore in the bight, Alhaji Sir Abubakar's private life was marked by a second venture into real property. The need to have a *piéd à terre* in Kaduna, avoiding all further obligations to friends, the emir, political colleagues or official hospitality, had led him to decide on building a bungalow in the northern capital. Another bank loan had been mooted, but by this time Kaduna contractors were more expensive than they had been in Bauchi, and the new loan was larger than the first one which he had paid off; the bank's officials were reluctant, until the prime minister's secretary went to scold them without telling his master, and the building went ahead, close by the Zaria road to the north.

A more charged matter was revealed when he rang the inspector-general, Hodge, on his much used direct line; after salutations and a chuckle, '*IG! I am breaking the law*'. 'Good heavens, sir, that sounds serious, what have you done?' '*I have got two unlicensed firearms*'. That sounds bad, especially in view of your new directive about firearms - would you like to send them down to me?' Half an hour later the PM's two orderlies staggered into police headquarters with a large packing case; Hodge went down the three storeys to have it opened conveniently on the ground floor. It held two modern machine guns. He climbed back to his office and returned the call: 'Sir, you are in trouble, wherever did you get these?' Abubakar laughed loudly: '*My friends in the United Arab republic gave them to me. They thought I might like to have them handy. Please deal with them*'. Hodge passed them on to the army.

General Welby-Everard's problem was more loaded still. Unlike Hodge, he had no direct telephone link, since his first duty was to the ministry of defence. His own relationships with minister and the top civil servant seemed to be good, but expatriate military staff officers found the permanent secretary unfriendly, suspicious and obstructive; the permsec being an able Oxford graduate was widely regarded as the star northern administrator (as a junior officer posted to the eastern region, he had been Zik's private secretary), but some of the British soldiers decided that he was racially embittered because of the deposition by a lieutenant-governor so many years before of his father, the *atta* of Igbirra. He had not been assigned to his home region lest he ever see the files on that case. Welby-Everard discussed the problems of senior military morale with Hodge, who took a chance to drop a hint in the prime minister's ear. Alhaji Sir Abubakar sent for the general, saying, '*GOC, I understand you are a bit worried*'. A tactful exchange was encouraged to grow into a frank explanation of how hard some of the staff were finding it to work with a civilian who was difficult, rude and apparently anti-British; they were unaware of having given any conscious cause, unless it be by displaying the outward cultural differences of any disciplined and uniformed service, which a thoughtful mandarin in mufti might have been expected to appreciate. The prime minister expressed diplomatic surprise, and pointed out that he too had to face problems of personality with ministers and important officials of different upbringing. Little more was said, but after some weeks, with Muhammadu Ribadu's agreement, Atta was transferred to the communications ministry, and his successor Sule D Kolo neither met nor created any further difficulties of working relationship with alien staff officers. Later some thought it significant that all senior army officers had been very conscious of Abdulaziz Atta as a personality, as well as

of his first minister – but that once that minister was replaced, nobody became very conscious of the new minister.

Although an effective air force did not yet exist, training of pilots and airmen had begun under the wing of west German instructors, the leader of whom enjoyed the best of rapport with the GOC but lacked any operational or administrative influence. This gave the general the opening, with the minister's and permanent secretary's encouragement, to set up Nigeria's first inter-service committee, and in effect broadened his own rôle into that of a chief of defence staff. Two essentially political problems coloured the committee's deliberations; one was that it was not service training alone that was shared even-handedly among friendly nations, but equipment also. Israel and Italy supplied arms, as well as Germany (not to mention the PM's Egyptian machine guns), yet the basic armament and electrical and mechanical engineering support remained of British origin, so that maintenance and quartermastering became frustratingly complex and the hardware unreliable. Welby-Everard led pressure for standardization, regardless of the source, but Muhammadu Ribadu appeared to be unpersuaded and Abubakar could no longer spare time for military technicalities. The other problem continued to be ethnic: prime minister and minister of defence were at one in wishing to see the natural feelings within the officer corps suppressed in favour of 'Nigerian-ness', but nobody could forget that the Igbos predominated, that they were clever, and that more of them were therefore available and fit for promotion to higher levels.

Early in 1964 the federal chief justice, Sir Adetokunboh Ademola, spoke out publicly once more for his brethren on the bench, calling the abolition of appeals to the privy council premature, and the abolition of the judicial service commission deplorable: 'The day that judges have to take instructions from politicians, or to acquaint them with their decisions beforehand, it will be time for us to pack up and go. We feel that our present politicians *[after all, Abubakar may have facilitated the abolitions, but he had approved of judicial freedom in the western court cases]* will use their wisdom carefully when going to appoint judges; but *[and here he saw what radical reformers in democracies forget]* what of those ten years hence? We on this side have taught that power corrupts (and absolute power corrupts absolutely). We cannot therefore but feel that in the years ahead the appointment of judges by politicians may lead to what we call a packed bench'.

This warning came against a background of renewed overseas disturbances. There was a violent anti-American breaking of diplomatic relations in Panama, and communal bloodshed in India. Dr Nkrumah in his new year's eve broadcast had undertaken to take his one-party state yet further: after a referendum (in which he was to win a classic '99%' affirmative vote), opposition would become treasonable, the CPP colours would appear on the national flag, and powers would be taken to dismiss any judge (not only the CJ, the power so recently used) and to nullify acquittals. A subsequent third attempt on Nkrumah's life, by a former police constable, had brought the running total of Ghanaian bomb casualties to over thirty admitted dead, and three hundred badly injured; the Ghanaian police commissioner was dismissed, the new chief justice and Dr Danquah were detained (although the CJ was soon freed), and anti-American riots followed.

On the east coast a rebellion took place in Zanzibar under John Okello, a Ugandan trained in Cuba, against the modest resistance of a small police

force, resulting in the deposition of the sultan (who took refuge in Britain and successful declaration of a people's republic; then when many Tanganyika police were sent over to keep order in the island, the Tanganyika Rifles at home mutinied, ostensibly for better pay and localization of their officers, but in direct challenge to Nyerere's authority. They were promptly imitated by troops in, first Uganda, and then Kenya. President Nyerere made initial concessions and was faced with a fresh mutiny. The nearest Commonwealth troops to answer Obote's and Kenyatta's requests for help were limited British forces still serving at a Kenyan base due to be closed after a year of independence. Nyerere also found to his lasting chagrin that he had to seek help. Once the British had quelled the risings, Nyerere disbanded his whole army, Obote disbanded two companies and Kenyatta punished some individual mutineers. Britain was loath to keep any army troops in east Africa, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar acceded to confidential requests that once order was restored the Nigerian army should spend time in Tanganyika, standing in for the absent indigenous army and training its replacement. Other Nigerian ministers thought that Nyerere, for all his mutual regard for Abubakar, was swallowing his pride; they detected jealousy of Nigeria's dominance in the new Africa. There were obvious future implications in all this for the OAU. Despite the tact and professionalism of the battalion commander concerned, James Pam, it also set the seal on some more junior Nigerian army officers' self-importance and confidence, that had bloomed in the Congo. Elsewhere, a constitutional conference opened on Cyprus, which failed to agree, at the same time as Makarios rejected a UK-US proposal for a UN-linked peace-keeping occupation force; riots broke out in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia; and Sudan deported 300 missionaries for supporting anti-government activity in the south.

Some events were essentially peaceful: the Bahamas became internally self-governing; Souru Mizan Apithy was elected the new president of Dahomey; UNIP swept the polls in Northern Rhodesia and Kenneth Kaunda became prime minister; Khrushchev appealed for a treaty renouncing war as a way of settling territorial disputes; Castro supported USSR in the ideological argument with China, and the USA suspended aid to Yugoslavia, Spain and Morocco for continuing to trade with Cuba, and imposed certain export restrictions to Britain and France; the UAR hosted 13 Arab league nations, in an effort to unify a military command against Israel's plan to divert the Jordan river; there was a bloodless coup by military dissidents in south Vietnam; Ben Bella agreed to end his border dispute with Morocco, as Abubakar had urged; premier Chou En-lai spent eight weeks touring those African countries where China had influential missions, going on to south-east Asia; and Britain decided to raise the school-leaving age to 16 in 1970.

A state opening of the federal parliament in the new National Hall had meanwhile marked the accelerating expedition of the Nigerian legislative process: on 8 January a single bill was passed, providing formally for the new mid-west region's constitution; on 9 January seven bills were passed, and on 10 January the remaining four of the meeting. All went through the senate together on the following day. The prime minister's contributions were nominal, but he was glad to lay the foundation stone at Abuleoja of a £5 million new building for the university of Lagos, which had been established in 1962 as Nigeria's fifth, and taught fewer than two hundred undergraduates (E N O Sodeinde and Emi Njoku were chairman and vice-chairman, and Stanley Wey a member, of its provisional council). He performed the same duty for the Jama-at-ul Islamiyya central mosque; and two days later much attention was

paid to a visit by the sultan of Sokoto, accompanied by the northern premier, where they jointly laid the foundation stone of a new Ibadan central mosque. This visit was interpreted as a gesture to show the NPC as a national party in its own right despite the formal political link with the NCNC, since the general secretary Alhaji Ahman Pategi used the occasion to say that an advance of the NPC into the politics of the south was one way to promote Nigerian unity. The Sardauna went further, and told newsmen that the country might become a one-party state, mysteriously adding, 'I am not a democrat: I do not know what I am'.

Continuing southern confusion gave the NPC some encouragement, no doubt. Chief 'ToS' Benson had been arguing for a Yoruba united front which would in an unclear way not be a 'tribal' political organization. He could not persuade the western NCNC, nor could he reconcile Awolowo's faithful and the Egbe Omọ Yoruba who disliked Awo. Nevertheless despite the general Egbe Omọ Oduduwa (EOO) membership's concern lest Awo might be 'sacrificed' in any successful Yoruba unity movement, its leadership found themselves in January argued by Akintola into a merger named Egbe Omọ Olofin: in consequence EOO's president and vice-president were shortly afterwards expelled, but Ademola and Majekodunmi retained an interest. The UPP noted gratefully that the merger might reduce AG's chances at future elections.

In the mid-west the administrator Dennis Osadebay faced political discontent. The electoral commission had delimited the region's constituency boundaries so that they would embrace approximately thirty thousand of population each, except where otherwise proportionately significant groups (of Edo, Itsekiri or western Ijọ, for example) would have lost out. This exception had meant that the 54,000 people in Warri and the 126,000 people in NCNC-supporting Aboh each enjoyed four representatives. The likely party successes in the election were for once in Nigeria's post-war history unpredictable. Alhaji Sir Abubakar used his good offices to enable an agreement between the MDF and the NCNC that they would share equally the appointment of electoral officers, once the high court at Benin had clarified that at this interim stage the administrator, and not the federal electoral commission, had this power. In the event the NCNC won on 3 February, and Osadebay as an Igbo premier succeeded himself as administrator. He nominated the 57-year old Urhobo Chief Samuel Jereton Mariere as governor; hopes were thereby dashed of the oba of Benin adding royal prestige to the office of governor in his own Bini capital city. Mariere had been a John Holt's clerk. The NCNC minister Chief Humphrey Omo-Osagie left the federal cabinet. The MDF formed an opposition, but arrangements were made that the three seats which the electoral commission had 'pruned' from Asaba and Aboh should be 'restored'. Nevertheless voices were still heard in the new region to say that the one important aim was to unite all the diverse southern forces in the single purpose of defeating the NPC at this year's federal election.

The north was of course only superficially united under the NPC. The Sardauna found it hard to comprehend that the Tiv simply did not like the Fulani or the 'Hausa'; although they had been quiescent since Tarka's acquittal, and effective direct rule without politics by a northern divisional officer appointed as virtual 'sole NA' had as so often been welcomed by ordinary people, Kaduna complacency and local NPC intrigue had again begun to alienate the Tiv NA officials and the UMBC. Dwindling material support from the AG had helped the opposition party to despair of constitutional cures for its resentments and, as has been seen, to ally itself with NEPU

in a progressive front. The Tiv were still a very different people from the Hausa-speakers, as much as they were from their southern neighbours in the east, and regularly produced 100 percent turn-outs at elections (of which 90% would support Tarka and his friends).

There was a renewal of violence in February, NPC personnel and NA offices were attacked, and lives were lost in heavy skirmishes between policemen and gangs of roughs on a scale that more recently would have spawned world headlines. For the moment law and order were left to the civil power, but expatriate officials in the northern government persuaded the premier and his secretary Ali Akilu to appoint Ahmadu Coomassie to hold a committee of inquiry, in order to recommend new forms of local government which the Tiv might support: in Lagos Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu were unafraid of harsh measures when civic discipline collapsed, but knew the political dangers and were still nervous of giving the army a taste at home of exercising the power to control a community which they had learnt in the Congo (and which, as noted above, some company commanders were soon greatly to enjoy in Tanganyika). After returning from a tour together, during which ill-mannered mobs had shouted abuse at them, and the IGP had subsequently confirmed that it was not his job to intervene in peaceful protest, Ribadu wanted police mobile units to be ordered to be positive in their responses. Abubakar overruled him. Nevertheless the police, who would gladly have 'gone in firing from the hip', were placed under command of the military mobile force, with instructions not to indulge in revenge or to appear to be fighting an NPC campaign in Tivland.

Abubakar should have opened the defence academy in Kaduna, already a far cry from its origin in the RWAFF company of boy soldiers (now effectively displaced by the various government college training corps, retitled 'cadet units'), but he was tired and preoccupied with preparing for the imminent OAU meeting and census announcement: a stomach upset in a resthouse gave his medical advisers the right to order two days' rest (Dr Majekodunmi told the Sardauna, 'I have arrested your friend!'). His speech was unpolished and was read for him:

'I recall with pride that I was privileged . . . to perform the opening ceremony of the Nigerian military college. . . . The academy will be an inter-service institution: the air force will join when the agreement with the federal government of Germany is ended in 1967. . . . There will be an academic wing, . . . so that students who might not, at a later stage, like to take military as a career will proceed . . . to some of our national universities. In the past we were dependent upon the generosity of . . . UK, Canada, India, USA, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Australia, . . . which we could not depend indefinitely upon. This is an interim academy, and the permanent one will be built soon. . . . We do not want to be second to anyone, . . . the best and only the best is good enough for us. . . . To you cadets, . . . morals must depend on a high standard of discipline, and accordingly, where no nonsense or other laxities could be tolerated, . . . there are three requisites, . . . loyalty to your government, patriotism and gallantry'.

He also thanked the Indian government for lending a number of high-powered and experienced personnel to man the academy.

Thirty-four foreign ministers gathered in Lagos at the end of February to attend the second ordinary session of the OAU's council of ministers, when the most

recent events to attract notice were Ghana's formal emergence now as the one-party socialist state which Dr Nkrumah had just promised – he was still crying for an African high command and continental union government, and angering Adoula by calling for a pan-African UN force to forestall a coup in the Congo by Mobutu or Tshombe; China's backing of a revolt in the central south Congo, led by one Pierre Mulele who had been trained in Cairo and Peking; the deposition of Gabon's president Léon Mba, who was at once restored by French troops (just as the continent's tremors at British military involvement in settling east Africa's rebellions were relaxing); Britain's and the USA's formal recognition of Abdul Amari Karume as president of the Zanzibar republic; a signal of British diplomatic and economic priorities in a Plowden committee recommendation to unite the staff of the foreign and commonwealth relations offices (which the 93-year-old Lord Hailey shrewdly questioned in the upper house as being contrary to the adequate interests of dependent territories); and the British prime minister's acceptance of Abubakar's invitation to visit Nigeria in the near future. Rumours were strong of a Ghanaian plot directed at Dr Jaja Wachuku, and security measures were 'tight'.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who had just told a preceding conference of the African jurists' commission that it might become the legal arm of the OAU, opened the five-day meeting with a useful review that reflected all of this and his own expanding idealistic daydream of ripened independence from the non-African world:

'Exactly nine months ago the OAU was born. . . . Our dreams are gradually but steadily being translated into realities. The first session of the council of ministers was held at Dakar within three months. . . . It reviewed the work of the liberation committee, and adopted its proposals. It received a report from the special deputation of foreign ministers to the security council, . . . charged with intensifying our efforts within the world forum to assuage the injustices of south African apartheid and Portuguese colonialism. . . . Significant successes were attained on both issues, though the struggle goes on. You were able at Dakar to arrange for the first sessions of the specialized commissions. Millions in Africa are to-day yearning for the fruits of independence; there is increasing recognition on the part of all of us that independence would be meaningless if we continued to live in fear and want. . . . Millions from all over Africa expect from you, not words, but actions. You must give life to the five commissions'.

(In fact since Dakar the OAU's economic and social commission had agreed a programme at Niamey; the educational and cultural commission had agreed at Léopoldville to merge its work with UNESCO; the health, sanitation and nutrition commission had settled a programme to be harmonized with WHO; and the scientific, technical and research commission had agreed a programme at Algiers. Only from the OAU's defence commission had little been heard).

Abubakar went on, '*. . . There have been many differences between neighbouring sister countries. . . . We are witnessing those symptoms usually associated with growth and progress. . . . The task before you is to devise ways and means of resolving these crises within our organization without resorting to outside help, with all its complicating consequences. The OAU . . . should . . . establish its authority and effectiveness. . . . It must base itself on the solid foundations of consent, legality and fraternal honesty'.* He referred to the two extraordinary sessions in Addis Ababa and Dar-es-Salaam which had discussed Ethiopia's and Kenya's border problems with Somalia, and the sustenance of

law and order and constitutional government in member states which faced mutiny or insurrection and asked for such assistance. He welcomed Zanzibar and Kenya as members, and concluded sanguinely: *'You are all mature statesmen, seasoned in the conduct of international transactions, tempered by humility before history, and inspired by a vision of our goal of unity'*. They were fine words, full of noble ambition. The OAU ministers recognized Holden Roberto's Angolan provisional government (GPRN) and Amilcar Cabral's party for the independence of Portuguese Guinea and Cap Verde (PAIGP), thus bringing OAU's membership after ratification to 36. They also recommended that no air or shipping line plying to South Africa should enjoy any member's facilities, and they opposed independence for Southern Rhodesia.

For two months the census board had been arguing in secrecy, and submitting the figures collected in November to exhaustive tests. On 24 February 1964, without further reference to supervising premiers or regional authorities, the preliminary results (in other words the all-important grand totals) were announced. It was the first tolling of the federation's funeral bell. Stories that the first unchecked sum exceeded 60 million had kept alive the hopes of the three southern regions that not only would they now have a controlling power over revision and delaying in the senate, but that they would outnumber the north in the lower house of representatives. Now they had to swallow the gall of learning that although the north had fallen back from the 1962 count of 31 millions to 29,777,986 (itself a rise of 67% since 1952-53), it remained a clear four millions ahead of the rest put together. The west and mid-west had also fallen back, from the joint 1962 14.75 millions to 10,278,500 and 2,533,337 respectively (still representing a rise of nearly 100% in the decade), the federal territory was little changed at 675,352, and the east remained firmly at Dr Okpara's approved figure of 12,388,646 (a rise of 65%). The round provisional figure was 55 millions; there were officially 74% more Nigerians than ten years before, an apparent rise of 5½% every year, and the country could claim to be, not the thirteenth, but the ninth most populous, perhaps most prolific, in the world.

It is worth reflecting that whether or not (in the era before AIDS) the viruses and parasites of endemic diseases had reached a balanced symbiosis with their human hosts, as mere hurdles to be surmounted before childhood acquire their natural immunity, and once epidemics could be met by modern defences, any stable rural community would still have its own customary controls of marriage; these would reduce birth rates to match the prevailing death rates and replace the rates of migration away from villages to towns, new colonial or mercenary service to strangers. Dowries, bride-prices, religious taboos and moral influences would postpone marriage until the man and his bride(s) had enough resources to maintain the same living standards for their own family as enjoyed by their parents. But in urban areas only the minority of propertied classes were likely to have economic and family restraints on early marriage and procreation; poor youngsters in newly expanding cities, especially in the shanty slums with which they were surrounded and in-filled, who had lost access to their traditional hereditary ways of employment, had no reason or will to wait until their parents retired before becoming fathers. Yet rural Nigerians seem to have grown in numbers greater than the townsfolk.

Regardless of the implications for future head-counts, as epidemic disease withdrew through official health measures, and lack of family planning had its own huge impact on popular numbers in any event, few thoughtful people ali-

at the time doubted that the first eastern figures had been artificially inflated, even though Dr Okpara bound himself to them. This emasculated his attacks on the northern figures, which few doubted had also been inflated (let alone those of the west), but which seemed to indicate no greater demographic increase than he claimed for his own region, however incredible they were to the scientists. On 28 February the eastern premier called a news conference to give detailed but unspecific allegations of irregularities, premature disclosures of surprise inspections, and sundry downright acts of cheating. He refused to use the resultant figures as the basis for future federal elections. The charges were universally plausible, but he only laid them against the north. At first the mid-west NCNC agreed with him. The Saradauna immediately held a northern NPC meeting and announced that he was ready for a showdown; he accepted all the results, would use them for planning, and would demarcate the region's constituencies anew; and he rebutted each and all of Okpara's accusations, with counter-allegations of deception and sabotage by the eastern inspectors. In the west Chief Akintola accepted the figures, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who had presided over the whole agony, announced that he regarded the results as entirely satisfactory.

A student deputation from Nsukka called on the prime minister at Enugu with a petition to reject them, but was told that they had been authorized by the census board, all of whose members had been checking and rechecking the figures in Lagos ever since the count. Interestingly, the president-general of the Ibo state union, Chief Z C Obi OBE, assured the prime minister of co-operation and demanded an end to inflammatory pamphlets on the subject. Abubakar then called on all Nigerians to wait until the future details were published, when he would hold a meeting with the premiers. But in practice to repeat the exercise was unthinkable. The forthcoming election was inevitable and could not be delayed. Management and planning of all kinds had to be resumed at last if terminal disease were to be prevented, however flawed the physical measurements of the national body politic. Yet the political bloodstream and muscles were also flawed, however strong the rural bones.

40 Census stubbornness and economic frustration bolster a labour challenge

*Ba ka ba mutum kibiya ya komo
ya harbe ka da ita*

While the census rumblings continued, the flow of overseas events was still a daily distraction to the prime minister's concentration. Fighting broke out in Cyprus, followed by a UN peacekeeping force take-over (to be renewed if necessary after three months), still more heavy fighting, and Makarios' abrogation of the 1960 treaty between Greece, Turkey and Britain; the South African republic withdrew from the international labour organization eight-weeks' sugar strike in British Guiana preceded four subsequent months' violence, including a state of emergency, declared by Grey's successor Sir Richard Luyt, and the arrest of the deputy premier; British troops prepared to leave Tanganyika, making way for the confidentially promised Nigerian replacements, and Canadian UN troops arrived in Cyprus; Dr Nkrumah would-be assassin was sentenced to death; the UAM made a verbal concession to OAU at Nouakchott in Mauritania by reconstituting itself as an African Malagache union of economic co-operation (OAMCE) with headquarters at Yaoundé; Eric Williams from Trinidad and Tobago told Sierra Leone that his own was not an African country, with its Chinese and Indian admixtures, but he assured Alhaji Sir Abubakar in Nigeria that he would welcome cultural and economic ties through the web of diplomacy, and invited him to a return visit.

The Congo troubles were unending: a national liberation committee (CNL) had been formed in Brazzaville by Christophe Gbenye, E B Davidson and G Soumailot, followed by another under Soumailot alone in Burundi, all loyal to Gizenga; on the other side, U Thant told the security council that while Tshombe was waiting for a summons in Spain, twenty white mercenaries were training 1,800 ex-Katangan gendarmes in Angola; Abubakar and Adoula exchanged greeting over an experimental telecommunications link with the democratic republic of Congo, while Belgium ceded back the three military bases it still held there, and agreed to share its national debt and reorganize its unreliable army; Kasavubu appointed a committee to draft a new Congolese constitution giving fewer powers to prime minister and legislature, and more to the president; Nkrumah told Adoula to call in the OAU, but was ignored.

Tanganyika's prime minister Oscar Kambona came to Lagos to discuss military co-operation, and Abubakar publicly agreed to send Lt-col Pam and his 3rd battalion for six months, until relieved by Algerians or Ethiopians; Winston Field, who was seen on all sides as a failure, resigned in Southern Rhodesia, to be succeeded as premier by Ian Smith, who placed Joshua Nkomo

under restriction; Tanganyika and Zanzibar agreed in principle to unite, causing speculation that Chinese influence might spread to the mainland, but the rebel Okello was expelled home to Uganda; Sir Milton Margai died at the end of April, and was succeeded by his brother Albert, who promptly dismissed four ministers, including two rivals for the top job – Alhaji Sir Abubakar sent a message to the people of Sierra Leone, describing Sir Milton as '*a personal friend, a dependable companion on all fronts . . .*'; the Lake Chad convention was formally signed on 1 May by Alhaji Sir Abubakar and presidents Ahidjo of Cameroon, Tombalbaye of Tchad and Diiori of Niger; Khrushchev attended the celebrations of the first stage of the Aswan high dam; France stopped aid to Tunisia for nationalizing land held in foreign hands; and 'A Conservative' anonymously and disturbingly challenged cherished British political traditions with an article in *The Times* declaring that 'the Commonwealth has really become a gigantic farce'.

Sir Alec Douglas-Home meanwhile had spent three nights in Lagos, as arranged. He had wished to sound his fellow prime minister out on a commonwealth conference, to discuss the implications of Southern Rhodesia's drift towards South Africa which might now threaten the commonwealth's survival. Abubakar began to adopt the idea as one of his own. Home also wished to talk over the effectiveness of trade and technical aid as alternative bonds for strengthening commonwealth links. Other matters were the aftermath of the east African military upsets, supposing that British officers in Kenya's forces should get involved in conflicts with Somalia, or Kenya were to ask for support and training for her land and air forces for a long period, while neighbouring Tanganyika continued to reject any similar British involvement. Abubakar's suspicious colleagues affected to contrast this visit, apparently in search of advice and sympathy, with Macmillan's of four years before with its airy talk of winds of change. Home had a private talk on the topics tabled with Abubakar for two hours, with Azikiwe for another hour, and also with Mbadiwe. Zik gave him a dinner and there was a formal address to a joint session of parliament. Reassured that the OAU's recent resolutions might have been much more embarrassing to Britain in the wording originally moved than they were when passed, and that OAU thinking might now create greater stability for overseas investors, Home felt a little happier. At a government reception Alhaji Sir Abubakar replied to Sir Alec's toast by stressing that one day Nigeria would make mistakes, and it would be then that she would stand in greatest need of friendship. But when Home left on 21 March, paranoiac Lagos gossip, freely encouraged by parliamentarians who held no office, remained convinced that some secret ulterior motive had lain behind the visit.

Another departure was in progress. The inspector-general of police, John Hodge, had attended his last police council, where Dr Okpara had begun a sentence with, 'You Hausas . . .', to be cut short by a bridling Sardauna: 'Hausa? Me a Hausa? I'd rather be dead than a Hausa – I am a Fulani'. Okpara turned to the prime minister: 'But, sir, you are a Hausa'. '*Hausa? I am not a Hausa, I am a Bageri from Bauchi*', and the other premiers all laughed (They would not know that the Fulani premier's command of the Fulfulde language had not been such as to dispense with a Malam Muhammadu Hong as an interpreter when visiting Adamawa). Now Hodge was being submitted to his farewell functions, including a televised banquet at the president's state house with sixty guests; Abubakar also gave him a relaxed dinner in private, to which he could ask his own forty friends, and promised him that he would arrange for him to revisit Nigeria every five years for the

rest of his life, to measure the changes. Hodge was succeeded by Lou Orok Edet, his 51-year old Efik deputy of Calabari stock. Edet had been a police clerk at the age of 20, a sub-inspector in 1945, with experience in immigration and tracking down 'leopard men' ritual murderers. As an assistant superintendent he had been seconded to both railway and police authority police.

Dr Mbadiwe now returned to the cabinet as minister of aviation, separate from transport or communications, in time for a lengthy meeting at which the NCNC members faced the dilemma of whether to support Dr Okpara's objections to the census irregularities and withhold acceptance of the figures on the flimsy grounds that the board had not completed its detailed work. Chief Festus, seeing resignation as an unwelcome alternative, finally took the lead in agreeing that he would not insist on his reservations, in the interests of unity and the survival of the coalition, as well as of meaningful budgeting. It was the regions which now wrecked the coalition.

The Federal budget meeting heard Chief Festus present a 'national' budget; the east had had a 'pragmatic' budget, the west a 'challenge' budget, and the mid-west a 'self-determination' budget. Only the Makama in Kaduna avoided a catchphrase. Early in the federal meeting, the prime minister formally announced that the census board (Chief Sir Kofo Abayomi, the physician, being chairman) had given him the preliminary figures of the 1963 national popular census, which all already knew, and that he would hold a meeting of the premiers: *'I am advised that my acceptance and publication of these figures are final'*. He was hoping to put a prompt stop, under the umbrella of corporate responsibility, to the current dynamic realignments and ultimate polarization of the north-south division of his country, about which Azikiwe had just characteristically announced that, 'The federal republic of Nigeria swoons in despair. Let our leaders not toy with our national destiny. Let them save this nation from shame, for indeed this is the time that tries men's souls'. That apart, Zik defined clearly a citizen's right to property and to full compensation for confiscation, and called for an end to propaganda that incited defamation, insult, disorder and hatred. The president's apologists suggested that he might have hopes of instigating a non-party government. The only person to have made positive moves in such a direction, Alhaji Sir Abubakar, was frustrated by the almost unanimous support of all influential members of the NPC for the Sardauna's refusal to have any part of it; Abubakar's yearning in despair for unity through a national government, giving fair shares to all, was interpreted as being softly 'pro-southern'.

The northern house of assembly budget session had agreed that all regional and NA job vacancies should be filled by northerners, failing whom by expatriates, and only in the very last resort by southerners; some members insisted on all Igbos being dismissed, deprived of their certificates of land occupancy, and despoiled of their petrol stations and 'hotels'. There were tasteless allegations of continuing cannibalism and 'nudity' in the east. Actual evictions were reported in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto, and civil servants persuaded the Sardauna that the north's economy would be crippled if southern businessmen and artisans were to leave the region now. The northern premier told the house of chiefs that injustice and lynch law would be suppressed, but also appealed to southerners to stop impugning northern institutions and civil servants, and to judge his region by the people's own attitudes, and not 'by the dictation of those outsiders who have no knowledge of our relations'. The

president sagely told Igbo petitioners to continue to show restraint despite provocation, and to find remedies in the law courts.

However the Sardauna now wanted a complete break with the NCNC; the NPC saw eye-to-eye with the NCNC on the basic fact – the census had shown that the north no longer needed the support of a mainly Igbo political party, but it could also use its numbers to weaken its perceived southern enemies' parties in their own regions. The NPC issued a printed call for national unity that denied its own intention to dominate or grasp a disproportionate share of federal jobs but, referring to Igbos without naming them, provocatively charged a 'cult group' with posing a danger to unity by using 'the machinery of a supposedly Nigeria-wide party' to achieve one tribe's ambitions. It attacked the anomalies of a region that called chieftaincy reactionary, yet had introduced its own untraditional house of chiefs, and called the NCNC's 'progressive socialist' claims a camouflage for dictatorial intentions. For the last time Abubakar spoke seriously of resigning and returning to his farm, but Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu dissuaded him.

The eastern house did not refrain from provocation either. In debates over rejection of the census and the insecurity of Igbo settlers in the north, its members endorsed official regional government claims that huge sums of 'their' money had been spent on the north – on the Ka'inji dam, on the Borno railway extension, on the 'northern Nigerian army' and its training and munitions facilities (created, members insisted, in order to fight southerners), on a road link from the dam to the Sokoto cement works, and on feasibility studies for an iron and steel industry that should have been in the east; nothing was said of the substantial Bonny bar project, or the delta development board, the great excess of crude oil production over expectation or BP-Shell's construction of Africa's first aluminium gas pipe in support of Aba's industry, or the £5 millions bridge above Onitsha. In fairness, only £15 millions had yet been secured of the projected £34 millions of regional overseas aid. Over in Ibadan Chief Akintola stirred the pot with references to 'Igbo greed and ambition', and by claiming very strong cultural links, social and religious, between western and northern peoples. The mid-west was content, with the discovery of five new oil-gas-fields and the off-shore strike near Burutu.

On 10 March the western premier, encouraged by prospects of a bumper cocoa crop, announced the formation of a Nigerian national democratic party (NNDP), composed of his own UPP, the still nominally extant southern people's congress, and a majority of the western NCNC. Two regional NCNC ministers acceded at once, the third, the deputy premier Chief Fani-Kayode, held back for a week until given 24 hours to make up his mind. 24 federal NCNC MPs joined him, and 60 western MHAs, including 22 of the NCNC: the Ibadan opposition was now 27 AG, 7 loyal NCNC and one independent. It was alleged that some of this opposition insisted on the reward of being paid what they had once received when part of an AG administration. The NNDP government (the former cabinet, reshuffled) was regarded by outsiders as weak, but it mustered a vote of parliamentary confidence by 53 to 21. The new party was vulgarly known as simply 'Egbe Omọ', and under 'Akin-Wonder' and 'Fani-Power' offered a special relationship to the NPC in Kaduna, which was always ready for pragmatic ties without emotional overtones, such as it had with the MDF. There were those who thought that the oba C D Akran should be deputy premier, but Fani-Kayode, inflexible and colourful as Adelabu had been, stood his ground and Akran became 'patron' of the party, to look after its worldly needs.

NNDP also stepped up its attack on the east, with political regional government claims (supported by the signatures of NCNC Yoruba leaders) that under Zik's friend Dr Ikejiani two-thirds of the railway corporation's senior posts were held by Igbos, and that the same applied to three-quarters of the ports authority. The party squib was converted into a regional 'white paper' which made similar accusations against the Igbo-headed Nigerian airways, Ibadan university, Ibadan teaching hospital and the Yaba technical institute. It was difficult to refute these appearances, now that by openly competitive selection three-quarters of the foreign service also were Igbos, but a disturbing newspaper and publicity pamphlet war of counter-claims ensued to deny such nepotism or to charge it in reverse (as for example against the Nigerian television service for which Yoruba Chief Benson was responsible). Yorubas who regretted the implicit NNDP acceptance of a junior partnership with NPC reactionaries thought back into their history, and remembered a renegade Oyo prince who had resorted to Sokoto, and had assisted Ilorin to come under traditional northern suzerainty.

The NNDP's fear of Igbo monopoly in the country's positions of power became as clearly virulent as any in the north. Belatedly Dr Okpara and his party began to detect that they had been cleverly false-footed by Akintola, that the NCNC's central authority was fractured, and that there might be reinforcements for them among sympathetic followers of the AG. Somewhat improbably, certain NCNC philosophers added Awolowo lying in chains to the ill-assorted pantheon of slain 'martyrs' which they now identified with Lumumba, Olympio and, even more strangely, Adelabu; Awolowo could only be released by a federal government, and NCNC could now only hope for power to achieve that in an electorally successful bargain with the AG and its remaining friends. Dr Okpara might have precipitated an immediate crisis had he after all induced the federal NCNC ministers to resign; but Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh would have been very hard to persuade, Dr Mbadiwe had a certain loyalty to Abubakar, and to see them all replaced by NNDP would have left Okpara no voice in the council of ministers whose task it would be to make the arrangements for the general election. The federal NCNC ministers personally survived the collapse of the NPC-NCNC coalition. Besides Benson (who had attacked Ikejiani) and Okotie-Eboh nursed deep antagonism against the AG; Chief Festus spoke of resigning from NCNC if they were to ally themselves with them. What nobody foresaw was that the battle in the looming renewed conflict between north and south would be fought in the field of Yoruba cultural exclusiveness, nor would it be metaphorical or merely political. But the problem remained that those who spoke of Yoruba unity could not agree on whether the stronger underlying emotion was dislike of the Hausa-Fulani with whom they were superficially said to have more in common, or of the Igbo whose culture had adopted so many of the same twentieth-century trappings as themselves. Soon the NCNC western rump were crying to Abubakar to take immediate steps to halt the 'present wave of unrest in western Nigeria', blaming the hooliganism, thuggery and violence now rife in their towns on the NNDP. NNDP told the same tale.

Chief Akintola had economic problems which may have contributed more to his troubles than the ethnic and personal clashes usually blamed. He was trying to reinforce his rural supporters through the Byzantine co-operative movement by finding public money for the western Nigeria farmers' council, and by instituting an agricultural credit corporation. Yet he was crippled because the AG government had used up the regional reserves, and now the price of cocoa

fell. Ife university, and its undergraduates, withheld intellectual approval of his efforts, and the press took note. The government could not buy the doubters off, and memories of the lush days under Awolowo's generosity nourished assumptions that the AG might return to power.

Against such a background the prime minister had much to say to parliament that aliens working in Nigeria outside the political battlegrounds have been ever ready to echo. Arguing that leaders had become too emotional and had taken little things too seriously, wondering whether Nigerians were as mature as they claimed to be, he went on: *'There is no harm in tribalism, provided it will end in mere jokes between the different groups. [My honourable friend Shettima Ali Monguno] said that when we talk in this parliament we generate a lot of tribal ill-feelings, but that if you go outside to the ordinary men, they work happily together – and they are very happy. He wondered why . . . we do not help them, instead of making life more difficult for them. I hope . . . we should begin to think in terms of ourselves belonging to one family and belonging to one country. Although of course we have our tribal groups, this does not matter'*.

In an adjournment debate on a motion which had protracted the census controversy and enlarged it to encompass the northern tribalist excesses, of which Dr Mbanugo, chairman of the NCNC's eastern central working committee had just complained to him, he commented:

'I made a statement over the radio that so far as I was aware, there was not a single case in the northern region when any Igbo was deprived of his property – not a single case; and not a single Igbo man from the northern region was asked to quit the northern region by the order of any native authority or the regional government. All these stories and rumours which go to the eastern region, which come to Lagos, which go to the other regions, are manufactured by some interested persons. . . . What happened was that I heard there were statements on the northern house of assembly, and at the same time statements were made in other parts of the federation. Things got a bit out of hand, I think people got very excited; there is no one side to be blamed entirely. . . . I think the Hausas have got a proverb that words are like arrows, and once you shoot them forth you cannot bring them back. . . . But I must say this. I have observed that the ordinary people who are not politicians, who are not newspapermen, seem to get on, no matter from where they are'.

On a later adjournment he added, *'These people who have left the north of their own accord are free to go back if they so choose. Nobody had asked them to leave,'* and in the final adjournment debate of the meeting he made a powerful attack on threats to national unity, and an equally powerful appeal to leaders and elected members; but the politicians and newspapermen were as reluctant to hear as they are in other continents afflicted with micronationalist rivalries and jealousies.

This chimed in resonantly with an earlier intervention in the appropriations committee's discussion of the subhead item for the state house, when Dr Azikiwe's quarrels with emirs and northern custom had been raised:

'There has been a suggestion that the government should set up a quasi-departmental organization to look into the criticisms of the president. I do not think that this is necessary, because I want honourable members to remember that we are less than one year old as a republic, and I think that Nigeria has done very well in trying to adjust itself with all the changes that has [sic] taken place. I do not think we

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ould rush into saying this or that. I think all of us are agreed that the president conducted himself in a most suitable manner as the head of state. Those of us in parliament have been very guarded. . . . I hope the newspapers, which are free in this country - they are freer than newspapers in any part of the world - will co-operate in giving the head of the Nigerian nation the proper respect which the head of any nation commands, because as I said earlier on, whoever disrespects the president disrespects Nigeria as a whole'.

remarks of importance were an answer to a rumour that he intended to extend the life of the Akintola western régime by five years ('The federal government has no power under the present constitution to extend the life of the regional legislatures'), and a well-received statement on the nationalization of the economy - in view of an unguarded speech of Waziri, it was necessary to state that the government's policy was unchanged. There would be no nationalization of retail and wholesale trade, banking, air or road transport, and no withdrawal of foreign capital before a successful enterprise could replace it, under due notice. There were incidental announcements that Nigeria now fully recognized Holden Roberto's Angolan government, in exile in Congo Brazzaville, and would appoint ambassadors with Hungary.

Chief electoral commissioner and chairman of the federal electoral commission, Sir Kofu Abayomi, resigned in despairing frustration on 1964 (he was now 68 and making no impression on events), to the appointment of the northerner who was his secretary. He was replaced by E Esua, an easterner but not an Igbo (the other commissioners were long-serving makama of Kano, Muhammadu Bello dan Amar, and an eastern member of the mid-western Benin royal house, with an eastern and western doctor as colleagues nominated by their regions, an Anglican clergyman from Lagos). A different indication of disillusion was in the tabled federal audit report, that contrary to the prime minister's instructions and declared austerity programme, 'it is apparent that each minister has the full-time use of an official car' (which ought properly to be made available for duty only, and not when private cars could very well be used). He had time to announce that this year the independence anniversary would be marked by one simple official reception, and in future at five year intervals: there would be no more central funds for local celebrations (such as sports contests).

There were some responses to Alhaji Sir Abubakar's attack on legislative and peaceful tribal wranglings. The Ibo state union (ISU) said that it would make no further statements on the tribal controversy; ToS Benson (himself an frequent butt of the ISU's past attacks) and the NPC called for the banning of tribal unions, Egbe Omọ Olofin as well as ISU. Dr Mbadiwe applauded Sir Abubakar, and called for more regions with fewer powers, more safeguards against sectional domination, and more exchange of views; but he was opposed to tribal organizations that had purely cultural rôles. On a wider scale, Sir Abubakar and President Léopold Senghor issued a joint communiqué at the end of a state visit from Sénégal, undertaking to enter formally into economic, social and cultural bonds, and to sign the air services and commercial agreements negotiated by their officials.

The Morgan commission reported on wages by the end of April, mentioning as a background to its proposals on pay that there had been no prosecutions under labour laws since 1958, that the federal labour advisory council had not met for three years, and that the provisions of the wages board act seemed to have been insufficiently used. It suggested the creation of joint industrial councils, a national wages advisory council and industrial courts, as in the advanced industrial societies (which were themselves now suffering from organic technological change). The joint action committee (JAC) under Mr Michael Imoudu's guidance demanded publication of the report and decisions by 15 May, complaining at the same time that the prime minister was only allowing ICFTU representatives to come to Nigeria while talks were being held about lasting unity in central labour organizations, and so showing bias against trades unions from socialist countries. But Morgan was not the federal government's highest priority at this moment, until his financial consequences could be weighed and apportioned. A less well publicized or leaked commission on the allocation of federal revenue (in the shape of Mr Binns, state commissioner of taxes from Tasmania) was looking at the 1958 formula, which had a bias towards population and an emphasis on need; it had been set up in response to northern demands for a greater share, and to eastern demands, now that it foresaw delta oilfield riches, that mineral royalties all go to the region of derivation. Both west and mid-west also wanted more cash, so the east had to tolerate a continuation of the division whereby the federation would always receive ten percent of the growing oil takings, and the north well over six percent. The eastern leaders' antipathy to the federation and to the north accordingly grew.

The prime minister therefore combined his scheduled premiers' 'summit' on the census with one of the now rare meetings of the national economic council, to review the six-year development programme, and did not react at once to Morgan. The president issued another homily about inter-tribal recrimination and appealed to the premiers not to allow the census to be the cause of 'impending disaster'. The Sardauna for his part said he was not prepared to discuss any of the figures again, and would not come if they were on the agenda. Chief Osadebay resiled from his government's rejection of them, and said he now had the mandate of his people to support the prime minister – the issue was not sufficient to split the country, and no census in Africa could be accurate; nor would it be fair to force an equality of legislative seats on all regions against the wishes of the north 'in view of the vast number of their people'. Akintola had already accepted the figures, so that Okpara could do no more than whistle in the wind and ask for the existing division of seats to remain unchanged, and the senate to be strengthened in size and to gain more concurrent powers. The others ignored him, and Abubakar announced that the delimitation commission would redistribute the 312 constituencies according to the new average population of 178,000.

The eastern premier was in effect told to take his case to court if he wished, and declared to reporters that since agreement was not unanimous, 'although the prime minister has the constitutional right to [go ahead and use the new figures for anything at all], I think he will not do so, and if he does the reaction of my government is not what I would like to discuss with you here, it will be made known to the nation'. He instructed his solicitor-general Mr D O Ibekwe to take out a writ in the federal supreme court to restrain the federal government from using the 1963 figures, and the federation formally entered an appearance. Dr Okpara persisted in planning a party tour of the western

region despite a ban on meetings and processions in most political areas. NNDP minister suggested to the press that the NCNC had provoked the crisis in order to be bought off with what the politicians saw as the main item on NEC agenda.

This item was the siting of the proposed £30 million (most recently estimated at £50 million) iron and steel project which sceptical independent economic experts had calculated, if it were to be economically sized, should be designed and sited on communications convenient for service of the entire west African market. All four premiers demanded its siting in their own region and each promised to find consultants to justify them, the Sardauna's favouring a site near Idah, upstream from Dr Okpara's chosen Onitsha. The fury was great, the officials from the joint planning committee found their advice ignored because it was unpalatable, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar (who despite having doubts about the viability of the whole enterprise against international competition, was reluctant to alienate three premiers by giving a firm lead called a 'cooling off' adjournment. Failing to find a compromise from the individual private exchanges, even when the westerners offered a third site in Ikare as a trade-off, he resumed the meeting with an indefinite deferral of any final detailed decision. However an economically and commercially irrational understanding was accepted, that the project should be divided between Onitsha in the east and Idah in the north. Osadebay praised the prime minister for his sense of 'justice', and the expensive consequences were for another régime to manage (on different sites entirely).

The economic reality ought to have been the heart of the meeting. The logically progressive centralization of the machinery of economic control has been having its deleterious effect on regional jealousies since the 1962 budget mentioned in chapter 36. The economic planning unit of experts working under the federal cabinet economic planning committee paralleled the joint planning committee that supported the national economic council; but this EPU's continuing oversight of detail meant that the NEC's occasional meetings were relatively powerless. New powers that were now competing to wield the economy's levers were the Nigerian industrial development bank since January 1964, the national manpower board which struggled to introduce realism in the political distensions of the Ashby report on educational investment, the central bank's growing authority (enforced through issue of credit and guarantees) over the regional marketing boards and commercial banks, and above all the board for external aid which only approved applications for foreign assistance after they had been processed upwards from regions and federal institutions and corporations through the federal planning unit. Yet the regions still thought themselves entitled to negotiate overseas aid direct, in the hopes of working it through the system *ex post facto*.

The failings of Nigeria's 'African socialist' planning have been seen, looking back from more liberal times, as fivefold: there had been too little left to private investment and to risk capital; there had been too little participation of increasingly more sophisticated cash-amassing sectors of the public, as opposed to its representatives, in decision-making; despite this, the machinery for carrying out public sector programmes was still too inexperienced; there was no running assessment of the value of programmes once set in motion; and above all, political interference in economic decisions such as setting of priorities and awarding of contracts was excessive. This latter corruption was particularly dangerous to the nation than, even when associated with, personal corruption. The removal of management control from executives and accountants had gi-

ministers far more power than in any successful European or north American economy, let alone the new far eastern centres of production.

The development plan had assumed that a likely annual population growth of 2-2½%, accompanied by a minimum economic growth of 4%, would give a rise in individuals' income of 1-2% in each of the six years to 1968. Now that population growth was said to be above 5%, average individuals must be growing poorer (although uncharted enterprise, unplanned by bureaucrats, might afford some counterbalance). Furthermore, only 14% of the plan's capital expenditure was being covered by foreign aid, where 50% had been expected, and total capital investment was less than half the original forecast. There were grounds for a savage look at levels of excise and direct taxation, but the NEC contented itself with the thought that once projects were better presented and convincingly costed, the padlocks of western democracies' technical assistance chests would be unlocked. Nevertheless there was enough alarm in Lagos at this first progress report on the 1962-68 plan, and at the east's new interest, based on oil prospects, in revenue allocation according to origin more than to need, for Alhaji Sir Abubakar to reform the cabinet economic committee under a new chairman. Chief Festus lost a battle over defence spending and surrendered the chair to Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu. The officials serving the NEC from all governments were disheartened by the tone of their politicians' arguments.

The delayed reaction to 'Morgan' is thus explained. The federal government did not believe it could afford it, and for the first time some private employers believed that they might be bankrupted by employee costs. Yet unquestionably, as in every developing free society, the surge of work-seekers from subsistence ruraldom into the cities meant that many were living in penury or squalor, or both: cheerful natures may still protest. There was also a mounting distaste among educated and respectable private townfolk for the ostentation of ministers and public officials who appeared to wax fat on outlandish perquisites and allowances, and whom they had supported thus far as totems. The JAC threatened a general strike in order to force action by 15 May, and Imoudu condemned rises in parliamentary salaries and general high living; 'The workers [who had lost] confidence in Alhaji Abubakar and his government must either kick now or perish'. The trades union movement under Imoudu, Wahab Goodluck of the NTUC and Alhaji Adebola's section wedded to the NCNC, looked momentarily united at last, and some of their friends spoke of a new national political party to be created out of pure socialism. On 26 May the JAC gave a 72-hour ultimatum, and on 30 May there was the 'battle of Iddo bridge', when the leaders of a demonstration clashed with police. The strike began at midnight on 31 May, and was answered impressively in major conurbations, although the contrast in crowd behaviour between more literate, increasingly militant, southerners and less citified artisans and labourers still remained. On 4 June the government published its proposals: Mr Justice Morgan had recommended £12.10s a month minimum for Lagos unskilled labour, and £10 for the east and the west; the counter-offer was £9.2s and £7.16s, which was rejected, and the strike spread. In fact some private managers in the east had already decided to pay rates above the Morgan levels.

Ministers listened to their officers and argued among themselves. Dr Mbadiwe made suggestions to Chief Okotie-Eboh and Muhammadu Ribadu, and they went to see Alhaji Sir Abubakar. Chief J M Johnson negotiated with the JAC, and Festus also went with Mbadiwe to see them. On 8 June the talks broke down, and Johnson told the JAC that the government gave them a

48-hour ultimatum to call the strike off, or all would be dismissed and lose their accrued privileges. The leaders shouted, 'Impossible, impossible - if so we lose our bargaining power', a response which must always be true if the followers, the actual strikers, cannot understand or refuse to accept chill economic argument. Private enterprise followed government's lead. Alhaji Si Abubakar made a public radio appeal in the evening to the JAC leaders to end their strike immediately, in their own interest, and to take all effective action to get the men back to their duty. He called the strike intolerable - any large increase in pay would ruin the economy, and all the projections of the six-year development plan with it; the government had made determined efforts to alleviate the condition of workers in the low income group, and its policy was to keep to that purpose and to increase productivity. This broadcast (and on such sensitive issues he still wrote the substance of his own speeches) only served to incense the union leaders, who 'regretted that he made no new offer that could lead to a solution'. They said that a breach of faith with organized labour had not inspired confidence that the government would honour any undertakings, and that Abubakar had shown an intention to use force to break industrial action of free workers, which was guaranteed by the constitution. It was the first serious disagreement that the prime minister had failed to calm by reasoned rebuke, and the more worrying in that the same newspapers that were claiming that 'politicians acquire wealth by all the corrupt methods that their political power could be used to aid' had also pressed a return to work since the country could not afford Morgan. A wise policy might fall from mistrusted hands.

Abubakar was at a loss amid conflicting advice. The labour minister Johnson had reason to go to America, and first-line political handling fell to the Idoma minister of establishments, J C Obande. The army was directed to guard key points in Lagos, which with closed offices and some overt expressions of labour solidarity took on the aspect of a siege town. In Kaduna police dispersed a mob with teargas outside a court where 17 employees of the electricity corporation were on trial for sabotage of power equipment. It became known that some ministers asked for armed escorts in Lagos, and that others noted for their conspicuous consumption were unnaturally quiet and modest in demeanour. Whispers became loud statements that the strike showed powerful politicians to be out of touch with the man in the street, arrogant yesterday, indecisive to-day and cringing to-morrow. Bureaucrats spoke with bold cynicism that it was now their responsibility to save Nigeria from the mess made by politicians, and soldiers heard them. Yet though store foods were running short, it was the propaganda war against the politicians which the JAC was winning, rather than the structural war against society of which some freshly instructed leaders were beginning to talk among themselves in novel imported terms. The first sign of the strike crumbling had in fact been at the time of Johnson's ultimatum, with the reopening of the UTC department store, where the police forcibly prevented intimidation of returning workers who understood deprivation but not class war.

Meanwhile a team of ministers including Okotie-Eboh, Obande, Mbadiwe and Waziri Ibrahim, conscious of the challenge to their authority from an unprecedentedly confident JAC which calls to order and a show of force had failed to divide, negotiated with the JAC and formally ended the strike after twelve days by virtually conceding all demands. The much longer general strike of 1945 was forgotten. There would be 'no victimization', all dismissals and warning notices would be withdrawn, the strike period would be treated as leave with full pay, and a body representing all governments, private employers

and the joint action committee would be set up to negotiate on the basis of the Morgan figures. The result was seen as an outright victory for the trades unions, and cabinet ministers were not sorry that under the umbrella of corporate responsibility they could share their humiliating defeat with the prime minister, whose leadership was generally seen as severely damaged by the failure of his strong appeal for reason and a return to work.

It was unlikely that an equally strong internal appeal to his political colleagues to stand their ground would have succeeded. The flames of public disillusion had been fanned by unions, press and official gossip, and some of the colleagues were very scared. There were suggestions that the prime minister should resign, and one newspaper flew the kite that he was about to retire, after he had missed a meeting of the NPC executive at Kaduna. It was a misjudgement of character: ever ready to retire back to field and classroom if asked by those whom he respected, or if weary of partisan rancour while the country's forward progress was apparently continuing, he would not depart weakly in an unsolved crisis which morally no one else was better equipped to face. That, however disappointed, he had no thought now of abdicating responsibility is shown by his guarded comments that when the time came Shehu Shagari or Maitama Sule could rule the country; both were still junior and, in Nigerian terms, too young in 1964 (In fact a personal assistant Olubanjo later presumed to challenge Abubakar in the privileged privacy of the Bauchi farm, for not grooming any lieutenant to succeed him. '*I am*', he said. - 'Who, Dipcharima?' - '*Guess again*'. - No suggestion. - '*Shehu Shagari*'. - 'That small boy?!' The chief justice heard a similar tale, but Alhaji Shehu never heard it directly). Eventually some reason did prevail among organized labour: early in July after further negotiation the JAC accepted £10 a month in Lagos federal territory and Port Harcourt, and £8 2s 6d in the rest of the southern regions. Market economics also prevailed since nothing had happened to increase the national wealth: costs of food and rent, as after every other pay award, promptly rose to absorb the increase. However, destabilization and loss of confidence had begun to be elements of the political atmosphere, and this gave heart to the selfishly ambitious. The JAC had permanently shaken the administrative self-confidence of a majority of federal ministers, without advancing any revolutionary cause of the urban workers in an unurbanized society.

41 Parties Realign and Alliances Reform

Bidi makwabci tun ba ka sayi gida ba

25 May 1964 was declared by Alhaji Sir Abubakar as Africa Liberation Day, to be celebrated annually pursuant to the Addis Ababa resolution a year before; two days later Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru died, to be succeeded as Indian prime minister by Lalbahadur Shastri; then eight black south Africans, including Nelson Mandela, were sentenced to life imprisonment at the 'Rivonia' treason trial; talks between Malaysia and Indonesia collapsed; Ghana's customs union with Togo broke down and the frontier was closed, while Nkrumah introduced preventive detention, to a limit of ten years. At home the prime minister interrupted a Bauchi holiday to summon an unexpected meeting of all the premiers in the new regional capital of Benin city, to discuss the general situation in the country, particularly the recent strike and 'allied matters'. There was speculation that the subject of preventive detention was being revived. A British lecturer in trades unionism from Leeds had just been charged with managing an unlawful society, with the purpose of overthrowing the Nigerian government by military means. Alhaji Sir Abubakar said that he personally was not aware of any such plot, but as a case was in the hands of the police it was better to wait and watch the course of developments. At a more risible level the federal public accounts committee was still grappling with the auditors' reports on the disposal of independence celebration motor cars, which had not been done quite as Mr Hefford had intended, let alone in conformity with government's general orders and financial instructions. It was alleged that one had been allocated for a year to the national council of women's societies, on the personal authority of the prime minister. It could not now be accounted for at all.

Jack Davies, the chairman of the UAC, had become less busy on government appointments. He had demitted membership of the ports authority in favour of the general manager of the Palm line, who was closer to the shipping and harbour problems of the day. By now private enterprise was unrepresented on the authority, but Davies remained 'available'. Alhaji Sir Abubakar accordingly asked him to make a private factual inquiry into the common current allegation that Africans were only appointed managers in expatriate firms in order to bring the statistical percentage up, but that true responsibility was withheld from, or even resisted by them. Davies convinced Abubakar that of the Nigerian managers he identified, 35 were already earning well over £3,000 a year, a very senior civil service salary level at that time; commercial firms could not afford such sums if the employees were not truly earning them through their qualities. At any time thirty or forty others were undergoing training in Britain, and he claimed with some pride that 60% of those who had been made redundant during his own company's partial restructuring after the abandonment of retail

trade, had promptly been recruited by government or his competitors. Training of local staff had been laid down as part of his duty from his first day in the country; so it still remained. Nigerian brains have always achieved more through commerce than 'pure' administration.

On the broader employment field, the all-African trades union federation was at last launched in June at Bamako in Mali, but with a view to having its headquarters in Accra under the Ghanaian John Tettegah as secretary-general. Its affiliates were to be required to renounce membership of both ICFTU and WFTU. The ICFTU held its African regional conference at Addis Ababa immediately afterwards, and naturally voiced its opposition to the infant AATUF.

Nigeria's involvement with the democratic republic of Congo was dwindling. The progressive withdrawal of ONUC was being followed by greater rebel action in the north-east, and a general deterioration of circumstances. The USA announced that its airmen would not fly again for the Congolese government against the rebels who were just taking Albertville; at the end of June Kasavubu called Tshombe back to the country from Madrid, with the intention of appointing him as provisional prime minister, pending elections, despite his lack of parliamentary sponsorship; and next day Tshombe's enemy the provisional president of north Katanga and two of his colleagues were assassinated. Adoula resigned on 30 June on the expiry of his time in office, and Kasavubu hoped that the worldly-wise Tshombe, who took over as caretaker and was then duly sworn in on 10 July, would gain by conciliation and guile what Adoula with Mobutu had failed to achieve by brute force; the Congo still lacked effective administrators and reliable gatherers of revenue. The Nigerian government was uneasy about Tshombe, but Abubakar decided to recognize him *faute de mieux*. Tshombe proceeded to woo the imprisoned Gizenga and to free those political prisoners who were not Lumumbist.

The withdrawal of the very last of the UN troops by 30 June (in all 126 out of 20,000 men from 34 nations had died in action) meant that apart from the battalion temporarily in Tanganyika, the whole Nigerian army was again stationed at home; four hundred able members of the Nigerian police force remained 'as a civilian training team for the Congolese constabulary, where they were to remain for as long as the elected Nigerian republic lasted. The soldiers' return was one of pride, boosted both by their own Aguiyi-Ironsi having been last commander of the UN peace-keeping force, and by their awareness of the Ghanaian contingent's superficial disgrace, which had contributed to Ghana's last British GOC's disagreements with Nkrumah and the end of General Henry Alexander's career. Almost immediately Tshombe faced the formation by the released Gizenga of a new united Lumumbist party, and rebellions in eastern Kwilu (led by Pierre Mulele after his return from eighteen months in Egypt and China), Kivu and Orientale. These were headed by a people's liberation army (PLA), composed of Gbenye's and Soumailot's CNLs, and supported by China from its Brazzaville embassy; while seeking and receiving some help from USA and Belgium, he beseeched Alhaji Sir Abubakar to send his military aid back, but was told that while a brigade might be available (*'If Nigeria is invited anywhere, we should be ready to do what we could to help'*), this could only be considered after Nigeria's federal elections. Ethiopia, Liberia, Malaya and Sénégal also rebuffed him, and the OAU machine generally sympathized with Gizenga because it could see nothing good in Tshombe. Nigeria's eastern pamphleteers continued to mourn Lumumba.

The federal supreme court effectively decided on 29 June that the federal government had infringed no legal right of the eastern region by accepting the census figures, and saw no reason why these should affect the east adversely; the court said it had no jurisdiction. Chief Awolowo's appeal was finally dismissed two days later (his case had been argued on 10-11 April by a British QC Victor Durand), together with that of eight others, although three fellow appellants were successful; Sir Louis Mbanefo in a minority judgement rejected the evidence of intention to overthrow the government, regarding the witnesses to this charge as tainted or uncorroborated accomplices. Federal minister ToS Benson, still first national vice-president of NCNC, though suspected of NNPP sympathies since Akintola's poaching of Fani-Kayode and the western NCNC, reminded the public that Abubakar had promised to reconsider Awo's case if there were a genuine change of heart: 'Chief Awolowo has been in constant custody for two years and has forgotten the past; the change of heart has occurred, and it is the hope and appeal of millions of Nigerians that our God-fearing Alhaji Abubakar will answer our prayers as soon as possible'. Abubakar seemed to think that this too should not be contemplated until the elections were safely past, but for the present said that although pardon was not ruled out, it would be premature so soon after the supreme court's final verdict. So long as Awo remained in jail, secondary opposition to Akintola was reinforced; but the dismissal of the appeal ended the rump AG's hope of a 'fight to the finish' to oust Akintola before a general election.

The Leeds lecturer was discharged by the Lagos court, complaining about having had poor support from the British high commission, but he was rearrested at Ikeja airport in the western region and charged again, this time with 'conspiring with persons unknown to do an act with seditious intention'. There were changes among the judges this month: the chief justiceship of Lagos had fallen vacant, and Justice Charles Onyeama seemed a likely candidate. However the prime minister listened again to advice that pressed the rights of seniority, and Justice John Idowu Conrad Taylor was elevated; however there were also two vacancies on the federal supreme court, and Justice Onyeama was favoured with one of these, together with George Coker.

Political unease and western civilian unrest began to spread as Dr Michael Okpara met Chief Adegbenro in Ibadan, where they signed a party pact. Okpara declared that, 'Anybody who does not like what is going on now must join us; when we unite ourselves, we shall be able to fight our enemy effectively'. The collapse of the Action Group, the continued trimming of the federal NCNC ministers, and the possible future adherence of still unknown mid-west parliamentarians left no doubt who was to unite against whom. Okpara also gave notice that the census controversy would be resolved within the year, that the 'coalition' between NCNC and NPC at the federal executive level had been a great mistake and would come to an end at the close of the present parliament, and that all progressive elements in NCNC and AG must join forces. Even with support from minority groups this seemed to pose no threat to the prime minister's parliamentary majority gained through the ballot box, and Abubakar refused to panic. Benson distanced himself from Okpara's move (he was also distracted by a public service dispute, familiar in Whitehall, over whether his information ministry or Wachuku's external affairs department should control overseas publicity).

Since the unsuccessful papering of western cracks described at the end of the 'digression' in Chapter 34, Chief Akintola's policy had been aimed at unifying the Yoruba peoples without any part for Awolowo to play, and at

taking advantage of any shallow friendship or social similarity with northern politicians, in order to win for his people that slice of the pie of which they felt deprived. As a federalist, and a pluralist, he was treated like Rosiji by Awolowo's Cromwellian followers as betraying his cultural purity. He still thought Okpara an opportunist, and he played consistently on the Yoruba fears of Igbo domination.

However amidst the continued exchanges of political abuse Adegbenro complained that the western region was 'in a situation worse than any in any known emergency', and that the prime minister should take personal control of the police to protect life and property. Like the NCNC, he blamed the NNNDP for making matters worse, while federal minister K O Mbadiwe, still another of NCNC's vice-presidents, warned the NNNDP to end all the oppressive terrorism and vandalism within seven days. There was also rioting in Port Harcourt, which three hundred police were sent in to settle. The Sardauna and his staff proceeded to call a Kaduna meeting of the NPC. After this the only conclusion could be that Abubakar's dreams of all-party national government were finally dead, despite his private prayers and realization that stability in the west depended on the Action Group having some residual place in the sun – the meeting proclaimed that a Nigerian national alliance (NNA) would embrace NPC; NNNDP; Apostle Edokpolor's and James Obo's MDF, comprising the deserters from the mid-west's AG; (unexpectedly) Chike Obi's Dynamic party; the old northern ally now ensconced in Chief Harold Dappa Biriye's rivers faction of the Niger delta congress; and a republican party led by a Dr J O J Okezie, the sole relic of the Independence party not yet to have been welcomed home by Okpara to the NCNC.

The new alliance called itself an 'ethnic commonwealth', and stood for traditional African orthodoxy, a stability that gave each constituent tribe a fair place under its umbrella, and 'no leaps in the dark'. Southerners had to recognise, thought this NNA, that since the Sardauna would ignore Dr Okpara and the AG, and although the NCNC were being replaced by NNNDP as junior partners, the NPC hierarchy was strong enough and only too ready to rule the federation alone if need be – but that NPC had southern friends who had never thought of the old NCNC or old AG as their natural home. Okotie-Eboh went to Nsukka to see the still convalescent Azikiwe, and then to Kaduna to satisfy himself that the AG would not be given life-support by the Sardauna, and said no more of resigning from an NCNC that was now, as he had indelicately put it, 'weekending in bed with the AG'.

Abubakar had been abroad for much of July while the NNA was being formed, and Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu was officiating as prime minister. It was announced that Nigeria would establish diplomatic relations with China when funds and personnel became available. The outside world was more inclined to take notice of the Tokyo Olympic games, of a Cypriot colonel Grivas's call for *enosis* (union) with Greece, of the independence within the commonwealth of Nyasaland as Malaŵi, of race riots in Singapore, of the end of the British Guiana sugar strike, of 491 deaths in disturbances caused in Northern Rhodesia by followers of Alice Lenshina and her Rumpa church, of Churchill's last appearance in the British House of Commons, and of promises of independence for a federation of south Arabia by 1968 and for The Gambia (accompanied by a probable friendship treaty with Sénégal) in February 1965. Alhaji Sir Abubakar's first major overseas engagement, after visiting Zik to discuss 'state matters' at his Nsukka home, where the president had now been

for two months, was with a commonwealth prime ministers' conference at Marlborough House between 8 and 15 July, to which Mr Ian Smith had not been invited by Sir Alec. On arrival Abubakar repeated that all his thoughts on the commonwealth continued to be based on making it a more effective contributor to international stability, and said that the meeting was for discussion of 'subjects', not 'problems'; he was criticized for not committing himself beyond his acceptance that Southern Rhodesia was likely to be the 'most exciting' subject on the agenda. Abubakar was however prominent during the conference for his outside activities. As well as having an audience with the Queen and signing an article on Southern Rhodesia in the *Daily Sketch*, he addressed two lunches and a dinner.

Little of his speech at the luncheon for himself, Lord Boyd and Mr Wachuku, hosted by *New Commonwealth* at the Hyde Park hotel, bore signs of his own phraseology, but it made a logical whole: new nations' industries required markets that would embrace several countries; international organizations demanded economy and efficiency in their meagre trained manpower; co-operation had to be continental, hence the OAU, unity being first expressed in raising living standards and fostering the well-being of all Africa's peoples:

'There are two forces in the world to-day – forces of universality, which find expression in the united nations and its agencies for co-operation, and forces of regionalism, which compel countries in different areas of the world to take advantage of economies of scale on a continental basis in order to create greater material prosperity for their peoples – the EEC, the OAS, the OAU. . . . A major cause of Africa's weakness in the nineteenth century was its lack of cohesion and its divisions. These factors retarded growth at a time when the miracles of modern science and technology were beginning to transform other regions of the world. . . . The developing countries, with a few exceptions, do not constitute readily viable units for modern economies. . . . That is why Nigeria has wholeheartedly worked for a multi-national organization for all African countries, which has culminated in the establishment of the OAU at our meeting in Addis Ababa last year. . . . A commission representing the republics of Nigeria, Niger, Tchad and the Cameroons has recently been established to harmonize the development of all resources of the Chad basin. . . . In relating these national and regional developments to the larger world outside, I have come to the conclusion that the commonwealth can play a vital rôle. Firstly by throwing its weight behind our struggle to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism from the African continent and to abolish once and for all time all traces of racialism. Secondly, to demonstrate more effectively its support for the ideals and principles of justice and freedom. Thirdly, by intensifying intra-commonwealth assistance, so that we may achieve better results from our concerted efforts to abolish poverty and tensions created by gross inequalities of wealth. In this spirit the commonwealth must approach the present difficulties in Southern Rhodesia and also meet the challenge in South Africa, with faith in the ideals for which it has always stood and without condoning usurpation of power by any minority'.

His more personal insertion was prophetic:

'Both the commonwealth and the OAU have accepted the principle of the equality of member states. . . . The practice exists in OAU of shifting the conferences of heads of state and government from one country to another, so that member states may have the opportunity of playing hosts to other governments. It would be in the interests of the commonwealth to borrow a leaf from what we are trying to do in Africa. I sincerely believe that the bonds . . . will be greatly strengthened by the

work on the basis of equality. It is our hope that the white minority government . . . will take note of the strong views we expressed in this regard, and abandon its reckless threat of UDI. The meeting had next condemned apartheid in South Africa and the denial by the Portuguese of the self-determination of the peoples of Angola and Mozambique. *'Although we did not all agree on the imposition of economic sanctions, I hope that the unanimous condemnation of these two countries in London would compel them to mend their ways before the situation gets out of hand'.*

He said that the days that lay ahead for the commonwealth were unlikely to be easy; with the continuing increase in membership, new and perplexing problems were bound to arise. Harking back to his RIIA speech, he went on: *'But by far the greatest achievement was the appreciation of the danger to world peace brought about by the widening gap between the developed and developing countries. We agreed that the commonwealth could in a modest way give a lead to the rest of the world in the economic field'.* There was a general recognition that there was a need for more aid, on easier terms, on a continuing basis and that developing countries should have greater access for their products to advanced markets. The Commonwealth should support the new Geneva 'UNCTAD' institutions (the general assembly had just set up a standing united nations conference on trade and development). They had signed a Commonwealth declaration on racial equality and the establishment of a Commonwealth secretariat was to be examined. They had considered China's significance for south-east Asia; her existence had to be recognized and *'We reiterated our view that she must be admitted to the UN'.*

Abubakar flew directly from London to the OAU's second summit assembly held in Cairo from 17 to 21 July, from which despite the organization's declared commitment to existing régimes and boundaries, Kasavubu and Tshombe had been firmly (though not unanimously) asked to stay away. Abubakar was driven straight to a vast TV studio, where he spurned Nkrumah's renewed demand for a continental union government now or within six months; it might come, but this was not the time: *'Instead of wasting our energy talking about it all the time, we should do more constructive things'.* The London declaration on Southern Rhodesia was all that could be expected, and he preferred to wait and see what others said rather than forecast how it might affect the OAU's discussions. Ian Smith in fact announced from Salisbury that he had no intention of calling a constitutional conference; this only reinforced African attitudes, which in turn drove Smith further into his laager of bravado and destroyed all final hope of his retaining Abubakar's understanding.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar's address at Cairo struck keynotes, and showed him no more a neo-colonialist than his rivals. He gave formal welcomes to Kenya and Malawi as new members and to Tanganyika and Zanzibar's unification; welcomed Albert Margai in the place of his deceased brother (Margai wondered whether with the OAU so well established, all their members' expensive embassies were still needed); and anticipated the conversion of the commission of jurists into OAU's sixth specialized commission. He referred to the *'gallant nationalist leaders of Southern Rhodesia where the settlers through fear and greed are assuming defiant postures'*, and added, *'I am happy that Mr Holden Roberto's provisional government in exile now commands the majority it deserves. The struggle in Angola has therefore entered a new phase. . . . We have proved our capacity to influence events in the various councils of the world by the unusual degree of unanimity that now exists. . . . South Africa and*

Portugal have become the black sheep of the international community'. Referring then to OAU's 'committee of nine' (the national committee of liberation, comprising Algeria, Congo Brazzaville, Morocco, Nigeria, Sénégal, Tanganyika & Zanzibar, Uganda and UAR, which met continuously but underfunded at Dar-es-Salaam amid accusation of ineffectiveness by Nkrumah and varied liberation movements), he continued: 'I sincerely hope that all African states will assist us in the speedy liberation of the remaining territories by making their contributions to the special fund which you have earnestly established to supply the most practical and financial assistance to the various African liberation movements. It is sad to note that some of our member states have not yet paid their dues'.

He also spoke of breaking down customs barriers, and of the civil and military commotions over border disputes and frontier incidents which underlined the proposals for arbitration machinery, before ending very positively: *'This organization of ours cannot survive if we only meet to exchange polite courtesies and vague platitudes, and return home to nurse secret grouses and pet dreams about what the organization might have been. . . . We must be true to ourselves, by dissolving the remaining groups and blocs among us. We came here on a new basis of unity and fraternity; there should be no personal, national or group ambitions to promote'.* It was President Nyerere of Tanganyika who led the personal attacks that followed on Nkrumah, and the conference rejected all Ghana's proposals and accepted Haute Volta's request to intervene with a demarcation of its boundary which Ghana was allegedly violating. It also ratified the draft protocol for the commission on mediation, conciliation and arbitration, continued the compulsory subscriptions to the committee of nine, agreed that the Africa group at the UN should work within UNCTAD's committee of 77, chose Addis Ababa as OAU's permanent headquarters, and appointed Diallo Telli of Guinée as the administrative secretary-general. As delegates from 34 countries looked forward to a future membership of up to fifty, uncertainty emerged as to whether by then the organization would be closer to a continental supergovernment, or still remain a respected club in which newly created states might help each other to understand and extend their incipient nationhood. The doubt affected the post of the secretary-general, who could develop a policy rôle like that of the secretary-general of UNO, able to take instant action to meet a major crisis on his own initiative, or might remain a simple, though distinguished administrative secretary to a standing seminar. Diallo Telli's own problem was mentioned at the end of Chapter 33.

When he had returned home to Lagos from the OAU, Abubakar commented on some of this in the same broadcast that reported the outcome of the commonwealth conference. He called the protocol on arbitration *'another milestone in our progress towards African unity'*, and promised, *'we will continue to give assistance within the limit of our resources to those sister African countries who seek our help'* or were under foreign rule. The consensus had been that before OAU took any other steps, first the specialized commissions should examine the fundamentals of a 'union government of Africa' and an 'African high command'; but *'given the conditions prevailing in our country to-day, Nigeria will not voluntarily surrender her sovereignty to a union government. Unity can only be attained in stages through genuine co-operation, particularly in economic, social and cultural fields'*. He was thinking of his own domestic experience, and refuted the rumour that in some way Nigeria had lost a battle for primacy in the decision of the assembly of heads of state to site OAU's offices and a Guinean chief executive in Ethiopia.

During the late summer Tshombe was proving to be unable to restore order to the democratic republic of Congo. The Congolese rebel PLA from Brazzaville and Burundi, headed by Pierre Mulele and Christophe Gbenye and supported materially by China, captured Stanleyville, took 500 European hostages and declared a separate people's republic on 5 September under Gbenye's presidency; thereupon the USA, which had already sent four C-130 heavy transport planes and three helicopters to Léopoldville, announced that it would after all give direct assistance to the central government in the eastern province, and this caused Russia and China to protest. Two or three weeks later in a separate move, reacting to African refusals of the loan of troop reinforcements, Tshombe's government which was still in control of the west of the country brought in the first white mercenary fighters from Europe, the USA, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, coincidentally recapturing Bukavu in Kivu and Albertville and the Kamina base in north Katanga. At a chance joint airport interview in Lagos the Sardauna was asked for his opinion on these events, and the prime minister interrupted to enforce his authority: *'This is a matter for the federal government - I take objection to this question and will not like regional governments talking about it'*.

There were other foreign events of interest to the federal government. Sierra Leone introduced west Africa's first decimal currency (the leone, valued at ten shillings); Turkish aircraft bombed the Greek Cypriots attacking north-west Cyprus; in Northern Rhodesia Alice Lenshina the prophetess surrendered amid new incidents; Welensky came out of retirement in response to the Commonwealth conference call and founded a Rhodesian party, with the aim of attaining independence in the Commonwealth through due negotiation; while the Smith government banned all nationalist movements, including a 'people's caretaker council' and ZAPU; South Vietnam acquired a new constitution, but in succession a military revolutionary council was replaced by a triumvirate of generals which itself was also quickly dissolved; Indonesian guerrillas landed and were captured in Malaya; Somalia had a new government; and Makarios discussed with Nasser of Egypt the possibility of demilitarizing Cyprus.

Before recouping his strength in the usual way for the grim domestic political struggle, Abubakar found time at the end of July to welcome for the last time a Mrs Isobel Slater, whose quixotic attempts to introduce concern for the welfare of animals into Nigerian (and other African countries') school curricula he had encouraged, not least by translating for her benefit the relevant parts of the Qur'ân. He also waxed poetic in a message to a joint UNESCO/ECA conference; this had been called to examine the organization of research and training with regard to the study, conservation and utilization of natural resources throughout Africa. The speech is virtually the idyll before the twilight sets in, and only just refrains from making lions to lie down with lambs.

'The whole world knows that Africa is rich in resources. The sun that shines above us is a major source of energy still to be fully exploited. The water that fills our streams and oceans is a resource still to be fully utilized. The earth below us with its ores and minerals, its coal and diamond, its uranium and thorium is a treasure still largely to be unlocked. Our forests and timbers, our farms and agricultural produce, our sheep and cattle, our birds and fishes are still to yield the protein of which we are so terribly short. . . . The countries of Africa have never faced, at any time in their chequered history, a challenge so awesome and so frightful. If by our joint endeavour we can solve this problem, the future will become rosier than

ever before. The challenge of apartheid will give us no longer any concern. The turbulence and turmoil embroiled by racial segregation in schools and employment will cease to have any meaning. For at the base of all these troubles is the fear of economic and physical domination.

We want to rouse the nations of Africa to face the technology challenge. The rousing must be persistent and continuous, otherwise some people may sleep again and all may be lost, . . . We must have, not only high-level manpower, but also . . . the whole spectrum of scientific and technological discipline, so that the resources of our nation may be surveyed, processed, utilized and conserved. We want to feed and house our nations. We want to clothe them and look after them in sickness and in health. We want to communicate with our neighbours and the rest of the world. We want to conquer space, and move as we have never done before, by sea, by land and by air. We want to build treasure-houses of knowledge in universities, and contribute our quota to the world heritage of scientific and technical knowledge, so that we may move along with the rest of the world in peace, brotherhood and concord. Africa will not come into its own in the world community until it has learnt to harness for purposes of development, economic, social and cultural, its resources, human and material'.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar welcomed the new Russian ambassador in comparable vein. He politely commended the USSR's contributions to world peace, emphasizing that the big nations must keep the peace if new nations were to succeed in development. *'I want Russia to understand there are millions in the world who cannot afford to go to war - only Russia, China and the US can or may afford the luxury of war'*. Clearly Britain only mattered to him now on account of Southern Rhodesia. Sir Alec Douglas-Home had just seen Ian Smith and made it quite clear that a council of chiefs' *indaba* was in no way regarded as representative of black southern Rhodesians; following the path of discussion and diplomatic pressure, he tried to show Smith that a genuine proof of Africans' desire for full Rhodesian independence was his only hope. However, the British parliament was about to be dissolved, with the politically colourless (although privately interesting) Duncan Sandys counting his two year record, far outnumbering Macleod's or Maudling's scores, of presiding over independence agreements for Basutoland, The Gambia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaya, Malta, North Borneo, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Sarawak, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda and Zanzibar. Regardless of the British election result (Douglas-Home's party had recovered from the demoralization surrounding Macmillan's last reshuffle and the disputed leadership that followed his resignation), the discharge of Barbados, Bechuanaland, the south Arabian federation and Swaziland was also assured. Nigeria might refocus its external priorities more narrowly.

The grim internal reality, for a federal prime minister dependent for stability on regional premiers' patriotic will to quell selfishness, was that in the eastern region, where bandits and thugs were also becoming bold, the party leaders would not budge from rejection of the other regions' census figures; in the west criminal violence continued to make politicians look for personal police protection, and the obas to cry out for emergency powers against terrorists; in the north the Tiv protests continued to produce arrests in hundreds and deaths in dozens; in Lagos and the urban south the trades unions, flushed with their success, and suspicious that government was encouraging employers to reject wage claims, were threatening another general strike of private employees for the immediate fulfilment of Okotie-Eboh's settlement of Morgan, and (with

Dr Tunji Otegbeye's SWAFP looking on) trying for the third time to form an ideological labour party under Imoudu; *ad valorem* import duties were raised from 20% to 33½% to pay for the higher government wages; all the various government newspapers were exchanging demoralizing mutual recriminations; and the president, at last emerging from convalescence after four months, was having to deny his complicity in the NCNC-AG alliance with the implicit motive of becoming executive president after the election.

Benson's speech to an NCNC meeting in mid-August was therefore significant. He said that the chances of a single party leading the federal government after the election were slim; it was foolish to assume that NCNC and its allies could win enough seats in the north, and against NNDP in the west, to form one exclusively southern alliance administration with the AG rump; equally so to assume that the NNA, if it won enough seats in the south to secure a federal majority, would not have to solace NCNC-sympathizers in east and mid-west with some shared power, in order to keep the federation intact. A national government, in which parties could still voice support for their purely regional interests, might then revise the constitution, with a care for minority rights, and by giving more power of decision on the creation of new states to the plebscites and less to the calculated proportions of legislative votes.

Benson, underrated as a thinking politician because of a lightweight public persona, did not please his own party's leaders with this perceptive talk. The southern alliance was happier to hear the cynically desperate argument that there was no national unity beyond a shared flag, anthem and the country's name, and that only some common external enemy (as imperialism had once been) produced internal harmony. Benson was however reflecting Abubakar, who was saying, '*A multi-party system . . . is good for us. We do not want to kill small parties. Perhaps we will allow them to die by themselves, or merge . . .*' The prime minister dropped further hints to this effect, while announcing that the federal electoral commission and the Binns fiscal review should shortly end their labours and open the way to an election announcement, which many thought could not come too soon or after too brief a campaign. Michael Imoudu's trades unions promptly threatened to boycott the election (Haroun A Adebola's united labour congress and the NTUC would have nothing to do with a Labour party competing with SWAFP).

The southern alliance had been developing under a directing committee of Okpara, Adegbenro, Tarka and Aminu Kano (whose NEPU was now renamed 'Nigerian' Elements Progressive Union). Dr Okpara was strengthening the weakest bonds by promising Chief Awolowo's wife that the alliance would free her husband; but he was also underestimating the powers of the Sardauna, to seduce Yoruba voters with the greater certainty of their sharing federal power if NNDP should be returned with NPC to Lagos, and to dishearten opposition parties in the north with exactly the same panache that NCNC deployed in the east. Okpara's other mistake was still to believe that in secret ballots the northern masses would renounce their traditional systems, with all their failings, in favour of southern-tinged change; hence the childlike acceptance of the president of UMBC's and president-general of NEPU's promises that they would deliver him about forty seats. The alliance did not at present look further for a common purpose than the winning of the federal general election, and this accounts for the NCNC in the federal house not moving into formal opposition before the dissolution.

On 1 September 1964 it was formally announced that the NCNC, the AG and the northern progressive front (NPF), in support of 'human right', was now

'christened' the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). This superficially true national alliance sought its intellectual justification in ideological language, and spoke of 'pragmatic socialism'. In practice its radicalism was blurred, not least by its NCNC component's ambivalence towards, and the AG rump's enthusiasm for, the creation of new states. The moralization in its language was heard as electioneering gobbledegook by its supporters, who continued to vote for the labels and personalities they knew of old.

42 The 'Half-and-half' General Election: a Second Unnecessary Cancer

*Wasa na zuwa kofar fada,
leken garu na menene?*

The last months of 1964 were inevitably regarded as a prolonged general election campaign, once the two alliances were arrayed in battle order. Sadly, southerners now referred to NNA as 'the Hausas', and northerners to UPGA as 'su Ibo', and the exchanges of venom in the press became ever more vicious. It is as well then first to record one event that was happy for Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and to record in a single passage the important foreign events that few leaders beyond himself and Dr Wachuku were taking time to observe.

The happy occasion was the ceremonial inauguration at New Bussa (and the explicit confirmation of the IMF documents) of the Ka'inji dam project. This was the keystone of the infrastructure which would support the development plan, his greatest materialist interest, and with his American memories Abubakar had personally insisted on locks being included in the scheme. Now estimated to cost \$200 million, the finance had largely been gathered in a basket containing a world bank loan of \$80 million, investment by Italy (which supplied the principal contractor) of up to \$25 million, \$14 million from the USA, up to \$14 million from Britain, \$5.5 million from the Netherlands, and various sums from seven American commercial banks. The construction consortium was supervised by another of Nigeria's proliferating 'parastatals', the Niger dam authority. Abubakar seized the opportunity of a brief stay in Zaria to have some rough shooting on Alhaji Abubakar Imam's farm, while unburdening himself to his old adviser, out of earshot of staff; after repeating that he would die happy when the dam was finished, he deplored the number of his northern political colleagues who still blamed him for 'favouring' the south: *'They cannot try to see that I have to give way to demands to some extent, to maintain a balance of compromise at the centre'*. The dam, unlike some federal development, promised to benefit the whole country, although during construction the Italians used heavy earth-moving equipment, instead of the thousands of labourers in employment with picks and shovels which ministers had hoped to see, as in the Niger delta and in the photographs that came from China.

Events abroad, particularly those in the commonwealth, continued to excite informed interests only. At the beginning of September the Indonesian army landed in Malaysia, and two days later British, Australian and New Zealand forces moved in to remove them, agreeing at the same time to help Malaya to expand her own forces; President Sukarno soon agreed that Field-marshal Ayub Khan should mediate. Malta became independent and the UN extended its

Cyprus force for yet three more months (and once again in December). Britain granted its first licences to explore for North sea oil. The British Solomon Islands protectorate elected its first members to join the legislative council. Dr Hastings Banda took fresh power to impose detention in Malawi. The Labour party under Mr Harold Wilson won the British general election on 15 October with a majority of five, and he redivided the joint secretaryship of state between colonies and Commonwealth relations. Northern Rhodesia became an independent republic in the Commonwealth under President Kaunda, to be named Zambia: it was then possible for liberation movements to begin a careful advance across the plains of Angola, the MPLA being supported by the soviet union and Cuba, and the FNLA (derived from the UPA which had risen in 1961) taking aid from China, USA or opportunist suppliers. Another Southern Rhodesian *indaba* of chiefs gave unanimous support to Smith's call for independence under an unchanged constitution, upon which Wilson warned Smith that 'UDI' would be treasonable. Nyerere renamed Tanganyika and Zanzibar as Tanzania.

At the beginning of November British and Malaysian planes dropped leaflets on Indonesia. 90% of the 61% of qualified electors who turned out in a Southern Rhodesian referendum voted for independence, and Smith rejected a proposed visit from the new British Commonwealth secretary. Tanzania confiscated British-owned farms for not complying with central development instructions. Ronald Ngala voluntarily dissolved KADU and the opposition, so that Kenya became a *de facto* single-party state. The Southern Rhodesia high court ruled Nkomo's detention to be illegal, and nationalist leaders were released, but promptly taken to restricted areas. Britain banned the export of all arms to South Africa, except some bombers already under contract (Verwoerd had threatened to retaliate by closing the residual British royal naval base at Simonstown); earlier Liberia and Ethiopia had arraigned South Africa at the Hague international court of justice for oppressing the natives of South-west Africa and breaking its 1918 mandate.

On 1 December Uganda signed a long-term technical assistance and credit agreement with the USSR. Mr Quaison-Sackey, foreign minister of Ghana, became the first black African president of the UN general assembly (now 115 strong). Kenya became a *de jure* one-party republic in the Commonwealth under President Kenyatta. After constitutional changes to permit it, the governor of British Guiana dismissed Jagan (who had refused to resign after losing an election) and appointed Mr Burnham as head of government. Canada adopted a new national flag which lacked any British significance. President Nyerere signed an agreement with Britain that would fund 80% of the 217 projects in his five-year plan.

Elsewhere abroad during the same period Khrushchev had retired, and Kosygin and Brezhnev had become premier and party secretary in Moscow. A civilian prime minister had again succeeded a soldier in South Vietnam, and communist Vietcong guerrillas had attacked an American airbase. President Johnson had been re-elected in Washington, and crown prince Faisal was proclaimed king of Saudi Arabia in his brother's place. Martin Luther King received a Nobel peace prize. The USA offered a new canal treaty to Panama, and at the year's end the military dissolved the South Vietnam legislature.

Even other events on the African continent tended to be overlooked, with one exception. The OAU council of ministers met again in Addis Ababa from 5 to 10 September, on Mali's initiative, to discuss the Congo situation, and saved itself from disaster by showing willingness to hear prime minister

Tshombe in the absence of Gbenye, despite the bitterness for many members of such a compromise. Dr Nkrumah called again for an OAU peacekeeping force to be sent in (which only he or Abubakar would have had the capacity to administer effectively); idealistically, this should be followed by an all-party Congolese conference, a general election, and a truly democratic government, with Kasavubu and Tshombe brushed aside. Kenya's foreign minister Murumbi supported him. Tshombe insisted that his relations with Belgium and USA, and acceptance of military equipment, were a purely internal matter, but promised to dispense with his mercenaries; but as a precondition he again asked for police and troops from friendly countries (naming Ethiopia, Libya, Malagasy, Nigeria and Sénégal) to replace them. Ghana said these would be used to kill African nationalists, and he was given none.

Mr Kenyatta was asked instead to chair an *ad hoc* committee, again suggested by Mali, which might try to reconcile the warring Congolese with each other and with their neighbours in Brazzaville and Burundi, and eliminate need for all external intervention. The committee was composed of Cameroun, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinée, Haute Volta, Nigeria, Somalia and Tunisia, and it rapidly collapsed in a division between those against Tshombe and those taking no sides. Tshombe met them in Nairobi, and a token reconciliation with the governments in Brazzaville and Usumbura was recorded. Proposals for internal reconciliation stumbled over Tshombe's refusal to negotiate with rebels in Stanleyville, and the meeting ended when the majority who considered that the removal of mercenaries was the solution to every problem decided to go to Washington to have exports of war materials stopped and American 'advisers' or military experts withdrawn. Thereupon Kasavubu announced the democratic republic of Congo's withdrawal from the committee. President Johnson refused to meet the OAU committee's delegation without the presence of the Congo government which he recognized; the committee had already made the tactical error of interviewing the rebels without Tshombe's prior knowledge. Tshombe tried to attend a conference of 58 'non-aligned' countries held in Cairo from 4 to 11 October, but was refused admission and held in detention, whence he featured in daily world headlines until allowed to creep away. The OAU's ineffectuality in the matter came to be admitted, silently, by most interested parties.

An attempt to assassinate President Diiori of Niger at this time brought to a head the widespread worries about activities of guerrilla training camps in Ghana, a matter tentatively on the OAU heads of governments' agenda. President Abboud of the Sudan dissolved his government and called on a new prime minister Khalifa, but his country's tensions did not lessen. The UAR agreed to compensate the French shareholders in the old Suez canal company for the 1956 nationalization. President Bourguiba of Tunisia was re-elected for a further seven years. The African development bank was founded in Abidjan. President Abboud resigned in mid-November and was replaced by a five-member Sudanese 'council of sovereignty'. Morocco, Algeria and Libya signed an agreement looking forward to a Maghreb economic community. In December there were race riots in Khartoum.

The exception to domestic indifference was inevitably the continuing Congo situation, where conflict between government troops and CNL *simbas* ('lions', as the best trained rebels were known) had become more vicious. On 24 November Congolese land forces led by 150 mercenaries, and 600 Belgian parachute troops who had been flown at Tshombe's government's request in American planes via the British airfield on Ascension island, captured

Stanleyville; but 29 of the foreign hostages, whose relief was the ostensible purpose, were massacred. They had been held, partly as an 'umbrella' against air raids, and partly as bargaining counters for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of all non-African military personnel; Red Cross offers to evacuate them had been rejected. African fury at the operation was widespread, but the Nigerian government impassively refused to condemn it, Wachuku insisting that exercise by a *de facto* legal government of authority for its American and Belgian friends to rescue their own nationals did not constitute 'foreign intervention'; he would himself perform an act of mercy to save human beings, he said. He went much further personally, and condemned those African states who also interfered as foreigners in the Congo by supplying arms to rebels; some embassies in Nigeria were employing trained staff for subversion, and Nigeria was next on the list after the Congo republic; African imperialism had replaced foreign imperialism, yet now refused to accept a sovereign state's right to subdue a rebellion. He was opposed, he went on, to mercenaries, not only their successful use on one side, but 'no outsiders will come into the Congo unless they ride on the backs of Africans'. His forthrightness made matters worse. Students rampaged outside American, Belgian and British consulates, the NCNC press insisted that because in their view Tshombe was an illegitimate usurper the operation was aggression. Dr Okpara called the government 'weak and undynamic', as its members 'had no sense of the governmental art'; why had they not joined Kenyatta's committee, Ghana, Russia, Egypt and others in condemnation?

Meanwhile the paratroops had returned home after freeing 1,800 Europeans and 300 Africans from captivity, but bitter fighting did not stop, and revenge killings began in Stanleyville. Tshombe went to have talks with de Gaulle, while his military dealt with the rebels without the formality of conducting trials. The Nigerian furore only died down when Ghana claimed that Nigerians were also serving as 'mercenaries' in the Congo, which conveniently turned the Lagos demonstrators' attentions against Ghanaian buildings and officials. Alhaji Sir Abubakar wearily refused to break off relations, and in the end said, '*Ghana is up to her madness as usual. . . . I think they have got a new kind of disease in Ghana now*'. Colonel Nasser openly admitted that he was sending arms to the Congo rebels. *De facto* recognition by the OAU had come too late to reassure Tshombe, who now refused even to recognise OAU decisions on peaceful contingencies. He still had Orientale to clear up, during which operations priests and nuns were among another 150 foreign hostages murdered. Most of the rebels, despite a soviet-financed Egyptian-Algerian military airlift in support, disappeared to the Sudan. At the end of the year the UN security council debated the Congo again, at which time the francophone countries and Wachuku again defended the strict legality of the Tshombe régime. Against this background the OAU council of ministers compromised by merely disapproving the American and Belgian interventions and again asking Tshombe to work with Kenyatta's committee towards national reconciliation. By this time the Nigerian election was over.

The final corrected and checked census figures at the beginning of September added 5,800 to the east and 2,500 to the mid-west; the greater reductions of 19,000 in the north and 12,600 in the west made no practical difference. However many states might be created, so long as cultural differences remained as stereotyped perceptions, there would always remain four millions more so-called 'northerners' (or 'Hausas') than so-called 'southerners'. A police council meeting called in Lagos, in anticipation of reactions, discussed security

measures including a need to expand the force. Northern NPC ministers had always been slightly doubtful of the Nigeria police force, with which outside Kaduna they were less familiar than with the NA police, and more than once they had wanted to see a Kaduna local authority force created; the real issue was which body of men they felt that in the last resort they could control. A proposal at this council to spend as much on the western local government and northern native authority police for equipment and training as on the federal Nigeria police became enveloped in a final announcement that 'for the duration' these forces would be placed under command of NPF. This did lead to some reduction in malpractices, but only in proportion to the local authority's good faith and to the strength of the NPF's local physical presence. Various statements emerged, of various relevance: Dr Okpara, who had no local forces, wanted total fusion of all the police and added that the western house should quit; Chief Akintola said there would be no regional election this year; the Sardauna repeated his objection to a national government other than NNA; and Chief Osadebay said that his wing of the NCNC was exempt from the southern alliance because the mid-west was stable and only wished to be left alone. The prime minister went to Nsukka to report on all this, and in the following police *Operation Hooliganism Campaign* over 200 thugs were arrested in Lagos and Ibadan.

On 5 September Alhaji Sir Abubakar reinforced the NNA by appointing two new ministers from the NNDP, without portfolio: Augustus Meredith Akinloye, and the former health minister Chief Ayotunde Rosiji. The eastern NCNC complained that on the eve of a dissolution this was a breach of the coalition agreement and a waste of public money, while Adegbenro protested about 'a most grievous rape of democracy'. The NPC announced that this did not mean that they did not still oppose creation of a national government. Alhaji Sir Abubakar called in his old journalistic acquaintance Babatunde Jose, now managing director of the *Daily Times*, for a briefing, and assured him that if his party won the election he would after all form a government of all the major political parties including, if possible, Awolowo. Jose had been supportive of Abubakar, but also of Akintola; in this he differed from many of his junior colleagues in the Lagos press.

The experience of Nigerian cabinets was beginning to counterpoint that of parliament. As legislative sessions became fewer and shorter, so cabinets dealt less with the familiar efficient routine of memoranda on the details of bills, subsidiary legislation and crisis management, and their discussions centred more on broader and loosely documented matters of politics and personal safety. Ministers accepted that individuals and political pressure groups would prefer to lobby the prime minister and his colleagues, to press their expectations from an imminent cabinet discussion of an otherwise limited formal agenda; in consequence a minor matter might unwittingly be allowed to escalate to a major level. The colonial tradition of internal pre-meeting caucuses also revived, and a minister who had been absent from one of these would occasionally detect Abubakar giving the full meeting a lead which turned out to be clearly contrary to some Kaduna-based caucus agreement or even to an NNA deal. The official government gazette also reflected, for those who still read it with informed understanding outside the public service, the divergence between unchanged administrative practices and new political standards: nearly 5,000 eastern workers would still be licensed to work in Fernando Póo upon the Spanish authorities depositing £200 a head guarantee, while buried among government notices of the 'loss' of local purchase order forms and disposal of 'unclaimed'

firearms would be found unprecedented numbers of unconditional presidential pardons for sentences already served out after convictions for counterfeiting and receiving (a different category of restoring full civil and political rights from the amnesties granted less discriminately to celebrate republic day), or of revocation 'in the interest of peace and amity in the federal territory of Lagos' of previous withdrawals of recognition of white cap chiefs. At internal affairs Shehu Shagari set up a committee to advise on the piquant problem of how the expression 'native authority' should be translated into local native languages. The Ikeja magistrate rejected the Leeds trades union lecturer Victor Allen's alleged confession as inadmissible, but the case continued. At the same time Alhaji Sir Abubakar was saddened by the death of his close friend the oba of Lagos Adele, who was succeeded by oba Oyekan.

Parliament met for four days on 25 September. Apart from the prime minister's motion to divide the federation into the 312 reallocated constituencies prescribed by the electoral commission, the main business was the newspaper amendment bill. The north lost seven seats (now 167) in the allocation and the east three (now 70); the west and mid-west gained nine (now 57 and 14 respectively) and Lagos one (now four). The boundaries and many of the names were still readily identifiable with old and long familiar administrative divisions or traditional NA districts, a socially comfortable fact which only deracinated theorists (and no successfully practising politician) found regrettable. The north's extra four millions still represented twenty-two extra seats for the south to envy.

This new press bill sought two things: to achieve the control which all governments in democratic countries that are doctrinally or socially divided are sometimes tempted to crave over a free press that sets unbridled opinion above facts (or rights above moral public duty); and to bring all the Lagos journals under the same discipline as in other parts of the federation – it provided for fining of the newspaper or imprisonment of the editor that authorized, published, reproduced or circulated any statement, rumour or report, false or without regard to its truth, which adversely affected any right, reputation or freedom of a person entitled to protection; or disclosed confidential information; or attacked or was likely to be prejudicial to the defence of Nigeria, or to its public safety, order, morality or health. Lawyers, trades unionists and above all journalists had raised their voices in protest, as in other free countries, but for once few opposition politicians joined the chorus. Ordinary people of all persuasions, let alone umbrageous parliamentarians, were more inclined at a time of demoralized uncertainty to agree with Benson's ministry statement that, 'Government has been driven back to the wall, assailed by the unpardonable irresponsibility of newspaper editors, correspondents, reporters and all, harassed by the reality that unless it stands its ground firmly, all other freedoms – except liberty to abuse – shall be lost'. There was no discussion in the streets when the bill was overwhelmingly passed, after verbal amendment to bring it closer to the eastern region's newspaper law of colonial times (if not to the slightly more liberal northern law), by removing reference to political motivation and so emphasizing falsity or inadequate verification. However, there would always be some men in the street ready to apportion some blame for later tragedies in the direction of blatantly partisan reporting, and editorializing dressed up as factual statements.

Abubakar had some scrupulous words of praise for those few who had opposed it on good ethical grounds, and journalists became no less vocal but more circumspect in their forthcoming reporting – even of well attested

tales of the UPGA lawyers arrested in the north, of denial of produce buying licences to AG members in the west, and of improper 'detentions' everywhere. A partial but surprising comment came from the Canadian owner of British newspapers, Lord Thomson of Fleet, whose organization had a substantial interest in the Amalgamated press which published the originally Action Group *Daily Express*. 'African politicians', he proclaimed, 'are peculiar people. Unless you have their name in large type on the front page every day, they think you are against them. . . . people in many new countries lack the necessary training and background to be permitted free use of the press. This result[s] in much unreasonable and irresponsible criticism. In such cases the press should be prepared to accept some restrictions. It is more in the interests of democracy to continue to publish under heavy restrictions imposed by governments, than to pull out in a huff as publishers have in the past'. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had in fact once consulted a trusted British journalist already mentioned in this record about Thomson's subsidizing a blatantly politicized party paper; what would the reactions be in Canada or London if he were deported on his next visit? The advice was that hilarity would outweigh outrage, since he was commonly regarded as an old innocent in political affairs, who had been taken for a total ride by the principals behind the Amalgamated press.

Nevertheless it is worth reflecting that at this time the NNDP had used western regional funds to launch the *Nigerian Daily Sketch* (renting its printing facilities from Cecil King's *Daily Times*); the AG had revived some of its former Allied newspapers such as the *Mid-West Echo*; UPGA could generally rely on the *Pilot* and *Eastern Outlook*; and the NPC on the *Nigerian Citizen*. All the premiers were highly critical of the *Daily Times*, which pointed to the weaknesses of the five governments as much as to their achievements, but Alhaji Sir Abubakar insisted that he would contemplate neither nationalizing the paper, nor withdrawing official advertising from it, nor giving chairman King 'final warnings', as the premiers had variously suggested; King had trust in the paper's Nigerian editors on the spot. Since then democratic politicians in other countries have come to share Thomson's peculiar belief that bad publicity is preferable to no publicity.

Although feelings had been running high all summer, Alhaji Sir Abubakar managed to turn the final adjournment debate of the republic's first parliament into a school breaking-up assembly: 'I have been in this house for 17 years. If you ask those who were with me in the legco in that year, in 1947, they will tell you what a terrible man I was, because I was all out to fight the south. I started fighting, and fighting, the south, and I did not understand why I was fighting them so hard. Later on, I realized that I had to change. . . . The north and the south of Nigeria must go together, otherwise there will be no Nigeria. So it is the same now in 1964 - the east, the west, the mid-west, and the north must go together'. Aminu Kano gave him a special tribute and there were cheers; but where Edward VII had met President Loubet, or de Gaulle had met Adenauer, and even one day Sadat was to meet Begin, Reagan Gorbachev and Gandhi Bhutto, there was no equal national opponent yet ready to join his proffered leadership in the direction of burying the past. Abubakar was proud next day to lay the foundation stone of the new permanent building of the Nigerian institute of international affairs (NIIA), watched by the new British high commissioner Sir Francis Cumming-Bruce and his artist wife, who were now social friends with a respect for him as a person. Francis Edward Hovell-Thurlow-Cumming-Bruce was Viscount Head's more aristocratic successor, with a diplomatic rather than a political career behind him, having been the adviser on external affairs

to the governor of the Gold Coast in 1955 (another 'John the Baptist') and deputy high commissioner to Ghana 1957-58, Abubakar also opened a fresh telephone link with the Congo, circumspectly telling Tshombe that '*We hope the present temporary problems which your country is facing will be solved within the African context*'.

President Azikiwe's health was declared sufficiently improved for him to postpone an intended recuperative holiday until after the elections. He substituted an admiral of the fleet's uniform for his field marshal's to deliver a republic day speech on 1 October, which purported to warn all political parties to behave themselves; but was plausibly reinterpreted as directed explicitly against the NNA (especially NNDP and Akintola, whom he accused of using the party to foster anti-Igbo tribal hatred) and implicitly pro-UPGA (who now openly favoured an executive presidency). A first national day honours list was impartial and lengthy. Many Nigerians honoured by the British, and still prominent in political life, had their crown awards repeated in similar classes of the two orders of the federal republic and of the Niger. The four premiers all received the GCON (grand commander, the highest grade), together with the sultan of Sokoto and the shehu of Borno. The eastern judge Sir Louis Mbanefo had a CFR, Brigadier Aguiyi-Ironsi an OFR. The northern list was the longest, including names that are familiar in this tale of Abubakar's background: CFR for the emirs of Katsina, Bauchi, Zaria and Gombe, the lamido of Adamawa and Malam Ali Afilu; OFR for the emir of Yauri, Peter Achimugu and Alhaji Yakubu Lame, and Sule Gaya; OON for the emir of Misau and Dr Dikko; MFR for pastor Lot; MON for the chief of Dass, Malam Yakubu Wanka and Dr Rupert East's artist widow Alhajiya Dada Sare. The east recognized some expatriates with honorary awards. But *noblesse oblige*; neither the president, the fount of honour, nor the prime minister on whose advice he acted, appeared on the list.

Earl Mountbatten of Burma visited Lagos, in commonwealth ex-servicemen's interests, and found an interested hearer in the prime minister; third world commonwealth countries had not so far done too much for their 'veterans'. Politicians hardly noticed that Nigerian officials now opened direct negotiations with the European community, talks which petered out unsuccessfully in December, although with a possibility of resumption in 1965. The general public noticed that Mr Eyo Esua's Nigerian union of teachers came out on strike, encouraged by the JAC's continuing post-Morgan agitation, and that placards in Lagos streets read, 'Abubakar, You were a Teacher, Pity us', and 'No teacher, no Balewa - no Nation, no Ministers'; Abubakar invited the leaders of the demonstrating marchers into the grounds of his lodge and reasoned with them that the federation was only one among their five principal employers.

Although electioneering had effectively been in full swing since Dr Okpara's rejection of the other regional census figures (if not since the abandonment of the first census), it was formally launched in the second week of October by the publication of the UPGA manifesto. As ever, NCNC and AG draftsmen were quicker to produce a doctrinal document than were their pragmatic opponents, although the words would go for little in the market places and lorry parks. Adherents of Westminster detected virtue in the apparent arrival of a straight contest between two national parties, UPGA and NNA, that both straddled the north-south divide; they did not notice that the NNA-UPGA divide tended merely to tilt the line in the pilot's inclinometer, down on the left and up on the right as the plane banked. UPGA (it was now pronounced 'up-gah') delivered

through Dr Okpara's lips its promise of what (in imitation of Mr Wilson in his contemporary British Labour campaign, if not of his metaphor of a white-hot crucible of technological change) it would achieve in its 'first hundred days': the release of Chief Awolowo (in the first 24 hours), the creation of an executive president and a distinct vice-presidency, another census, centralization of education as an exclusive federal subject, the establishment of (undefined) new states and fairer (undefined) allocation of revenue between them, a judicial human rights commission with powers over regions, the absorption of all local police into the NPF, a new army council on which the president would sit, equal power for the senate with the lower house, and votes for women in the north. Cures for economic ills were not stressed, although the problems identified included growth of production, jobs for school-leavers, training in scarce skills and eradication of debilitating endemic disease. As for foreign policy, there was little beyond a call for 'dynamism' in relation to the Congo and China, and for less involvement with both the Arab world and Israel.

The NPC hard core saw itself marked as UPGA's one real enemy, and swore to have no compromise with its leaders once they themselves had, under whatever name, won the election. The political elements of the manifesto were directed obliquely against the northern NA system, especially the emirates, whence the NPC politicians won their power and from which NCNC and AG politicians believed their own countrymen to fear oppression; the mistake lay in still thinking that northern voters endured the same syndrome of oppressor and, enlightened and fully enfranchised, were now ready to reject it. Candidates who knew their constituencies knew that the fight would be about earthier things, and UPGA now got down to the graft of assigning seats among the alliance's locally competitive parties. In very few of the predominantly rural constituencies of the whole country, however, had the probable winner and his party not already been identified in the voters' minds many months before.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar took the initiative and called a two-day meeting in the senate building on 22 October of the leaders of all the principal parties and groupings. His purpose was, looking back on other such national round table conferences since that preceding the Queen's visit nearly a decade before (not on Ibadan in 1950), that they might resolve together on the best means of ensuring free and fair elections. Effectively Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu led for the NPC in the meeting, the northern premier being involved with regional party discussion in Kaduna. Dr Okpara was anxious to see something set out on paper, however ineffective it might prove to be, since it might offer a useful weapon in later argument. The meeting did agree on a nine-point plan, which was duly signed, to co-operate with the police for a peaceful campaign, and for fair elections based on equal freedom for all political parties, abstention from bans and discrimination, and determination to stamp out hooliganism. The plan amounted to a pious appeal to the party organizations to restrain their followers, and it illustrated as clearly as may be that a democratically-minded federal prime minister cannot go far towards dealing strictly with his country people unless its premiers, who share locally his national responsibility for law and order, and for giving a lead on moral standards, are prepared to give him personal public support. Abubakar's summit meeting gave the lead, but those on the nursery slopes seemed to take small heed.

Only two days later NNDP supporters banned Okpara (who had, unlike Akintola and the Sardauna, wanted to lead his own alliance's federal campaign personally outside its strongholds) from a meeting in Akintola's home town c

Ogbomosho. Chief Festus doubtless warned him that personally he had just as little faith in their new AG allies, but shortly afterwards Okpara was told that there was nowhere in Bauchi town that was not already booked, and he had to hold his meeting outside the town's mud walls; in Kaduna he had booked rooms in advance at the Hamdala hotel, but on arrival was told that all the rooms were already occupied. A gloomy President Azikiwe in consequence told an interviewer on his 60th birthday that, 'What is happening in Nigeria to-day does not inspire me to be optimistic that we shall survive as one nation'. He might have been reminded of Thomas Hobbes's assertion that prophecy is many times the principal cause of the events foretold. In fact all regions were watching bully-boys at work in towns, and official agencies refusing permits for meetings, so that vandalism and intimidation were taken for granted. Aminu Kano soon claimed that 26 of his NPF candidates were in jail. Okpara went down to see Awolowo, who was now in Calabar jail where the prime minister had thought he would receive more reasonable treatment than in other federal prisons. It was against such a background of distrust that at a timely internal security meeting of the police council the expatriate deputy commissioner responsible for criminal investigation, John Lynn, told the prime minister that he was retiring ('*O, please reconsider*', the usual response, was made more convincing by the memory of Lynn's discoveries during the treason investigation).

In one of his fits of self-doubt about NPC solidarity at this time, Alhaji Sir Abubakar commented to his NNDP colleague Chief Ayotunde Rosiji, '*Some people don't want me here: well, if they don't want me, I can resign without waiting to be pushed out*'. Rosiji demanded to know why this should be: 'This isn't good. Let it come out in the open, and the country can judge! The job of PM is not a personal property'. '*I will go back to being a teacher, in the same school and village*'.

After the political summit meeting reporters, anxious to fish for the actual date of the election, asked Abubakar disingenuously whether the country would be threatened by disunity afterwards. Since the electoral rolls could only begin to be compiled once the geographical constituency boundaries were gazetted beyond doubt, and he had only just signed the order delimiting the last new federal constituencies in the mid-west, he declined to be drawn into more precision than to say that it would be '*soon*'; but concerning disunity he confessed, '*I don't think so, provided of course that the party leaders will behave as sportsmen after victory or defeat*'. This was not the club slang of a polo player, or of an army officer, but he feared that such a concept of 'fair play' was alien to many of the grooms, or NCOs, serving those of whom he spoke. Shortly after this he was able to order the delimitation, on the commission's advice, of the 65 mid-west regional constituencies, while disheartened that a commander, lieutenant-commander and lieutenant of the Nigerian navy had had to be dismissed because of 'irregularities' in their stores. Britain's press, excited by Wilson's bare election victory, was also interested in the Leeds lecturer Victor Allen's sentence at Ikeja of a year's hard labour for plotting to overthrow Nigeria's government (he had already received two months on charges to which he had pleaded guilty, involving an attempt to jump bail for Dahomey in the unconvincing guise of a Hausa trader); the German investigative, sometimes imaginative, journal *Der Spiegel* was more interested in the 'Russian' methods being adopted by the German officers training the infant Nigerian air force in Kaduna: but the southern Nigerian press (the *Daily Times* excepted) made the most of its own licentious attacks on northerners, and the northern press of its profligate attacks on Igbo 'opportunists'.

Tiv and UMBC resentment of the NPC had continued unabated all summer since May, and now in the growing political election fever there had been riots and damage sufficient to interfere with the mainline railway services between Jos and Enugu. Hundreds had taken refuge in the east. Severe sentences had been imposed, but it was clear that the Tiv people hated the police and could not be controlled by them. Security advisers had to point out that the Tiv country was part of the strategic communication between the north-east and the south-east, and that the growing Tiv population was spilling over into Jukun and other peoples' areas. Those advisers, and some of his more impetuous ministers, were finding the prime minister less ready than he might have been to direct the firm action they wanted. It was not, they said, that he would not let them punish the hooligans who cursed and reviled them, but that it was hard to convince him, even with evidence that people were dousing cars with petrol and setting light to the occupants. It did not even seem to matter more when the alleged victims were northerners. It was as a very last resort that Alhaji Sir Abubakar called in the GOC and asked him, 'What can you do?', now that the police had asked for 'aid to the civil power'. General Welby-Everard consulted and said that Sam Ademulegun, who was in charge of the brigade that covered the north and east, could send a battalion from Kaduna to carry out a peace-keeping rôle. Taking the final line that, as in the west in 1961, '*come what may, law and order must be restored*', on 18 November the prime minister authorized immediate military steps '*to ensure the return to normal life as early as possible*' in the Tiv area. A deliberate choice was made within the army to use Jack Pam's 3NA battalion, newly home from its steady task in Tanganyika, rather than Ojukwu's 5NA. There were practical limits to what regimented soldiers could do when the violent trouble-makers were petty guerrillas incapable of presenting mass targets and, like all terrorists, concerned to frighten opponents among their own tribe into enforced co-operation by burning their huts and attacking unarmed individuals. Nevertheless 'the flag was shown', no shots were fired, Major Hassan with his reconnaissance company toured peaceably, and most of the trouble quietened down. Meanwhile Abubakar dutifully went to Nsukka to keep the president informed of security worries and election arrangements.

The army's intervention inspired some new myths which were to grow deep roots. Without constituting a 'warrior caste' such as Indian army legends had once concocted, the Tiv had always been the least peaceful of Nigeria's principal races. Yet although they were in some ways the backbone of the Nigerian army, they did not comprise more than a third of the infantry. It was not true then that brother was set against brother. In fact the Tiv were very fond of the army, and welcomed them in place of the armed police. Nor was it true in more than superficial words that the military had for the first time been launched against innocent civilians. As has been said, no force was used and the civilian reception was (as it had been in most of the Congo) one of welcome. However the myths grew in the minds and mouths of those who had not been there, and expanded to embrace earlier military operations under British COs to destroy flocks of *quelea quelea* birds that were consuming farmers' crops. Major Nzeogwu who had been in touch with Angolan freedom-fighters was now teaching in Kaduna, after returning from staff college in India. The intoxicating thought that politicians might invite the army to unleash a reign of terror assisted one easterner lieutenant-colonel, and a colleague Banjo, to verbalize suggestive hints to colleagues during the forthcoming presidential crisis that the government

might be taken over; lieutenants-colonel Gowon and David Ejoor proved unresponsive.

Two more happy occasions were distractions from the election campaign. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was never again seen in public so apparently fit and in high spirits as on 30 November when he welcomed President François Ngartha Tombalbaye across the border from Tchad, to meet Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroun and Hammani Diori from Niamey, to attend the opening of the final Borno railway extension. Sceptics might still think that 20-ton lorries on improved roads should, for all the traffic problems, have been more economical, but Abubakar could claim that '*African unity is in operation in Maiduguri to-day*', and 46-year old Tombalbaye added, 'For the English and the French there is a difference between two Bornos, for us there is only one country'. Abubakar had a speech covering five sheets of foolscap (A4 was still unknown), but spoke it word for word from memory. The 92-year-old shehu attended the closing of the ceremony, and all the Nigerian speakers referred to Sir Ralf Emerson, who had been brought back for the occasion, and his British railway engineers. Three old Katsina college boys, Abubakar Tafawa, Ahmed Raba and Shettima Kashim, talked ruefully in private of their impossible ambitions to retire peacefully to their farms from public life. There was a special national honours list, including a CFR for minister Raymond Amanze Njoku and an honorary CFR for Sir Ralf Billing Emerson. There was still the possibility in Abubakar's mind of further extensions, into Niger certainly, and perhaps even far east into the Sudan; but because the northern premier was now actively using a sometimes reluctant provincial administration to make returns of religious conversions, and talking more often of forging external links, behaviour which frightened the south with the prospect of his secession to some greater Arabised confederation, Abubakar kept the vision very close to himself. A different pleasure, at home in Bauchi, was the opening next day of the Yankari game park, with comfortable visitors' lodgings around the once remote and fabled Wikki springs between Dindima, Gar and Mainamaji.

The NNA manifesto, when it became available, gave no more food for market gossip than UPGA's. It was broadly conservative, promising peace and stability on the foundation of the existing system, which might however be 'modernised'. Abubakar's voice is certainly echoed in this passage: 'The coming together in one organization of north and south, Igbo and Yoruba, Efik and Hausa, and all the other ethnic groups is the greatest blessing that has ever happened to our people. It will underline our strength, and what is more it will ensure that all of our people, the strong and the weak, will get a fair deal'. Periodically there would be independent fiscal review commissions to review revenue division between centre and regions, paying special attention to the special needs of all parts; if real reason and necessity existed for new states, the present constitutional provisions were adequate for their creation; 'socialism' would be of an indigenous kind, with growing participation of Nigerians in industry and commerce until the transfer from expatriate hands had been effected in an orderly way; as for labour, all governments, workers and private employers ought to be members of a single family; the respectful treatment of trades unions as equals would be in return for their showing responsibility and restraint in a movement free from interference by outside forces which did not understand the problems of Nigerian workers. The Sardauna allowed it to be repeated that, as Azikiwe was his personal friend, the president's person would be safeguarded if NNA won.

During the actual canvassing Alhaji Sir Abubakar himself was little heard outside his own province, except for an interview in which he was forced to show realism despite his loyalty to cabinet colleagues, and to describe the NCNC as the principal enemy since they disowned the work done by their own partners in his 'coalition'. He would not think of changing the constitution again, and demanded to know which African state had developed faster than Nigeria. Yet he also insisted that his NCNC foreign minister's policies had brought the country great credit in Africa and beyond. His followers tended to make cheaper jibes, merely denouncing their opponents as aliens or (if members of the northern progressive front) as shameless good-for-nothings.

Similarly the southern allies in the NNA were inclined to replay the old chauvinist arguments from 1959 and before. The NNDP concentrated on Yoruba unity against Igbo domination, while making fun of NCNC for having plagiarised Awolowo's ideas and of Okpara for not standing for a federal seat himself and wanting to break up the federation (Okpara responded by challenging Abubakar and Akintola to stand, or at least campaign, in the east). The NDC's anti-Igbo message centred on the NNA being the only power likely to break up the east and form a rivers state. The MDF fought on Igbo domination also, although its president James Otobo showed some independence by bringing a suit in the Benin high court, against Alhaji Sir Abubakar among others, to declare the mid-west house of assembly illegal because its constituencies had been unfairly delimited. The Awolowo card was played by Fani-Kayode, who without consulting NNA leaders claimed early in December that they also would free him, anticipating the prime minister's words of a year later with, ' . . . he has many things to do for Nigeria'. Akintola was saying the same thing, but knowing what an AG led by Awo, with UPGA, might do to himself and NNDP, he only said it in private.

The UPGA campaign, as led by Dr Okpara's NCNC, was anxious to be forceful in all provinces, using equally strong anti-northern language and expressing resentment of northern institutions' treatment of Igbos everywhere, except in those areas where their northern allies tactfully substituted opposition to the native authorities' general oppressiveness against all progressives: in the rivers they concentrated on the need for more states and to free Awo. They mocked members of the NNDP for changing their politics four times in as many years, now allowing their party's balloting symbol of the black hand to be used to wield the NPC's symbol of the hoe; after all, NCNC had helped Akintola (and his former NCNC deputy Fani-Kayode) to oust Awolowo, while NNDP's colleagues were only reactionary northerners and a cabal of self-regarding intellectuals, incapable of making the country progress. The UMBC, a party of Christians and animists for the most part, and the KPP with its many Tijani, had their own reasons for circumspection in explaining their alliance or selecting the terms in which to attack their chosen enemy. NEPU was unashamed of friendship with southern infidels. As for the AG itself, it preferred to attack what had to remain rather more ill-defined 'Enemies of the Yoruba', to attribute the west's confusion to Awolowo's absence, and to demand the division of the huge north into politically manageable states; it was helped by any resentment of Akintola's coercive methods, but it was not helped by becoming identified with Dr Okpara's attempts to tour the west in the interest of the west's natural opposition. The western region was seen by both alliances as the key to the campaign: UPGA wanted to show that the people of three of the four regions were united behind it, NNA having gelded the AG wanted to prove that NCNC was not invincible either.

These ethnic exchanges were hurled across a background chorus of activity that was nastier than in any earlier campaign but, colourfully though it was described in the press of the time, in language often reminiscent of Amos Tutuola's poetic extravaganzas, not quite as bad as it was to be remembered across later memories of the much worse political experiences that were to follow. In a forewarning of what was to come, Alhaji Sir Abubakar's federal government, which had intervened in the west in 1962, was criticized for not intervening again now; yet the unpleasantness in the west was not so very much greater than in other regions as to justify singling it out for special treatment. Thuggery was widespread, but its violence seemed generally to be directed at keeping waverers or the mob in line rather than against opponents or aliens personally. Petty partisan bureaucracy and narrow interpretation of rule books were the more effective tools against politicians: special reasons for forbidding entry to certain places, or withholding permits, cancelled accommodation, dumb insolence and functionaries' empty offices all frustrated the leaders (Okpara, Aminu Kano and Adegbenro gave up one northern tour in disgust three days early). The same tactics were soon scented in electoral registrations: adults known to have been counted for the census may not have received voting cards; such complainants might not find anyone 'on seat' to hear their plea; the printed forms for formal claims were not always available. Incompetence led to misspellings and inaccuracies of address, or entry in the wrong ward: but so might malice.

The law courts could also be used: even a practising lawyer might be taken in unlawful assembly, and Joseph Tarka was arrested for 'incitement'. Some thought this peculiar to the venality of NA police and native courts, but in the eastern region which had only the federal Nigeria police force and, because traditions and custom were fragmented, had a greater reliance on magistrates' courts, attested complaints of arrests, victimization and brow-beating were made by MDF, the Dynamic party, NDC, the Republican party, SWAFP, and the little known Eastern People's Congress. Motives and guilty minds are hard to prove: if a sanitary inspector lays a charge for harbouring mosquito larvae in a tin or banana stem, a forestry assistant accuses a farmer of damaging a protected tree, or a works supervisor has a dangerous hut demolished, is the offence less because the parties' politics differ? It was not a peculiarly Nigerian dilemma: American policemen have booked traffic offenders displaying 'Black Panther' bumper stickers; British officials have commandeered historic iron railings from aristocrats' estates to rust in stockpiles instead of being smelted into wartime tanks, but left the local authority housing perimeters defended; English public schoolboys have been imprisoned (or freed without a caution) after minor crimes; and who may weigh prejudice against a true bill? The bad taste however remains, as it did in Nigeria despite the sultan's reminders that authority must deal with offenders without regard to their party allegiance or social status, and that 'no person can be imprisoned without committing an offence'. There was another consideration, self-evident but rarely diagnosed: secularized inhabitants of liberal western democracies, and many Africans converted to Christianity or schooled in European law and constitutionality, are persuaded of the separation of powers, the division between church and state, and a distinction between 'political' and other criminal activity; but those faithful to a medieval church, or to Islam, and respectful of other African law and custom, are reluctant to compartmentalize life, and judge all human behaviour by the same universal rules and norms. A party political, or ethnic, election campaign was not an excuse for otherwise intolerable social acts, and

had they but been circumspect few of, say, the NEPU supporters who ended in jail need have found themselves there – but some undoubtedly outrageous reactions were unhappily seen as the universal pattern.

The prime minister was forced by circumstances (some of the lately compiled electoral registers had even to be farmed out to America to be printed in time) to agree with the federal electoral commission to appoint the election date, after giving the statutory three weeks' notice upon dissolution of parliament on virtually the last day constitutionally acceptable, as 30 December. Although avoiding the peak of election emotions arising over Christmas, which would be spoilt in any event, formation of a new government might now extend into the *Ramadan* fast. On the day after the announcement Dr Azikiwe made a dramatic 'dawn broadcast', in the tradition of Nkrumah unorthodoxy rather than of constitutional rule. Some listeners found him 'incredible and challenging' in his allegations and counter-allegations, others heard them as yet another attack on the NNA rather than an impartial castigation of all the contesting parties whose lawless fashion, he said in a reference to 10,000 'detentions', would cause the nation to disintegrate: 'If this embryo republic must disintegrate, then in the name of God let the operation be a short and painless one! . . . If the nation's politicians have decided to destroy our national unity, then they should summon a round table conference to decide how our national assets should be divided before they seal their doom by satisfying their lust for office, because it is better for us and for our many admirers abroad that we should disintegrate in peace, not in pieces'. The president then suffered renewed strain and was bidden by his doctor to rest once more. In this broadcast he had positively failed to give support to his prime minister's own non-partisan and patriotic appeals for unity, but had moreover for the first time openly placed secession as a possibly respectable option before the nation as a whole. It was an act full of fate, in view of those many who still saw Zik as the NCNC political leader of the Igbo people.

The northern premier immediately reacted: those who talked dimly of the country's future should recognize that there was no constitutional provision for secession or 'disintegration' – he had remained silent in the past, he said, because he thought the NCNC would not be serious in suggesting it, but its leading members were now causing fear and suspicion. To muffle those who were pointing at the evidence of internal NPC dissension in Alhaji Sir Abubakar's dormant yearning for another all-party national government, the Sardauna and the prime minister made a joint statement that Abubakar would remain head of government if their party were returned to power, and that he had never worked outside the party's policies, always in full consultation with Sir Ahmadu and without disagreement. This plausible statement reassured the party, but weakened Abubakar in the eyes of those southerners who preferred to picture him as the puppet rather than the national leader. Sir Kashim Ibrahim broke ranks and conceded that any section firmly convinced that it could not remain in the federation should properly consult its own and the other governments through accepted channels, if indeed it desired such 'progress' to be peaceful.

In the run-up to nominations, Abubakar's information minister T O S Benson was 'deselected': as the NCNC seemed to become more exclusively eastern regional and Igbo-led, he was all the more isolated as a Yoruba, despite his vice-presidency of the party. When his constituency association in Lagos north gave a heavy majority to a Mr F M Moronu as their new prospective

candidate, he resigned from seventeen years' individualistic service to the NCNC and declared himself an 'independent UPGA' candidate: the NCNC hierarchy responded to this gracefully 'with great relief'. There were few other prominent party upsets or new choices, but the process towards official nominations became rough. Hoodlums and stonewallers might well have been expected wherever opponents might have a fighting chance, but in numbers of 'safe seats', especially in the north, it became a bizarre point of pride with party agents, who could not believe in political pendulums in a plural society and who saw rivalry as a personal insult, that their candidate should be declared elected unopposed. NNNDP's machinations with nominations were modest compared with NPC's. Some ministers and emirs were shameless in showing electoral officers, particularly NA officials, the path to future favours, and middle-belt officers were not the least ready to succumb. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was embarrassed by the strength of such feeling shown in his own province, as if there were a league table of 'unopposeds'. Not surprisingly, where successful the ploy backfired, as inevitable winners were excoriated for having beaten inevitable losers by obstructionism alone; Abubakar in particular was blamed for the difficulties met by UPGA in Bauchi south-west. However as UPGA began to appreciate that in the fifth year of independence there were no machiavellian alien administrators to blame for the latest northern population figures, its leaders changed tack. On the day of dissolution Dr Okpara, mindful of the probable northern results and at last admitting privily to himself that he could not win the election, claimed that if the polls were rigged or unfairly conducted, UPGA 'would not allow' any government to assume power. It appeared that setting aside the large population still under age, and the women of the north, the potential Nigerian electorate officially numbered about 22 million.

Two precedents now began to be misleadingly reinterpreted: one was the reference to the government as a 'caretaker' government, with the implication that, as it might have been when the AG ministers resigned from the council of ministers in 1953 (or when Labour left Churchill's cabinet in 1945 and he formed a 'caretaker' administration for a few weeks), it had no true policy powers; the second was that, purportedly as Sir James Robertson had invited Sir Abubakar to form a government in 1959 without waiting for the few last remote results to come in, so the president might use the wording of the constitution to call on a new prime minister in the vacuum caused by no 'valid' election having been held. It became important therefore to UPGA that the election be seen to be 'improper'. The burgeoning countryside newspaper stories of 'partymen' (*sic*) being thrashed, refused bail or dying, of curfews and journalists' sedition trials, of religious divisions and findings of weapons, were an encouragement. However the likelihood that, through obstructions or not, a substantial number of NNA candidates would be declared unopposed after nomination day (possibly creating a wave of imitative results and making it impossible for the president to call quickly on an NCNC PM if UPGA won most early declarations of the contested seats), was worrying. Dr Majekodunmi warned the prime minister to take advice, but the legal consultant who was approached concentrated on precedents in the Indian constitution rather than on interpretation of Nigeria's wording.

UPGA held rallies in Benin, Enugu and Lagos, calling for the dismissal of the 'caretaker' government forthwith, and Adegbenro wired the president on 16 December explaining that both UPGA and NNA should then fill the ministerial vacancies. AG supporters at Ibadan university, whom some suspected later of

being privy to the thoughts of soldiers like Banjo and other plotters, called for a delay to the election and for the army (whose use to enforce law and order they otherwise purported to resent) to take over administration for three months and to supervise the polls. The Sardauna issued an immediate statement quoting a clear lawyerly interpretation of the limits to the president's actual powers, and expressing his certainty that Zik would not flout the constitution; Alhaji Si Abubakar also dismissed Adegbenro's renewed slur that his was a 'caretaker government since no one had resigned, insisted that there was no constitutional issue at stake, and that he and all his ministers (including those from NCN who were 'sitting tight') were correctly administering their executive duties; was normal until a new government was formed after the election. His cabin might be 'lame duck' or 'hung', but except that it had no legislature to pass new legislation it had all the budget and policies a legal executive requires. At least Osadebay told the people to regard it as an article of faith that Nigeria was 'one and indivisible'. On 17 December the last of the swampy electoral registers were released; the revising officers had been swamped and had long been struggling for 24 hours a day with the unfamiliar and newfangled computers commandeered from the census office, the statistics office, the railway corporation, Shell-BP at Port Harcourt and the univer at Ibadan. New technology apart, there had been great human problems in fitting traditional or Anglicised name-styles into listings whose software programs assumed European forenames and family surnames. One principal public concern had been that the names of every candidate's proposer, second and assenters had to be checked with the final register for his nomination to be valid. There was now one day left in which to do it all.

Dr Azikiwe had said nothing, but 'Zikists' spoke of boycott and secession. UPGA complained to the police inspector-general Louis Edet that local elections were not yet fully under his effective command. On 18 December, closing for nominations, Edet who had the prized right of access to the prime minister made a non-political broadcast, appealing in the interest of national security to all politicians to observe the 'Eight Don'ts': it was too late. The electoral attorney-general Mr C C Mojekwu had been touring the north to investigate UPGA's frustrations. His experience was classic: for example, some federal electoral commission conducted a quasi-judicial hearing in a hotel to listen to Mojekwu, Aminu Kano and other UPGA spokesmen on their case, which now extended beyond brutality and red tape barriers to broken culverts and herds of cows blocking the organizers' traffic. Once some NPC spokesmen (Inuwa Wada, Sule Gaya, Sule Gezawa) had been collected by telephonic summons to act as 'deputy attorneys', Mr Mojekwu had to concede that the chief northern electoral officer, Ja Abdul Kadiri, and the Ghanaian provincial electoral officer for Kaduna had fully and fairly investigated every complaint that had reached them. That it was easier for the respondents to claim speciously that the other cases from the north or Adamawa had been cited merely because there was no one locally available to answer, and (more effectively) that the people who were actually objecting all seemed to be the itinerant lawyers with sophisticated paper skills and finances, but that the candidates' own local supporters surely needed outside resources to make simple and valid nominations. The commission dismissed the complaints, but UPGA contenders for many of the constituencies distant from airports still did not get their names in by the following day after Esua's final twelve-hour extension of the deadline into late Saturday.

December (following his colleagues' initial well-publicized suggestion of 20 December and Mojekwu's insistence on five clear days).

On 19 December it appeared from conflicting and unaccountably delayed reports that 64 NNA nominees in the north and two more at the AG stronghold of Ife in the west were to be declared unopposed and elected; so also were at least 18 UPGA (including the ever-ready mediator Dr Mbadiwe). The chance that early majority returns for UPGA would give the president his excuse to invite an NCNC PM to form a government was blighted, but NCNC leaders whistled in the wind, ignored practical legality, and said wildly that they would regard all the seats where UPGA nominations had failed as having been won by UPGA. In fact the UPGA hierarchy called on the president to act on the evidence of rigging, which he must have read in intelligence summaries, to postpone the election and appoint a true caretaker government. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, who unlike the party leaders saw the business of an election (maintenance of law and order apart) as the duty of the federal electoral commission and not of political governments, disagreed with Dr Azikiwe's response and ordered that routines should proceed.

Unfortunately the commission was portrayed by the press generally as in tribal disarray, and the belief was wide that evidence of, for example, offices being locked as soon as NNA nominations had been filed, was deliberately ignored by Mr Esua. Okpara said on television that the election arrangements were a 'colossal farce' and that there would be no election at all, blaming the 'disintegration' of the country on the Sardauna personally (whom he identified with 'the emirs', his emigrant countrymen's bogeys) and on the NPC for undermining unity. UPGA issued a squib entitled *The Big Fraud*, circumstantially detailing the manipulations and intimidations, and the Zikist movement spoke again of the east, and now also the mid-west, seceding if the election went ahead. Abubakar's comment, like most bystanders' when former political rivals form novel alliances, was that the NCNC was a great liability to UPGA, but that if they lost they would blame it on the AG. On 22 December Mr Esua admitted on the radio that there had been three cases of announcements of unopposed candidatures where more than one valid nomination had in fact been received, and deplored the issue of unauthorized reports; elections would go forward there after all - in Ilorin, Katsina and Okigwi. Adegbenro said that UPGA would now formally petition the president for a postponement of elections and a 'provisional' government meanwhile, or at least cancellation of the unopposed nominations. The NPC cheekily told them not to drag the president into politics. On the 23rd Okpara rashly suggested that the army should supervise the election - in the north; the prime minister in a party political broadcast made clear his resentment at all the allegations being made selectively against the north, and denied knowledge of malicious molestation of UPGA members, adding that their rumours were *'doing great disservice to Nigeria, especially at a time when all of us are (or could be) engaged in the task of developing the country'*. Okpara, Adegbenro and Osadebay privily told the president that they were now ready to call a boycott of the election.

On Christmas eve the information minister announced that the president would be guided by the constitution - he had once more been pressed by Okpara (who again talked about secession) and Osadebay, accompanied among others by Adegbenro, Mbadiwe, Kola Balogun and Imodu, to postpone the election for irregularities to be removed. Otherwise they would boycott it. Zik seemed convinced but also, despite his dawn broadcast, worried by the threat to

secede. The president's private legal advisers suggested that because his powers were variously interpreted by interested parties, he should consult the federal attorney-general Dr T O Elias. Okpara told the press that a few weeks' delay should suffice, the Action Group said that the commission had the power of postponement, Akintola warned the electoral commission not to trespass on the courts' preserve, and the NPC leadership went into conclave in Kaduna. The president's Christmas day message was that the nation should go to the polls 'with all sense of honesty and purpose'.

On Boxing Day Dr Azikiwe summoned all four regional governors to the state house to tell his colleagues, who were like himself presumed by virtue of their high office to be above party politics, what UPGA had said. They decided that the PM should call in the premiers to confirm adherence to their earlier undertakings and ensure free and fair electioneering; all should live together as brothers and sisters, whatever the outcome of the election – a hint that there would be no postponement. Abubakar received no formal acknowledgment of his promptly despatched invitations. On the following day Osadebay called again for an all-party central government, UPGA students in Ibadan re-echoed Okpara by calling for the army to act as a referee, and on 28 December Mr Eyo Esua said that his commission was satisfied with the arrangements made for the election in the eastern region. Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Dr Azikiwe then argued unsuccessfully for nearly two hours about due process and dormant powers, but even with secession in the background Zik failed to persuade Abubakar that, after a six-month postponement (which would require extraordinary legislation, probably under disputable emergency powers) UNO experts should supervise a free and fair election; Abubakar, his courtesy strained to the limit, thought this would be humiliating for a sovereign democracy, and in view of their disagreement they decided that the president should summon all the governors, this time with their premiers, to resolve the issue next day. Dr Elias advised the president that the political leaders' unanimous instructions to the constitutional draftsmen had been that 'heads of state' should not be vested with executive powers, that the sections of the constitution supposedly in dispute did not necessarily confer absolute executive powers on the president, and that the president certainly did not have the power to form a provisional government or to assume the powers that had been given to parliament or cabinet. Azikiwe reserved his position.

Simultaneously the labour movement was splitting in an *ad hoc* meeting. One of the three JAC's joint chairmen Wahab Goodluck, with Michael Imoudu the Labour party leader, wanted a strike in support of postponement and as encouragement to Zik; Haroun Adebola, president of the united labour congress and another joint chairman, disagreed in company of E N Okongwu, a joint secretary of JAC who supported NNA; and the third joint chairman N Chukwurah was in favour of the JAC remaining uncommitted to any political party. Soon a large UPGA rally, promising a boycott unless the elections were 'free and fair', joined with SWAFP, some Labour and minority JAC representation to demonstrate outside the state house shouting 'No Awo, no government!', and was dispersed by police with truncheons after handing in a petition for postponement. An armed guard was mounted outside. Alhaji Sir Abubakar consulted the GOC and announced that as an extension of their existing exercise *Harmony* (already seen in Tiv country), the people would be given an opportunity to see their own army 'showing the flag'. A motorised column of 400 troops in fighting kit with fixed bayonets marched through Lagos (hardly on a 'manœuvre' as it was mischievously described)

and its sight was thought to make the first impression on Dr Azikiwe, on the one hand of potential military intervention and on the other of the virtues of compromise; General Welby-Everard more particularly hoped that it would impress the Lagos mob that the army was ready in case of any trouble.

It is helpful to recall that the pyramid of electoral officials appointed early in the year was now moving into post. Sadly, not a few had become politicized since independence. The more senior, the more eminently trustworthy they were: supervisory electoral officers were all senior administrative officers, or their equivalents; executive electoral officers were a wider variety of respectable government officers, administrative and professional; assistant electoral officers were local government or native authority officials. The actual returning officers were district officers (or equivalent) and senior education officers, and the assistant returning officers came from apparently reputable levels of government service in the east and mixed government, local government and NAs in the other three regions. None should have been overtly partisan, although many came under pressure from politicians who knew them, and those who gave way often confessed to shame in the aftermath.

On 29 December Dr Mbadiwe advised the president to use patience and tact, yet the eastern solicitor-general, Mr Daniel Onuora Ibekwe from Onitsha, who happened to be in Lagos, confirmed Dr Elias's advice but was told to go away and look for corroboration. The western and northern premiers and governors refused to attend the meeting which should have resolved the rift between the constitutional head of state and the political head of government, with senior legal authorities; the Sardauna dismissed it (after an NPC Kaduna meeting) on the grounds that it would clearly be a discussion of the east's proposed unconstitutional boycott and secession, a complex problem requiring adequate preparation to which nobody in the north had yet given any thought. The prime minister first spoke to the heads of the police, army and navy about precautions for polling day and then attended at the state house with the easterners and mid-westerners. The deadlock remained, although the meeting agreed that the electoral commission should adhere strictly to the laws governing elections; but a press release from the prime minister's office announced that the elections would go ahead as planned. Dr Okpara then informed the president that UPGA would boycott the general election: Dr Azikiwe questioned his tactics, as a boycott would have no legal effect, but the eastern premier said truly that it would have political effect. The story gained ground that the president warned him that only an effective boycott in three of the four regions would give him the moral strength to reject the results and assume executive authority. Mr Eyo Esua announced that the polling booths would open next day from 7 *am* to 6 *pm*.

UPGA and SWAFP proceeded to implement the boycott, with loudspeaker vans and eastern radio as well as a well-briefed press spreading the news; candidates purported to resign or withdraw their nomination papers; AG leaders, mindful of Zik's doubts, were half-hearted but at last conformed. UPGA rank-and-file spread the story that it was the president, finding attacks on the Igbos and himself insupportable, who was contemplating the break-up of the federation, with both east and mid-west seceding. The UPGA leadership was confirming that it would not accept the authority of the government about to be elected as this 'would be to compromise with evil and to sentence millions of Nigerians to servitude'. Dr Okpara advised UPGA's supporters in the west to 'defend themselves', which may have encouraged them during the later regional

troubles to resort to the best form of defence. The Sardauna enlarged on his refusal of the president's meeting: 'Since the discovery of oil the NCNC has been growing steadily colder about its relations with other parts of Nigeria and have tried to make themselves so intolerable that other Nigerians will take the initiative of getting eastern Nigeria outside the federation, and thereby winning sympathy for NCNC in the world at large; a conference to divide the assets should be called as the president suggested'. The president telegraphed the regions to refute the Sardauna's interpretation of his meeting's purpose.

Wahab Goodluck, of the radical third of the JAC, called for a sit-down strike next day, and the eastern and mid-western electoral commissioners (Anthony Aniagolu and David Akenzua) publicly prepared their resignations because of their inability to carry a complete postponement with the chairman and two others (one of whom would have accepted postponement 'in part'), and were joined by the Lagos member, the reverend canon B A Adelaja. The commissioners' move amended UPGA's fall-back position: if half the federal electoral commission had resigned, they thought, the election would *ipso facto* be invalid, there would be no government, and in the abhorrent vacuum Dr Azikiwe's executive actions as head of state and commander-in-chief must be exercised in discretion, there being nobody to advise him; he would be able to summon an interim administration to run the country and organize a legally arbitrary but popularly acceptable postponed election of a proper parliament. The prospect appealed to all who were looking down the throat of defeat, and who blamed their entrapment on the Sardauna's and Akintola's activists.

On election day Dr Mbadiwe was joined in his repeated counselling of caution to Dr Azikiwe by Dr Orizu, the president of the senate, in the interest of peace and unity, and Mr Ibekwe confirmed his endorsement of Dr Elias's opinions on the limits of the president's constitutional powers. Dr Okpara attended their meeting to hear this, and reserved his own judgement in turn. The 'partial election' went ahead, with little direct response by workers to the JAC factional strike call (except on the railway and in the ports), but delivering the results now generally expected. Voting in the north was busy and mostly calm, the only noticeable boycott being in NEPU areas of Kano and Jos; the constituencies most disputed by UPGA (twenty of them in the conservative Sokoto province alone) returned the candidates who would have been inevitable, even had no unnecessary and damaging, questionable or controversial hurdles been raised, or had free political criticism been welcomed from any alien or radical quarter throughout. Some booths were destroyed in the west, some ballot boxes stolen, but overall the western figures were lower than was customary, because the outcome was not in doubt rather than because of UPGA's boycott in the larger towns. In the mid-west although the UPGA boycott was official, Chief Osadebay decided at noon to broadcast to his followers to turn out, lest the MDF win seats by default; some ballot boxes went astray there also, but elections generally went ahead. In Lagos, where nothing could go unnoticed and unreported, there were scuffles, many booths were destroyed by boycotters, and only a handful of NNA supporters succeeded in casting their votes, returning Chief Benson in Lagos north with a very low percentage of the registered electorate indeed. In the east the politicians' ban was obeyed by the electoral officials, no facilities were opened and the boycott was total. Muhammadu Ribadu called it 'childish'. UPGA again called the election 'a farce' and told the president to hold a conference to 'break up the federation peacefully', while Zik was yet again insisting that the Sardauna was mistaken and his meeting had been meant to preserve unity.

The conflict between his known politics and his national vision stretched him in painful indecision. While public meetings in Lagos were being banned as a precaution, he petulantly announced yet again that the state house meeting had not contemplated the secession issue. He was desperately worried by the powder trail he had sparked himself.

As the country came to consider the 'partial election', as it was named in the headlines, it was too soon to recognize some of the elements of the tragedy which have since suggested themselves. The basis was that disinterested observers would have been astonished had the freest and fairest of democratic 'first past the post' elections resulted in more than marginally different figures from those returned on 30 December 1964 – with the possible exception of a few parts of the western region. Nor would proportional representation have made much more difference. In fact, whether or not the numerical dominance of the north was the psychological justification for what was to happen, by this time it was the divisions in the west, due to the region's inability to find one wise and tolerant political leader (they had many who kept aloof from politics), with personal attractions for a broad majority of all of the Yoruba peoples, that provoked the physical tremors underneath the approaching avalanche. The mid-western region was too small and new to be more than a makeweight in the balance. The eastern region's leaders all lacked the same ultimate wisdom that offers tolerance, forgiveness and fraternity. The Sardauna in the north had the potential to follow his faith generously, but his unassailable majority seemed to make any profound long-term gesture to Nigerian or religious minorities unnecessary while he was concentrating on his private northern and religious preoccupations. His overpowering personality and targeted charm, so effective among *malamai* and *talakawa*, meant that the federal prime minister's care for law and the constitution and for brotherliness, and his resolute opposition to intellectual and material dishonesty, were hidden in the shadows from Nigerians who only knew the party label 'NPC' and the men with flamboyance and rhetoric, big gowns and big turbans.

The madcap actions of the UPGA leaders had been those of blinkered men in face of the certainty in their own hearts that they could not after all, in any circumstances, win all the southern regions, nor many seats in the north. This was despite having found at least one paper candidate for virtually every constituency, even when not always agreeing on a single name among the rival local allies. It did not matter therefore that the boycott guaranteed their enemies the 55% success that was inevitable in any event. The war, as all students of practical politics rather than political science must face sooner or later, was for power, and not about the spectrum of theoretical political issues and policies ranging from foreign affairs to exclusive regional legislative subjects. The spectre that now haunted them was of a federal government one day using the same emergency powers against the NCNC that had demolished the AG. Hence the Igbo talk of secession, oblivious of the cynical comparisons that would be made with the NPC's talk of a common services agency serving a mere customs union in 1953. In their emotional awakening they ignored the significance of, to take practical examples, the federation's £1 million and the other regions' £3 million share in the £19 million Port Harcourt oil refinery; or the danger of their own practical loss of benefits from the Ka'inji dam, the new Niger bridge, or the new railway extension. They also seemed to forget that the western Igbos, in the mid-west, were their poorest kinsmen, and that their potentially richest eastern citizens, in the oil delta, were not Igbos. Perhaps the

strongest myopia was not to see that an Igbo president warmly co-operative with the prime minister could have brought pressure on the NPC to accept the genuinely broad national government that should have promised everything that an Igbo minority might ever righteously claim.

It was at this time that secret army plotting first became serious. It was inevitable in the Africa of the 1960s, which has been mentioned so often in the background panoramas, that young officers in the mess or army living quarters should talk lightheartedly about coups; northern officers were as liable as any to do so, particularly against hated politicians, but perhaps without much realistic thought of using weapons against them. However a definite move was now planned, intended to emerge from a shooting competition in Enugu in December, involving Major Nzeogwu, Captain Ifeajuna, Major Dennis Okafor and Captain E N Nwobosi. It was foiled because the story leaked; under a truly oppressive government doubtless they would have been shot and a different tragedy have followed. More senior officers did discuss military intervention in theory, but saw their traditional duties, taught in military colleges, as being to the established state and not to supplant civilians; they stayed away from the competition, as they did from seditious huddles, and maintained control. One of these circumspect lieutenant-colonels was Ojukwu. General Welby-Everard detected no lack of personal loyalty to himself, or to his Nigerian civilian superiors, among the staff or combatant commanders. No charges were laid, and nothing was done to pursue persistent allegations that some civilians, including principal politicians, had been privy to the plot. Any surviving security records naturally remain secret, although two years later a military government strangely set it to the credit of this civilian federal government that it was 'in the interest of peace' that no officer or civilian was subsequently punished.

Against all that has been said, the reader must always remember that a majority of the constituencies which had not been boycotted had no veritable tales to report of either violence or chicanery. The first rough figures seemed to show about two million voters for NPC and 855 thousand for NNDP; about one million for UPGA, including 380 thousand NCNC and 350 thousand AG; northern opposition parties had about a quarter of a million votes, and independents 50 thousand. The NPC figures were slightly higher than they had been in 1959, and with 67 uncontested seats the party had 162 out of the 312 in parliament. In addition, NNDP had 36 of the 57 seats from the west. NCNC were reported to have won nine of the 14 from the mid-west, AG 13 from west and mid-west, and UPGA as a whole had 50, if the 19 uncontested and presumably unboycotted NCNC nominations in the east were counted. Lagos had Chief Benson, leaving three seats there and 51 in the east yet to be fought.

The labour movement split hardened. In the aftermath of the election Adebola resigned from the JAC, which he thought had become a mere political grenade, with the joint hands of the Nigerian Labour party and SWAFP holding the safety lever; he resented the summoning of the meeting on 28 December by unauthorised persons, which other unauthorised persons also attended. Chukwurah, the third joint chairman, also disapproved of turning the JAC into either a permanent labour movement to rival the congresses or a new political party. Okongwu, the joint secretary, now claimed, 'I am the accredited secretary of the JAC, because I am the one known and recognized as such by both the federal government and the workers'. This did nothing to halt

the militants, who were becoming an increasing, but inadequately recognized, threat to the federal government's authority.

The Right Honourable Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa awaited his summons to the state house to be invited by the president to form a new government. His Excellency Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe was contemplating the three completed resignations from the electoral commission which had just been formally and personally handed to him, a telegram from the president of Liberia opposing popular strife among brethren of the same family in Nigeria, and other familiar messages from pressure groups about unity and democracy. He had JAC and UPGA activists ensconced in his house and grounds, uninvited and confident of enjoying warm hospitality.

43 A non-executive President Precipitates a Constitutional Crisis

Kowa ya diba da zafi bakinsa

The census corruption and the election miasma might have been cured, even despite the boycott for which they were the extenuation, but for the lasting misfaith created by the five days' gap between the evident result of the election and the president's eventual summons. Dr Azikiwe saw Alhaji Sir Abubakar on Friday 1 January 1965 and told him that the elections were 'unsatisfactory in view of the violations of freedom of recent weeks', that there was in effect no new parliament, that he had no intention of appointing him or any person to form a government, and that he would rather resign. All this was embodied theatrically in a speech, which was recorded for broadcast but had been pre-released to overseas newspapers and radio outlets and abbreviated for the *Pilot*, before Zik was persuaded by staff and friends to postpone it in hope of a compromise. Unsubstantiated suspicions were aroused that certain military officers had advised him of their support for such action. For his part Abubakar contained himself and replied that constitutionally he was still prime minister until a new one was appointed, and that the clear majority vote for his supporters gave the president no alternative but to reappoint him; only the commission could adjudge disputes over individual constituency declarations. As for the violations, he might have added, any new election must equally depend on the will of all political party leaders and followers to make it free and fair, and to abide by the result. Clearly if the president could not obey the call of duty, his only alternative was to hear the calls of conscience and honour, and to resign at once.

Abubakar withdrew and explained to the governor and premier of the mid-west, and to Chief Festus, Nwafor Orizu and Ibekwe, that the president blamed UPGA for threatening secession on 26 December, and that UPGA was trying to cast the charge back on Zik. The PM then disappeared, supposedly in despair to contemplation and prayer, even someone trusted like the Bauchi provincial commissioner (Dauda Belel, galadima of Mubi) finding him hard to track down; but not before first talking to his friend the chief justice Ademola about a replacement for Zik once he had actually resigned, preferably a respectable non-political man from the south. Sir Adetokunboh did not believe that Zik would risk resignation on diplomatic grounds of health, thus burning his boats (or being removed and losing all his material benefits), but Abubakar allowed the wish to be father to the thought and disagreed, suggesting Sir Kofoworola Adekunle Abayomi, the veteran oculist who had been trusted chairman of commissions. Sir Adetokunboh had good friends in all the regions and said he would take soundings, but warned that if he had to ask Sir Kofo the response was likely to be a crisp inquiry whether he should take his coffin with him into office; an amicable settlement with Zik was preferable, which

might depend upon which ministers Abubakar was to appoint on forming a new administration.

After Alhaji Sir Abubakar left, the chief justice telephoned an easterner whose standing in the whole country was as substantial as in his home region. Louis Nwachukwu Mbanefo, now 54, hailed from Onitsha, and had been the first Igbo to qualify in the law. He had been appointed to a salary revision in 1959, become chancellor of the Anglican diocese on the Niger, been knighted in 1961, and had led an inquiry into trades union problems in Trinidad and Tobago in 1963. He was a founding member with Abubakar, and a trustee, of the NIIA, and was soon to be pro-chancellor of Ibadan university. He was no light-weight arbiter. As the CJ of the eastern region, Sir Louis Mbanefo was told by Sir Adetokunboh to come to Lagos to remind the disputants of their duties of patriotism and unity, and when he said that there was no scheduled plane found himself instructed to find his way by the freight plane carrying specie to Enugu on Sunday 3 January.

Abubakar's constitutional and political positions were impregnable, and his moral resolution was unmoved, although it was not long since he had for the first time hinted to a retiring expatriate (a ministry of works engineer engaged on some repairs and redesign of his Onikan lodge) that he should not renew his contract, admitting his fear of an approaching civil war. More immediately to be feared than civil war was the Lagos mob, Macpherson's old bogey, now inspired by the 'Okpara-ism' that began to seem stronger than the familiar Zikism. Okpara-ism had a fuzzy meaning, defined by one contemporary as 'a vague baseless doctrine, built on pragmatic tribalism and sectionalism' (Broad-minded figures like Chief Festus, ToS Benson and Dr Majekodunmi found Zikism, with its simply woolly meaning, less offensive). A draft prime ministerial reply to the president's postponed but leaked broadcast was prepared, and their disagreement became universally known. One of the go-betweens between head of state and head of government proved to be Alhaji Shehu Shagari, and another obviously had to be the attorney general. Abubakar had no intention of going in person and appearing to be a supplicant, being certain that he would win and the president come a cropper. In fact he privily asked the trusted British journalist, alluded to in the foregoing chapter, to come and see him. *'I have all the cards, if I play them properly'*, he said, and cunningly hinted that Zik might be, so to speak, deported. The journalist was taken in by the ruse and, knowing how much the president was reliant on his supposed latent power as commander-in-chief, went in alarm to see Dr Elias, who told him not to worry, Zik said that to everyone, but it was all right. The next to be warned of the hint was the British high commissioner, who in turn told the American ambassador; before long Babs Jose of the *Daily Times* had staked out the state house with reporters to witness the removal. Of course, nothing happened.

The president for his part excitedly summoned Major-general Welby-Everard, Commodore J R A Wey, Inspector-general Edet of the police and the commandant of the air force training staff (seconded from the air force of the federal republic of West Germany) to the state house. The general commanded 7,000 troops, of whom the true combatants were six battalions and a reconnaissance squadron of armoured cars, numbering under 5,000 (by now the British secondments amounted to a round dozen); the policeman, counting unarmed local government and native authority forces, could call on about 30,000 able-bodied men; the sailor, who had originally been a pilot on John Holt's river fleet, was more accustomed to putting his seamen at their ease with a

cheerful, 'That's all right, stand easy!' Zik reminded them that they had all taken oaths of allegiance to himself, that their loyalty lay to him, and that they must obey orders. The general and the German airman (who was non-plussed and out of his depth) were under contract and had in fact sworn no such oath, but Wey and Edet were truly at a loss. It was not obvious in what way all their services would be expected, under orders, to act against the political government, but that was the clear implication. They dispersed with little said and no kind of instructions or directive; the airman came quickly to the general's home for reassurance and a stimulant, and was told, as leader of a partially Ethiopian training mission with no power of operational command whatever, to put it all out of his mind; the naval person followed in equally puzzled dismay, and was encouraged to hear that legal advice was being sought in their difficulty.

The general did not wish to embarrass either the chief justice or the attorney-general at this stage. It was Mr Justice Brett who was quick to interpret the constitution to him as giving the federal parliament sole powers to legislate for the forces, and the army and navy acts as laying down general control to be wielded by the army council and navy board responsible to the minister of defence, operational control to be by the commanders under policy direction of the cabinet, and maintenance of public safety and order to be under direction of the prime minister; no mention or residual implication of the president, who was only the figurehead of the established government through which loyalty to himself must lie. No effort was made to involve the British high commission, which had only learnt of events through informal contacts such as that mentioned. Welby-Everard felt confident of the loyalty of all ranks, bar possibly a few gossipers in certain officers' messes. He gathered as many of his officers together as was practicable, in order to leave them in no doubt, despite the common knowledge during the surrounding hot press controversy and rumour of what was evidently being mooted, that they could not answer a constitutional president's direct prerogative call. A circular to all units, including those still actively showing the flag in Tiv country, confirmed this, and the commanders were grateful that even their Igbo officers offered no trace of dissent. The prime minister, who was not given to planting photographs of himself in the press, took an opportunity to emerge and call his service heads and the Lagos police commissioner together, ostensibly '*to discuss operational matters*'; a picture of them all standing together appeared in most newspapers, which left no doubt in readers' minds who was in charge of the security forces.

Dr Azikiwe began to have second thoughts. His only supporters prepared to act were the Lagos mob, and his personal courage remained remote from recklessness. The fraught consequences of an eastern secession for the countless easterners employed throughout the bulk of the federation were being assessed. The UPGA's thinkers began to draw back from violent choices, although the leadership and the JAC militants contrived to lobby the state house in support of its occupant's original *démarche*. On Saturday Dr Okpara came back from a day's absence and encouraged Zik not to budge, but not to resign either. The mid-westerners already in Lagos were now anxious to see reconciliation, and the westerners (who had already foregathered in the capital for Akintola's son's twice postponed wedding) certainly wanted an early settlement. The only figures missing were the Sardauna and, of course, Awolowo. The popular atmosphere in Lagos was of tense anticipation, elsewhere of puzzled wonder, but nowhere of ordinary citizens calling for emergency measures, despite all the wild political talk of the country 'disintegrating' to fulfil Zik's prophetic

expression. The full texts of the two untransmitted speeches were now officially released: Azikiwe had meant to say, 'I have . . . decided . . . in the name of the Nigerian unity to arrest a situation which is rapidly deteriorating. I find it extremely awkward to exercise the power to call on any person to form a government. True, the constitution is clear on this issue, but my decision is that I will not exercise such a power and I would prefer to resign'; given his convictions and heritage, his dilemma was honest though the action unwise – his hesitation over his quietus smacked of Hamlet. Abubakar's reply would have included: *'The future of the country is in very grave danger just now. In order to avoid bloodshed, for which I cannot accept any responsibility, because it is not for a cause which I think is right, I would humbly suggest that we have a conference . . . of all the governments, . . . so as to decide among ourselves what the future of our country should be'*.

On Sunday 3 January the two chief justices, Sir Adetokunboh and Sir Louis, went to see the president with their own formula for ending the imbroglio. They were able to confirm that Mr Justice Onyeama agreed with all the other judicial and law officers' opinions on constitutional interpretation. Zik asked why they were so late in coming and was reminded that the judiciary must not interfere in political squabbles, but that it became different if the country were evidently about to break up. The six points which the judges suggested were – a reaffirmation of federal unity, with equal opportunities and no oppression; strict observance of the constitution till properly amended; a broad-based national government formed on the declared election results, to avoid chaos; detailed legality of the election to be determined by the courts, and the constituency results upheld, except where the small turn-out had made an obvious mockery and commonsense required a re-run; a one-year eleven man commission to be set up within six months, to review the constitution and electoral machinery with a view to a constituent assembly (the president to nominate a member and the prime minister and premiers two each); and finally, the western government to be dissolved to allow a free expression of regional electoral will. Dr Azikiwe spoke mistily as one above politics and suggested that NNA and UPGA should be consulted before he could make up his mind. Nonetheless the CJs had the impression that he accepted the first five points subject to minor rewording, and they left expecting to hear an announcement in the evening of such a plan and of Abubakar's reappointment to implement it.

They were followed by Osadebay and Okotie-Eboh on another conciliatory mission, who were told of the proposed formula. Then the mid-western premier came back, accompanying a broad UPGA and JAC group (cheered on by the activists camping downstairs), including Okpara (who was never to refrain from speaking publicly of secession as a possibility), Orizu, Mbadiwe, Aminu Kano, Adegbenro, Tarka, Otegbeye, Imoudu, Goodluck, Olawoyin and McEwen. The president, now under visible stress, asked for their opinion of the judges' formula. McEwen admitted that the boycott was a mistake, but all told Zik to stand firm since they were still convinced that, in the circumstances, he could appoint anyone as prime minister. Dr Azikiwe referred to tales that the NPC were planning to replace him with Sir Adetokunboh Ademola, who would be succeeded at the supreme court by Sir Louis Mbanefo. The JAC, who still thought that the Lagos rabble could counteract 'feudal interference', were unimpressed; they expected Zik to revert to the days of demagogic mass-meetings and march on the Bastille at the head of the people. So, as the politicians departed, banking on some version of the formula saving their faces, they met wilder elements coming up the stairs to press for the opposite.

The security forces were now more than satisfied that they would be justified in arresting JAC ringleaders on legitimate charges, but the support of executive authority was lacking.

The president had good reason to be unhappy. The constitution stated that if he were absent from the country or, in the opinion of the prime minister, unable to perform the functions of his office by reason of illness, his office would be performed by the president of the senate (Orizu). He had been ostentatiously confined to Nsukka for varying periods up to as much as four months since May, with medical reports of being unwell and in need of specialist attention. NNA members had been causing it to be widely believed that the prime minister might now so certify his opinion; this reinforced the repeated loud whispers that to make doubly certain, the president could be whisked aboard the navy's flagship, apparently ready for sea by the marina opposite the state house, and taken beyond the three-mile territorial limit, away from the country. The president's press secretary, Chuks-Adophy, hastily announced in a middle of the night bulletin that the president had benefited from his rest 'following the strain of the Yuletide season', and that he was fit to resume his normal engagements, pending specialist attention; the press release emphasized 'engagements both inside and outside state house'. There had been no announcement such as the chief justices had expected; nor was there evidence that the president recognized that 'dirty tricks' might feature in many politicians' imaginations, but nothing more underhand than bluff in his prime minister's own purposes.

On Monday morning the newspapers were heavily critical of the situation and those they chose to blame for it, and the fears of those in public life began to grow. Sir Adetokunbo and Sir Louis had been busy and reported to Dr Azikiwe that Alhaji Sir Abubakar only required verbal changes in their formula, but thought the immediate western dissolution unnecessary, even if he had had power to enforce it, as an election must be held within eight months; he promised a national government's goodwill, if only it might be mutual. Dr Okpara however would wish to speak further about 'modifications'. Okpara arrived with the NCNC eastern working committee's Dr Mbanugo, and Sir Louis Mbanefo and Mr Justice Onyeama sat in as observers; Okpara had nine amending points, including - release of Awo; dissolution of the western house within two months; fresh elections in all seats with unopposed returns, or where the total poll had been under 50% (if this should prove a sticking point, then 30%); a broad-based national government with equal numbers of posts for each of the main parties in the east and north (the west's share to depend on the anticipated regional election result); the prompt constitutional review to be thorough, conducted by a commission drawn equally from all four regions. Foreseeing the inevitable passionate rejection by NNA of, in effect, a two-thirds UPGA national government and more states in the north, Mbanefo and Onyeama counselled withdrawal of these counter-proposals in order to end the crisis. The president said that Alhaji Sir Abubakar had apparently accepted the need for 'give and take', and asked Dr Okpara for some maturity and statesmanship. Okpara then agreed to trust Zik and Abubakar to use their good offices in respect of a western dissolution and election validities, and left with a further request for a review of Awo's position.

The police commissioner now telephoned Dr Azikiwe direct, in legitimate alarm for the public safety, and sought his agreement to the removal of the notorious troublemakers encamped in and around his residence. The

president was by now only too glad to acquiesce, and the JAC activists were forcibly replaced by a conspicuously strong police guard. He could now see no alternative to taking all the judicious advice of recent days to comply with the constitution. He sent a message to Alhaji Sir Abubakar, who came out of his contemplative cloister in the early evening to accept an invitation to form a broadly-based national government, and to exchange notes on what resulting broadcasts they might make. When Dr Azikiwe worried about what he should say ('I must be allowed to explain to my people'), a calm Dr Elias handed him a fair draft: 'There is the speech'. Constitutional heads of state should only speak blandly or on totally uncontroversial apolitical subjects, otherwise they must speak on ministerial advice. Here was the advice. A tired-sounding president spoke on the radio at night about the five points which were the basis of the main agreement reached by NNA and UPGA, and admitted for the sake of national unity that his constitutional position was clearly defined, that the people's decision for the present federal constitution had not been forced upon them but was an expression of their common will, and that to question elections otherwise than by process of law was to invite chaos – the crisis was now over, 'Long live the constitution!'

The prime minister followed: *'As I have had the advantage of seeing the text of the speech you have just heard from the president, I wish to confirm that we have now resolved our differences. . . . Uppermost in our minds . . . has been how to secure . . . the stability of Nigeria. . . . The president and I have once again showed that the things that bind us together are much stronger than those that sometimes divide us. . . . God helping me, I shall seek to do what is right and just in the interest of our country. It is my intention to try and form a broadly based government that will cater for all our peoples. I shall be telling the nation about my plan in the next few days.'*

Okpara and Adegbenro announced that UPGA acclaimed the affirmation of unity, would fight for fair elections, and welcomed the promise of a constitutional and electoral review. One of the go-betweens said that the crisis had 'seemed much longer' than the five days which had passed. During this whole period, although the makama of Bida, Isa Kaita and the northern government barrister Nasiru had come down to represent the north in argument with Ribadu, Inuwa Wada and Dipcharima, nothing was referred back to the Sardauna or his Kaduna hierarchy, who were known to be resistant to giving any sops to the NCNC. The prime minister had not been, as some thought, sunk in depression during his retreat but, although he was frustrated by others' lack of realism, and pessimistic, buoyed up by the certainty of the outcome. 'He was almost enjoying it', said a confidant. The president's defeat was a climacteric, which might have led to the triumph after all of Nigeria's federal version of Westminster democracy, had humanity's quirks been able to adapt more athletically to modern social and economic forces.

A period opened of premature exchanges of congratulations and mutual approval between internal and international commentators, churchmen and politicians (Selassié, Tubman, Kaunda, Banda and Johnson) over the apparent 'Zik-Balewa pact of unity', pulling back from the brink just in time. Harold Wilson spoke of it as a sure source of satisfaction to Azikiwe as 'one of the prime architects of the federation'. Indeed for some months a semblance of normality did seem to return to administrative life except in western politics (although even there in pursuing its routine activities the regional government seemed to have mellowed). But the underlying bitterness had not faded. The

prime minister talked to Dr Chike Obi of the east's Dynamic party, and flew with him, Ribadu and Inuwa Wada to Kaduna on Tuesday 5 January, to be joined by the Sardauna and the NPC hierarchy and the NNDP from Ibadan, who all learnt the details for the first time. There it was made plain to him that 'a broad-based national government' would be utterly unacceptable to two regional governments and parties if it were to include the Action Group. In return Abubakar rejected pressures to remove Azikiwe legitimately (by seeking a two-thirds majority vote of censure in a joint meeting of both federal houses), insisting that Zik was now so discredited that he could do less harm where he was (indeed his willingness to appease Zik with tokens never ended; even now he was disposed to consider allowing a new state house to be built on a site earmarked for 1,004 workers' flats). But a few minor hawks gliding around the meeting remained interested in the prospect of some riot in the east enabling a repeat there of the state of emergency that the west had experienced, and the detachment from neighbouring Igboland of an oil-rich rivers state. The prime minister returned to Lagos to finalize the more restricted cabinet appointments now in his mind, while elsewhere UPGA supporters began to express their dawning disillusionment at their leaders' evident defeat, and Mr E N O Sodeinde, chairman of the Lagos university provisional council was appointed to the vacant Lagos seat on the electoral commission.

The list of names submitted to the president on 7 January was declared by Abubakar to be '*only temporary*', and consisted of familiars to whom he felt he could from experience entrust ministerial responsibility without positive regard for party affiliation. That still meant 13 out of the 17 from NNA, although he insisted that after the postponed elections in east and mid-west he would reshuffle and reassign. He said openly that he was '*bringing UPGA in*', but the official release only repeated the 'broad-based' cliché which seemed to promise jobs for all. There resulted more grass roots UPGA resentment against Azikiwe and Okpara for bad tactics, and SWAFP showed signs of abandoning the alliance. The prime minister had once more retained external affairs in his own hands, and reappointed Chief Festus (who had stood as NCNC, not UPGA, and did not consult his party before accepting office) to finance, Muhammadu Ribadu to defence, Inuwa Wada to works and surveys, Bukar Dipcharima to commerce, industry and to be caretaker of transport, Shehu Shagari to internal affairs and caretaker of communications, Maitama Sule to mines and power, Waziri Ibrahim to economic development and caretaker of education, Musa Yar'Adua to Lagos affairs, Dr Majekodunmi (still independent and renominated as a senator, who was warning Abubakar to refurbish the constitution before its false interpreters could regroup) to health and caretaker of information, Obande to establishments and caretaker of labour, and Mbadiwe of UPGA to aviation. Dr Mbadiwe protested that UPGA would not serve in any apologetic way, and would really prefer to await the outstanding elections and come in as a united team, but he and Festus had never moved out of their official ministerial offices and residences during the campaign. There were four ministers of state with cabinet rank, Usmanu Maitamari, Hashimu Adaji, Nuhu Bamalli (after a few weeks brought into external affairs) and Ibrahim Tako (to be brought into defence as army minister).

Twelve former ministers were missing, including Benson who had been returned to a back-bench; Wachuku's seat was one that had succumbed to the boycott and he retired to an Aba hospital for delayed treatment of a liver malady. Of the other dropped NCNC cabinet members, Akinfosile

was a radical anathema to NNDP, and Amechi had led the UPGA attacks on his NPC colleagues when the pre-election rift opened. Most of the ten parliamentary secretaries were northerners. An unexpected two months' ban on western regional meetings and processions was imposed, but lifted after a week. Mid-west and eastern local party groups began quickly to plan for the promised outstanding elections. Aniagolu and Akenzua were immediately renominated by their governments for reappointment to the federal electoral commission from which they had obtrusively resigned less than a fortnight before.

Distress at the narrow, however 'temporary', interpretation of a 'broad-based' cabinet was not confined to the NNDP, with its hopes deferred, and the disappointed UPGA: smaller parties from the rivers, mid-west and middle belt which did not even have a member of parliament also felt illogically deprived of their fair share. They received for a while the moral support of some northern journalists and (*sub rosa*) civil servants who wished to see the traditional NPC hierarchy modernized without weakening the north's federal predominance, and to find allies in counteracting the east's continuing domination of the intellectual, commissioned military and artisan vocations. All were perturbed by the retention of Okotie-Eboh and Mbadiwe, although unable to name southern replacements who would serve Abubakar and Muhammadu Ribadu as loyally; they did not believe that had NCNC led a broad-based government there would have been more than a token NPC presence, confined to the minor ministries, and they believed the prime minister to have shown weakness, not generosity, in face of his party. This questioning faded for the nonce as they came to recognise that Abubakar's preferred way was to soften the impact of the north's dominance by using strong southern allies in key positions, but that it was essential to choose the right allies; there was the greater danger that the party was choosing the wrong allies outside the federal cabinet. In fact NPC rank-and-file on back benches wanted to castigate the prime minister at some joint parliamentary party meeting in Kaduna; Maitama Sule, who had been involved in individual exchanges between Lagos and Kaduna NPC dignitaries and the prime minister and premier prior to the president's surrender, threatened to turn any such abuse of Abubakar back against the party leadership and force an NPC split. The Sardauna cut further proceedings short at once. The internal NPC doubts only emphasized the conclusion that neither NNA nor UPGA had in any way introduced Nigeria to true national politics.

The link between the NPC and NNDP was shown to be continuing when Akintola took Ayo Rosiji and Richard Akinjide to confer with the Sardauna at Sokoto. The west was being challenged by Chief Benson, who irritated many friends and enemies alike by now describing UPGA's Yorubas as 'pawns on the chessboard of NCNC tribal politics', and saying that the followers of both Akintola and Awolowo should unite. Daniel Ibekwe, who had endorsed Elias's opinion on the president's powers, resigned as eastern solicitor-general. NCNC's organizing secretary Fred McEwen stubbornly announced that there had been too much compromise, that Okpara's nine points had never been put to the prime minister, that the president had never bargained, and that UPGA had never had an answer.

This did not prevent UPGA from at last making a formal but grudging public declaration on 16 January that it was rededicated to the maintenance of democracy and would give the 'pact' and the new government 'a fair trial'. Meetings in Ibadan and Enugu between NCNC and AG had been papering over

the cracks between party leaders and the led, but a prominent western NCNC figure Chief Ogunsanya insisted that all depended on what 'Balewa' might eventually mean by 'broad-based', and on Awolowo's release. Coincidentally the president's office published a 'state house diary' of the sixteen days of crisis from Christmas Eve, on which Adegbenro commented, 'Let us leave state house to its conscience'. Zik cancelled all his official appointments in the east for several weeks. Alhaji Sir Abubakar clutched at optimism while it fluttered about, and said, *'The crisis has taught Nigeria some lessons which will strengthen her unity'*. Pressed on whether the pact meant Awo's release within three months, he remembered Kaduna's commitments with Akintola and parried with, *'So now it isn't January the 3rd? I thought someone said he'd be released on January the 3rd, better go and ask him'*.

The practical impossibility of legislating for a politically acceptable arbitrary line between those elections where the turn-out was so small as to be a mockery, and those where it had simply been small, forced the prime minister and the law draftsman to conclude that fresh elections must be confined to those constituencies where no votes had been cast or no voting made possible at all. When this became known some recourse was had to the courts, but less than had been promised; among those who did make challenges were Mrs Awolowo, Chief Benson's opponent Moronu, and Azi Nyako in south-east Bauchi who claimed that Alhaji Sir Abubakar's agent had been corrupt, and that he had been obstructed from filing his nomination papers and so not allowed to exercise his rights to contest an unopposed election. Dr Mbadiwe was coy about joining his colleagues to take their renewed cabinet oath together, saying that he was loyal to UPGA which directed his actions, but he was duly sworn in a day or two later so that he might enter on his rights and duties. By what will be seen later as a stroke of irony, the small arms instructor Major Nzeogwu was using 'pan' (corrugated galvanized iron sheets) salvaged from Kaduna's temporary polling booths to roof an army training camp at Kaciya, joking that 'there won't be another general election for a long time to come'.

A personal rift in an old relationship opened to disconcert the prime minister, when for the first time he admitted to suspicions of Aminu Kano, who had been seen as a possible compromise prime minister had UPGA contrived to be invited to form a government. For many weeks there had been rumours of a plot somewhere within UPGA against Abubakar's person, of which 'Malam' was alleged to be well aware, and the NPC establishment advised him strongly to sever connections. Not to ruffle Kaduna feathers, Abubakar began to refuse to see Aminu until these unwelcome doubts were put to rest, a process which Maitama Sule promoted and which ended after a while with Aminu's reconciliation to the Sardauna also.

Federal politics were not all, not even during a crisis. Other events were still interesting Nigerians of differing tastes. Fighting broke out at a soccer match between Nigeria and Dahomey in an eliminating round for forthcoming all-Africa games; the new oba of Lagos was recognized, after the passing of Abubakar's friend who had been made vice-president of the senate as well as president of Lagos town council; the Gombe to Maiduguri railway line (a novel route for road travellers to contemplate) was opened for regular passenger traffic as well as freight, a week before the death of Sir Ralf Emerson, and just as the corporation's temporary minister Dipcharima was saying it was virtually bankrupt; the tenth UMBC convention at Gboko expelled Ibrahim Imam for duplicity in trying to rejoin NPC; the trades unions' JAC was seen to be in

ruins, now that Adebola had left it to merge the united labour congress and the Christian-led Nigerian workers' council into a new supreme council of Nigerian trades unions (Goodluck who had tried to lead the JAC into a strike in which most workers saw no point, and objected to the JAC being seen as a tool of SWAFP, had been wearing a SWAFP label during the campaign); J S Tarka, after a heroic series of escapes through appeals and seeking reviews of his case, finally received a four months' jail sentence for his part in the 1964 Tiv disturbances.

The prime minister responded to criticism that there were physical and psychological disincentives to overseas investment with, *'We offer as many industrial incentives as our economy can bear, in order to ensure rapid, sustained and balanced economic growth'*. Lagos was host to a five-day meeting of the OAU's scientific, technical and research commission, renamed from the educational and cultural commission but collapsing nevertheless for lack of support; Alhaji Sir Abubakar warned that recent events cast doubt on the realism and efficiency of *'our organization'* and the fraternal relationship between members, since two of the commissions had just failed to meet for want of a quorum, and others had met with many absentees – *'It is really sad and portends a crisis of confidence'*. He had another warning, this for his own profession; his message to the inaugural meeting of the national educational research council of Nigeria was that the country could not afford unnecessary luxury, and must preserve a balance between the purely academic and those projects orientated towards action within the school system.

Alhaji Bukar Dipcharima led revived negotiations to devise a relationship with the European community. General Welby-Everard's imminent retirement was announced. Even two decades after the second world war, the death of Sir Winston Churchill at 90 brought back memories or visions of the defeat of fascism, and a country devoted to charismatic characters *'larger than life'* took unexpected notice; Dr Elias and Alhaji Shehu Shagari attended the state funeral in London (so, without fuss, did M Tshombe), and Alhaji Sir Abubakar thought back to hours spent in Westminster long ago and said, *'Those of us who are practising parliamentary democracy, and those who are not, have to mourn the loss of this great man who during his last years saved the world from tyranny and stood against all kinds of organized barbarism'*.

Other assorted external affairs were successively and more narrowly the interest of their temporary minister, the prime minister. The British foreign and commonwealth relations services were amalgamated into a single diplomatic service, with a more cohesive and less sentimental ethos towards things *outrémer*; Ayub Khan was re-elected in Pakistan; Tanzania signed an agricultural agreement with China; Sir Burke Trend chaired talks in London on the creation of a permanent Commonwealth secretariat; Sukarno withdrew Indonesia from the United Nations; the south Vietnamese military agreed to restore civilian rule; the Sudan admitted it had been aiding the Congolese rebels; the premier of Burundi was assassinated by a Mututsi refugee, the second so to die in little more than two years; the democratic republican government of Congo accused Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania of each holding talks with Congolese rebels, others of whom were now invading from Congo Brazzaville as Gbenye began to recover his old confidence; Burundi broke off relations with China; New Zealand offered troops in support of Malaysia in Borneo; internal fighting ended in Laos; Belgium made major financial concessions to the democratic republic of Congo, including the surrender of securities; the Vietcong attacked an American base, the US bombed north

Vietnam and ordered its own forces' dependants home; Dr Joseph B Danquah died while still in detention in Ghana, where restaged treason trials sentenced two former ministers and three others to death (later commuted to 20 years); a former minister unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow Hastings Banda; Britain sent more troops to reinforce Malaysia; Algeria acquired equipment for its militia from China; the provisional OCAM (organization commune Africaine et Malagache) of fourteen francophone nations was now formally constituted; The Gambia became independent, though still encouraged by alien diplomats to join with Sénégal; and in Uganda Mr Obote abolished the official opposition.

The OAU's Congo conciliation committee (now solely drawn from Ghana, Guinée and Nigeria) arranged to seek the facts about any opposition to Tshombe on the ground in Léopoldville, Brazzaville and Burundi – but in February only the Nigerians had arrived, and in the absence of the others they abandoned the search. It seems fair to conclude that by this time the great majority of the foreign ministers in the OAU, not least those whose support for the Congolese rebels was dwindling because of their own growing domestic dissensions, might remain suspicious of Tshombe's conversion to national unity, but were finding good reasons for conformity with Alhaji Sir Abubakar's policy of strict non-interference in the internal affairs of others. Gbenye and Soumailot chose the moment to quarrel over rebel leadership, and enabled Tshombe to counterattack against what was consequently a demoralized insurgent force. The OAU thereupon withheld further recognition of a CNL that was split, although the USSR agreed to support the costs and resources of an Egyptian-Algerian airlift to the rebels. The OAU had other strains: Ghana and Guinée were encouraging ill-will towards OCAM being recognized as a legitimate sub-unit, Ethiopia and its neighbours were still quarrelling, and the dispute between Algeria and Morocco kept breaking surface.

Mrs Supeni, Indonesia's deputy foreign minister brought a delegation to Lagos to explain their withdrawal from the UNO and their *konfrontasi* with Malaysia, to find Abubakar quite unsympathetic and urgent for restraint. He wondered why two nations largely of the same race and religious belief could not settle their differences amicably: *'In the world to-day many people are carried away by emotions belonging to the past. Phrases like 'neo-colonialism', 'anti-colonialism', 'imperialism' and others were good for a nation struggling for independence, but we are independent, and have passed the stage of using such catchy phrases. Since the UN recognises Malaysia, Nigeria does the same'*. He capped this by instructing all Nigerian delegates at conferences to support other African countries in any initiative to expel Southern Rhodesia from meetings.

Realism induced temporary reconciliation as the prime minister met Dr Michael Okpara, Chief Dennis Osadebay and Alhaji Dauda Adegbenro in Lagos. Nigeria's story is full of individual leaders shaking hands, crossing the floor or amending their slogans, instants after events in which their positions had seemed eternally polarized; it does not mean that the underlying mass tensions have relaxed because the persons who have surrendered have retained their overt leadership and charisma. On this occasion it was the teacher Abubakar and the physician Okpara, encouraged by the judge Mbanefo, who were able to resume a normal individual relationship. Ignoring voices muttering that for NCNC to rejoin NPC was a 'disaster for Nigeria', the eastern premier announced that everything in Nigeria would now be plain sailing and the crisis was resolved; UPGA had accepted the PM's invitation to take part in the government. They had discussed the electoral bill being prepared for the

summoning of the newly elected parliament, which formed an adequate quorum and would have the power to make elections possible in the east and Lagos, wherever they had not been held on 30 December. The northern and western legislatures had already appointed their senators (including, as before, some members who had been fairly defeated for the house of representatives), and meetings of the other two regional joint houses would now be arranged to do the same. There was no comment on revisions of constitution or of electoral practice. It was apparent that if constitutionalism and legal process might lead to power-sharing in a plural society, this could well be more attractive to minority leadership than sterile non-co-operation in a social democracy which had been artificially crafted for competing philosophies in a unitary nation; but UPGA's lasting dilemma sprang from NPC's and NNDP's rejection of AG because it was Awolowo's party, which furthermore NCNC itself had never seen virtue in officiously saving from self-destruction, despite its long recognized value as an ally against the north.

Sir James Robertson had occasion to visit Nigeria privately at this time, and found his old friend Alhaji Sir Abubakar, although as sensible and restrained as he had always remembered him, still very restless and anxious over the difficulties of his position since the confrontation with the president and the challenge from the east. The two day meeting of the incomplete parliament, to elect a speaker and pass the electoral bill towards the end of February, took place in none too happy an atmosphere, and the prime minister took no part in debate. The presidential assent was immediate. None of the unopposed UPGA candidates who had promised to resign their seats had done so. The election date was subsequently set for 18 March.

UPGA and those it claimed to represent remained targets for lower level attack, even as they and NNDP both looked for rewards in the new situation. The persons governing, managing or staffing federal agencies were still objects of newspaper suspicion or private jealousy (regional agencies, being unashamedly chauvinist, were seldom now deemed to need purgation). The electricity corporation was notorious for its office inefficiency and service unreliability, and this was readily attributed to tribalist politics through nepotist and partisan appointments of staff or board; Dr Ikejiani's railway corporation was equally accused of such corruption, and of having creatively inflated a minimal profit into a seven figure publicity claim (the minister Bukar Dipcharima had only admitted to £35,000 surplus). Alhaji Sir Abubakar was openly told by northern politicians and journalists to remove all known UPGA supporters from public life, whether as institutional chairmen, ministers or foreign envoys. Such routine appointments as the resumption by the thoroughly respectable westerner Sir Samuel Manuwa of chairmanship of the public service commission, while the northerner Sule Katagum enjoyed a two month absence, received ethnic interpretations among the scribblers and chatters. Even the formal retitling of former west African research institutes (such as what became the Nigerian institutes of trypanosomiasis or of oil palm research) also fuelled mischievous speculation.

An academic and a property scandal illuminate the spreading dusk. The Igbo botanist professor Eni Njoku, who had been one of the first ministers, had been appointed principal of the federal Lagos university in 1962 for three years. Since leaving active politics, although being a senator 1960-61, he had been dean of the science faculty at Ibadan and chairman of the electricity corporation until accepting his present post. It was generally assumed that (as

was once the convention in Britain) persons of distinction would hardly accept short appointments to positions of long term influence unless assured of one or more reappointments, in the absence of some grave misbehaviour, so as to build up corporate confidence without making lifetime careers. Dr Saburi O Biobaku, a Muslim westerner who was a good friend of such northerners as Sir Kashim Ibrahim (himself a future chancellor of both Ibadan and Lagos universities), had been the first registrar of Ibadan university college, and also secretary to the western regional government. Now he was pro-vice-chancellor of Ife university and designated to become vice-chancellor of the university of Zambia. Njoku's creative spadework for his own new university had been successful, but now a majority of his provisional council under Mr Sodeinde decided that it was proper not to offer him a contract renewal, and NNDP wanted to see Biobaku, a distant relative of Adegbenro, in the post.

Part of the circumstance was that Dr Kenneth Dike, now principal of the Ibadan (federal) university, was another Igbo. Njoku spoke to his old council of ministers colleague the prime minister, complaining that the Sardauna and Akintola were opposed to him, and was heartened by his reception; but Akintola spoke to the Sardauna, who (against the background of the northern government's press agitation over Abubakar's softness with southerners) induced Abubakar in desperation to ignore such unbiased advisers as Kashim who stood up in favour of both convention and Njoku, and to let the council and the caretaking minister 'fight it out' without his interference. Njoku retained his salary and professorial chair, but Biobaku succeeded him and only one member of the council resigned. Adegbenro offended Okpara by congratulating his fellow townsman on the appointment. The teaching staff (many expatriates in the van) was shocked into international protest against 'neo-imperialism' and the student body rioted. Two truckloads of police stood by while youngsters lobbied the prime minister in his house, with banners reading, 'No Njoku, no Lagos university' and 'No politics in university'. Abubakar appealed to them to be responsible and reasonable, just as he had asked the demonstrating teachers in October, and to realize that they were only students; the provisional council had the authority to do what it had done. The university was closed for some months after Biobaku subsequently received a stab wound. The salient clues were that the general public was quite indifferent to the affair, most of the local teaching staff unsurprised, the NCNC too fearful of the recoil if it loosed any criticism, and the wavering Yoruba electorate was reminded on which side its future bread might be buttered. The pity was that another suitable Yoruba was not found, so that Zambia should not be inconvenienced.

The other affair was Dr Mbadiwe's land deal. The allegation in late February was that, using his political contacts, he had obtained for his own Afro-Properties and Investment company a lease of a plot of Ijora causeway land from the Lagos executive development board under the ministry of Lagos affairs; and that he had assigned the lease to Nigerpool (a football pool company in which the government had a substantial investment interest, to reduce outflow of exchange to British pools) at an annual profit which the semi-'parastatal' Nigerpool might have saved had it taken a direct lease. The profit was allegedly £1,230, a sum which places public perception of corruption in the mid 1960s in perspective compared with what was to come. After several days' press campaigning, which the NCNC *Pilot* would have joined in order to challenge the prime minister to take action, had not senior political influence silenced it, Dr Mbadiwe explained: the plot had been offered to him in 1964 before he rejoined the ranks of ministers, and had he wished to make a fortune

he would have built on the plot himself instead of subletting to others who might do so – to sublet instead was to avoid such major conflict with his ministerial duty. This did not satisfy the critics who were still calling for a dismissal at a troubled time. The prime minister interviewed Mbadiwe, then made a statement agreeing that the deed implementing the 1961 offer had not in fact been executed till after Mbadiwe had become a minister: *'Now, after careful consideration of the matter, the minister had informed me that in the overall interest of the country he is returning to the federal government the plot of land in question which was granted to him by the ministry of Lagos affairs'*.

Abubakar may have thought back to an occasion when ToS Benson complained that the ministry of Lagos affairs had allocated a plot at Victoria, promised to himself, to an expatriate interest; he had then called in Muhammadu Ribadu to find out how a minister might be thus disappointed (Ribadu had fixed a compromise whereby Benson was given an alternative site, but lacking a pretty view, and a second at Ikoyi as solace for that). After the present contretemps he added, *'I do not think any further action is necessary. Every step had now been taken to prevent any recurrence of this kind of situation'*. He explained privately to Babatunde Jose of the *Daily Times*, *'You want me to remove this man. What he did fell below what is proper, under British standards he would go, but the NCNC who put him into my original coalition are solidly for him [its central working committee had passed a unanimous vote of confidence in Mbadiwe]. If they withdraw, since Awolowo can't join, the ['broad-based'] government will collapse'*. The northern government's newspaper *Nigerian Citizen* continued its superficially independent policy with covert subversion of Abubakar's *idée fixe*, a future national government of all the talents: Abubakar should not have defended the indefensible nor yielded to 'threats by mere cranks like an ordinary puppet', it said; there was no room for cowards and he should either obey the majority by whose grace he was in office, by ejecting Mbadiwe, or resign. The ructions continued during the budget session without further comment from the prime minister, but the coolest and most pertinent comments came from Chief Kolawole Balogun, himself no stranger to land deals and now NCNC's national legal adviser: *'To say that financial transaction in land . . . by many leading citizens . . . has not become a gainful pastime is to start deceiving ourselves. All top Nigerians, ministers, parliamentarians, top civil servants, journalists, hold positions of trust They all indulge in these transactions. When it suits our purpose we quote conventions surrounding the British parliamentary system. When it again suits our purpose, we close our eyes to certain practices, all in the name of 'Nigerian way of life' . . . , where everybody regards it as fair to make money. If we have made up our mind that . . . ministers, parliamentarians, judges, top civil servants, should not be associated with business in any form or . . . be found to indulge in financial transactions . . . under the guise of taking fantastic overdrafts . . . , then let the prime minister . . . [lay] down this new code of self-abnegation by those who . . . serve the public – and then our new way of life begins'*.

The prime minister had spoken publicly about self-abnegation often enough. This has been recorded in chapters 33, 35 and 38. He had no more to add now. The strict ministerial code of conduct, originally inherited from Downing Street, had required divestment of commercial directorships, prudent examination of investments and sources of income, and such an arrangement of individual affairs as would not allow a situation to arise in which conflict might exist, or appear to exist, between proper performance of public duty and personal or private interests. British-drafted general orders for the civil service

required declaration to government by functionaries of their shareholding or profit-making interests (with a view to divestment where conflict would be clear and substantial), a prohibition of direct engagement in trade, outside work or private commercial agencies, and a placing of an officer's whole services and talents at the government's disposal at all hours. British officers had been used to the governor refusing permission to own any local investments, but local officers naturally never understood hindrances to investment in their own country's enterprises. Alhaji Sir Abubakar would have been pleased to translate these precepts from the British way of official life quite literally, even after 1960, had more than his few closest officials and a mere handful of his supporters also wished to enforce them. Since a code requires willing and understanding participation to prevail, the realistic alternative starkly marked out by Kola Balogun, Yoruba NCNC member of the prime minister's first cabinet, could not be challenged in a democracy. Army officers took note, what time the GOC Welby-Everard was making his farewells in inspection tours before retirement at the end of his contract in May.

44 A Contentious Military Appointment, a Grossly Inflated Government, and a Lamentable Death

Wuni da masoyi ya fi shekara da makiyi

Major-General Christopher Welby-Everard had been committed to Nigerianizing the officer corps of the Nigerian army by 1965, and knew that his own successor must be Nigerian. He had enjoyed his time as GOC and would willingly have considered accepting an extension to his contract appointment, but he was not surprised that this was not offered. The last few months of his appointment were coloured by speculation and argument about the choice of his successor. The GOC was in no doubt who that would be, but was determined to make his own recommendation for the best commander of the army on non-partisan professional judgment alone. Those whom he advised had different criteria.

The general's advice to the minister of defence and the prime minister was to appoint Brigadier Babafemi Olatunde Ogundipe: aged 42, with RWAFF experience in India and Burma, commissioned in 1953 and briefly seconded to the British army of the Rhine, he had been a very good battalion and Katanga brigade commander in the Congo, and UN chief of staff there for seven months. He seemed to Welby-Everard to be quite unpolitical, popular and acceptable throughout the army. Ogundipe would be the man to hold the troops together. This choice came as a surprise to all the politicians, who had never experienced military life on the inside and supposed an army to be a civil service in fancy uniform dress; Ogundipe was unknown in Kaduna. Very much the second best would be the Kaduna brigade commander, Samuel Adesujo Ademulegun, certainly efficient but judged by Welby-Everard to be rather too politically minded, and to be neither as universally respected nor as likely to be welcome in every part of the army, despite having come well out of overseeing the Tiv operations. He regarded Brigadier Zakari Maimalari as rather junior in years, for all his intelligence, competence and popularity: he had been commissioned six months before Ogundipe, who however had been able in more recent British tradition to count half of his service experience in the non-commissioned ranks towards seniority as an officer. Similarly his AAG Lt-col Gwon and AQMG Lt-col Ojukwu were much too junior.

This left Brigadier Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi as no more than a fall-back third candidate. Aguiyi-Ironsi, the same age as Ogundipe, had spent two terms as a public schoolboy at Epsom college in England, before his father's fees ran out. He had been catapulted on to the military promotion escalator by being the Queen's equerry during the royal visit, had commanded in the Congo, and was the most senior; but his background was the narrowest, he was the least well equipped militarily or intellectually, and would certainly not

(thought Welby-Everard) make a good GOC. Nevertheless the general knew Aguiyi-Ironsi to be the president's favourite. He was ignorantly regarded as an Igbo, after his mother from Umuahia, although his father was of Sierra Leonean origin; but most northern fellow-officers did not typify him as an Igbo. The other two candidates were Yoruba.

The majority of the mainly NPC federal cabinet wanted Ademulegun, an able officer also favoured by the Sardauna and the northern region's ministers, who were familiar with him in Kaduna (where he studiously paid court to the premier, wearing Hausa dress gifted to him and kicking off his shoes in the presence) and thought him 'brilliant' and trusty; a contrary minority thought him an overbearing tribalist who schemed with politicians, unforgiving and too ambitious (he already owned a set of major-general's insignia in case of being called on to act in the GOC's absence); but his marriage, not rare in Yorubaland, uniting a practising Muslim with a practising Christian, stood him in good stead generally. Alhaji Sir Abubakar was more uncertain of his potential future relationships with a national government that might include the Action Group, even Awolowo as deputy PM. He was also instinctively looking for further signals to reassure his unconvincing coalition allies in the NCNC; besides, he still remained confident that the army's British-disciplined loyalty, regardless of officers' origins or where their overseas training might have been, was wholly dependable. Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu was strongly lobbied by Dr Azikiwe, mainly through the medium of Chief Okotie-Eboh, with other pressure coming from Mbadiwe, Mbu and influential outsiders like Pius Okigbo (ambassador to the European community); he concluded that to support Aguiyi-Ironsi was logically tenable on grounds of his seniority (promotions out of turn might always give rise to doubts in any traditionalist society), and that he himself as minister of defence could always correct the steering if the ship's course became erratic. His politics had overcome his normally shrewd judgment of character, and he was able to convince a wavering Abubakar, who relied so much on him for second opinions on most affairs.

It was much more difficult for the prime minister to convince the Sardauna and the party rank-and-file that a hard-drinking slow-speaking 'Igbo' from fairly humble origins should become a harmless figurehead GOC, and there were heated exchanges. Abubakar had Maitama Sule flown to Kaduna to persuade the premier to acquiesce; after a preliminary hour's argument with Isa Kaita, who reminded him of Zik's alleged remark that the Igbo could only get power by the bullet now that they had failed by ballot, and six hours' bitter tussle with the premier, Alhaji Maitama prevailed: but the Sardauna insisted that 'the country will regret it'. It was unfortunate that for all the intelligence that was being served up to them, and all the superficial encouragement of recent better quality recruitment, the Kaduna hierarchy could not quite rid itself of the caricature of the northern officer cadre as being either lapsed Muslim drinkers or third class brains: as for the middle belt officers, they tended to ignore them. The consequence was that the regional government never took the army quite seriously enough until it was too late.

There was no formal endorsement of the appointment in cabinet, and on the announcement of his promotion in early March 'Johnny Ironsi' said, 'The army supports the government that is'. Welby-Everard was given a sincere send-off with the emotional bugle call of the 'Hausa farewell' of RWAFF tradition. It was still accepted in the more complacent diplomatic circles that, whatever the experience elsewhere on the continent, in the three former British West African armies from which the last expatriate commander had now departed

politics were non-existent; whereas the more complacent politicians felt that these small, lightly armed forces could have no dangerous ambitions.

The strains within OAU continued to be evident, particularly within the *entente* of Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, Haute Volta and Niger. In March Presidents Hamani Diori of Niger and Maurice Yaméogo of Haute Volta flew into Lagos, together with the vice-president of the Sénégal national assembly and two Dahomeyan ministers, to tell the prime minister that the francophone *conseil d'état* would refuse to attend next September's OAU meeting in Accra unless Dr Nkrumah ceased from supporting plots against them (those against Diori culminated in an assassination attempt on 13 April, and Yaméogo claimed that the *osagyefo* had already nominated the man to succeed him after his own forcible removal). Ghana was perturbed since 'Job 600' (almost Nkrumah's last major extravagance, the new Accra conference centre) might thus turn out to be a white elephant, and Quaison-Sackey was despatched to see Alhaji Sir Abubakar in hope of his dissuading the boycotters. The NPC was inclined to sympathize with a boycott in the light of Ghana's failure to extradite the AG truants Ikoku and Adebajo, and the Sardauna unwisely announced after returning from a visit to Ethiopia that, 'My [sic] government has not yet decided whether to go or not'; the NCNC, which questioned the survival of the *conseil d'état* after the supposed demise of the Monrovia and Casablanca blocs, favoured attendance – so long as Nkrumah was either openly challenged or totally snubbed.

The situation was further clouded, at two levels. There had been a heads of states' meeting at Bamako of Ghana, Guinée, Algeria and Mali, which looked like Casablanca *rediviva*. In a broadcast Abubakar referred to this and said, '*When a thing is dead, it is dead. . . . There is no reason why heads of African states should not meet in small groups to discuss any subject of choice. . . . The best thing to do with a country that tries to force its ideology on other members of the OAU is to ignore it and its ideology*'. In addition, there had been organized anti-Nigerian demonstrations against the high commission in Accra, in protest against six alleged Nigerian 'mercenaries' caught in the Congo on Tshombe's side and accused by Congolese rebels and the Sudanese foreign minister, and purportedly now held in Tanzania. Again Abubakar, wondering despairingly, '*Why must Nigeria be involved in the matter?*', showed his view of Nigeria-Ghanaian relations as those between a calm gradualist elephant and an angry impatient ant; referring to Ghana's '*madness – as usual*' and Nuhu Bamalli's forthright refutation of the whole story, he refused to break off diplomatic relations because of '*this tiny matter. . . . Something has gone wrong in Ghana. If anybody is wanted in this country for crime or something like that, all you do is go to Ghana and you will find him there, because Ghana offers asylum to every undesirable person*'. Nigerian trades unionists counter-demonstrated against Ghana's high commission in Lagos, and Nigerian students against Nkrumah's embassy in Léopoldville.

Nevertheless Abubakar moved in his usual mediatory way to save Nkrumah's face and, more important, to brace the OAU. He cabled the secretary-general Diallo Telli about his Yaméogo-Diori talks, and advised that since some members were disinclined to attend the meeting firmly scheduled for Accra because of the host Ghana's attitude, which they held to be inconsistent with the OAU charter, Telli should call an extraordinary session of the council of ministers as soon as possible, preferably in May, to try to overcome the difficulty. There, no doubt, Quaison-Sackey would be virtually put on trial by

his accusers, the foreign ministers of Côte d'Ivoire, Haute Volta and Niger, but not his president in person. About this time Hamani Diori sought the Sardauna's good offices to organize a telephonic link with Sokoto, but when Shehu Shagari, temporarily in charge of communications and a Sokoto man himself, wanted to facilitate this, Alhaji Sir Abubakar intervened to insist that this was no business for a region to conduct directly with a foreign country. Almost as a side issue, the OAU council of ministers had adjourned discussion of the democratic republic of Congo on 9 March, having heard that Tshombe had promised to hold a general election to which OAU might send observers, and to allow free movement throughout his country, provided that the remaining rebels first laid down their arms. It was left to the heads of state to take up at the Accra summit.

Other external events, mostly violent, crowded together until the end of April. In sequence, the USA accused north Vietnamese of stepping up aggression; Harold Wilson exchanged letters with Ian Smith and sent out his lord chancellor and commonwealth secretary to continue discussions of Rhodesian reform; Seretse Khama became first premier of Bechuanaland, and George Price first prime minister of a self-governing British Honduras; American marines had their first skirmish with Vietcong guerrillas in what was to grow into a war; President Johnson delivered an address to the joint senate and congress in support of a civil rights bill guaranteeing negro citizens full voting rights, as the republic of South Africa ordered stricter segregation in sports and theatres; the UN Cyprus force was extended yet again for three more months' peacekeeping; rioting led to deaths in Morocco; Dudley Senanayake replaced Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike as Ceylonese prime minister; democratic republican Congolese troops and mercenaries took the last rebel stronghold in the north-east, amid continued promises of elections in which Tshombe's new party CONACO (an alliance of two hundred small parties) at first seemed certain, despite widespread 'irregularities', to succeed over any hostile alliance of Lumumbist movements, whose army had proven quite as ineffective administrators as combatants; the north Vietnamese rejected both a call from seventeen 'non-aligned' heads of state for a negotiated peace without pre-conditions, and a subsequent offer by President Johnson (supported by Wilson of Britain); clashes on the Indo-Pakistan border threatened war between two major Commonwealth members; USSR threatened to send troops to Vietnam, and Uganda became the first non-communist country to join Russia in denouncing the American presence there; an election in the Sudan (excepting the south, where violence persisted) returned the Umma prime minister Mahgoub to power; and the USA landed troops in the Dominican Republic, to protect and evacuate its citizens in advance of a security council demanding a permanent ceasefire.

Ghana's constitution was amended, to allow of only one single presidential nomination, which had to be approved by the CPP secretary; an attempt to have the Congolese rebels confer in Cairo fell through because of their continued internal dissension and the absence of the nominal leader of a government-in-exile, Gbenye; Australia decided to send a battalion to support South Vietnam; Kenyatta rejected an offer of arms from USSR, and disbanded both Kenya's trades union federations because 'African socialism' would embrace plural forms of all ownership of resources; Liberia and Ethiopia dropped their case against South Africa, the international court at the Hague saying that they had no legal material interest in the area; 37 Afro-Asian countries attended a reunion of the Bandung non-aligned group in Jakarta, for celebration rather than new declarations; the revolt against military authority

in the Dominican republic developed into open civil war in defiance of the UN security council; Basutoland attained full internal self-government under paramount chief Moshoeshe II as king and representative of Queen Elizabeth; the third round opened of Britain's and Nigeria's negotiations with the European community; Ghana was formally accused of harbouring the would-be murderer of Niger's president, and Dr Nkrumah expressed his shock and horror; and 26 out of 36 OAU states, more than the two-thirds requisite, voted in favour of Abubakar's call to Telli for an extraordinary council of ministers' meeting in Lagos to settle the argument over coming to Accra in September, despite the OAU secretariat's fears that this intervention might disrupt their infant organization. Intelligent newspaper readers worldwide merely took note of all this: competent prime and foreign ministers had to think actively about the implications of everything for their own country.

Events at home during the same two months were as varied. The western regional government found itself as bankrupt as governments may be, because of cocoa-farmers' boycott of the fixed prices and of a shift in world demand, and had to turn to the central bank and federal ministry of finance for support. The Sardauna, who had once given easterner Zik a horse out of political friendship, now showed the redirection of his southern trust as publicly by conspicuously presenting a ceremonial sword to his client, the NNDP western premier Chief Akintola, during a visit to the Niger canoe regatta at Pategi. The Action Group was still weakened by internal tension and lack of dividends from its investment in UPGA. Dr Majekodunmi and his allies' cultural group Egbe Omo Olofin had not succeeded in reconciling Awolowo and Akintola with each other, and the AG leader in Ibadan, Alhaji Obisesan, had been dropped for supporting their efforts, although restored after admitting his ideological error. The federation's own economy was better able to contemplate baling the west out, being in receipt of a fifty year interest-free credit of \$35 million from the World Bank's affiliate, the international development agency (IDA); repayment of principal was to begin after ten years at 1% a year, and the balance would be spread comfortably over the last thirty years, at the modest cost of a $\frac{3}{4}$ % service charge. The bank's intention had been to spend \$20 million on education and \$15 million on roads in the north. However, the latest projection of oil production was enough to assure the confidence of politicians that within two years the inflow of foreign exchange would make both economic worries, and interest in cocoa or any agricultural product, historical curiosities.

The president had earlier committed his political thoughts to paper, once again without advice or agreement of his government, and they had now appeared in the American journal *Foreign Affairs*. After a description of the electoral organizers' incompetence, the undemocratically savage campaigning, the quarter-boycott and talk of secession, Dr Azikiwe called in question the whole exercise of his own country's executive, legislative and judicial powers, fundamental human rights, creation of more states and, inevitably, the status of the head of state. Disregarding Milton Margai's comments from Sierra Leone, Zik approved the popular picture of an executive ruler. Nigeria was 'simply not ready' to have a constitutional head with hollow powers working in parallel with an all-powerful head of government; the illiterate majority confused the appearance and the reality. He himself, having no personal ambitions, had been ready to be 'a prisoner in a gilded cage', but the very least responsibility that a president ought to have was control of the federal public service commission, audit, electoral commission and census board. A

THE LONELY LEADER OF A SHORT LIVED REPUBLIC: 1965

council of past and present presidents, governors, premiers and speak
d have sole power to advise on use of armed forces for internal secur
n peace and war. Unless northern parliamentary representation wer
oportionate to registered electors rather than population, all adult wo
ld be enfranchised, and all judicial systems should be unified 'so that
ral government supervises all courts'. There must be more regions so
e might dominate the rest. Whatever the academic merits of his case w
ever long it had been in the press, was unchanged since 1961, and in
g before, Dr Azikiwe was made to seem as having learnt nothing pers
practical from his collapse in the new year crisis.

The NPC secretary-general Ahman Pategi promptly challenged him
eating dirty linen for Nigeria so that he can wash it in public', ar
rthern press told him to resign; the Sardauna telegraphed the prime mi
fore leaving for the pilgrimage, to advise the president to keep
ontroversy 'in the interest of the unity and stability of our beloved co
ore detached comment came from the former AG justice ministe
Rotimi Williams, who rightly insisted that the basic system had been
out by Nigerians for themselves, and only the present republican vers
been less carefully thought out; such little constitutional change as n
needed should follow lengthy consultations, including restoration of the
service commission, a new appellate jurisdiction at the equivalent lev
judicial committee of HM's privy council, and some adjustment to
position of chiefs. Parliamentary and judicial checks on the prime
worked well: they needed no sharing with the president - two ca
one boat would be a dangerous experiment. The true safeguards lay
Williams's disregard of the talk about more states reflected a mor
appraisal than Zik's of what majority leadership in the four regi
now contemplate, given the oil situation and the present unlikelihoc
conditions which had led to the mid-west region might be repeated.

At any rate the Sardauna was convinced that the north's unity wa
with the AG emasculated, and the Tiv pacified to all appearances
the report of Ahmadu Coomassie's commission. Rumours that E-
and arms were backing the northern government were denied as
outrageous malice, although large gifts from Cairo for mosques an
were openly acknowledged; but Alhaji Sir Abubakar's repeated v
party, that it would be the end of happiness in this country if
election and indeed the creation of the republic the northern
never discouraging shows of deference, had seen himself prim
as a party politician and far more as a religious devotee, preac
mosques and calling on the people to live austere lives. He als
deeper personal interest in Zaria's Ahmadu Bello university th
other politicians in the establishments with whose foundatio
closely associated in the public's mind. But his locally popula
Islamic conversion campaigns in the north are important for
Sir Abubakar's later life and times, because of the very differ
placed on them by those who consciously or unconsciously
first republic and his leadership to an end. It is as well to
more in these pages that the novel European constitutio
separation of powers might be accepted by experienced north

still be beyond ordinary people's comprehension; and, a quite distinct matter, that truly religious people do not admit that life contains secular compartments from which religion may be excluded.

Many of the Sardauna's most sympathetic admirers concede that there were some difficulties about his position as regional premier and religious reformer. He was a consummate practising politician, his vivid personality and heritage compensating for weaknesses, but he never claimed to be a deep theological scholar himself, and like the traditional chieftains of Arabia looked for wisdom to the truly learned viziers and kadis. Yet in his travels (and he was to be seen more frequently than the prime minister in north Africa, the near and middle east and Pakistan, often in conjunction with his *'umrah* and *haj* journeyings) he met and corresponded as though head of a Muslim country on equal terms with crowned heads like Kings Sa'ud and Hussein and the shah, presidents like Nasser and Ayub Khan, and prime ministers in the Sudan and Lebanon. This treatment, and their apparent estimation of him, conflicted with his own scrupulous minuting on regional files, where he respected external political affairs as no concern of his. Southerners and Nigerian Christians generally were unhappy when he was once reported at Karachi airport as 'promoting a pan-Islamic commonwealth or federation', and were only partially reassured when Abubakar commented that he was sure that no such comment had been made – but if it were ever to be said, it would be beyond the power of a regional premier to say it. Yet in accepting a position as a senior world Islamic figure as of right, invited to attend great meetings and to chair conferences, Sir Ahmadu Bello was as conscious as Malays or other west Africans that he spoke for a non-racist Muslim unity, very different from the 'Arab unity' that his southern critics feared. The confusing danger was that so many of the untutored masses, or the imperceptive of all ranks outside the northern region, were beginning to regard him as the effective commander of the faithful, and to approach him in that light for guidance or favours. Since for various reasons he thought he would not now live to succeed to the caliphate itself, a surrogate position was not objectionable to him; but he was prompt to denounce the *Citizen* for blasphemy when its pages referred to him as a 'messenger of God'.

His civil service wisely redirected religious supplicants to one or other of the two northern bodies outside the bureaucratic and executive pale. The independent Jama'at-el-Nasr-el-Islam (society for the victory of Islam, or JANI) had been set up, under the Sultan's presidency and the Sardauna's patronage, to do at last what the Christian missions had for so very long done among people ignorant of the book, and which Muslims, in Nigeria at least, had not – actively build mosques, to proselytize, and generally to educate, but to do so particularly (without immediately and controversially bringing the old-fashioned Qur'anic schools into the system, as so often promised by politicians) in Islamic societies enjoying the equipment and qualified staff that would attract the graduates available from the ministry of education to NA and Christian voluntary agencies. The other organization was the Advisory Committee on Islamic Affairs, known popularly as 'the council of mallams'; originally this was a wise men convened by the Sardauna from the whole of the north, to provide on the detailed contemporary interpretation of Muslim practices such as pilgrimage, alms giving, dowry, or uniform signalling of the moon-signaling of *Ramadan*. The difficulty for insensitive onlookers, who disliked the sight of the same stage army wearing different hats in incompatible rôles, was that so many members of JANI were civil servants, and so many of the mallams were well-known NPC supporters.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar could not but approve of the motives for founding these odies, which he knew he would never have had the presumption to set up himself. Privately the sincerity of his Muslim faith was quite as strong as that of any Nigerian named in these pages. But such was now the Sardauna's burning purpose, to convert whole 'pagan/polytheist communities'. Much of the alarm created in the south was unjustified: personally he concentrated on the remaining animist pockets in majority Muslim-ruled areas outside Borno, and left the Christian or Christian-influenced areas in the middle belt alone, whom he respected without full acknowledgement from his critics that he did so (sycophants and ambitious NPC supporters in those parts might use his name in their own activities, and often did). The campaigns had started in September 1963 with the mass conversion of 1,500 Gwari 'pagans' in the Niger province, in the presence of the premier, grand kadi, speaker and regional dignitaries. If the distribution of holy Qur'ans, pamphlets, cloth and rosaries, and sometimes five pound notes, and the prospect of more elaborate clothing, and of absorption into a more economically and politically successful majority, were the superficial attractions, conversion was a voluntary and grateful act, and (as with many a 'rice-bowl' Christian adherent) the nurture of a truly convinced belief frequently followed an initially superficial outward conformity. Shamefully, some of the 'converts' counted were already Muslims of long standing, ready to accept their share of the goods.

The process gathered strength, receded somewhat during the general election and resumed in 1965, with credible reports of 100,000 conversions in Zaria and Niger alone, and local campaigns being initiated by lesser politicians and zealous new converts. Sir Ahmadu made a later claim, in the context of insinuation that, 'For me, Israel does not exist', of 430,000 converts to Islam since his had begun. Not all of the longest established civil servants or the young intake, who had been very pleased to take an active interest in JNIs, increase of religious publications, were as happy about their involvement which came about through official collection of conversion statistics. reports and reactions were alarming in their implications. Misunderstanding was compounded by the premier's occasional reference to a *jihad*. What had in mind, as part of the belated response to overseas Christian attacks, not a physical war but a mass endeavour to protect the faith, life, liberty and self-respect which Muslims and their closest neighbours felt threatened by universal secular reformation: the onlookers only knew *jihad* as sword and flame, in the way that their fear of what they thought as Islamic procedure and punishment had made them fret irrationally. 1961 northern constitutional change (mentioned in Chapter 35), to the grand kadi on to the northern civil bench in mixed cases. Famous politicians were not, for the most part, notable for their involvement in doctrinal matters or Christian evangelism. Some of the future tragedies arise from a radical youth's unlettered readiness to class one circle's zealous souls together with another circle's flourishing public corruption, as ways to reinforce party political powers - power in which the new government unlike its predecessor, saw few signs of sharing.

The Sardauna was also a principal in the Usmaniyya movement not quite a new or sub-*tarika* in the line of the Kadiriyya and Tijj Ahmadu Bello would probably have been happier that there should be no *tarikas*, but it represented an interpretation into modern terms of the basis of Usman dan Fodiyo's caliphate. Again Alhaji Sir Abubakar's public credentials to challenge the wisdom, even on national political

of ignoring outsiders' reactions to such internal activities which might enjoy the highest religious motivation. The man with that confidence, to spell out to Sir Ahmadu Bello the ambiguity and danger of the situation, and the dangers for the whole country of the increasingly distorted lens through which the north was being seen by the uncomprehending, was Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu. In April 1965 the Sardauna was again visiting Saudi Arabia, and restless southern military officers speculated on where all this might lead. Some senior northern civil servants were quietly wondering at what point they too should stand out against their premier's perceived steps outside his civil constitutional limits. They rightly believed that if faced by resolute and reasoned opposition by his own élite, he would back down; on truly political matters the NPC Kaduna hierarchy and its civil service still worked on mutual trust as a team.

The quarter-election had gone forward as legislated and was held, after an average campaign and the now customary cross-allegations of malpractices, on 18 March. Several mid-west seats were uncontested, and UPGA received its expected overwhelming majority, winning all but six seats in the east and trouncing NNDP in the three Lagos seats; but NPC still had 162, NNDP 36 and independents five of the 312 seats in the full parliament, although 208 votes would be needed for any constitutional changes. The final declarations showed that AG had two seats in Lagos, 15 in the west and four in the east; NCNC one in Lagos, five in the west, 64 in the east and 13 in the mid-west; NPF four in the north; independents one each in Lagos (Benson), the west and the north, and two in the east. Wachuku, Njoku and Mbu were back, but not Chike Obi, and Aminu Kano promptly called for the promised constitutional review to be held before August.

The president opened the budget session, the parliament's last month-long meeting, six days later, preferring to wear a civilian gown rather than one of his C-in-C's uniforms. His speech on the government's programme made no reference to constitutional change. The prime minister's parliamentary secretary said in reply to an oral question that Alhaji Sir Abubakar would fulfil his 1962 promise to tour all African countries if and when he were invited and as his other duties permitted. Next day a debate on the development fund in a supplementary appropriation bill was allowed to drift into renewed criticisms of the electoral commission. Abubakar intervened with some irritation to defend independent bodies and officials who could not answer back, and to inveigh against wild political allegations, of which some might be true or not, but some could not possibly be true: *'We should remember that people outside cannot know when we are joking, and when we are not trying to be constructive'*. Disturbances seemed likely when an NCNC easterner Mr A U D Mbah claimed that the whole of the house was not truly representative of the people of the country, as the elections were rigged and the December farce was the result of large-scale lawlessness organized by 'certain politicians'. The prime minister calmed the storm with a stern warning to Mbah to exercise restraint over his allegations, in the interest of the unity of the federation.

At the end of March Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh presented what he named his 'rededication budget'. He stressed the unanticipated effects of the low prices for primary products, especially cocoa, of the Morgan pay awards, of the excess of luxury imports over sagging exports (the adverse trade balance had worsened from £18 million in 1963 to £41 million in 1964), for which the rise in petroleum exports to five million tons, or by £12 million to £32 million, was as yet only a palliative. The revenue estimate for 1965-66 was £160 million, and the optimist

looked forward to continuation of budget surpluses. However this was heard in the context of a gloomy half-way house report on the six year plan; a grand total, now absorbing the demands of a fourth region on top of the surprising census figures and burdensome Morgan wages and salaries, of more accurate costing, and of the addition of new projects without abandoning or less justifiable ones, had risen to £823 million. There were also the left-overs from the 1958-62 plans, the unproductive social and administrative sectors had swollen, and the two censuses and elections had cost far more than had seemed probable in 1962. Foreign aid had so far found 12.3% of actual capital expenditure where 50% had been boldly assumed. Grants and loans were 'assured' amounting to £267 million, but only two-thirds of the original forecast was at all likely ever to eventuate. Servicing of the hard loans represented by contractor-financing and suppliers' credit, and the guarantees given to select categories of foreign investment, were harder to meet than when light-heartedly entered into. Besides cocoa, the other marketing board's out-turn had not been encouraging either, although domestic borrowing had met the planners' more limited expectations. 'Rededication' was clearly a call for sobriety, which was never popular, and it distracted attention from the moment from the oil prospects. The regional budgets deserve comparison: the north's totalled £60 millions; the east's was very buoyant at almost £42 million where the £9.6 millions Shell-BP oil refinery at Port Harcourt was repaying its 50% government financial interests; the west's total was £28 million, hit by the lowest cocoa prices since 1945, although the partially unsold production had been a record 300,000 tons; but the mid-western region, enjoying 90% of the country's rubber and timber, and in the UAC timber plant at Sapele its large single enterprise which exported 1.2 million cubic feet, had a budget of only £5.8 million.

The minister of finance upset some NCNC members, and many reacted outside the house, with a political commentary by the way: he made an assault on 'so-called socialism', whether it were dressed up as 'progressive' or 'democratic' - it still meant state ownership of land, capital, the means of production and distribution, and the abolition of inheritance. This loss of individual freedom must make it unacceptable to all 'true and honest Nigerians', he said, and thereby stored up for himself a natural resentment among Nigerians whose fathers had known neither material prosperity nor inherited resources, and had not yet learnt how to acquire much wealth themselves. The prime minister left it to others to argue about money markets and pure finance but agreed with his political economy.

On April the first Alhaji Sir Abubakar announced the reality of his proposed reshuffle to create a broad-based cabinet. It was widely derided, without criticism identifying the effective moral defences that would have protected the prime minister and his handful of honest non-partisan confidants against a greedy combination of personal, geographical and tribal pressures. The pressure to create and appoint to office was there, and every premier in the country was expected to reward his fiefdoms by exercising it regardless of the economic demands of stewardship; much more so a federal prime minister struggling to find stable support from many groupings in more than one party. Even the edifice left after this jerry-builders' bazaar was grotesque. The abolition of the Action Group was no surprise, but a ministerial government of 80 members, costing at £750,000 double its predecessor and half as much as all four regional political administrations taken together, was a show-

came from the north, 25 from the west, 15 from the east, four from mid-west and two from Lagos, so that (including a man from Ilorin) the Yoruba had a disproportionate share of the 'broad base', without drawing on the AG; and all the former NCNC ministers were back in office. Sadly, no name that had been discredited by radical or enlightened public opinion over assertions of ostentation or corruption was missing either. The cabinet itself contained 21 ministers with portfolios and eleven ministers of state, but there were also 22 ministers of state without cabinet rank and 26 parliamentary secretaries. The party division of the spoils was broad-based without reflecting strengths in the house: NPC had 15 cabinet ministers, seven non-cabinet ministers and twelve parliamentary secretaries; NNDP and NCNC both had seven cabinet ministers and seven parliamentary secretaries, but NCNC one more non-cabinet minister than NNDP at eight. Three cabinet ministers were not party members, Dr Elias, Dr Majekodunmi and (now a senator after his forced resignation as eastern S-G) Mr Daniel Onwura Ibekwe, who was to join Alhaji Nuhu Bamalli, replacing Dr Esin at commonwealth relations.

The assignment of responsibilities and allocation of portfolios showed where power might actually lie, and as this was Alhaji Sir Abubakar's last administration these deserve to be listed. The occupants of the 'temporary' cabinet seats of 7 January shown in the preceding chapter mostly remained unchanged, but their 'caretaking' duties were shed. The prime minister (and therefore his secretary and office) retained charge of constitutional matters; the federal legislature and its executive business; the Nigeria police force, security and public safety; co-ordination between ministries; the national universities commission; and relations with the Niger dam authority. Retaining his own post as minister for external affairs, he and his two ministers of state oversaw foreign and commonwealth affairs; the pilgrimage; collection & collation of information about other countries; co-ordination of arrangements for international conferences in Nigeria; and seamen's identity certificates.

Most of the other portfolios' duties, such as finance, were self-explanatory, but defence included the advisory council on the prerogative of mercy; transport (in which Alhaji Abdul Razaq as a full cabinet minister of state now supported Zanna Bukar Dipcharima) included water from sources affecting more than one region; economic development included relations with the Niger delta development board; Lagos affairs included all federal lands; housing and surveys (now given to Chief A O O Ogunsanya) nevertheless included housing and rents in Lagos; education (now given to NNDP's secretary-general Mr Richard O A Akinjide, assisted by a non-cabinet minister, Chief B O Olusola) now included antiquities; and labour (given to Chief A Adedoyin) also covered social welfare, juvenile delinquency, co-operatives and Lagos sports.

The other main additions were that Mr Raymond Njoku relieved Alhaji Shehu Shagari of communications (Shagari acquired Alhaji Ali Monguno as non-cabinet minister of state to assist at internal affairs); Dr Mbadiwe surrendered aviation to Dr Jaja Wachuku and assumed trade; Chief Akinloye was allotted industries, with a non-cabinet minister in support, Mr J O Taiwo; Chief Ayotunde Rosiji was nominated a senator and became minister of information; Prince A Lamuye received natural resources and research. The remaining ministers of state of full cabinet rank were Chief A Akerele, Chief Hezekiah Oladipo Davies, Mr Matthew Tawo Mbu, Mr Aja Nwachukwu and Mr E T Orodì. No specific ministerial interests were immediately allocated to them, nor at once to the remaining 19 ministers outside the cabinet, who included Senator Moses Olarewaju, Chief Olu Akinfosile, Mr Mbazulike

Amechi and Mr D C Ugwu. Next month the number of parliamentary secretaries was to be inflated by a further two. There was no job for ToS Benson. Nor was Malam Aminu Kano reappointed government chief whip.

The common wonder was what all the members of this administration outside the cabinet would find to do. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had rarely not been (or seemed to be) tired, but for the first time he could justly be called weak. He had minimized cross-party discontent and been praised for magnanimity, but his personal power was now thought by many to stem solely from his long service, his survival from the first council of 1952. Yet the last word should rest, perversely, with Chief Akintola, who had once clarified the irrelevance of Downing Street ideas and Westminster pretensions to Nigerian politics of the day: 'The cabinet is not the executive! It, not the legislature, is the representative body! We must give some part of it to everyone'. He knew where power lay and where it did not, as well as any of his contemporaries. After his long wait to be able to prove to his voters that NNDP had its hands in the Lagos powerhouse, he now called the accession of NNDP to the federal government 'a great day for the west', as others had been calling the return of NCNC a disaster for Nigeria; he drove more confidently in his motorcade, with the police sirens blaring ahead. Dr Mbadiwe of NCNC had the confidence to raise the question of his land deals again with the prime minister and attorney-general, suggesting that it should be possible to ward off 'irresponsible attacks', but receiving no response.

The budget session continued during these excitements, fulfilling its purpose of keeping a check on this huge executive, but its floor members no longer supposing that they were the government or even included an alternative government in waiting. The question of reviewing the constitution was in the air and was much mentioned in their speeches. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, minister of economic development, at one stage gratuitously said there would be no need for this, and that the north would resist any attempt to do so. Another furore began at this alleged 'unprovoked insult to southerners', and Alhaji Sir Abubakar had to make it clear that it was the minister's own opinion; but he confirmed for the government as a whole that '*arrangements will be made for the review of the Nigerian constitution, as soon as the necessary processes had been completed*'.

He also tried, when debating the cabinet office provisions in the appropriation bill's committee stage towards the end of April, to discourage inflammatory speeches about more 'dynamic' approaches to international problems and relations with Ghana, on which his actions have already been reviewed. The house ought surely to remember, he said, the last treason trials, and that many Nigerians who were wanted to answer charges by their own government were still in Accra, the headquarters of subversive elements in Africa; but

'I always want us in Nigeria to look at this Ghana business as a case between an elephant and an ant. An ant can go over the body of an elephant, play there and drop, and perhaps die. . . . The ordinary Ghanaians are still very friendly with Nigerians. So why do we allow this temporary thing to disturb the happiness and the happy relations between the people of Nigeria and the people of Ghana? . . . If anybody thinks that he could hold the continent of Africa and carry it on his shoulders, well, here we are, let him do so!' The house laughed. 'When the president of Ghana invited the conference to be held in Accra last July in Cairo, . . . I said that would be all right, but that I could not see how I could go to Accra to dine and laugh

with Nigerians who had run away from their country because they were wanted by the police. . . . I do not know what you would think of it. . . . Of course I would like to consult with many heads of African states as soon as possible. . . . Maybe we shall postpone it. Some time ago . . . Ghana mounted a campaign against us . . . that we had sent our soldiers to fight on the side of Tshombe in the Congo. This is a lie, and it is madness because if Ghana could send her troops secretly to fight in any country, in Nigeria our system is such that we cannot do so.

His anger was open, but his realism in resisting reprisals was strong, just as when he supported whatever government was established in actual authority in the Congo.

Nuhu Bamalli also assured the house that Nigeria was doing everything financially and morally to help freedom-fighters, and would give them arms and ammunition if the OAU so decided. He was also considering the opening of a diplomatic mission in Israel. The cabinet office head of the estimates was quickly approved, Abubakar's parting shot in exchanges about parliamentary and ministerial salaries being, *'The Nigerian prime minister is one of the least paid in the commonwealth, and in Africa perhaps he is the least paid of all the heads of government'*. It was true, but it failed to impress parliamentarians as an argument for their own austerity.

Meanwhile in the Jos high court Abubakar's UPGA opponent Azi Nyako was submitting in his election petition that the Bauchi native authority, its police and the alkalis were all the prime minister's agents, and his own counsel R O Gaji was asserting that Azi's evidence was weak and his ten witnesses 'speculative and fictitious'. Mr Justice Nigel Reed from New Zealand found no proof that these persons or bodies alleged to be Alhaji Sir Abubakar's agents had acted on his general or specific authority, and added, 'I am bound to say that Mr Nyako's witnesses were inspired by malice'. Contemporaneously the Leeds trades union expert Allen was found not guilty in two of his appeals, but on the third offence of conspiracy had his sentence confirmed but reduced to four months; having already served them, he was released to return home. The Sardauna had been saying that the expatriates working in the north were there because of their interest in the progress of the region, while southerners were there 'to suck our blood, play politics and take what they can home'. Sir Ahmadu now defended his NPC first vice-president against an 'unrighteous' attack 'in very bad taste' in the northern organ the *Nigerian Citizen* which had referred to a policy of 'Bauchinization': it had been 'ignorant of the complete accord and close consultation which exists in our party, in ensuring that the peoples of the north got their fair share of entitlements in the federation'.

An inopportune death gave new strength to those who believed that outstanding individuals were as important in history as impersonal mass forces. Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu's forebears had been almost as humble as the prime minister's, although he had risen through a district headship and native treasury rather than the classrooms of Katsina college. As the man to whom all northern difficulties in Lagos ultimately came, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar's nearest, most trusted political friend and principal filter of conundrums, he was the prime minister's deputy in all but name. The only minister capable of confronting Abubakar firmly but without malice or aggression was this sole remaining ally who knew how to wield power effectively and without backlash. Whenever Muhammadu Ribadu was stubborn, Abubakar would avoid collision by sending a third party, such as Maitama Sule, to make representations, *'even if you have*

to cry'. In the same way, whenever Abubakar did not want to experience out-and-out quarrel in Kaduna, or to advise the Sardauna yet again to refrain from meddling in foreign affairs, the more right-wing 'Hardo' would defuse the cause. Chief Festus, as his understanding of northerners ripened in sympathy and widened his rift with easterners, regarded Ribadu as his closest northern friend. But he or his medical advisers had allowed him to carry about ever-growing bodily weight, in contrast to the still wiry Abubakar. Alhaji M. Yar'Adua had welcomed Muhammadu Ribadu back at the airport from 'Yar' before his budget speech, where the businessman C Leventis had whispered 'The old man is ill' (he was 56), but nobody appeared to notice that his health was under strain.

However on 1 May he was sick in bed. The Sardauna of Sokoto had prepared a ceremony to reward both Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu with gold medals of the Usmaniyya order, which he had had struck for their services to the NPC and to the north. Abubakar, who had come up all with a southerner ADC to assuage some NPC friction over the olive branch tendered to NCNC, had to receive their friend's medal on his behalf at the state house in the morning. A large celebratory party was arranged later in the day in a banqueting room but, after the company had been long waiting, the Sardauna came in with dejected sobs and spoke solemnly into the microphone: 'Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu he died this morning'. The principal guest returned to the state house, where Abubakar said, '*Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu is very lucky, he met death peacefully in his bed, after the pilgrimage. None of us know how we are going to die*'. Echoing his prayer on mount Arafat mentioned in chapter 24, he added, '*We hope our deaths will not be violent, and be in his, with our reason entire*'. Party members wanted the burial to be in Kaduna whether the prime minister accompanied the coffin, but it was known that the family and the lamido had a place in 'Yola which the dead man had chosen and the Sardauna led the funeral escort by air to Adamawa. Almost inevitably rumours were invented that there had been an Igbo poisoning.

On the return to Kaduna, the prime minister had more to say in the state house: '*Gentlemen, Alhaji Ribadu has preceded us, and he was lucky if he stood by his grave - but we do not know who are going to stand by our progress of Nigeria. His death was a great personal loss to me. His death was not have come at a worse time than now*'. On 4 May to a hastily convened meeting of parliament, where speculation was rife on a cabinet reshuffle soon after the last, he gave a brief and dignified obituary speech, repeating this death could not have come at a worse moment: one of the late minister's greatest achievements had been '*the wonderful way he moulded our arrangements he has infused into them the spirit of self-confidence, reliability and maturity*' and followed by Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh with a long, almost poetic remark and by Alhaji Inuwa Wada and Dr Kingsley Mbadiwe. 'KO' pointed out that Abubakar had always gone to Ribadu for last minute advice - and asked could he go now?

He could only use his imagination: in the remaining months colleagues could say that never a day passed without Abubakar musing, '*If it were Ribadu do [so-and-so]*'. There was no living substitute, and Abubakar was no minister to have survived in office since 1952.

Chapter 45 A Long Hot Summer

Kowa ya tuna bara bai ji dadin bana ba

Abubakar's domestic political isolation, indeed his loneliness outside of his purely social friendships, now became obvious to those public figures who understood him. Theirs was contrary to the view of foreign correspondents, who only saw that he had come out of the constitutional crisis with great honour and avoided what had seemed inescapable disaster. Alhaji Aminu Kano knew that the prime minister's short-term hopes for Nigerian unity were drained, and that that part of his intellect that was not exhausted could only find compensation on the international platform: like more than one British prime minister abused by domestic rivals, it was there that he might speak in a way that earned respect for his home country, from world figures who did not suppose Nigeria's federal unity to be a canvas façade. The unabashed NPC élite and the radicals in the northern governing hierarchy ironically mistook his behaviour under strain for complacency. While the NCNC drifted away from the realism of power-sharing into the daydreams of domination, Alhaji Sir Abubakar was losing some of the support of his own natural defenders who sprang from similar roots. 'Malam' saw this trend encouraged by the general perception – even if a misconception – that the Sardauna's religious preoccupations, and the selfishness of some of his followers or sycophants, were turning the northern region back into a psychologically distinct country. During the year the Sardauna was heard to say, 'I'd rather be called sultan of Sokoto than president of Nigeria!'

The prime minister's own delicate rapport with the northern premier did not change. When commenting to pressmen on his acceptance of the Sardauna's Usmaniyya medal, he said that foreign journalists often misunderstood their relationship: '*I know we disagree, but we disagree because we are human*'. Both were *bayin Allah* [servants of God], and whether or not one of them might be a *shugaban addini* [religious leader], to suggest that he might be in any theological way 'elect' to be more than that, was a matter for the consciences of others. Where there was friction, it could be traced to some of the more stubborn of those in the Sardauna's entourage who tried to discourage their master's instincts towards liberalism. Ordinarily Abubakar had always been able to reason with Ahmadu Bello and agree on a compromise, but nowadays uncomfortable news from Kaduna was more likely to result in, in effect, '*I'm tired – go and tell them to do whatever they want*'. The differences in workstyle and stamina were shown when the prime minister once commented to the premier in Kaduna on the Sardauna's readiness to receive northern visitors of all sorts at any time of day or night, in office or at home: '*Your will-power is too much – I must have fixed appointments, you just take all comers in turn*'.

Alhaji Inuwa Wada inevitably found himself trying to fill Alhaji Muhammad Ribadu's shoes whenever a personal go-between was needed to settle some uncertainty between Lagos and Kaduna; but his character and manner were less forthright and his intimacy with Abubakar less close. Members of the 'Wh

If?' school of romantic historians like to speculate on whether Ribadu, had he lived, would have urged Abubakar to take stern action on the forthcoming subversive moves within the army, after reading the intelligence reports which would have reached him as soon as the prime minister. Sharing responsibility, as they had, for the choice of the army's leadership, it is unlikely that they would have treated these confidential warnings any more seriously than the few senior ministers and permanent secretaries privy to such delicate information were going to do without the advice of Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu.

By the end of May the new minister of defence was the same Inuwa Wada, who had to face difficulties of which he was not always fully aware: the 'war of succession' to Welby-Everard had left some irritants among the senior military hierarchy, and even matters of material logistics, procurement and supply began to be ingredients, not only for potential corruption, but also for lobbying by cliques who identified themselves with one or other of the potential rivals. Shehu Shagari took over the works portfolio, while another minister of state not of cabinet rank was appointed at the same time (there was no significance in his name being Ahmadu Ribadu). Those who understood the prime minister, and forgave him for the bizarre proliferation of political offices whose creation had been forced on him, agreed with his judgement - that all the other political leaders enjoying wide popular appeal were now determined either to rule themselves, or to withhold their co-operation from whoever else was ruling. He would have to continue his fight for a federated unity of diversity alone.

Few internal events required the prime minister's personal initiative while he prepared for OAU and commonwealth PMs' discussions, although several held his interest. In the north the Coomassie commission report had just been drafted, advising the restoration of familiar local government systems, with thirty to thirty-five administrative districts under Tor Tiv's chieftaincy, founded more or less on the traditional clan system; it was not welcomed by those Tiv who had hoped for devolution to a distinct modern Tiv 'state', but it was at last an effort to comprehend and treat with respect a large minority who still, both consciously and unconsciously, rebuffed integration with the nation. Lt-col Jack Gowon was sent to the British joint services Latimer staff college at Chesham to study inter-service co-operation, and was succeeded as AAG by James Pam. President and prime minister received three Russian delegates from a Soviet-Nigeria friendship society, and later two American astronauts, who proceeded to tour the country. Sir Adetokunbo repeated his hope for re-establishment of a judicial service commission to allow judges to be appointed without politicians' intervention. Dipcharima replaced Dr Ikejiani and most of his bankrupt railway corporation board, installing the transport permanent secretary Mr H A Ejueyitchie as chairman. Earl Mountbatten, head of a British fact-finding commission on immigration into Britain, visited Lagos with a member of the London high commission's staff and spoke with the prime minister, who subsequently admitted that Britain, like other countries, needed to have some restrictions on immigration. A skirmish was reported from Bauchi province between policemen and rustics armed with bows and arrows. Abubakar announced that the 'summit' of premiers to discuss how to review the constitution would be held in August in Enugu. The quarrel between ministries of external affairs and of information over responsibility for overseas publicity was settled with the decision that Chief Rosiji, Benson's successor, would handle it (and relieve the overburdened foreign minister). In the light of the budget statement further work on the new £8 million federal parliamentary

building was suspended, until sufficient financial resources should become available.

Early in May Prince Makhosini, the leader of Swaziland's Imbhokodo national movement came to Nigeria and saw the prime minister. Abubakar's advice to him, which he quoted to newsmen, was to be mindful of geographical and economic realities, and not to be carried away by unrealistic political slogans which, if taken at their face value, would reduce Swaziland to a shambles.

The Lagos university unhappiness continued. Traditions founded in ancient foreign practices, whereby endowments and fees covered costs and guaranteed philosophical freedom for teachers, now foundered in face of both treasury payments and the institution's statutory origins calling the piper's tune. The federal government refused to submit to threats and blackmail, especially that believed to be the work of self-important expatriate academics; Dr Biobaku was confirmed by the provisional council, Dr Njoku would no longer remain as professor of biology, an eminent commercial lawyer, Professor Gower (later Sir Raymond), was suspended for continuing to back Njoku, Biobaku was screamed down during his inaugural address at the formal reopening of the university, and six contract expatriates were subsequently removed from their faculties. Njoku left to be a visiting professor at Michigan state university. Another traditional British freedom received a gentler reminder at the same time: the *Daily Times* of Nigeria had enjoyed its fortieth annual general meeting, to which Alhaji Sir Abubakar uttered the hope that it would continue to maintain its independent views, in other words to be guided in its publication by truth, accuracy and fairness – the freedom enjoyed by the Nigerian press was one of the fundamental human rights honoured by the federal government but, *'We expect that it will continuously reciprocate its sacred duty to the public to be fair and honest, without distortion of the truth, either by omission or by deliberate act'*.

There followed a visit to Lagos from The Gambia's prime minister Mr David Jawara, with whom he announced a substantial identity of views on the topics to be discussed at the next month's commonwealth conference – Mr Jawara told him that his country would become a republic in February 1966. Julius Nyerere from Tanzania also called on him on his way to London. Both Jawara and Nyerere visited the northern region, where the former was reconverted to Islam by the Sardauna and renamed himself Dauda. A Christian major among the guests invited to the state house reception, Nzeogwu, was affronted by the premier's fulsome speech celebrating this event.

The extraordinary session of the OAU council of ministers was preceded by a repetition of Zik's statement that the heads of state were morally bound to attend the disputed Accra plenary session, and by a prime minister's press conference at which Abubakar explained that although the OAU secretariat in Addis Ababa had still only received 23 formal acceptances, 26 states were known to be in favour of coming to Lagos, two more than the minimum needed for an extraordinary meeting: *'When you start boycotting meetings, you are heading for trouble. . . . Exiles in Nigeria are given a clear warning that if they indulge in politics against their own country, or indulge in Nigerian politics, they will be sent away immediately'*. He added that there appeared to be closer contact between such exiles in Accra and the Ghana government. Pressed yet again over Nkrumah's ideas of an African union government, he said, *'Let him continue to put the proposal – the states will continue to throw it out'*.

The delegates were addressed in Lagos by Alhaji Sir Abubakar on 10 June. He said that the meeting was not competent to change the venue of a plenary meeting which had been settled by the heads of state, but should take note of that and recommend what would satisfy all concerned. He urged them not to turn the meeting into a virtual tribunal set up to try Ghana, but to approach the issue before it with frankness, as a basis for healing the wounds which were tending to disintegrate the OAU, Africa's main bulwark and safest guarantee against colonialism; without its charter's principles of non-interference in internal affairs, of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and of unqualified condemnation of any subversive activity, the OAU had no meaning – and without those Nigeria would not be represented at this or any other meeting of the organization. Concerning the Ghanaian issue, *'These are grave allegations and charges. But I thought that in considering these limited but crucial problems, we should not lose sight of the centrifugal effect of a boycott on the future of our organization'*. The Ghanaians in turn asserted that they housed no camps of dissidents plotting against any other African state; their accusers responded by demanding the return of all their nationals who were taking refuge in Ghana; Ghana rejected this but offered to send such people as were considered dangerous away from Accra during the full conference; and this was found acceptable. It was eventually agreed that Haile Selassie and Abubakar should attend a meeting in Abidjan where Nkrumah and his accusers would confront each other.

In the event that potentially instructive clash was cancelled, but the Lagos meeting closed with an understanding that all delegations would go to Accra in October, provided that a mediating committee were satisfied that the subversive 'refugees' would be cleared out. There was general overseas agreement that Abubakar's initiative in calling the extraordinary council of ministers, and his leadership in the OAU and OCAM issues, earned high praise for a truly continental leader. The latest distraction was the summoning of a 'second Bandung', a tenth anniversary Afro-Asian conference in Algiers at the end of June in the wake of the purely celebratory Jakarta gathering, to be preceded by a preliminary colloquium of potentially seventy member foreign ministers. The question was whether Russia would or would not attend, thus balancing China, and the possible presence of anti-communist Malaya and distraught South Vietnam also inspired speculation; Nuhu Bamalli commented that there was no objection to Russian participation, but that Malaya as a Commonwealth country could not be denied recognition in Algiers.

Some Nigerian officials were beginning to attract attention as international figures in their own right, although they sat in the shadow of their prime minister: Simeon Adebo, whose departure from the headship of the western regional civil service was widely blamed for the west's administrative crumbling, was now ambassador to the USA, and Godfrey K Amachree, an eastern administrative officer trained at the Oxford Devonshire course who had reverted to the law and was a former QC, was now under-secretary in charge of the department of trusteeship and non-self-governing territories at UNO. Amachree had an official interest in the 'special committee of 24', the more convenient title of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This committee was currently visiting east and central Africa, and its report styled the behaviour of Portugal, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia as 'intolerable'. It had also, enlisting the support of 35 African member states, just urged the security council to call on Britain to take

action to stop any unilateral declaration of independence by Southern Rhodesia, such as the Rhodesian Front had been threatening after the imminent elections, 'by all possible means'. This resolution was passed 7-0.

Other overseas interests during the summer included an accusation by Bourguiba of Tunis early in May that Nasser of Egypt was trying to be dictator of the Arab world; the arrival of American paratroops in South Vietnam; Cambodia's severance of relations with the USA, which had supported a USSR call for that country to be neutralized; the dissolution of the South Vietnam armed forces council; the Russian launch of an unmanned *Lunik* to survey the moon; the admission of the democratic republic of Congo Léopoldville to OCAM, making a total of fifteen members; the dissolution of the Zanzibar revolutionary council in favour of an Afro-Shirazi party which did not favour President Nyerere; the release by Kenyatta of eleven undeclared truckloads of Chinese arms, seized in transit from Tanzania to Uganda, after an apology from Obote; the safe return of American astronauts from 62 orbits in four days; the establishment in USA of a constitutional right to privacy as the indirect result of a supreme court invalidation of a Connecticut law against birth control devices; declaration of an emergency in Morocco by King Hassan II; another despairing extension of the UN force in Cyprus, this time for six months; the blocking by Tanzania of a wide range of imports from Kenya and Uganda, thus effectively ending their shared monetary and banking system, and hastening the disintegration of the east African common services organization which some Nigerians had once seen as a model; severance by South Vietnam of diplomatic, but not consular, relations with France; an agreement by the European community foreign ministers to abolish industrial tariffs by 1967; the coincident conclusion of Nigeria's negotiations with the community in Brussels, belatedly eased by France dropping its blocking objections, but clouded at the last minute when de Gaulle removed France from the council of ministers, leaving the validity of an agreement with one missing signature temporarily in doubt; Nigeria's incidental irritation of Britain by offering preferences to the community in return for tariff concessions; UNESCO's establishment of another scheme to standardize the transcription of African languages before all the traditional spoken forms were further adulterated by pidgins or creoles, or swamped by international tongues, beginning with 'Peul' (Fulfulde or Fulani); Britain's Labour colonial minister Anthony Greenwood's appointment of a committee under Nigeria's former CJ Sir Stafford Foster-Sutton, to consult the dean and chapter of Westminster abbey, frame the costs, and appeal for funds to arrange for a commemorative tablet to past (and present) members of Britain's colonial services, which the Queen would unveil; and his colleague Mrs Barbara Castle's launch of the new overseas development ministry, promising more publicly funded aid at the same time as the British treasury was placing restrictions on private overseas investment.

The next two months were as engrossing. Early in July American troops left the Dominican republic; Congo Brazzaville accused Fulbert Youlou of attempting a coup; there were clashes in southern Sudan; Mauritania resigned from OCAM, remaining member of Air Afrique, the west African customs union and the committee for development of the Senegal river; Egypt won the first African games in Brazzaville; the British parliament unanimously passed a bill prohibiting racial discrimination in public places; Ghana decimalized its currency; Dr Banda announced that Malawi would become a Commonwealth republic in July 1966; Cyprus abolished the separate Greek and Turkish electoral rolls, effectively dismissing the Turkish vice-president assured on

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ce, and Britain and Turkey laid a complaint against Makarios; an independence agreement was signed for the Maldive islands; As-Home resigned as leader of the British opposition party, being replaced by the younger Edward Heath; pictures were released of the surface of the moon from an unmanned American spacecraft Mariner 4; constitutional changes in the future of Aden and the south Arabian federation broke down; USA suspended bombing of Hanoi during a visit by Dr Nkrumah; Singapore declared independence as an independent nation after talks between Lee Kuan Yew and Tengku Abdul Rahman, Britain retaining the right to use its bases; there were race riots in Los Angeles; American officials were expelled from Brazzaville after maltreatment; a Muslim brotherhood plot was uncovered against Nasser; USSR released pictures of the far side of the moon; President Nkrumah assumed direct control of the Ghanaian army; a coup was averted by the suppression of a generals' revolt; another American astronaut made 120 orbits of the earth in eight days; China formally recognized Soumailot in place of the 'rightful' rebel Congolese leader of the supreme council of the state; Indian troops invaded Pakistan-occupied Kashmir; the UN Security Council was enlarged from eleven to fifteen seats, and the Economic and Social Council from eighteen to twenty-seven. By the end of the year there was a semblance of quiet from Africa's guerrillas based in the edges of Tanzania, Congo, Sénégal and the southern Portuguese colonies, but peace was still unattainable in the southern Sudan, Burundi and the Ethiopian border.

Abubakar's visit to London proved to be another personal success. At Heathrow with Mr Nyerere on 15 June, he told the newsmen that where Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front party had indeed won a sweeping majority in the limited franchise on 7 May) would be one of the most important of the prime ministers' conference; it had been much discussed in advance of the African members (particularly in the light of Nkomo's and Sithole's demands for an end to all mention of 'secession', and the claims that 10,000 members of ZANU were under detention). There was no agreement yet, he would now go far to press the British government, whose sole constitutional duty Rhodesia was, to impose majority rule by *force majeure*: 'What is the value of having [such] an agreement, when we are coming to the conference? I want an open mind'. He could clearly see that anyone negotiating with Mr Smith would not go in with his hands too tightly tied. When badgered for some official statement on the British immigration issue (the latest proposal was to issue annual work permits for Commonwealth immigrants to 8,500), he was content with, 'We all impose restrictions in our own countries'. Lord Wilson found the Commonwealth round the table stubbornly silent on the question was for the first time being indirectly addressed whether the prime minister, although host, need always chair the conference. It was he who led the attack: he had just been sworn in as sole candidate of the Rhodesian party for his second five-year term of presidency, which he had done by praising 'democratic centralism', abolishing his MPs' salaries and sending his ministers on ideological training courses. He was adamant that Rhodesia that lacked 'one man, one vote' should be member of neither the Commonwealth nor UNO, and his arguments were supported by all but the African states. Joe Murumbi from Kenya piously told Wilson that it was not a parliamentary majority but one's principles. Albert Margai, the newly knighted, attacked the commonwealth relations secretary Arthur

Bottomley over his comment that if the Rhodesian Africans had tried to make their present constitution work, they might have achieved better progress, and like Milton Obote demanded the release of Rhodesia's detainees. Kenya and Tanzania joined in Kaunda of Zambia's tentative offer of military bases on their territory for British troops to attack Rhodesia. Alhaji Sir Abubakar supported Nkrumah generally, but also spoke warmly of the danger to the rest of Africa once a Rhodesia were '*wooded into the South African-Portuguese camp*'. He appealed strongly for a final outcome that might enable both the European and the African peoples of Rhodesia to learn to live together, and agreed with Margai and Obote: '*Although the primary responsibility rests with Britain, the political prisoners must be released, and this release would pave the way for a constitutional conference. What has to be done has to be done quickly*'. He called for a definite time and date.

Most of the Caribbean and Asian members endorsed all of this. The sole exception was Dr Hastings Banda, of whom Wilson later wrote, 'the only African I have ever heard using the phrase 'kith and kin' except as a term of abuse'. The debate, as publicly reported, was called by *The Times* a 'moment of truth', but the final communiqué was a feeble paragraph about the Commonwealth leaders hoping that a way would be found for Rhodesia to proceed to independence at the earliest practicable date on a basis acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.

Wilson knew that to use British troops against white Rhodesians, whether or not they regarded them as 'kith and kin', would raise fundamental home issues for a government with a bare majority, and preferred to direct attention to an issue of wider world interest where a successful British intervention might bring political rewards: however he found perfunctory support for this pet objective, of sending a Commonwealth peace mission to Vietnam. Alhaji Sir Abubakar insisted that it would have to work as closely as possible with the UN: '*The situation is very serious and constitutes a challenge to the good sense of the world. Expressions of goodwill and pious hopes are not enough. We must act now without counting the cost to our personal and national prestige*'. There were two problems for Wilson: one was again why the British prime minister, even as chairman of this conference, should assume he must lead the mission; the other was why, if a Commonwealth mission was supposed to have any effect in countries where Britain had no *locus* or control, was it out of the question to send a Commonwealth mission to a country where Britain was supposed to have ultimate power? There were other reservations. Nyerere as a client disliked 'putting China in the dock', and did not think the Commonwealth should appear to be supporting either Wilson or the USA; Nkrumah wanted Australia to withdraw its battalion and New Zealand to cancel its plans to send troops to Vietnam, and America to stop all bombing. However both he and Abubakar enthusiastically favoured the initiative and in the end the conference asked the heads of Britain, Ceylon, Ghana, Nigeria and Trinidad and Tobago jointly to try to settle the Vietnam crisis. Abubakar accepted Wilson's leadership, provided that it was to be acceptable to the other parties whom they would meet in their efforts.

It rapidly became clear that Moscow, Peking and Hanoi would have nothing of such a proposal. In the middle of a meeting the Chinese chargé d'affaires brought a message from Chou En-lai to the Pakistani and other delegations to lobby against the proposed mission, and within days Ceylon, Ghana and Trinidad were losing interest in their nominations. Nevertheless Wilson,

Abubakar, Nkrumah and Trinidad's Eric Williams got down to discussing the details of their terms of reference, even while recognizing that they might be unable to go further than to meet the UNO secretary-general in Geneva and perhaps then meet Johnson in Washington. *West Africa's* 'Matchet' said lightheartedly to Abubakar that in the end he might be the only member of the mission left to keep Wilson company, but was told quietly, 'I should still go'. President Johnson authorized the US commander to commit his forces, already in defensive combat against guerrillas, if the South Vietnamese government asked for help; but he continued to press the UN, on its twentieth birthday, and the security council to make meaningful efforts for peace in Vietnam, and in the end the British initiative lapsed.

The London conference had also expressed its concern over the troubles in Malaya and Cyprus, and discussed economic aid (Britain would now grant interest-free loans on the lines of the world bank's affiliate the international development association (IDA)), and immigration; its principal decision was to set up a permanent Commonwealth secretariat under a Canadian secretary-general, Arnold Smith. Nigeria's foreign ministers were swift to agree with Australia's Robert Menzies that this secretariat must never try to be an executive body, as this would mean the end of either the secretariat or the Commonwealth. Arnold Smith had been a Rhodes scholar, ambassador to Moscow during the Cuban crisis, and a lecturer on politics and economics. He had drafted the last conference's 'Commonwealth declaration on racial equality', and had just said, 'The division of humanity between white and other races, which coincides too closely for comfort with the division between affluent industrialized peoples and the poor undeveloped peoples, is, I think, the most difficult and potentially dangerous problem in the world'.

Abubakar spoke at a number of public functions, including a full dress ceremonial occasion at Guildhall (where a Nigerian parliamentarian observed with satisfaction that Mr Wilson spoke from notes, Dr Nkrumah and others spoke incomprehensibly, and Abubakar spoke clearly, fluently, and without any note at all). He told a dinner of the Britain-Nigeria association that even if the first attempt to set up a Vietnamese peace mission did not succeed, something might be done on which the others could build. He told a joint meeting of the central executive of the Nigerian union of Great Britain and Ireland, and the London branches of the Action Group and the Lagos league, that he was seriously considering legislation against tribalism; he also spoke frankly about Awolowo, promised moral and cash help to the union's planned nursery centre, and undertook to discuss in cabinet the need for a cultural attaché to the London high commission. While dismissing a rumour that the federal government was thinking of abolishing the Lagos city council, he also said, 'There are people who believe that Lagos belongs to everybody. Others believe that Lagos belongs to the Yorubas. I stand between the two views. If I make an Igbo man the minister for Lagos affairs, there will be trouble; and if I put a Yoruba man, he will be charged with favouritism. Hence I choose a Hausa man. There are plans going on in Lagos about what is to be done on the Lagos state, but I am not in a position to tell you my mind'.

He also made an impression on the federation of Commonwealth chambers of commerce when reading a paragraph from a promotional script about 'a country entirely free of political risks' - he raised his eyes and added *sotto voce*, 'O no! I don't think anywhere is entirely free!' But he also insisted that trade and investment from overseas were far more important than aid, and showed

his worries about the consequences of Britain's new corporation tax. Before leaving he attended a Marlborough House garden party, and had what were to be his last audience with the Queen and his last meeting with Lord Boyd of Merton. He spoke sadly to this old friend of the growing custom for heads of the Commonwealth delegations to hold their individual press conferences, at which they would give the reporters their own partisan interpretations of the secret proceedings: *'If this goes on, all the value of such talks will go'*. The *Daily Mirror* embarrassed him (and weakened his domestic position) by calling him Britain's greatest ally.

On his return home Alhaji Sir Abubakar bravely declared in the rain at Ikeja that the conference had been *'very, very successful'*. Awo's deputy Adegbenro joined the welcoming crowds and newspaper acclaim in congratulating him on his part in it, and Abubakar assured the press that he wanted peace and happiness for all Rhodesians, but that there remained some hurdles to clear before majority African rule would be achieved. He remained hopeful about the Commonwealth peace mission to Vietnam, for all the outside criticism of its irrelevant composition and objectives, and intended to return to join the other members in London shortly. Questioned about the Afro-Asian conference in Algiers, he said that the situation there was confused and that the country still needed time to settle down; Nigeria's, or indeed OAU's, attendance would be a contravention of the OAU charter which abhorred any change of government by violent or military means; furthermore, to go would be to encourage more such events as the bloodless overthrow of the Algerian president Ben Bella by his vice-president Boumédienne, which had just been announced. And as it turned out, despite strong lobbying by Algerians and Chinese, almost immediately thirteen Afro-Asian members of the Commonwealth decided not to go to the conference, which was abandoned for the present. The Algerian coup and the Russo-Chinese rivalry had been too much.

During these summer months of rain and heat, politically minded Nigerians were thinking of the forthcoming western regional election. By now the high courts had rejected every outstanding election petition from the federal polls. Ordinary life continued nevertheless, during the ostensible but unconvincing truce between the two grand alliances in the country. The Roman catholic archbishop had been born in Lagos but his origins were in Kita in French territory. This now gave him passport problems, which mutual friends put to the chief justice as a possible go-between. Sir Adetokunbo went to Abubakar, who said it was a small matter, which he should go and mention to the minister of internal affairs. Ademola demurred that he hardly knew Shagari (who had not at this time been transferred to the works portfolio), but was told, *'I'll tell him to see you. Mark my words, that fellow's going to make his mark in this country'*. Later Abubakar and his attorney-general Dr Elias had to visit Mubi in Adamawa in a light two passenger aircraft, and the pilot seemed to be treating the seasonable turbulence with levity and potential aerobatics. The prime minister sat up and calling him loudly to order, *'Remember you are carrying valuable cargo, my dear friend, and you are not on a show flight!'*, restored some stability.

Lagos university continued to be unhappy. The prime minister, deploring the inability of the provisional council and the senate to come to any lasting agreement, set up a reconciliation panel under Professor Alexander from Ibadan to resolve the dispute; this group condemned all the people whose

uncompromising attitude had made it difficult to bring about the peaceful solution that everyone else desired. To their suggestion that a 'Visitor' be created to handle the matter personally in the English tradition, he admitted that he had himself been named as visitor, but that the necessary amending legislation had yet to pass through parliament. A happier model seemed to him to be the embracing of all southern Nigerian Anglicans, presbyterians and methodists in a Christian united church of Nigeria under a moderator. His broad-mindedness was also shown in a preface he contributed to a book with which he was not wholly in sympathy, the western deputy premier Fani-Kayode's *Blackism*: ' . . . the ideas and feelings of many African nationalists . . . were mainly motivated by experience during the colonial régime. I think it is most important that the present and future generations of African politicians should have absolute freedom to express their views and ideas freely and fearlessly'. This did not inhibit restriction on politicians who went beyond persuasive argument - his government now proscribed the Niger republic's troublesome opposition *parti Sawaba*.

Attention was turned briefly to economic affairs, and in August the national economic council was called by the prime minister to meet at Enugu, for the first time for a year. This was primarily to examine the report of the Australian sole federal commissioner Binns (mentioned in Chapter 40 as appointed in June 1964) on the workings of the established system of dividing Nigeria's federally collected revenues. The NEC and all five governments broadly accepted his recommendations on how to secure greater justice without upsetting the entire revenue structure whereby the federation collected the national revenue and redistributed it to the regions in proportion to their populations' needs - an arrangement the north was justified, to let it win a still greater measure of parity with the other regions, and least benefit to the east, whose immediate prospects seem brightest; but he also thought that the new western and mid-west shares should be relatively increased, to take account of their two governments' overheads costing more than the single undivided west. Not all those who had accepted his proposals had understood what he had written.

Since all the financial leaders agreed that the longer term outlook for the whole country was encouraging, whatever the contemporary difficulties, an obstacle was seen to amending the relevant clauses of the constitution. The entrenched 'distributable pool' from 30% of general import duties (exclusive of motor spirit, diesel oil, tobacco, wine and potable spirits) and the mining rents and royalties received from the regions would be varied, the 40% due to the north rising to 42, the 31 parts to the east falling to 30, 18 to the west rising to 20, and the 6 parts to the mid-west to 8. These were also vital statutory payments (50% of the import and excise duties on tobacco, and of the import duties on petrol and diesel, of the export duties on produce, hides and skins, and of the mining rent and royalties from the regions, were also redistributed back in proportion to the actual consumption thereof in each region) and additional non-statutory payments (30% of fee receipts were redistributed in the same proportions from export duties on animals, birds and reptiles, excise on mineral water and matches, and - since 1964 - any newly imposed excise duties). When the Port Harcourt revenue came on stream, excise on its motor spirit and diesel would be divided the same way as tobacco, according to regional consumption; and that of oil-extraction rents and royalties for redistribution would be raised to £1. The agreement of Okpara and the easterners to the package seemed on the

of it to be the strongest reassurance yet that the constitutional worries might be receding.

It was a suitable background to the announcement that an outline agreement had been signed for a consortium of the federal government, three German, two American and one British firms, to build the £30+ million integrated iron and steel complex discussed at the last NEC; and another that with the help of a west German government loan another German company had been contracted to build a second bridge to join Lagos to the mainland. Economic nationalism was asserted by Jaja Wachuku, who complained that BOAC still dominated Nigeria Airways, and as a form of protest recalled two Nigerian pilots who were about to start training for conversion to the new advanced but expensive British Vickers VC-10 airliner. But the salaried and waged workers were not conscious of future economic strength: Alhaji Sir Abubakar took a Bauchi holiday after the NEC, to keep in touch with humble people, and then returned to take the chair of the national council of establishments, which was faced with awkward recommendations by the national joint negotiating council for teachers. This was followed by a long and difficult cabinet meeting made aware of the burden of the imports bill and of the renewed threat from 'the JAC'. The spirit of the JAC was now seen not to be in ruins after all, after the labour movement's regrouping. A general strike was promised against what the trades unions perceived as the repeated arbitrary increases in cost of foodstuffs, rent, transport, clothes, medicines and general metropolitan household requirements. Three days of demonstrations against 'jam to-morrow' followed in Lagos, and of a boycott by Nigerian-owned shops, directed against the most recent tariff increases on imported consumer goods, but hurting only the wholesalers who stocked them. On the second day the demonstrators marched to the prime minister's house, and on the third to the oba of Lagos; once wilder members of both mobs began breaking the windows of foreign-managed stores, they were dispersed by riot police using teargas, and the federal government then banned all public meetings for two months.

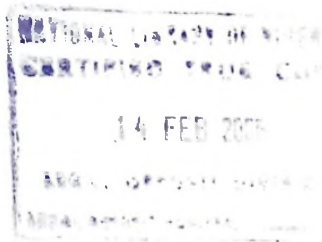
But politics remained at the forefront. Alhaji Sir Abubakar confirmed that the promised premiers' summit would not itself review the constitution (as Azikiwe, with his different order of priorities for attention, had expected to have happened by June) but would study the ways and means of conducting such a review, and he announced that it would meet very shortly in Lagos since Akintola had been unable to attend the NEC at Enugu. It was one thing to see a constitutional revision as yet again the cure for congenital ills, but quite another to prescribe one. Dr Okpara, for example, personally disliked one-party states and strong executive presidencies, which inhibited any transfer of power, drove all opposition underground and produced regimentation, all of which was unsuited to plural societies. But he was also unhappy with the institutionalized so-called 'loyal oppositions' of Westminster. He was now toying with the thought of proportional representation of parties at the parliamentary level, excluding those who attracted less than 10% of the votes, and with a cabinet drawn from outside parliament on the American model. 'Okpara-ism' was indeed different from Zikism, or the preferences of other owners of strong and independent minds. At the end of August the summit decided to form a committee under Dr Elias, attorney-general and minister of justice, to submit proposals to a full constitutional conference at some later date. These tactics were seen by the restive as dilatory.

Abroad new disagreements broke out over the Afro-Asian meeting which had now been reconvened for November in Algiers, to be preceded in October by the OAU at the huge new complex in Accra, now that Nkrumah had finally undertaken to move the 'political refugees' out of town. Abubakar listened to delegations from both Algiers and Accra. He also met British Commonwealth secretary Arthur Bottomley, who had come out with permanent secretary Sir Saville Garner at the joint invitation of Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria to discuss Southern Rhodesia. British Labour politicians were not all as distrusted by the Nigerian prime minister as they had often been by the Bauchi educationist. While showing Bottomley round his farm in Bauchi and posing for photographs, Abubakar again pressed his proposal for a conference of European and African leaders to settle the future of the country, provided that the restricted nationalist leaders were released first. The Commonwealth secretary-general Arnold Smith favoured overseas conferences (that is, those not held in London), and he shared this view with Abubakar who now found Bottomley also strongly in favour and a sympathetic character. For their part, Mrs Bottomley and Lady Garner were impressed by the prime minister's flourishing farm crops - kola nuts, cassava, oranges, maize, tomatoes, lettuces, beans and tobacco - and still more by the efficient service, at a house which was completely surrounded by bush, of a wholesome meal of mushroom soup, chicken with boiled potatoes, rice, spaghetti, beans and tomato sauce followed by tinned mandarins and cream. Bottomley's civil servants were most impressed by their host's gentlemanly wisdom, and his determination to avoid purely northern posture when talking of Nigerian politics.

The rapprochement with the Labour party was furthered by the British high commissioner's subsequent intervention. Knowing that Alhaji Sir Abubakar had never forgiven them for their behaviour over the extradition of Enahor and had said that he '*would never shake hands with Wilson*', Cumming-Bruce contrived that his old friend and colleague Malcolm MacDonald (son of the Labour prime minister of a national government, Chamberlain's colonial secretary, post-war commissioner-general for south-east Asia, and most recently high commissioner to Kenya) should pay a visit to Lagos. The three men had a warmly amicable discussion, MacDonald reminded them, 'My father was a socialist', and in the end Abubakar concluded that present day Labour was '*not so bad*'.

The western region was of course the domestic political cynosure, as elections came nearer and the party conflicts became more unpleasant between those who saw them as a re-run of the previous December's federal contest. Chief Olu Akinfosile, federal minister of state and chairman of the NCNE western working committee, claimed that NCNC and AG would finally win after the election, although AG spokesmen warned that this was still subject to the ratification of their own executive and congress, whose support outside their home region was now a fraction of what it had been in 1959. Meanwhile UPGA leaders kept publicizing their conviction that NNNDP, which was picturing itself as a future truly national party, would rig the election, called for a round table meeting. The prime minister's response was that the election was the constitutional responsibility of the western premier, the federal electoral commission, although he was himself vested with powers of law and order, and would not hesitate to '*flood the region with troops and police*' if there were trouble during the election campaign. The words were not to be forgotten. The traditional rulers met under the ocular eye, and entreated both UPGA and NNNDP to discuss behind closed

how best to make the polls as free, fair and peaceful as possible. But early stoning incidents led the police, who were ready for the worst and had set up a stick-and-carrot *Operation Wipe Out Thuggery*, to declare Ile-Ife and Ijebu-Ode 'offensive areas'; and ToS Benson, who had been elected as independent UPGA, made oral attacks on UPGA. Rigging and violence or no, the psephologists were for the first time in Nigeria's history in understandable difficulty in forecasting the voters' true intentions. What mattered most to the latter was which Yoruba faction would guarantee most 'places in the Nigerian sun' for Yorubas. Two Igbo army officers, majors Ifeajuna and Okafor, were deeply critical observers.



46 The Autumn that Foreshadowed no Spring

*Kowa ya yi aiki abin da ya ke so,
yana gamuwa da bakin ciki*

Abubakar's domestic life should receive a final mention in 1965. The stress of internal politics, so often selfish and irrational as he saw them, and the sheer burden of assessing international events (in its reactions to which he believed that the country that he symbolized now had a major responsibility – still inadequately shouldered), might well have combined to make any normal family relationships impossible. Yet he contrived to find the occasional evening hours for his children in Lagos, as well as during the escapes to Bauchi, to which he retired regularly in a new 'executive' Gulfstream jet, an indulgence which attracted some criticism from the jealous metropolitans who did not recognize how much speed of communication with the hinterland had thereby improved. Two of his sons, Mukhtar and Saddik, were favoured when their father decided to give them an English boarding education. Uncle Ahmed had never liked to see them grow up in Lagos, and invitations to spend school holidays with the Majekodunmi boys were politely rejected in favour of Bauchi. Despite their being older than the usual British admission age, Abubakar made his own inquiries, which included Eton. He decided on a preparatory school in Hertfordshire, after which they should attend public school at Epsom, where Emeka Ojukwu and, briefly, Johnny Ironsi had been boys. Initial cultural problems in strange surroundings made their early progress in class more difficult than their schoolmates'. He went personally to see them settled in their first English school, only four months before the end of this story, and made contact with his old Bauchi associate from pre-war days J E B Hall, who was to be their guardian in Britain. They were destined to spend eight years away from home in a distant, foreign land.

The daughters had also been sent to a Lagos kindergarten and then a mix school, but now a dilemma arose. Their grandmother at home was opposed to western education for girls; they slept in modern beds, but their father wanted them to share and understand the ordinary people's way of life (as was determined that at least they should be taught to work hard, A'ishat's daughter Yalwa was now sent home to Bauchi primary school like the others to live with the grandmother and Inni. As tension in the country grew, and the prime minister became more preoccupied, there were to be no more business trips on the lagoon with his children, uncle Ahmed, or Mr and Mrs Khan; with Abubakar was at home there would be fewer evening meals together or Soccer questionings about whether they would like to become nurses or teachers when they grew up. The Lagos PM's lodge became quieter this autumn, although

master was never too proud to rearrange the furnishings or do small chores himself rather than summon a servant. In addition to the police orderlies, there were now two 'aides-de-camp' with quarters in the compound: Kaftan Nangasu from Tchad, who had told endearingly tall tales to Mukhtar and Saddik, and Maxwell Orukpabo the Igbo. Kaftan, having lost a lung to surgery, mainly did light duties, often living out with his family. Abubakar's tailor Dauda Sade was now more of a permanent resident, trusted with money for errands to Bauchi and for charity, and was liable as Lagos life became troubled to be given Abubakarian homilies against materialism, and injunctions to live a good life. Apart from the Europeanized food served at occasions of official hospitality, and a limited amount of the well advertised patent packaged or tinned goods that had gained urban popularity, Abubakar's household diet was still essentially the same indigenous variety that had prevailed since childhood days in Bauchi. He would have been shocked to think that before long the short-lived riches of oil and the rush of the young from their farms to the towns might lead to imported cans, and bread baked commercially from foreign wheat, becoming roadside staples for the poor. But such a change of culture and lifestyle had indeed begun, comparable in its way to the seventeenth century Portuguese introductions from distant climes of chillis, maize, manioc, peanuts and tomatoes, and of the coconut palms which had first ringed the slaving forts of the Brandenburgers, Danes and Dutchmen, before spreading inland.

Progressive economic cameos of Abubakar's Nigeria have been sketched as part of the prologue, and of preceding chapters (9, 20, 27, 35, 36, 38, 40, 44 & 45). It is only right at this point, when the federal government's most dangerous internal opponents were economically illiterate and innumerate, to give a final mention to the state of the country's resources which its prime minister was to bequeath to his successors; these were only to be rescued from their budgetary inexperience by a temporary inflow of wealth gushing out of the oilwells which was to destroy the people's present agricultural self-sufficiency. The broad fact is that the underlying economy of exportable crops was growing consistently at around 5% each year throughout Abubakar's leadership, despite the disappointments in implementing the development plan that had become clear during 1965. A 15% growth rate in manufactures which substituted imports sounded more impressive but contributed less to this increasing national wealth. Chief Festus could claim a balance of payments surplus in 1965 of £11.4 million, after ten years of deficit, a boon which the oil was about to multiply. The purely trade deficit fell over fivefold in this last year, with £276 million of imports nearly met by £268 million of exports, principally still such primary materials as groundnuts, cotton, hides, oil-palm products, cocoa, rubber and timber. Britain was still the main hard capital investor and trading partner, buying £101.5 million of Nigerian exports (as much as USA, West Germany and Japan combined) and selling £85 million of British goods in return (equal to the total of Dutch, West German, American and French imports). With over £400 million invested, much in plants bearing household British names (including £250 million in oil), Britain was also the most heavily entrenched economic stakeholder. This was reflected in the high commission, which was Britain's fourth largest overseas diplomatic mission (and an approved training post for a young diplomat recruited from the royal family), and in the number of British residents, which had risen since independence to 15 thousand. The repudiation of the 'defence agreement' was long forgotten on both sides.

As the world's largest producer of groundnuts, steps were being taken

for Nigeria to inaugurate an African groundnut council. This northern product (together with rubber, which was not shackled by marketing board bureaucracies) was the only cash crop which paid its grower more in real terms than he had been receiving a decade earlier. The cash incentives to the producer had been a prime motive for the consolidation of the boards in Macpherson's day, in linear succession to the state-run wartime produce control board that had embraced the west coast with the hope of restricting inflation and evening out the swings of a fickle market. Now these were in fact shrinking: of the FOB prices paid at the ports, only 69% went into the pockets of the cocoa farmers, 64% of groundnuts, 54% of seed cotton, 51% of palm kernels and 50% of palm oil. Sydney Phillipson's insistence on boards making profits was now interpreted as designed, not to buffer future market falls, but to allocate about ten percent to research and development, about twenty percent to often unrelated 'infrastructures', and the rest to building up board funds, not forgetting rewards for contractors (and board members); on top of this, the even greater exaction of export duties and sales taxes was no longer encouraging lasting dedication of a peasantry to primary industry, except for its own village consumption. Although cocoa exports were also falling against lessened world demand, blamed by many western farmers on the NNDD and Britain, and earning only £32 million, this drop was more than made up for nationally by the doubling of oil sales to £68 million. That figure was earned from a production of 13 million tons, underpinned by the early promise of a completed connection between the Bonny terminal and the mid-west oilfield through a trans-Niger pipeline, and the likelihood of exporting natural gas to Britain. Nigeria was already the commonwealth's second largest oil-producer and, although falling back, still produced one-twentieth of the world's tin.

Heavier industry was growing in importance. Two factories costing £3.5 million between them for processing oil palm products had been set up in 1965 at Ikeja and Koko. The ministry of economic development was determined to encourage diversification and industrialization, while not despising any 'intermediate technology' that would still be labour intensive, and to place internal capital attraction above investment and 'aid' from overseas in its priorities. This did not diminish other ministries' pressure on Britain's new Labour administration to help with more loans and grants towards the development plan and for such projects as water supplies, farm settlements, universities and the great dam. Most interesting if less significant was the conclusion of the European community negotiations, about to be embodied in a treaty to associate Nigeria with the community for four years, very much as British ministers directed by Butler and Heath had originally so unsuccessfully advised, although with a different nomenclature: under the common external tariff cocoa, groundnuts, palm oil and plywood would receive duty-free quotas on top of the existing free entry for oil, timber and tin. In return Nigeria would give between 2% and 10% preferences on an assortment of 26 European industrial products, valued at only about £3.5 million. On both sides the venture was an amiable token.

Doubts about the continuing worth of the marketing board system apart, it was a sound economic inheritance to pass on, and its growth owed little to the politics and jealousies which have filled so many of these pages. In round numbers of what it meant to the people (and to a former teacher), it financed an education system in which a hundred thousand primary teachers taught three million children; twelve thousand secondary teachers taught a quarter of a million pupils; 750 vocational trainers taught 7,500 trainees; two

thousand lecturers instructed 32,000 teachers in training; and 750 dons guided the studies of six thousand undergraduates and students at the five universities and six other tertiary institutions (Nigerians also formed the largest contingent of commonwealth students in Britain). There were 1,600 registered medical practitioners, and sixty dentists. The Nigerian pound was on a par with sterling, and the official cost of living index was, unbelievably, falling. The population owned fifty thousand motor cars and 25,000 lorries, three quarters of a million radio sets and fifteen thousand TVs, and used over sixty thousand telephones. If these last figures sound small in present-day ears, they are to be measured against what a bright boy in Katsina college would have thought credible in the 1920s, or a novice legislator in 1947 have thought attainable before two decades might pass. Voters were now less excited by promises of dispensaries and roads, and the youths who ran away from ancient social disciplines to the towns wanted waged employment, and urban attractions to spend the wages on.

Abubakar was a Nigerian, but even he did not wish to conceal his origins, and a last look at northern development is in order. The gap with the south was closing, but it remained wide. He might be perturbed that still only 3.2% of Sokoto children attended formal schools, 4.1 % in Borno and 4.9% in Kano, as against 45.3% of the middle-belt Idoma children and 82.5% in Kabba-Yagba. But much had been done overall: there were now 2,700 primary schools, of which 950 offered classes through from 1 to 7; 72 secondary grammar schools, twelve offering arts and science to the 6th form, and fourteen others entering candidates for the west African school certificate; a crafts school in each province, and five commercial schools under construction; 55 teacher training colleges and two rural science institutes, 26 of which entered for higher elementary certificates; advanced teacher training colleges in Zaria and Kano, taking the Nigerian certificate in education; and three technical training schools in addition to the old technical institute. A Kaduna polytechnic was supplanting the tertiary institutions at Zaria. Arabic teachers were being trained to grades II and III in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto, and the institute of administration now had a department to train education officers for NA service, the grade from which the prime minister had become a serious politician in 1949. Audio-visual equipment included a thousand radios and 60 TVs.

The world bank's soft loan of £14 million, together with USAID, had paid for much of this, and for roads development between Maiduguri and Tchad and elsewhere. Roads were being tarred, the Gongola river rebridged, Sokoto was having a water supply and nine cottage hospitals being built. West German loans were funding ten major hospitals and a cattle industry at Mokwa. The Niger dam was functioning. Administration of laws was more controlled, with the justice ministry inspecting native courts, and more area courts of first instance opening in large towns. The air communications flight now had three aircraft, the largest 12-seat De Havilland *Heron* about to be replaced by a plane with international capacity. Northernization was not complete: 56% of all senior government officers were now northern, 33% expatriates and eleven percent other Nigerians; but 93% of the junior grades were northerners. Specifically, three out of the seventeen permanent secretaries were still expatriate, and three of the thirteen provincial secretaries. The overt northernising problem was to balance domestic priorities against the determination to fill northern quotas in the federal service and Lagos ministries. The problem ignored in the north was the resentment of corruption and nepotism on the part of the

young southern majors (and their civilian political sympathizers), to whom we are about to return.

But looking at Nigeria overall, Alhaji Sir Abubakar was prepared now to learn from the newer world economists. It would be a small jump from colonial practices to recognize that, as Professor Arthur Lewis was writing, small businesses were the university of entrepreneurship, and the governments might subsidize the admission of its students. All Abubakar's countrymen and women had been bequeathed the instinct to trade for profit and reinvestment and were equipped to collect any capital needed for whatever small industry was within their resource capacity to exploit. Large scale managerial competence had still only been experienced by a few. It might have taken longer for him to persuade those officials shackled to the existing financial structures to accept that money invested from any source in expectation of a return was preferable to loans (so many of which were never repaid). But as Lewis also said, money was like a fertilizer. Accordingly no crop would benefit from it alone, unless the varieties sown were of high-yielding strains, and then only if their husbandmen were skilled in assuring them the proper amounts of water and sun, and would do their best to control weeds, pests and diseases. This might be the hardest parable for the officials' other masters to learn. Fast growth had still not kept pace with the aspirations of the beneficiaries of expanded education and increased social mobility; and just as narrow-minded or self-expatriates had feared falling standards from increased Nigerianization, ambitious southerners were now questioning the consequences of discrimination in favour of northerners.

Observers saw the country's ability to survive every constitutional crisis and civil disorder as a proof of basic stability, and believed that patience would engender a permanent tolerance and restraint, which would in turn smother tribalism, talk of secession, nepotism, greed for power and blatant corruption which filled the columns of the hungry press. It might have been so, particularly if the traditional local and social institutions had been preserved intact. Judging the disarray and horror with which the same observers were so shocked to react to the developments in Nigeria to which the remainder of this book is the prelude, it may be wise to recognize that by 1965, Tivland excepted, rural Nigerians still living in their inherited environments were enjoying the healthiest, most enlightened and confident daily life and culture that might recall. The great majority were happy people who knew how to live. Few violent revolutions fail to provoke, for a long period at least, a surge of misery out from a strange and unaccustomed uncertainty of life.

Corruption feeds on corruption, however, and twisted personalities may be prevailed upon to take part in purging society of evil; all the more so if politicization is the work of unscientific political theorists intent on destabilizing the existing institutions. When political parties and their leaders cease to be the most highly educated, the reaction is likely to bring about something not covenanted for, just as dissatisfaction with Weimar opened the door to Hitler. Radical academics and beardless students began to press their clansmen into messes to take over from the politicians who had failed them. Less conspicuous distinguished political figures who have escaped public blame, although private accusation, did nothing to conceal from the same clansmen their own that only ambiguous regional politicians and an upright prime minister were between themselves and national power. The malcontents in the army attracted by the apparent ease with which power might be wrenched in their

from those who seemed to abuse both their accumulations of ill-gotten wealth (much of it gained from the new contract-hungry international businessmen) and their access to political influence for the benefit of tribal or sectarian allies. In August they began to act as they believed so many military revolutionaries had been doing in other new nations. By now only fifteen percent of the officers had ever served under British unit commanders, and half of those trained as striplings at Sandhurst or Mons (and most of the mature entry graduates) had come from the eastern region. That there was some simple negative idealism, hatred of graft, and rejection of the feudalism which the Sardauna's party was thought to symbolize, is not in doubt; the lack of any comprehensible and coherent plan for whatever new system should follow a coup is naive evidence of that. Equally certain is that with the final Nigerianization of the youthful officer corps, not all enjoying the paper educational qualifications of the malcontents, the prospect of a lengthy promotion block (unless the eight thousands strong army expanded) was in the minds of many. In fact the raising of a sixth infantry battalion, to be stationed in Ikeja, was under consideration, and its mid-western Igbo CO Lt-col C D Nwawo had already been identified.

Indeed some eastern officers suspected that as an extension of the quota entry system an NPC defence minister and parliamentary secretary (supported by a northern permanent secretary) might well start to retire Igbos, once there were northerners available to replace them. They had no evidence of this, although the revision of the new officers' quota system, since the creation of the fourth region, to sixty percent north, fifteen percent each east and west, and ten percent mid-west, showed where the squeeze to create a fair ethnic balance in the future was going to pinch; but their amalgam of contempt and fear of the north tinged everything. In an army where endless high-minded gossip about everyone else's tribalism, favouritism and double standards was bound to lead to moral indiscipline and, worse, politicization, it became hard to distinguish visions of 'desirable reforms' from civilian UPGA manifestos. Thirst for responsibility became naked lust for power, and sympathizers could not always resist the urge to jump on the band wagon. A junior subaltern earning £768 and a senior major at his limit of £1,920 would always be ready to draw comparisons with the despised aristocracies of the ruling class's suburbs in Lagos's Ikoyi and Kaduna's Nasarawa; and most of the northern fifty percent rank-and-file quota were, nominally at least, middle belt Christians. Lt-col Victor Banjo, CO of the infantry workshops at Apapa, a Yoruba friend of both Dr Azikiwe and Action Group leaders, was one who again gave more than thought to a coup. His ideas failed to engender successful action, he was challenged, yet unaccountably no political or military action was taken by way of discipline. Others' activity was more successful.

An all-arms battle group course, which was to have been held in Kaduna in September and October, was transferred on Aguiyi-Ironsi's orders to Abeokuta. Here an inner circle began to formulate what may be called a junior staff officers' 'school solution' for a thorough-going *coup d'état*. The original principals had been officers referred to at Enugu in Chapter 42, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna, the high-jumping chief signals officer in the south, Major Donatus Okafor, the OC of the 'crack' federal guard (a company of the Lagos garrison battalion which provided the prime minister's normal and ceremonial security), and a captain. Okafor used his easy relationship with Abubakar and familiarity with every detail of the prime minister's household and relatives as proof of his own friendship as well as trustworthiness, and briefed Ifeajuna fully on the layout of the official residence. They had the encouragement o-

civilians behind them, politicians and civil servants whose names have yet to be admitted. By September they had recruited two more majors from the Lagos military headquarters, Anuforo and Chukuka. They soon realized that if Ifeajuna was to co-ordinate the south, someone must do the same for the north, and Anuforo's friend the small arms instructor and Sandhurst graduate, C K Nzeogwu in Kaduna, was brought in for this purpose. All were Igbos, and Nzeogwu and Okafor, born in the north to a Tiv mother and a humble bricklayer father respectively, were fluent Hausa speakers, in vocabulary if not in tone. Nzeogwu, a devout and puritanical Roman catholic, quickly became the lead thinker, and Ifeajuna set about recruiting more Igbo sympathizers. Even if by now the whole army had lost respect for practising politicians and faith in any likely substitutes, and granted that none of its officer factions had failed to chatter in the ante-rooms about coups, the first group to take any active initiative was that of these junior Igbos.

There was no doubt in their minds from the start that blood would be shed, and that it would be perilous to their long-term success if personalities were spared in any of the government leaderships; yet as the excited plotting continued, such determination wavered whenever thoughts wandered in the directions of Benin city and Enugu - it began to seem more convenient just to make colourful threats to the targets there of the consequence of any failure to collaborate. There was much stricture of the federal refusal to impose another manipulation of the imminent western regional election on that already being perpetrated by Akintola and his friends; Lagos's failure to prevent the breakdown of security for life and property was seen as proving its incompetence and lack of purpose. Yet by a typical inconsistency the inspired fanning of a rumour that, in the teeth of Alhaji Sir Abubakar opposition, the army would be sent in to quell Akintola's civilian enemies which would multiply the existing deathroll as Nigerian soldiers killed the brothers, reinforced the young rebels' thirst for action. By the end of October five Igbo majors and a captain, supported by a single Yoruba major, Adewu Ademoyega whom Nzeogwu had won over, were involved.

At a meeting at Tarquah bay they arrogantly assessed their various human targets. Dr Azikiwe they treated as no more than a father figure, a harmlessly occupying an empty appointment. The prime minister they brushed aside as having been raised on a tribal ticket as the voice of Sardauna, with no mind of his own and a conscript ally of Chief Akintola. Dr Okpara of the east was cast as a pragmatic radical, but of an intransigent nature which could therefore be persuaded that the compromises of the 1960 were no longer good enough. They were incapable of seeing Sir Ahmadu Bello as anything but the arch-northernizer, the fanatic who masterminded all acts of the 'notoriously brutal and anti-southern' native authority police force and of the native court *alkalis* 'dedicated to discriminatory' chastisement of non-Muslim delinquents, and the planner of a military *jihād* against all infidels; they were reinforced in their caricature by Aminu Kano's open treatment of Sardauna's tours of proselytization as being politically motivated rather than inspired by zeal for religious glory or reward. Chief Akintola, whom they mocked for his thin, high voice, was denounced as the worst of the electors and intriguers, and was doubly suspect because of his supposed frequent clandestine meetings at night with the Sardauna. Chief Osagha earned little mention (his region was small and he was an Igbo); but E. Okotie-Eboh was judged to be no better than a shady profiteer from shoemaking business, a flaunter of his wealth, possessed of sundry du-

means, a man whom they alleged to have stolen government money – or at least who announced tax changes separately from his budgets, with insider's knowledge of how to take advantage of what the tax changes would be.

The significant positive exception to the general denigration of the peoples' elected leaders was Chief Awolowo whom they could now afford to regard, after his two years' seclusion in jail from public political activity, as a distinguished lawyer whom the guilty had abused as a political underdog. However, although all NNA members were treated as incorrigible blackguards, many in UPGA were found by this jury to be, if not exactly saints, redeemable. As for the majors' own senior officers, intellectually snobbish reasons were readily verbalized to disparage James Pam and the Borno full colonel Kur Muhammed and lieutenant-colonel Abogo Largema; but for the senior Kanuri, Brigadier Zakari Maimalari, this was much more difficult – universally respected by professional soldiers, highly personable, afraid of nobody, he had however once given an unwitting hostage by a spoken threat 'to teach [some] infidels a bloody lesson'.

The details still far from isolated, the fact of broad conspiracy was no safe secret. Brigadier Sam Ademulegun specifically warned Lagos from 1st brigade headquarters in Kaduna to keep an eye on the army's young men in a hurry, mentioning Nzeogwu's fascination with coups and Ojukwu's intellectual arrogance, and that their like also had their own senior officers in their sights. He was supported by similar reports from his virtual deputy, the commander of the Kaduna military training college and second-in-command of the defence academy, Lt-col Ralph A Shodeinde, who was categorized by 'the majors' as a boringly inefficient and fretting tribalist; although too tolerant by nature, Shodeinde made it known to his superiors whenever he saw the smoke that betokened fire. Aguiyi-Ironsi, comfortable and unimaginative in the top saddle, was not perturbed. In fact the chapter and verse of many facts were also served up by the civilian police special branch, where Fagbola had inherited the impressive machine for so long run by the shrewd and effective assistant commissioner John O'Sullivan (Nigerianization of the ranks below gorget-wearers had by now left only seven British superintendents in the whole force). 'SB' specifically named Ifeajuna and Nzeogwu (whose record had been on their files ever since his intelligence training in Britain). But Fagbola had to spend too much time watching events in Ibadan, and the tradition of 'direct access' to his prime minister was by now much honoured in the breach.

There were other sources of warning. The eastern chief justice Sir Louis Mbanefo, still universally respected for his part in settling the presidential crisis, took the substance of many petitions he had received from opponents of Akintola to Alhaji Sir Abubakar, and reminded him that peace in the west depended on a free election, which it now seemed was going to be rigged. Alhaji Maitama Sule screwed his courage up to repeat to the prime minister's face what he had been impressing on Abubakar's household staff, that the country was out of control; the answer was, '*Only God can get us out of this mess, but we will do our best*'. Brigadier Maimalari, informed by his junior Kanuri officers, succeeded in some discreet off-duty briefing of his countryman the northern governor, Sir Kashim Ibrahim: 'This country is not all right. We have lots of things to tell you . . . Unless you find a way, . . . one day all of you and us soldiers will be killed'. Sir Kashim warned the Sardauna that northern officers seemed to be posted to the south, southerners to the north, that all the specialist service officers were from the south, and all the British officers who had left the army and police had been replaced

by young Igbos. He worried that neither the prime minister nor the minister of defence took any action, although Inuwa Wada said he had stopped the cross-regional postings.

Similarly, when Ayo Rosiji was becoming aware of rumbling in the information ministry about possible putsches, he once chanced to meet Brigadier Ademulegun at Kaduna airport, who told him enigmatically that the Sardauna, who had been seeing some mysterious VIPs off, should be more careful – he would be one of the first to be killed if things went wrong, and something had to be done. Rosiji made Ademulegun fix an appointment with the premier for the morning, but he could not at first gain admission himself. Allowed in at last, he complained that the prime minister did not seem to be doing anything about the rumours; the northern premier responded that, being 'fed up' after trying so many times, he was disinclined to speak to Abubakar any more on the subject – if Ayo was his friend, he should now do the talking; but he conceded that since Ayo had come specifically, he would talk to the prime minister after all. Rosiji went home and tackled Abubakar directly, to be told that he was doing something – he was working on it – all would be 'OK'. Dissatisfied, and being due to take leave shortly, Chief Rosiji seized him again after the following day's cabinet meeting, and this time was told that everything was under control, it had been '*nipped in the bud*'. Rosiji demanded details. '*Chief, you worry too much*', said the prime minister: '*If they kill us, I will go*'. – '*If they kill me, I'll fight back*'. – '*O chief, you make too much*'. Abubakar knew that in the game being played the cards must stay close against his chest, but not all the security necessary was so effective once it were in other hands or entrusted to wires that could be tapped by venal technicians. For the first time the realization was spreading that telephones could be tapped, and indeed that intelligence reporting could be falsified or tampered with.

Such clear messages as there were were all becoming clouded before arrival at their destinations, and ministerial responses were totally negative, although lesser voices were heard later to claim that they had demanded at least arrests, if not courts martial and sentences of shooting. Alhaji Inuwa Wada might have lacked Muhammadu Ribadu's stature and stubbornness, but he also had the childlike faith that a coup in Nigeria was unthinkable, and insisted on this whenever ministers in Kaduna questioned him on the persistent rumours which also reached them. As for Abubakar himself, he might by now be less convinced of the army's unshakable loyalty since Aguiyi-Ironsi's succession to command and be more doubtful of what evils might flow from the 'flooding of the west with troops' which he had threatened; but he now lacked adamant political advisers to support either a general policy of spartan military discipline or on of 'wait and see'. All around him were complacent men, more sinister for the self-satisfaction than honest ditherers would have been. He also found himself inhibited by his own respect for constitutional propriety: in peacetime trouble he felt himself bound to deal through first the minister of defence and then the GOC, and there was clearly greater occasion now to fear that interference with military matters would exacerbate the army's politicization than during the 1962 western upheaval or the Tiv unrest. He was, as may with hindsight be regretted, saved from harsh decisiveness by the forthcoming progress towards a Commonwealth conference on Rhodesia, to be held unprecedentedly in Lagos. It will be seen in the final chapter that this induced the plotters to lie quiet until it was out of the way. It seems that there were also some Ghanaian army officers lying low in Nigeria, in mufti.

At this critical point it is convenient to make a final selection of first the domestic, and then the foreign, events that weighed on Abubakar during the remaining four and a half months of his life; and then once more to abandon chronology and to treat in separate chapters the two preoccupations (the domestic threat of the second western regional troubles, and the international moral challenge of Rhodesia) which distracted him from asserting his authority over those who could, but would not, have backed any pre-emptive strike against either western hooligans and wire-pullers or the mutineers who will bring the story to its end.

Early in September the prime minister and premiers confirmed their rejection of Sir Adetokunbo Ademola's continuing plea for the reconstitution of a judicial service commission. Richard Akinjide reallocated federal scholarship quotas in favour of Yorubas, as a *bonne bouche* to NNDP sympathizers. The Sardauna was again touring parts of his region to greet new converts to Islam, while Ibo state union leaders were again complaining to Alhaji Sir Abubakar about alleged discrimination against Igbos in the north, the west and the federal capital. Sundry small local political parties were also complaining to him about being left out of Dr Elias's preliminary constitutional review committee, not least the NPC's recent ally the Niger delta congress, the midwest democratic front which had won a single seat in its regional house of assembly, and SWAFP. The agreed membership of the committee was already too substantial for any succinct or original business to remain likely: each of the five governments would send ten representatives; the three major political parties in the federal administration (NPC, NCNC and NNDP) would also each have ten, the AG four and the northern progressive front (NEPU, UMBC, KPP and others) two between them; single interest groups would amount to fourteen more (two each from the bar association and the medical association, one from the Nigerian union of journalists [accompanied by an adviser], three from the trades unions, one each from the Nigerian chamber of commerce, and one woman each from UPGA and NNA). Their most particular remits were to consider how to approach the practical conduct of elections, the right of regions or minorities to secede, and the future interpretation to be placed on the powers of the president and of the prime minister. The later full formal review itself would have to settle these, and such problems as the effectiveness of the senate or the minority attractions of proportional representation.

Kano was another source of grumbling, where KPP cries for devolution to a full Kano state or region were growing louder; but trades unions were for the moment quieter, once Abubakar had given formal recognition to Haruna Boboola Adebola's united labour congress of Nigeria, which was empowered in future to negotiate with government officially, in addition to any other labour organization which the labour ministry might find it convenient to consult. Alhaji Sir Abubakar sent a message at the same time to the first ordinary congress of African trades unions, expressing his grave concern over splits in the continental labour movement and its fruitless ideological struggles – its own unity was of fundamental significance to general African unity.

The sun shone briefly when Dick Tiger, who had held on to his middleweight world champion's belt in Lagos in 1963, but lost it at New Jersey, now regained his boxing title. He was now 36. The dark clouds persisted in Lagos university, as the dismissed deans of faculties saw a chance of suing for libel in the wording of a press release; but by December all six withdrew their writs, since they had all found resettlement elsewhere with undamaged academic reputations, and could afford to help Lagos university to recover

its former tranquillity and respectability. At Zik's university in Nsukka Dr Okpara suggested that there should be a moratorium on elections for ten or fifteen years, to allow 'the breath of freedom' to settle down to village level before partisan politics took over again. The Sardauna then spread alarm by announcing his intention of extending his peaceful religious *jihād* of conversion into the southern regions. In the brief October meeting of the house of representatives, in so many ways moribund even without such a moratorium as Okpara's disingenuous proposal, a formal resolution was passed expressing the country's pride at its prime minister's creditable rôle in the last London commonwealth conference, and especially welcoming the unequivocal stance which he and other African heads of government had taken on the question of majority rule in Rhodesia. Parliament also began to debate the constitutional amendment bill needed to implement the Binns commission revenue changes; but while showing no enthusiasm about raising the electoral commissioners' salaries, it showed liveliness in a motion to increase federal MPs' basic salaries from £900 to £1,500, which the government undertook to consider.

After the meeting President Azikiwe showed the prime minister his medical certificates, and Alhaji Sir Abubakar advised him that in the present political climate he would be as well to be away from Nigeria. Accompanied by two medical specialists, his mid-western ADC John Obade, personal assistant and a large entourage, Zik departed for treatment of a prolonged lung infection in a London hospital, to which he responded satisfactorily enough to be discharged before Christmas, with a recommendation for a lengthy convalescence. Dr Nwafor Orizu became acting president for the remainder of the republic's survival, while Zik recouped his strength, first on a French Caribbean cruise-ship from which he visited the president of Haiti, 'Papa Doc' Duvalier, and then in hotels in London and Dorking.

At the beginning of November the federal government boldly rejected a revision of teachers' salary scales, which the national joint negotiating council had agreed should be effective from the preceding July, and substituted its own as from September: various associated recommendations were accepted in principle, but left to employing governments to implement if they wished. Dr Jaja Wachuku now decided to remove Dr Blankson as chairman of Nigeria Airways and assume the appointment himself. Shortly afterwards he was expelled from the NCNC, his party feeling embarrassed by the independence of many of his actions as foreign or air minister, obviously expecting the prime minister to dismiss him from the cabinet, and hoping that he might replace him with Mr Matthew Mbu, the minister for the navy. Alhaji Sir Abubakar held meetings with Wachuku and Blankson at his lodge in Onikan before Christmas, but his final resolution was delayed until Mbu succeeded Wachuku at aviation on 14 January 1966, when T O S Benson and the NCNC radical Mbazuluike Amechi rejoined the cabinet proper, and Mr R B K Okafor became another minister of state. Meanwhile in November, in instructive contrast to what was happening in the western region, the Action Group had won peacefully in a Lagos city council election and agreed to share the political management with the NCNC on the old-fashioned British lines of taking local government offices proportionately to party strengths; the NNDP had offered no candidates, trusting that no Yoruba in Lagos would vote for NCNC. The mid-west and eastern legislatures proceeded (the latter with some oral reservations), like the federal houses before them, to pass their constitutional amendment bills to facilitate the Binns revenue reforms.

One pleasing human event in November was the conferment of an honorary doctorate by Ibadan university on the loyal secretary to the prime minister, Stanley Wey, an honour outside the public service system which he was convinced was at the chancellor's initiative; Abubakar capped the degree with a personal present of a wristwatch which Wey was always to treasure, as much as he might have the national postnominal letters denied him. In a resurgence of confidence Abubakar also decided that in the new year he would resume his monthly open press conferences, which had lapsed for many months; and on 1 December, after considering the promotion of Alhaji Maitama Sule, whom the Sardauna did not favour, he formally appointed Alhaji Nuhu Bamalli as the minister of external affairs, in which portfolio the PM had been doubling since the federal election - Nuhu had been travelling far and wide in a representative capacity as the senior of the two ministers of state, and had been absent from most of the government's decision-making. Cabinet meetings continued to run smoothly, however roughly individual members might treat their corporate responsibility elsewhere. But not all was happy, even outside the west: SWAFP, the Nigerian Labour party and other militant activists launched 'the people's front' as a hard left organization in Lagos. The lesson at this late stage continued to be that would-be pan-Nigerian parties, which were still perceived by less successful local politicians as tribal parties, could only be challenged usefully by small parties which represented even more parochial interests or offered some fashionable imported ideology. A sophisticated joint meeting of federal and regional ministers of information, at the time of Rosiji's parleys with the Sardauna and Brigadier Maimalari, felt impelled to regret that some newspapers were still banned in some parts of the country, and to recommend that each others' ministries should try to foster national unity.

In the middle of December Mr Esua resigned his distressful chairmanship of the electoral commission, which had become too much for him, and was succeeded by another Efik from Calabar, Mr Michael O Ani, the permanent secretary of the ministry of establishments. Esua agreed that there had been some misconduct in the western election whose final official returns had just been confirmed, but angrily rejected the 'scurrilous and sometimes libellous nationwide criticism' of his commission's conduct: this is however to anticipate the following chapter. The courts rejected the last prominent electoral petition from the previous year, that against ToS Benson's return with only 569 votes in a boycotted poll, and thereby removed the psychological obstacle to his return to office. The northern and western houses passed their constitutional amendment bills, leaving it for the federal parliament finally to confirm the Binns financial reforms; UPGA boycotted the new western legislature. On a flight to Britain the prime minister was told of a scheme to cancel that part of a bilateral air services agreement granting the profitable London-Kano-Lagos route to the British flag-carrier, and to award it to a major American operator, with the unsubstantiated hint of a cash payment to a proverbial personal numbered foreign bank account; on his return he sent for the civil aviation files and cancelled any further move towards formalizing such a scheme, even though nobody brought him any 'evidence'.

In the north the Alhaji Ahmadu Coomassie commission's report on the Tiv problem was released for publication, recommending in essence a liberal reassessment of the tribe's needs and involving a reconciliation between Tor Tiv the chief and J S Tarka the jacobin, between the UMBC and the local NPC: the NPC hierarchy was no more enamoured of the proposals than were the radicals. Late in the year a country whose people's outward appearance

had still changed very little since 1950 learnt that 'as an experiment' some of their policemen would be issued with long trousers for day use, beginning with Lagos. Abubakar honoured his minister Dr Mbadiwe by attending at a grand opening of his remarkable new three-storey house, resplendent with blue terrazzo walls, swimming pool and fountain, red carpet and gilt chairs, erected by Italian contractors amid the mud and thatch of the distant eastern village of Arondizuogu, still served by laterite roads. Even the British high commissioner had been invited, and came. Dr Michael Okpara could not resist the barbed comment that it was 'a great achievement for one of the priests of "pragmatic socialism" to have been so clever as to be able to accommodate this building within the context of "pragmatic African socialism"'. It released a residence to be used as a nurses' home for a local American-funded hospital.

Perhaps it is fitting to close this short survey of internal events with the prime minister's opening of the new Niger bridge between Asaba and Onitsha on 4 January 1966, Alhaji Sir Abubakar's last public engagement outside Lagos. He was accompanied by the minister of works responsible at the time of completion, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, and Chief Dennis Osadebay, premier of the mid-west; all three paid their toll fee and were the first officially to cross the Niger in this way. It was meant in part to be yet another of the by now countless symbols of unity, but the eastern premier Dr Okpara capped his year of deliberate antagonism to the prime minister by boycotting the ceremony.

Overseas events remained harassing during these same months, for the most part. Reverting to September, Dr Albert Schweitzer died at the age of 90, closing a book of missionary medicine and colonial philosophy, and a book of Bach interpretation, both as moving as they had become unfashionable; the democratic republic of Congo's national assembly met for the first time in two years, with Tshombe's CONACO party in the majority - he had gained control of all the towns and cut off the 'rebels' from all military aid from outside; the speaker of the Aden legislature was shot dead by terrorists; the security council called for a ceasefire in Kashmir, while Indian troops advanced towards Lahore but were beaten back near Sialkot in Pakistan, following which Britain and USA suspended arms shipments to both countries, and Ayub Khan asked for American help to end the war; India then claimed that Chinese troops were firing across their border, while China announced that India had dismantled the military installations alleged to be in Chinese territory; finally both India and Pakistan accepted UN proposals for a ceasefire; north Vietnam rejected renewed American offers of negotiations; the Mauritius constitutional conference under Anthony Greenwood as secretary of state closed with a promise of independence by the end of 1966; a new treaty with Panama involved American recognition of its sovereignty over the canal, subject to interim conditions; a provisional president of the Dominican republic was now elected; and Britain suspended the Aden constitution, since the terrorism continued unabated.

During October Cambodia boycotted all the main committees of the UN general assembly, calling UNO 'ineffective'; because the revolutionaries in the democratic republic of Congo had been driven back in 1965, Kasavubu felt safe to search for 'a broad-based government of national unity', dismissed Tshombe who had 'served his purpose' and whose CONACO party could be said to have failed to become the desired national body, and asked Evariste Kimba to form a government - Tshombe had been hinting that he would run for the presidency himself in February 1966, and refused to co-operate, although willing enough

to submit to the majority will of the assembly which he dominated, and which twice rejected Kimba's proposed governmental lists; Bechuanaland was assured of independence by the end of September 1966; the premier of Burundi was wounded in an abortive attack against the king, and 53 soldiers and policemen were executed in punishment.

The controversial OAU summit meeting in Accra was finally held from 21 to 25 October. Since Tshombe had been dismissed, he was not present to add again to members' confusion, but despite Kasavubu's newly expressed wish to support the creation of an African continental government, and despite the continent's continuing embarrassment over five years of violent disorder and controversy, the questions of the Congo were ignored. Only half of the heads of state or government attended in person. Seven francophone territories boycotted the proceedings because they had not been satisfied by a confrontational meeting at Bamako in Mali (set up after the Abidjan summit between Abubakar, Haïlé Selassié and Nkrumah and his accusers had been abandoned) that Nkrumah had in fact banished the 'undesirables' from Accra (whom they would have preferred to see expelled outright from Ghana). The organization had by now built up a deficit of \$2.5 million, so it was in no position to innovate by action and was forced to be content with speeches, which were therefore heard as the voice of the spirit of civilized deliberation. It had no power to dissolve OCAM, which President Nkrumah denounced as a 'tool of neo-imperialism and contrary to the OAU charter'.

Allegations were made against Nigeria's Alhaji Sir Abubakar over the recent western regional elections, which he ignored (Dr Majekodunmi had been brought by plane to brief him on the latest position, and met him in the vast 'Job 600', but demurred at speaking too frankly because the place was certain to be bugged - 'Let him bug us', said Abubakar, 'We're talking about our home'); he was sent a letter of reassurance and support on the subject from a conference of chiefs held in Kaduna. His status remained such that the ambassadors of the 'entente four' francophone countries (Gabon, Malagasy, Tchad and Togo) whose heads were absent sought to make their excuses to him personally. Abubakar reminded the summit once more that 'continental union government now!' remained an impractical dream; the OAU's members were just beginning to know one another better, and Nigeria itself could be cited as a good example of the difficulties of running any union - besides, his constitution had no provision, and his people no intention, of surrendering sovereignty; the OAU was designed to recommend measures, rather than to put them into effect. Yet the meeting was adjudged a success, if only because it was held at all and was attended by other respected leaders besides himself. Kasavubu offered a verbal initiative towards resolving the issue of the democratic republic of Congo's usage of mercenaries, and the conference condemned the use of each others' refugees to subvert régimes, although Tubman insisted on true political asylum being sacrosanct and Abubakar drew a clear distinction between 'wanted political offenders' and genuine refugees from oppression. The opportunity for patching up unity was seized in an unanimous resolution calling on Britain to end the situation in Rhodesia through a forceful resumption of a colonial administration. Once the summit ended, Nkrumah allowed the 'refugees' and guerrilla trainees to return to Accra. Three days later the representatives of ten African countries, meeting in Lusaka, urged their home countries to form an economic community for east and central Africa.

In contrast, November opened with a decision by 45 of the delegations due to assemble only two days later in Algiers for the 'second Bandung' Afro-Asian

conference, to postpone the meeting until 'a day which will be fixed later' in other words indefinitely. This was largely engineered by Algeria's new president Houari Boumédiène, and proved an irreparable crack in the Chinese mould for Afro-Asian solidarity. The communist party of the USSR chose the same moment to give up any attempt to reconcile nationalist and ideological differences with the Chinese party, telling the world that any move to end the Marxist-Leninist schism must now come from Maoist China. At the same time Alhaji Sir Abubakar embarked after his return from Accra on a fresh approach (his last) to relations with Ghana, emphasizing his preference for differentiation between, as he saw them, its incorrigible president and its misled or maltreated citizens; it was a régime that sought progressive economic development, but was destroying its material and human resources. He was confident that through the NPC majority he would not lose national support for his contempt for both man and the irrational ideological mystique of his pan-Africanism, and that this firmness would give most of the francophone states the leadership and moral fibre to resist renewed seduction by the *osagyefo*. Taking his leave of the departing Ghanaian high commissioner, who gave him the kolanuts that were the traditional parting gifts of friendship for a journey, he claimed that '*misunderstandings have been due to some liars, who felt that by telling different stories to us, either for monetary or for other gains, they could achieve something. We should find out these evildoers, and disrupt them. Just as Nigerian citizens live happily in Ghana, so should Ghanaians in Nigeria live in harmony with their brothers in Nigeria*'. Relations, he said, were now 'excellent'.

Elsewhere, the security council called for an end to a renewal of violence in Cyprus; Greenwood announced the creation of a new British colony in the British Indian ocean territory (BIOT), formed from outlying islands previously administered from Mauritius and the Seychelles, to provide a joint British and American naval base; China accused the USSR of collaborating with the USSR to dominate the world; the Indian prime minister Mr Shastri refused to accept any mediators over Kashmir; a vote on China's admission to UNO was taken at 47-47, still far short of the necessary two-thirds acceptance; Greece announced after another conference that British Guiana would be independent as Guyana on 26 May 1966; France and Guinée broke off diplomatic relations; Tshombe's supporters again blocked Kimba's confirmation in the Congo assembly and prevented the formation of a government; the C-in-C of the democratic republic of Congo's national army deposed Kasavubu (as he had done before for similar reasons in 1960) in the middle of the president's term to restore an administration, and proclaimed himself president for five years, saying, 'It took the politicians five years to lead the country to ruin - I will do myself five years to put the situation right'; Mobutu then suspended the constitution and directed fresh elections in February 1966; three days later he swore in Léonard Mulamba as PM, Kasavubu went home to his country (although agreeing to serve as a mere senator), Tshombe went into exile in France and Madrid, and Gizenga and Mulele also left the country; the president of Dahomey, Apithy, was next to be deposed, peacefully, by Christophe Soglo, who 'appointed' a new head of government; a referendum in The Gambia showed insufficient support for a republican constitution; Alhaji Aminu Kano returned from UNO, where he had been official delegate to UNCTAD.

In the early days of December Lalbahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan accepted Kosygin's invitation that they should meet at Tashkent, in the Uzbek SSR, to discuss Kashmir in January 1966; Pope Paul VI

the 21st ecumenical council in the Vatican; Seretse Khama declared that Bechuanaland protectorate would become the republic of Botswana on 30 September 1966, and the conference confirmed this a fortnight later; the widely loved Queen Salote of Tonga died, the Commonwealth heroine of the rain-soaked 1953 London coronation crowds; Nigeria acceded to an agreement on aid and technical or scientific co-operation with Yugoslavia; the accession of Cameroun to the 'equatorial customs union' allowed the creation from 1 January 1966 of UDEAC (a new central African customs and economic union) of Cameroun, central African republic (CAR), Congo Brazzaville, Gabon and Tchad; Nigeria and Uganda were endorsed by the 36-state African UNO group as candidates for seats on the 1966 security council; it was agreed that Nigerian police might now leave the Congo early in 1966; the Indonesian foreign minister Subandrio said he was willing to negotiate over the two-year-long conflict with Malaysia; the UN security council extended the peace-keeping rôle in Cyprus for yet six months more; prime minister Wilson spent two days discussing Vietnam, Rhodesia and world troubles with President Johnson; Laos agreed to American bombing of the 'Ho Chi Minh trail' which passed through its territory from north to south Vietnam; arrangements were finalized for participation in the April 1966 negro arts festival at Dakar, giving Sénégal's acting president the untimely opportunity to call Nigeria, 'Africa's showpiece of democracy – she is an example of everything beautiful in democracy, and an example for Sénégal to emulate – Nigeria is to Africa what Greece is to Europe!'; fighting erupted once more in the Dominican republic; France ended its boycott of the European community; General Soglo assumed the position of chief of state of Dahomey, for the third time; and on 30 December the colonial office proposed a constitutional novelty, 'states in association with Britain', for Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St Lucia and St Vincent, which were still thought to lack the realistic capacity to sustain individual defence and diplomatic independence.

During the first fifteen days of January 1966, a colonel Jean Bedel Bokassa, chief of staff of the CAR's 400-man army, seized power from President David Dacko; Fidel Castro complained that China was cutting its rice exports to Cuba; the American vice-president Hubert Humphrey returned home from fruitless global consultations on how to achieve a ceasefire agreement in Vietnam; Shastri and Ayub met in Tashkent; Dahomey severed relations with China; Martin Luther King took the American civil rights movement north into the city of Chicago; General de Gaulle began his second seven-year term as French president; Shastri and Ayub signed a 'no war' accord with Kosygin on 10 January, and Shastri died of a heart attack the next day (Lagos flags flew at half mast); President Johnson announced that the USA would stay in Vietnam until all aggression there had ceased; he appointed the first black member of the American cabinet; the first tricontinental conference of Asian, African and Latin American revolutionary solidarity was held in Castro's Havana; the USSR said that it would continue to support the Hanoi authorities; and perhaps the last foreign affair that Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa heard of was a pledge by the south Vietnam government to create a new constitution and hold elections in 1967.

For Africa it had been 'the year of the generals'; since the Sudanese event of November 1958 there had been military interventions in fourteen new independent African states. For Britain it might have been 'the year of embarrassing UN resolutions'; the organization had told her to withdraw from

Oman, to end the emergency in Aden by granting immediate independence, to free British Guiana (while still exhorting its belligerent political parties to cooperate), to negotiate with Argentina over the Falkland islands, and with Spain over Gibraltar, to end Fijians' discrimination against their immigrant Indian population, not to detach the ex-Mauritian outliers to form part of BIOT, and to demilitarize all the temporarily remaining colonies except Hong Kong.

Readers who have exercised the right to ignore, or been irritated by, the periodic processions of miscellaneous international occurrences, so many of them unhappy, that have interrupted the narrative are asked again, now that the last has passed them by, to consider one thing. To the great majority of Abubakar's contemporary rivals or critics, none of them was of much interest, least of all in comparison with what was happening in their own regions. But Abubakar, once he had become a genuine Nigerian and ceased to be guided solely by the more parochial instincts of the north, had now also begun to be a world citizen, and to recognise that if no man was an island, still no country was entire of itself; he saw how all these events, and many more, impinged on Nigeria's future evolution. His later critics, typical of the mediocrity that knows nothing higher than itself, and supposing him to be weakly indifferent to the western regional crisis, and interested in Rhodesia only to distract minds from his apparent domestic failure, might flatter themselves as politicians; such limited talents could not recognize the breadth and proportions of actual statesmanship, which is an attribute far rarer than cheap usage admits.

47 The Second Western Regional Troubles

Abu duka yana ga wa? Yana ga Allah

The Nigerian police announced in mid-September, too soon, that their *Operation Wipe Out Thuggery* had been a success in the west. The Ibadan house of assembly was dissolved on 18 September, and constitutionalist correspondents were flattering Nigeria that there was going to be an election with a true choice. This was not too common now in independent Africa: Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Haute Volta tolerated some opposition parties, and Tshombe's Conaco alliance of many small groups had been giving him a cloak of democratic legitimacy, but there was a growing alienation of the intelligentsia in single-party-list states with immovable presidents like CAR, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania or Tchad; and even in those freer countries where nevertheless electoral outcomes were never in doubt, such as Cameroun, Dahomey, Sénégal and Togo, tensions were in fact very high. Akintola's NNDP had learnt something from their AG rivals' 1962 plotting, and both sides produced more politics and more violence than the 1962 crises had generated. Matters were exacerbated by the involvement of the north, which has to be seen, if not excused, as flowing from its leaders' residual fear of the south, still surviving since 1900 and 1914, and which any new wedge driven between the Yoruba factions could only assuage: northern memories remained fresh of southern reactions to the 1960 election, the treason trial, the census and the presidential crisis, and northern money went into NNDP accounts. Yoruba allies were a welcome Trojan horse, much more significant than a few friends around Benin city. If only, some dreamed, a similar wedge could be driven between certain eastern neighbours.

Moreover the incumbent NNDP government was unashamed of using not only the same appeals as its rivals to tribal emotions and obas' self-interest, but also money, blackmail and official institutions to get its way before, during and after the election; despite the region's wrecked economy, it ensured that while the world price for cocoa was £65 a ton, £120 was still paid to producers, that anti-Igbo feeling was played upon, and that where pretexts were still available, well-disposed management committees, appointed by Fani-Kayode as minister of local government, replaced local government councils. The AG had its own money, some of it from the eastern allies, but otherwise had to build upon (and also be ready to pervert) habit, local associations and the voluntary or workless sectors. Each side assumed that the populace would acquiesce in the victory of either, and failed to anticipate the extent and intensity of feelings translated into violence; arson, chaos and murder were the companions, not the consequences, of the overt ballot-rigging, and the hands of neither party were clean. However the Akintola régime had taken the superficially fair and preventive steps at its last legislative meeting, when approving the new delimitation of the 94 seats, of amending the criminal code to increase the powers against thuggery, of allowing

the parties of any unfortunate unopposed candidates who might be maliciously killed between nomination and election to field substitutes, and of permitting local electoral officers faced on the day by riots to postpone their constituency election. Their opponents chose to see malice aforthought in such provisions.

Akintola, as Okotie-Eboh of the mid-west had done long before the original western region was divided, had taken the initiative to forge personal links with the NPC in Kaduna, partly in self-protection but mainly to ensure the total eclipse of Awolowo as the supposed keeper of the conscience of the Yoruba nation lying in chains. This aim appealed to his Kaduna friends also, although the Sardauna saw him more as an important piece on the chessboard rather than as a comrade; support for AG in the middle belt always aroused suspicions that the kingdom of Oyo's 19th century northwards infiltration was reviving. The token presence of Akintola's nominees in the federal cabinet only inflamed the AG, although from the point of view of the prime minister's submerged yearning for a government of national unity any Yoruba ministers would be birds of a feather. But the fact of a personal, as well as a party, alliance between Chief Akintola and Sir Ahmadu Bello, seen against all this background, meant that in the imminent breakdown of law and order Akintola's government had to be supported however undeserving, and despite countrywide derision for its political authority; and that Dr Okpara's eastern government was primarily concerned to break this Kaduna-Ibadan alliance, rather than to back Awo's weak deputy Adegbenro. As for the thoughtful Yoruba citizens, most felt that their people were deprived of direct access to true federal powers; the educated were disappointed with the plummeting of political standards, and the townspeople, the informed peasantry and the unemployed were cynical about any rich men sitting in the back of large motorcars. Distrust was rife, while behind closed doors NNDP individuals adopted postures against their own government.

As the campaign got into its swing and Akintola and Adegbenro faced each other unconvincingly in a television studio, UPGA threatened legal suits against the officials of the western regional electoral commission over alleged blocking of nomination papers, another practice in which lessons, this time from the NPC in the 1964 election, had been only too well learnt. Mr Eyo E Esua was still *ex officio* chairman, but all the officials of the western commission, led by Mr S O Ojerinola, were appointed by the western regional public service commission, and might therefore appear to be less independent. Familiar claims were heard that some nominations had been made impossible through the kidnapping of the electoral officers concerned. By 30 September sixteen NNDP were declared elected unopposed in the east and north of the region (including three sitting ministers and two parliamentary secretaries), and nominations in five constituencies remained uncertain. Akintola's own sole opponent in Ogbomosho had withdrawn a week in advance (to his nervous mother's relief) when he heard of the unopposed nominations elsewhere, and the Sardauna sent his counterpart a complimentary message. Akintola went to Lagos to reassure the prime minister (whom he found with the northern premier in his company) that the furore over the unopposed seats (which had also included his own deputy Fani-Kayode among five in Ife alone) was exaggerated: if 209 candidates were still fighting 78 seats, this surely meant that UPGA could still win the election on the day, although he himself expected a narrow victory.

The Sardauna had gone on the trail as far as Ilorin with the intention of supporting NNDP, before the disorder had given the western government

occasion on 19 September to ban all public processions and meetings for two months, thus confining politicians' activities to pamphleteering and canvassing; Adegbenro accepted the ban, although Okpara called it a 'pure panic measure'. By now 3,000 extra police were available and some soldiers were standing by; the Igbo assistant police commissioner in charge of the mobile unit, M A Ibekwe, was accused by partisan interests of ignoring the western commissioner Odofin Bello when taking his strategic professional decisions.

UPGA, hoping to nominate 62 AG and 32 NCNC candidates, sought a three day extension by Esua of the eight days' period for depositing papers, a move which NNDP claimed to be evidence that they knew they were already defeated. The actual party manifestos were only published five days before voting day, sufficient proof that the true electoral choice had nothing to do with social or economic policy. UPGA's main issue was to demand Awolowo's release, to which Akintola responded by calling it, 'the last cry of a dying man', and ambiguously promising Awo 'his fair share'; NNDP's manifesto was a 'fair shares charter', explicitly designed to restore Yoruba national interests. Despite the unending allegations of rigging and anger at Esua's inactivity, and the unending reports of killings, attempted murders, intimidation and vandalism, it is interesting that the police, who had deployed half of their federal strength, concluded that considering how much was politically at stake, the last three weeks of campaigning had been 'relatively orderly'. The worst was in fact to come. Fani-Kayode and Bola Ige of AG fanned the flames. On the eve of the poll an 18-year old electoral commission official was shot dead in his Ibadan office, soldiers had to be stationed to guard booths and ballots, and the police enhanced their already massive security provisions, arresting several opposition leaders for questioning in the process.

The election day was 11 October. At one station where the electoral officer, strictly following the revised regulations, postponed the election, angry UPGA followers set fire to ten houses. NNDP leaders were infuriated at what they saw as biased interrogations from pressmen about the widespread but by no means universal rigging, and about the taking of unauthorised persons in possession of twelve filled ballot boxes; they wanted to know why reporters were not investigating equally obvious UPGA violence and damage to property. Because of tensions the voting closed early in Adegbenro's own constituency in Egba south, and the ballots were locked away in police care, where they were kept circumspectly under observation from outside by AG trustees, pending a court case. At least five deaths were reported from sporadic fights elsewhere during the day, two from gunshots during UPGA riots in the Lagos suburb of Mushin where polling was abandoned; and a curfew was partially imposed at close of polls. Next morning two NNDP ministers had been fairly defeated, but with 33 results still to come in, NNDP were declared by the western regional electoral commission to have won 51 seats, a clear majority of the 94 total. On these official figures, certified by the commission's secretary, the governor Chief Odeleye Fadahunsi reappointed Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola to be premier of western Nigeria, as the constitution provided, and he was sworn in on Wednesday morning 13 October.

A little later the figures were 73 NNDP, 15 AG, 2 NCNC, with Ondo central, Egba south and the two seats in Mushin undeclared. Like all opposition parties uncomprehending of some previous rejection, the Action Group had been crying 'To the polls!' for three years, and matters did not end there with such a massive formal defeat. Adegbenro and the local UPGA began to fantasize

exit poll figures and even to use imagination upon some of the returning officers' less convincing or indiscreet announcements made before reporting to the commission; they finally claimed, from a candle-lit conclave in Awolowo's Ibadan home, to have won 68 seats.

In a straight and fair election, given the contemporary Yoruba imperative that it is impossible to judge which of these unsafe figures would have come close to a true result. Awolowo and the socially or economically intellectual Yoruba leaders congregated in Ijebu and Egba, yet Akintola had sympathizers in Ijebu Abeokuta and Ondo who never went in fear. Awolowo's support in Ekiti came from those who hated Oyo, not from gratitude for the AG's policies. The NNPP had won convincingly in Ijebu and Ikeja north, as NNPP had done in Ibadan but elsewhere there had been much splitting of votes among candidates (unopposed seats apart) no overwhelming victories. In fact Adegbenro said first that he would respect the constitution, foreshadowing a flood of electoral petitions; but he harshly criticized the commission's handling of the election, particular the pre-emptive manner of announcing the result, and added that he would lay a report of the irregularities before the governor.

Unfortunately Dr Okpara went much further; he called a press conference and, in a distorted echo of the east's insistence on its original census figure, publicly adopted the UPGA figure of 68 as authoritative for Alhaji I Adegbenro's 'resounding victory'. Not only the eastern regional broadcast service and one national newspaper, but also clandestine mobile radio stations in or around Ibadan, spread the news that UPGA had won, with Adegbenro forming a cabinet (sometimes referred to as an 'interim' executive committee) of nine specific names. The accompanying political comment made for confidence and bitterness. Rumour was quoted as factual evidence that figures announced at polling stations all differed from the commission's; that electoral officers had deliberately been absent in the sixteen 'unopposed' constituencies; that voters were found with hundreds of ballots in their pockets and boxes filled before polling even opened; that thugs in local government police uniforms had driven polling agents away and beaten innocent people; that patience essential to any formal inquiry into the rigging of which honest men were already convinced, and to any convincing court hearing properly laid petitions, was destroyed from the start, and the tinder of the powder barrel. Any recommendation by Dr Elias's constitutional commission on how to approach the conduct and supervision of future elections was too late.

UPGA's supporters continued to spread false rumours that the government met UPGA and was going to appoint Adegbenro as premier, which gave Fadahunsi occasion to refuse to explain his legal position to Adegbenro's person. The western chief justice Mr Adeyinka Morgan remanded UPGA leaders in custody, on charges of attempting *prima facie* to assume lawful authority to hold themselves out as the premier and government. A prominent author and poet Wole Soyinka, who had a senior appointment in the western broadcasting service's news and information section, was seized by the police over the apparent substitution by a gunman of UPGA for a tape of an Akintola speech recorded for broadcast. Adegbenro told the court before the hearing of his case that he was only 'prepared' to act as premier when called on, as he should be, and would continue to act by lawful means. Trouble continued, Fadahunsi's private home being attacked and undergraduates and policemen clashing at Ibadan.

while Mushin market women marching to protest peacefully outside the prime minister's house about prices were teargassed.

The press maintained the vicious partisan campaigns, the few moderate editorial elements alone suggesting that the rival parties should think the unthinkable and sit down together to discuss modest power-sharing, or that the impartial Nigerian Alhaji Sir Abubakar should give a lead to them. There were bannings of newspapers in both eastern and western regions, and some western local governments tried to prevent listeners tuning in to eastern broadcasts. The NCNC western working committee chairman Chief Olu Akinfosile called for a state of emergency to be called in the west; it should last, he said, between one and three months and allow either a judicial inquiry into the facts of such votes as had been legitimately cast on 11 October, or a new election supervised by a new electoral commission appointed by the emergency administrator. Akintola challenged Okpara to say whether Ibadan, Oshun or Oyo would ever vote against himself, or whether Ondo would ever vote for an Igbo party; Ijebu and Egba had voted against NNDP on the same ground that Ibadan and Oyo had voted for – because they favoured his personal rival – whose party had now sold the Yoruba soul to the people of the east.

The prime minister, boxed into his own corner by his respect for procedural forms that had *prima facie* been followed to the letter, broke his silence on 19 October; an arranged adjournment debate was opened in the house by his close friend the government chief whip Mukhtar sarkin Bai Dambatta, 'in view of the claims and counterclaims'. The body legally competent to announce results of polling, said Abubakar, had declared that NNDP had won the election; '*I think the confusion in the western region at present had been deliberately planned . . . , however, the situation so far shows that people can cause confusion whenever they like, hiding under the name of democracy*'; he had done all he could to ensure a peaceful election in the region, yet '*a lot of innocent people still lost their lives. . . . I find it difficult to understand what is going on now; if politics will turn into this way for innocent people, I think it is time we think of the future of this country*'; if Nigerians did not learn now to respect the constitution and law courts, the future was very gloomy; '*democracy does not mean that one can do what one likes*'; the country's leaders should approach issues with great restraint, '*words are like bullets, and whenever they are shot out they cannot be recalled*'. Now, as throughout the weeks that remained, all his ministers were behind him (the NCNC held most of the envied portfolios and chairmanships, after all), even though his hope remained for compromise, *son zaman lafiya*; but there was very little discussion in the cabinet room, and most action taken was purely executive.

Restraint was no part of the vocabulary of the uncompromising factions for whom the mere continuance of Akintola's government in power was sufficient provocation to spontaneous rebellion. To some his survival was proof of the Sardauna-led NPC's invincibility, even in a parliamentary democracy; to army officers in general, it offered the moral excuse for their private discontent, that they they had not joined up with any thought that settling election disputes might be their mission; for the 'Igbo majors' and Ademoyega in particular – be able to say that Abubakar and the Sardauna had backed the wrong western horse became the logic behind their final active plotting to bring down the federal and regional governments together. The only effective resistance to the dreaded NPC, it was widely reasoned in the south, must come from an élite of well-informed politicians, or the civil service, or the army, or a combination of these; and if there had been no crisis over election rigging, some

emotional excuse would have been found in a prolonged labour strike, or a fresh Tiv upheaval, or a move towards secession.

As it was, the NNDP sought to entrench itself through acts which could be seen as repression in those areas which had not supported Akintola. For a time these kept popular outbreaks to a minimum and allowed an impression of Nigerian normality, as western ministers carried on government without self-doubt or protective cover, tax collection went ahead as usual and the cocoa buying price was boldly slashed to equate with commercial truths. AG Adegbenro spoke soberly of the need to eschew sentiment and base peace formulas on objective realities, while the Sardauna blamed all on the NCNC. Wole Soyinka gave himself up to the CID in Ibadan, but began a hung strike. The Ibadan curfew was raised since troops were ready to hand, but minor crimes of arson occurred in Egba and mugging was reported in Mushin; in other circumstances the blame might have been conveniently laid on the deprivation of an underclass in an affluent society, as criminal opportunism, associated with an upsurge in drug-abuse, encouraged rent-a-thug hooliganism. However this was also manifested in protection rackets offering immunity to those who exhibited AG palm leaf symbols, or to those who gave the Awo version of Churchill's victory sign. It became clear that whether the protesters consciously had the secondary motive of destabilizing the federal Nigerian government or not, they were indifferent to the possibility that the country might break. It was not widely noted that Chief Akintola had personally lost heart for his well-loved daughter Omodele, who had been a doughty political activist in his behalf, had died tragically a fortnight after the election (His youngest son had been sent away to Eton college in England, a move of which his political opponents tried to make capital).

Alhaji Sir Abubakar met a delegation of undergraduates at Ibadan university on 16 November, and told them that he still had no intention of suspending the western regional government or declaring a state of emergency, and that UPGA should seek redress of any justifiable grievance in the courts. He admitted no analogy with the 1962 split between two purportedly co-existent governments, which had precipitated that earlier resolution in the court of public house, since there was now a single legally constituted government, and the amount of violent protest could refute that. Abubakar had lost his illusions of the competence of the Ibadan NNDP government, and he had despaired of the UPGA Enugu leadership's readiness to support the federal sway democratically. UPGA had collected, as he knew, ample *facie* evidence of what Okoi Arikpo called 'never such rigging', dating from suggestions of gerrymandering of the new delimitations onwards. It was ostensibly claim that the violence, because it was so badly managed, was self-evidently not been centrally orchestrated or conducted, and was the work of individuals protesting in the only way they knew. But in risking legal process UPGA leaders pointed out that only a week prior to the Ibadan high court had struck out fourteen 1964 federal electoral petitions submitted out of time, and in fact went on to declare that petitions were a waste of time and money, and 'public opinion' should be the decisive factor. Some saw a direct consequence of such inaction on both sides in the form of riots and arson that now followed, made unspeakably barbarous by a new practice of 'wetting' (in pidgin, 'Operation *weti-e*') - dowsing of petrol with petrol and setting them alight. Alhaji Aminu Kano came on television from New York and, horrified to hear of burnt-out cars and charred

advised the prime minister to declare another emergency, but was told that all was in hand.

Mr Esua's belated reaction to the criticism and ignominy showered upon him as *ex officio* chairman of the western regional electoral commission was published as a letter to the governor Chief Fadahunsi on 20 November. It was frank but untimely. Whatever the real prospects may have been of negotiating a token presence of the Action Group in the Ibadan government (and it must not be forgotten that Abubakar was toying with the private thought of a federal post for a pardoned Awolowo), they were for the moment dashed. Esua claimed to be writing his personal views, not those of his fellow commissioners, federal or regional, upon the general claims that improper behaviour by the electoral officers had resulted in some unopposed returns; that ballot papers had been unlawfully distributed before voting day; that some candidates who had not scored highest had been elected; and that there had been misconduct among electoral, polling and presiding officers.

He said that UPGA had forewarned the commission that NNDP would rig the election and use questionable means to return unopposed candidates; that 'although the commission endeavoured to forestall any such manoeuvres, it was a notorious fact' that some electoral officers refused to accept papers, or failed to report for duty (Esua himself had confronted one truant from Ife engaged on dubious extraneous business for his local government in Lagos); that he and a fellow commissioner had personally received complaints about such difficulty in nominating candidates at Ado-Ekiti, Ondo and Owo; that contrary to instructions, announcements were made of candidates 'elected unopposed' without the commission's prior clearance; that the commission's secretary had revoked the appointment of, and replaced, some electoral officers who had already issued certificates of validity to opposition candidates; that the revoked officers' names had not been duly gazetted nor their acts validated; that because of the security printing arrangements, and the deliberate placing of ballot papers with the commissioner of police for safe custody and distribution on the polling morning, the reports of 'leakages' of voting slips in Mushin, Ibadan and Ijebu-Ode had come as a great surprise; that the refusal of some returning officers to read the certificate of the votes counted at the place of counting was incomprehensible and gave good cause for misgivings; that he himself had furnished no results to the governor or anybody else; that although local government police were under control of the inspector-general during elections, it was disappointing to learn that some men operating in uniform were nothing but thugs; that under the regional electoral regulations neither the commission nor he had powers to remedy the wrongs by postponement or cancellation, to appoint or remove its officers, or to interfere or correct any impropriety; that while the federal commission alone had powers to postpone a federal election in any likelihood of a breach of the peace, the power in regional cases belonged to the regional governor-in-council; and that the regional PSC had delegated its powers to appoint electoral, polling and returning officers, not to the regional electoral commission, but to its secretary, who had been inadequately staffed.

He made various brief generalized proposals for future changes, but in effect fell back on the excuse that an impotent commission could not be expected to perform miracles. Apart from reopening the wounds by giving UPGA comfort and driving NNDP into furious self-defence, this was inadequate and unhelpful. As chairman there was so much that he should have satisfied himself with what his secretary was doing, by way of training and warning the various levels of officers now held at fault, whatever their regular duties and loyalties.

particularly after hearing the alarm-bells he now admitted to have taken seriously. Esua's western colleagues warmly dissociated themselves from him, but he had regrettably failed to suggest whether, or how, the irregularities which he had now identified, without having annexed any supporting evidence, had actually affected the results in any individual constituencies, or indeed overall. Furthermore nobody believed that he had been powerless to insist that his regional officers, however stretched, should provide him with any information he needed, and fulfil any of his commission's instructions. If he could know all this, why had he done nothing at the time?

Intransigence being thus secured, and honourable men despairing of wielders of power having any lingering respect for constitutional niceties, anarchy between terrorist groups and citizens again began to prevail for the next two months on the west's main highways and in its built-up areas. The worst seemed to be in the Ijebu and Egba provinces, where UPGA candidates had been returned, and many if not a majority of the victims were claimed by NNDP as its supporters. The UAC enterprise forbade its senior employees to travel by road within the region on business. In December the prime minister ordered the federal civilian security forces to control this outbreak, which strained the police in Lagos and the west beyond their routine capabilities, and also left the north denuded of its first line security force in the strategic reserve. It was a fact that the police were unenthusiastic. The presence among them of 'Hausa' officers and constables exacerbated the bitterness with which they were met by the riotous, although the police were nearest to the army in being a truly mixed federal force; there was a malignant increase in violence between ordinary Yorubas and civilian Hausas (who tended to sympathize with NNDP). The practical effect was to prop up Akintola without snuffing out the gangsters. UPGA finally allowed the date for filing election petitions to slip past them, with a last minute face-saving excuse that a suspension of the Akintola régime would make them unnecessary. At the end of November Alhaji Sir Abubakar took Akinloye and Rosiji up to Kaduna, where Akintola, Fani-Kayode, their attorney-general, and Akinjide were conferring with the Sardauna. Akintola was adamant that every allegation made against his government could be made with equal force in any other region. The Sardauna agreed that some extra degree of force had to be used, but no unanimity could be reached on when and how, and it seemed weakly best to leave the initiative to Akintola. Aminu Kano came home once again in December to report from UNO on the Cyprus situation, and was appalled to find nothing changed from the month before.

But why then, apart from the obvious and very human inclination not to sully the commonwealth's impression of a functioning parliamentary democracy in Nigeria until after a successful end to the Lagos conference called to demand action against a racial oligarchy in Southern Rhodesia (a conference which was to wrench permanent chairmanship of the club from Britain and make anti-racism the club's *raison d'être*), would Abubakar not declare an emergency and install an administrator once more? His public constitutional rationale to the Ibadan undergraduates, which unfortunately amounted to a refusal to concede publicly that the polls were indeed rigged, has already been explained. The unspoken thought in his mind was that such a declaration might lead to a situation still worse. It would not only be another surrender to those who gloated that democracy did not work in Africa. The army, which would have had to support the civil power, might not have stopped at sulkily restoring order, given its irresolute leader and its restive politicized majors; if order were

simply restored, but at heavy cost to the man in the street, rebellious voices would be raised that this government only acted against the west, presumably because of its supposed pathological distrust of Awolowo and all who shared his origins; and how much easier it might be, if people wearied and matters cooled, to allure the troublemakers towards a rewarding compromise in the Nigerian way.

There were also very practical difficulties, however. If he were to take into his hands the powers that would have permitted operational direction through the army act, a threat to the whole federation required to be identified; and although ingenious lawyers could undoubtedly have defined such a threat, the major parts of Nigeria that were ostensibly peaceful and orderly would also have been made vulnerable to martial law. Doubtless to leave the shot corpses in the streets of a few well-known villains found possessed of illegal arms would have quietened the region within 24 hours (as events in 1966 after the mutiny were to prove), but it went against the grain if it had to be done in the prime minister's name in apparent support of Akintola.

The simple barrier to emergency legislation on the 1962 model under section 70(3) of the constitution was that for the first actual time the lieutenant in Lagos, weakened by the loss of the fearless Muhammadu Ribadu, was hamstrung by not being his party's leader. Not only was he debilitated, and preoccupied by external responsibilities (as we have just seen, he was concerned with, say, events in Cyprus, even if persons concerned with Nigeria were not – those events had lessons for Nigeria, and perhaps one day, as in Rhodesia, Nigeria might have to share in a Commonwealth initiative to solve them); he was now also too uncertain of winning the necessary two-thirds majority of all members in both of the parliamentary houses. The NNDP held 36 of the 57 western seats in the house of representatives, and enjoyed 21 appointments on government benches. The knowledge that both NCNC and AG were demanding a state of emergency had only strengthened the northern premier's determination to keep Akintola in power and the southern regions' leaders divided, despite warnings from experienced people with authority like his governor Sir Kashim Ibrahim. Nor were any of the Lagos ministers confident that they knew precisely what passed between Akintola and the Sardauna when they met privately, or what the members of the Ibadan government might be expected to do, following on any army intervention; in fact many in the north believed that the Sardauna was resisting pleas from Akintola to urge Alhaji Sir Abubakar to send the army in to prop up his government and decimate the AG. The northern premier told his governor, 'I think we have got the situation in hand now, because we had a meeting with all the leaders of the west, including their soldiers and businessmen. They all agreed that the people, including Awo, have agreed to settle the problem. In a few days the situation in the west will be contained'. The division in the country if the Lagos NPC back-benchers were told by Kaduna to vote against a government resolution, however hypothetical, would be the widest national split yet, and the succession to Abubakar was an indefinable factor. Yet the Sardauna and Akintola were both perturbed by the prime minister's unenthusiastic support for the NNDP régime, and puzzled by his seeming confidence that a solution would emerge. Clearly the theoretical alternative could never materialize, that the western government itself should ask formally for federal military aid in support of the civil power; nor would the eastern government instruct its supporters to come out for plural federal unity.

In fact there was a brief spell early in December when the worst excesses receded, apart from a clash in Ikenne after a celebration of Mrs Awolowo's

50th birthday. The western minister of local government Ayo Ajibola felt able to assert that the recent disorders were not the result of the disputed election but 'the last resort of the grudge borne against members of the local authorities by their political opponents, resulting from arbitrary taxation and improper use of the customary courts'. There was more than an element of truth in this, but strong security precautions were still taken to protect the meeting of the Ibadan houses on 9 December, constitutionally required to be called within three months of the dissolution. A ban on meetings and a dusk to dawn curfew were reimposed two days in advance. Not all the seats were yet filled (Adegbenro's own was still subject to a high court petition to order a recount of the impounded Egba South 1 boxes). In the event UPGA silently boycotted the meeting, which had its encouraging aspects even if the speeches were offered as second thoughts. The deputy premier Chief Fani-Kayode said that innocent people who knew nothing about what was happening were being molested and murdered every day - these lawbreakers should face the government, who were their proper adversaries after all. He appealed to the opposition to join the government, going to the heart of the problem of power, in an echo of the prime minister's hopes and Akintola's hint: 'There is enough for everybody in this region. Let us come together! We shall organize this region in such a way that everybody will be in a position to 'chop life', and the only way to do it is by coming together'. The passing of a law to ban the sale and purchase of toy arms and ammunition was well meant, as a move against impersonation, but attracted some derision.

Further meetings looking for a peace formula were held at the ooni of Ife's Ibadan home, but to no avail. Minor rulers loyal to the Akintola government were forced off their thrones in Ijebu and Ondo. The thugs whose sponsors wanted all or nothing returned to killings and arson, including the grisly 'wetting' of an unfortunate local oba and a wretched local government policeman. Arms and ammunition were discovered by the police in the mid-western region, apparently on their way from the east to be used in the west. A delegation from NNDP went to see the prime minister, seeking the dismissal of the western regional commissioner of police Odofin Bello. Ironically, there were loud allegations abroad that their party maintained a specific fund for the suborning of policemen. Wole Soyinka was acquitted on his charge of stealing two recorded tapes and of threatening violence, and was free to continue embedding thorns in the fat flesh of the establishment. By the end of the year a principal topic of social conversation in Lagos, fuelled by UAC's policy, was the increasing risk of travel on roads in the west, where even a visiting American senator had been accosted by highwaymen. Western ministers now officially carried handguns and had armed police escorts, something that the prime minister must have known and bitterly accepted. The train seemed preferable transportation to a motorcar, as stories spread of hold-ups, ransom demands, car-burnings and killings. The excuses made for most of the confirmed horrors were that there was now no other way open for justified AG protests against NNDP, sadly taken to extremes. This was not persuasive to those who saw a very different element behind the mayhem, strangers blindly intent on savagery taking advantage of every suggestion that a supporter of one Yoruba faction had hurt, or merely provoked, a supporter of another. Demoralization and distrust were aggravated by attacks made personally on the prime minister for letting matters drift, made by the *Pilot* newspaper, UPGA supporters and most labour minister F D Lawanson.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar was continuing to think in the long term and in global perspectives, which would have been proper had he had a tough adjutant for the immediate decisions on his own doorstep. Agreeing in principle, if in nothing more, with Okpara that a fresh start was essential, possibly to be enabled by the work of Elias's constitutional committee, he reverted more openly to the thought of bringing Chief Awolowo in as a balancing deputy prime minister. The Action Group rump leadership was by now quite ready to accept mediation, but the NNDP had yet to see why it should yield an inch. Possible go-betweens existed in the civil service, people of trust like Charles Lawson, and in the judiciary, who could test the water. The Sardauna and Chief Akintola would remain implacable on this point, of course, having refused to contemplate any greater amelioration of Awo's prison conditions than his move to Calabar had permitted. Any attempt to change the northern premier's mind, and to secure his agreement to a parliamentary declaration of emergency, would now have to await his group's return from his annual lesser pilgrimage, the *'umrah*, which would then be overtaken by the Commonwealth gathering. Abubakar's visit to Kaduna before their departure, preoccupied by religious considerations, could only be one of courtesy, although Sir Kashim Ibrahim warned both prime minister and premier that he had consistent warnings from Kanuri officers in the army that all was not well, and important lives might be in danger. Alhaji Sir Abubakar's resigned comment, apart from leaving things till the Sardauna's return, apparently was that, *'Well, we are all surrounded by Igbo officers, if anything happens, they are going to kill us'*. Isa Kaita accompanied him back to Bauchi for a short day on the farm and to borrow a last book.

It was not procrastination therefore, but a waiting on inexorable events. Raising the question of using Awo in a coalition government might have reduced emotional opposition to what might then have seemed by comparison the lesser evil of accepting a second state of emergency. Nor was it indifference. Dr Majekodunmi saw Abubakar shortly before the Commonwealth visitors began to arrive and found him in a state of very personal misery over the burnings and crippings of human beings. His manner was one of religious compassion, not that of a doubting wimp. He still had reasoned fear of the obvious solutions making matters worse: the former army minister Majekodunmi himself had some sympathy for using the mailed fist (the soldiers would have been disciplining evil ruffians, not reinforcing Akintola and the NNDP, as some majors would have claimed), but the prime minister's reassurances were such as to make a man ashamed. If the will of God permitted, the advisers with their prophecies of doom about the army and the west would be proven wrong, and with calm patience and intelligent reasoning all would finally be well. Abubakar did not trust the fair weather and self-protective friendship of Akintola; he looked in the long run for the belated commonsense support of Okpara, despite that premier's support for Azikiwe against himself a year before, and his part in recent politicking. Meanwhile a deeply religious submission was not the same thing as weak surrender to the force of events.

The independently minded Igbo federal minister senator Dan Ibekwe tried to strike a blow for strict constitutionality, as he had done as eastern solicitor-general when consulted by the president a year before over Zik's supposed residual executive powers as an American commander-in-chief. He had been affronted by the very personal attacks on his prime minister's supposed inaction by Okeke and Lawson. Holding a press conference before Christmas, purportedly as an exponent of free speech and not as a politician, he denounced the criticisms of Alhaji Sir Abubakar as unfounded and unfair attempts to

find a scapegoat: such talk was ignorant or careless of the provisions of the constitution. This led to further unbridled assaults by the NCNC and its newspapers on targets which now included himself for defending Abubakar. On 30 December Ibekwe issued an official explanatory press release repeating his legal opinions, stressing the importance of Nigeria's voice being heard authoritatively in Commonwealth, OAU and UNO, and putting the true responsibility for ending the present turmoil in the western region firmly on the shoulders of UPGA's and NNNDP's figureheads. Christian, Muslim and other leaders should use their authority to secure such a settlement, which would solve the most difficult problem of all, the securing of Nigeria's continued existence as one country, one nation. There was no doubt whose mouthpiece he was. On the same day Aminu Kano told Abubakar that Akintola should be replaced by a federal caretaker, having lost the confidence of all; he was told in return that all the disruption was the work of 'eastern plotters', who would soon get their deserts. Ibekwe's just apologia was enfeebled by NCNC's memories of his dismissal in Enugu. Akintola, who was beginning to consider making way for Fani-Kayode who would not refrain from harsher methods (although this might have induced oba C D Akran to split the NNNDP), declared on 1 January that 98 Igbo and 332 Tiv thugs had been arrested in Mushin, and elsewhere 212 others from the mid-west and east, all involved in attacking NNNDP supporters.

However federal action was at last being envisaged as unavoidable. Spurred by rumours of a coup, passed by the Nupe northern minister Ahman Patagi to his countryman the army minister, galadima of Bida Ibrahim Tako, cabinet ministers gave covering approval of a contingency plan, which would allow Brigadier Zakari Maimalari's 2 Bde to execute an operation crudely named *No Mercy* to restore order in the west. 1 January 1966 seems to have been the original preferred date, but jumpy nerves at the prospect of the commonwealth and the world's press having a grandstand view of military operations put the likely date back to 0001 hours on 17 January. By then parliament should be sitting in the normal way, and able to vote without overtones of an emergency summons having forewarned the 'plotters'; Abubakar would make it plain that if Akintola did not restore political accord after the army had restored urban peace, he would lose further federal tolerance, let alone NPC political support. Sadly, it was impossible that long before then the contingencies would not be known to some quite junior military officers who, as will be seen, had their countrymen working in army signals and civilian posts and telegraphs.

The outbreaks of trouble began to seem more systematic, as they were reported ever more closely to the federal capital. Members of the legislature planning their ways through the west in good time for the January meeting were not safe from attack and attempts to extort valuables. There was little doubt that the conference of commonwealth leaders in the capital was seen as a providential opportunity to draw overseas attention to opposition grievances, and if there had ever been any basis for regarding the meeting as a useful distraction from internal predicaments, it would have been an entire failure. The upheavals in the west meant more to Nigeria's peoples in all the regions than anything that heads of governments might have to say about faraway Rhodesia.

Even as the overseas delegates were arriving for the Commonwealth conference, hoodlums with matchets and bows-and-arrows were active in Lagos's northern suburbs, where seven deaths and twenty woundings were officially reported amidst an impressive police presence. Whole families, amounting to hundreds in all, fled from their homes, and nearly every market,

the heart of any African community, closed. When the house of representatives met for the last time on 13 January 1966 after the conference, the AG member for Lagos central tabled a motion calling for a state of emergency in the western region. Questions and statements elicited the official admission by the minister of state for police affairs that there had been 64 civilians killed by the police during the crisis, and 91 killed by other civilians. No casualties had occurred on either side where soldiers had been involved in peace-keeping. The cost of the operations to the end of the year had been £332,600. There was to be no public inquiry into the allegations of fraud by NNDP during the election. A parliamentary secretary said, 'It is the constitutional responsibility of the western Nigerian government to handle the situation in western Nigeria'.

On 14 January Alhaji Sir Abubakar gave an interview to the commercial editor of *West Africa*, in the course of which he had this to say:

A lot of these reports [of growing violence in the western region] are true; some are not. This violence was planned . . . before the election. There might have been irregularities . . . I . . . was surprised at the size of the NNDP victory; I thought they would win, but with a small margin, . . . but this violence was planned by people who were determined that there shall be no peace in the west. I have tried to bring about a settlement, and I have the solution at my fingertips – I could solve it in five minutes. . . . You know the people of the west have suffered so much. . . . If only everybody could come together, and could forget the past and decide to work together for the peace of the region! . . . the AG has accepted my mediation, but the NNDP has asked for more time. The trouble with the Yorubas is that there is no one man, no single individual [not even, sotto voce, Awolowo], who can command enough respect among his people; and . . . you can take all the police and the army out of the northern region, and the people would be peaceful. But in the west, you can't maintain law and order without the police and the army. If I used real force . . . and make no mistake, I haven't yet – then I could bring the people to their knees, and I don't want to use force like that. Force can't bring peace to people's hearts. . . . I think that [Awo's release] might be part of it, yes, obviously we would have to see. Awolowo has still a great deal to give to this country, a great deal.

I'm afraid that [the violence] must have an [economic] effect, but the violence has its economic reasons too. I was told the other day that a car was stopped in the region, and its occupants were asked by the people who held them up to give money. They answered, 'But we thought we had to shout 'Awo! Awo!' Do you know the answer they got? The men replied, 'Should we eat 'Awo'? Give us money!' . . . The AG and the NNDP, who have been organizing their hooligans, are not now, I hear, paying them enough, so they are joining the thieves and the thugs to demand money. . . . I have no power [to impose a solution] . . . I only wish I had. The chief justice and others have been working with me, and are still working, trying to get a solution. But it is difficult'.

He gave no hint of operation *No Mercy*.

48 Nigeria's Prime Minister and Rhodesia

A yi a gama, ya fi gobe a karasa

The statesman's supposed external distraction from the mere politicians' local preoccupations was, for himself, no paper tiger. Rhodesia had given to Africa's governments, squabbling and ideologically confused as their leaders were despite all attempts to conjure up unity, a cause on which every bloc and individual could gratefully speak as one. It was unthinkable that a man who believed in the ethos of the commonwealth, and who gave the only successful lead to African unity, should not see a fulfilment in trying to resolve that cause. Very attentive readers of this book may have taken heed of the references in the summaries of external events to steps in Southern Rhodesia's evolution. They should be recalled against the background thought that, as the premier from 1933 to 1953 of a country self-governing since 1923, Sir Godfrey Huggins had single-handedly earned and ungrudgingly retained his territory's conventional right to attend the old imperial conferences, the right to which the short-lived central African federation had fallen heir. He had personally signed the Havana charter in 1948, and would without doubt have been given full dominion status after the war, had he sought it at once. The failure of the wider federation, and the Monckton commission's virtual guarantee of independence for Zambia and Malawi, coupled with settlers' abhorrence of the Congo experience and misplaced judgement of strong actions by Lisbon and Pretoria, strengthened Ian Smith's supporters' memory of that fact, and the consequent conviction that Britain had made a moral promise of independence upon the break-up of the CAF.

Equally strong on the opposite side, misjudgment of Nkrumah's world influence, de Gaulle's forsaking of the *pieds noirs* in Algeria, Britain's agreement with Kenyatta in the other white settlers' colony, and Kennedy's apparent support for African nationalist movements, all seemed to Nkomo and his supporters to make talk of multi-racial moderation unnecessary. South Africa's departure from the commonwealth superficially appeared to promise the minority the backing of a strong neighbour (although even Verwoerd saw that every interest was best met by a settlement without bloodshed), and Britain's concern for American and Afro-Asian opinion had weakened the whites' patriotic regard for their insular 'kith and kin' and enhanced their confidence in 'going it alone'. The original infiltrations of poorly trained guerrillas across the Zambezi were proving for the present to be easy to parry. Alhaji Sir Abubakar, no longer impressed by Welensky's original arguments as now reconstituted by Ian Smith, still acknowledged all this confusion of cultural myth and material reality; he observed that while South African, American and third world interests all criticized Britain severely from their very different standpoints,

none of them offered any useful assistance to solve the dilemma in a civilized way.

The complexities grew in September 1965. Smith appointed his own accredited diplomatic representative at Lisbon, and admitted that his party did not rule out the adoption of *apartheid* if eventually the policies of the republic of South Africa should demonstrate that separate racial development was 'the best'. President Nyerere declared that he would withdraw from the commonwealth if Britain gave Rhodesia independence, and Alhaji Nuhu Bamalli was quoted as saying that in view of Britain not applying her military force in Rhodesia, and so 'letting us down', the UN should now be asked to intervene. By 4 October Mr Harold Wilson and Mr Ian Smith were in fact locked with their staffs in a protracted London negotiation, very different in tone from the familiar independence conferences now customarily held in Lancaster House. Wilson adhered to the bipartisan British policy that Rhodesia should also move towards independence, but that this should be under a constitution broadly approved by the people as a whole (not necessarily by prominent individuals), which should provide for a peaceful transition from the present effectively indefinite rule by 220,000 whites (African nationalists had largely boycotted registration under either the 'A' or the 'B' rolls of the 1961 constitution mentioned in Chapter 34) to an eventual majority embracing the four million blacks.

The discussions did not contemplate withholding of full independence until majority rule was already in place; HM overseas civil service did not have a rôle in Southern Rhodesia. Wilson's five prior points insisted on unimpeded subsequent progress towards the majority rule envisaged in the 1961 arrangements, a guarantee of no retrogressive amendments, an immediate improvement in the Africans' political status, progress towards elimination of racial discrimination, and the overriding satisfaction of the British parliament that any proposed basis for independence would be acceptable to the Rhodesian population as a whole. He was prepared to co-operate, possibly with Australia, in a crash programme of African education to equip the majority to take an effective share in the country's economic and political life within roughly a decade; there was an unspoken hint that colonial servants redundant from west Africa might be useful in a purely training rôle. On 8 October the talks broke down, and the UN general assembly quickly voted by 107-2 (Portugal and South Africa), calling on Britain to prevent the now likely 'unilateral declaration of independence' (UDI) by Smith. Nuhu Bamalli said that he might advise Nigeria to withdraw from the club, like Nyerere, if Britain acquiesced in a UDI. Ian Smith, back in London, summarily rejected a suggestion that a team of commonwealth prime ministers should go out and mediate a settlement. The archbishop of Canterbury ruled that the use of force in Rhodesia would have the support of Christians, and next day the British prime minister flew out to Salisbury for more talks. On 27 October Wilson shocked those white Rhodesians who thought themselves loyal to the crown, and still looked to the 'mother country' for sympathy in their dilemma, by stating publicly that UDI would be an act of defiance, rebellion and treason. This language and interpretation had not been heard locally before. By the end of the generally fruitless and one-sided exchanges he had tentatively agreed with Smith that a royal commission should be appointed to determine whether the Rhodesian people wanted independence under their

The British foreign secretary Michael Stewart went to the security council, where he achieved a 10-0 security council vote (France abstaining on the technical ground that it was an internal British matter), condemning UDI and calling on all member states to deny recognition or assistance to the illegal régime. On 14 November Sir Humphrey Gibb, the figurehead governor of Southern Rhodesia, refused to step down or to vacate government house, and on the ministerially advised order of Queen Elizabeth II dismissed Ian Smith as premier, who took no notice and appointed a Mr Dupont as 'officer administering the government' (OAG). Two days later the British government took powers to impose sanctions, with the object that economic hardship should force the emergence of a liberal alternative to Smith. On 20 November the security council again called on Britain by 10-0 to 'quell this rebellion of the racist minority', taking the view that the 1961 constitution had broken down, and the illegal decrees had destroyed all safeguards for the rule of law and human rights; but the substance of the resolution was a compromise which called for all nations to end their economic relations with Rhodesia, but for no military action beyond support of an economic boycott and oil embargo.

While Mr Wilson was speaking optimistically of the proposed petrol and oil embargo causing the rebellion to end in weeks rather than months, a token squadron of British jet planes arrived at Ndola in answer to Zambia's request for protection of the Kariba dam, but it stayed on the Zambian side of the border. Wilson's diplomatic efforts behind the scenes had clearly failed to persuade African Commonwealth leaders of the logistical impracticability of a direct military attack, let alone of his own internal political or external economic obstacles. On 3 December the OAU foreign ministers, at an emergency council of ministers in Addis Ababa, threatened a mass break with Britain if the UDI were not ended by 15 December. Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia also spoke of leaving the Commonwealth. This unrealistic deadline, although set by the second eleven who still mistakenly pictured Britain as a great power, wrecked the OAU's chances of exerting moral or diplomatic pressure on British public opinion. Nuhu Bamalli had been particularly outspoken and committed to a break in relations in his first conference as substantive foreign minister, but Alhaji Sir Abubakar felt that such a boycott could only indirectly benefit the Rhodesians, and would not endorse his minister's words; he commented out loud in implicit reproof that a severance of diplomatic relations with Britain would have far-reaching implications for his own country, and was *'unlikely to achieve the objects which we all so fervently desire'*. In private Abubakar was very angry, and said that there would be no such thing. One or two other heads of government were also less enthusiastic than their mouthpieces in Addis Ababa. Britain's shadow foreign minister Douglas-Home suggested four principles for a speedy return to constitutionality and ultimate majority rule, which the Westminster government accepted.

On 16 December Wilson asked the UN general assembly for more time and patience, and for members to support Britain's economic and financial sanctions to the hilt while rejecting the use of force; 24 African delegations walked out. Immediately afterwards Britain's oil embargo took effect, which caused a split among the country's right-wing politicians, although they had broadly agreed that the UDI was illegal. Rhodesia took measures to redirect its trade to South Africa, to raise export duties on coke and coal, and to ban exports or transit of oil to Zambia. In the event the African FM's resolution, although announced by Diallo Telli as a formal decision, was effectively repudiated by the majority of African states through subsequent

lack of implementation. There was no preparation behind the scenes for such meetings, called at short notice, of delegates who arrived unequipped with particular mandates, and who lacked immediate and reliable communications with their home capitals; neutral powers were hard to find who were keen to take over the interests of a whole group of countries suddenly unrepresented in a major capital, particularly while day-to-day commercial business and consular interest in students were continuing as amicably as ever. It was true that Ghana was still talking of leaving the Commonwealth outright, and that Tanzania was showing signs of closing its London high commission, but President Kenneth Kaunda had quickly written to other heads of African states explaining his own practical difficulties with an economy closely bonded to Southern Rhodesia's. Nigeria's high commissioner in London Alhaji Abdulmaliki Atta from Okene was fortuitously on home leave and delayed his return to his post, but no other African embassy received any instructions to prepare for closure, even those whose governments had made the formal declaration. Alhaji Nuhu had returned to Lagos still enthusiastic for a Nigerian break-off, but his prime minister took no notice, beyond rebuking Nuhu strongly for running with the pack, and trusting that the new responsibility for all of the external affairs files would curb his single-mindedness.

The Commonwealth parliamentary association (CPA) was meeting at Wellington in New Zealand, where the substance of the discussions was also concentrated on attacking Rhodesia and the foreign country of South Africa. Shehu Shagari and Isa Kaita were involved, and Alhaji Shehu as leader of the Nigerians made a hurtful attack on Wilson for allowing UDI to happen, and on Emmanuel Shinwell, leader of the British delegation, for 'not taking the conference seriously'. Shinwell spoke in return about a tissue of clichés, platitudes and irrelevances, but Shagari insisted that Africans conceded to the white settlers the right to reap the fruits of their labour, but not to deny to others their rights to existence, fundamental freedoms and liberties. Others to speak up at home included Chief Akintola at the December Ibadan legislative meeting, where he also attacked Britain, said that as a member of the Commonwealth he was ashamed, and that troops from the Commonwealth should man the Rhodesian frontiers in order to make the sanctions effective; and the Sardauna, who said that he would assist the British if it became necessary to use force to crush the rebellion.

In the circumstances of Africa's vacillation and Mr Wilson's discomfiture, Alhaji Sir Abubakar's initiative was timely and face-saving all round, for all his domestic anxieties. He had signalled his intention of proposing a Commonwealth round table to Wilson with some urgency, and had received an ambiguous telegraphic reply which Cumming-Bruce had not discouraged him from interpreting as favourable to such a conference. He endured a fraught scheduled flight on 13 December which was diverted by fog to Frankfurt, with thwarted attempts to land at Heathrow and a final landfall at Manchester after eleven hours of flying. Dinner at No 10 was cancelled but he arrived by road from the north in time to have a late night talk. The British high commissioner had been called back to join the talks, and taken advantage of the first class air accommodation to encourage Abubakar further to accept Wilson as 'not so bad'. British officials were hopeful that in spite of his known preference for an overwhelming and therefore bloodless military intervention, the Nigerian prime minister's purpose was to forestall the embarrassing OAU Addis Ababa severance of all relations, scheduled for 16 December; certainly for Nigeria to

fall in line would devastate the flow of vital British technical assistance to the west coast. They were dumbfounded to hear that he had already invited all the other Commonwealth countries to Lagos for about 11 January, including those which might by that date have left the Commonwealth or refused to have further formal relations with Britain; but that he was willing to accept London as the venue if this was generally preferred. The British prime minister, who had never intended his telegram to be read positively, was infuriated at being finessed.

First reactions were not propitious, encapsulated in Wilson's condescending aside, 'If everyone is prepared to discuss problems in a constructive way, I might look in'. Nkrumah was known to be opposed to any Commonwealth summit held away from London (if he were still a member) and did not believe anything would be gained anyway. Unattributable British spokesmen said that they were not prepared to be 'put in the dock'. Malaysia let it be known that it wished to host the conference in Kuala Lumpur, and Lal Bahadur Shastri reminded everyone that he had an appointment in Tashkent with Ayub Khan. In the end, despite British reservations, and his own public reaction which was restricted to ostentatiously neutral sympathy with the proposal, Wilson agreed to be guided by the other Commonwealth leaders' formal responses. He knew that many of his own Labour supporters would be alienated by too great severity towards the white Rhodesians, and that the Conservatives' new leader Edward Heath would argue strongly for more use of diplomatic persuasion and encouragement of Rhodesia's politicians back to the roads of moderation and planned constitutional development. Wilson flew off to Ottawa, where the prime minister of Canada Lester Pearson shared his lack of enthusiasm but made the point that to turn Abubakar's bid down would only aggravate ill feelings in the commonwealth still further. However Robert Menzies in Australia said such a conference would have disastrous results.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar thought his nocturnal talk with the British prime minister had been successful, and on 14 December he had breakfast with Sir Alec Douglas-Home, was received by the Queen, and had a visit from Mr Arthur Bottomley. He was infuriated by one reporter who wondered whether Nigeria was calling the conference just to spite Ghana in some way: '*We don't work like that!*' Before being flown home in an RAF transport command *Comet* he said that despite President Nyerere's final decision to quit, which had just been announced, he still did not think Nigeria would break off relations; and in Lagos he told the familiar welcoming crowd that he was almost certain that the Commonwealth would meet in Lagos on 10 January, and would deal effectively with Rhodesia in a Commonwealth context. Mr Wilson, he claimed, had reassured him and heightened his hopes; but he was himself still convinced that economic sanctions alone could not solve the problem. The *Daily Times* called him 'a knight in shining armour stepping in to confront his dithering counterpart'. As Rhodesia introduced rationing of petrol and diesel fuel, calls were heard for another hasty emergency OAU conference, this time of heads of state. Abubakar demurred that he was considering it, and did later agree to add Nigeria's name to those willing to meet on 19 January; but his hopes rested for the present with Mr Gooneratne, Arnold Smith's deputy, who had flown out from London to organize the Commonwealth conference in co-operation with the minister of state for commonwealth affairs, Senator Dan Ibekwe, and the Lagos external affairs ministry staff. Dr Azikiwe was heard from Barbados to say that he felt sorry for Mr Wilson on his tightrope and would not like to be in his shoes. Abubakar, however, told Isa Kaita, during their day together on the

Bauchi farm before wishing the Sardauna godspeed on his way to the 'umrah' that he 'really could relax, in view of the commonwealth conference' which he had called.

By the new year twenty of the 22 independent Commonwealth governments had accepted, although President Nyerere was also expected to break his promise made personally to Alhaji Sir Abubakar. Sir Robert Menzies had confirmed his refusal with the further remark that the meeting would only record and emphasize their differences, although the Australian high commissioner in Lagos might attend as an observer. President Nkrumah's intended absence had been more than adequately signalled. Trinidad was also doubtful. The further doubt cast on what some were disparaging as the 'little' conference of Commonwealth ministers arose from the probable level of participation. Prime Minister Harold Wilson did not decide whether or not to go in person or to delegate to Mr Bottomley until a day or two into January; but in the event prime ministers Abubakar, Wilson, Lester Pearson, Sir Dauda Jawara of The Gambia, Dr Hastings Banda of Malawi, Dr Borg Olivier of Malta, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, Sir Albert Margai of Sierra Leone and Dr Milton Obote of Uganda were all to be present, reinforced by President Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, acting prime minister of Jamaica Donald Sangster, vice-president of Zambia Mr Kamanga and Ceylon's minister of justice. India's minister of law and social security, Kenya's minister of finance, Malaysia's deputy prime minister, New Zealand's high commissioner in London, Pakistan's high commissioner in Lagos and Trinidad and Tobago's deputy prime minister.

Britain's permanent under-secretary of state for commonwealth affairs, Sir Savile (better known as 'Joe') Garner, came back to Nigeria a week before the conference to make straight the way for his masters in facing an agenda with a single item. The Federal Palace hotel had been cleared of its usual guests, its ballroom turned into a conference centre, and the international casino which Abubakar disliked closed, to allow the building to be equipped with the highest degree of security that Nigeria had yet known. Even the press were barred without invitation and vetting. Alhaji Sir Abubakar himself prepared to move into the Israeli-managed hotel, built by Leventis, so that as chairman he might greet each arrival and be available to every guest throughout the stay: 'Nigeria is convening the meeting in order to find a practical solution to the Rhodesian issue', he said bluntly, 'since Africa has admitted that the organization of African unity can't go there militarily to persuade Britain to change her present stand over the Rhodesian issue'. The problem was going to be that Commonwealth politicians, many of whom had matured in the belief that Britain's military brute force, as depicted in Victorian and Edwardian fiction, had created and maintained its imperial power, and that the setbacks of 1939 to 1942 were erased by allied victories in 1945, could not understand that in the 1960s Mr Wilson needed rather more than political will and a sabre to rattle to transfer effective responsibility in Salisbury, even if he had decided to whom. The level of understanding was shown by the brash comments that if the RAF could airlift troops to Aden and Mauritius, and was even about to fly Dr Hastings Banda from Blantyre to Lagos, it could do the same to Rhodesia. The most that Wilson could hope for was to persuade his peers that a practical time limit might be set for sanctions to take effect, with a non-committal promise in reserve to consider ultimate force followed by a period of direct rule until majority rule was possible. He arrived in Lagos ready to face a suspicious summit willing for its part to be convinced but not to accept equivocation; but he was less well prepared for an ill-disciplined press grilling in the humid discomfort of the

international airport, and was disconcerted to see that soldiers and policemen guarding the airport road had their backs to the car and were facing the crowds at every point. Alhaji Sir Abubakar accompanied him on the sticky drive to the closely guarded hotel, late night hordes thronging the streets, but occasional shots of gunfire offering a distant obligato in the western background.

The conference opened nervously on 11 January as the local papers reported fresh communal clashes in Ilesha. Alhaji Sir Abubakar and Mr Harold Wilson led the delegates into the ballroom, accompanied by Mr Arthur Bottomley. After two minutes' silence in memory of Mr Shastri, the Nigerian prime minister confidently welcomed his guests, gathered *'to discuss a major problem which has not only assumed global proportions, but is threatening to create a division within our cherished commonwealth organization. . . . Although a few friends and colleagues are not at the meeting, everybody nonetheless has one objective, the speedy solution of the Rhodesian crisis'*. Thereafter he 'controlled the conference with the unforced dignity of a man in a customary rôle, rather than as the first African ever to preside over such a gathering', to quote an onlooker. He was followed by Mr Lester Pearson, Canada being the oldest dominion of the commonwealth, whom many regarded as an obvious mediator, and Mr Lee Kuan Yew speaking for the newest member state. Abubakar then delivered the keynote speech, pointing out in a review of the present situation that their task was not only to find a way of crushing the illegal régime but also more emphatically to consider the right long-term solution for the future of the territory. Although the desire of the African people, the commonwealth and the united nations was to ensure an African majority rule in Southern Rhodesia, it would be unwise to neglect the fear of the white majority in the country; the earlier the racists were made to know about their future, the sooner would the rebellion end. After Smith's defeat, the release of all nationalists and a conference, the 1961 constitution should be abrogated and give way to a period of direct rule under which the police, armed forces, judiciary and civil service should to a large measure revert to control by the British, with appointed executive and legislative councils, of all races, presided over by the governor. His present skills and his vision of a Rhodesian future had both been acquired in the old council of ministers' chamber, observing two Scots governors.

Wilson stated Britain's position in a massive review of his policy to bring down the Smith régime. He insisted that the problem was Britain's responsibility alone, not a matter for other organizations, that economic sanctions had already cut Rhodesia's inward and outward trade by half, that the oil embargo was proving more successful than he could have hoped, and that given time sanctions would work. Further than that he would not go, and sat down to hear the same predictable messages of condemnation in the restricted session confined to the leaders (who were supported by three colleagues each from Britain, Nigeria and Zambia, and two each from the others), uttered from Asia, the Caribbean and Cyprus. The Africans in particular, he later wrote, sought one after another 'to prove how much more African each was than his neighbours'. Zambia thought there would be no resistance. Canada suggested that if sanctions failed, the UN should be invited to step in and impose mandatory world sanctions. Wilson felt that Britain was again, as before the UN a month before, 'in the dock', with the difference that most of the Lagos prosecution were their countries' principals, rather than remote plenipotentiaries voicing other persons' opinions. He was impressed, if not encouraged, by the sophisticated quality of a 40-minute extempore speech by Lee Kuan Yew, equal in substance to any world leader's

that he had heard and displaying an awareness of 'what the modern world was really about'.

But Sir Albert Margai, always expected to be, together with Dr Milton Obote, the most excitable likely contributor, raised the temperature by demanding that Britain should go much farther, and setting out an aggressive case for military intervention. This was welcomed particularly by members with their own vivid pictures of subversion being crushed and imprisonment suffered under British rule, and still unable to distinguish the military potential in the Rhodesian colonial situation from their own recent past. Sir Albert's speech and supporting memorandum insisted that mere economic sanctions were not enough and that if Britain persisted in refusing to crush the illegal régime by force, Sierra Leone would demand that under article 42 of the charter the UN should use force for the successful imposition of sanctions. Margai was beginning to lose the overall support of his countrymen, whether despite or because of his growing friendship for Sékou Touré and Nkrumah, and was looking further afield than Freetown or Lagos for effect. Supposing presciently that this speech was already in the hands of the world press and would be reported the next day, Wilson passed a note to Abubakar asking for a right of immediate reply, which would not however receive immediate headlines. The press concluded indeed that Margai had guaranteed a deadlock and perhaps a humiliating end of the commonwealth.

The British prime minister launched into an unscripted 25-minute house of commons politician's attack, concentrating sharply on the Sierra Leonean's lack of military understanding rather than on his own political weakness at home: Britain's difficulties were simply not widely appreciated - at least 25,000 combatant troops would be necessary for a successful invasion across the Zambezi river against a resistant Rhodesian army, which was well trained and equipped to British standards: 'If you were commander-in-chief of an invasion force, could you give us the date when you could overthrow the Smith régime? Could this be done without thousands of Africans being killed, and the Kariba dam being destroyed?' Sanctions would work, he adamantly asserted, and within a short time he would expect a recognition of this fact from Sir Albert. Although Alhaji Sir Abubakar, no less than the other leaders (and indeed Canada had been the first to broach article 42), was still prepared to approve of force if there were no alternative, the other contributions became milder, Tun Abdul Razak of Malaysia insisting on 'contingency planning'. Dr Obote thought that force would probably still have to be used, but although he objected to Britain treating the commonwealth as a consultative assembly in which she had the status of a country and the other members had the status of mere provinces, he finally fell in line with Mr James Gichuru of Kenya in taking an interim moderate stand. Wilson and Margai remained on Christian name terms, for all their cutting exchanges.

This did not mean that there was yet agreement, and there were references to 'walking out'. On the second day Dr Banda delivered a very long philosophical and historical survey, apparently in support of Wilson, which the chairman felt impelled to cut short before the Malawian's thoughts had progressed as far forward as the 1930s. By the tea-time interval the contributions were still not leading to a consensus, although the efficient secretarial arrangements of the secretary-general Arnold Smith and the Nigerian cabinet office were receiving praise. Harold Wilson proposed an adjournment for delegations to confer, after which to avoid playing to the gallery delegation heads should reconvene with only one supportive observer each. Mr Malcolm MacDonald, Britain's itinerant diplomat in Africa, saw no hope of a rapprochement, but after an hour the

smaller restricted group had agreed to Britain's broad terms, subject to drafting of a communiqué. The Indian minister had left for home to mourn his prime minister. The drafting required three efforts from the secretariat to secure exact wording acceptable to the plenary: should 'use of force' or 'qualified use of force' be precluded or not 'at an appropriate stage', whatever that might mean, in the economic war against Rhodesia?

The final unanimous six-page communiqué was at last issued at 11.15 *pm* by Arnold Smith, with one reservation by Dr Borg Olivier for whom the expression 'direct rule' by Britain after putting down the rebellion was distasteful (he had great sympathy with Ian Smith, whom he saw as a companion David fighting the Whitehall Goliath). After a tribute to the late Mr Shastri, it was noted that this was the first such conference to be held in Africa, and that the delegations had agreed to assemble from time to time in a different Commonwealth capital, to underline the essential character of the Commonwealth as a free association of equal nations, spanning all races and continents. They had discussed three aspects of the Rhodesian problem – the ending of the rebellion, the need for co-operation with and assistance to Zambia, and the future of Rhodesia under constitutional rule. The prime ministers reaffirmed that the authority and responsibility for guiding Rhodesia to independence rested with Britain, but acknowledged that the problem was of wider concern to Africa, the Commonwealth and the world. The Commonwealth objectives were that the rebellion must be brought to an end, political detainees must be released, political activities should be constitutional and free from intimidation from any quarter, and repressive and discriminatory laws should be repealed, because the imposition of discriminatory conditions of a political, social, economic and educational nature upon the majority by any minority for the benefit of a privileged few was an outrageous violation of the fundamental principles of human rights. The prime ministers noted the statement of the British government that a period of direct rule would be needed, leading to the holding of a constitutional conference, representing all sections of the Rhodesian people, which would be for the purpose of recommending a constitution leading to majority rule on a basis acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.

Having reviewed and noted the measures taken against the illegal régime, some expressed concern that the steps taken so far had not resulted in its removal. They had discussed the question of the use of military force, and it was accepted that its use could not be precluded, if this proved necessary to restore law and order. In this connexion the prime ministers noted the statement by the British prime minister that, on the expert advice available to him, the cumulative effects of the economic and financial sanctions might well bring the rebellion to an end within a matter of weeks rather than months. While some had misgivings in this regard, all expressed the hope that these measures would result in the overthrow of the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia within the period mentioned by the British prime minister.

The prime ministers decided on the following measures of commonwealth action:

1. To appoint two continuing committees, composed of representatives of all commonwealth countries, to meet with the secretary-general in London. The first would review regularly the effect of sanctions, and also the special needs which might from time to time arise in honouring the Commonwealth's undertaking to come to the support of Zambia

- as required; the second would co-ordinate a special commonwealth programme of assistance in training Rhodesian Africans as set out below.
2. The sanctions committee would recommend the reconvening of the prime ministers' meeting when they judged that this was necessary. In any case the prime ministers agreed to meet again in July 1966 if the rebellion had not been ended before then.
 3. The sanctions committee would advise the prime ministers if it considered that action by the United Nations was called for.
 4. Some prime ministers indicated that they reserved the right, if need arose to propose mandatory United Nations action under articles 41 or 42 of chapter VII of the charter. This statement was noted by the other heads of government.

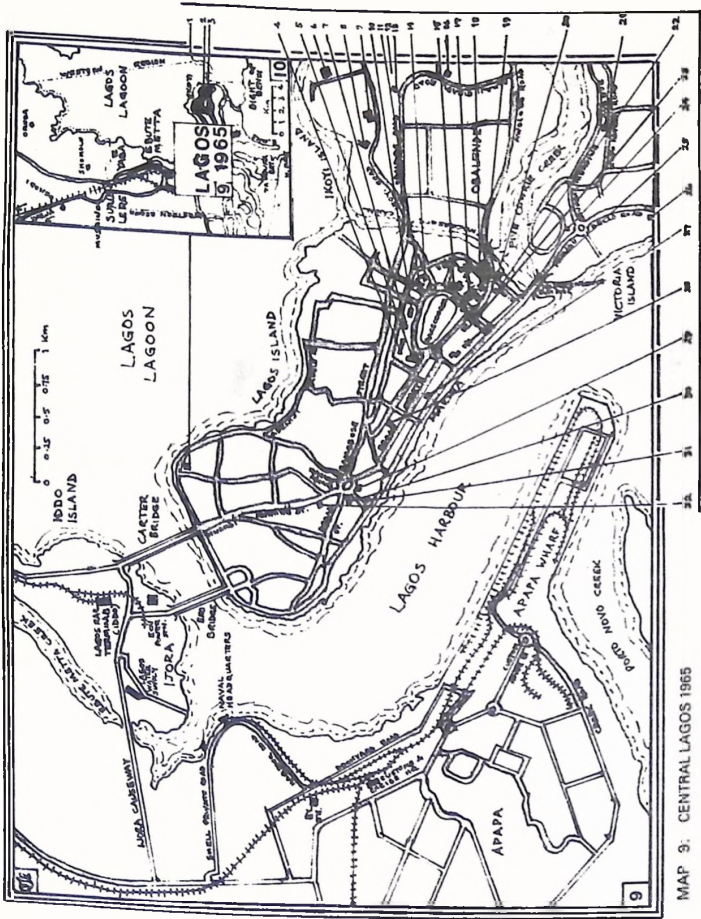
They were agreed that planned assistance to a lawfully constituted government of Rhodesia should begin at once; they therefore approved the establishment of a special Commonwealth programme to help to accelerate the training of Rhodesian Africans and the early establishment of an administrative training centre in Rhodesia; and asked the secretary-general to call a meeting of educational and technical assistance experts as soon as possible to this end. The prime ministers, having effectively rejected earlier continental demands for the use of armed enforcement for the foreseeable future, finally 'expressed the hope that a just solution to the Rhodesian question would light a ray of hope for men and women of all races throughout the world for the future, giving assurance of greater harmony between nations and recognition to the dignity of man'. Lester Pearson gilded the lily of euphoric relief by saying that he had come knowing that it would be difficult and have unfortunate consequences if it ended in division: 'That danger has been averted and the Commonwealth, in agreeing to set up this machinery, has shown once again its capacity to adapt itself to new situations, and confirmed its value in a multi-racial situation'.

It was not the Canadians, but the Nigerian, who had made it possible. Mr Wilson, speaking on behalf of his colleagues and himself 'as the only British prime minister who had attended a commonwealth conference other than as chairman', presented a silver salver to 'our highly successful chairman'. As they dispersed (Archbishop Makarios to Enugu for an eastern regional tour), Alhaji Sir Abubakar insisted on escorting Wilson back to his chartered VC-10 at Ikeja, for take-off only an hour later to Lusaka since Wilson had promised to return home by way of Zambia. Turning off the trunk road into the airport to the accompaniment of more rifle fire, Abubakar said to him, 'You have a great future as prime minister of our mother country, you are fortunate. One thing only I wish for you, that you never have to become prime minister of a federal and divided country'. Wilson told the press that the conference had been a very great success, and a great triumph for Sir Abubakar, despite all the critics who had been gloomy about its prospects. Privately he was disconcerted to have found himself in the middle of a country whose stability seemed to be under threat, and later found it hard to accept that no coup would ever have happened while he and his Commonwealth peers were still there. The attractive but improbable story has spread that Mr Wilson invited Alhaji Sir Abubakar to come away with him to escape from the country's troubles on a holiday together; the hint that was not pressed home was that the two might have supported each other in Zambian arguments. Although never admitted, the more realistic belief has survived unshakably that the royal naval assault

carrier HMS *Fearless* had been stationed in international waters off Lagos throughout the conference, ready to protect the prime minister's security. Where the public enjoyed the titillation of rumours reporting possible coups and counter-coups, take-overs and pre-emptive strikes, the private world of intelligence had unavoidably been busy. The vessel was certainly there, but militarily useless to intervene in terrestrial disorder; its purpose was no more than to be a reliable communications centre for the British prime minister, its aggressive potential being for any local circumstance minimal.

In 'the final interview' on 14 January Alhaji Sir Abubakar agreed that he had put more emphasis on the future after the rebellion was ended, and that a time limit could not be set for the achievement of majority rule: *'British rule in Rhodesia should be exactly as it has been for former British colonial territories who have achieved independence - though it needn't take so long as it did for us. But there must be time for Africans to be trained and to gain experience, . . . not just the politicians but the civil servants as well, and there must be time for the whites to get used to the idea of majority rule. What you need is to arrive at the time when both sides can say that, after all, it's not too bad. For this, the existence of the whites will have to be recognized - and majority rule assured. I think it can be done, and probably much quicker than before. Really, you know, UDI was a blessing for Africans; Mr Smith was really very foolish.'*

It was not the Nigerian's failing that Rhodesia did not return to legality, as the republic of Zimbabwe, for another fourteen years. His government immediately and generously agreed that five railway locomotives ordered urgently from AEI in Britain for its groundnut export needs should be sent to Zambia instead, and that British Leyland's Lagos agents BEWAC should alter sixty lorry chassis in stock into oil-carriers for re-export to Zambia the next week. Kaunda sent a letter of gratitude, while Mr Bottomley cancelled his intention to return home by way of Rhodesia to see the lonely governor Gibb, Ian Smith having imposed unacceptable conditions. What else might have followed can only be speculated, for the crest of the wave was about to break. On 13 January, the day before the house of representatives failed for want of a quorum, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh reacted to the question why the Rhodesian crisis had not been selected for debate with, 'We are even in a better position to discuss it now, because of the great success of the conference of the Commonwealth prime ministers held in Lagos'. Abubakar had early that morning returned to his official home from the Federal Palace Hotel.



MAP 9: CENTRAL LAGOS 1965

MAP 10: LAGOS FEDERAL TERRITORY

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|--------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Oba's Palace | 9 | Ministry of Labour | 17 | House of Representatives | 25 | State House (Old GH) |
| 2 | Ikoyi Hotel | 10 | Lagos High Court | 18 | National Museum | 26 | Federal Palace Hotel |
| 3 | Ikoyi Club | 11 | Ministry of Works | 19 | Yoruba Tennis Club | 27 | Old Secretariat |
| 4 | King's College | 12 | Dodan Barracks | 20 | Prime Minister's Lodge | 28 | Ministry of Health |
| 5 | Independence House | 13 | (New) State House | 21 | Nig. Ins. of Internat. Affairs | 29 | Ministry of Finance |
| 6 | State House | 14 | State Office | 22 | Tennis Courts | 30 | Central Bank |
| 7 | Federal Supreme Court | 15 | Senate | 23 | Tennis Courts | 31 | Ministry of Defence |
| | | | | | | 32 | Radio Nigeria |

49 His Brutal End: 'Good makes for Unity, Evil for Separateness'

Da alheri, da mugunta, ba a mancewa da su

Happiness for Nigerians was Abubakar's purpose in all his political life; often voiced, publicly and privately. Too much of this narrative has had to tell of unhappy events, disappointed ambitions and rival searches for power, for a reader who may be a stranger to Nigeria to be able to draw out of it a truthful vision of ordinary Nigerians' lives. Too many of the participants have not been typical of the common men, and some of the tribal leaders were not always typical of the peoples they headed. Every ethnic group is composed of religiously minded people; but because they are given to lively social exchanges about the links between individuals, families and peoples, castes and callings, they are also politically minded. An easy error of full-time politicians, and of the academics, journalists and historians who study such people and their institutions, is to forget that the common man allots by far the largest part of his waking life to thoughts and pursuits which only crazed bigots relate to partisan politics. Even if most Nigerians had become contemptuous of many of the politicians whom they nonetheless had elected, the majority were not jealous of those successful men who had made money and gathered clients. Sceptical they may have been of ministers' promises and MPs' motives, but most did not mind that their government put up with the excesses of zestful domestic panjandrum or found other allies besides revolutionary foreign régimes.

All would prefer to avoid violence but their past history was full of violence, and its use by others was, however shocking, never wholly unexpected. As much as that of the Chinese, the ordinary man's instinct was to keep out of the eye of authority, to obey its whims when unavoidable, and to pursue private life undisturbed once the caravan of authority had moved on to trouble others. Their contempt had grown because the emergent political class might understand how to juggle with artificial programmed institutions, but had as a whole lost touch with the dynamics of daily life – what did they know of classroom practice, crop management, water supplies, what to do about disease, or how to keep the market moving in the common man's world? In nearing the tragic conclusion to an honourable life, the alien reader must remember that even in the rarefied settings of national or international establishments, Abubakar had never forgotten that the people he served found their own rewards from life in their families, their worship, their song and dance, their enjoyment of the earth's fruits, their talent for finding laughter and amusement in improbable discoveries and the absurdities of mankind overreaching itself, in the northerners' and westerners' cultural affinity to business, and the easterners' fascination for the professions. His hope had always been to minimize the

chances for authoritative institutions to interfere with people's godly happiness. He would have understood E F Schumacher's report of the frustrated American technical assistant who said, 'I can't do a thing with these Burmese, they're too ----- happy'.

The last three chapters have each looked at the same period of time, in different perspectives. This final chapter covers the same span. Some patient readers may still be doggedly disposed to disparage Alhaji Sir Abubakar as a decent man, but weak and out of his depth. Judge rather the decency, the strength of character, and the capacity not to sink of each one of his political supporters - and also of each of those rivals who were primarily intent on their own political dominance. Very few of his cabinet colleagues, and nor of his opponents, had had to concentrate their minds and energies on all these kaleidoscopic puzzles consistently and for so long. A few of his non-partisan professional friends and civil servants shared his breadth of vision, probably his deeper intellects, but lacked the sense of authority. Many have asked, 'Why did Abubakar not do such-and-such?' Not one went to him at the time to say, 'Take this specific action against so-and-so, whatever others may advise, and we stand foursquare and publicly with you'. When a handful of apparent pigmy picked up the little siege engines ready to hand, the country's divided giant toppled at once; the protective castles they had built around themselves were on a canvas, they had spurned the unity which the chief victim alone symbolized, a unity which would have given to them all (and to the peoples they claimed to lead) the strength to defend peace and stability in a nation where winners would not take all.

It is still not possible for anyone, let alone an outsider, to record categorically the final events of this story. What follows seems to be the most logical assembly of what has been published and included in the bibliography, of what contemporaries have told the writer concerning the prime minister's disgraceful and unmerited fate. If it induces the emergence from concealment of factual evidence in correction, the labour will have been worthwhile at a time when second world war criminals are still being pursued. No attempt has been made to elaborate beyond the outlines of the crimes and happenings elsewhere than in Lagos during the conspiracy and its aftermath; they also have been the object of many conflicting accounts. Hausa speakers say, '*Mutuwa mai ton ton* [Death, the unearther of secrets]!' Many secrets have yet to be unearthed that Nigeria's honour may be purged.

The plotters described in chapter 46 had begun to define their precise objectives, with the help of their anonymous plain clothes consultants, including a member of the foreign service, and (so it was subsequently, but probably, alleged in parts of the north) even of Israeli money. Chosen members of trusted military units would be led to arrest the prime minister and politicians in each of the federation's five seats of government; any who refused would be shot; the key tactical points, long identified in every draft emergency scheme since colonial times, would be taken over by men who would be allowed to assume it to be a routine army exercise - broadcasting stations and transmitters, telephone exchanges, public utilities and police control posts; armoured troops would seize the Niger and Benue crossings at Zaria and Makurdi, to prevent loyalist movements north or south; and those army officers who might be able and willing to thwart the mutiny should be liquidated. The rebels would then assume the government of the country, and was where the objectives remained ill-defined.

In early November the seven met in Ifeajuna's Lagos home to refine the details, while building up their whispered crescendo of political self-justifications – the disillusion of the educated with interventions by ministerial cliques in the courts, the census, the elections, the police and the armed services, the spread of corruption into the public services, the embezzlements, the tribalism. To their original list for arrest they added the federal minister of finance, and other Lagos ministers: K O Mbadiwe, Jaja Wachuku, Inuwa Wada, Shehu Shagari, Dr Elias, Ayo Rosiji, Dr Majekodunmi, Matthew Mbu, Richard Akinjide, and Waziri Alhaji Ibrahim who was seen as the demon responsible for the original census disaster; lesser politicians would provisionally be kept under house detention, but Fani-Kayode in Ibadan, and the respected Aliyu makama of Bida and governor Sir Kashim Ibrahim in Kaduna, were also pencilled in, as well as the Sardauna's secretary Ali Afilu, blamed by Nzeogwu for encouraging unnecessary killings of Tiv in the Benue troubles.

They recognized that in their own service there was no love lost between Aguiyi-Ironsi and Ademulegun, or between Aguiyi-Ironsi and Maimalari, and that jealousy was supposed to subsist among non-graduates like Aguiyi-Ironsi, Ademulegun, Pam and Gowon, of Ojukwu, a friend of the president, and other 'university boys'. They then identified their own seniors for outright assassination: Brigadier Zakari Maimalari of 2 brigade; Colonel Kur Mohammed, the amiable but self-indulgent chief of army staff designate; Lt-col Yakubu Pam, adjutant-general, and his friend (the only non-northerner in the Lagos list) Lt-col Arthur Unegbe, quartermaster-general; Lt-col Abogo Largema, OC 4NA in Ibadan; and Brigadier Sam Ademulegun of 1 brigade and Colonel Ralph Shodeinde of the training college, both in Kaduna. Major-general Aguiyi-Ironsi, Brigadier Baba Ogundipe (chief of staff, defence forces), the four non-northerners among the five battalion commanders, David Ejoor of 1NA in Enugu, Hilary Njoku of 2NA in Ikeja and Abeokuta, George T Kurubo of 3NA in Kaduna and Chukwuemeka O Ojukwu of 5NA in Kano, were to be spared on various assumptions. Yakubu Gowon might well have been on the preliminary list had he not been absent abroad, and the intended fate of Hassan Katsina seems uncertain at this stage. The basic assumption was that survivors would join the victors. Working very roughly on the existing division of Nigeria into two brigade structures, the mutineers allocated action in the north under operation *Damisa* [leopard] to Nzeogwu, and in the south under operation *New Wash* to Ifeajuna, with a minor rôle in Ibadan for Captain Nwobosi from Abeokuta, known to be sympathetic since 1964, but only recruited into the plot and briefed at the very last minute. Once H-hour was fixed, *ad hoc* arrangements would see to any other actions necessary to render the mutiny countrywide even where they thought that opposition was improbable.

They spoke like general staff officers of three 'phases': the detailed staffwork and TEWT-like rehearsal (an officers' 'tactical exercise without troops'); the actual mutiny and the mopping up; and the consequent reorganization and assumption of government. The latter remained hazy as ever; although some favoured despatching a Captain Udeaja to Calabar to bring Chief Awolowo back to head a subordinate but progressive administration, others including Nzeogwu disagreed with that; and there was an unspoken consensus that their surviving senior officers might have to be presented with a *fait accompli*, which they should sympathetically take over. As the more brutal members were ready to shout down any opposition, but the more religious-minded preferred to think of taking hostages, spur-of-the-moment initiatives on the day became

inevitable. Memories of UPGA policies were however mentally rewritten, to be translated into the thoughts which lay behind some of the military government's decrees and circulars on unification and neutralization of existing establishments; but these were not to be issued until after this book closes, when soldiers and civil servants were to begin a short-lived reconstruction. Meanwhile what was planned for December was first postponed to early January, and then again till after the Commonwealth conference – ostensibly to avoid disgrace to Nigeria if any of the visitors should be hurt, but in fact because legitimate security measures would then be at their height.

The mutineers and their traitorous supporters or potential sympathizers were in effect encouraged by the recurrent suspicions and street rumours of threatened coups; these also proved useful later in supporting a wild apologetic tale that the mutiny had been set up to pre-empt a separate coup as well as to redeem the people from political degradation. This is not to say that no other plans existed: some Nigerians are still convinced that Brigadier Maimalari had ideas of his own, others cannot acquit greater people of having at least fingers in other pies. The federal chief justice had received one warning from Accra which the prime minister had been too preoccupied to acknowledge. Alha Abubakar Imam had heard both an Englishman from Enugu and an expatriate lady in the north express informed worries about alleged conspiracies; he wondered whether to warn Sir Kashim Ibrahim and the judiciary, but decided that it was wiser to steer clear of 'modern politics'. There was the contraband tale that the Sardauna, using the NNA, intended to force the prime minister to retire Aguiyi-Ironsi, or otherwise make the GOC's post available, so that Ademulegun might subdue UPGA by military means. Again, gossip had it that ministers' houses were to be destroyed, 11 January being the favourite date. The squib was relit that a riot might be organized in the east, to allow the council of ministers to move successfully in parliament for an emergency declaration which, as in the west, would end with the ruling party's deposit and the excision of another (fifth) region, and leaving NCNC as emasculated as AG in its home estate. What the federal NCNC ministers would have said this was lost sight of. The Sardauna and Akintola, some other tattlers (ignoring of where military control lay in constitutional reality) were saying, would laud the Kanuri Largema's 4NA in Ibadan against UPGA supporters in the west. Conversely, it was hinted that UPGA was backing some army malcontent to drive out the federal government and install Awolowo at the head of UPGA clique. This last was least far from the truth, but there was no jot even plausible hearsay evidence to support any of the rumours, which put plotters on guard to redouble their own secrecy, but meant that the outcome was to shock many but surprise few. A tale that Aguiyi-Ironsi had got word of events and wanted to fly with Stanley Wey to warn Alhaji Sir Abubakar Bauchi, but was dissuaded by Inuwa Wada who preferred to wait till the prime minister returned to Lagos, was later spread but always lacked any plausible movements of all significant politicians and senior army officers were carefully monitored by the inner circle, since official security measures based on 'need to know' principle were sliding in only too slovenly fashion into the 'to know' network between co-tribalists among the malcontents, army sig and civilian P&T.

The Sardauna's yearly visit to the holy places, the lesser pilgrimage 'urr which might be conducted at any time in the calendar, had been planned to take place during the fast month of *Ramadan*, between 23 December 1965 and

January 1966. It can hardly have escaped the plotters' assessments that a period when many of their targets were physically tired and some of them emotionally distracted, was a choice time to strike; anticipation of the 'operation *No Mercy*', outlined in Chapter 47 and itself deliberately delayed until the Rhodesian conference was over, was essential. Before the northern premier's party took off he undertook a tour of Sokoto, accompanied by the usual retinue. At Argungu they were caught up by the secretary to the premier Ali Afilu, who had brought with him an intelligence report of a plan to waylay the Sardauna; he advised their prompt return to Kaduna. The party insisted on carrying on, returned as planned to receive the farewell courtesies already mentioned, and left again on their *'umrah* on Tuesday 4 January. Before embarking at Kano the Sardauna was given a dubious letter in uneducated English, warning him that he himself and Akintola, indeed all the NNA hierarchy, were going to be killed; the provincial commissioner called it 'nonsense', and Sir Ahmadu Bello agreed, but he left it for his officials to investigate.

At the same time General Welby-Everard, recently knighted, had been officially invited back to Nigeria to attend the ceremonial inauguration of the now fully trained air force. His old permanent secretary at the defence ministry, Sule Kolo, hinted that he might also be helpful: 'You may have appreciated, Christopher, that all is not as it seems - ('Yes, Sule') - You have the freedom to go where you like, to your old units, on one condition - ('What's that?') - Before you go home, tell me what the atmosphere in the army is really like'. Welby-Everard duly went to the air force parade and speeches, but also visited many of his former soldiers around the country. He concluded that some uncertainty about the future generally hovered in the messes, but that the morale among the troops in the barrack rooms was good; he detected that something indefinable was going on behind the scenes, but he picked up no scent of an actual imminent mutiny. In Kaduna Major Nzeogwu was openly organizing an army exercise, *Damisa*, which seemed to his brigade headquarters quite a natural activity for a chief instructor.

On 11 January the northern premier's party left Saudi Arabia to come home, exalted by his privilege of having been given access to the Prophet's very tomb. At Kaduna on 13 January he was met by the prime minister, together with Sir Kashim Ibrahim and his relief as acting premier, the makama of Bida. They discussed the latest rumours and the letters that Brigadier Ademulegun had been writing to northern regional ministers by hand of the chief imam in Kaduna, giving impressive warning of signs of trouble, deduced from recent postings of senior officers, such as of Major Hassan Katsina (the emir's son who commanded the reconnaissance squadron) just about to be moved to Abeokuta, and of 'plum' jobs allegedly going to Igbos. However no convincing reason was seen to alter the timetable of existing intentions. Later embellishments that at this meeting the Sardauna had been told, but refused to believe, that the British prime minister had passed on British intelligence foretelling a mutiny, and had offered Alhaji Sir Abubakar safe custody in the high commission after leaving the Federal Palace hotel on 12 January, are to be taken with a heavy spoonful of salt; by 1966 British intelligence in Lagos knew no more than Nigeria's own loyal sources, and suffered from the same distortions by biased intermediaries. Nevertheless the Sardauna was seen to be in a state of foreboding, resignation exceeding depression, exacerbated by calls in the northern press that he should 'have a go' in the west.

That same day an unsuspecting Lt-colonel Jack Gowon disembarked at Apapa on his return from his staff college training in inter-service co-operation.

He had hoped to stay with James Pam, but the adjutant-general's house was full of family and guests; although Ifeajuna had had him booked into the Ikoyi hotel, he found a billet at 2NA's officers' mess in Ikeja, the unit of which he was to assume command, so to revive some tactical field experience after his staff appointments: he was the relief for Lt-col Hilary Njoku, who was posted to the 'plum' of commandant NMTC Kaduna. Brigadier Ademulegun was busy in Kaduna making ready to visit Ghana for more OAU discussions about an African high command, which might result in promotion for Aguiyi-Ironsi or himself, or both.

Next day, 14 January, the demoralized Chief Akintola chartered a plane without any warning to anyone, and flew up with Akinjide from Ibadan to Kaduna. He badly wanted reassurance that his senior NNA ally would continue to support him, although it is unlikely that he had been made privy to the imminence of *No Mercy* (that operation was undoubtedly at the heart of a contemporaneous high level security conference of senior officers in Lagos). Akintola found his host unprepared on a hot northern *azumi* [fast], with the Sardauna attending Friday mosque. A Christian minister, Michael Audu Buba, took him from the airport and eventually he met Sir Ahmadu Bello, Isa Kaita and Ahman Pategi. Lt-col Largema of 4NA in Ibadan seems to have been present also, as a friend. Akintola insisted that the army must quell his opponents at once, since his own people had lost three hundred lives already and could be restrained no longer; that the stories of a take-over with the help of certain military elements were serious; and that the Sardauna should come away with him at once, presumably to bestir the prime minister and Lagos authorities. He was virtually ignored, the northern premier beginning to show disinterest in the whole affair, although he was promised that Alhaji Sir Abubakar would be informed of what he had to say; but even while reboarding his aircraft for Ibadan later in the afternoon in despair he turned back to Alhaji Sir Ahmadu, crying, 'I tell you that to-day they are going to kill us'. The prime minister, his lips buttoned by the need for secrecy, found it easiest to respond to casual inquiries later in the day that Akintola had only been crying 'Wolf! wolf! wolf!' yet again. The western premier told his wife to go to Ogbomosho, where he usually spent the week-end himself, to prepare to receive Emperor Haile Selassie on a private visit after the conference.

Also on 14 January John Smith, the director of the north's staff development centre, who had been deputy secretary to the premier and was better informed than any other remaining expatriate, went with James O'Connell, the editor of *Nigerian Opinion* from Ibadan university, to see the regional commissioner of police, M D Yusufu, at Kaduna. They told him of their moral certainty that there would be a coup within weeks if the government did not co-ordinate action to take hold of the country (and incidentally remove Akintola). He agreed with their assessment, but reminded them of how resistant the Sardauna now was to any practical initiative of such a sort. They accepted that Yusufu would make another effort, and O'Connell drove off to Zaria, passing through troops equipped for exercise *Damisa*.

A northern army field officer flew down to Lagos, popularly supposed to have been sent to put Aguiyi-Ironsi on alert. Kaduna was warned to expect a federal junior minister (Ahmadu Ribadu), bearing the prime minister's draft speech on action in the western region and the timetable for the army's operation, but since these were not yet complete, the Sardauna never received them. Stories abound to suggest that the Sardauna, so far from losing the 'ruthless blitz' on the western UPGA that he had no power to authorize but was suspected

by gossips of preparing, was by now submissively expecting the worst; but the element that strangers to northern Nigeria find most bizarre is that, with the air full of alarm and despondency, the British tradition of 'week-end' prevailed. Further discussion, prevention, action, all was left to be resumed on Monday morning, 17 January, while the observant Major Nzeogwu deduced that his comrades' cat was out of the bag, and time was now of the essence.

In Lagos the house of representatives meeting had fizzled out after hearing a government business statement, nothing else being on the order paper. Alhaji Sir Abubakar went out to Ikeja international airport with Dr Elias for a final VIP farewell to the last of the Commonwealth visitors. Dr Elias had just had a letter from the exiled Dr Kofi Busia of Ghana, warning him that Nkrumah's opponents had detected signs of an imminent revolt in Nigeria. Abubakar read it and pocketed it. He also gave a press interview which has been quoted in each of the last two chapters. A last extract may give a final insight into his world-wearily wise views of his country's political weakness, and of what lay at the heart of the domestic discontent which was used by the rebels as justification: *'I have told people all along that we are not ripe for a system of government in which there is a fully fledged opposition. In Nigeria no party can agree to be in opposition for long. A political opposition in the western sense is a luxury that we cannot afford. You see? To-day in parliament there, the MPs are performing – some of them – some of the duties of an opposition. So they can – let them criticize, let them condemn this government, let them say anything they like. The trouble is that the Nigerian member of parliament wants to criticize the government and to be in it at the same time. Democracy, democracy, what is it? There is American democracy – British democracy. Why not Nigerian democracy? I wish we could find that.'*

For the last time he spoke on corruption too (other countries had battled with it unsuccessfully for many times five years): *'Yes, . . . people do talk about it, and I think it is serious, but when you ask for proof, you can't get it. I have tried many times – I will give you an example. I got a report from one of my parliamentary secretaries that a top politician was being offered thousands of pounds by a European – a German – having something to do with construction. We traced the man to Jos, and then after an unsatisfactory report, we got on to him again at Kano where he was about to leave the country. The story we got was that he was to negotiate a loan abroad to finance construction of buildings at Ife university. He had been to Ibadan and seen certain ministers; then, he said, when he was in a hotel 'somebody' came to him demanding money for a minister, with an assurance that the contract would be 'all right'. That 'somebody' turned out to be a lawyer, but with no apparent or proven connexions with any of the ministers, or the government party in the west. So finally we put Interpol on to it, and we found that the man himself was a very shady character, with no authority to negotiate a loan anyway. There are a lot of expatriates in this country now. The activities of some of them do not help us at all. I would very much like to catch somebody to make an example of him'*. He said nothing about recently prepared transfers of air services.

Abubakar was finally pressed to speculate on the problem of transition that would arise if he retired from public life (as he was known so often to have wanted to do), now that Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu was no more. All he would say was that, *'That is a question which has preoccupied me a very great deal in the past year. . . . I think, if you don't mind, I would rather not comment'*. He returned home from his office to Onikan, still only lightly guarded by police, where he was visited by the madaki of Kano, Bello d'an Amar, who happily

found Abubakar's lifelong friend, Alhaji Abubakar Garba Kafin Madaki, the madaki of Bauchi, installed in the guest room. Alhaji Maitama Sule came later on behalf of a Kano pilgrimage agent, but was told that by this time the prime minister was incommunicado with other ministers, discussing action on the western regional situation.

On this day, Friday 14 January, President Azikiwe was still abroad and Chief Nwafor Orizu was still acting head of state. The minister of defence, Alhaji Inuwa Wada, was absent on his way to Zurich to undergo an eye operation having been told by the prime minister that his health took priority over Commonwealth conferences; as he had been accompanied for other business purposes by his permanent secretary Sule Kolo, the army minister Alhaji Ibrahim, galadima of Tako, and the deputy permanent secretary Ahmed Kurfi were answering for them. Chief Ayo Rosiji, the minister of information, had been on leave in Madrid and London, and had just met Inuwa Wada in Rome where he was telling them that he was still worried that the prime minister did not seem to be doing anything about the reports of insurrection. Alhaji Nuhu Bamalli was also away from Lagos. The inspector-general of police Louis Edet was absent on leave, his deputy Alhaji Kam Salem acting in his place; and Leslie Marsden as the acting deputy inspector-general was responsible for the whole force's staffwork and communications.

The ministers who had been summoned by telephone, and were still closeted late at night with Alhaji Sir Abubakar, included no northerners. His friends, such as the two madakis, who after all these years could not yet accept that the first true Nigerian might treat all his cabinet colleagues as equals saw him as having barricaded himself away from his honest advisers at a time when his mind was too full to think clearly. Yet inevitably the action, which he knew that the NPC would at last agree to, had still to be expounded and accepted by his NCNC federal partners. Chief Festus Sam Okotie-Eboh was undoubtedly a minister who feathered his own nest, but as a colleague he could be both shrewd and hugely entertaining; he had a feeling for northerners and an understanding of the north that had lost him the confidence of the more chauvinistic Igbos in his own NCNC party as well as among the plotters; and he was a very hard-working and competent minister of finance. It was not difficult to tolerate him, even at his most outrageous moments. Dr Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe had gone far out of his way to retain friendly social relationships with a prime minister whom he deeply respected, despite a conviction that had fate dealt Nigeria different cards he should have been federal prime minister himself; the ambivalence that allowed him to enjoy federal office, while his NCNC party and leading countrymen were badly disaffected towards federal authority, might make him seem two-faced and untrustworthy to some, but a lonely leader might legitimately see it as personal loyalty, all the more welcome for its source. These two were the men who mattered in the caucus, although the essential attorney-general Dr Elias and the transport minister Raymond Njoku were also present.

Abubakar confided in these southern colleagues that he was now so worried that he could no longer risk being thought merely to be sitting down and watching; he was fully prepared to seek a declaration of emergency, had approved the principles of a military operation, and would make a statement in parliament on the Monday. He would be speaking as the leader of Nigeria, and he expected Dr Mbadiwe, as NCNC leader in the house, to come out openly in full support. They exchanged notes and Abubakar produced the first draft of the speech which should already have been seen by the Sardauna. He intended

to make it himself, but he asked Mbadiwe first to annotate and return it next day. Mbadiwe was the last to leave before midnight, and was verbally abused by a private secretary for keeping his master up so late. At about 1 o'clock, after telephoning the Sardauna and relaxing into some dazed chattering with the madaki of Bauchi about how '*friend Akintola*' has got us into this mess, and now only God can get us out of it', Abubakar complained that his body was aching, and retired; one of his children shared his room, and two wives slept elsewhere; Inni was in Bauchi, eight months pregnant.

The army's leaders had been preoccupied throughout the evening, since it had been suggested to General Aguiyi-Ironsi that he should be the guest of honour at a party at the Ikoyi home of the popular Kanuri Brigadier Maimalari, to celebrate the brigadier's marriage to a new wife from Kano; Lt-col Gowon was only one of many high-ranking officers who went with sundry pressmen and foreign guests to the fairy-lit festivities, which left the reactions of those whose custom allowed alcohol less than usually sensitive. Gowon is said to have been warned later by a friendly Igbo girl at a night club that danger was afoot, gave observers the impression that he was driving to Ibadan but, observing unusual military activity, left early for Mushin instead of returning direct to barracks, where he would easily have been found. Aguiyi-Ironsi went merrily on to another party on the Elder Dempster line flagship *Aureol* at Apapa wharf. It was time for the plotters to act.

Late on the night of 14 January Ifeajuna called in his fellow Lagos conspirators and, for the first time, most of the other captains and subalterns who had been identified as reliable supporters; including Okafor, Ifeajuna (now brigade major 2 bde, having been relieved by Major Murtala Muhammad as acting chief signals officer), Anuforo and Chukuka of army HQ, and Ademoyega and a Captain Oji, thirteen in all assembled at his house in Apapa (where most army officers were quartered). Several had been drinking and laughing at the Maimalari party. He expounded on the betrayals committed by corrupt politicians, the chaos in the western region, the danger of the army becoming involved in internecine political violence, and the collapse for which Nigeria was headed - would they help in the plan to end this disaster? The single doubter was persuaded, possibly recognising that those who were not with the insurrection would be treated as against it, and would be marked men. Seven separate objectives were allocated between them: to abduct the prime minister and minister of finance; to kill Colonel Muhammed and Lt-col Unegbe; to capture or kill General Aguiyi-Ironsi and Brigadier Maimalari; to kill Lt-col Pam; to occupy the police control room; to occupy the telephone exchange; to occupy the ECN building. Other eliminations may have been left unspoken, such as that of Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. Action in Kaduna, Benin city and Ibadan was to have been co-ordinated, and Ifeajuna would proceed to Enugu to see fulfilment there. All ranks likely to be needed, or to have to be kept preoccupied, were to be called out for bogus 'internal security operations' between midnight and 1 am, so that ammunition and transport would become readily available. They should parade armed in battle order at 2 Brigade headquarters. On completion of their missions, all should rendezvous at the federal guard's mess at Dodan barracks in Obalende, Ikoyi. They went their ways, and at 2 am everybody moved off to their allotted targets. By the end of the night seven other commissioned officers had become involved on their side.

Ifeajuna's convoy, with two subalterns and 22 soldiers, closed off the Onikan roundabout by the prime minister's lodge, opposite the Yoruba tennis club.

The six policemen posted there with a guard dog were easily intimidated in surrender of their rifles, and were detained in the gatehouse; they were prepared to deal with burglars, not mutinous servicemen in battle order. Ifeajuna led a few of his group through the back gate and rounded up a few domestics. The invalid police ADC Kaftan Topolomiyo, for once sleeping in his official quarters, woke up and supposing the noise to be the police gun stopping some intruders, belted his revolver round the shorts he was wearing. He emerged, to be seized and forced into a chair with a pistol to his head. He heard it misfire as one of his fingers was broken in the trigger guard when Ifeajuna pulled his own gun from him. A young son of Kaftan ran to defend him with a stick, and was knocked into submission as he himself was manhandled towards the main rooms, denying in the face of death threats that he knew where the PM slept or where the main doors or bedroom keys might be. After some exchanges between themselves in Igbo, the party next hammered on the door of the other ADC, Maxwell Orukpabo, who had been seen by police guards through a window for some time before, walking up and down in his room. He came out in singlet and lappa, also to deny knowledge of keys and be threatened with shooting; he said that the senior steward might have keys and, his turn to have a gun at his head, led Ifeajuna and Kaftan as escort to Audu's room. When Audu denied having keys either, Kaftan was turned on again. He told them to carry on and shoot him, for all that they would gain them. The black farce continued with an assault on the glass front door and a dramatic armed break-in of an empty pantry, after which Kaftan for the moment convinced he was in the hands of political traitors disguised as soldiers, was forced up the stairs and tried to make them continue up the second landing, where there was only empty guest accommodation. This time Orukpabo was behind, and someone called them back. Standing outside Alhaji Sir Abubakar's bedroom, Kaftan continued to insist that he was a stranger in this part of the house, but after another exchange in Igbo, Orukpabo, still held at gunpoint, nodded at the door.

Ifeajuna knocked and a voice said. 'Who is it?' Kaftan answered, 'Sir, it is I'. - 'What has happened?' - 'Sir, I am under arrest and taken by the soldiers'. Before he could say more he was given a gun butt in the back and told to 'shut up' for mentioning 'soldiers'. Orukpabo called out something like, 'Pal! Make you come outside, Sir'. Abubakar opened the door, Kaftan was hurled in, and Ifeajuna doubled up and crept quickly after him like a commando, below hand-gun level. The prime minister was standing unarmed in his night clothes. Ifeajuna scrambled up, saluted and said, 'I come here with respect, I will take you with me'. Abubakar reached for his day gown, but was told he had clothes enough; Kaftan protested that this was a distinguished man, and should have proper clothes against the damp. He was allowed to put on his vest and trousers, white gown, cap and slippers, and to take his prayer beads, while insisting that he should say his prayers before leaving. Kaftan demanded to know what 'Alhaji' had ever done, to deserve this, and what they were going to do with him. Ambiguously Ifeajuna said, 'I am not going to do anything with him, I will take care of him', and in the corridor and downstairs called those soldiers who did not salute to come to attention and salute the prime minister. The party bundled itself hastily out, leaving a helmet and a firearm behind in the confusion. The madaki heard all this, locked into his bedroom, his wife having hidden his key.

In the open a dignified Abubakar walked calmly in front, followed by Kaftan, still pinioned in the hands of Ifeajuna's squad, through the gatehouse and back

to the roundabout. The leader affected to reassure his captive, 'We know all the trouble going on in the country is not your fault'. All that Abubakar was heard to say was, 'Yes'. At a tree near the memorial hall he was stopped, and Kaftan who had continued to cry that 'Alhaji' was the only son of his mother, and to keep asking about their reasons and intentions, was told to return home. He refused, despite more browbeating with cocked revolvers, until Abubakar himself told him not to worry and to go back; but he watched them go down Awolowo Road towards the Force Road roundabout near the museum and Onikan swimming pool, where Ifeajuna's get-away pick-up was parked. At the lodge about 4 *am* there was confusion and panic; some women were still hoping that 'Alhaji' had been taken to hospital because his body ached, others, including his wife Laraba, knew that soldiers had kidnapped him; they were now doubly alarmed because of events next door at Okotie-Eboh's house. Kaftan's son Ibrahim had telephoned the wife of the Lagos police commissioner, Hamman Maiduguri, a friend of Abubakar's household, and so raised the alarm that allowed countermeasures to be taken.

In other incidents the remaining members of Ifeajuna's squad had first been dealing with the minister of finance, Omimi-Ejo Chief Festus Samuel Okotie-Eboh: they went in a three-ton lorry, jumped over the wall, quelled the single policeman and the five civilian guards dozing over their bows-and-arrows, and kicked in the glass front door with their boots. Abubakar's housekeeper, Malama Habiba the wife of Alhaji Isa Kaita, was awakened by shouts and noise next door about 2 *am*, which she put down at first in her daze to another market women's demonstration. Looking through her window at Chief Festus's compound, she saw soldiers who might have been mounting a guard against protesters, but then she recognized Festus being dragged out in his lappa, repeatedly crying, 'Don't kill me!', and being told to get into the lorry. After more struggling and cries of 'Shoot him!', he was forced in. There were then two gunshots and silence, except for the vehicle driving away, probably to the Force Road roundabout. One version has it that this group shot Maimalari on their way to the federal guard mess.

Major Chukuka had meanwhile assaulted the house of the Christian Bi Rom AAG Lt-col Jack Pam; the unexpected arrival of armed soldiers in the compound having enlivened his existing nervous suspicions, Pam was trying by telephone to convince an incoherent General Aguiyi-Ironsi, at his quarters at Glover Road by the lagoon, that trouble had started; he went as he was, in a coat and his nightwear, quietly so as not to endanger his distraught wife who had just borne another baby boy, and was taken to the Dodan mess. There Anuforo had him driven back to Ikoyi, made him get out to pray briefly, and shot him with a submachine gun on the golfcourse behind his own house. The body was then carried back once more to Dodan barracks in a vehicle which, according to some stories, was the same one into which Abubakar was put, with nothing to sit on but one of the corpses.

Aguiyi-Ironsi meanwhile heard shooting after Pam's phone call, roused his sentries and went to ground, evading those prepared to frustrate or assassinate him. He seems first to have ordered the other ranks left in Dodan barracks to get ready to fight any trouble-makers, and take no order except from Maimalari and himself; to have got the illegal occupiers of the federal territory operations room to disperse; and after making his way through ineffective rebel road blocks, and bluffing his way past a muddled young rebel officer who stopped

his car with a landrover, to have alerted loyal troops at Ikeja barracks later, towards dawn.

Anuforo's squad certainly killed the QMG, the Igbo Lt-col Unegbe, ostensibly because he had refused to hand over any keys to the armoury. He went on to Parkland, Apapa, to kill the Kanuri chief-of-staff designate Colonel Kur Mohammed, whose sentries were unarmed field ambulance orderlies. Kur was put up against a tree in the yard of his temporary quarters in his nightwear, tied with a rifle sling and also shot with a SMG. Both bodies were then taken to the Dodan mess.

The federal guard commander Okafor and his group had failed to take either Aguiyi-Ironsi, whom he may personally have wished to protect, or Maimalari. When the newly married Kanuri Brigadier Maimalari's house was attacked, warned by Okafor's preliminary altercation with the sentries and a burst of submachine gunfire just as his telephone was ringing, he managed to escape through his boys' quarters and back yard, down the road to a petrol station whether or not he telephoned back to his driver to bring his car, which came for him full of rebel soldiers, or flagged down a car on the street which turned out to be in charge of an insurgent, he was seized (one 'authorized' version has it that it was Ifeajuna, who shot him there and then on his way to the Ikoyi hotel). Okafor seems to have claimed to have shot Pam himself and then, having failed to find Maimalari, to have joined Ifeajuna at the prime minister's lodge; and witnesses who may have been confused or bad at identification have said that he took part in the final stage of the PM's abduction. The Kanuri Lt-col Aboga Largema was known to be staying temporarily in the Ikoyi hotel after attending the Maimalari party; he was called out in his pyjamas, shot in the corridor by men under Ifeajuna's command, and his body dragged down to the foyer.

There is no doubt that all the living captives, Abubakar, possibly still Maimalari, conceivably still Okotie-Eboh, and up to sixteen still unnamed unco-operative officers, were taken to the Dodan barracks rendezvous; if Aguiyi-Ironsi's instruction to take no further orders had already been given, the rank-and-file there can have done nothing one way or the other. After 4 am Ifeajuna and Okafor left with Abubakar, and perhaps Maimalari and the other officers, and after driving round the streets of Lagos in uncertain bewilderment because things were not going quite according to plan, had finally detained the prime minister under Igbo guard in a 'safe house' belonging to Oyekan, the oba of Lagos. The loyal officers held may have joined him. Corpses began to be collected in the hospital mortuary, while Ifeajuna and Okafor set off for Enugu to take charge of events there. This left Anuforo in charge of Lagos events: about 3.30 am he seems to have collected the bodies of Maimalari, Kur, Pam and Unegbe into a three-tonner and dumped them into shallow graves some miles on the way to Abeokuta. The story that suggests that Okotie-Eboh had not already been shot, in the vehicle at his own compound, relates that he was still sitting petrified in this lorry. Anuforo is said to have stared at him, exclaiming, 'Who is that man?', had him forced out into the bush, and shot him with his SMG, to be buried hastily with the four army officers.

Bugles had blown at the federal guard some time after 3 am, and these combined with the sporadic gunfire and unusual nocturnal roaring of military traffic to cause all the prudent and cowardly to lie low, and a few remarkably bold individuals to try to make sense of the mystery. By now the telephone exchange and all lines were silenced. The acting IGP Kam Salem and the Lagos CP Hamman Maiduguri roused the senior defence civil servant in the country

Alhaji Ahmed Kurfi the deputy permanent secretary, to tell him that the prime minister had been kidnapped by soldiers, and to seek guidance. Ahmed Kurfi went off in one car to investigate, the police commander in another, first going to Maimalari's house which was dark and deserted, with a body lying lifeless out-side the gate. At Jack Pam's house, equally silent, he found the car with its tyres shot out, and Mrs Pam miserable and scared. On intuition he went on to the Ikoyi hotel, to find that Largema had been shot and his body by now removed. All three officers had been schoolboys with Ahmed Kurfi at Zaria government college. He returned home to reassure his family and dress more formally.

Ahmed Kurfi's only political superior at the moment, the minister of state for the army, Alhaji Ibrahim Tako galadima of Bida, was awakened by bugles, which he took to be an alarm, sounding near his house. Hearing from a servant that the nearby Dodan barracks were in uproar he hurried into short clothes to see for himself and ask for an escort; he found no officers, but a warrant officer told him he would need a proper guard, pointing out some likely rebels in the shadows who might be about to attack his house. While the protective guard was mounted (so effectively that they refused admission to Ahmed Kurfi shortly afterwards) and the rebels ran away, Ibrahim Tako cycled off to the prime minister's lodge, but finding it still milling with soldiers returned home. Ahmed Kurfi had set off round other ministers to find someone willing to take charge, but was rebuffed by the customary civilian guards, armed with crude but effective weapons, at all but one house, which had but a single traditional night watchman. Shehu Shagari had virtually resigned himself to the inevitable and was telling his beads, but refused to assume overall ministerial responsibility since Zanna Bukar Dipcharima came next after Abubakar and Inuwa Wada in the federal NPC hierarchy. Alhaji Ahmed returned home in despair to await what daylight would bring.

Before the telephone was cut Kaftan's wife's sister rang Alhaji Maitama Sule. Maitama leapt out of bed and pedalled off barelegged and shoeless on his son's bicycle to find the prime minister's lodge gates open, something unknown after nightfall, and a gang of soldiers who shouted at him (Okafor was said to have claimed that he drew his revolver on Maitama, but had spared him for old time's sake). He then raced to the old prime minister's house, now a guest house, where Abubakar's young 'brother' Balarabe, Maitama's private secretary and a future career diplomat, was staying, but failed to rouse him (The term 'brother' was traditionally used in the north for wards or dependants too old to be called 'sons' but young enough to pass as siblings). On his way home he saw two soldiers marching someone at gunpoint towards the broadcasting corporation headquarters, where a military officer was announcing to a sleeping country that the army had taken over to bring to an end gangsterism and disorder, corruption and despotism ('My compatriots, you will no longer need to be ashamed to be Nigerians'). Reaching Obalende, Maitama climbed over his wall to warn Ibrahim Tako as acting defence minister, who was already alive to events and said they should send a joint note to the GOC, Aguiyi-Ironsi. The reply they eventually received was that there had certainly been an 'attempt' but all was under control. Ibrahim Tako hurried off with him round Maimalari's and Pam's houses, finding that each had been attacked, as well as the house of his own permanent secretary who was abroad with the substantive minister. Maitama Sule went home exhausted and full of doubt. Ibrahim Tako went to find the acting inspector-general, Kam Salem, who told him that the prime minister seemed to be missing and normal communications with Kaduna were cut. He decided to find the German training adviser and send his private

force plane to Kaduna for liaison. He had discovered Premier, Fani-Kayode, in the Dodan mess, wearing a white shirt and dark trousers. He had taken him from Ibadan and he had taken him to a friend's house before repatriating him to the Premier's lodge, alarmed at the evidence that the rising

the electricity was cut in Ibadan. Chief Samuel Akintola, dressed hurriedly, telling the elder son and the rest of the family what he had been expecting. A squad under Nwobani in a truck, called him out, and shot him at the foot of the stairs before he had finally surrendered. He had been armed, and had killed himself purposefully for about ten minutes, killing his daughter-in-law and grandson had been wounded. The rebels were violently settled in Ibadan under cover of the night, with many people seeking refuge in Dahomey, and a frenzied looting of NNDP ministers' property.

Nwobani, supported by thirteen officers including Major and Captains Ben Gbulie and Udi, supervised a better and more bloodier operation in *Damisa*, that in the first instance was for the mutiny. The fledgling air force patrolled the sky in the ground. The premier, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, and other officers Ademulegun and his wife, Colonel Shodeinde, other police guards and two of the Sardauna's watchmen, and were all brutally shot, for the apparent loss of one rebel. Nwobani's ricochet wounds to Nzeogwu himself. The premier's house was looted and burnt. The northern political government was in a state of confusion. Sir Kashim Ibrahim, was taken with moderate interest. Nzeogwu told Sir Kashim, 'You are a gentleman, but you are not a people like you; . . . all these corrupt politicians . . . are taking the country to ransom . . . without rhyme or reason'. He was supported by Akintola, Azikiwe, Okotie-Eboh, Okpara and Orizu. Nzeogwu's disapproval and the general fear which had gripped the premier's closest associates. Regional ministers were ordered to disperse to their home towns.

Nzeogwu declared martial law over 'the northern provinces'. He intended to have been repeated by colleagues in the other regional capitals, he purported to suspend the constitution and legislature 'in the name of the supreme authority of the armed forces'. All political, cultural, tribal and religious activities, all demonstrations and unauthorised gatherings (including meetings) were banned. In a most extraordinary and unprecedented nation of his own, offences punishable by death included desertion, looting, arson, homosexuality, rape, embezzlement, treason, participation in the revolution, sabotage, subversion, false information, invasion, demonstrations, unauthorised assembly, recruitment of revolutionary troops, failure to report anti-revolutionary activities, harboring or sheltering wanted persons attempting to escape justice; and loitering or sitting on the fence, were also 'offences'.

Nzeogwu publicly assigned credit for the revolt to 'five majors', but appointed an executive government of civil servants 'to stamp out nepotism, tribalism and regionism'. He was surprised to meet Major Hassan Katsina at the airport: Hassan should have flown to Lagos the previous day, where colleagues were expecting him, but he had been off-loaded from a full plane without 'pulling rank', and was speculating on fate, being unarmed himself for the moment.

In Benin city a small detachment surrounded the mid-western governor's and premier's residences, but Chief Dennis Osadebay was later allowed to go home to Asaba, leaving merely confusion behind him, and his wife crying, 'There you are, Dennis, I told you not to get into politics!' In Enugu at first the post office and broadcasting house were surrounded, and the radio station ordered only to relay the Lagos service; the principal residences were cut off by road blocks, but although no telephones were working to Lagos or Ibadan, few of their occupants thought there had been an insurrection - here too it seemed to be a typical army exercise. When Ifeajuna and Okafor reached Enugu after lunch, they held a discussion with the eastern premier Dr Michael Okpara, and allowed his visitor, Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, to make his departure by helicopter for Lagos on his way to Abidjan, in the presence of the premier's ministerial colleagues and the governor; they then advised Okpara to retreat to Umuahia, and the others to their villages. The two majors quickly disappeared themselves, after discovering that Lt-col David Ejoor had returned from Lagos at mid-day, and that thereafter his battalion INA had failed to support the rebellion.

By the time that most communications had been restored late on the Saturday Nzeogwu, receiving a telephone call in Kaduna from the federal capital, realized that Ifeajuna had failed in Lagos, that Okpara was still alive, and that a revision of his intentions was necessary, since others were in control. Lt-col Ojukwu in Kano appeared to be unaware of what was happening elsewhere, although one story tells of him being in Kaduna with a girl friend on 14 January, and when the news arrived of indeterminate risings he contented himself with seizing the international airport; his ambitions rendering him jealous of all his seniors and equals, he also delayed any sign of sympathy with the rebel majors until that became unnecessary. His guest of honour at a SNA mess night the night before, Sir Christopher Welby-Everard, received a telephonic warning from the Lagos defence ministry to leave for home at once: malicious rumours had already started that he was involved in the upheaval in some strange way.

In Lagos by 9 o'clock that Saturday morning Aguiyi-Ironsi's journey to Ikeja had had results. Lieut-colonel Jack Gowon had heard more troop movements in the night after leaving the night club for Mushin, and getting up early was given a garbled report at Ikeja of some mutiny and the apparent abduction of Abubakar and Festus. He found the GOC and 2NA's officers in the mess, and was directed to take a full company into Lagos. This contingent found the acting defence minister and the housekeeper Habiba Kaita who told him what seemed to have happened at the PM's lodge. The soldiers at the parliament buildings and broadcasting house were ordered to take no further orders from anyone but the GOC in person. Gowon went on to reassure Mrs Aguiyi-Ironsi that her husband was safe, and Mrs Pam that there might yet be hope. At Maimalari's house he found blood and destruction, and he reached Dodan barracks too late to catch any rebel. Leaving the garrison under strict instructions, he passed a small convoy led by Ademoyega, who evaded pursuit and escaped to the eastern region. He radioed to Aguiyi-Ironsi from the defence ministry that effective

the ministers. Marsden reassured them that the civilian police were steady, but warned that they might look for military support in arresting mutineers. The apparent melodramatic threat of thugs arriving in Ikoyi's houses, looking for drink and women, before the army was secured and the police again in charge, resulted in a direct request from Bukar Dipcharima to Sir Francis to ask London for troops to quell the mutiny.

Cumming-Bruce judged privately that a single battalion was all that was needed, but agreed to withdraw for a short conference with his worried aide. In their official car downstairs, surrounded by a swarm of pressmen, the first secretary recalled that such action had certainly been effective in east Africa two years before, but at a cost: 'Nyerere and the Ugandans will never, ever, forgive us, for the loss of face' (Indeed Nyerere was to recognise rebel 'Biafra' during the future Nigerian civil war, largely because he remembered with embarrassment his country's debt to Jack Pam's battalion for reconstructing his own mutinous army). They went back, and Cumming-Bruce told the rump cabinet that he had full confidence in Nigeria's own troops and policemen to restore and maintain law and order. He did not remind them that they could send a request directly through their own high commission in London, and Whitehall was duly grateful to have no formal request to acknowledge. The circumstance and logistics were in any case very different from those two years before, when British troops had already been close by in east Africa.

The conclusion recorded, after those in attendance withdrew, was the simple instruction that the GOC should find the prime minister, crush the mutiny, and protect the parliament buildings from destruction; the acting minister of defence signed an order there and then, drafted by Wey and as advised by the attorney-general in person. Less authoritative legal advice was however offered to Aguiyi-Ironsi, suggesting that he could only accept formal operational instructions in an emergency from a prime minister; there was a general assumption in the cabinet that the acting president, Dr Nwafor Orizu, would be appointing Alhaji Bukar Dipcharima as acting prime minister, although clearly Dr K O Mbadiwe's hopes, and his party's, remained high. A resolution discussion proposed to concoct a special message as from Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to President Nnamdi Azikiwe in England, by hand of the minister of state for commonwealth relations, Senator Dan Ibekwe should fly on Sunday morning (on the BOAC VC-10 actually impounded at Kano airport by Lt-col Ojukwu). However in the event Ibekwe did not and a dubious Orizu make any acting appointment. Early in the afternoon the radio announced, as from the council of ministers, to a Lagos which was mostly enjoying a normal Saturday, that a dissident section of the army had taken the prime minister and the minister of finance to an unknown destination; the GOC Major-general Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi and a vast majority were completely loyal, the 'ill-advised mutiny' would soon be to an end, and law and order in the few disturbed areas of the country soon be restored.

Next day Orizu called in some of these ministers to say that he had legal advice, not from the attorney-general, did not know how to use the power to do, and wished to consult the service heads with the substantive president by telephone. He clearly had no intention of appointing Bukar Dipcharima, if he could avoid it. While they were arguing, Bukar Dipcharima in the chair, Aguiyi-Ironsi, who had consulted with some of the important civilian lawyers, sent notice that his remaining

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ating difficulties and that the instructions given to him were causing
n; something was also made of the supposed inability of ministers to
whether Dipcharima or Mbadiwe should act as prime minister, and
ession was left that their lives were still in danger from the rebels.
ronsi followed in person, in effect telling the rump that, since he
t persuade Orizu to make an appointment, he must assume supreme
of administration, acting through the army and the police, and that
hem to devise some legal form of words to clothe his intention; he took
rtunity to upbraid politicians for forcing young politicized graduates
as officers, instead of boys who wanted to be real soldiers. Dr Elias
ator Ibekwe were required by the other ministers present, who were
out a rudder, still less a helmsman, to draft something acceptable as
ary measure. The rump was convinced of a return to normality in six to
eks, or sooner if perchance the prime minister were found safe. Abdul
he NPC lawyer from Ilorin, made a rough record of the meeting on
per in an Ikoyi house.

at night the acting president Orizu broadcast that he had to-night been
by the council of ministers, headed by Zanna Bukar, that they had
the unanimous decision voluntarily to hand over the administration
country to the armed forces and police of the republic, in view of the
situation in the country. All ministers are assured of their personal
the new administration'. That assurance was the touchstone. As for
ary people who had lost faith in politicians, the half-educated had
by rumour to expect a coup, and the educated in large measure to
: especially was this true of those in the west who loathed Akintola.
e throughout the country who were unable to come to terms with their
perception of the Sardauna. At this point all thought it possible that
r Abubakar Tafawa Balewa might return to a cleansed stable. Some
as apparent in markets and intellectual circles at the prospect of the
limbing out of the pit into the light.

trange promptness the newly designated Supreme Commander of the
Military Government made a public announcement of a seven-point
ne, decreeing the suspension of the offices of president, prime minister
ament; each region would have a military governor, and regional
governments would be responsible to the federal military government,
governors, premiers and executive councils also being suspended
the regional governors would act as advisers); the chief justice and
would continue to function normally, as would all civil servants, the
police force and special constabulary; but all native authority and local
ent police would be under the control of the inspector-general. The
inistration would honour all financial and other agreements entered
ne previous government, and maintain its present external relations.
ns must 'co-operate in this urgent task to maintain law and order
untry'. The constitution was suspended until another was drawn up
ance with the wishes of the people. He made no promise about
, but he did not intend to remain in power once law and order was
nd the constitution prepared.

not taken his new outside advisers long to draft the end of democratic
s which had been led by persons most of whom the Nigerian people
chosen freely to support. The permanent secretaries and some other
l servants were called in by Aguiyi-Ironsi and told to carry on normal
ation until further notice. Inevitably, in the light of the casualties and

of the loyal operations, Gowon was recognized as chief of staff. Some of the proclamations had to be drafted by the British police officers Marsden, George Duckett and Stacey Barham; indeed Marsden's key rôle for this brief period in constitutional, administrative and security matters was quite fundamental. Nwafor Orizu seems to have remained acting in the abolished office of president until 21 January, when Aguiyi-Ironsi was publicly clothed in the dignity of head of state. Thereafter the supreme commander was to be led politically further astray by advisers of the same kidney as those who had advised Azikiwe a year before.

During the rest of the weekend, some troops in Kaduna were heard to be questioning what they were doing, when their comrades in Benin and Enugu seemed to be inactive; but there were also tales of the irrepressible Nzeogwu (who was angry that neither the eastern and mid-western premiers nor Aguiyi-Ironsi had been killed) preparing to march on Lagos and to send the *rece* squadron to hold or blow up the Jebba and Makurdi bridges. However on Monday morning 17 January Nzeogwu, who had just 'appointed' a northern government composed of the permanent secretaries, announced with typically post-adolescent flamboyance that without 'surrendering' to the new military régime, he was offering his 'sword and command' to Major-general Aguiyi-Ironsi, and had pledged the loyalty of his own 'Supreme Council of the Revolution'. There had been a go-between in the person of another major, Alexander Madiebo, Igbo commanding officer of the Nigerian Regiment of Artillery stationed in Kaduna, a bystander who could now see that the majority of the army would not join the rebels in a civil war between a federal government headed by the GOC and a murderous revolutionary government set up by a major in Kaduna. Lt-col Gowon told Madiebo to bring Nzeogwu to Lagos, dead or alive, and Madiebo eventually convinced Nzeogwu that he should give himself up; Gowon refused to take the responsibility of giving any of the reassurances that he demanded, but Aguiyi-Ironsi agreed to them. The process was smoothed by Nzeogwu's friend Lt-col Conrad D Nwawo, just returned from being a military attaché to the London high commission, who escorted him down to Lagos in a form of open arrest.

The oral understanding on the telephone between Lagos and Kaduna had been that the safety and freedom from all legal proceedings of Nzeogwu and his officers and men involved in the northern revolt and bloodbath was guaranteed for the future; that the people they had fought to remove would not be returned to office; that compensation would be paid to the next-of-kin of any rebels who had been killed in all the risings; and that all officers and men arrested in Lagos and the west should be freed. 'We feel it is absurd', Nzeogwu let the press know, 'that men who risked their lives to establish the new régime should be held prisoner by other soldiers'. Privately he hinted that another eastern major colleague had had plans of his own for political change. Aguiyi-Ironsi accepted all this, strengthening any assumption that instead of restoring law and order he had simply taken the revolution over, and effectively but unwittingly signing a post-dated death warrant for himself. He may have feared to provoke those in the officer cadre who would happily have followed Ifeajuna and Nzeogwu if they had triumphed, and he had to be in a position to stamp out the violent reaction in the north that might be predictable. Nor could he feel sure that Ojukwu would remain on the sideline. He casually referred to the mutiny in a press conference as 'general disorder in the army'. He might have expressed it differently had Lt-col Victor Banjo already made the bungled attempt to shoot

the GOC which occurred shortly afterwards that morning; this time Banjo was arrested and ended in Enugu jail. Nzeogwu was treated for his shrapnel wounds at the teaching hospital, close to the mortuary, and later joined about a hundred rebel officers and men who had been rounded up by Gowon's troops and locked in Broad Street prison.

Thereafter military governors of the regions were appointed, each with the former civilian governor acting as his 'adviser': Major Hassan Katsina in the north, Lt-col Emeka Ojukwu in the east, Lt-col Adekunle Fajuyi in the Lagos province and the west, and Lt-col David Ejoor in the midwest, all in their own native regions. The president's principal private secretary A K Disu became principal secretary, state house. Mr Stanley O Wey became secretary to the military government, providing continuity beyond price. Subsequent changes are part of other later stories of Nigeria.

The whereabouts of the Prime Minister remained a matter for growing public speculation and gossip, fuelled by the discovery on Tuesday 18 January in their shallow graves 48 kilometres up the road to Abeokuta of the bullet-ridden bodies of Chief Okotie-Eboh and the five well-liked soldiers (Abogo Largema, Zakariya Maimalari, Kur Mohammed, James Pam and Arthur Unegbe). People began to refer to Aguiyi-Ironsi's 'coup within a coup'. As has been suggested earlier, Alhaji Sir Abubakar, after having been driven hither and yon round Lagos by an increasingly muddled Ifeajuna, who was realizing that the mutiny had misfired, is believed to have been placed in a safe house of the oba's; one unlikely but much credited story is that Maimalari survived there with him, becoming worried about would happen if Abubakar remained alive and free, for any determined opposition to a military government to rally around; but that although having the will to shoot Maimalari, of whose soldierly prowess he had been jealous since Congo days, he could not bring himself to kill Abubakar and left it to a willing Donatus Okafor. The same and other sources tend to agree that the sixteen unnamed officers originally brought with the captives to the Dodan mess were shot in the same house. Most sources point at Okafor, evidently returned from Enugu, whether or not with the foreknowledge or company of Aguiyi-Ironsi, as the man who shot Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa over the heart with a submachinegun in the early morning (some say with precision at 2.30 am) of Tuesday 18 January. One version has it that the ignorant rank-and-file with him first taunted Abubakar with being wealthy like all ministers, and made fruitless demands for money; another colourfully claims that Okafor offered to spare him if he would drink some alcohol, and that Abubakar refused utterly as a true Muslim, but had something to say before they killed him: '*Ibo! Ibo! Ibo! Sai kun rasa wajen zama a Nijeriya* [Igbo! You will lack any place to belong to in Nigeria!']. There is something that might be thought to ring true in such a last bitter rejection after the years of struggle for unity and reconciliation, but those who knew him and know his countrymen may scent the same imaginative Hausa fancy that has tinged the retelling of other martyrdoms.

Watchers had seen five wrapped corpses being deposited by soldiers in the Lagos teaching hospital mortuary early on the Monday morning, and being removed later, doubtless by Anuforo to the Abeokuta road. Other bodies, more numerous, received the same service the following day. Among these the prime minister's was seen in confidence by a British pathologist, and it

must be assumed that it was two of these that were later taken by Okafor to Otta. Otta, one sympathetic observer was to point out, was where the northern people had ended their uninterrupted conquest to the sea, in the nineteenth century *jihad* of the Fulani and Hausa, frustrated by the loss of their horses to trypanosomiasis – the *jihad* referred to in chapter 10, through the ringing tones of Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's first major legislative council speech, nineteen years before.

Epilogue

Ranar mutuwa so ya yi kunya

This account of a man and his times, no matter how detailed some may have found it, has embraced no more than a selective incidental story of Nigeria. It is right that following his murder such loose ends should now be tied as may allow a sympathetic reader to make his own assessment of Abubakar against the environment in which he, and not the present-day reader, lived. The decades that followed have been scrutinised in other studies, and the reader who is familiar with them must judge for himself how far the present recollections should colour the assumptions behind other appraisals. A summary reprise of a long enough tale may suitably precede our own conclusion.

A boy was humbly born and brought up in a strong religious faith to enjoy fond traditional parental ties. By sheer chance he was one of the few who received a rural education after the first world war, and he received it in a primitive school. His elders and betters took note of his capacities and sent him to a bigger school in a large market town, where he became conscious of a new cultural world of change and alien power. Application to modern lessons in the thirties earned him the very rough equivalent of an English grammar schoolboy's county scholarship to a public school. This was a boarding school, whose Arnoldian ethos was heavily adapted to suit mud rooms, restricted government finance and Islam. Here he learnt to balance his own intellect and humanity against the characters of aristocrats and ambitious aspirants. He returned to the county town to teach, convinced that the well of fresh knowledge would never run dry, and that an understanding of mankind's bonds, one individual's with another's, was the key to a just civilization under God's will. Promotion took him closer to the sources of some of the injustices which he thought to be amendable. His lasting readiness to talk with the brightest of his peers, and with one or two open-hearted aliens, about the various ways of curbing injustice brought him social acceptance as a modest source of calm wisdom.

It was no longer chance therefore that gave him a year's further professional training overseas, immediately after the second world war, in the country of the people who had evolved the 'public school'. He found those people looking for ways to knit the military victory of an alliance of heterogeneous philosophies of social freedom, which had been gained at the cost of their own economic impoverishment and moral exhaustion, into a pattern for a fresh world order. Once back home, he met a change in the style and purpose of the established government. This was demanding the swift participation of gifted local people, despite the reluctance to step forward of those groups which had had the fewest modern advantages. He inevitably became a representative voice of those of his contemporaries who had lacked both his opportunities and his natural ability to marshal his thought in persuasive speech. When

faced with the impatience of the dissatisfied beneficiaries of neighbouring but different societies, his first instinct was to spring to the defence of his own social culture, which was indivisible from his faith and jurisprudence, and where stability and unquestioning confidence in the Creator's ultimate purpose counted for more than individuals' hopes for instant worldly rewards. But his searching interests and instilled sense that duty preceded rights, helped by encouragement from some new aliens who shared some of his basic precepts, led quickly to his receipt of further recognition and higher responsibility.

Since he shared this introduction to power with members of the impatient rival cultures, he soon learnt to respect their multifarious qualities, and was rewarded with their respect for his own moral strengths. Over a short span of time his integrity and facility for universal friendship came to outweigh the wider intellectual experience of selfish men who were trammelled within the cultural confines of their own origins. His rise to the formal national leadership was not hindered by his lack of the others' more colourful semblance of populist appeal, because those who selected him held honesty, quick-minded shrewdness and industry above glamour. This position eventually gave him the task of being his country's first international ambassador. He was then able to use the same qualities to gain, for a few short years, a place for that country, in the eyes of those students of *weltpolitik* who saw Africa as an interesting new element but not yet a fundamentally important component, that other better-known names from south of the Sahara never realized. He was strengthened because he saw colonialism and racialism as quite distinct forces, with different origins and vulnerabilities.

A believer in traditional mannerliness and discipline, self-imposed as much as institutional, in public life as much as in the schoolroom, he had developed a will to be strong domestically, in the interests of the unity of his country. This was progressively undermined by the competitive fencing for power among the sub-national leaders. They shared his authority, but procured for themselves the greater allegiances of the people: the outside world may have discounted his rivals and for the present identified Nigeria through him, but Nigeria had not identified him as its symbol. Events forced him to spend more of his limited energies on those external concerns where his countrymen's name would benefit from influence and success; but while those countrymen's tranquillity was being diminished by feuding, some young soldiers appeared who suffered from the intellectual weaknesses of cocksure over-simplification and hubristic intolerance that infect the immature. They gave themselves a mandate: their mission presumed to purge the kind of evils which were common to most (and yet possibly less here than in other) societies which were emerging through root-and-branch change out of an undistinguished past into a time of great future promise. In that act, perhaps without deep premeditation but certainly without shame or due caution, they encompassed the death of the man who had secured their country's greatest political esteem. They had supposed that they could abolish regionalization, tribalism, immorality and corruption overnight. This was a long-term aim which the murdered man shared, but with the patience which they lacked. They remedied few of the evils and unleashed new ones, a common experience of revolutionaries. It is no comfort for an alien writer that it was to be Nigerians in authority who would publicly admit in 1967 and 1968 that, on reflection, time had proven that the British had been right, and they had been wrong, on the vital issue of hurrying to independence without solving the problem of the stability of the federation.

On Thursday 20 January 1966 the prime minister's lifelong friend the madaki (or madawaki) of Bauchi, who had been worrying every officer who would listen to him with the prophecy that if the disappearance was not accounted for and the public reassured, a 'Congo situation' was unavoidable in the north, learnt from the missing man's household that a Ghana radio bulletin had reported the finding of the body. Still wishing to believe the rumours that Abubakar was held alive as a hostage in an unknown place, be that in a Lagos white cap chief's house or at Calabar in confrontation with or exchange for the imprisoned Awolowo, he looked for, and for a while received, comfort from the Lagos commissioner of police, the northerner Hamman Maiduguri. But next morning the madaki and the ADC Inspector, Kaftan Topolomiyi from Nangasu, were called without explanation to the army headquarters at Dodan barracks. They were allowed to leave to attend Friday mosque but, although fasting, were summoned back twice more, until late at night they were at last driven to the military hospital. There after equivocal exchange with an Igbo attendant they were given 'enough cloth for an important man's burial'. There was no explanation, their conclusions were their own to draw. They were joined by an army medical officer and one or two police officers. A large military convoy, all the men appearing to be Igbos, took kerosene lamps and torches and drove them 43 kilometres up the Abeokuta road. Near Otta they halted and went some way through rain-sodden undergrowth and thorns into the bush, where they first saw a naked, bloated corpse with a damaged head, probably Largema's. Nearby a glimmer of white led them to a second body, against the bole of a tree. It was the white gown which allowed them to identify the putrid remains, with a wound over the heart and a hole in the back where the bullets had blown out the backbone, as those of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. His cap was at his feet. If there had been other lesser injuries, it was too late for the MO or laymen to detect them. It has been suggested that Dr Elias's warning letter about a revolution, from Dr Busia exiled in the Hague, was still in the pocket of the gown. The soldiers offered to dig the graves there and then, having brought tarpaulins and coffins. The MO saw to the application of disinfectant, and Kaftan to the enshrouding of the clothed remains, just as they were, and closing of the coffin lid. The madaki recovered sufficiently from the grief which had overwhelmed him to insist that the prime minister must be returned to Bauchi for proper burial.

The coffin was taken to Ikeja airport well before sunrise on the Saturday morning, and Hamman Maiduguri arranged for a charter flight. He told Kaftan to gather Abubakar's whole family together to accompany them, which Kaftan did, not telling them till the last minute that he now knew the fate of their husband and father. Commissioner Hamman, Kam Salem the deputy inspector-general of police and the minister Alhaji Yusuff Maitama Sule escorted the wives Laraba and Jummai, the grieving madaki Alhaji Abubakar Garba and the household with the coffin directly to Bauchi, where they arrived on the eve of the great *sallah* day, which marked the end of the *Ramadan* fast. Alhaji Sir Kashim Ibrahim and the grand kadi joined them there. Abubakar's pupil and ward Alhaji Adamu Tafawa Balewa, now the ajiya and shyly used to being called 'Baba' by his sometime master, was at the airstrip and, as head of the extended family and the followers, assumed responsibility for the burial. The body might not be touched or washed, but water was sprinkled on it in the final cleansing rite, the lid replaced and prayer offered. There were thousands in the numb congregation. Then the body was laid to rest in the earth below the town house, where for generations people of the ajiya's family and household

had been buried. Ajija Adamu knew that people would wish to know where the grave was, and would wish to pray for the deceased. Without departing from the Islamic law that the ground be left flat and unplastered, and any adjacent stone of gratitude be free of any memorial writing or device, he had it simply marked with some small cement blocks. The wives and the others returned to Abubakar's private house. They had nothing of their own but what they wore and what they carried in their hands. Alhaji Sir Abubakar had left them some gold which Kaftan had brought in a small casket from Lagos, the farm, its implements, and the house in Kaduna.

Aguiyi-Ironsi left police HQ for the *id-el-fitr* holiday, marking the end of *Ramadan*, to stay with the sultan's nephew, Alhaji Shehu Malami. Late that day the federal military government announced 'with deep regret' that the remains of the former prime minister had been discovered and that his burial would be taking place in his home town; 'as a mark of respect to this great son of Nigeria', it had ordered that public offices be closed that day, and that flags should be flown at half mast for three days. By this time the funeral was already over. There followed an echo of every upheaval in Nigeria since the alien occupations of Benin and Sokoto, clinically diagnosed by the unscientific as 'euphoria'. While the great mass of ordinary people deliberately shut their minds and reverted to their briefly interrupted routine of farm and market, office and store, amid whispered speculation, those who were plucking at the skirts of power gloried boldly in the new prospects. The press reflected the latter: the Lagos *Daily Times* blamed politicians for the country having gone wrong and praised the new military régime for the calm change-over which had avoided public panic; the *West African Pilot* said that 16 January would go down in history as the great day when Nigeria took on a new lease of life; the Nigerian *Daily Telegraph* argued that federalism had promoted tribalism, and urged Aguiyi-Ironsi to create a unified system with no regions; the *Nigerian Morning Post* accused politicians of assuming a divine right to lord it over ordinary people, and joined millions of fellow countrymen, as it claimed, in welcoming the dawn of this era; the Nigerian *Sunday Times* thought that perhaps in the final analysis the crisis was not a tragedy, for the lesson was that in the national interest there was a point beyond which compromise became unwisdom.

Individual politicians generally went for cover, particularly those whose consciences might be telling them that they had helped to make the revolution likely: the NPC under its new leader Zanna Bukar Dipcharima declared its unqualified support for the new federal military government: Kola Balogun as spokesman for NCNC and various students', trades union and youth organizations did likewise, although UPGA did later ritually refer to 'mourning the death of a great son who, all things being equal, had left his footprints on the sands of time'; the AG welcomed the régime through the mouth of Adegbenro, at the same time trusting that Aguiyi-Ironsi would hold general elections in three months (failing which they promised to launch violence again in the western region and to disrupt the army); Richard Akinjide pledged the support of the NNDP. The bar association offered loyalty and support, and its co-operation in drafting a new constitution. Emirs called for their people to rally round in the new government's task of eradicating corruption, bribery and nepotism, and restoring the lost glory of the country, as it catered for the masses regardless of tribe, religion or station. The people of the north who truly rejoiced were the relatives of those Tiv still in prison for defying the NPC.

Dr Azikiwe, convalescing from his lung ailment after the cruise, had announced on 11 January in the first of a series of statements from his

sick-bed in a Dorking hotel that being above politics he would fly back to restore peace. Aguiyi-Ironsi's decrees pre-empted any action by him or by the army officers associated with him, and on 17 January he changed his mind; because of the handover he would not fly back until asked to do so, although it would be tragic if the federation collapsed: 'I am not satisfied that the people involved in this have political ambitions. . . . I feel we can always negotiate with those concerned after things settle down'. Wryly he had also said, calling himself the father of his people and a man only interested in restoring peace, 'I would not say I see eye to eye one hundred percent with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, but constitutionally I am supposed to act on advice. If the advice my government gives to me shocks my conscience. I am always at liberty to do the honourable thing and resign'. Whatever his awareness of military and political disaffection, he had been shattered by the nature of what had taken place, and deplored the introduction by 'Young Turks' of the element of violent revolution; 'it is an unwise policy'. (When Azikiwe did return home, although Aguiyi-Ironsi had been in frequent telephonic communication since the revolt, there was no official to meet him at the airport - there was no longer a president for protocol officers to meet). Apart from casual token regrets, nobody outside northern Nigeria had immediate mourning to express for Alhaji Sir Abubakar. A few months later the vice-chancellor of Ibadan university, Dr Kenneth Dike, called for one minute's silence in memory of their first chancellor, saying, 'The educated Nigerian is the worst pedlar of tribalism in Nigeria'.

Official comments heard over the USSR radio, ignoring even Abubakar's name and looking at the whole continent, were strikingly predictable in their surrealist image of the rural African social majority: 'No major social reform had been made in Nigeria. . . . Real democracy was restricted everywhere, but it was such a country that Britain had considered its sincere friend in Africa. The ruling quarters of Nigeria were really loyal to the western monopolies and acted in their interests, not in the interests of the working people. . . . The British newspapers . . . are out to prove that the events were caused only by the inter-tribal struggles and even, allegedly, by the inability of Africans for independent political development. . . . in a bid to defend racism and colonialism. . . . The interference of the armies has prevented the danger of more serious and profound changes caused by the failure of neo-colonialism. . . . A covert struggle between the revolutionary and democratic elements is also going on in the army officers' ranks. . . . If the military régimes repeat the mistakes of the ousted governments . . . [and] are unable to present to the peoples an alternative to the former neo-colonialist policies, the present crisis will break out again. The peoples of Africa are tired of waiting for the solution of pressing problems'. Apparatchiks who had never set eyes on a moujik, and cadres born after every kulak had been liquidated, could still use a tragedy as a tool in the struggle against multi-party systems and free enterprise, while misunderstanding the evidence in their very hands.

Elsewhere in Africa, however, there were strong personal reactions. General Soglo of Dahomey closed the border and declared a whole week's mourning. Flags flew at half mast in Kenya, Zambia and Côte d'Ivoire. Dr Hastings Banda of Malawi said that with the death of the man who had been both a strong believer in the commonwealth and a link between the French- and English-speaking states, the fate of the OAU hung in the balance; Dr Milton Obote of Uganda said that the death of one of the finest African leaders of this century and a statesman of world standing had shocked the world, and was

a great calamity to the successful projection of the image of the independent African states – ‘In mourning his death, we must bear in our hearts the inhuman lack of appreciation of all the late PM did and stood for; the shocking manner in which he died will by itself not solve, but may further complicate, the problems of Nigeria’; President Ahidjo of Cameroun deplored the deaths of Alhaji Sir Abubakar and both premiers, adding that assassinating leaders was not the way to build Africa; President Hamani Diori in Niger also closed his border, spoke of dastardly assassinations, and ordered three days’ mourning for Abubakar; President Nyerere of Tanzania told how Abubakar, a man of great integrity and courage, knew how to disagree without bitterness or intrigue, and he hoped that the new leaders would overcome those persistent problems of organization and attitude which made Alhaji Sir Abubakar an innocent victim. Emperor Hailé Selassié, President Tubman and President Grunitzky of Togo also spoke with audible sincerity.

On the other hand, President Nasser in Egypt looked for closer ties, now that the man who had resisted his overtures had gone. As for President Nkrumah of Ghana, still protecting the Action Group traitors (and only one ironical month distant from being toppled by his own army), still a believer that verbose man-made social systems which employed both superstitious and logical philosophy would frustrate the worldly sins of men, never to realize that a nation may need a century or two fully to recover stability after a social revolution, he had the most piquant cerebral comments. He claimed in a special broadcast that Alhaji Sir Abubakar ‘died a victim of forces he did not understand, and a martyr to a neo-colonialist system of which he was merely the figurehead. Deeply religious, honest and sincere in his personal dealings, striving valiantly to master a situation which was beyond his capacity, he has fallen in a struggle whose nature he never understood. It is right that we should mourn him. It is right that we should honour his memory. But it is equally important that we should understand the factors which brought about his death. . . .’

‘His early life was spent in northern Nigeria where neo-colonialism, in the earliest form of indirect rule, had been developed and perfected since the beginning of the century. Subconsciously, the ruling classes of northern Nigeria came to look on British imperial power as the source of their authority, and they considered independence merely as a method of continuing indirect rule over a larger area by other means. Here it was that the inherent inconsistencies and contradictions of neo-colonialism showed themselves. Those that inherited power in Nigeria assumed that they had only to copy the British parliamentary system in every detail to ensure freedom and justice in Nigeria. In fact by doing so they only transferred to the parliamentary stage the underlying contradictions of Nigeria as colonially constituted. What Sir Abubakar and his government succeeded to was an artificial state, created to suit the needs of early 20th century imperialism. Nigeria became an entity, not because of its peoples but because the rivalry between Britain and France at the turn of the century made it necessary for Britain to control the Niger and its hinterland. On independence the federal government was left with the shadow of authority, but real power rested with the regions. Behind this façade of different forms, imperialism sought to perpetuate its interests. Sir Abubakar and his government therefore faced an impossible task.

‘. . . The tragedy of Sir Abubakar was that he never realized that for Nigeria the choice was either immediate political unification of Africa, or Nigeria’s disintegration. . . . Remarkably honest himself, Sir Abubakar was unable to control the forces of evil generated by the system over which he ruled. His

failure sprang from the fact that he supposed, if his government copied all the outward attributes of British political life, all would be well. He failed to realize that he was being manipulated by neo-colonialism. He was deluded, perhaps, despite his personal modesty, by the applause of western countries who lauded Nigeria as the one true democracy of Africa. In fact they meant by this that Nigeria was, from this point of view, the easiest of all to influence. However, this may be, Sir Abubakar never examined scientifically the basis of the society over which his government governed. If he had done so, he would have realized that of all the countries on our continent, Nigeria had the most to gain and the least to lose by a union of government of Africa. May he rest in peace. Shrewd diagnosis of clinical symptoms in part, in part ensnared for prognosis of treatment and cure by the necromantic vocabulary of the apparatchik who ignored all individualism but his own, Nkrumah failed to show how the Alhaji's analysis could be refuted by the *osagyefo*'s in the long run.

Commonwealth tributes came from President Ayub Khan of Pakistan, Singapore's prime minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, and the Australian premier Sir Robert Menzies, just resigned, who added that, 'his death has come as a great shock to many of us who had come to believe that the principles of constitutional government and of peaceful rule were especially illustrated in Nigeria'. The US secretary of state Dean Rusk and the UN secretary-general U Thant also spoke of him. To them all, he had been a world figure of substance, a consideration that seems not to have entered the minds of the petty creatures who had destroyed him.

In the new Britain his passing was not officially recognized. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh indeed expressed their own deep personal regret at the passing of a friend whom they held in high esteem, but very many of Nigeria's lesser friends who had worked there became increasingly restive at the lack of outright condemnation from the political government, although Mr Bottomley for his own part agreed that the world and commonwealth had lost a powerful advocate for good. There was some wider surprise that the world's diplomatic chanceries appeared to accept the military government as a direct legitimate successor to that of Alhaji Sir Abubakar under President Azikiwe, without further formal recognition or even reference to *de facto* interim legitimacy. After some days the Earl of Perth, Viscount Boyd of Merton and Viscount Chandos felt the need to fill the ruling statesmen's breach strongly enough to write to *The Times*: 'In our official life we had much to do with Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. We became very fond of him and will always remember him as a man whose shining selflessness was an example to people of all creeds. We cannot let his murder pass without expressing our horror and grief. Lord Head wrote an obituary referring to Abubakar's unusual, perhaps unique, difficulties, sustained by his profound love of God and his country. Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith was impelled by an early example of tastelessly self-righteous investigative television journalism to voice his shock to the *Daily Telegraph* about an interview with Major Nzeogwu over his attack on the Sardauna's house, an exchange which had treated the principal murderer as though he were a successful footballer.

It seemed to require an opposition MP during prime minister's question-time in the house of commons to prise a tribute to Alhaji Sir Abubakar out of Mr Harold Wilson, in the course of denying that events had vitiated the decisions of the commonwealth conference at which he had just been Abubakar's guest. When formal books of condolence were opened at the Lagos ministry of

external affairs and the high commission in London, the press took particular note that the secretary of state for commonwealth affairs Mr Arthur Bottomley went to sign for the British government, while mentioning also Mr Harold Macmillan, Lord Boyd and Lord Milverton, and the American ambassador Mr Bruce. But Britain's press and people were already losing interest in just another quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom, except as stereotypes, they still truly knew nothing. They were content that it appeared that firm action had now restored the law and order that had been deteriorating. Among the few who knew something, allegations began to be exchanged, questioning the new diplomacy's loyalty to assumptions that until recently had been fundamental; the deputy high commissioner's staff in Kaduna had been horrified at the suggestion that they might 'take sides' by offering temporary sanctuary to the north's most senior civil servant, much loved by his expatriate colleagues and thought to be on Nzeogwu's death list; the high commissioner in Lagos had had to pour cold water on the request that British troops might help to quell the dissident section of the Nigerian army, as they had done before in east Africa and before that in the gulf. Nigerian ex-ministers were freely commenting that none of this would have happened had Douglas-Home still been British prime minister, or Awolowo's defender Dingle Foot not been the second law officer in Wilson's government. It all remained gossip, but it did great harm to public confidence and diplomatic goodwill.

After a month, in the absence of any formal move for a memorial service, the Britain-Nigeria association prepared a Quaker-style memorial 'meeting' at the Royal Commonwealth Society. Lord Boyd spoke of their affectionate memory of a dear friend and a very great man, and was joined in tributes by the chief imam of the London Islamic cultural centre and Sir James Robertson, who told the gathering of 'a great patriot with a vision of Nigeria as an independent nation. . . . It is a tragedy that, with Nigerian politics as they are, he could not shape events as he wished'. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and Princess Alexandra were all formally represented at this demi-official ceremony by senior members of their households. Mr Wilson was represented by his wife. Government ministers who accepted invitations were the Commonwealth secretary again, Mr Bottomley, the colonial secretary Lord Longford, the overseas development minister Mr Arthur Greenwood, and the lord privy seal Sir Frank Soskice. Her Majesty's opposition included Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Mr Duncan Sandys, Mr Henry Brooke and Mr John Tilney. There were private Nigerians staying in London, from all the regions, who attended in abundance. With the Commonwealth high commissioners there were retired Nigerian officials with their own memories: Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, Sir Stafford Foster-Sutton, the archaeologist Bernard Fagg, and many others. But despite subsidiary references in memoirs, and the creation of a memorial scholarship trust fund by the unofficial association which had arranged the meeting, what they all had to remember was soon submerged in the general public disillusion and cynicism engendered by journalistic interpretations of an imperial past and the probable prospects of Africa. For years to come public thought in Britain of Abubakar's Nigeria was left to sidestream academics to foster, as collateral evidence for their extraneous speculations.

In Nigeria itself the early responses were fading fast. The evaporation of the sub-political terrorists on both sides in the west allowed the army to restore order in a matter of days in the exemplary fashion which Dr Majekodunmi had

foretold, and without crises of conscience among the supposedly sensitive junior officers. The 'euphoria' reported from Kaduna was swallowed up in a nation undercurrent of recalculation as local gossip, persuasive rumour and fantasy grew. Certainly Lagos was wrapped in fear and doubts for about three months with uncertainty of whom to trust, and the clear recognition that Igbos were in charge where so recently northerners in a majority had to some extent shared their powers. On their side even the most cultivated Igbos, such as Mbanime Dike and Nwokedi, continued to blame Britain for slyly supporting the northern and past or remaining British officers for prejudicial favouring of northerners and they looked back on Alhaji Sir Abubakar as part of this web of conspiracy. Few southerners paused to consider how much more quickly those British who had loved their western and eastern wards and colleagues had been given *congé* and disappeared from the regional scenes. The realization of who had died in the coup and the possible rationales of that; the strengthening belief in the moral responsibility, or guilt by association, of senior military and civil survivors; the dramatic spread of bigoted conviction that £2 million of British money had led to martyrs of Islam being killed by imperialism and Zionism; security leaks linking the plotters with Nkrumah's bureau of African affairs; of superstitious countryfolk's certainty that the Sardauna had been miraculously transported to Mecca, whence he would return as an 'awaited Mahdi'; a 'once and future king' – all those perceptions and more led to the unsettledness of minds, and the scholars and apologists who have written in the following years have covered them all elsewhere.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar had left a family behind (nineteen children, including a posthumous daughter Zainab), a home, a farm house and a Kaduna Ibadan and not much else. His old mother, ailing, survived him for barely a year. Although there were some new-fashioned scruples about leaving the inheritance of a prime minister's inheritance to the normal local native court procedure, there were also collateral disputes from which the loyal madaki Alhaji Garba alone kept distant. There was little enough for the *al'kali* to divide following the Maliki code, although in time the embarrassment of the house was disposed of to the Jama'atu Nasriyya Islam. Apart from loose cash, a box, and his depleted library and one or two valuables (such as his wristwatch, world shortwave radio, and a ceremonial scimitar given by the Sardauna, later placed on display in the annexe to the national memorial), no possessions, intended as an insurance, were soon to be unceremoniously reappropriated. Indeed equal in disgrace and irony were parallels between the Sardauna's deserted corpse while people looted his burning house and Abubakar's family, huddled orphans in a den of predators.

The two boys at school in England were comforted and looked after by their kindly headmaster, Trafford Allen, with the support of their guardian, B. Hall, and spent a consoling weekend with their father's one surviving daughter, Mary O'Hara. The school fees for Epsom college thereafter were covered, until a later military government under General Gowenlock assumed the responsibility. Their schoolfellows, including some Africans, were mostly from middle-class professional families, and they were spared from both stereotyped snobbery and the incipient racism of British public schools. Reasonably keen rugby players were to find it uncomfortable at first to adapt to African ways when later Uncle Ahmed returned them from public school to complete higher education at home in their own environment. Keffi government college, although prepared for the news by the

his guardian the Sardauna, could only guess at his own father's fate from the embarrassment of his schoolfellows until the college caterer broke it to him; the expatriate principal with his wife saw to it that another British teacher escorted him home to Bauchi, where he played the man's part in calming the womenfolk's old-fashioned laments, which were still continuing days after the burial. The son of the retired police inspector-general Hodge, whom his father had sent to the Kaduna capital school, heard the news of his old schoolmate and said, 'Poor Bala'.

The younger children, despite such circumstances, all went on to a variety of careers. Except for one daughter, Rabi, who resisted early marriage in favour of academic studies, the girls all married after gaining educational qualifications, mostly to men of local distinction; one of these, Yalwa, was sadly widowed prematurely and followed her father's interests by becoming an organizer of women's education. Apart from Ali, who died at the age of 9, the boys grew up to share such diverse callings as Islamic scholar, social science academic, trainee air pilot, businessman and student of film. Although one developed political philosophies, the father's mantle of political leadership remained unworn during the coming decades of coups and reconstructions.

And yet although Abubakar left behind him neither fortune nor palaces for his family, his spirit emerged recognisably even among the children born too late to have learnt much of it from his lips. As one has said to the present writer, they inherited a strong sense of direction in the world, and this would not wither, since his children had succeeded to it. They came to feel no tragedy in what had happened, rather a landmark as a beginning for themselves. Since he had shown them the way, it was for them to write, not an epitaph, but a prologue. The tone, the flavour, the very language used in this comment were that the child could never have observed. Unlike so many children of great men who were in one way or another spoilt, none has brought shame on his name.

Local initiative eventually prodded military governments into belated action. Bauchi's provincial secretary at the time of the murder and the argument about inheritance protocol, Alhaji Abdurrahman Okene, pressed the northern military governor, the recently promoted lieutenant-colonel Hassan Katsina, to take some steps to show central responsibility for the late prime minister's affairs. Recognition was accorded to a committee chaired by the emir of Bauchi and including the chief imam, the chief alkali, the madaki, ajiya, waziri, sarkin yaki and garkuwa, with a civil service secretary from the provincial office. It was not till years after the estate had been proved and apportioned that the matters of a pension, or *ex gratia* payments for such things as house repairs, were settled. Until then friends saw the prolonged apparent indifference of distant Lagos power as offensive and demoralizing.

The question of a national memorial came very much later, and as something of a surprise to ordinary Bauchi townfolk and to some believers in cardinal Islamic principles. Some time after General Gowon's régime was firmly established and the northern region had been divided into six states, Mormoni Bazza who was holding the senior administrative post in Bauchi state suggested to the committee headed by the emir that something worthy should be done to preserve the prime minister's worldly memory. It seemed to the committee to be a truly national issue and the idea quickly reached Lagos, in whose foreign soil it grew unrecognizably. Although Gowon had advisers who were familiar with both Abubakar's own modest character and Muslim susceptibilities

(Obasanjo was commissioner of works, Shehu Shagari had succeeded Awolowo as commissioner of finance, and Mukhtar Tahir, son of the former Bauchi court registrar, was deputy permanent secretary of works), the original grandiose plan, estimated at around £1½ millions, for which architects' details were invited seems to have envisaged cutting off and realigning existing main roads through Bauchi (a much more formidable and authoritarian project than the residential Backhouse's town roadworks of a generation or more before), and driving a great pedestrian avenue from the Wunti gate straight through the town to the tomb, in the tradition of the Lincoln and Atatürk memorials. In the event the budget fell to £700,000. The mausoleum, which wholly replaces the compound where the burial took place, is a deservedly noble work. The design of Robin Atkinson of the firm of Frydrew Atkinson, it is more reminiscent of a Nilotic temple than of Bauchi or Tafawa Balewa tradition. It was opened in August 1979, just before a return to civilian rule. There is correctly no roof over the central part, so that the tomb is open to the sky, but national and political considerations in Lagos overruled local family and religious custom, and the name and dates are incised on the covering slab. The pilgrim or visitor is impressed and inspired, but those who knew the man who lies there cannot but feel that his diffident approval would have been reserved for the later small annexe, where a library for scholars of the prime minister and his times may study and ponder over what remains of his own book collection, which the garkuwa Alhaji A Ahmed Kari succeeded in preserving, and the museum of his few relics. They may nurse the gloomy thought that of all the founding fathers of the OAU, two-thirds were ousted in coups, and only six died peacefully in office or gave up their positions voluntarily.

There may be readers who will not be disposed to learn more of Abubakar's Nigeria or of its development, with its people unchanged but institutions unrecognizable, through six military coups, an intervening civil war and more constitutional experiment with civilian rule, into a maverick in OPEC, but who nevertheless wonder about the future of the other characters. A list can only be selective, and may begin with some of the civil servants. Robert Wright and Bryan Sharwood-Smith retired to family life. Jock Macpherson became chairman of an English new town development corporation, and of Cable and Wireless. Foley Newns was transferred, after his post-independence Sierra Leonean service as an adviser, to the Bahamas and at final retirement remained the principal authority on the modes of cabinet government for new commonwealth states. John Willie Robertson received the rare distinction for a Scottish commoner of the Knighthood of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle. Michael Varvill became involved in publishing the complete diaries of Samuel Pepys. Peter Stallard was Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man. Stanley Wey continued as secretary to the new governments, but became a philosophical writer and pillar of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, and like his master remained unhonoured by his nation because there was none of greater stature to make the recommendation. Kaftan became an assistant superintendent of the Bauchi native authority police; Orukpabo a passport officer in the diplomatic service.

Of the politicians Nnamdi Azikiwe, his services rejected by Aguiyi-Ironsi, returned two months after the revolt as a private citizen and 'journalist', to survive as a notable figure with personal influence and following, but no true power. Obafemi Awolowo was released by Gowon in a gesture of reconciliation after Ironsi was killed, and like Aminu Kano enjoyed various

prime governmental positions and commissionerships before retreating into elder statesmanship to await the call which never came before his death. Both he and Zik were unsuccessful candidates for an elective executive presidency. Kashim Ibrahim was recalled many times from Maiduguri to play a co-ordinating or propitiatory part, both dignified and efficient, in 'sorting things out' after some upset. Michael Okpara made his way to France and later took further professional training in Dublin before returning home to the healing world of medical practice. Shehu Shagari became the executive President that others had wanted to be, but that experiment collapsed in ruins. Kingsley Mbadiwe, Jaja Wachuku, Inuwa Wada, Ayotunde Rosiji, Isa Kaita, Maitama Sule, and many others of their peers, survived as prominent citizens with interests beyond politics. Okotie-Eboh's personal fortune, probably under a million pounds, remained disputed in the courts for many years without probate being given. Great names from the bench, Ademola, Soweimimo, Mbanefo, retained their repute and self-respect for judicial wisdom in extra-legal society as their years advanced. Dr Elias rose to the highest level of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, and Dr Majekodunmi continued to administer hospitals and primary patient care. Francis Nwokedi, Aguiyi-Ironsi's adviser, later advised Ojukwu in the civil war, and ultimately became a printer in Sierra Leone. Naming of names becomes invidious, but some soldiers should also be mentioned.

The DO Bauchi, secretary to Kaduna executive council and SDO Okene, occasionally mentioned in the main text, wrote from the far east to General Aguiyi-Ironsi in the early summer of 1966, reminding him of past acquaintance over bottles of *Star* beer, when 'Johnny Ironsi' had been a junior officer and governor-general's ADC; he despaired of hearing news that those responsible for murder, reported to be in custody, were to be tried. He had not then heard that Aguiyi-Ironsi had been a target for liquidation by some at least of the mutineers; nor that the military leader's hands were tied by the terms of Nzeogwu's submission, and by the same insecure sense of popular support for bold retribution that had frustrated his butchered friend Abubakar the year before; nor had he realized that those who mourned Abubakar and most of the murdered officers did not necessarily regret the passing of the old régime. The Principal Secretary to the Head of the Federal Military Government, Mr A K Disu, Zik's former publicist, replied with a conveyance of the general's kind memories and assurance that justice would be done. By June a trial of the rebels, even one ending in executions, might have been generally accepted, and have saved the situation. But after bringing nobody to justice, and because of the moves under the guidance of Francis Nwokedi to abolish all semblance of a federation, to destroy all traditional forms of local government and with them the indigenous intelligence systems that had served all governments since 1900, and to unify all services (the bluff soldierly way of abolishing tribalism that only reinvigorated it), Major-General Johnson Thomas Umanankwe Aguiyi-Ironsi died in a counter-coup on 29 July. Lieut-colonel Yakubu Gowon, who had restored the army's morale while waiting for the rebels to receive justice, emerged as the second military head of state; the first commissioners he appointed were Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, J S Tarka and Aminu Kano. The first stumbling efforts followed to rebuild the fragile inter-ethnic unity that Abubakar had tried to build.

Major Donatus Okafor, who had once seen himself as emerging from the revolt as president, met his fate in Abeokuta prison immediately after the counter-coup; statements attributed to him have been published, and have not

been publicly refuted by those in a position to deny them. Major Emman Ifeajuna escaped from Enugu and then, dressed as a woman, fled through Ibadan and Dahomey to be welcomed as a hero by his sponsors in Ghana whence he and the Action Group's Samuel Ikoku were extradited with assurances by Aguiyi-Ironsi after Nkrumah's fall; imprisoned, but not put on trial, in the east, he was released to fight on Ojukwu's side in the secessionist civil war, but was eventually shot on his leader's instructions, if not by Ojukwu himself, for joining another plot. The same fate awaited Victor Banjo in September 1967. Major Kaduna Nzeogwu's body was found during a civil engagement near Nsukka; strong opinion was widely held that he too had been shot by his own side and left to be picked up by the loyalists (he had opposed the secession at the start), although others say that his federal captors were incensed by his rudeness that they shot him summarily. Madiabo became 'the Biafra' in the civil war. Only one of the known principal plotters or suspects seems to have survived; none was ever arraigned in a court of justice, and those held in custody were treated like superior privileged political prisoners. Many have at times and places been regarded as heroic patriots by imperceptible radicals, who may have failed to weigh with discretion all the moral and material attributes of Nigeria's governments before 1965, and to balance them against those since 1966. Many written apologiae have been printed, but not Ifeajuna's which few have read.

Alhaji Sir Abubakar would have wanted, like Oliver Cromwell, to have his portrait painted 'roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything'. No doubt a discreditable that research can uncover has been concealed in these portraits and the most sceptical of his contemporary opponents has never called on him as a private citizen. Yet free-thinking commentators, who have enjoyed the privilege, the temptations and the peril of government, have often found themselves, found much to denounce. An example must be given, lest there be thought a blinkered hagiography. After Alhaji Sir Abubakar's death, the artist Lady Cumming-Bruce, who as the British High Commissioner's wife was regarded the prime minister as a close personal friend, painted a convincing penetrating portrait in oils, which the Nigerian Tobacco Company presented to the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, to hang conspicuously in Abubakar's memory in its entrance lobby. She had taken much trouble in Lagos a man who shared the late prime minister's facial colouring and features as she remembered them, and to recreate them in the canvas. At its unveiling, Major-general Yakubu Gowon, as he had become, quoted Abubakar as saying: 'If we seek truth and justice, we must look for it in the spirit of man. We must to resolve the conflict in men's minds. Man must have inner peace if there is to be world peace - he must return to the things that matter'. This event provoked a historian in the University of Ife to draw a different representation.

If, he wrote, the late prime minister had had even a modicum of the sense so liberally ascribed to him, it would not have needed a military régime to clean up the mess created by the incompetence, misrule, kleptomania and corruption of his government. His lack of vision, courage and conviction, except in the pursuit of narrow political advantage, as opposed to statesmanlike conduct towards nationalist and pan-Africanist goals, were unbelievable. He had decried emergency in the west with little honest justification, but had turned in a cavalier manner a popular request for similar action when the west was on the brink of a disastrous civil war; he had shown the small-min-

a power-hungry politician, rejecting the course of honour and statesmanship, and using a spurious legalistic rationalization that in 1965 law and order had not broken down because there was a single premier, whereas in 1962 there had been two rival premiers. This had been dishonest, irresponsible and cynical. Abubakar had defended at every turn his great friend the minister of finance against charges of using his position to promote his own business interests. Nigeria had become a paradise for foreign investors, and had deservedly acquired a status akin to the leper nation of Africa because of the government's faithful relationship with 'traditional friends' and lack of interest in the key problems that tormented all conscious and patriotic third world or progressive countries, like colonialism, neo-colonialism, racialism and pan-African unity. Little impact had been made on this man of peace by Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Rhodesia, South Africa, Cuba, Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. His attitude to the dastardly murder of Lumumba by the combined forces of imperialism and domestic reaction was baffling, yet when Tshombe was 'riding high', Nigeria had had one of the four or five decadent African governments that were not ashamed to be on an intimate basis with this traitorous régime. His indifference to the unbending and excruciating campaign of the Algerian nationalists against French imperialism had been cold-blooded. The NIIA itself, Abubakar's brainchild, symbolized the emptiness, ineffectiveness and merely decorative nature of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa régime.

That trenchant opinion, of an academic, must in fairness be read against the evidence, the *oral self-defence*, and the implications of the present version of the character and events; and readers must form their own judgement of the prejudices that may lie behind both. The language from Ife echoed none of that heard from Abubakar's own contemporary political enemies or rivals, all of whom have acknowledged his openness of mind. More measured critical tones were heard from the Lagos QC H O Davies, who questioned whether Abubakar's confidence, in 1959, that Nigeria's size and limitless resources alone would make her one of Africa's most important nations, did not merely indicate complacency or naïvety. The lesson might be that while truly democratic systems can attract, and are ill-equipped to crush, both intellectual and criminal corruption, they also do not contentedly maintain supermen in power for long; and Abubakar never wished to be the superman with dictatorial powers who might have achieved the sweeping aims of which such disappointed critics dreamed. Power did emerge, after all, from the barrel of a gun, and it too was frustrated by Nigeria's human realities.

Whatever other weaknesses may be attributed to the only government which Abubakar was competent to appoint in the circumstances, it did hold Nigeria together as a political unit. Seventeen months after its removal the country was plunged into a bloody civil war which cost the lives of many common people, not many well-known officers, and a single Nigerian civilian of distinction – an Igbo poet with a romantic streak (after the peace another academic was killed by a drunken patrol). Years later, referring to contemporary corruption amidst the riches of oil, the country's military leader was to say that in comparison with what had gone before, 'Nigeria never had it so bad'. Every cry for 'unity', be that internal, sectarian or continental, had always been by its very nature a manifestation of basic pluralism at least, if not of actual disunity; every new party label that began with 'United . . .' seemed to guarantee early division; but Alhaji Sir Abubakar had to take note of the reality of the political imperatives which demanded tactical concessions, in the interest of

the internal unity for which he pined, whether they might concede an unsound distribution of a steel industry or an unsound appointment of a general. Given the population distribution of the nation, this had to be done within a fabric that provided the Sardauna with the assurance of northern numerical predomination, and Abubakar himself with the assurance that no other section would win a doctrinal dominance by artifice.

Even Awolowo, on his release, would insist that Nigeria held not four but ten major ethnic groupings, within which were thirty-two northern minorities and nine eastern (Awo admitted to 13.6 million 'Hausa' and Fulani, 13 million Yorubas, 7.8 million Igbos, 3.2 million Efik and Ibibio, 2.9 million Kanuris, 1.5 million Tivs, 0.9 million each Ijòs and Edos, 0.6 million Urhobos and 0.5 million Nupes). Given time, Alhaji Sir Abubakar might perhaps have sought assimilative change in all these peoples, through a dynamic cross-cultural educational approach. This was attempted much later, although alien teachers who seek to change the inherited customs and parentally taught beliefs of young people, in the distant areas to which they have been introduced as strangers, are usually much resented. Almost any of the regional leaders would have had far fewer qualms about using force to get their own way; but it was also they of whom people would later still say, 'The old politicians may have been corrupt, but at least they did not go around shooting people'. The real delicacy of their position was seen when, only six months after Abubakar's murder, leading northerners were once more talking defensively of secession (*a raba, a ware*—let [it] be divided), or of a common market and central common services agency, rather than an effective unitary state.

Economically, before the infrastructural upheaval and partial wealth distribution caused by the oil boom, initiatives which might quite properly be held to Abubakar's nominal credit included the commencement of the Niger Jebba dam, and the Shiroro gorge dam on the Kaduna river; the studies for a further large dam south of Lokoja, delayed though they were by the civil war; and the Ajaokuta steel plant. But it was indicative of contemporary popular esteem that when General Gowon ceremonially opened the great Ka'inji dam (the day of which Abubakar had told his friend Alhaji Abubakar Imam that, once he had seen it, he would die happily) the late prime minister's name, and his encouragement of the project since the early 1950s, was never mentioned in the speeches drafted in Lagos offices. The oversight made Abubakar Imam, a spectator at the site, break into tears.

Historical revisionism is being corrected. Alhaji the Right Honourable Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's image still appears on unflattering Nigerian currency notes. He is honoured by his contemporaries who still live, of all ethnic origins, even those once his opponents. The younger generation, which has often had the benefit of being educated or giving public service in states far from their places of birth, has now come to recognise that their fathers' story before independence was not as shameful as the early revisionists asserted; they too admit that Abubakar truthfully was one of their country's greatest sons, and one of their nation's few genuine founders.

This book has been a demure contribution, from just one outsider who is proud to remember him well and with affection, towards a future widening appreciation of his authentic stature. In the customary Hausa words, sadly commemorating those departed in true faith and fear,

Allah ya ji kansa, amin.

The Proverbs

Alfarma na Kano, sarauta na Sakkwato, yaki na Zariya, karin magana na Bauci

The subheading tells us that we must go to Kano for 'outward show', to Sokoto for 'power', to Zaria for 'bravery in war' – and to Bauchi for 'proverbs'. Interpretations follow of the Hausa proverbs which have been chosen (from the 1935 collection of Burdon, Powell, Whitting and Abubakar Nasiru) to introduce and illustrate each section of the book. They were inserted because Alhaji Sir Abubakar loved to use such morsels from his own folk culture, both as a teacher and as an orator or observer of the passing scene. With his affection for Sir Jock, Sir John Willie and other lesser Scotsmen, he would have been amused by the *Scots identicals or near-equivalents*, which were collected and published in 1750 by the poet Allan Ramsay who lived in a goose-pie house through the wall from where this book was written.

Introduction The blade of grass you despise can pierce your eye (Never underestimate the trivial) (*Little kend* [known], *the less car'd for*).

Contents Only by patience can one gather it all together (*Ye mauna* [mustn't] *think tae win thro' the world on a feather bed*).

Prologue The rainy season, the giver of possessions (Farming is the foundation of everything, but the fields do need water) (*Natur' passes nurtur'*).

Part One Learning to read! Your beginning is a bitter plant, your end is sweet honey (There is no royal road to knowledge) (*Rule youth well, for eild* [old age] *will rule itsel'*).

Chapter 1 If you get a guarantee from an evil spirit, then you can enter the water safely (He had the devil's own luck) (*Gi'e a mon luck, an' fling him in the sea*).

Chapter 2 It's when a tree is green and pliant that one bends it [to make a bow or walking stick], it will grow tall and straight (Much may be made of a man, if he be caught young) (*'atween three an' thirteen, thraw* [twist] *the wand when it's green*).

Chapter 3 One pebble can't beat a whole earth floor flat (*Ae swallow mak's nae summer*).

Chapter 4 The water that's enough for a bathing party, it's by falling in that one knows it (*Experientia docet*) (*Ae hauf* [half] *o' the world kenna* [doesn't know] *how the ither hauf live*).

Chapter 5 God made the silk-cotton tree beautiful, the [ugly] fig tree should cease its anger (Don't kick against the traces) (*That which God will give, the de'il canna reeve* [devil can't steal]).

Chapter 6 Rumbling thunder means a mighty boiling (A great storm is brewing) (*A wee spark mak's meikle wark* [much troublesome work]).

Chapter 7 (If you have to rest, [be sure to] rest in a big shade (A thing worth doing is worth doing well) (*Better ne'er done than ne'er ended*).

Chapter 8 However long the night, dawn will break (*Blaw the wind ne'er sae fast, it'll lown* [calm] *at the last*).

Chapter 9 Character is a mark drawn by a stone, there is no one who can wipe it out (*A mon o' words an' no' o' deeds, is like a gairden fu' [full] o' weeds*).

Part Two One chop won't fell a tree (*Rome wasna a' bigged* [all built] *in a day*).

Chapter 10 It is not because of one's height that one sees the moon (Physical and worldly attributes aren't enough, or 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?') (*Ne'er rax aboon* [reach above] *yer reach*).

Chapter 11 If you see your enemy in the sun, keep blowing more flames close to him (Add to your enemy's discomforts) (*Courtesy is cumbersome tae them, that kens it no'* [know it not]).

Chapter 12 Anyone who ties up a hyena must know how he will manage to let it go free (Make sure how to get out before you jump in) (*Better wade back mid-water than gae foward an' droon* [go forward and drown]).

Chapter 13 The sky will not ever come down to earth, the upward slope doesn't turn into a downward slope ('... and never the twain shall meet') (*It's hard tae please a' [all] parties*).

Chapter 14 A year is only a day, if life remains ahead (Time passes quicker than you think) (*Day licht'll peep through a sma' hole*).

Part Three He's become a pair of trousers that will fit anybody's rump (*Birth's guid* [good] *but breedin's better*).

Chapter 15 One tree is not a forest (*Frien'ship canna staund ay* [can't stand always] *on ae side*).

Chapter 16 One can spend a year slicing water, all one gets is useless spray (Maximum fuss, minimum achievement) (*Lang mint, little dint*).

Chapter 17 Whatever the depth of the water, there's sand in it (Everything comes to an end) (*Be thou well, be thou wae* [woeful], *thou will no' be ay sae* [always so]).

Chapter 18 The goat died and left its skin to suffer (Let those who come after us bear the brunt) (*Ye may ha'e a guid memory, but yer judgment winna gi'e meikle* [won't give much]).

Chapter 19 A large waste of bushland is the medicine for the jealous man (Loneliness makes one receptive to strangers) (*Mak' frien's o' fremit fowk* [stranger folk]).

Chapter 20 Fighting between men [creates] friendship (*Better a fair fae [foe] than a fause [false] frien'*).

Chapter 21 You should look for good fortune in a smiling face (*Love an' licht winna [light won't] hide*).

Chapter 22 Even nowadays water is the cure for dirt (The important things never change) (*We'll ne'er ken the worth o' the water till the well gae [goes] dry*).

Chapter 23 The seventh month is the ending of the dry season – even if there is no wet season [yet], there is every likelihood of it (However weary the wait, a change is bound to come) (*Ae guid turn may meet anither, if [though] it were at the brigg [bridge] o' London*).

Chapter 24 We should pass that sort of thing by – an emir's son on a donkey (The truly great may dispense with pomp) (*Meat feeds an' claith cleads [cloth clads], but manners mak's the mon*).

Part Four 'We mean to go to the heavens', [he said as] he climbed the deleb palm (At least take the first step, if you're going to tackle an impossibility) (*A begun turn is hauf ended*).

Chapter 25 Life sees life, the Nupe man saw gruel (It's good to see an old friend again, as the man said when he saw his favourite meal) (*Remember, mon, an' keep in min', a faithfu' frien' is hard to fin'*).

Chapter 26 Every man, in his own house, reverts to being a boy. We all know each other, there, we'll do all right (*Play's guid while it is play. Let by gones be by gones, and fair play in time to come*).

Chapter 27 Only if the character is similar, can one then create friendship (*As ye lead yer life, ye judge yer neighbours*).

Chapter 28 'Not so bad'? That's not exactly laudatory (*Let them care that come behind*).

Chapter 29 Plans, clever talk and skill, all three won't bring a man to next year (*Mon propones, but God dispones*).

Chapter 30 Farming is hard, but once it's finished, it's nice to be able to eat [the produce] (*God ne'er sent the mou' [-th], but [except] he sent the meat wi' it*).

Part Five May God give me an entrance, I'll make my own way out (Just give me a chance (*Ae bird in haun [hand], is worth ten fleeand [flying]*)).

Chapter 31 The man with the sweet personality comes from God (*Ane ne'er tines [one never loses] by daein' guid*).

Chapter 32 A lie passes a year [and remains] a lie; truth has its own fixed place [forever] (*Fause fowk [false folk] shou'd hae mony witnesses*).

Chapter 33 Only when one is wrestling breast to breast does one recognise a great man (*Ne'er show your teeth unless you can bite*).

Chapter 34 Black shade! Rather the [scorching] sun than you! (*'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes'*).

Chapter 35 Law! You have no diversion; anyone who swerves from you, you tread on him (*Every mon's blin' in his ain [own] case*).

Chapter 36 Living happily with a friend, that is what brings you a yearning [when he is absent] (*Hearts may agree, though heids [heads] differ*).

Chapter 37 If the end comes, there's no avoiding it (*Flee as fast as you can your fortune will be at your tail*).

Chapter 38 It is said that when they told the goat that the head butcher was dead, she riposted, 'O indeed? and did the slaughtering knife die along with him?' (*Hearken to the hinder end, hereafter comes not yet*).

Part Six The funeral alms were collected, but the scheming sorcerer was denied [his share]: he said, 'It [the killing] will be done again' (*The de'il [devil] will tak' little ere he wants a' [all]*).

Chapter 39 The size of a madman is useless, a small healthy person is better than him (*Ill-won gear winna enrich the third heir, or Health is the best wealth*).

Chapter 40 Don't give a man an arrow, for him to return and shoot you with it (*Anger's mair [more] hurtfu' than the wrang [wrong] that caused it*).

Chapter 41 Choose your neighbour before you buy your house (*We can live wi'oot [without] oor frien's, but no' wi'oot oor neighbours*).

Chapter 42 If the dance is coming to the palace entrance, what is the point of peeping over the wall? (Why take pains to get what will be yours inevitably?) (*He that has mickle wad ay ha'e mair [much would always want to have more]*).

Chapter 43 Anyone who sups [something that's] hot [has to look after] his mouth (Everyone carries the consequences of his own actions) (*As ye maun [must] lie doon your bed, sae [so] ye maun [must] lie doon*).

Chapter 44 Spending a day with a friend is better than a year with an enemy (*A guid [good] frien' is ne'er tint [lost], but an ill ane's at hand*).

Chapter 45 He who can remember last year won't find this year pleasurable ('*Laudator temporis acti*' may be right) (*They that laugh the mornin' may greet [weep] ere nicht [night]*).

Chapter 46 Anyone who does [just] what he wants is going to meet with misery (*A wilfu' mon ne'er wanted wae [lacked woe]*).

Chapter 47 Everything is with whom? It is with God (*God sends meat, but the de'il sends cooks*).

Chapter 48 To do it and finish it, that's better than let it be ended tomorrow. (*There's naething got by delay, but dirt and lang [long] nails*).

Chapter 49 Kindness and evil, one does not forget either of them (*Do we and doubt nae [no] man, do ill and doubt a' [all] men*).

Epilogue On the day of death, love is ashamed (*Cauld [cold] cools the love that kindles o'er het [over heat]*).

Acknowledgements

The writer wishes to thank the following people most warmly for the privilege of the conversations on the dates shown (where noted). These helped greatly to complete his work. In many cases also they gave him access to, or gifts or loans of, papers and letters. With some the meetings were numerous, over too many years for any specific dates to be significant.

- Dan Galadima Alhaji Abdullahi Khalil (2/88)
Grand Khadi Alhaji Abdulmalik Bappa Mahmud (16/2/88)
Alhaji Abdurrahman Mora (11/2/88)
The late Alhaji Dr Abubakar Imam CON CBE LLD (25/1/81)
Alhaji Abubakar Saddiq (Bas) dan Bappa OFR (24/2/88)
The late Sarkin Bauci (the Emir) Alhaji Adamu Jumba CFR CBE
(1950-57, 2/81)
Ajiyan Bauci Alhaji Adamu Tafawa Balewa OON (29/1/81, 16/2/88)
The Rt Hon Sir Adetokunboh Ademola GCON CFR KBE (4/2/88)
Dr Ahmadu Usman Jalingo PhD MSc (1978-79, 2/81, 24/2/88)
Alhaji Ahmed Jarma Misau (2/2/81)
Garkuwan Bauci Alhaji A Ahmed Kari (16/2/88)
Alhaji Ahmed Kurfi (18/2/88)
Alhaji Ahmed Talib CFR CBE LLD DCL (1/81, 8/2/88)
Hajiya A'ishatu Jummai (1/81)
The late Alhaji Dr Aliyu Abubakar BA MA PhD (28/1/81)
Alhaji Aliyu Danyari (11/2/88)
The late (Alhaji) Aminu Kano ('Malam') (19/1/81)
HE Chief Emeka C Anyaoku (22/9/80)
Mr E S Armitage BSc FICE FIHE MASCE (1951-53 and 22/2/81)
Alhaji Baba Sidi (29/1/81)
Alhaji Bala (Abubakar) Tafawa Balewa (17/2/88)
Sarkin Magana Alhaji Bature (20/2/88)
The late Makaman Kano Alhaji Bello Dan Amar CBE (20/1/81)
Otunba T O Shobowale Benson CFR (3/2/88)
The Rt Hon Lord Bottomley OBE (15/3/83)
The late Rt Hon Viscount Boyd of Merton CH (19/10 and 22/12/78)
The late Rt Hon Lord Caradon GCMG (23/12/78)
Mrs Betty Dan Bappa (24/2/88)
Dr Alec G Dickson CBE (1982)
Mr Gabriel Fagbure (3/2/88)
Ir Hein C Frijlink OBE (1980)
Alhaji Gida'fo Mu'azu Jama'are (28/1/81)
Hajiya Habiba Kaita (24/2/88)
The late Mr John E Hodge CMG QPM (1979)
Mrs Rosemary Hollis (Pugh) (1979)
The Rt Hon Lord Home of the Hirsell KT (1982 and 23/3/89)
Sir David Hunt KCMG OBE (1985)

- Magajin Garin Kano Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa Wada CFR (24/2/88)
 Wazirin Katsina Alhaji Isa Kaita CON CBE DPA LLB (23/1/81, 10 and 13/2/88)
 Alhaji Dr Isma'il Babatunde Jose OFR (27/2/88)
 Mr Cam Judd (10/7/79)
 Mr Richard J D M Kinsman (8/7/86)
 Mr Charles Olatunde Lawson CON MA BSc (1/2/88)
 Alhaji Liman Ciroma (18/2/88)
 Sir Kenneth Maddocks KCMG KCVO (1954-88)
 Dr Moses Adekoyo Majekodunmi CFR CMG (4/81, 5/2/88)
 Malam Mammam Daura MA MBA (1987-88)
 The late Mr Hedley H Marshall CMG QC (1954-80)
 The late Dr Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe (12/2/81)
 Mr N C McClintock CBE (1986)
 Alhaji Muhammadu Babban Mutum (29/1/81)
 Alhaji Mukhtar Tafawa Balewa (25/2/88)
 Mutuwallin Katsina Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua (22/2/88)
 Magajin Garin Zazzau Alhaji Nuhu Bamalli (20/7/87, 12/2/88)
 Alhaji Othman Ja'afar (9/2/88)
 The Rt Hon the Earl of Perth (1983)
 Emeritus Professor Margaret Read (1978)
 The late Sir James Robertson KT GCMG GCVO (4/78)
 Chief Ayotunde Rosiji (5/2/88)
 Mr D Christopher Rounthwaite (1979 and 1988)
 Malam Saddik Abubakar (27-28/11/88)
 The late Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith KCMG KCVO KBE ED,
 & Lady Sharwood-Smith (1954-88)
 The late Madakin Kano Alhaji Shehu Ahmed MBE (20/1/81)
 Alhaji Shehu Awak (1981)
 Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Usman Shagari (2/81)
 The late Mr Anthony A Shillingford CBE (1978)
 Chief Justice George Shodeinde Sowemimo (4/2/88)
 The late Mr Laurence T Stevenson (11/82)
 Sarkin Fadan Kano Alhaji Sule Gaya OFR (24/2/88)
 Mr Gerald V Summerhayes CMG (4/2/81)
 The Rt Hon Lord Thurlow KCMG (26/6/90)
 The late Mr Michael H Varvill CMG (17/10/78)
 Dr Ugo Ngwa Jaja Wachuku MA LLD (12/2/81)
 Major-General Sir Christopher Welby-Everard KBE CB (14/6/88)
 Mr Stanley Olabode Wey jssc idc (4/2/88)
 Mr James H Whalley MBE MA (1979)
 Mr David M Williams CBE MA ('Matchet') (28/6/87, 17/6/89 and 27/6/90)
 Mr Robert H Wright (1949-88)
 Dr Alhaji Yahaya Gusau OFR OBE LLD DLitt (4/2/81, 8/2/88)
 Sarkin YaKIn Bauci Alhaji YaKubu Lame (28/1/81)
 Wazirin Bauci Alhaji YaKubu Wanka OFR MON (16/2/88)
 Malama Yalwa Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (16/2/88)
 Alhaji Yusuff Maitama Sule (19/1/81)
 Hajiya Zainab Inni (1/81)

Professor Chinua Achebe very kindly gave permission to quote as an epigraph the sentence from his book, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, published by Heinemann, London, in 1983.

The writer is also indebted for additional very practical personal help to Alhaji Abdullahi Khalil, managing director of Hudahuda Publishing Co Ltd; to Malam Mamman Daura, Director, and Messrs Ibrahim O Ohai and A O Ajayi of KFCC Ltd; to drivers Yusufu Balarabe and Celestine; to Chief E A O Shonekan, Chairman of UAC of Nigeria Ltd, and Chief Sobo Sowemimo; to Mr Michael Okereke and Miss Duro Onabolu, formerly of UAC of Nigeria Ltd in Lagos; to Messrs Ndekwe & R A Adeosun of the National Archives in Kaduna; to Mr W Desmond Wilson OBE, former British Deputy High Commissioner at Kaduna and Mrs Wilson; to the staffs of the Public Records Office, Kew, National Library of Scotland, Rhodes House Library (the Bodleian), the libraries of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, of the Royal Commonwealth Society, of the Centre for African Studies, University of Edinburgh, and of the library of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa mausoleum in Bauchi. Hereonwards, and in the index, all other persons whom the writer has known or met personally, though not always for the purposes of this book, are marked with a dagger (†).

He is grateful to the British Broadcasting Corporation for generous opportunity to re-hear the tape of the *Leaders of the New Africa* programme on Abubakar, written and produced by Frank Barber and researched by Alison Truefitt †, which included contributions by the late Tom Baldwin, the late Eric L Mort OBE and the late Madakin Bauci Alhaji Abubakar Garba Kafin Madaki †, and by Christopher Graham †, and Mr Enodien; and to the Director, staff and Academic Registrar of the University of London Institute of Education, in particular for copies of the student Abubakar's terminal essay and report, from which quotations have been made and whose copyright is acknowledged – the conclusion of Chapter 9 is also based closely on that essay.

The following names are also most gratefully acknowledged. All sent helpful private correspondence, and in some cases additional papers or records that proved to be invaluable -

Mr Hugh M Alexander
 Mr R L Armstrong OBE MA CEng FICE
 Mr Burland A Babb
 The Rt Hon Lord Bancroft GCB
 HE Mr Brian L Barder †
 The late Sir William Gorell Barnes KCMG CB
 Sir Gawain Bell KCMG OBE †
 The late Sir Arthur Benson GCMG KCVO
 Miss Margaret Burness
 Mr P F Campbell
 Mr George G Carlyle OBE
 Mr A J Carpenter
 Mr John D Clarke †
 Mr Nigel F Cooke †
 The late Sir Leonard Daldry KBE
 His Excellency Judge T O Elias GCON CFR DSc
 Mr J B Davies CMG OBE †
 Mr Anthony G Eyre †
 Sir Robert Fellowes KCVO
 Sir Stanley Finland KCMG

- The late Mr M H V Fleming
 Mr Laurence C Giles MBE †
 Mr Humphrey C Gill †
 The late Sir Bruce Greatbatch KCVO CMG MBE †
 Mr James D Greig CMG †
 The Rt Hon Lord Grey of Naunton GCMG GCVO OBE †
 Mr J E B Hall CMG
 Mr E Keith Hallam
 The late Rt Hon Viscount Head GCMG CBE MC
 Mr Eric Hefford CVO
 The Rt Hon Sir William Heseltine GCVO CB ACT
 Mr F H (Patrick) Jaekel OBE †
 Sir James Johnston KCMG
 Mr Antony H M Kirk-Greene MBE MA †
 Sir Noël Larmour KCMG †
 Professor L John Lewis BSc
 The late Mr John Lynn OBE MVO
 Mr Desmond F H MacBride †
 Ir A G Maris
 The late Mr Leslie A Marsden CMG
 The late Mr Charles W Michie CMG †
 Dr Norman J Miners MA PhD
 Sir Leslie Monson KCMG
 Sir John Moreton KCMG KCVO MC
 Sir Foley News KCMG CVO †
 Sir Rex Niven CMG MC †
 The late Mrs Mary O'Hara
 Mr J W H O'Regan OBE †
 Mr John J O'Sullivan CBE QPM †
 The late Mr Geoffrey H Payton †
 The late Dame Margery Perham DCMG CBE †
 Mr H F P Plumridge
 Mr John F Ross †
 Mr D O Savill †
 Mrs Isobel Slater MBE
 Mr John H Smith CBE †
 Mr Maurice G Smith †
 Sir Peter Stallard KCMG CVO MBE †
 The late Rt Hon the Earl of Stockton CH †
 Mr Ambler R Thomas CMG †
 Miss Alison Truefitt †
 Herr Helmut Türk †
 Mr Leith S Watt †
 Mr Donald H Williams MBE †

Apologies must inevitably be due for some errors and omissions in these attributions. Readers will surmise that Nigerian friends are always generous with oral reminiscences, but chary of answering mere letters – there are indeed many potential informants who might have been listed here but whom the writer failed either to meet or to reach through written word. Any corrections of errors in detail or timing, or new material, that readers may be able to offer will be very welcome, and would be embodied in any revised publication.

Latecomers on the scene were Mr Philip Walters, a Director of Edward Arnold (Division of Hodder & Stoughton), and Ms Diane Leadbetter-Conway, their Editor, who saw the book through the press on a fast track which I never expected to see. They shared the author's problems in friendly, professional and supportive manner traditional in their craft.

Particular reference must be made to the transcripts of interviews held in the Oxford Colonial Records Project, the Development Records Project and allied archives. The following are those which proved to be relevant, with the names of the persons who gave permission to study papers which are still 'restricted' shown (*in brackets*) –

Chief Simeon Olaosebiken Adebo CON CMG
 Sir Gawain (Westray) Bell † (*Sir Gawain*)
 Sir (Conrad Swire) Kerr Bovell
 Lord Caradon †
 Viscount Chandos PC DSO MC LLD (*The second Lord Chandos*)
 Mr Jack B Davies †
 Mr Randolph E Ellison CMG †
 Mr Henry George Farrant OBE † (*Mr W F Farrant*)
 Mr F Dennis Hibbert CMG †
 Rt Hon Iain Macleod (*Baroness Macleod of Borve*)
 Sir John Macpherson GCMG † (*Lady Macpherson and Mr Ian F C Macpherson OBE*)
 Mr Hedley Marshall † (*The late Mr Marshall*)
 Rt Hon Reginald Maudling (*Baroness Maudling*)
 Lord Milverton GCMG
 Mr Eric L Mort
 Sir Rex Niven †
 Dame Margery Perham †
 Sir James Robertson †
 Sir Thomas Scrivenor CMG
 Sir Bryan Evers Sharwood-Smith †
 Sir Peter Stallard † (*Sir Peter*)
 Mr Ronald E Wraith CBE †

The following files were of value –

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MIA/G/96

PER/801

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828 A RIGHT HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN

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Debt is owed above all to the complete run of *West Africa* held in the University of Edinburgh Centre of African Studies, without which basic research would have been an impossibility, and to the *Records of Proceedings of the Nigeria Legislative Council Debates, Northern House of Assembly (Regional Council) Debates, House of Representatives Debates and Federal Parliament Debates*, held in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library.

Some useful references were found in *The Times*, *West African Review*, *The New Nigeria*, *Africa Research Bulletin* and *Britannica Books of the Year*.

Any Nigerian bibliography will include many other books besides those listed below; they may have been read, but will not have directly helped the preparation of this volume. Apart from the obvious standard reference books (including *Makers of Modern Africa: Profiles in History* (London 1981), *Africa Today* (London 1987) and *Africa South of the Sahara* (London 1987)), the following titles were directly consulted for background; their authors, and careful readers of them, may deduce how far the writer has agreed or disagreed with any incidental conclusions concerning Abubakar or his environment -

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- THYSVILLE**⁷, Congolese Town, now Mbanza Ngungu (Zaire), 480.
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SO, Division of Warri (Delta)

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Dutch Town, 315.

I, Town in Ishan Division, Benin

Province (Bendel State), 444.

BURA, Capital of Burundi, 675.

HT⁶, Dutch City, 315.

DUVER, Canadian City, 240.

BURG⁵, American Town, 279-80.

RIA⁴, Port in Victoria Division,

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NGFORD, British Town, 315.

⁴, HQ Town, Division and

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NGTON, DC, Capital of USA,

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RI⁴, Town and Division in Benue

Province, 177.

, Gate in Bauchi Town, 79, 813.

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WUSHISHI⁴, Second-Class Chiefdom
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YABA¹⁰, Mainland Suburb of Lagos, 15
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YALWA³, Village by Bauchi and Train
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YANKARI, Game Reserve in Bauchi
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YAOUNDE, Capital of French Cameroon
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YAURI⁴, Yawuri, Second-Class Emirate
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YOLA⁴, HQ Town of First-Class
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ZANDVOORT⁶, Dutch Town, 315.

ZANZIBAR, Island Protectorate, later
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ZARIA⁴, HQ Town of First-Class
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ZEGIZEGI, see Bauchi, xxxvii.

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ZUNGERU⁴, former HQ of Northern
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a^H, one, *impers pr.*

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abu, (gen) *abin^H*, thing.

ACTION GROUP (AG), Ibadan based Western Regional Political Party, 154, 160, 173, 176, 180, 183, 188, 192-3, 196, 199, 201, 206-8, 212-4, 217-8, 220-4, 230, 240, 243, 247-51, 254, 265, 272, 282, 290, 291, 296, 301, 308, 312-3, 317, 320, 328-30, 342-3, 358-60, 363, 365, 372-4, 376-7, 381, 386, 391, 401-15, 407-8, 411, 415, 418-9, 424, 426, 444-7, 452, 462, 472, 479, 501, 503-4, 508, 511, 518, 528, 537-42, 543-8, 550-5, 558-9, 561-2, 571, 575-7, 596, 600, 604, 610-2, 617, 619-20, 633, 635-6, 639, 645, 654-5, 664-5, 671-2, 680-2, 686, 689-91, 694, 695-6, 703, 706, 709, 714, 717-8, 721-2, 729, 734, 738, 744, 749-50, 757-9, 761-2, 765-6, 768-9, 786, 807-8, 815.

addini^H, religion.

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aiki^H, work.

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al'amari, (pl) *al'amura^H*, affair.

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algaita^H, simple Oboe.

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ALKALI, Islamic Court Judge, xxxii-iii, xxxviii, 48, 237, 404, 573, 619, 812.

alkyabba^H, burnous.

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AMALGAMATION (UNIFICATION) OF NIGERIA, 7.

amana^H, friendliness, trust.

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ANIMISM, attribution of soul to natural things, xxxii, 5, 134, 619, 720.

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- arewa^H*, north.
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- attajiri*, (pl) *attajirai^H*, wealthy trader.
- ATTORNEYS-GENERAL**, 36, 211, 231, 451, 598, 635.
- azumi^H*, Great Fast of Ramadan.
- ba . . . ba^H*, (there is) not.
- baba^H*, equal or inferior coeval of father.
- babba(n)^H*, big, great.
- bafada*, (pl) *fadawa^H*, courtier.
- Bairam**, Muslim Festival, Lesser for three days following Ramadan, Greater for four days seventy days later.
- bakwai^H*, seven.
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- bature*, (pl) *turawa^H*, white man, Arab Syrian.
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- bawa*, (pl) *bayi^H*, slave, servant.
- bawan Alla*, *bayin Alla^H*, human being persons.
- BENIN SACRIFICIES**, xxxiii.
- biyayya^H*, obedience, loyalty.
- boko^H*, 'book'. secular education.
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- buhu^H*, sack.
- bulala^H*, hippohide whip.
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- chop*, pidgin for food.
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- ci^H*, eat, gnaw, win, etc.
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cucananci^H, marks of slavery, effrontery

da^H, with

da, (gen) *dan*^H, son.

dai^H, indeed.

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Damisa^H, Leopard; Name of
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danniya^H, pressure, repression.

daraja^H, rank, value, respect, .

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- doka^H*, order, prohibition.
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- fadawa*, (sing) *bafada*^H, courtiers, xxxi.
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- FRELIMO**, Mozambique Freedom Movement, 583.
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- FUNAS**, Federated Union of Native Administration Staff, 44, 260.
- fura*^H, cooked flour ball for mixing in milk.
- gaba*; *ci gaba*^H, front, forward; adv. progress.
- GALADIMA**, Traditional Title, District Head or NA Official, 76, 360.
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- gari*^H, town.
- GARKUWA**, Shield, Traditional Title xxxvii, 527, 619.
- GAS**, Natural Industry, 653-4.
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- gida*^H, compound, house.
- gini*^H, building-*girma*^H, bigness, ground honoured position.
- gona*^H, farm.
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- gwamna*^H, governor.
- gwani*^H, expert, skilled person.
- gyara*^H, repair.
- HADĪTH**, Traditions about Prophet Muhammad, 86.
- haj*, *haji*^H, pilgrimage to Mecca.
- hakimi*, pl *hakimai*^H, District Head, xxxvii, 11.
- haraji*^H, Poll Tax, Direct Tax, xxxii, x.
- hardo*, Cattle Fulani headman.
- hau*^H, mount, climb.
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- id-el-fit*, Lesser Bairam, festival following end of Ramadan fast.
- IDOMA STATE UNION**, 205.
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- FRENCH**, 29, 40-2, 52.
- ina*^H, how, where, I'm.
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- iska*^H, wind, spirit.
- ISLAM**, xxix-xxxiii, xxxv-vi, xxxix-xl, 7, 27, 50-2, 71, 77, 81, 86, 108, 134, 216, 239, 241, 257, 260, 263, 273, 287, 294, 313, 320, 323-5, 355, 364, 374, 379, 384, 404, 446, 526, 539, 573, 619, 623, 638, 688, 719-21, 729, 749, 812.
- istihara*^H, seeking divine counsel.
- jahilci*^H, ignorance.
- jakada*^H, messenger, tax gatherer, xxxvii.
- JAKADIYA**, Newspaper, 107.
- JAMA'AT-EL-NASR-EL-ISLAM (JNI)**, Jama'at Nasaru Islam, 718-9, 812.
- jama'a*^H, community, crowd, public.
- jam'iyya*^H, society, club, political party.
- JAM'IYYAR AL'AMURAN NIJERIJATA AREWA**, 133.
- JAM'IYYAR MUTANEN AREWA TAYAU**, 113, 120.
- jangali*^H, cattle tax, xxxii, xxxix, 159, 206, 610.
- jihad*^H, Fight in the Way of God, xxxii, 383, 593, 720, 749, 802.
- jinkai*^H, mercy.
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- ANCASTER HOUSE**, London Conference Centre, 770.
- anga^H**, children's hopping game.
- appa**, wrapper, pidgin for waiver.
- AW**, 7, 21-2, 27, 48, 59, 93, 237, 257, 273, 361, 364, 385, 507-8, 573, 594, 619.
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- man^H**, imam, officiating Muslim.
- LIVESTOCK MISSION**, 150.
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- GUARD HALL**, Northern Regional Council Chamber, 101, 128.
- aji^H**, native authority treasurer.
- adaki, madawaki^H**, traditional title, district head, Master of Horse, 7, 225.
- haukata**, (sing) imahaukaci^H, madam, esp organized Kano thugs, 201, 225.
- MAHDI, MAHDISM**, Rightly Guided One who will bring about Victory of Islam, Belief that such a One has Come, xxxvi, 7, 26.
- (pl) **masu^H**, owner of.
- aranta^H**, school.
- malami**, (pl) **malamai^H**, from Arabic **ulamā**, literate person, teacher, n. equivalent of 'Mr'.
- MARIA**, 8.
- MAKFI**, Founder of a School of Muslim Law, universal in Northern Nigeria, 59, 225.
- ama^H**, possess, rule over.
- MALAMS**, from **malami**, literates, scholars, gentlemen, xxxi.
- HESTER GUARDIAN**, British newspaper, now *The Guardian*.
- WAR BAY**, Community Development Training Centre at Victoria, Southern Cameroons, 18, 568.
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- maroki^H*, pleader, professional beggar.
- MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, etc**, xxxi, 25-6, 77, 86, 88, 108.
- masara^H*, maize.
- mato^H*, motorcar
- MAU MAU**, 176-7, 207, 215, 257, 477, 526.
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- MID-WEST PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (MPC)**, 636.
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- MORAL STANDARDS**, 18, 102, 108, 178, 227, 258, 277.
- MOUVEMENT NATIONAL CONGOLAIS (MNC)**, 370, 396, 433.
- MPLA**, Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola, 674.
- mulki^H*, ruling, government.
- mulkin kai^H*, self-government.
- MUTINY**, 417, 744-8, 784-804.
- mutum (in nan)^H*, (that) man.
- mutuwa^H*, death.
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- nema^H*, seek, seeking.
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- ni^H*, I, me.
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- rana(r)*^H, sun, sunshine, day, date (of).
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- ruwa*^H, water, rain, liquid.
- sabo(n)*^H, new.
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- salla(h)*^H, daily prayer (one of five), festival, *haj*, 11.
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- sarakuna*, (sing) *sarki*^H, chiefs, xxx.
- SARDAUNA**^H, Gobir and Sokoto Traditional Title, Head of Ruler's Bodyguard.
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su^H, they, them.

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taimako^H, help, liberality.

taki(n)^H, manure, fertilizer (from).

talakawa, (sing) *talaka^H*, commoners,

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tambaya, (pl) *tambayoyi^H*, question(s).

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tarika^H, sect, 57, 82, 134, 291, 721.

taro^H, gathering, crowd.

tattaunci^H, continual chewing, unending

discussion.

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- tona^H*, dig up.
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- tukwici^H*, gift to bringer of another's present.
- tun^H*, since, while.
- Turai^H*, Europe.
- TUSSAUD'S WAXWORKS, MADAME**, in London, 531.
- tuwo^H*, staple food (Guinea-corn or millet flour in butter and gravy soup).
- TWELVE PILLARS**, Proposed Northern Provincial Authorities, 271, 287, 310-1, 319, 349, 357, 362, 365, 386, 603.
- UDEAC**, *Union Douanière et Économique de l'Afrique Centrale*, 754.
- uku^H*, three.
- 'ulam*, scribes, learned doctors.
- 'UMRAH**, Visit to Ka'aba, Lesser Pilgrimage, 323, 719, 767, 775, 786.
- UNCTAD**, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 667-8, 754.
- UNESCO**, United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, 438, 504, 670.
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da^H, rumour, *on dit*, watch out!

WAKILIH, (pl) *wakilai*, representative, deputy, traditional officeholder's title.

da^H, who, which.

do^H, trousers.

sa^H, sift out, separate.

ka^H, goatskin used as loincloth.

RSAW PACT, 263, 492.

ifa^H, repetitious prayers.

ZIRIH, Traditional Important Title, Vizier, 241, 246, 382.

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yadda^H, (*rel*) how.

yana, *ya ke*^H, he/it is (*cont*).

yaki^H, war.

yau^H, today.

'yan (sing of *da*)^H, sons, children of.

'ya'ya^H, children.

yi(n)^H, do(ing).

YORUBA PARAPO, 620.

zalunci^H, oppression.

zama(n)^H, is, being seated, state (of)

zamani^H, period, present day.

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zane^H, line drawn on sand, handmark sign, *etc.*

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
RECEIVED FROM COST
JAN FEB 2000
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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



TREVOR CLARK was educated in Scotland. After early years at Glasgow Academy he went to Edinburgh Academy. He then read Classical Honour Moderations and Mathematics (PPE) at Magdalen College, Oxford. He is a practising Barrister of the Middle Temple. He was commissioned in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and served with the Sierra Leone and Gambia Regiments of the Royal West African Frontier Force during the Second World War, as part of the 81st (West African) Division in The Kaladan Valley. After the Pacific War ended he was extra-regimentally employed with the (West African) Division in Rangoon, Burma, as a member of the staff.

Joining HM Colonial Administrative Service in Nigeria in 1948, he was successively Assistant District Officer at Katagum, at Azare; ADO and District Officer at Bauchi; Deputy Secretary to the Executive Council in the Governor's Office of the Northern Region at Kaduna; the first Secretary to the northern cabinet; and Senior District Officer, Igbirra, at Okene. In Bauchi he knew Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa well, and met him frequently thereafter in Kaduna, Okene and Lagos. Later, after working in Hong Kong and the Pacific region, he was made CBE and LVO.

Since retiring in 1977 he has been a town councillor in Edinburgh, a member of a VSO selection panel, involved in UK and Scottish museums and galleries in various Edinburgh film, arts, heritage and heritage voluntary responsibilities. With his wife he has maintained lively interests and friendships in Nigeria, Hong Kong and the Pacific. Although he has written many articles and reviews, this is his first book.



Hudahuda Publishing Company, Zaria
ISBN 0 340 56190 4

