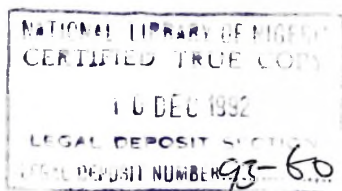


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**THE EGBA  
AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS**



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**THE EGBA  
AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS  
1842-1872**

**BY  
SABURI O. BIOBAKU**

**University Press PLC  
Ibadan  
1991**

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## PREFACE

THIS book, which is based on a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of London in May 1951, deals with the external relations of the Egba State from 1842 to 1872, from the time when the first missionary arrived at Abeokuta to the departure of Commander Glover from Lagos, the coastal British colony. In order to understand fully the forces at work, I have reconstructed the Egba state from the original homes of the Egba and have shown how it was transplanted to the composite town of Abeokuta in 1830. Then begins the main study which is essentially a study of the reaction of indigenous peoples to outside events: the impact of the transatlantic slave trade; the return of kinsmen once carried away into slavery; the advent of missionary enterprise; the installation of official British influence and, later, power at Lagos; and the gropings towards the expansion of trade into the interior. It explains why the Egba, who were proclaimed to the world by the missionaries as the spearhead of civilization in that part of Africa, came to be regarded by the Lagos authorities as the chief obstacle to peace in the neighbourhood.

During the period covered by this book opinion in Britain was against 'imperialism'. It was, nevertheless, a period of preparation for the eventual British penetration of the interior through Lagos. The detailed study of Egba relations in the pre-expansion era reveals the complexity of the problems of penetration and warns against a facile analysis of the issues in terms of the revival of the slave trade and the quest for a free access to the coast. Power politics obtained in the Yoruba country and the British authorities at Lagos indulged in them in their efforts at once to promote peace in the interior and to enhance the authority and prosperity of the Lagos settlement.

In addition to written sources, material for this study was obtained from oral evidence and traditional accounts, especially for the introductory chapters. The history of a non-literate people is essentially remembered history, which is transmitted from generation to generation. By interviewing knowledgeable persons in an informal atmosphere, valuable oral evidence may be obtained. Such evidence must be checked and cross-checked and then rigorously analysed if it is to yield historical material. The use of oral evidence in the introductory

chapters of this book has enabled me to complete the picture delineated without being dogmatic.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable help which I have received from numerous persons in Nigeria and the United Kingdom in preparing this book. In particular, I am greatly indebted to Professor Molly Mahood, of the University College, Ibadan, for reading through the script with an eye on the style.

S. O. B.

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precisely are often bedevilled by later expansionist ambitions. Johnson's imaginary lines will serve. He says

They [the Egba] originally occupied the area bounded by certain imaginary lines drawn say from Ijaye to meet the Ogun River at Olokemeji and along it to its mouth and another from the same point via Ibadan to the west of Jebu Remo down to the coast.<sup>1</sup>

The term 'Egba' probably comes from Egbalugbo, which may be rendered as 'wanderers towards the forest', on the analogy of Egbado or Egbaluwe, which E. P. Cotton, in his report on the Egba Boundary, 1905, gave as the 'wanderers towards the river'. The Egbado were the people of the waterside whilst the Egba proper were dwellers in the forest. Another conjecture is that the Egba were led into the forest by one Esegba, from whom they took their name; but the most popular derivation of the name connotes open-handed generosity, which was considered to be the distinguishing trait of the Egba.

Whatever the origin of their name the Egba seem to have penetrated the Egba Forest in three successive waves in the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. One wave went slightly to the north-west of Ile-Ife and settled in the region of modern Oyo. Their group of towns constituted the province of Gbagura, i.e. Egba Agura, the Egba under the *Agura*, their group *Oba*. Iddo, the site of which is now part of Ibadan, was their capital. Another wave went beyond the first to the south and crossed the Ona River, which gave the people their name, Egba Oke-Ona. The *Oshile* was their group *Oba* and Oko their capital. The third wave went farther still and brought the Egba into contact with the Ijebu Remo and within reach of the coast. This wave, which became the leading group, was at first called Egba Agbeyin, with the *Ojoko* of Kesi<sup>2</sup> as the dominant *Oba*. Its present name, Egba Alake, is bound up with what was probably a fourth and certainly the last major wave of migration into the Egba Forest.

Ajalake, a descendant of the House of Oduduwa, the main Yoruba royal lineage, went, according to tradition, with the Alaketu to Ketu, where he became a weaver. Later, he was led into the Egba Forest by Ako-Agbo, a Ketu hunter, and there founded the town of Ake. One tradition has it that he obtained paramountcy in Egba Agbeyin by breaking the *Ojoko*'s monopoly in corn and freely distributing maize seeds to all. Kesi people denied this and gave a more

<sup>1</sup> S. Johnson, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> The site of Kesi is off the Ibadan-Abeokuta road at a point about twenty miles from Ibadan.

mythical explanation: the Alake's claim rested upon the division of a ram in which, after all his brothers had taken choice parts, he was left with the head, interpreted by their mother as the symbol of over-all authority. The truth probably was that the Alake, by his direct descent from Oduduwa, the legendary founder of Ile-Ife, possessed a prestige that raised him above the rivalry of municipal kings. Moreover, he was probably at the head of a later and more virile migration whose claim to leadership was conceded. At all events, Ake became the capital town and the name of the group was changed from Egba Agbeyin to Egba Alake. The Alake himself was chosen primarily by five towns which were adjacent to one another and may be taken to have formed the core of the Alake migration. These *Omo-Iya*<sup>1</sup> or sister towns have retained their premier position till the present day.

The three Egba groups of towns or provinces long remained quite distinct in the Egba Forest; but their distinguishing features have been greatly obscured by common residence at Abeokuta, inter-marriage, and other influences. They all probably gave their children the characteristic Egba marks of three short vertical strokes on either cheek, the *Abaja* or *Pele*. Differences have, however, persisted in their speech. They all speak the Yoruba language but in different dialects which reflect the prevailing usages in their localities in the Egba Forest. The Egba Alake people, for example, tend to approximate their speech pattern to that of Ijebu Remo, their neighbours, though they maintain the individuality of their dialect. (When the Owu joined the Egba at Abeokuta c. 1831 they brought a fourth dialect<sup>2</sup> into the town.)

In the organization of their communities the Egba did not differ from one another or from the Yoruba in general. The basis of their communal life was the town. We have little precise evidence about the sizes of the towns. My own visits to some of the old sites afforded only rough ideas of their sizes; for the forest had reclaimed the old clearings which were once towns. Dr. E. C. Irving,<sup>3</sup> the medical *aide* and political adviser to the Yoruba Anglican Mission, passed through

<sup>1</sup> Ake, Ijeun, Iporo, Kemta, and Itoku.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalents of English 'Yes' (literally 'It is so'):

Egba Alake: *Be wa* (pronounced almost *Ba wa*)

Egba Oke Ona: *Beni*

Gbagura: *Beni re*

Owu: *Bawun ni*.

<sup>3</sup> E. C. Irving, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, vii (1856), pp. 65-72.

some ruins of Egba towns while on his way from Ibadan to Ijebu Remo in 1854-5 and he gave some interesting accounts of them. He measured the size of a town by the time it took his party to traverse the town from one wall and ditch to the other, 'on horse-back, our direction being a nearly straight line, and the animal walking at a brisk rate'. In this manner Orun was traversed in ten minutes, Idomapa in fifteen minutes, Ikija in twenty, and Ikereku in ten minutes. Irving did not time the interval between two adjacent towns. Koelle,<sup>1</sup> however, gave an idea of the distance between some of the towns in the Egba Forest from information which he gathered by questioning liberated Egba captives in Sierra Leone:

Ijeun is about four miles from Ake, the Egba capital. Igbore is situate . . . one day's journey from Ake . . . and only three hours' journey from Jebu (i.e. Ijebu Remo) country.

Irving described Ikija in detail: it was built partly upon two heights and partly in the intervening hollow, protected by an outer wall and ditch and an inner or town wall proper also with a ditch. The town had six gates: 'the first opened to the east, to Ijebu Ode; the second to the south, to Ikereku; the third to the north, to Ibadan; the fourth, the Elisa gate, to Ilawo . . . , the fifth, the Onna Egan, road to the forest; and the sixth, Bode Obba, King's gate or custom-house.'<sup>2</sup>

This description indicates intercourse among the people of the various towns, each of which was fortified. The people lived in towns for safety, farming near their towns and gathering the fruits of the surrounding forest. In the market<sup>s</sup>, which were a feature of every town, they exchanged their surplus products among themselves and with their not-too-distant neighbours. This simple exchange economy, based largely upon barter, required a certain amount of security, of law and order.

At the head of each town was an *Oba*, who was the ultimate source of justice in the town. He was also the High Priest, but never a despot. He was much more the symbol of authority than the instrument of its exercise. The real rulers of the town were the *Ogboni*. The Egba brought the *Ogboni* institution with them from Ile-Ife and developed it to such an extent that it has become the most characteristic Egba institution. Briefly, it is a society of wealthy and influential men and a few old women who could be relied upon to place duty before

<sup>1</sup> S. W. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana* (1854), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> E. C. Irving, *op. cit.*

sentiment and to maintain secrecy. The *Ogboni* constituted at once the civic court, the town council, and the electoral college for the selection of the *Oba* from candidates nominated by the ruling houses. By keeping their proceedings secret and binding their members by blood oaths, the *Ogboni* ensured solidarity for their decisions. They used the *Oro*, an ancestral cult organization, whose symbol is the Bull-roarer, to proclaim curfews when riots were expected in apprehending criminals and to execute the guilty ones in secret recesses of the *Oro* grove. In principle, the *Ogboni* stood between the *Oba* and his subjects, preventing the one from becoming despotic and ensuring the proper subordination of the other. The *Oluwo* was the nominal head in whose name a committee of six, the *Iwarefa*, conducted affairs of the *Ogboni* and their opinion was made manifest in the pronouncements of the *Apena*, the convener of meetings, the spokesman, and the ear and the eye of the *Ogboni* lodge of the town. The *Ogboni* met every seventeen days, a sufficient interval for those at work on distant farms to return home.

The *Parakoyi*, who also met every seventeen days, were the 'trade chiefs'. They furthered the commercial interests of their towns, settled disputes at the markets and made rules and regulations to ensure just prices and safeguard the standards of workmanship in crafts. The *Olori-Parakoyi* was at the head of the organization and he was assisted by a number of chiefs. But how far the *Parakoyi* was a craft guild or a guild of merchants is obscure and must await further research. The third feature of town organization was the *Ode* or Hunters, who in the early days provided protection against robbers and kept wild beasts away at night. Later, they were used in wars as scouts and pioneer corps. The *Lerin* or *Olorode* was their chief and he had his supporters in the leadership.

These three organizations existed side by side in the different towns of the Egba Forest. They corresponded very much to the division of life into youth, middle age, and old age. It was possible for a man to have been first an *Ode* chief, then a *Parakoyi* chief, and finally he might become one of the 'Fathers', the *Ogboni*. No office or title was hereditary; though in joining an order, a man usually took a title which had once been held by a member of his lineage. Above all the orders stood, remote and often ignored, the *Oba*, whose sanction, sometimes a mere formality, was required for the judicial and executive actions of the *Ogboni*.

If the town was the primary political unit, the secondary unit was

the province, the distinctive group of towns under a senior *Oba*. At one time Gbagura comprised as many as 144 towns in the Egba Forest: 72 under the Agura and 72 under the Onigu of Ilugun.<sup>1</sup> The suppression of the title of the Onigu, which probably led to the adhesion of Ilugun to the province of Egba Oke-Ona, marked the consolidation of the Gbagura province under the Agura. The process must have begun with the suppression of the titles of the several town *Obas* or the subordination of those who survived to the Agura. The same process took place in the Egba Oke-Ona where the Oshile emerged not only supreme but as the sole *Oba*. The Alake must have achieved a similar success<sup>2</sup> in the Egba Alake before he could claim primacy over all the Egba. That claim emphasizes the Egba conception of supreme authority as judicial rather than executive. Ake was the venue of the highest court of appeal and the Alake the ultimate or chief judge of all the Egba. In effect, what the Ake *Ogboni* decided was final.<sup>3</sup>

These provincial federations can also be viewed in another light. They appear to be the result of compromises whereby, if one town supplied one aspect of authority, another provided another aspect. A division of powers obtained and perhaps one kind of authority was valued as much as another. This practice would seem natural to the Egba, who abhorred a despot. A fragment of the system as it existed in the Egba Alake has been preserved.<sup>4</sup> Ake was the capital, but four other towns (Ijeun, Kemta, Iporo, and Itoku) shared with it the decisive voice in the election of the Alake. The chief of the *Parakoyi* was supplied by *Igbore*; Ijemo provided the head divining priest (the *Oluwo Ifa*) and Ijeun the High Priest of the Oro cult (the *Ologbo Ijeun*), who was entrusted with the execution of condemned criminals. This device might have been intended merely to assuage the wounded vanities of the towns after losing their *Obas*; it nevertheless ensured a judicious distribution of powers and functions which gave the province its cohesion.

How the Alake's judicial supremacy worked in practice is difficult

<sup>1</sup> E. K. Ajisafe, *History of Abeokuta* (1924), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> While the Alake's supremacy is unquestioned there have been efforts to revive two other *obaships* in the Egba Alake section in recent times; the attempt to install an *Ontori* of Itori led to a serious riot at Abeokuta in 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Tradition has it that Omonide or Ejo, the mother of Yoruba kings, died at Ake while visiting her grandson, the Alake. So, a saying '*Ejo ku s'Ake*' either stated this fact or symbolized that a lawsuit 'died' at Ake.

<sup>4</sup> J. Blair, *Abeokuta Intelligence Report* (1937), para. 96.

to determine. One may assume that it was brought into play when a case concerned two different towns or when appeals were lodged at the Ake *Ogboni* house. The Oshile and the Agura probably enjoyed the same judicial rights in their respective provinces, but their relationship to each other and to the Alake is obscure; nor could their precedence be put to the test, as it was unheard of for two *Obas* to meet in those days among the Yoruba in general.

The Alake's supremacy has been emphasized by later events; but what was painfully obvious to the Egba earlier was the overlordship of the Alafin of Oyo. The Egba Forest lay within the Oyo-Yoruba empire, though it was one of the remote dependencies. How Oyo power came to be superimposed upon that of the Alake and of the provincial Egba *Obas* is obscure; but it was acknowledged. A partial explanation lay in the fact that the Egba at first had no machinery for self-defence other than the *Ode*. They probably depended upon the Oyo armed forces for their external defence and in return for this protection they paid tribute. Within the security thus provided, they cultivated their farms and worshipped their gods. The well-known elaborate Yoruba pantheon passed muster among the Egba, who also had their special gods. *Oro* was regarded as their distinguishing cult and each town possessed its patron *orisha*. The three sites of Egba towns which I have visited possessed civic shrines: Kemta had one dedicated to Alashe, a minor deity, whilst both Kesi and Emere worshipped the goddesses of the ponds which supplied them with water during the dry season. Thus in their remote corner of an empire the Egba led their own lives, although at the price of the petty oppression of the Alafin's *Ilari*.

Lishabi was the Egba liberator. The Alafin's *Ilari* had entrenched themselves in the different Egba towns by assuming the roles of the chief priests of Shango, the deified Alafin of Oyo and the Yoruba thunder god, whose cult in the Oyo domains assumed something of the force of emperor-worship in the later Roman Empire. They exploited the religious fears of the people to feather their own nests and in order to exact enormous tribute for the Alafin. Lishabi came to the conclusion that only a massacre of these petty oppressors could free the Egba from their yoke and he proceeded to organize a militant movement under the guise of a traditional mutual aid society, *Egbe Aro*, a farmer's society which provided collective aid for its members in heavy work such as clearing virgin land or gathering in the harvest.

Lishabi's<sup>1</sup> movement embraced the three Egba provinces and spread to all the towns; his principal lieutenants were Amosu of Ikija in Oke-Ona, Arinokotu of Ojo, and Akila of Iddo in Gbagura. It gradually assumed the character of a military organization. Each town converted its 'resistance movement' into *Egbe Olorogun* (military society) whose members met every seventeen days at the *Ile Olorogun* (military chamber). Lishabi and his associates armed their followers in secret with bows and arrows, slings, spears, daggers, swords, hatchets, and clubs. Titles were taken by the officers, which reflected the simple organization of the command into centre (the *Jaguna*), right (the *Lukotun*), and left (the *Lukosi*) wings. While Lishabi was forging his revolutionary weapon, he bided his time until a suitable opportunity for a rising occurred.

The massacre itself has not been precisely dated. It is evident that it must have occurred at a time when the metropolitan power was weak and consequently unable to strike back and nip the revolution in the bud. This conjecture lends support to the supposition that the Egba achieved their independence during the civil war at Oyo which led to the downfall and condign punishment of Gaha, the *Bashorun*, who had usurped the prerogatives of the Alafin and had indulged in a reign of terror. The propitious moment for the Egba, therefore, occurred probably between 1775 and 1780 and the signal for the general massacre was the news of the assassination of the Alafin's representatives in Lishabi's own town of Igbein in Egba Alake. In all, over 600 *Ilari* were believed to have been slain in one day.

Abiodun, the Alafin, having regained his authority at Oyo, attempted to quell the Egba revolt and reconquer the territory. He dispatched a force which he had raised from among the Oyo, the Ibarapa, and the Egbado and the invading host approached the Egba Forest by way of Ketu. It encamped at Muroko on the left bank of the Ogun River, facing Igbein. Lishabi sent a detachment of the *Ode* to reconnoitre the enemy's strength and disposition and when he found that his own forces were outnumbered, he decided to evacuate Igbein and lay an ambush for the invaders around the Melegun Ravine. The enemy marched into Igbein, which they found deserted, and walked unsuspecting into Lishabi's ambush. The result was a rout. Egba independence was assured.

Lishabi undoubtedly lifted the Egba from obscurity. In the role of

<sup>1</sup> Lishabi himself was a native of Itoku who lived at Igbein (both towns in the Egba Alake province).

a Lycurgus he taught them how to perfect their civic constitutions and laid down laws which have been written into the customs of the people. He devised simple fortifications—walls and ditches—for their towns in the same way as he had created the militia (*Olorogun*) the fourth order in each town. Inspired by Lishabi's example, the Egba gained confidence in themselves and with the prestige which their newly won independence conferred upon them they began to venture beyond their forest homes in order to take part in the trade which followed the caravan routes from Badagry on the coast to the Niger and North Africa. They participated chiefly in the kola trade. Indeed, the Egba became prosperous in Lishabi's time and his own boast, that he fought for the Egba in order that the rich might wear the best broadcloth of native weaving and that the ordinary person might wear cloth of European manufacture,<sup>1</sup> was entirely justified.

With independence, however, the Egba had assumed responsibility for their external defence against the incursions of the Dahomi and the possible return of the Oyo forces. They found allies in the Oke-Ogun, the trans-Ogun people who dwelt on the west bank of the river; they delimited their boundary and concluded a treaty:

henceforth the Ogun river shall form the boundary line for both parties and none of the contracting parties should cross the river to war against the other.<sup>2</sup>

They pursued a common active frontier policy against the Dahomi who raided Oke-Ogun periodically. Lishabi built a fortress on a hill in order the more easily to watch the activities of the enemy and he remained there at the head of a garrison. Thus Lishabi fully understood the import of independence but the Egba did not share his insight into the problems of defence; they required their men on the farms. He became unpopular and subsequently either perished in a sudden Dahomian raid on the Egba frontiers or mysteriously took his own life in the forest.<sup>3</sup> He is remembered, however, as the Father of the Egba,<sup>4</sup> their liberator and lawgiver.

Local differences had been submerged in the Egba Forest under the spell of Lishabi's personality and the need to combine to meet an

<sup>1</sup> 'I fought for them to wrap Alari, I warred for them to wear Sekini.' J. B. Ogunjimi Losi, *History of Abeokuta* (1924), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> The Egba were told that Lishabi had descended into the bowels of the earth and so achieved immortality.

<sup>4</sup> '*Egba omo Lisabi*', i.e. 'Egba, the children of Lishabi', is a current Yoruba saying.

close at hand. That demand brought the full impact of the transatlantic slave trade upon the Yoruba country. The Ijebu introduced gun-powder into the interior wars.

The Owu<sup>1</sup> War which began in 1821 was the signal for the general disruption of the Yoruba country and the destruction of the Egba towns. The catastrophe must be viewed in the light of the demand for slaves on the coast and the advancing tide of Moslem conquest from Ilorin. Islam had slowly been infiltrating into the region. Oral evidence suggests that Moslem converts and their immigrant mallams were subversive of the established order and often turned 'fifth columnists' when the Fulani came. To the panic of the impending Fulani invasion must be added the disruptive influences of slave-hunting. The Ife began indiscriminate kidnapping and sold their captives to the Ijebu. The *Olowu* of Owu tried to check the activities of the Ife in his domains and in a battle which ensued the Owu defeated the Ife. Later, a fracas at the Apomu market gave the Ijebu the opportunity to make common cause with their Ife slave suppliers against the Owu, who heroically defended their town until they were hemmed in and starved into making a futile sortie. With their superior armaments the Ijebu and their Ife allies defeated the Owu, whose only weapons were *agedemgbe* (long, heavy cutlasses), bows, and arrows. Owu was destroyed and its people dispersed. Its fall was also the result of the action of Oyo refugees, fleeing from the approaching Fulani, who eagerly joined the winning side regardless of the cause. Moreover, the neighbouring Egba towns were indifferent to the fate of Owu.

Egba inaction may have been due in part to Moslem infiltration; for the Fulani policy was to keep the Yoruba divided and so render them an easy prey in successive stages. The Egba thought they could be neutral in a war between the Owu and the Ijebu; but they soon learnt that peace was indivisible. The victorious allies pursued the fleeing Owu into Egba territory and internal jealousies flared up to increase the opportunities for slave-hunting. Ikija<sup>2</sup> was the first Egba town to be destroyed on the pretext that it had aided Owu; then followed Kesi and Emere. The victorious allies next occupied Erunwon and Ijemo, but they soon quarrelled with the latter and destroyed it. Itoko shared its fate. Then they occupied Oba, Itoku, and Ijeun.

<sup>1</sup> Owu was a large town slightly to the north-east of the Egba Forest. It took Dr. Irving twenty-five minutes to traverse its ruins in 1854.

<sup>2</sup> E. C. Irving, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, ii (1856), 65-72, contains an eyewitness account of the destruction of the Egba towns.

The allies split into two over the Ijebu invitation to them to come nearer and so shorten the line of slave supply: one section under Laboshinde marched into Ijebu Remo and encamped at Ipara, which was evacuated to Ishara; the other section under Maye occupied the Egba town of Iporo. From both camps Egba towns were raided and destroyed. Igbore, Imo, and Igbein<sup>1</sup> rallied and assumed a counter-offensive against the allies at Ipara with no success; the three towns were then destroyed. Collaboration with the enemy did not save Ikereku either; it was destroyed by the combined allies in 1826. Destruction became general and in the holocaust Gbagura towns were laid waste like those of the other two provinces. The only Gbagura town which was not a smoking ruin one evening was Ibadan: the Ife, Ijebu, and Oyo forces camped on the deserted site and thus was founded the modern town of Ibadan c. 1829.

The destruction of the Egba towns showed how completely the loose federation in the Egba Forest had broken down. There was no central authority. The mutual jealousies of the towns were such that some assisted and even gloried in the destruction of others. In the demoralizing atmosphere of the period the Egba had failed to perceive the advantage of united defensive action. They had been rudely awakened from their imagined isolation and were engulfed in the circumambient anarchy. Dispersed and chastened, the Egba also resorted to Ibadan, which proved to be the rallying point of the Yoruba and, later, the bulwark of their defence against the Fulani. At Ibadan, the Egba regrouped themselves and evolved the first truly federal organization, an all-Egba military command. They adopted Oyo-Yoruba ideas and titles for their forces. Yisa of Itoko (probably a Moslem convert) became the *Balogun* (general of the veterans) of the Egba, and Deboku of Ijemo, the *Seriki* (general of the youths). Each had his right- and left-wing commanders. There was also the cavalry, led by the *Sarumi* and his lieutenants. The old militia, the *Olorogun*, had given way to an organization approaching a national army except that its units were still organized according to the old towns. The new organization, the *Ologun*, arose from the emergency but old town loyalties remained.

Subsequent events in Ibadan halted the experiment in federal military organization. The Egba discovered that they were not wanted in Ibadan except as ready victims of slave-hunting. They managed to

<sup>1</sup> These towns attempted a counter-attack probably because from their positions near the coast they were able to obtain fire-arms.

extricate themselves<sup>1</sup> and encamped on the other side of the Ona River, leaving some of their leaders behind as hostages. A plot to eliminate these leaders failed; but Lamodi, who had become the Egba Balogun, lost his life in his flight to join the Egba in the trans-Ona settlement. Thus Shodeke, the Seriki,<sup>2</sup> assumed the leadership of the Egba.

<sup>1</sup> Maye, the generalissimo at Ibadan, decided to put the issue of Egba removal to the test of kola splitting and Losi of Ake, an *Ogboni* chief, manipulated the kola portions so skilfully that the right number to secure assent fell face upwards.

<sup>2</sup> Denlu succeeded Deboku as Seriki, and Shodeke, Denlu.

## CHAPTER II

### Early Days at Abeokuta

(1830-41)

AFTER the escape from Ibadan the Egba were attacked in strength by the allies in their trans-Ona settlement. Although they were outnumbered, they fought with the desperation of a people whose very existence was threatened and beat back their assailants. It was clear that the trans-Ona settlement was too near Ibadan for the Egba to feel safe there; so they cast around for a new and safer site.

During the dispersal from the Egba Forest, three Egba hunters had taken refuge upon a rock which was situated upon land whose ownership has been disputed. According to the Egba, the hunters were preceded in the area by an Itoko man who had escaped to his distant farm when Itoko was destroyed. He crossed the Ogun River and sought refuge with the *Olubara* of Ibara whom he taught *Ogboni* statecraft. Later, he recrossed the Ogun and settled on his farm-land where the hunters joined him and they soon made the settlement famous under the name of 'Abeokuta' or 'Under Stone' taken from their cave-dwellings under the overhanging of the rock.<sup>1</sup> The Egbado, on the other hand, claimed that the settlement was named 'Okò Adagba', after Adagba, the Egbado host of the three hunters; although the Egba countered by claiming Adagba as an Egba hero who twice repulsed attackers upon the settlement single-handed. Of the two names, 'Okò Adagba' soon disappeared; when the main body of Egba refugees arrived they called their new settlement Abeokuta.

Before Shodeke decided to lead the Egba to Abeokuta, he had obtained samples of its soil which he tested in order to satisfy himself that the region was fertile enough to support an influx of people.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Its name 'Olumo' was probably acquired later as it was said to signify Egba determination to yield no further ground to their enemies.

<sup>2</sup> According to tradition the *Ifa* oracle was consulted and the *odu* was favourable.

then detailed an advance party<sup>1</sup> to cut a wide track through the forest to the chosen site.

Ogubonna, a notable chief of Ikija, joined the Egba just before they left the trans-Ona settlement. Hotly pursued by the allied army, he had escaped from capture only by denying that he was an Egba. The evacuation was carefully planned. Shodeke and the Egba Alake people constituted the vanguard; they were followed by Agbo, who led the Gbagura people. The Oke-Ona people brought up the rear, with Lunloye, the Balogun of Ilugun, as their leader. A skeleton force under Agbunrin of Ilugun, Shoge, and Lashilo protected the rear and fought delaying actions against Maye's pursuing army. Two of these chiefs eventually joined the others at Abeokuta but the third, Lashilo the *Oshiele* of Ilugun, settled at a place seven miles off and founded a permanent look-out post which was named Oshiele after him.

The main body of the Egba entered Abeokuta during the lull in the rainy season of 1830,<sup>2</sup> and settled on the western side of the Olumo Rock. This founding settlement was bounded on the north by the present Ikija quarter and on the south by the Igbore quarter. Remnants of the old towns formed townships or quarters to which they gave the names of their former towns. Some prefixed 'Ago' or camp to the names in order to keep alive the desire to return to the old locations in less troubled times in the future. The Egba surrounded the new settlement with a wall which was adjusted as new refugees arrived and formed their own quarters. Shodeke allotted land to the new-comers and the settlement quickly spread over parcels of land formerly farmed by the Itoko and Ijemo people. For this reason, Egba tradition regards the people of these townships as the owners of the site of Abeokuta.

The two immediate problems of the new settlement were defence and food-supply. Shodeke had the clear vision that unless the Egba could consolidate their strength and employ it in the defence of a single town, they were doomed as a people. He therefore threw the gates of Abeokuta open to all Egba refugees in order to render the town, by the sheer force of numbers, an impregnable fortress. An influx of people put a severe strain upon the limited supplies of food. Hardship and even famine were rife. Desperate people pawned their

<sup>1</sup> Some say the party was led by Edun of Kemta, an Ode chief; others, by Somoye, a young *Ologun*.

<sup>2</sup> The year 1830 is the accepted Egba date and the centenary of the foundation of Abeokuta was officially celebrated in 1930.

children, wives, or themselves for food to the Itoko and Ijemo people who alone had access to their old farms. Within a year, however, the new farms yielded an abundant harvest<sup>1</sup> of corn, yams, &c.

Shodeke's 'open-door' policy was extended to all the 'displaced persons' of that era of anarchy and disruption. The Owu were the greatest single body of wanderers who appeared before Abeokuta. After the destruction of their town (c. 1825), the Owu had managed to shake off their pursuers, regrouped themselves, and began a migration towards the coast. On arriving opposite Abeokuta, they encamped at Oke Atta, debating among themselves whether to join the Dahomi or to settle at Gaun on the Ogun River, which *Ifa* had advised. Shodeke realized the value of the accession of the heroic Owu to the Egba cause and successfully pleaded the mutual advantages of a united Egba and Owu settlement at Abeokuta. The Owu, for their part, knew that the journey to Gaun was hazardous and that the disposition of the King of Dahomey was unpredictable; so they reluctantly agreed to join the Egba. Led by Lara, they crossed the Ogun River into Abeokuta and settled on the nearby hill. They called their new home 'Ago Owu' or Owu Camp and 'did not unpack'. Thus the fourth section came into Abeokuta as the Egba Owu.<sup>2</sup>

The growing settlement was soon hard pressed by the old enemies of the Egba. Bands of Ibadan and Ijebu marauders overran the new farms and kidnapped in broad daylight anyone who ventured beyond the town wall. Shodeke and the *Ologun* drove the marauders off and pursued them far into the Ijebu country and within sight of the coast. Repulsed near Epe, the Egba recrossed the Ogun River at Isheri and laid siege to Otta, a tributary of Oyo, on the pretext that Otta had aided the marauders against them. A combined Ibadan and Ijebu force drove the Egba from Otta and they returned to Abeokuta via Agbamaya on the Ogun River.

The unsuccessful attempt to subjugate Otta had shown that the Egba wanted to command their own trade route to the coast. This episode underlined the importance of the new Egba settlement *vis-à-vis* its neighbours. The Egba had not been completely evicted

<sup>1</sup> A topical song of the time freely translated runs thus:

'A bag of corn was threepence  
Now it is twenty-five bags for threepence  
The Itoko people are sad, disappointed  
By God'.

<sup>2</sup> There is a section of the Owu now in Owu-Ijebu and another has returned to the old site at Owu-Ipole in the Ibadan Province.

from the Egba Forest but only compressed into that portion of it which lay on the east bank of the Ogun River. If they regrouped and consolidated their strength they might subdue the Egbado and the Awori and emerge as a great power on both sides of the river. The Ijebu and the Oyo-Yoruba rulers of Ibadan decided to crush the Egba before they became too powerful.

The Ijebu and the Ibadan<sup>1</sup> had planned a joint attack upon the Egba. The Ibadan were, however, preoccupied with a war with Ipetumodu to their east and could send only a small detachment, led by Oluguna, to aid their allies. The Owivi War of 1832 was therefore mainly fought between the Ijebu and the Egba. The Ijebu, led by Kalejaiye and six other famous generals, crossed the Ogun River and encamped at Koboro, with the Egbado country to their rear and cutting the Egba off from coastal supplies of ammunition. Shodeke himself led the Egba army, which encamped at Ishorun, facing the Ijebu host. In an engagement which followed, the Egba were heavily defeated; they retreated to Ibara and drew reinforcements from Abeokuta. When the news of this set-back reached Abeokuta people panicked and some drowned themselves in the Ogun River rather than fall victims to the expected Ijebu invaders or resume a forlorn wandering in the forest.

The second round opened with skirmishes. The Egba accidentally forestalled a major attack upon their position at Ibara and pursued the disconcerted Ijebu into the Egbado country. Although surrounded on three sides, the Ijebu fought gallantly and managed to retreat to the banks of the Owivi River. Both sides encamped and engaged in skirmishes for about four months: the truth was that they had fought to a stalemate because both had run out of gunpowder. Victory would now go to the side that was first able to obtain gunpowder from the coast.

The Egba found a friend in Adele,<sup>2</sup> the fifth King of Lagos, with whom they had been in contact during his exile in Badagry through Apati, then *Bada* of Kemta. The Egba probably helped Adele to regain the Lagos throne in 1832 and consequently he went to their aid on the banks of the Owivi. He sent gunpowder which was stowed away in empty rum bottles and 'poled' up the Ogun River to Mokoloki, where a strong Egba detachment received it and conveyed it

<sup>1</sup> Henceforth 'Ibadan' will be used to signify the old Oyo and Ife elements who had settled in that town. The Oyo had gained the upper hand: Maye had been expelled and the new settlement vaguely acknowledged Oyo suzerainty.

<sup>2</sup> Exiled in 1780; tried to regain the throne unsuccessfully in 1819.

safely to the camp. Moreover, the Egba, acting on information received from Ishaga spies, intercepted an Ijebu convoy which was taking gunpowder to the Ijebu army. The Egba were thus in a position to strike a decisive blow.

Before Shodeke attacked the Ijebu, a plague broke out in their camp to add to their misfortunes. Then Adele arrived at the head of a contingent, which strengthened the Egba forces. When the battle was joined the Ijebu fought hard and well but at the end of the day their defeat had turned into a rout. The seven Ijebu generals were captured, executed and their heads taken as trophies to Abeokuta where they were finally buried in front of Shodeke's compound at Iporo. Apart from the Adele's help, the Egba had won because they were protected on one flank by a neutral Otta, then under the leadership of the Ajano.<sup>1</sup> Though Adele professed to be disinterested in his aid to the Egba, Shodeke definitely presented him with 300 slaves and thereby began an Egba export slave trade with Lagos.

The Egba, flushed with victory, accused the Egbado towns of collaborating with their enemies and would-be destroyers. It was true that the Egbado towns had provisioned the Ijebu army but they might have done so out of necessity. Moreover, the Egbado were still nominally vassals of the Alafin of Oyo and might have co-operated with the small Ibadan contingent which came to aid the Ijebu. The Egba, however, sent a detachment under Apati, the *Bada* of Kemta, to punish the Egbado. Apati destroyed several Egbado towns, notably Ijanna, and attacked Ilaro, the Egbado capital. There internal intrigue aided the Egba arms and the *Olu* or King was driven out and pursued to Itoro, where he was taken and slain. The Ilaro people fled to Idogo and elected a new *Olu*<sup>2</sup> whose reign was short. Later the Egba invited them to resettle Ilaro and forced them to install a pro-Egba *Olu*<sup>3</sup> and to receive an *Ajele* or Consul from Abeokuta to supervise the new administration and collect an annual tribute.

After the Owiwi War the Egba became supreme on the west bank of the Ogun River: the Egbado had been subjugated and their principal town of Ilaro mediatized. The Egba had, however, come within the ambit of the Dahomian raids and they probably came to an

<sup>1</sup> The jubilant Egba recorded their gratitude to both Adele and the Ajano in this ditty:

'Excepting Ajano, [of Otta]  
Excepting Adele, [of Lagos]  
Abeokuta people befriend no one'.

<sup>2</sup> Ojo Kosiwon.

<sup>3</sup> Tella.

Danger again threatened from Ijebu and Ibadan marauders who were approaching Abeokuta from Ijebu Remo. The first force sent by Shodeke to check their advance was beaten back owing, the Egba alleged, to inadequate leadership. A second force under Apati, the Seriki of the Egba, drove back the marauders at Samore and captured much booty. For the time being the Egba could maintain their trade route to the coast. The importance of this was that, as a route for the supply of arms to the interior, it offered an alternative to the route which had hitherto given the Ijebu a valuable monopoly. Although the Ijebu were industrious themselves, they derived great benefits from their geographical position which made them the natural middlemen in the trade between the coast and the interior. They now found serious rivals in the Egba; hence their determination to destroy the new settlement at Abeokuta before it became fully established.

The next invasion came from Ibadan. In 1835, Oluyole, the Ibadan general, brought a large force 'united with all the Oyo tribes'.<sup>1</sup> According to Johnson<sup>2</sup> the Ibadan merely wanted to avenge Oshun, their cavalry chief who had been killed at Oniyefun in the aftermath of the Owiwi War and not to attempt the destruction of the Egba which the Ijebu had failed to accomplish. Kurunmi, the Are of Ijaiye and Ayo of Abemo, two notable Yoruba war chiefs, joined the Ibadan at Olokemeji and the grand force hoped by forced marches to take Abeokuta by surprise. The Egba sentries, however, spotted the invading host and raised the alarm.

A hastily mustered Egba force engaged the enemy on a hill close to the town with inconclusive results. Both sides retreated a little and encamped; the invaders pitched their tents upon the other side of the Arakonga stream—which gave its name to the war—and began a regular siege. After about three months the Egba, goaded by starvation, decided upon a desperate sortie: 'At a given signal by the sound of their god, *Oro*, to which they responded with a shout, they made a sudden dash and attacked the enemy vigorously, cutlass in hand.'<sup>3</sup> The Ibadan, who had exhausted their powder in skirmishes during the siege, pelted the Egba with gourds<sup>4</sup> found growing in the battle-kinsmen, absorbed into their captors' households, or sold into domestic or foreign slavery.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. 84/976, Campbell to Clarendon 9 Oct. 1855, enclosure 1.

<sup>2</sup> S. Johnson, *History of the Yorubas*, pp. 251-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Melon gourds or *Bara*, from which the war took its alternative name 'Jabara War'.

field. The Egba gained the day and they owed much of their victory to the heroism of the Owu contingents. They pursued their advantage and again defeated the Ibadan on the site of Aiyetoro and did not return until they had reached Olokemeji. Shodeke made a triumphal entry into Abeokuta, his forces laden with booty and many slaves.

The Ibadan made excuses for their defeat: the campaign was badly planned and ill-executed; junior chiefs followed their leaders half-heartedly and carried faked kegs of gunpowder which were in fact filled with yam flour. The very attempt to explain away Egba victory emphasized its importance at the time; for it could not be ignored. The Egba had defeated the strongest military power in Yorubaland and must henceforth rank among the leading powers. They had driven back the last invading host until the Dahomi came in 1851 and save for occasional marauders, such as a party from Ilorin wearing *Kembe* (baggy trousers) and beating *Bembe* (large drums) which encamped at Oke-Aleji and terrorized the district, Abeokuta was secure for the time being. In fact, the Egba assumed the offensive themselves.

The Egba discovered that the people of Iperu, believed to be friends, had supplied gunpowder to the Ibadan during the Arakonga War. They decided to punish Iperu in 1836. Aiyejorun,<sup>1</sup> the Balogun of Odo, led an Egba force by the quickest route to Iperu but they failed to surprise the town, which had appealed to the Ibadan for help. The Egba then feigned a retreat, drew the besieged people out and then fell upon them with deadly results. However, the arrival of the Ibadan force led by Lakanle saved Iperu: the Egba withdrew, having lost Aiyejorun, who was taken and slain, in the process. They returned to Abeokuta with some slaves believed to be Ibadan captives as they would not enslave the people of Iperu, who were regarded as their kinsmen. This was probably the last battle in which Shodeke took part in person.

Between 1836 and 1842 refugees poured into Abeokuta. Shodeke's fame had spread far and wide and all the Egba who had hidden in the forest during the dispersal from the Egba Forest began to find their way into the fortress based upon the Olumo Rock. Inhabitants of friendly towns fled before invaders and sought refuge at Abeokuta, especially from the Oke-Ogun district. *Ologun* chiefs, returning from successful forays, brought back Oyo, Ife, or Ijebu captives whom they

<sup>1</sup> Aiyejorun had lived in the Ijebu country after the Owu War and had fought on the Ijebu side in the Owivi War.

absorbed into their households, when not sold abroad, as domestic slaves. Thus Abeokuta grew in size: the immigrants spoke many dialects and worshipped different gods.

Besides the traditional religion, with its pantheon of no fewer than 401 gods, some of the refugees probably brought Islam with them into Abeokuta. As we have seen,<sup>1</sup> Islam was known in the Egba Forest and the establishment of the Moslems at Ilorin provided a base for proselytizing in the Yoruba country. In fact, it was believed that a Fulani mallam accompanied the Owu when they arrived at Abeokuta and he eventually became a protégé of Apati, the Seriki of the Egba. Apati sent eight sons to his Koranic school at Itoku and several notables did likewise. Thus as at Ibadan, the leading *Ologun* rapidly embraced Islam: its appeal lay in the charms which Koranic texts were alleged to provide for the safety of warriors and certainly in the fascination of the learning which the mallams displayed.

Among those who heard of the fame of Shodeke and Abeokuta were Sierra Leonians who were trading in their own ships to Badagry. The slave trade had been abolished in England in 1807 and all slaves set free in British colonies in 1833. Then British ships undertook the task of suppressing the slave trade on the high seas; they captured slave ships, freed the slaves on board and settled them in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Some of these liberated Africans became relatively prosperous in Freetown. Butt-Thompson<sup>2</sup> records two early examples:

Harry Johnson, a Yoruba, who passed through the King's yard about 1816, bought in 1830 the clipper-built schooner 'Harriet' of 140 tons, for the sum of £200 and soon after purchased a felucca of one hundred tons. Orshorbah (or Osoba) known also as Gooms, whose son, born in Lagos, called himself 'J. B. George', was the owner of the 'Nancy', 159 tons, in which he moved himself and his household when exchanging Freetown for Lagos.

Talbot<sup>3</sup> gave some details of the trade with Badagry:

1838-9 some Yoruba slaves [*sic*] at Freetown bought a small captured slave vessel called the 'Wilberforce' loaded her with European and Sierra Leone goods and sailed to Badagry where they were well received by one quarter in the town. They took back palm oil, etc. and a brisk trade was started between the two places.

When the news of the new Egba refuge reached Freetown many of

<sup>1</sup> See p. 13 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> F. W. Butt-Thompson, *Sierra Leone in History and Tradition*, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> P. Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, i. 88.

the Egba captives there became eager to rejoin their kith and kin at Abeokuta. Action quickly followed: the first batch arrived at Badagry c. 1839 with a letter, recommending them to the protection of Wowu, the chief of the English quarter. They could not proceed to Abeokuta at once owing to difficulties arising from the current insecurity of the interior routes. The more daring among them, however, pressed on as soon as possible and eventually reached Abeokuta to the delight and wonderment of their relations. More followed. The new immigrants were impressed with the town as evidenced by the rosy account of their reaction given by Miss Tucker.<sup>1</sup> The clay houses were well built and commodious; the people were industrious and well clad; and the markets were stocked with articles of local manufacture as well as imported ones.

Abeokuta in 1841, on the eve of direct contact with Europeans, comprised four sections, Egba Alake, Egba Oke-Ona, Gbagura, and Owu; the people were mainly polytheists and some Moslem; the Sierra Leone immigrants constituted an element which had had some contact, however slight, with an alien culture. The 'heterogeneous' society was held together by the genius and personality of the supreme ruler, Shodeke. Under his leadership the Egba had risen to the fore in the immediate interior of Lagos and were in command of a hinterland which shortly assumed great importance.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Tucker, *Abbeokuta or Sunrise within the Tropics*, p. 53.

## CHAPTER III

### 'Sunrise Within the Tropics'

(1842-9)

IN 1841 the Ajano of Otta demanded from the Egba an exorbitant price<sup>1</sup> for his friendship which safeguarded their trade route to Lagos. The Egba took up the challenge and sent a force, under Lumloye, the Otun of the Egba, to reduce Otta. Ibadan, Prince Kosoko of Lagos, and Ado<sup>2</sup> offered to help Otta but the Egba moved swiftly and Otta was surrounded and so prevented from receiving any help from its allies. Lack of water and starvation weakened Otta's resistance; the Egba stormed the town and took it in 1842. The inhabitants were allowed to remain in the town provided they did not rebuild its walls, and the Egba placed an Ajele or Consul there. Thus Otta was 'demilitarized' and annexed by the Egba.

After the fall of Otta, Lumloye wanted to reduce Ado also. Shodeke disagreed, as he realized that an unlimited expansion in the Awori and Egbado countries might eventually lead the Egba into a clash with the Dahomi. The conquest of Otta was necessary and it had secured an access to the coast as far as Ebute Metta, the port of Otta, which was a sufficient gain for the Egba for the time being. Shodeke was always mindful of the danger from the Ibadan and did not want the Egba forces to be tied down elsewhere should the Ibadan reappear from the north. He therefore overruled Lumloye, who died<sup>3</sup> shortly after his return to Abeokuta. A small force was left outside Ado, sufficient to continue a siege but not for capturing the town.

On 6 December 1842 Thomas Birch Freeman, the Wesleyan missionary pioneer in West Africa, reached the Egba camp on his way to Abeokuta. Freeman had obtained permission from the Wesleyan authorities to set up a mission at Badagry for the benefit of the Sierra Leone emigrants of Methodist persuasion who were known to have gone there. On reaching Badagry Freeman found that many of the

<sup>1</sup> The Ajano sent an *Aroko* (symbolic message) to Shodeke asking him to choose between gunpowder (meaning war) and a sack (meaning tribute).

<sup>2</sup> A neighbouring Awori town.

<sup>3</sup> Some say Shodeke recalled Lumloye lest his success might tempt him to supplant Shodeke and that Lumloye was poisoned.

emigrants had moved to Abeokuta and he resolved to follow them. He wrote to Shodeke and in reply received a warm invitation to visit Abeokuta. When Freeman arrived at the Egba camp after a day's journey from Badagry he was received by Shomoye, its commander. He described the camp:

This military post consists of a great number of small huts or sheds surrounded by a mud-wall about five feet high and a ditch about four feet deep. It is nearly within musket-shot of the wall and outworks of the hostile tribe. Each party has small places or seats erected in the trees near the walls from whence the sentinels watch over and report each other's movements.<sup>1</sup>

While at the camp Freeman saw more skirmishes. He found the Egba—indeed Yoruba—method of fighting dilatory; he advised a show of overwhelming force which would compel a surrender rather than a siege in which famine was expected to do the work of soldiers for them.

Freeman arrived at Abeokuta on Sunday, 11 December 1842 and was accorded a genuine welcome by Shodeke

seated on the floor on a large native mat, supporting himself against a beautiful leather-covered cushion of native manufacture. He wore a handsome damask cloth, thrown lightly over his shoulder, and a scarlet cloth cap with a blue tassel on the crown of it. Before him stood a large glass bowl of European manufacture well supplied with gora-[i.e. kola] nuts.<sup>2</sup>

Freeman found that the town was about double the size of Kumasi, the Ashanti capital; although it was not so well planned. He received accounts of their migrations from the Sierra Leonian immigrants: those who landed at the port of Lagos were robbed with the connivance of the King, Oluwole,<sup>3</sup> and those of the 265 immigrants, passengers of three vessels, who eventually reached Abeokuta did so empty-handed; on the other hand, those who had landed at Badagry fared better and up to 1842 nearly 300 emigrants had used that port. They were all well treated at Abeokuta. Shodeke did not require them to prostrate before him on account of their alien culture. They practised their trades and calling when they could but many engaged in agriculture, cultivating maize, yams, and cotton. Nearly all of them,

<sup>1</sup> T. B. Freeman, *Journal of Various Visits to the Interior of West Africa*, 3rd Journal, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> Oluwole (1834-41) succeeded Adele I at Lagos.

'dressed in European clothes', took part in the first Christian service held at Abeokuta that Sunday with Shodeke himself a keen spectator.

Freeman left Abeokuta on 20 December 1842 deeply impressed with its prospects as a seat of missionary and civilizing influences in that part of Africa. The ruler was liberal and co-operative; there were Christian immigrants who could lead their kinsmen into the Church. From Abeokuta Christian civilization would spread into the interior. Freeman was determined to bring this gateway to African regeneration to the notice of the British Government as well as the missionary authorities.

Around 1840 opinion in Britain favoured vigorous efforts for the suppression of the slave trade; but people differed on the best method to achieve the desired end. James Bandinel's<sup>1</sup> semi-official classic on the slave trade appeared in 1842 and confirmed what was already suspected, that the trade had increased in spite of the Emancipation Act of 1833 and the work of the Preventive Squadron on the high seas. Earlier in 1840, the well-known philanthropist T. Fowell Buxton had said that the remedy<sup>2</sup> lay in supplementing action on the seas by positive action upon the African mainland. The objective must be to elevate the minds of the people and call forth the capabilities of their soil. In concrete terms, Buxton proposed a Niger expedition which would make treaties with African chiefs and open the way for commerce and agriculture; and the acquisition of the island of Fernando Po, as the key to the Niger. Buxton was, in fact, echoing earlier views as expressed by the founders of the settlement at Freetown, envisaged as the 'cradle of African civilization', and James McQueen,<sup>3</sup> who held that the sovereign remedy lay in the propagation of agriculture.

Robert Jamieson,<sup>4</sup> a Niger merchant, opposed Buxton's scheme in the name of *laissez-faire* and criticized it in details. It would involve governmental interference in an area already open to commerce by private enterprise whilst ignoring the notorious slave ports of Lagos and Whydah in the Bight of Benin, where British trade was negligible. The Aborigine Committee<sup>5</sup> also opposed the scheme for fear that treaties made with African chiefs were likely to lead to disputes rather than promote peace.

<sup>1</sup> J. Bandinel, *Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa as connected with Europe and America* (1842).

<sup>2</sup> T. F. Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (1840).

<sup>3</sup> J. McQueen, *General Geographical Survey of Africa* (1840).

<sup>4</sup> R. Jamieson to Lord Russell, 1840.      <sup>5</sup> A House of Commons Committee.

Despite other strong views expressed against the scheme, Buxton had the ear of the Whig Government and he could count upon the support of public opinion and the active co-operation of the Church Missionary Society in his efforts to regenerate Africa by means of 'the Bible and the plough'. The Prince Consort presided over the first meeting of the 'Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa' founded by Buxton and others at Exeter Hall in June 1840. Lord Normanby, the Colonial Secretary, promised aid; the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, began to negotiate with Spain for Fernando Po as the base of the operation.

The expedition set sail for the Niger in 1841. It was equipped to inquire into the natural resources of the land along the river, and two missionaries, the Rev. J. P. Schon<sup>1</sup> and Samuel Ajayi Crowther (an African teacher from Sierra Leone), accompanied it. Of the 162 Europeans who entered the Niger in August 1841, 54 succumbed to malarial fever by the time Beecroft<sup>2</sup> brought the surviving ship to Fernando Po in October 1841. Thus the terrible mortality ruined the expedition and obscured its achievements. A few treaties had been concluded and a model farm established at Lokoja on the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, but had to be abandoned. The news of the fate of the expedition assuredly ended Buxton's public career and his opponents were quick to claim the vindication of their prophecy. Nevertheless, others clung to Buxton's idea; one of them was the Rev. Henry Venn, who became the Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in 1841 and held the office until 1872.

The Parliamentary Committee which reported mainly on Gold Coast affairs in 1842 praised the work of missionaries, especially the Wesleyan, in that settlement. The Church Missionary Society, tenacious and still hopeful in Sierra Leone, was anxious to seek new pastures. The call came from Abeokuta from the Sierra Leonian immigrants who felt the need for Anglican ministrations in their new home. Shodeke agreed and they petitioned the Church Missionary Society to attach a missionary to them. Henry Townsend, then a teacher in Freetown, accepted the challenge.

Townsend left Freetown in a ship owned by a liberated African and arrived at Badagry towards the end of 1842. Wowu received him well and lodged him in his own house until Townsend left for

<sup>1</sup> A German Church missionary in Sierra Leone.

<sup>2</sup> Captain John Beecroft was a trader and *de facto* Governor of the Spanish colony of Fernando Po.

decided to admit the English to Lagos, abolish the slave trade and promote legitimate commerce, Kosoko placed himself at the head of the friends of the slave trade on the island and rebelled against his mild uncle. Without the support of the *Eletu Odibo*, a consistent opponent of Kosoko who had left the island on protest at the recall of the prince, Akitoye was defeated by Kosoko. After a twelve-day civil war, Akitoye was expelled and many of his followers were captured and slain. He took refuge in Abeokuta with friends and relatives.<sup>1</sup>

A pro-Kosoko party at Abeokuta, led by Apati (a great cosmopolitan figure in those days), opposed Akitoye's stay there and demanded his head to be sent to Kosoko at Lagos. Okukenu, the Sagbua, the head of the *Ogboni*, on the other hand, provided lodgings for Akitoye in his own township of Ake, then located near Ikija and succeeded in saving Akitoye's life. Baulked of their prey, Apati's supporters harassed the Ake people by burning their houses and in consequence the people moved and Ake was established on its present site, then on the outskirts of the town. Thus, the question of an asylum for Akitoye at Abeokuta led to a rift: the leading *Ologun* favoured Kosoko and by implication the slave trade; the *Ogboni*, led by Okukenu, supported Akitoye and favoured the admission of the English missionary.

Townsend's eventual admission to Abeokuta was unexpectedly facilitated by the action of a Badagry slave dealer, Domingo Martinez. Domingo wanted the Ado trade route opened as the closure was bad for his trade; he therefore sent rich presents to the Egba authorities. He promised them the best cloth, tobacco, and rum in exchange for slaves and advised them to refuse Townsend's request for admission as the missionaries opposed the slave trade. In response to his bribe the Egba opened the Ado route, but at the same time they granted Townsend his safe conduct.

Townsend, accompanied by Samuel Ajayi Crowther, arrived at Abeokuta on 3 August 1846 and was again joyously received. They explained their mission at a public meeting and they were formally permitted to preach freely and to hold property. Land was given to them at Ake for a church and a dwelling-house. Soon, other mission stations sprang up at Igbein, Ikija, Itoku, Itoko, and Ago-Owu.

The Wesleyan Mission followed the Anglican in 1847. The Rev. C. Martin visited Abeokuta from Cape Coast and left an African

<sup>1</sup> Akitoye's mother was probably an Egba Owu woman.

catechist<sup>1</sup> in charge of a station at Ogbe. Bowen brought in the Baptist Mission in 1850; he arrived at Abeokuta by way of Badagry on 18 August. The three missions started gaining converts<sup>2</sup> and teaching the young. The leading chiefs sent their sons to live with the missionaries, and Christian settlements known as *Alabama* or *Wasimi*<sup>3</sup> grew round the mission stations at Ake, Ogbe, and Ikija. It was a period of joyous imitation of the white man. Young men took English surnames: Somoye's son became Tinney; Okukenu's, Charles Simeon and Ogubonna's, Meadows. Ogubonna himself delighted in the appellation 'Agboke t'Oyinbo' (a man of elegant manners like a white man), and added windows and doors to his house in 'imitation of missionaries' dwellings'.<sup>4</sup>

The Egba raid upon Abaka in Oke-Ogun in 1846 might be explained as the action of the slave-trade party who wanted to carry on business with Domingo Martinez at Badagry. Abaka, however, put up an unexpectedly strong resistance which took a four-month siege and the support of Porto Novo for the Egba to overcome it. They returned to Abeokuta with many slaves; Anoba, the Are-Ona-Kakanfo, alone had 150 slaves allotted to him at the end of the campaign.

The Abaka raid illustrates the radical weakness of the Egba state—the fact that the *Ologun* with their own forces were a law unto themselves. The official Egba policy at this time was against the slave trade; yet one of the *Ologun* could boast<sup>5</sup> openly in council that the object of the Abaka raid was to raise slaves for export. In the aftermath of the raid, *Ologun* agitation against Akitoye broke out afresh and Okukenu, the Sagbua, judged it best for Akitoye to leave Abeokuta. He was escorted to the frontier town of Imowo and handed over there to the people of Badagry, who were solemnly charged to protect him against Kosoko or else they would incur the wrath of their Egba overlords.<sup>6</sup> Clearly the slave-trade party was in the ascendant among the *Ologun* at this time.

<sup>1</sup> Catechists continued at Ogbe until the arrival of the Rev. T. Champness and wife in 1861.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the earliest converts included Crowther's own mother with whom he had been unexpectedly reunited in 1846; and one of the Sagbua's wives.

<sup>3</sup> Literally 'come and rest'.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Tucker, *Abbeokuta or Sunrise within the Tropics*, p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> Townsend in evidence before the Hutt Committee of 1847-8.

<sup>6</sup> The Egba claim of overlordship of Badagry is contentious; they said a man named Gbogboro was their Ajele there and that Posu, as a vassal, was coerced to join the Egba in the Ado War.

The burial of the first deceased 'native'<sup>1</sup> Christian convert according to Christian rites in a cemetery instead of the family compound led to the persecution of the Christian converts in 1848-9. It broke out at the Itoku township and spread quickly to Igbore, Igbein, Itori, Kemta, Oko, and Ijeun; but it did not become general because the Sagbua and three powerful *Ologun* (Somoye, Ogubonna, and Shokenu) disapproved of it. Church services were interdicted in the affected townships and the missionaries<sup>2</sup> were mocked in the streets. The converts bore their persecution with fortitude and finally paid fines, estimated at £100, to the authorities of the townships concerned in order to end it.

The persecution arose because Christian burial had deprived the *Ogboni* of their traditional burial fees and the *Babalawo*<sup>3</sup> of their accustomed roles. Crowther suspected that back-sliding Sierra Leonians, who had been aggrieved by missionary disapproval of polygamy and their rigorous anglicanism, incited the Babalawo and others against the converts who had abandoned age-old customs. The new faith could not, of course, be established without any opposition; for the Moslems had earlier had their mosques pulled down several times by their angry opponents before they were firmly established. Nevertheless, it was easy in 1848 for the conservative polytheists to combine with the unruly *Ologun* against the missionaries who were undermining native custom on the one hand and preaching against the slave trade on the other. It was only the support of the leading chiefs that saved the delicately poised missions.

When Townsend returned to England in 1848 he took a letter from Okukenu, the Sagbua, and chiefs of Abeokuta, addressed to Queen Victoria. The Egba expressed their gratitude for British friendship; they professed hatred for the slave trade and named Lagos as its stronghold. They invited lawful traders and asked for teachers to teach their children agriculture and the mechanical arts. They wanted protection to enable them to navigate the Lagos Lagoon and so link Abeokuta to the coast by the Ogun River. Townsend's influence in the framing of the letter is clear: the unsatisfactory land route from Badagry to Abeokuta via Ado must be replaced by an inland water-way which would be within Egba juris-

<sup>1</sup> As opposed to Sierra Leone immigrant.

<sup>2</sup> Townsend was away on furlough; Muhler, Hinderer, and Crowther were in Abeokuta.

<sup>3</sup> 'Father in occult'—the term used by the Christians for the 'heathen priests', especially *Ifa* diviners.

diction. In this way the missions would receive their stores and supplies in safety, and the Egba a more secure trade route. It all depended, however, on freedom of navigation on the Lagos Lagoon and creeks which only the British Preventive Squadron could guarantee.

Townsend's visit was timely in that the fate of the Preventive Squadron was being discussed in England then. The Hutt Committee (1847-8) had been appointed by the House of Commons to consider the best means of extinguishing the slave trade and Townsend gave evidence before it on 4 July 1848. He reported favourably on Abeokuta and strongly supported the retention of the Preventive Squadron, which alone could prevent a general revival of the slave trade in Africa. Gollmer, another missionary, who spoke from his experience in Sierra Leone and Badagry, supported Townsend. When, however, the Hutt Committee finally reported in 1849 the anti-coercionists, comprising Quakers and partisans of economy like Joseph Hume, triumphed. They pronounced against the Squadron and recommended more active diplomatic measures to secure the co-operation of all nations against the slave trade. The Committee, however, recommended the continuance of the 'instruction of the natives by missionary labours, by education and by all practical efforts' as one of the most effective means of suppressing the slave traffic. The House of Lords appointed its own select committee under Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford which interviewed the same witnesses, including Townsend, and which in their interim report of 1849 advised against the removal of the Squadron and suggested improvements in its equipment and disposition.

Roused by Townsend, the Church Missionary Society authorities sent a delegation to wait upon the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, on 4 December 1849. The delegation was led by Lord Waldgrave and its members included Hutton (a West African trader), Townsend, and Gollmer. In order to secure an opening for legitimate commerce in the Abeokuta area, the delegation advocated the appointment of a 'British Resident' at Abeokuta; the stationing of an armed boat in the Lagos Lagoon; and the building of a fort at Badagry. Lord Palmerston was inclined to send an envoy to Abeokuta to report. The Church Missionary Society maintained their pressure; another delegation waited upon the Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, on 15 December 1849 and yet another upon Lord Palmerston on 12 March 1850.

Townsend returned to Abeokuta in 1850 happy in the knowledge

that his ideas were receiving fruitful attention in England. An envoy was likely to visit Abeokuta and report to the British Government on the best means of rendering her safe as the 'cradle of civilization' in the Yoruba country. The Church Missionary Society authorities were alive to the needs and potentialities of the new Yoruba Mission with its headquarters at Abeokuta. The Egba themselves welcomed back their *de facto* envoy with demonstrations of joy which were heightened by the Queen's reply to their letter, written at Her Majesty's command by the Earl of Chichester. The Queen was pleased that the Egba had preferred legitimate commerce to the slave trade and that they had welcomed the missionaries and received the Word of God. She sent to them two neatly bound Bibles in Arabic and English and the Prince Consort, with his practical genius, added a steel corn-mill. (Townsend also brought for Ogubonna, the well-disposed *Ologun*, a stained-glass window from the Rev. G. H. Shield.)

Townsend's prestige at Abeokuta stood very high after his return. He had represented Abeokuta in Britain as the hopeful centre ('Sunrise within the Tropics') from which commerce and Christian civilization would radiate into the dark but fertile interior. His task would be to ensure that the real Abeokuta did not belie his rosy picture. The dreadful menace of the slave trade clouded the horizon: it had its friends, secret and avowed, within Abeokuta; and its exponents were active without. The immediate problem in 1850 was, however, one of survival for the town itself, against which Ghezo, King of Dahomey, was preparing an annihilatory attack. British response to missionary promptings was urgently confronted with this problem when it came forth.

## CHAPTER IV

# Dahomian Menace

(1850-4)

THE military kingdom of Dahomey emerged from the efforts of the Fon to check the Yoruba encroachment upon their country. Dako, a prince of Allada, conquered a neighbouring king, Dan, c. 1625 and made his territory the nucleus of the kingdom of Dahomey<sup>1</sup> with its capital at Abomey. In the reign of the fourth king, Agaja,<sup>2</sup> Whydah was subjugated and a route to the coast opened. There the Dahomi came into contact with slave dealers (Portuguese, Brazilian, and English) and exchanged slaves captured in forays for rifles and cannons by means of which their forces became irresistible to their inadequately armed neighbours. The Dahomi, however, found the cavalry raids of the Oyo-Yoruba exceedingly troublesome and in 1747 they purchased peace by offering an annual tribute to the Oyo. The tribute was paid at Calmina about November in each year until during the reign of Ghezo<sup>3</sup> (1818-58) when the Dahomi threw off the Oyo yoke and also overran western Yoruba.

The kingdom of Dahomey was unusual in that it possessed a standing army and used its women as soldiers. The so-called Amazons were originally Agaja's superfluous wives whom he first used as bodyguards and latterly as soldiers in order to strike terror into the enemy by a display of overwhelming numbers. The Dahomi fought incessantly either to expand their territory or to keep up their export trade in slaves. They were dreaded by their neighbours and to the civilized world their kingdom constituted an odious stronghold of slavery and human sacrifice.

Thomas Birch Freeman, the missionary explorer, visited Dahomey in 1843. He reported that the King was willing to receive a mission and would like the British to reoccupy Whydah. The King had also said that he would consider stopping the slave trade if he was adequately compensated. Whether or not the King was sincere, opinion in

<sup>1</sup> *Dan-ho-men* means, in Fon, 'in Dan's belly'.

<sup>2</sup> Or Truó; the kings usually took a ceremonial name on their accession.

<sup>3</sup> *Ghezo emasigbe*, ceremonial name meaning 'the phoenix is not afraid of a burning bush'.

London favoured action. Freeman and Dandeson Coates, the Church Missionary Society lay Secretary, urged the Government to act in order to afford protection for missionary enterprise around Badagry. Traders wanted the British to intervene at Whydah in order to protect their trade against the French, who had established trading stations at Gaboon and on the Ivory Coast. The Foreign Office was willing to consider a proposal to send a Consul to Whydah but the Colonial Office disagreed; so nothing was done. In 1846, John Duncan, trader and traveller, brought back the old request from Dahomey but the move to establish a consulate at Whydah again failed owing to Colonial Office refusal to co-operate.

In 1848, Governor Winniett of the Gold Coast and Freeman visited Abomey and concluded a 'treaty' of protection for British commerce with Ghezo. The King also promised to eschew the slave trade after cotton culture had taken root in Dahomey. With this evidence, Lord Palmerston at the Foreign Office decided to act alone: Duncan was appointed at his own request an unpaid Vice-Consul at Whydah, and later, John Beecroft was made Consul for the Bights in 1849. Moreover, opinion in Britain had encouraged Palmerston. Hutt's motion for the removal of the Preventive Squadron had been defeated<sup>1</sup> in the House of Commons and the report of the Lords' Committee<sup>2</sup> recommended the extension of forts and consular establishments in places which were 'fitted to become emporiums of trade'.

John Beecroft was chosen to be Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra on account of his knowledge of the people and because he had become popular among them during his long residence in those parts. His consular jurisdiction covered the western coast of Africa lying between Capes St. Paul and St. John's. His duties included preventing quarrels among the chiefs and promoting legitimate trade in place of the slave traffic. It was envisaged that he would have an iron boat at his disposal in order to carry out his instructions of touring the area of his consulship. Beecroft's first missions were to Dahomey and Abeokuta.

In Dahomey, Beecroft was instructed to explain to Ghezo the advantages of legitimate commerce over the slave trade; whereas the latter was doomed by British efforts on the seas, demand in Europe for palm oil and cotton was increasing. Beecroft was to offer a

<sup>1</sup> By 232 votes to 154, with Bright, Cobden, and Gladstone in the minority.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 36 *supra*.

subsidy of £3,000 for three years in sterling or goods to the King to compensate him for the certain loss which would result from immediate cessation of his export trade in slaves. He should warn the King against his raids upon the Yoruba and the Popo,<sup>1</sup> who were friends of the British and in effect under the protection of Her Majesty's Government.

At Abeokuta, on the other hand, Beecroft was instructed to observe and report on the true disposition of the Egba and the Yoruba in general towards legitimate commerce. He should investigate the possibility of opening up the Ogun River with a view to reaching Egga<sup>2</sup> and Rabbah on the Niger. He should also investigate the charges which missionaries had brought against Lagos of slave dealing; preventing legitimate trade; expelling its lawful king because he was friendly to the British; and of kidnapping Sierra Leone immigrants. He was empowered to remonstrate with the ruler of Lagos in the light of his inquiries.

On 26 May 1850 Beecroft, accompanied by Commander Forbes, arrived at Abomey and he stayed there for six weeks, one-quarter of the duration of the customs.<sup>3</sup> The King refused to give up the slave trade because his 'manly' people scorned agriculture and had laid waste all arable land around. He ignored the offer of a subsidy and declared that to stop the slave trade was to ruin his kingdom. Beecroft, for his part, resisted the suggestion of making Whydah a 'free port' and after a show of anger, obtained the release of two Sierra Leonians who had been kidnapped. Concerning Abeokuta, the *Mayo-gan* or chief minister made it plain that the Dahomi were jealous of missionary influence there; they would welcome it in their own territory provided it came no nearer than Whydah. Beecroft also saw clearly that the Dahomi had marked Abeokuta down for destruction.

Beecroft reported that both the wealth and the power of the King of Dahomey had been exaggerated. Of the reported 8,000 Amazons, he had seen only 3,000 at a grand review and about the same number of men. Although the King's frontiers were well guarded Beecroft estimated that he could muster only 20,000-25,000 men in his army. It was certain, however, that only strong measures could compel the

<sup>1</sup> The Popo are the natives of Badagry and are reckoned as a sub-group of the Yoruba.

<sup>2</sup> The highest point reached by the Niger expedition of 1841-2.

<sup>3</sup> The annual festival of human sacrifice to the King's ancestors.

Ayikonde, the Balogun of the Egba) were hostile. The Oke-Ona chief, Ogubonna, was an Anglophile but 'a little vain'; the Owu chief, Lara, was agreeable; and the two Gbagura leaders, Anoba, the Arc-Ona-Kakanfo, and Agbo, approved the 'palaver'. At a final meeting, attended only by the *Ologun*, Shokenu was the spokesman. The Egba requested help for fortifying their town and suggested that Akitoye be restored at Lagos. Beecroft agreed.

On returning to Badagry, Beecroft found that the Kosoko faction there had gained ground and only the presence of H.M.S. *Jackal* (Commander Bedingsfeld) in the Lagoon prevented a Porto-Novian invasion of Badagry with a view to expelling Akitoye. The ex-King presented a petition asking for British protection and his reinstatement at Lagos. Beecroft informed him dramatically that he would be safe only if he accompanied Beecroft on the *Jackal*. Akitoye demurred but eventually agreed and was allowed to take 'two wives, two men and a boy with him' on board. Akitoye's flight with the Consul threw Badagry into consternation: opposing parties clashed; the King of Porto Novo sent the *Iso*, mercenary canoe men, to invade the port and Gollmer asked for protection for Akitoye's supporters and the missionaries in the event of British operations at Lagos. Action in Lagos was inevitable. The *Jackal* had liberated 270 slaves off Ijebu; and, together with the *Centaur*, the *Jackal* had intercepted two slavers with about 267 slaves on board in the vicinity of Lagos. Beecroft thus possessed concrete evidence of the Lagos chiefs' participation in the slave trade and the Foreign Office agreed with him that British influence must be established in Lagos. Beecroft was instructed to negotiate a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade with Kosoko and to warn him in characteristic Palmerstonian language:

That Great Britain is a stronger Power both by sea and by land, that her friendship is worth having and that her Displeasure it is well to avoid. . . . If the chief should show a disposition to refuse compliance, you should beg him to remember that Lagos is near to the Sea, and that on the Sea are the ships and the Cannons of England and also to bear in mind that he does not hold his Authority without a Competitor. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Before action could be taken against Lagos, however, the Dahomi struck at Abeokuta on 3 March 1851.

Ghezo disregarded British warnings and decided to satisfy the insistent demand of his warriors for the privilege of destroying Abeokuta. A large army (estimated at 10,000 men and 6,000 women)

<sup>1</sup> F.O. 84/858, Palmerston to Beecroft, 21 Feb. 1851.

was assembled at Abomey and Ghezo harangued it before it was led out against the Egba by the *Gaou*, Akati. When the army reached Ishaga in the Egbado country, the people feigned submission while at the same time they warned the Egba of the approaching army; they advised the Dahomi to attack Abeokuta in daylight instead of under cover of darkness and led them to ford the Ogun River at a deep point where some of their powder was lost or became wet. The Egba, on hearing of the approach of the Dahomi, hurried to man their walls in response to the women's cry of *Elele m'ele*.<sup>1</sup> Townsend distributed the ammunition, supplied by the Consul, amongst the *Ologun*.

The actual attack was launched upon the western or Aro Gate, whither the Ishaga had fortunately directed the Dahomi; for the wall there had been repaired by the Sagbua and other pro-missionary chiefs. The Dahomi approached in a stolid and disciplined column, firing on command and with demoralizing effect upon the defenders of the town. They set about their objective of scaling the wall with grim determination. The Egba soon discovered, however, that foremost amongst their assailants were the Amazons and were revolted at the thought of yielding to women. Shokenu, the Seriki, the Egba commander-in-chief, led an out-flanking movement which soon demoralized the besiegers. In vain Akati endeavoured to rally the crack regiment; he perished in the attempt and his leaderless army broke into a retreat. The Egba pursued the retreating forces and arrived just in time to rescue the Ishaga from condign punishment for their double-dealing with the Dahomi. In the ferocious second engagement the Dahomi were finally routed. They never lost their cohesion altogether; they re-crossed the Yewa River and laid waste Egba farms *en route* and took some prisoners home.

The Egba had won the Battle of Aro at a great price but the Dahomian casualties were heavier.<sup>2</sup> The Amazons, who led the attack, suffered particularly heavy losses and several of the prisoners-of-war proved exceedingly troublesome to their captors in their state of unabated ferocity. The Egba owed their victory to the zeal of their women, who attended the wounded and kept the front-line supplied with food and water; and to the tireless energy and example of the missionaries. Bowen of the Baptist Mission employed his military

<sup>1</sup> *Elele m'ele* = each to his cutlass!

<sup>2</sup> 'Cette campagne malheureuse coûta aux Dahoméens plus de trois mille morts et un plus grand nombre de blessés sans compter quelques centaines de prisonniers.' E. Dunglas, *Études Dahoméennes*, 1<sup>er</sup> Numéro (1949).

training to direct and encourage the Egba fighters upon the walls; Townsend and his Church Missionary Society colleagues used a nearby rock as a watch-tower and a first-aid post. Among the Egba, Shokenu, the Seriki, and Ogubonna, the Balogun of Ikija, distinguished themselves in the fighting. But the Egba were vociferous in their gratitude to the missionaries who had brought them valuable material aid from the British.

After the defeat of the Dahomi, Townsend's prestige at Abeokuta touched its zenith. He was not only the amanuensis of the Egba 'nation' but he was regarded as the author of their deliverance from the Dahomi. Henceforth, he must be acknowledged as the real architect of Egba policy towards the British. His objective was peace in which missionary and other civilizing influences might flourish and the great obstacle which must be overcome was the foreign slave trade. Towards this end, the British must take action at Lagos and Badagry; for Townsend had discovered that Kosoko of Lagos and Possu of Badagry had co-operated with the Dahomi in their effort to destroy Abeokuta. While Lagos was receiving the attention of the British Consul and Government, Townsend encouraged the Egba to send a force, under Shomoye, the Bashorun, to protect Badagry from an impending attack by Kosoko and also keep the Badagry-Abeokuta route open to commerce. The Egba also formally asked the British for a treaty of commerce and friendship on 15 August 1851, 'according to the custom of the English', and promised cotton, indigo, pepper, and ginger. They again named Kosoko as their enemy (and added the King of Porto Novo); requested Akitoye's restoration at Lagos and military aid for themselves.

The British remained firm in their support of the Egba in spite of a *démarche* from Ghezo, King of Dahomey. He alleged that his attack upon Abeokuta had been provoked by Egba inroads into his territory and excused his failure by the need to garrison the hostile towns which his forces had traversed on their way to Abeokuta. He said he was bound to try again in order to retrieve his huge losses including the royal wives who had been captured and appropriated by the Egba leaders; but he promised not to touch the British persons who were resident at Abeokuta. If there were any doubts in the minds of the British Government, Townsend silenced them by proving conclusively that a recent civil war at Badagry was not just a 'native squabble' but one fomented by slave dealers and aimed at eliminating British influence. Beecroft was authorized to supply arms up to the

value of £300 to the Egba against the Dahomi and to the people of Badagry against Kosoko's wanton attack. He was further instructed to conclude a treaty with the Egba. Commodore Bruce warned Ghezo not to repeat his attack upon Abeokuta and Commander Forbes was dispatched to help the Egba with their defences.

Forbes arrived at Abeokuta on 13 November 1851, and received a civic welcome. He disclosed that a French officer had gone to Dahomey to teach the Dahomi the art of war. He said that he had been sent by the Queen to teach the Egba artillery and to point out the defects in their fortifications. He taught them elements of military tactics, trained some Sierra Leone immigrant volunteers as gunners and succeeded in rousing the Egba to repair their walls and mount their field pieces properly. Impressed by the Egba, Forbes concluded an anti-slave-trade treaty with them before he was recalled to other duties only to meet his untimely death.

On 8 December 1851 Commodore Bruce blockaded all ports and places in the Bight of Benin except Badagry in order to induce the Kings of Lagos, Dahomey, and Porto Novo to reconsider their decisions not to sign the anti-slave-trade treaties. Beecroft had hoped to effect Akitoye's restoration at Lagos through the good offices of the King of Benin, to whom he wrote, but Kosoko made naval action inevitable by firing upon a ship which was flying a flag of truce. Beecroft hastily requested Commander Forbes to attack Lagos, but the British landing-party was repulsed with heavy losses.

The abortive attempt—for which Beecroft was censured—was followed by a properly concerted and successful action. A sufficient force was mustered. Kosoko and Tappa, his 'caboceer',<sup>1</sup> put up a gallant defence: they erected a stockade which was protected by ditches and whence proceeded such firing as grounded the *Tizel* twice. When a well-directed rocket burst upon the stockade, however, the carnage was such that the opposition collapsed. Kosoko and Tappa abandoned Lagos and retired in the direction of Ijebu. The Egba sent a land force under Ogudipe of Ikija to assist Akitoye, who was restored to his throne. Akitoye signed the Treaty with Commodore Bruce on board the *Penelope* on 1 January 1852. A free pardon was proclaimed and pro-Kosoko chiefs soon began to return to their rightful allegiance. Thus, British influence was established at Lagos on the suggestion and with the active co-operation of the Egba under the guidance of the missionaries.

<sup>1</sup> War chief.

Gollmer moved from Badagry to Lagos in 1852 after Akitoye's restoration. He took possession of a slave baracoon and began his missionary activities. It was clear from the start that the task of missionaries in these parts was not merely to convert heathens but to promote the regeneration of the area. Missions must expand and diffuse their influence instead of concentrating their energies upon one centre until all its inhabitants had embraced the Gospel. It was their duty to impart useful knowledge as well as Christian teachings, and to heal the sick, irrespective of their faith.

In 1851 the Yoruba Mission received reinforcements, among whom was a teacher<sup>1</sup> for a school at Abeokuta and an industrial agent and medical aid.<sup>2</sup> Hinderer<sup>3</sup> dreamed of a chain of missions from the coast into the far interior of which Badagry and Abeokuta were just two links. Ibadan would be the third, and Hinderer proceeded there in May 1851. Ilorin would be the fourth; for trade between Abeokuta and Ilorin had already blazed the trail for the Gospel and British commerce. This programme of expansion depended upon the missionaries maintaining good relations with the British protecting authorities and with the indigenous peoples.

Vice-Consul Fraser in Whydah had become *persona non grata* with the King of Dahomey and so he was transferred to Lagos, on Bercroft's suggestion, pending the appointment of a full Consul there. During his brief tenure of office, Fraser left his mark in a policy which placed the promotion of trade first and foremost and regarded missionary activities as only secondary. In order to promote trade at Lagos, Fraser tended to wink even at slave trading and he worked for a *rapprochement* with pro-slave-trade chiefs, including Kosoko and Tappa. A dispute between the bellicose Gollmer and representatives of Messrs. Forster and Smith over extensive lagoon frontage land which Akitoye had granted to the missionaries but was more suitable for the furtherance of trade than for the building of churches led to the pronouncement by Lord Malmesbury, then Foreign Secretary, in support of the priority of trade over missionary enterprise.

If Vice-Consul Fraser had ensured that the missionaries would not

<sup>1</sup> Palcy, the grandson of the great scholar, who died within a few days of his arrival at Abeokuta. His wife also died on her way back to Lagos.

<sup>2</sup> W. C. Hensman, 1841 Niger expedition surgeon; joined the Church Missionary Society in 1851 and went to Abeokuta, where he died within eighteen months.

<sup>3</sup> A Basle man. His wife, Anna Hinderer, wrote down their experiences in *17 Years in the Yoruba Country* (1873).

be the powers behind the throne at Lagos, their influence at Abeokuta was as yet unchallenged. They refused Fraser's offer of mediation in the protracted siege of Ado to which the Egba had returned on their way from Badagry and after capturing Ipokia. Ado, surrounded by marshes and with an outlet to Porto Novo, could not be hemmed in and starved into surrender as the Egba were wont to do. Townsend, however, stepped in and accompanied by Crowther he went to Ado and mediated successfully between the two parties. The Egba raised the siege in 1853 and the Ado undertook to keep the Badagry trade route open and safe.

The Egba, the missionaries, and the British authorities continued to co-operate in the chief task of suppressing the slave trade and keeping Lagos safe for commerce. Anti-slave-trade treaties had been concluded with the Ijebu and Badagry early in 1852 and in December of that year, Commander Foote of the *Prometheus*, accompanied by Dr. Irving, R.N., visited Abeokuta. The Egba, for their part, sent a detachment before they broke up their camp at Ado to help Akitoye to suppress the insurrection of two pro-Kosoko chiefs at Lagos.

Benjamin Campbell, the new Consul, arrived at Lagos towards the end of 1853. He was a man of considerable experience in West African affairs. A relentless opponent of the slave trade, one of his first acts was to reprimand Fraser, the outgoing Vice-Consul, for keeping four young African domestic slaves and to proclaim such an act illegal in future for British subjects residing at Lagos. Two chiefs rebelled, allegedly against the growing dominance of Akitoye's niece, Tinubu, but in reality as a cover for Kosoko to land at Lagos. Campbell dealt with the insurrection and the timely intervention of Commander Phillips of H.M.S. *Polyphemus* ensured Kosoko's defeat when he did land.

After Akitoye's death, Campbell wrote to Kosoko and Tappa at Epe asking them to keep the peace. He arranged for Akitoye's son, Dosunmu, to be elected King before the chiefs were aware of Akitoye's death. Although Kosoko and Tappa professed themselves eager to return peacefully to Lagos, it was clear that they would not acquiesce in Dosunmu's rule. As they were converting Epe into a piratical base for molesting canoes on their way to Abeokuta, Campbell arranged, with Foreign Office approval, for Egba land forces and Dosunmu's war-canoes under Commander Phillips' naval coverage to dislodge Kosoko and his followers from Epe. The venture failed: Phillips bombarded Kosoko's stockades but the Egba and Lagos forces

failed to land and later indulged in mutual recriminations. The Egba went on their own and attacked Olomowewe in the Ijebu country, drove off Kosoko's forces, and destroyed a slave baracoon. Kosoko's Portuguese friends, including Señor Lima, his *chef d'artillerie*, were found at Olomowewe and a slaver hurriedly put to sea at the approach of the Egba forces, led by Ogudipe.

Campbell had made a good start at Lagos. He next dealt with the dispute between the missionaries and the traders which the Foreign Office had referred to him. He defended the missionaries, especially 'the upright and dauntless Gollmer' and traced the quarrel to the fact that the traders had carried over into the days of avowed legitimate commerce the resentment which they had harboured against missionaries in the palmy days of the slave trade. He dismissed traders' charges that missionaries were inciting the Egba to war against their neighbours and cited Townsend's recent successful mediation at Ado as evidence of missionaries' desire for peace, which alone could further their labours. On the question of the land dispute he acquitted the missionaries; for Mr. Sandeman of Messrs. Forster and Smith had taken the best site and a mile of lagoon frontage was yet unoccupied.

Trade began to flow steadily into Lagos from Abeokuta by the overland route or by water, convoyed by Dosunmu's canoes and occasionally accompanied by vessels of the Royal Navy. Once, Kosoko kidnapped about 300 traders travelling from Abeokuta to Lagos; thenceforth, the Egba provided armed escorts for their caravans to within ten miles of Lagos. Campbell, with Foreign Office approval, made strenuous efforts to obtain the release of the kidnapped Egba, some of whom were eventually ransomed by their relatives from Kosoko who confessed that he needed the money; hence the raid. Lagos, however, remained peaceful. More immigrants flocked in and amongst them were 130 families of self-emancipated Africans from Brazil.<sup>1</sup> They were industrious and well-conducted people whose vanguard had suffered spoliation at the hands of Kosoko when he was King. Campbell took them into consular protection on the condition that they recognized the new régime, refrained from the slave trade, and embraced civilization.

Campbell noticed that trade came into Lagos only from Abeokuta. If its volume was to increase, trade from elsewhere must be attracted. The exiled Kosoko and his party were known to be adepts in the

<sup>1</sup> The *emancipados*.

peculiar trading methods of the coast, the credit or trust system; their return to the island would promote its economic interests. The missionaries saw in this policy an attempt to compromise with the forces of evil—the exponents of the slave trade. In order to succeed, Campbell must appease Kosoko and the King of Porto Novo as well as install a puppet ruler at Badagry. To do both of these was to outrage the moral sense of the missionaries and dislodge the Egba from their quasi-overlordship over Badagry. Campbell and Gollmer 'fell out right royal' over the proposal to make peace between Kosoko and Dosunmu: Gollmer used his influence with the chiefs against it; Campbell went over to the anti-Gollmer and the Egba party of traders.

Campbell achieved the first objective fairly easily. He ignored Dosunmu's protests and concluded a treaty with Kosoko in November 1854. Kosoko forsook the slave trade and Campbell guaranteed the port of Palma to him. A subsidy of 2,000 heads of cowries or 1,000 dollars (at his option) was assigned to Kosoko for life, provided he abandoned hostile intentions towards Lagos and embraced equitable trade. Lord Clarendon at the Foreign Office thought that Campbell had created a dangerous precedent but approved the treaty and subsidy. Campbell's next step was to restore Wowu and Possu, pro-Kosoko chiefs at Badagry, in order to develop trade between Badagry and Lagos. The pro-Egba chief, Mewu, had to be removed either by agreement or by force; Campbell offered him a subsidy<sup>1</sup> and asked Townsend and the Egba to use their acknowledged influence to obtain his compliance. The Egba demurred: they sent Townsend and the Apena of Ikija to investigate at Badagry. The envoys came to the conclusion that Mewu would not treat and that the return of the chiefs who had been expelled for their slave-trade sympathies would jeopardize legitimate trade. The Egba therefore refused to desert Mewu and Campbell retorted that they wanted to maintain their hold upon Badagry as an outlet for their clandestine slave trade with Domingo Martinez at which Mewu had connived. Campbell resorted to force and after two abortive attempts succeeded in ousting Mewu for Wowu and Possu; Mewu sought asylum with Dosunmu at Lagos after the expected Egba relieving force had failed to arrive.

The Foreign Office, however, needed much convincing before it

<sup>1</sup> 500 heads of cowries per annum or £50 sterling if he retired to Lagos or Abeokuta.

## CHAPTER V

### A 'Buxton' State and Cotton

(1855-9)

THE Anglican missionaries had established at Abeokuta, through their influence, a state which should be the centre from which Fowell Buxton's dream of regenerating Africa by 'calling forth her resources' could be realized. Their success depended upon consular support from Lagos, where the slave trade was again in evidence. Consul Campbell was, however, vigilant. He compelled Dosunmu to expel two notorious slave dealers<sup>1</sup> from Lagos and dealt energetically with a plot to restore Kosoko and revive the lucrative slave traffic. He sent some ammunition to the Egba in response to their appeal for aid against the Dahomi, who were preparing to attack Abeokuta with a view to sending slaves to Brazil. Campbell, however, no longer regarded the Dahomi as wholly to blame in their efforts to destroy Abeokuta; so he offered to mediate between the two parties.

Meanwhile, Campbell forwarded a petition to the Foreign Office from the merchants of Lagos against the return of the Anglican missionaries, Townsend and Gollmer, who were on furlough in May 1855. The petitioners alleged that the two missionaries were stirring up trouble in the neighbourhood of Lagos: Gollmer in Lagos itself and Badagry; Townsend in Abeokuta. They maintained that peace and tranquillity prevailed in the absence of the two men; to allow them to return would be to endanger both, the sure foundation of trade. The petitioners included nine white traders, some Brazilian and Sierra Leone immigrants, and Gardiner, the Methodist missionary.

Campbell supported the petition, although he was more concerned with Gollmer than with Townsend. He had revised his earlier favourable opinion of Gollmer and he believed that the missionary policy of establishing the hegemony of the Egba in the neighbourhood of Lagos would certainly disrupt the peace of the whole area. Sandeman, one of the traders, later revealed the true cause of their resent-

<sup>1</sup> The bogus French Consul (Monsieur Lemaignier, *alias* Don Luis) and the Brazilian Señor Jambo.

ment against the two missionaries. The latter were becoming mercantile speculators shipping their own supplies direct and so all their activities became suspect to the traders and missionary interpretation of events were rejected.<sup>1</sup> McKoskry said that only Egba partisans could oppose the traders' petition.

Indeed, the Egba submitted a counter-petition to the Church Missionary Society authorities. The chiefs and the converts praised the excellent work of the two missionaries amongst them and instanced Townsend's mediation at Ado to illustrate the missionary *pax* which they were enjoying. On the other hand, the Egba complained to Campbell against trade practices in Lagos—inadequate prices, defective measures, and lack of direct access to white merchants—in consequence of which they had interdicted the Lagos trade. Campbell replied that although price should be subject to the economic laws of supply and demand he would ensure accurate measure by introducing a 'branding' system and would help any Egba trader who was debarred from trading direct with white merchants by Lagos and Sierra Leonian middlemen.

Campbell found that the cessation of Egba trade was causing hardship to the European importers at Lagos and the immigrant middlemen. Porto Novo and Ijebu sources were being tapped for essential provisions. The Egba traders were 'bullionists' who demanded payment in cowries instead of bartering their oil for manufactured goods like other traders. In consequence, the price of cowries had risen from £13 per ton to £40 or £50 in England. Moreover, Campbell alleged that the Egba had stopped trading with Lagos in order to engage upon raiding their neighbours for slaves. McKoskry added that the Egba were encouraging the Nago<sup>2</sup> in Dahomey to revolt for the same reason and wondered why the Anglican missionaries were silent about it. The Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, for their part, were anxious to dissociate themselves from the activities of their Anglican colleagues. Their African agent at Abeokuta, perhaps unwittingly, served as Campbell's spy upon the Egba and his reports deepened Campbell's suspicions. The Egba were breaking their treaty; the Owu had offered human sacrifice when installing the Olowu and the Alake had seen nothing wrong in that. Campbell, distrusting the Egba more and more, tended to be less

<sup>1</sup> For example, Sandeman denied that Akitoye was ever opposed to the slave trade.

<sup>2</sup> The Yoruba immigrants in the Fon and Egun country.

antagonistic to the King of Dahomey; he replied to another *démarche* from Ghezo with an assurance that Her Majesty's Government disapproved of Egba aggressive wars.

Anglican missionaries complained that Campbell had committed a trespass on missionary land while selecting the site for the new Consulate. The Foreign Office asked the Admiralty to designate an officer to investigate the charges. Meanwhile, irritating polemics raged over Campbell's policy towards Badagry and Kosoko. The missionaries accused Campbell of destroying British influence and reputation for good faith by countenancing slave-trading chiefs. Campbell countered by blaming Gollmer for his disagreement with the Anglican missionaries at Lagos. He maintained that there were no slave-trade abolishing chiefs around Lagos; nor was he unpopular with the Egba at whose behest he had allowed Madam Tinubu to remain in Lagos and readmitted the Brazilian immigrant, Bamgbose, who had been expelled for his part in an anti-British plot. He defended his policy towards Kosoko and maintained that continued Egba hostility towards Kosoko was only a camouflage for their slave-raiding. Although Campbell missed the point of missionary opposition which characterized his *rapprochement* with Kosoko and his Badagry friends as a breach of faith, at all events he had no animus against the missionaries *qua* missionaries.

Campbell recognized the importance of the missionary role in spreading civilization and of Abeokuta and the Yoruba country as suitable centres for missionary activities. He knew also that British disinterestedness in aiding the return of people once enslaved had been the 'open sesame' to civilizing work in these parts. In his view, the Wesleyan approach was the ideal one, working with native agency under European supervision. The European supervisor must, however, refrain from interfering in secular or political disputes, a sphere which properly belonged to the Consul. It was essential that Her Majesty's representative should be the British spokesman in secular affairs otherwise a struggle for supremacy between consul and missionaries would ensue to the detriment of British influence. Campbell, therefore, asked the Foreign Office to impress upon the Church Missionary Society authorities the necessity of instructing their missionaries to refrain from political matters, a point of view which the missionaries naturally rejected.

Campbell visited Abeokuta from 19 to 29 November 1855 in order to remonstrate with the Egba against the recent human

sacrifice, which he impressed upon the Alake was forbidden by the treaty under any circumstances. He was astonished at the size of the town and its fortifications and wondered why it dreaded the Dahomian invasion so much considering that the Egba could mobilize 20,000 men to Ghezo's 15,000-16,000 men and women. He ascertained that people were well disposed towards him personally and to the missionaries and regretted that Ogubonna was not the supreme ruler at Abeokuta; for he was not only capable of restraining the slave-raiding *Ologun* had he been given the authority but he was also foremost among those cultivating cotton for export. Campbell seized the opportunity of his visit to impress upon the Egba that Her Majesty's Government would not aid them in any aggressive campaigns and to explain to them his policy towards Kosoko which, he claimed, had ensured a safe passage for all Egba canoes plying the Lagoon on lawful trade to Lagos.

While at Abeokuta Campbell heard of the Ibadan raid on Efon and Ijaye's 'razzia' on the pastoral people of 'Esha-bay' ('situate between the Mahi country and the River Niger')—two examples which the Owu and the Gbagura<sup>1</sup> sections of the Egba were preparing to follow. To his dismay, Campbell found that the Egba authorities had no power to restrain the two sections from independent action. Pawu had become the Olowu in 1855, and Okukenu, the Alake in 1854, but as yet there was no attempt to evolve a stable federal authority for all the Egba.

Campbell also found fault with the Sierra Leone immigrants who were not 'pulling their weight' in the matter of suppressing slavery. He admitted that free labour was unobtainable, but he disliked immigrants owning domestic slaves and readily casting off their veneer of Christianity either by professing Islam or by openly relapsing into idolatry and polygamy. Nevertheless, with the aid of some Sierra Leone immigrants, Campbell obtained the resumption of trade which Shomoye's unauthorized campaign against 'Esha-bay' had interrupted. The Alake, who could not prevent the campaign, welcomed Campbell's disapproval of it in the hope that consular reprimand would deter the restless *Ologun* in future.

While Campbell was away from Lagos there was a rising against the immigrants whose growing influence was alleged to be subversive of the authority of the King. On his return, Campbell compelled Dosunmu, who had been neutral, to imprison the leaders of the

<sup>1</sup> Campbell said the Owu and the Gbagura were mostly 'Mahometans'.

rising. Madam Tinubu then openly defied the authority of the King. Campbell thereupon called in the gunboats and forced Dosunmu to authorize Madam Tinubu's expulsion in May 1856.

Dosunmu's reluctance to let Madam Tinubu go was understandable. She was the leading 'middleman' in the interior trade at Lagos and many of her creditors attempted to shelter her. In the credit trading system she was a bad debtor to the tune of over £5,000 advanced to her for palm oil by various merchants. In expelling her, therefore, Campbell antagonized McKoskry as well as the influential Sierra Leonian, Turner, in whose house she had hidden herself. Tinubu loitered around Lagos, hoping for recall; but eventually she was escorted to Abeokuta at the Consul's expense. Well might Campbell report that a great middleman monopoly had been broken up to the delight of numerous Egba traders who had been cheated by it; but at Abeokuta Tinubu was an influential Lagosian *émigrée* who could foment dissension between the Egba and the authorities at Lagos.

In 1856 the Ilorin warned the Egba of preparations which the Dahomi were making towards an attack on Abeokuta. Ghezo was building up a grand coalition of Kosoko, the Ijebu, the Ibadan, the Ijaye, and his own forces; only the *Emir* of Ilorin had refused to join him. Greatly alarmed, the Egba appealed through Campbell to Queen Victoria for help, sending a present, comprising a war drum,<sup>1</sup> two leather cushions, and a piece of cotton cloth locally manufactured. In reply, Campbell promised to devise, with the Commander-in-Chief, West African Station, appropriate measures to deter the King of Dahomey and he sent emissaries to break up the formidable coalition.

Meanwhile, Campbell explored the economic potentialities of the area within his consular jurisdiction. He obtained a 'gold-bearing earthen-pot' from Abeokuta for examination, but expert metallurgists in London found no trace of gold in the glittering particles which were in fact yellow mica. He devoted his enthusiastic attention to cotton culture, and at Abeokuta, with the Anglican missionaries as indefatigable pioneers, he found a welcome response.

Henry Venn, the Church Missionary Society secretary, was an apostle of Fowell Buxton. He obtained samples of African products from missionaries and explored their commercial possibilities in

<sup>1</sup> Campbell kept back the war drum until he could be assured that its gift was symbolic of the Egba renunciation of predatory raids.

England. In this experiment, he was assisted by a coterie of distinguished philanthropists.<sup>1</sup> Not wishing to turn missionaries into traders, Venn kept his economic ventures separate from the evangelizing enterprise of the central Church Missionary Society authorities. The Baroness Burdett Coutts presented Venn with the first cotton gins that he sent to Abeokuta and Samuel Gurney, a generous Quaker, paid for the first press. Venn's ideal, however, was the philanthropic merchant who could devote his capital and skill to the improvement of Africa without seeking personal profit. Such a man was Thomas Clegg whom Venn found after preaching an 'improving' sermon at Manchester.

Thomas Clegg, an experienced 'African trader', took a philanthropic interest in the development of cotton cultivation around Abeokuta. He assisted the Church Missionary Society to set up small industrial institutions at Lagos and Abeokuta where people were taught how to prepare their cotton for export. Henry Robin, a young 'Saro',<sup>2</sup> was in charge of the premises at Lagos where Abeokuta cotton was pressed and prepared for shipping.

Cotton had begun to trickle into England from Abeokuta via Lagos in 1851 and the need to expand this valuable export trade in 1856 provided a basis for co-operation between consul and missionaries which even the indecisive report of the inquiry into the land dispute between Gollman and Campbell at Lagos could not disturb. The naval officer had reported that both consul and missionary were in error as to the exact site of the plots granted to them by King Akitoye; but that Campbell had not placed his house on land belonging to the Church Missionary Society. Neither party accepted the findings.

The King of Sardinia appointed a Consul for Lagos in 1856, accredited to function from Cape Formosa to Cape Three Points. Campbell sponsored the Consul, Signor Scala, before Dosunmu and welcomed the agreement which they concluded whereby Dosunmu farmed his customs duties to Signor Scala. The merchants were up in arms; for Signor Scala would collect the duties from them more efficiently than Dosunmu ever did. The result was a petition against Campbell.

<sup>1</sup> The group included Lords Shaftesbury and Harrowby, Sir T. D. Acland, Sir R. H. Inglis, and Sir E. N. Buxton.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth the term 'Saro' will be used for Sierra Leone immigrants; for 'Saro' or 'Oyinbo' was what they were in fact called at this time.

The merchants preferred various charges against Campbell, varying from dominating King Dosunmu by threatening to recall Kosoko to losing his temper too quickly. Campbell had no difficulty in defending himself and showing how turbulent the merchants were. A naval officer, after an inquiry, dismissed the traders' charges as 'malicious and unfounded'.

Isolated from the British traders at Lagos, Campbell plunged himself into the task of promoting cotton culture which had become urgent. Rising prices of raw cotton from America led Lancashire interests to seek new sources of supply and Africa was confidently expected to be one of them. Campbell's trade report for 1856 placed palm oil first and ivory second among the export staples of the Bight of Benin; but cotton 'which is now being extensively cultivated around Abeokuta, forms the third'. He maintained that the Yoruba knew how to cultivate cotton and grew enough to clothe their own people; what they needed was a stimulus for increased and better production and the machinery to prepare their cotton for export. It was true that domestic slave labour was used on the cotton farms but a domestic slave always had the hope of manumission. Hence the problem was not one of slave labour as such but of lack of capital to improve the method of cultivation and introduce mechanical preparation for export. European-owned and managed plantations with African labourers were out of the question; all that was needed was European guidance for African peasant producers. Given the right kind of leadership, Campbell was confident that African cotton production would be as phenomenally successful as the palm-oil industry.

Campbell elaborated upon the drawbacks of the cotton industry at Abeokuta and Lagos: the 'saw' gin tore the fibre; the 'roller' gin was too slow; and the presses did not reach Abeokuta quick enough. He suggested that H.M. Consuls in the United States and Latin America should be asked for plans of rude but powerful wooden presses, such as were used in the interior of Brazil to make small cotton bales for human portorage, for the benefit of the Yoruba who had neither roads nor canals. He suggested that the proposed Niger expedition of Dr. Baikie should interest itself in buying cotton.

The Foreign Office approved Campbell's efforts in the interest of cotton cultivation. Inquiries were set afoot to obtain better seeds for distribution and the right type of cleaning and pressing machines. Dosunmu was asked to encourage cotton culture and Campbell was

requested to name suitable agents to further the project of the Manchester Cotton Supply Association to encourage the supply of cotton from Abeokuta.

Missionary influence continued to spread in the Yoruba country. Any evidence of British benevolence helped the acceptance of the missionaries. Accordingly, when John the Baptist Desalu, who had been taken captive by the King of Dahomey but restored by the combined efforts of the British Government and the Church Missionary Society in England, arrived at Abeokuta in 1856 the missionaries made the most of this example of British solicitude. From the centre of missionary activities at Abeokuta, the interior had been further penetrated in 1857; stations had been established at Ibadan, Ijaye, Awaye, Iseyin, Shaki, and Oyo; whilst the Ijesha country had been reconnoitred. A station stood precariously poised in Ijebu and although the missionaries had been repulsed at Ilorin, they remained undaunted. Missionary penetration was reaching for the Niger just when consular policy favoured the extension of cotton cultivation as far as possible inland. Then when the *Dayspring* had been wrecked at Jebba, Dr. Baikie decided to open a land route from the Niger to the coast at Lagos.

Dr. Baikie detached D. J. May from his party on the Niger and he travelled to Lagos in twenty days, 'over three hundred miles of country, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback and once carried'. May found the country industrious, people spinning, weaving and dyeing cotton, and pursuing other useful employments. He was well received everywhere and was struck by the prevailing security on the routes which enabled a white man to travel unmolested. At Abeokuta he received much kindness and assistance from Townsend.

May's report had shown the possibilities of extending cotton cultivation farther into the interior from Abeokuta but Campbell's attention was, in the meantime, diverted to the certainty of a general renewal of slave trade consequent upon the French Free Emigration Scheme. The French Government signed a contract with the trading house of Regis of Marseilles, 27 March 1857, to recruit emigrant labourers from the West Coast for Martinique and Guadeloupe and another with the house of Maës of Nantes to supply French colonies in the Indian Ocean, principally Réunion. As there were no free Africans anxious to emigrate, the scheme could operate only if slaves were disguised as emigrants.

George Brand, formerly Vice-Consul at Loanda, succeeded Benjamin Campbell at Lagos in November 1859. Brand saw the need for action clearly and he took steps to obtain proper legal sanctions. He concluded an agreement with Dosunmu concerning the proposed Consular Magisterial Powers Order in Council which enabled H.M. Consuls to perform judicial functions in areas which were outside British territory but in which British subjects and property needed British protection. He wisely suggested limiting the application of the Order in Council to Lagos for a start. In his analysis of the situation around Lagos, it was essential to coerce Dahomey if the slave trade was to be eradicated.

It must not be supposed that the missionaries were henceforth out of the picture. They still blazed the trail for the penetration of the interior and at Abeokuta they continued their efforts to enlighten the populace. Their latest venture was the publication in 1859 of the *Iwe Irohin*, a Yoruba newspaper designed to inculcate in the people the habit of seeking information through reading. The *Iwe Irohin*, however, soon became bilingual (Yoruba and English) and afforded the missionaries a forum for airing their views in the controversy which shortly followed concerning the right policy towards Abeokuta, in particular; and the place of coercion in the consular relation with regions outside Lagos, in general. In order to place Egba-Lagos relations in their true perspective, events farther in the interior must next claim attention.

## CHAPTER VI

# The Era of the Ijaye War

(1860-5)

THE kingdom of Oyo, with its new capital at Ago-Oja<sup>1</sup> (present Oyo), placed its defences upon two pillars. Ibadan, under Oluyole, the Bashorun, was responsible for the defence of the north and north-eastern frontiers; whilst Ijaye under Kurunmi, the Are-ona-Kakanfo, was responsible for the defence of the western frontiers. Rivalry for hegemony was inevitable between the two new 'palatinates'. The first serious clash came in the Batedo War, 1844, when Ogunmola, the future Otun of Ibadan, was captured by the Ijaye and had to be ransomed.

In 1859, Atiba, the Alafin of Oyo, died and Adelu, the *Aremo* or Crown Prince, was chosen to succeed him instead of dying with his father according to ancient custom. Kurunmi, the Are of Ijaye, regarded this innovation with the horror of a die-hard conservative who saw his familiar world crumbling around him from the impact of revolutionary ideas. He refused to recognize the new King and Ibadan was commissioned to bring the despot of Ijaye back to his nominal allegiance.

Ibadan was divided at the onset. Ibikunle, the Balogun, was against hostilities, preferring approaching death to deal with the old warrior who could not adjust himself to changed circumstances. Ogunmola, the Otun, was for war. Perhaps he was eager to wipe off the stain of servitude at Ijaye from his escutcheon or, as R. H. Stone (the American Baptist missionary at Ijaye) thought, he conceived a grand design whereby, in alliance with Dahomey and the Kosoko party on the coast, Ibadan would expunge British influence from Yorubaland and restore ancient slaving ways. Ijaye was the first objective; Abeokuta would be the next and there Ogunmola could count upon Dahomian co-operation.

The Egba were, in fact, expecting a Dahomian attack in 1860 and Townsend came to the fore in soliciting help for them from Lagos. Consul Brand tried to secure volunteer officers from the Royal Navy

<sup>1</sup> The Oyo moved to Ago-Oja c. 1839 after the Fulani from Ilorin had sacked Old Oyo.

who would teach the Egba how to manipulate their field pieces, but with the dry season over the danger to the Egba passed away for that year. Brand, nevertheless, considered measures for ensuring permanent security and came to the conclusion that Whydah must be occupied and Lagos taken either as a British possession or a protectorate. Lagos, the natural entrepot of that part of Africa, with its heterogeneous population and a weak and ineffective government, presented to the Consul in its growing commercial importance a whole range of judicial, police, and administrative problems which he lacked the means, even if he had had the authority, to solve. If Lagos was to fulfil its natural geographical role steps must be taken at once to provide a regular and efficient administration there.

Take the problem of domestic slavery at Lagos. Travellers like Baikie and Glover had alleged that even officials of the consulate owned and dealt in slaves. Brand's policy was to encourage manumission as a means of eradicating the admitted evil. At the end of 1859, twenty-five domestic slaves had been freed at the consulate. Moreover, slaves fleeing from slave-dealing states such as Dahomey always had their flights facilitated but those from friendly neighbouring states had been returned to their owners.

The question of the Niger load robberies seriously threatened the Egba-consular relations. Brand was prepared to admit extenuating circumstances—the Alake was weak, the Igbore and Igbein slave-holding chiefs were the real culprits—yet the Foreign Office demanded restitution else the Egba would forfeit British help when they needed it against the Dahomi. The Egba authorities were unable to deal with the robbers and so continued to give offence to the Consul. Brand attempted to remove another cause of friction by offering to mediate in the Ijaye War and so stop it.

Brand obtained the release of Lieutenant Lodder to lead a delegation from Lagos to mediate between the Ibadan and the Ijaye. In spite of Townsend's co-operation with Brand, the delegation failed owing to lack of active co-operation from the Egba. They alleged that the Ibadan had rejected their own offer of mediation and made overtures to the Dahomi who had renewed their threat to Abeokuta. It was clear, therefore, that in aiding the Ijaye they were going to act in self-defence; if Ijaye was destroyed, the victorious allies would combine with the Dahomi to destroy Abeokuta. Townsend added that the Egba favoured the Ijaye because the growing power of the Ibadan was upsetting the balance of power in the hinterland.

Brand was disappointed at the failure of the delegation and considered the idea of an Egba 'preventive war' a dangerous one which might be used as a cover for aggression in other directions. He died of dysentery at Lagos on 16 June 1860, however, before he could take further measures to secure peace. Dosunmu's anxieties in Lagos over Kosoko's designs and chaos at Badagry—all emphasized Brand's perception that the Consul must be transformed into a 'pro-consul', if peace and security were to be ensured around Lagos.

Lieutenant Hand, the Acting Consul, continued Brand's efforts to obtain peace. The Egba had entered the war with some alacrity after the Ibadan had destroyed some Egba villages *en route* for Ijaye. The Bashorun led out 2,000 men to the front but the Egba tactics were dilatory and apathy prevailed at Abeokuta where the usual expediences of interdicting trade and calling up the veterans had not resulted in any appreciable reinforcements being sent to the front. As the war was bad for Lagos trade, however, Acting Consul Hand endeavoured to effect peace. The Ibadan were receiving ammunition via Ikorodu in exchange for slaves; but Hand found that the Awujale of Ijebu-Ode was on the side of the Egba. At Abeokuta, Hand found that the missionaries felt that the Egba were 'politically right' in supporting the Ijaye, though everyone was more concerned with another impending attack by the Dahomi. Hand concluded that the essential action was to station West Indian troops in Abeokuta and, with Egba forces co-operating, they should attack Abomey.

Henry Grant Foote, formerly Consul at Salvador, succeeded Brand at Lagos. He was a man of action. Fortright and fair-minded, Foote endeavoured to associate both the missionaries and the traders with his policy of firmness and friendliness towards all the peoples around Lagos. In order to make his authority effective he suggested consular guards, detachments of black troops, to be stationed at Lagos, Badagry, Porto Novo, Whydah, Aghwey, and Benin and to be supported by a fast steamer from Lagos. In order to extend his jurisdiction, he suggested that a Vice-Consul be appointed at Lagos and 'coloured' agents for Badagry, Abeokuta, and Benin. The Foreign Office demurred at both suggestions; Foote realized that he was ahead of the times in suggesting 'coloured' consular agents and was content with the appointment of two merchants as Vice-Consuls, Tickel at Badagry, and McKoskry at Lagos.

The King of Porto Novo had again interdicted trade in palm oil. On 24 February 1861 Foote bombarded the town in order to compel

the King to restore normal trade. His success was only partial, however, and it required a second action with rockets before the King really opened trade. Here, Foote produced an example of coercion which had a salutary effect; he hoped that the interior people would take note and accept his ideas peacefully.

Reporting on Commodore Edmonstone's plan for armed aid to the Egba, Foote enthusiastically supported the suggestion that black West Indian troops under European officers should co-operate with a trained and disciplined Egba force in order to subdue the Dahomi. He went to Abeokuta to ascertain the reaction of the Egba authorities to the proposal. He found them ready to receive the troops; to refrain from other European alliances, and to consult the Consul on their 'foreign policy' after concluding peace with Ibadan.

Foote was impressed by the goodwill of the Egba towards the British. He noted, however, that although English education was gaining ground, the Government was weak; the Alake was more of a president than a king. The Egba would enjoy the security necessary to enable them to cultivate their farms, if action was taken to remove the Dahomian menace. He agreed with the missionaries that the Egba should be the spearhead of civilizing activities and that they should be strengthened in order to become the instrument of British policy in the area.

Unfortunately Foote died, killed by his exertions,<sup>1</sup> on 17 May 1861, after only five months in the country and before he could follow up his idea of raising the Egba as the land force in the service of British ideals in those parts and also before he received instructions, soon on their way, to negotiate the cession of Lagos to the British Crown. And he marked the end of the era of consul and missionary agreement upon the essentials of policy. It was characteristic of him that when he visited Abeokuta, although traders were his Vice-Consuls, he was accompanied by Samuel Ajayi Crowther (an African missionary) and he lodged with Andrew Wilhem (also an African). An unbiased consul was the best arbiter of the situation; fate at a critical time decreed a trader-consul, William McKoskry.

William McKoskry, the Acting Consul, analysed the interior affairs in terms of trade. The interior war was bad for trade; treaties must be concluded with Porto Novo and Badagry in order to pro-

<sup>1</sup> Foote undertook his second campaign against Porto Novo before he had fully recovered from an attack of fever which he had contracted on his visit to Abeokuta and died from a renewed attack.

mote trade. The treaty with Badagry contained a novel feature: the chiefs surrendered to the Consul the customs duties for him to distribute among the four principal chiefs. A trader was in the saddle at Lagos unmistakably and his sympathies lay with the extension of trade without 'favouring' any particular section of the Yoruba people.

With this policy, McKoskry attempted to stop the interior war. When Captain Jones arrived in Lagos with ten men on his way to Abeokuta where he would instruct the Egba in the art of military defence, McKoskry diverted the mission from its true purpose. He detached the ten men to serve as consular guard in Lagos and sent Captain Jones to report on Abeokuta. Jones was shocked at the state of the cannons there. He lost his life in pursuing McKoskry's scheme of mediating between the Egba and the Ibadan. The Egba, henceforth, felt aggrieved in that the military aid foreshadowed by Foote had not come nor the military instruction for which Captain Jones had been sent.

The Foreign Office made up its mind that Lagos should be annexed but the instructions to the Consul made it plain that action was being taken not on account of any offence on the part of King Dosunmu but in the interest of the people of Lagos and beyond:

to secure for ever the free population of Lagos from the slave Traders and kidnappers who formerly oppressed them, to protect and develop the important trade of which their town is the seat; and to exercise an influence on the surrounding tribes which may, it is hoped, be permanently beneficial to the African race.<sup>1</sup>

The aim was to check the 'aggressive spirit of the King of Dahomey' but as Lagos was in fact kept secure only by the presence of British gunboats the change was no more than transforming an 'anomalous protectorate' into 'an avowed occupation'.

The Consul was left to decide whether Dosunmu should be employed in some recognized capacity under the British régime or merely be pensioned off; in either event he should be amply compensated for loss of sovereign rights and the need for the change carefully explained to him. Concert with naval authorities was imperative. A colonial security force was essential; but on no account should the colonial authorities embark upon an aggressive policy towards their neighbours.

McKoskry shared few of the scruples of the Foreign Office. When

<sup>1</sup> F.O. 84/1141, Russell to Foote, 22 June 1861.

Dosunmu hesitated, he called the *Prometheus* into Lagos waters and the King gave way. Dosunmu ceded Lagos to the British Crown on 6 August 1861. Subsequently the white-capped chiefs were assured that the cession did not abrogate their land tenure rights. Dosunmu became a grand-pensionary,<sup>1</sup> though he was permitted by the treaty to use the term 'King' in its native connotation and to affix his stamp in order to give native sanction to land transfer deeds. McKoskry became Acting Governor.

The sudden action at Lagos alarmed the neighbouring peoples, especially the Egba. Nor were the actions of the new Lagos Government reassuring. McKoskry's suggestion of a consular agent at Abeokuta was suspect; so were his feelers towards the return of Kosoko to Lagos in the interest of trade. The Acting Governor was himself angry with the Egba because the death of Kurunmi, the Are of Ijaye, on 25 August 1861 had not led to the immediate cessation of the Ijaye War, which was so ruinous to trade at Lagos. Only a severe measure would end the war which the Egba were now waging in order to regain their original homeland and especially the kola groves, which the Ibadan had appropriated.

Commander Bedingsfeld of the *Prometheus*, however, still believed in personal contact and conciliatory measures. Accompanied by Consul Burton of Fernando Po, he visited Abeokuta and concluded another agreement with the authorities against human sacrifice. He carefully explained the British policy of neutrality in interior affairs to them. He went on a similar mission to Ijebu Ode and ascertained the views of the Awujale on several matters. Bedingsfeld, conciliatory and friendly to all, would have been an ideal governor for the new colony of Lagos; but Freeman was eventually appointed and he proved to be more susceptible to McKoskry's ideas.

Meanwhile the Ijaye War dragged on with desultory engagements. Privations increased in the beleaguered town. Children were 'pawnd' by the Ijaye to their Egba allies in order to purchase meagre meals and the Egba authorities were hard put to it to prevent indiscriminate kidnapping of Ijaye refugees. Ogunbonna, the enlightened *Ologun*, moved to Olokemeji to protect Egba convoys to Ijaye and in the hope that other apathetic war leaders might follow his example with their contingents. He died soon after, in 1861, and the missionaries lost one of their most valuable supporters at Abeokuta.

<sup>1</sup> His pension was fixed at £1,030 (sterling), based on McKoskry's suggestion.

The continuance of the Ijaye War had another unfortunate effect on the Anglican missionaries; it split their ranks. Hinderer at Ibadan was suffering increasing privations because the Egba had cut his supply line via Ikorodu. Moreover, he shared the Ibadan view that the Egba were merely intruders, prolonging the war by aiding Ijaye. He accused the Egba of slave dealing and appealed to Lagos for help in order to open the Ibadan-Ikorodu-Lagos route, which the Egba and the Ijebu had contended was useful to Ibadan only as an ammunition supply route. Needless to say that Hinderer's colleagues at Abeokuta did not share his views. In his famous 'charge' in 1860, Venn, the Church Missionary Society secretary, had dealt with the question of missionary intervention in political affairs; he approved of humble intervention where great human and Christian principles were involved and enjoined missionaries to use their influence in the interests of peace. Events in Yorubaland had placed missionaries under the protection of chiefs who were at strife with one another and they tended to support their particular protectors.

H. Stanhope Freeman, first Governor of Lagos, arrived on 21 January 1862 with clear-cut instructions against the extension of the new colony. The Duke of Newcastle, the Colonial Secretary, had reflected the current British public opinion, dominated by the Manchester School and which in colonial terms meant limited territories, small governmental establishment, and above all self-sufficiency for the colonies. What was not realized was that it would be impossible for the Governor to be quiescent if he was to achieve the aim of the colony, of affording a base for the suppression of the slave trade inland and the promotion of legitimate commerce.

Freeman first dealt with Kosoko. He concluded an agreement with him in order to attract trade to Lagos and obtain additional revenue by collecting customs duties at Kosoko's port of Palma. He found another excuse for his actions in French intrigue round Kosoko; so he permitted Kosoko and his followers to return to Lagos under British protection. Freeman required much sophistry to justify this change of policy. But for the time being the Egba were again preoccupied with the possibility of a Dahomian invasion. The Dahomi, characteristically, had struck with brutal suddenness at Ishaga, fifteen miles from Abeokuta, and Abeokuta itself stood in danger of its wily enemy. Freeman's answer was to advise the occupation of the 'beach from Cape St. Paul to Lagos', a proposed extension of territory which confirmed the Duke of Newcastle's suspicion

doubtful home support led Freeman to raise the blockade after two months. He did this just before he went on furlough as a *démarche* and also in order to attract to Lagos the palm-oil crop then being collected in Abeokuta and its districts. Freeman's actions elsewhere were far from reassuring to the Egba. First, Palma, Leckie, and Badagry were formally annexed as natural and historical appendages of Lagos. Then Epe was destroyed, in a second attempt, in order to make Possu, a recalcitrant Kosoko 'caboceer', acknowledge the new régime. Both actions needed much explaining to the Colonial Office and drew from the Duke of Newcastle a disquisition upon 'chastisement', temporarily efficacious but giving the 'natives' a grudge besides teaching them how to fight.

The Acting Governor, Captain Mulliner, and Commodore Wilmot visited Abeokuta in May 1863. Mulliner reviewed the causes of the dispute between Lagos and the Egba and emphasized the peaceful intentions of the Lagos Government towards them and its desire to do justice. Wilmot was even more sympathetic to the Egba and their grievances; he shared the missionary view that Freeman's approach, brusque and hectoring, was the root-cause of the deterioration of Egba-Lagos relations. Coercion was futile in itself and moral influence preferable. A coastal blockade of Abeokuta was bound to be ineffective as the Egba had access to other sources of supply beside Lagos and the coast. Wilmot was prevented from proceeding to the Egba camp at Makun only by illness. Meanwhile, Captain Mulliner was superseded at Lagos by Commander Glover as Acting Governor.

Abeokuta itself in 1863 was again dominated by the *Ologun*. After the destruction of Ijaye on 18 March 1862 Ijaye refugees congregated at Abeokuta and a separate quarter of the town was assigned to them. On 4 September 1862 Alake Okukenu died. Shomoye, the Bashorun, was made Regent and was accorded the royal greeting of 'Kabiyesi', but in view of the shifting of the war to Makun, Shomoye could exercise no control over the *Ologun*. Robberies were rife; trade was, in effect, interdicted. Thus trade was in the doldrums at Lagos when Commander John Glover took over there as Lieutenant-Governor and Acting Colonial Secretary.

Glover was anxious to obtain a secure interior route to the Niger and to King Massaba, whom he expected to protect trade ventures to those parts. He lent the authority of his knowledge and experience to the theory that the continued war was motivated by considerations of trade monopoly. Towards a general peace he proposed that the

Egba and the Ibadan should evacuate their respective camps at Makun and Ipara; that Ikorodu should return to its proper Ijebu Ode allegiance; and that a safe road to Ibadan via Ikorodu should be opened subject to agreed tolls being paid to the Awujale of Ijebu Ode through whose territory the road would pass.

The Colonial Office was dubious about compelling the Egba to evacuate Makun and Glover's action in creating the protectorates of Ipokia (Pokrah), Addo, and Oke Odan upon flimsy mandates from the people was declared *ultra vires* and Glover was severely censured. He had been expected to be quiescent and not display over-eagerness to extend Lagos territory.

Glover was popular with the merchants at Lagos and they petitioned for his substantive appointment as Governor. Colonial Office disapproval of his action was partly the result of missionary pressure in England. Moreover, Abeokuta was again under the threat of Dahomian invasion in the dry season of 1863 and so the Colonial Office ruled that any measures against the Egba must not include an arms embargo. The Church Missionary Society publicized the threatened attack in 1863 throughout England and prayers were offered for the deliverance of the Egba even in Switzerland and Syria. The Dahomi suddenly decamped without attacking but the Lagos Government and even Townsend knew that the Egba no longer needed help from Lagos in order to withstand the Dahomi.

The Dahomi, led by King Gelele,<sup>1</sup> attacked Abeokuta on 15 March 1864, but were repulsed with heavy losses after a short engagement. Governor Freeman estimated the Dahomian force at 10,000 and put their losses at 4,500, of whom about 150 were killed before the walls and the rest captured or killed in retreat. Three brass guns and the greater part of the King's impedimenta including large quantities of arms and ammunition were captured. The Egba lost only fifty men.

The Egba victory had dealt a severe blow to the Dahomian prestige and it would take years before Gelele could assemble a sufficient force to attempt another assault. Freeman felt that Egba success, breeding the illusion of military prowess, would give added impetus to the war against the Ibadan. The Colonial Office, however, refused to sanction an armed intervention at Makun, which was certain to embroil Lagos with the Egba. Then Freeman returned to England to raise a loan to meet increasing government expenditure at Lagos and once more Commander Glover was in charge.

<sup>1</sup> Badahun took the name Gelele when he succeeded Ghezo, his father, in 1858.

Glover visited the Egba camp at Makun and discussed with them the advisability of accepting a British agent at Abeokuta. As the Ikorodu had often raided the Egba camp at Makun, Glover gave the Egba a free hand to reduce Ikorodu. The Egba then opened the trade routes, but only partially; they closed them when they realized that arms were leaking through to the Ibadan thereby and that a resumption of trading operations had led to desertion from their camps. Glover became annoyed with the Egba.

Previously, Ikorodu had enjoyed British protection. Glover withdrew this after Ikorodu had refused to return to her Ijebu Ode allegiance, and Glover assumed the role of a mediator before he began negotiations with the Egba. Thus the Colonial Office found it difficult to approve or disapprove Glover's diplomacy: first, to protect Ikorodu, then to withdraw protection and then blockade it and later to give the Egba ten days in which to destroy it knowing full well they could not accomplish the task in the allotted time—was altogether too complicated. Fortunately Colonel Orde was about to visit West Africa and report on the Colonial governments; the Colonial Office decided to await his views.

In May 1864 the missionaries returned<sup>1</sup> to their attack on the policy of the Lagos Government. They reiterated Egba grievances and added those of Lagos 'Saro'. The latter were having their property seized for road-making in Lagos, without adequate compensation; they were excluded from the Colonial Council. The Church Missionary Society suggested a proclamation against colonial expansion, the admission of 'educated natives' to the Colonial Council, and a modified procedure concerning fugitive slaves which would permit the return of absconding wives to the neighbouring chiefs.

The Lagos 'commercial' were divided in their opinion. The 'West African Company' supported Glover, and so did the Cotton Supply Association. Banner Brothers came out in support of the Egba and against the ruinous fiscal policy of the Lagos Government.

Freeman, in England, defended the policy of the Lagos Government. Glover continued to carry it out on the spot.

Undoubtedly, Glover manoeuvred the Egba into the position where he could take the step of armed intervention which he had predetermined as the best means of ending the interior war. Through his secret agents he detached the Awujale of Ijebu Ode from the

<sup>1</sup> C.O. 147/7, Venn to Cardwell, 17 May 1864.

Governments with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all, except, probably, Sierra Leone.

Here was, the missionaries thought, the answer to Glover's forward policy. Neither the missionaries who applauded this principle of training for self-government or 'constructive abdication' of power, nor its authors, however, realized that it depended upon substantial aid in personnel and equipment for its success.

## CHAPTER VII

### Power Politics

(1866-72)

THE Egba scene in 1866 was one of an uneasy peace with Ibadan, an alliance with Ijebu Ode and a 'cold war' with Lagos. Lagos, however, held the key to the situation; for Glover had assumed the role of the arbiter of war and peace in the Yoruba country.

The Egba Government was weak. The missionary effort to obtain a strong executive at Abeokuta by reviving the traditional kingship had been only partially successful; by electing a weak Alake, the powerful *Ologun* with their retainers were a law unto themselves. It would take years before the sons of chiefs who were being trained in missionary schools would have the opportunity to put into practice the concept of good government which they were learning from the mission schools. At all events, missionary influence was on the wane; difficulties with the Lagos Government and failure to obtain a settlement after the clash at Ikorodu had given the 'Saro' at Abeokuta the opportunity to gain control of the Egba state.

The Egba United Board of Management had emerged in 1865. Its constitution remains obscure, though it must be recognized as an attempt to engender co-operation between the traditional chiefs and the educated elements, the Egba 'Saro', with a view to establishing a stable and, in contemporary language, a 'civilized' government at Abeokuta. Shomoye, the Bashorun, was styled President-General; Akodu, the Seriki, was called 'High Sheriff', and Asalu, the head of the *Ogboni*, was included. The Board was, however, directed and controlled by its secretary, G. W. Johnson, and other leading Egba 'Saro'.<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that it evolved a proper council, representative of the traditional, sectional, and immigrant elements in Abeokuta; although there was an Olowu<sup>2</sup> at the time, he was not a member of the Board. In fact, the Board was little more than an empty bureaucracy, parading sovereign pretensions, and issuing largely idle threats. Its single positive achievement was that it estab-

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Turner was its Treasurer, and Henry Robin a member of the Board.

<sup>2</sup> Pawu (1855-67).

lished a short-lived Customs Department for levying export duties instead of the customary tolls collected at the gates. Defaulting goods were seized and auctioned; one-third of the proceeds was assigned to the seizer and two-thirds to the Egba Government.

In order to counter what Glover termed the 'evil' influence of the 'Saro' on the Egba, he intensified his measures against the 'Saro'. He passed an ordinance in Lagos obliging them to take the oath of allegiance and the leading Egba 'Saro' who refused were imprisoned and thereby prevented from organizing resistance to the 2½ per cent. export duty imposed upon goods leaving Lagos for Abeokuta. The Colonial Office subsequently disallowed the ordinance but on its repeal Glover issued a proclamation inviting people to institute actions in the Magistrate Courts against rumour-mongers who were injuring Lagos commercial relations with Abeokuta, and to claim compensations. The Colonial Office also disapproved of this extraordinary incitement to hazardous litigation.

Although Glover passed another ordinance which enabled Lagos creditors to seize the personal property of absconding debtors, many of whom were known to reside at Abeokuta, he attempted to conciliate the Egba 'Saro'. Arms were allowed to pass to Abeokuta on payment of the 2½ per cent. duty and coloured British subjects ('Saro') were allowed to reside there at their own risk. White persons (except missionaries) were still excluded and Glover argued that only the monopoly which the British traders, Hughes and Mills, enjoyed at Abeokuta kept them there despite the unjust exactions they had to suffer and even led them to support the Egba determination to control the country and its trade and thereby 'render Lagos dependent for its very existence on the will of Abeokuta'.<sup>1</sup> The Egba, however, did not, as Glover had hoped, respond to the lifting of the arms embargo by sending delegates, acceptable to Glover, to determine compensations for the 'robberies' and Glover blamed the Egba 'Saro' for this obstinacy. He saw in it one more proof that only abject surrender to their hegemony would satisfy the Egba.

Meanwhile, the West African Settlements were constituted into the Government of West African Settlements by an Instrument dated February 1866. The Governor-in-Chief was to reside in Sierra Leone; and the Gambia, the Gold Coast, and Lagos were each to be administered by an Administrator who henceforth communicated with the Colonial Office through the Governor-in-Chief. Glover's policy,

<sup>1</sup> C.O. 147/11, Glover to Cardwell, 7 Feb. 1866.

therefore, came under the surveillance of a superior officer on the coast who could approve or overrule his actions, pending the final decision of the Colonial Office. Major Blackall, the first Governor-in-Chief, gave the affairs of Lagos his urgent attention. He did not overrule Glover's policy but he softened it as regards Porto Novo, and whilst accepting his analysis of the Egba situation, Blackall welcomed Egba overtures for peaceful relations.

Townsend and Phillips (the American Baptist missionary at Abeokuta) waited upon Blackall at Lagos in February 1866 and presented a memorandum of Egba grievances which G. W. Johnson had prepared. It reviewed Egba relations with Lagos since Consul Foote's time and enumerated old grievances. It added the new one caused by Glover's unpaid, irregular blockade forces, under Oshifilla, who were harassing the Egba frontiers in order to make the blockade effective. Blackall undertook to guarantee free intercourse between Lagos and Abeokuta if Townsend could obtain genuine assurances from the Egba authorities that British lives and property would be protected according to the Treaty of 5 January 1852.

Mr. Secretary Johnson was uncompromising: he declared that the Egba were no longer bound by the Treaty of 1852 although they would protect British entrants who had previously obtained the sanction in writing of the authorities before arriving at Abeokuta. He demanded the abolition of the 2½ per cent. export duty and the removal of Administrator Glover from Lagos. Blackall lectured the Egba authorities on the obligation of successive governments to honour the treaty undertakings of their predecessors, and upon assurance from Phillips that Johnson's letter did not represent the true feeling of the Bashorun and his chiefs, he maintained his conciliatory policy towards the Egba. He removed the 2½ per cent. duty and all restrictions on trade and commerce with Abeokuta forthwith, in the hope that the Egba would respond to such a generous gesture. Glover acquiesced, as he was not overruled on the question of British subjects proceeding to Abeokuta at their own peril. The duties had extracted about £560 from the Egba in compensation for the robberies. Contrary to Glover's expectation, however, the Egba did respond to Blackall's generous overture; they opened the roads and announced duties for goods exported to Lagos against which Glover raised no objection.

Admiral Patey arrived in Lagos as the Administrator in April 1856 and Glover proceeded on leave. Traders found in Patey the ideal

administrator; his policy of non-interference soon bore rich fruit in brisk trade at Lagos and peaceful pursuits at Abeokuta where the people, tired of war, were growing cotton and again extracting more palm oil. In about a month upwards of £2,000-worth of Egba cotton reached Lagos. Patey also had hopes of extending trading operations farther inland and of placing Lagos in a sound financial position. The Colonial Office, however, overruled his plan of compelling the King of Porto Novo to pay his reduced fines by a combined naval and military blockade, partly because it ascribed the King's intransigence to Glover's unwarranted interference and partly because Adderley, the chairman of the 1865 Committee, had become Under-Secretary of State and he was bent upon implementing the recommendation of the Committee against the extension of territories. Although withdrawal from Lagos was not ordered, the Colonial Office supported a policy of non-interference and approved Blackall's recommendation that judicious economy and administration would balance the Lagos budget.

Glover, who was appointed Administrator of Lagos in October 1866, could not remain quiescent. In 1867 he used his influence with the Ibadan authorities to obtain the early return of the Ibadan forces from the Igbajo War: the Ijesha had been beaten, seven towns had been taken and plundered by the Ibadan and if Glover had not intervened Ilesha itself might have been captured.

The Egba United Board of Management announced in June 1867 its intention to place customs-houses on the Ogun River at Isheri and Agbamaya in order to record movements of produce and levy duties according to the Egba customs duties ordinance. Glover seized the opportunity to suggest the delimitation of boundaries between Lagos and the Egba. For the first time Glover appeared to recognize the E.U.B.M., characterizing it as a government sufficiently responsible to conclude a definitive peace, and in effect he abandoned his previous insistence upon dealing directly with responsible indigenous chiefs. The E.U.B.M., however, demurred and slammed the door against boundary delimitation. It lodged complaints against the petty oppressions of the constables whom Glover had placed on the Egba border. A reminder asked for an immediate reply in order to avert 'startling disputes'.

Glover investigated the charges and found the constables guilty: he replaced the sergeant and issued strict instructions against molesting Egba women travellers. The E.U.B.M. ungraciously responded

representation of G. W. Johnson as a felon. Blackall, however, defended Glover, ascribing his mistakes to excessive zeal.

Glover's own defence showed that he had encroached upon territory which the Egba claimed by virtue of their conquest of Otta. He, however, denied any conscious policy of expansion and sought to justify the arming of the frontier peoples by the need to hold an Egba invasion for at least three days in order to gain time to mobilize Lagos forces. He adduced evidence of the Awujale's master plan. The Colonial Office softened its disapprobation but insisted that the Lagos settlement must not be extended.

Throughout 1868 Glover strained at the leash but on the whole he adhered to the non-interference policy and at the end he earned the praise of the Governor-in-Chief, Sir Arthur Kennedy, for his energy, industry, and firmness of purpose. Lagos was on the road to self-sufficiency and the Hausa armed police, raised by Glover, was considered to be a more suitable colonial force than regular soldiers.

If Glover was quiet, the Egba were not. They struck at Meko in the trans-Ogun country on the pretext that its inhabitants were acting as spies for both the Dahomi and the Ibadan, traditional enemies of the Egba. The *Ologun* were divided; one party favoured action against Iperu whose inhabitants had fallen upon the Egba while they were fleeing from Glover's rockets at Ikorodu; the other, preferring a campaign against Meko, eventually won. Meko was besieged but unexpected aid to Meko from Alafin Adelu of Oyo led to the raising of the siege in 1869. In default of victory at Meko, the Egba fell upon Afon, a nearby town, and plundered it in 1870. These campaigns were, however, unimportant; the Egba state had been thrown into constitutional difficulties by the death of Somoye, the Bashorun, on 24 August 1868.

No one could aspire to the status and prestige of Somoye, one of the leaders from the Egba Forest. Glover speculated at Lagos, but wisely decided not to interfere. The Egba factions, however, made overtures to Glover ostensibly with a view to ending the 'cold war' but really to obtain his recognition and support in their bid for political power at Abeokuta. Ogudipe (who had assumed the title of *Alatishe*, 'Mediator-General', because he was traditionally debarred from becoming the Balogun of the Egba, which belonged to the Igbein township) took the initiative and Glover welcomed his overtures. Then G. W. Johnson, writing on behalf of the Asalu and chiefs,

revealed that Sholanke of Igbein, the Balogun, and his faction were in open rebellion against the customs ordinance; they had claimed the ownership of the Ogun River and opened a new road to Isheri which by-passed the customs-house. Johnson asked the Lagos Government to co-operate with the E.U.B.M. by restraining Lagos people from trading to Isheri until the intransigence of the Balogun had been broken. Ogubiyi, the Jaguna and Balogun of Igbore, also sought Glover's recognition.

Glover refused the requests of both G. W. Johnson and the Balogun of Igbore. How G. W. Johnson acquired his sobriquet 'Reversible' is obscure; but his readiness to turn to Glover for support after demanding his removal from Lagos in the past lends support to the views of those who accused him of being 'double-faced'.<sup>1</sup> Glover, however, did no more than acquaint Lagos traders with the new situation at Isheri. At Abeokuta itself efforts were made to end the rivalries by electing an Alake but they merely intensified them.

The two chief contestants were Ademola, a wealthy Owu man whose mother was a descendant of Ajibodu, an Alake in the Egba Forest, and Oyekan, who was a patrilineal descendant of Ajibodu. As the Alakeship was in fact elective the support of chiefs counted far more than blood royal. The chiefs were divided: the *Ogboni*, the *Parakoyi* and some *Ologun* including Ogudipe supported Ademola who was declared elected; whilst the E.U.B.M., the Asalu and the remaining *Ologun* together with the influential Madam Tinubu, now the *Iyalode*<sup>2</sup> of the Egba, supported Oyekan and refused to recognize Ademola's accession. Both sides sought Lagos recognition; the Ademola faction claimed to stand for peaceful relations while the Oyekan party contained opponents of the Lagos régime. Glover was away from Lagos on tour and, by temporizing, Lieutenant Gerard, the Acting Administrator, lost the opportunity of strengthening the King's party at Abeokuta. Subsequently, Glover went on furlough after nearly four years' continuous residence on the coast; for such was his diligence and devotion to duty.

When Glover returned early in 1871, civil war was imminent in Abeokuta; the Egba were more than ever divided within, with each party bidding for Lagos recognition and implied support. He seized

<sup>1</sup> C.O. 147/14, Hone to Buckingham, 17 Feb. 1868.

<sup>2</sup> First Lady of the Egba, a title given to Madam Tinubu on account of her relief activities near Aro Gate during the second Dahomian invasion in 1864.

the opportunity of the imprisonment, at the instigation of Mr. Secretary Johnson, of Thomas Butcher Johnson, a British subject, and on the orders of Akodu, the Seriki, to point out to the Egba that relations with Lagos could not be placed upon the essential basis of a definitive treaty until they established a strong and united government under the authority of the Alake. After obtaining the release of the incarcerated Johnson, however, he was able to include the emissaries from the Alake and the chiefs of Abeokuta in the conference which he called for July 1871 in Lagos on the question of obtaining a safe route to the coast for the Oyo-Yoruba.

The conference was attended by emissaries from the Awujale of Ijebu Ode, the 'King of the Yorubas' (i.e. the Alafin of Oyo), the chiefs of Ibadan as well as the Egba representatives. Glover hoped to use his influence with the Ibadan to obtain two routes for the Oyo-Yoruba: the first was the old one through the Ijebu Remo country, via Ikorodu and Ipara; the second would be a new one to the eastward by the 'River Charchar'.

More representatives came to the conference at a later stage from Benin, the Ijaw, Ketu, and Ilaro and Glover reviewed all the possible routes from Lagos to the interior. With the immediate objective of reaching Ibadan there were five major routes:

- (a) from Lagos to Abeokuta overland or by the Ogun River and thence to Ibadan;
- (b) Lagos to Ikorodu to Ibadan via Ipara, i.e. through the Ijebu Remo country;
- (c) Lagos to Ijebu Ode and thence to Ibadan;
- (d) Westwards from Lagos to Igbessa, thence to Ilaro, Ketu, and the interior;
- (e) Through the Ijaw country via Ondo and Okeigbo to Ibadan or via Ilesha to Ibadan.

Glover's policy was to obtain route (e) and keep route (d) open in order to maintain contact with the interior should war break out and close the other routes.

The Egba constituted the real obstacle to Glover's policy. They controlled their own route; they could close the Egbado route by action in Egbado and the trans-Ogun countries; they could persuade the Ijebu to close the routes through the Ijebu and the Ijebu Remo territories. It was only by opening the Ondo route that Glover could hope to compel the Egba and the Ijebu to keep open the other routes

so as to avoid the complete diversion of interior trade to the new route. Glover also argued that the Ibadan would no longer need to wage war on the Egba and the Ijebu once the new route gave them access to the coast.

Meanwhile Glover had to come to a decision on the recognition of a supreme ruler at Abeokuta, a step which might well ensure the support of a section of the Egba, at least, for his trade-route scheme. Three major parties had emerged: Ademola and the *Ogboni*; Oyekan, the E.U.B.M., and Akodu, the Seriki; Sholanke, the Balogun, and his Igbein supporters. The third party had made contact with Glover through Taiwo Olowo, a Lagos merchant, and their traditional control of the Ogun River gave them a peculiar status.

The affair of Butcher Johnson had discredited the E.U.B.M. party. The Igbein party claimed primacy for their chief because they controlled the river, denounced the general tendency towards insubordination at Abeokuta ('every-one likes to be chief, it is that which is spoiling us here') and attempted to curry favour with Glover by returning a man suspected to be a fugitive from Lagos. Ademola rested his case on the Egba traditional constitution: the Alake was the acknowledged head of the Egba under whom the *Ologun* presided over military matters, and the *Ogboni* over civil affairs. The Igbein township usually provided the Balogun, but he was never supreme over the Egba. Ademola ascribed the cause of the trouble to rank innovation engendered by G. W. Johnson; the E.U.B.M. had opposed the Alake because they wished to keep the customs dues to themselves without reference to the ruler. He deplored the action of the Igbein and the Igbore chiefs in closing the roads against Townsend in 1871 and promised to effect his entry into Abeokuta. The *Ogboni*, the *Parakoyi* and Christian chiefs wrote to Glover in support of Ademola's claim.

Glover recognized Ademola as the *de facto* Alake of Abeokuta as it was clear that 202 townships supported him whilst only three opposed, and he had been in effective occupation of the *Afin*<sup>1</sup> at Ake for over eighteen months. Glover, however, continued to correspond with the leaders of the other two factions, Sholanke, the Balogun, and Akodu, the Seriki, in the hope that they would not act otherwise than as a constitutional opposition to the Government of the Alake. The Colonial Office approved the *de facto* recognition; but Glover certainly erred in continuing to correspond with the other chiefs,

<sup>1</sup> Palace.

thus defeating the very purpose of recognition, which was to strengthen the central authority at Abeokuta.

By October 1871 Glover knew that he could not keep the Lagos-Ikorodu-Ibadan trade route open owing to combined Egba and Ijebu opposition. He reported that war was imminent between the Ibadan and the allies; the Ibadan were determined to open the route whilst the Egba and the Ijebu had placed an embargo upon the transit of arms to the interior. Considering war inevitable, Glover took appropriate measures at Lagos; he gave general application to the Colonial Secretary Lord Kimberley's dispatch authorizing the prohibition of the sale of arms and ammunition in connexion with a war on the Oil Rivers and he attempted to annex Porto Novo as the last Egba market for exchanging slaves for ammunition. Kimberley wisely vetoed the annexation of Porto Novo, a step which was bound to spread dismay and distrust among the neighbouring peoples.

Glover offered to mediate between the Egba and the Ibadan, and the *Ologun*, excluding Akodu, the Seriki, welcomed the offer and recounted their grievances against the Ibadan. They made friendly overtures to Glover but he rightly demanded the concrete gesture of opening the routes unconditionally, since he suspected that his forward action at Porto Novo was the mainspring of Egba friendliness.

The merchants at Lagos, alarmed at the stagnation of trade, raised the cry that Glover was again at his 'rumour tricks' in order to humiliate the Egba, who had dared to reject his terms after the Ikorodu action; Fitzgerald, the editor of the *African Times*, had attacked<sup>1</sup> Glover's policy vigorously and had revealed to the Colonial Office that the Ibadan wanted the route to the coast only for obtaining arms to terrorize other interior peoples as witnessed by their kidnapping raids against the Ijesha. Glover had clearly failed to associate the merchants with his policy which was devised in the interest of trade but appeared to the merchants as affording Glover the opportunities to incite the interior peoples into a war, which he could not himself wage, against the Egba. In Glover's defence it must be said that he was, in fact, groping towards a kind of interior Peace League under Lagos leadership in which disputes would be submitted to arbitration before a resort to force.

Lagos-Egba relations deteriorated rather than improved. Glover attempted to discredit G. W. Johnson by returning one of his letters only to elicit the retort from Akodu, the Seriki, that the Egba had

<sup>1</sup> C.O. 147/22, Fitzgerald to Kimberley, 16 Dec. 1867.

confidence in Johnson. The plain fact was that civil government had broken down at Abeokuta: such constitutional distortions as regarding Ademola as the King of Ake and Oyekan as the King of Abeokuta were advanced. The *Ologun* issued such idle threats as Akodu's that 'he will go to Ebute Metta and thrust his sword into the waters of the Lagoon' and surprisingly Glover appeared to have believed them. Relying on secret agents, he took the old precautions of arming frontier peoples and created a scare that the real intention of the Egba was to foment a war with the aim of ousting British influence from Lagos.

Bishop Crowther, however, passed through Abeokuta in 1872 and reported<sup>1</sup> to the Colonial Office on the situation there. The Egba at a representative meeting of all the sections put their case into the bishop's hands for correct presentation to Her Majesty's Government. They complained that Lagos was a refuge for domestic slaves fleeing from their owners at Abeokuta; that the arms embargo was so severely interpreted that agricultural tools were barred from passing to Abeokuta; and that the Lagos Government stationed constables beyond Ebute Metta, up to which the Egba were entitled to exercise jurisdiction by the right of conquest. They explained that the *Ifole* was the act of a lawless rabble, smarting under the stings of the Lagos policy, and that it in no way represented the true Egba policy which had encouraged Christian converts and others to reside freely at Abeokuta since the incident. The Egba suggested that an impartial commission of inquiry be appointed to examine their relations with Lagos. Crowther obtained from them a promise of free flow of trade for three months; for he and his party had found in the interior a desire to trade to the coast.

The Colonial Office referred Bishop Crowther's report and the whole question of Lagos-Egba relations to Pope-Hennessy, the new Governor-in-Chief of the West African settlement in April 1872.

By persistent warning to Glover to raise his unauthorized blockade of Porto Novo, Pope-Hennessy showed that he viewed Glover's policy critically. Glover still maintained that only the Egba opposed his scheme of opening the new eastward route to the interior; he chose Goldsworthy, the Acting Collector of Customs, to undertake an explanatory journey to Ibadan and Oyo from Ode on the Lagoon with a view to Glover himself leading a route-opening expedition later. Meanwhile, however, Glover's proposal to pass an ordinance 'to

<sup>1</sup> C.O. 147 23, Crowther to Kimberley, 6 Feb. 1872.

empower the administration to close all roads and prohibit the export and import of all goods from Lagos' brought the merchants into open revolt against his policy.

Porter,<sup>1</sup> the representative of the merchants on the Colonial Council, opposed the ordinance on the grounds that Glover's policy towards the Egba was mistaken. He maintained that the Egba grew most of the produce which they exported and so were not mere brokers for the interior people; and that they would not interdict trade were the arms embargo relaxed to permit the passage of agricultural and industrial tools. The Bill, nevertheless, passed its third reading; but Pope-Hennessy refused to approve it and the Colonial Office supported him. Announcing prematurely that the eastern route, free from Egba and Ijebu interruption, had been opened, Glover urgently requested Pope-Hennessy's presence at Lagos.

Pope-Hennessy found, on arrival at Lagos, that Glover was completely alienated from the mercantile community; his only friends were the members of the Oyo-Yoruba Association and Taiwo, the trader. The merchants' case was that only a reversal of Glover's policy could restore trade. Glover had interfered in interior affairs and supported Taiwo's efforts to create a monopoly by diverting Egba traders to the Isheri market under the protection of Lagos constables. He was enforcing the arms embargo too rigorously against the Egba whilst arming their neighbours and taking mysterious actions to open a new trade route. The merchants mentioned other grievances ranging from holding secret sessions of the Colonial Council to allegations of ammunition being presented to interior chiefs and the suppression of the report of Payne's<sup>2</sup> mission to Ijebu Ode.

The merchants were angry with Glover because they felt that he was interfering with the normal course of commerce, with the result that trade was stagnant in the best season of the year. The merchants were the true champions of free trade whilst Glover was bent upon creating artificial diversions of trade from its normal channels. The traders had vested interests against the isolation of Abeokuta; for they had trading posts there which could be abandoned only at considerable loss. Glover's defence was that he aimed at peace and that he placed the interests of indigenous traders before those of the European merchants.

Given the combination of the Egba and the white merchants against

<sup>1</sup> Of Messrs. Banner Brothers, Lagos.

<sup>2</sup> J. Otunba Payne was then the sheriff at Lagos.

Glover and his unauthorized action at Porto Novo, Pope-Hennessy decided to repudiate Glover's policy. Glover, feeling 'that he was not wanted',<sup>1</sup> asked for leave in June 1872. Pope-Hennessy removed the blockading colonial steamer, the *Eyo Honesty*, from Porto Novo and invited the Egba to speak their minds to him freely and fully upon the causes of the stoppage of trade.

The Egba replied to Pope-Hennessy, adducing the evidence of two captured letters<sup>2</sup> to show that Glover had plotted with their neighbours and some of their own people to encompass their ruin. In reprisal, they had interdicted trade. Pope-Hennessy construed the Egba letter in terms of the arms embargo and so lifted it, because it was just to do so, and as a gesture of goodwill. The Colonial Office was not happy about this brusque reversal of Glover's policy.

Pope-Hennessy found no cause for alarm at Lagos; nor could Glover's exaggerated fears of an Egba design to invade Lagos, expel the British, and restore the indigenous régime be substantiated. Payne's suppressed report was unearthed and it became clear that the Awujale of Ijebu Ode disapproved of Glover's attempts to alter the established economic order whereby the Ijebu served as middlemen between the interior people and the Lagosians. He also combined with the Egba to prevent arms from reaching the Ibadan because of their warlike propensities which were upsetting the balance of power in the interior. Pope-Hennessy, however, had reason to hope that the friendly approach would bear fruit, as the Egba were endeavouring to concert action with the Ijebu in opening their roads; the delay was blamed upon Goldsworthy's mission to the interior which was reminiscent of Glover's policy.

Payne's second mission to Ijebu Ode revealed that the Awujale had other grievances against the Lagos Government. There were the problems of fugitive domestic slaves; the placing of constables upon Ijebu territory; and the exclusion of ex-King Dosunmu from participation in the government of Lagos. The Ijebu were, however, endeavouring to rally all the peoples who had agreed to their arms embargo against the Ibadan with a view to lifting it and opening the trade routes.

Goldsworthy's interim report on his mission in connexion with the eastern route led to Acting Administrator Fowler's general review of

<sup>1</sup> Barrow's minute upon C.O. 147/23, Pope-Hennessy to Kimberley, 15 June 1872.

<sup>2</sup> C.O. 147/23, Pope-Hennessy to Kimberley, 15 June 1872 (i): enclosure (i) contained the captured letters.

slave problem and the delimitation of boundaries were themselves but facets of the main difficulty—the implications of a British colony at Lagos *vis-à-vis* the independent indigenous states. A real settlement would raise the question of imperial expansion in an age which was opposed to it; it was not surprising, therefore, that Administrator Berkeley recommended a quiescent policy in 1873. Internal dissensions at Abeokuta continued to hold up the opening of the roads until the opposition of the E.U.B.M. party was overcome and the roads were opened on 12 June 1873. The Ijebu roads, however, remained short.

Glover's departure definitely marked the end of an era, the era of unauthorized expansionist policy which the Egba, supported by the missionaries and later by Sierra Leone immigrants and their Ijebu allies, frustrated. When the merchants joined them in their opposition, the author of the policy was removed. For the Egba, however, their own peculiar problem remained—the need of evolving a strong executive power from a welter of cumbrous traditional, sectional, and conflicting authorities.

## Epilogue

THE period covered by this book was one in which the dominant issue in British relations with West Africa was the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade and the promotion of legitimate commerce. The Preventive Squadron, in spite of doubts in Britain, continued to patrol the high seas with varying successes. The coastal British settlements were challenged but were eventually recognized as offering suitable bases for suppression activities inland and for missionary enterprise. International action was intensified with a view to killing the demand for slaves, and after the Treaty of Washington in 1861 by which the Americans conceded the 'right of search' and the consequent collapse of the Cuban slave trade, the Atlantic trade was really a thing of the past by the end of 1865.

What remained was the internal slave trade, and the irony of the situation was that the more trade—the imagined liberator—expanded, the greater was the demand for domestic slaves who supplied the agricultural labour, provided human portage (the only form of transport known for goods), and in some places constituted the accepted currency. Everyone agreed about the need to expand trade, and the demand for West African produce remained fairly steady throughout the period; but the traders in an age of *laissez-faire* erroneously believed that Government protection was hampering their operations. The truth was that the Africans could establish a *pax* under which trade would flourish only when they were not engaged in their wars which sprang from a variety of causes—a sense of rivalry, land hunger, irredentism, and often local imperialism, but which invariably supplied the labour force of domestic slaves.

At Abeokuta the Church Missionary Society believed that by extending cotton culture and diverting the unruly to trade the wars would cease. The fact that the Egba had to interdict trade in the Ijaye War (1860–2) gave an important superficial support to the missionary view. The Lagos Government, on the other hand, attempted to ensure peace through a league of neighbouring chiefs under its own leadership and, when it failed, it endeavoured to attach Ibadan to its cause by opening a new route to the coast for its people. It also attempted to use its power as a lever to drive the Egba and the Ijebu into the proposed league. The basic assumption was still

one of friendship with the indigenous people, cemented by a frequent exchange of presents and given formal expression in a treaty. The real issue of domestic slavery was as yet shelved. The other assumption of the Lagos Government was that trade would flow into Lagos and that established friendship with the people *en route* from the interior would be sufficient to protect it. There was the burning desire to tap interior resources as far as the Niger but the problem of inland transport was hardly realized. Nor were the traders really ready for large-scale interior penetration in 1872.

By 1890 the stage was set for the extension of commerce from the coast and the river stations into the interior of Nigeria. Not only had the scramble for Africa begun but the shipping interests on the West Coast were sympathetic towards continental expansion. From the two rival companies (formed in 1852 and 1879 respectively) emerged the Elder Dempster Lines: freight charges were deliberately reduced to facilitate the introduction of bulky commodities and thus diversify the consumer goods, and also to enable those goods to bear the burden of heavy land transport charges when taken into the far interior. Increased tonnage testified to increased commerce which in turn indirectly stimulated the interior wars by increasing the demand for farm labour and transport. Sir George Tubman Goldie clearly recognized this vicious circle in modern Northern Nigeria and realized that only by providing economic leadership, mechanical transport, and sound money, and by fostering commercial intercourse with the outside world, could the area be liberated from its scourge of 'slave-raiding'.

The same was true of Lagos and the Yoruba country; in order to stop the recurrent wars which paralysed trade and suspended agriculture, the demand for domestic slaves had to be eliminated. One sure way in 1890 to attain that objective was to provide railways. Indeed, Sir Gilbert Carter's pacification tour of the Yoruba country in 1893 was a rough survey with an eye on railway construction. But the significant thing then was that the Ibadan had become the central figures in a general war which embraced the Egba, the Ijebu, the Ijesha, the Ilorin, and the Ekiti. What both the Egba and the Ijebu had realized but Glover had refused to recognize was that the Ibadan had emerged from the previous interior wars as the scourge of their neighbours; though also as the bulwark of Yoruba defence against the advancing tide of Fulani conquest.

In order to alleviate the consequences of the Ibadan hegemony it

was necessary to place a British Resident there in 1893. In 1892 an expedition had been sent against the Ijebu and their resistance broken. But in 1893 Carter guaranteed the independence of the Egba. In 1898 Governor Macallum dealt with the over-mighty *Ologun*, who had eclipsed the reigning Alake, and suggested the reorganization of the Egba state as the Egba United Government. Vacancies in the four traditional kingly offices were to be filled and the holders, together with the senior chiefs, would form a 'cabinet' with the Alake as the head; there was provision for a secretariat. The history of the Egba United Government cannot as yet be written, however, because some of the relevant documents are still closed to the historians. It is important to realize that the E.U.G. owed its existence, when all territories around had been absorbed into the Lagos Protectorate system, to the early stand against encroachment which the Egba, aided by the Church Missionary Society and later by the Sierra Leone immigrants, had made against the expansionist policies of both Freeman and Glover. The Church Missionary Society agents did not succeed in preserving at Abeokuta an enclave for missionary-sponsored activities but due to their association with the Egba a unique experiment in enlightened self-rule was tried at Abeokuta from 1898 to 1914.

Lagos won the contest with Abeokuta as the centre of British influence; but what peace in Yorubaland made possible was not what Glover had envisaged. Interior produce was not brought to Lagos for sale by interior producers; instead, stores were established along the railway lines where interior peasants sold their produce to African middlemen or agents of the European traders. The goods trains took the produce to Lagos for shipment overseas and conveyed consumer goods back to the interior. Human portorage was required only up to the railhead, until the arrival of motor lorries which could reach the scattered interior produce centres. With the coming of the railways also came the practice of hiring labour; for neither the E.U.G. at Abeokuta nor the protecting authorities at Lagos would countenance domestic slavery. The full implication of the annexation of Lagos in 1861 was that the authority of the Lagos Government would inevitably extend unless the circumjacent indigenous governments were strong enough to maintain law and order and were sufficiently enlightened to promote commerce and stamp out evil practices. A *pax* was needed for the expanding trade, and the contemporary solution for the kind of problem that confronted the

Lagos Government in the 1890's was the protectorate system and the application of the principle of 'indirect rule'.

The history of the Egba ensured for them the alternative of self-rule, which could endure only by the co-operation of the traditional chiefs and the rising middle class of Egba 'Saro' and successful indigenous entrepreneurs. The E.U.G. was the first genuine attempt at a federal constitution, but the elements were more diverse in 1898 than they had been when the fragmentary federations emerged in the Egba Forest. The concept of the supreme authority as judicial had given place imperfectly to the missionary idea of the highest chief as the supreme executive; the over-mighty *Ologun* had rendered every constitution ineffective until 1898. The attempt to build a stable government from the top was doomed to failure; for the recognizable unit remained the township, derived from the old town in the Egba Forest.

The evident weakness of the Egba state stemmed from the fact that although circumstances had forced its components into one town, they readily disintegrated in default of a strong personal leadership such as Shodeke displayed in the early days at Abeokuta. The enduring constitution had to be built from the bottom upwards, from the township level to the federal, and this was a task no one undertook in 1872. The comparable state was Ibadan, where a strong government emerged partly because it was continually engaged in warfare; but partly also because those who flocked to Ibadan completely identified themselves with the new town under the nominal suzerainty of Oyo. The Egba remained primarily attached to their townships and the attempt to revive the office of the Alake was only partially successful and certainly not to the extent of supplying a welding force. War with their neighbours and their difficulties with the Lagos Government increased the disrupting influences of the *Ologun* on the Egba state so that by 1872 civil government had broken down entirely at Abeokuta. All efforts to evolve a stable government failed until 1898 when the first truly federal constitution emerged.

## APPENDIX A

### Consuls for the Bight of Benin and later Governors at Lagos up to 1872

Louis Fraser	Vice-Consul	May 1852
Benjamin Campbell	Consul	July 1853
Lieutenant Lodder	Acting Consul	June 1858
Benjamin Campbell <sup>1</sup>	Consul	Jan. 1859
Lieutenant Lodder	Acting Consul	May 1859
George Brand <sup>1</sup>	Consul	25 Nov. 1859
Lt.-Commander Henry Hand	Acting Consul	16 June 1860
Henry Grant Foote <sup>1</sup>	Consul	21 Dec. 1860
William McKoskry	Acting Consul	17 May 1861
	Acting Governor	7 Aug. 1861
H. S. Freeman	Governor and Consul	21 Jan. 1862
Captain Mulliner	Acting Governor and Consul	11 April 1863
Commander J. H. Glover	Lieutenant-Governor and Acting Consul	22 May 1863
H. S. Freeman	Governor and Consul	21 Nov. 1863
Commander J. H. Glover	Lieutenant-Governor and Acting Consul	July 1864
Admiral Patey	Administrator	23 May 1866
Commander J. H. Glover	Administrator	20 Nov. 1866
W. H. Simpson	Acting Administrator	14 June 1870
Commander J. H. Glover	Administrator	29 Aug. 1870
Henry Fowler	Acting Administrator	10 July 1872
George Berkeley	Administrator	22 Dec. 1872

<sup>1</sup> Died at Lagos.

## APPENDIX B

### Governors-in-Chief of the West African Settlements, 1866-74

Major S. W. Blackall	(Governor)	Feb. 1866-July 1867
Lt.-Colonel G. N. Yonge	(Acting Governor)	July 1867-Nov. 1867
Major S. W. Blackall	(Governor)	Nov. 1867-Feb. 1868
Sir A. Kennedy	(Governor)	Feb. 1868-Aug. 1869
J. J. Kendall	(Acting Governor)	Aug. 1869-Dec. 1869
Sir A. Kennedy	(Governor)	Dec. 1869-Jan. 1872
J. Pope-Hennessy	(Acting Governor)	Feb. 1872-Feb. 1873
R. W. Keate	(Governor)	Feb. 1873-March 1873
Lt.-Colonel R. W. Harley	(Acting Governor)	Mar. 1873-Aug. 1873
G. Berkeley	(Acting Governor)	Aug. 1873-July 1874

Lagos and the Gold Coast were constituted into the Gold Coast Colony in 1874, and Lagos was eventually separated in 1886.

## APPENDIX C

### Lagos: Imports and Exports Figures

	<i>Imports</i> £	<i>Exports</i> £
1862 (half-year)	77,933	61,932
1863	171,138	158,341
1864	120,796	166,903
1865	114,284	175,636
1866	220,766	262,699
1867	321,997	513,157
1868	340,815	517,253
1869	416,895	689,598
1870	400,558	515,365
1871	391,653	539,302
1872	366,256	444,849
1873	258,883	406,986

## APPENDIX E

### Glover's terms to the Egbas after the clash at Ikorodu in 1865

(Enclosure 3 in F.O. 84/1250, Glover to Lord John Russell 8/7/1865,  
No. 1)

1. On fit and suitable messengers arriving in Lagos from Abbeokuta stating that the Egbas are willing to accept the following arrangements, they will be carried out by this Government viz:

2. That trees at present closing the mouths of Agboe creek will be removed, and the messengers return to Abbeokuta by the River Ogun.

3. The Produce (property of British subjects and Lagos people) so long detained in Abbeokuta shall be permitted to come down. Three commissioners shall be immediately appointed by each Government to meet at Lagos or Otta to consider the claim for compensation for robberies committed on the River Ogun on the property of British subjects and Lagos Traders, to settle the amount of compensation to be paid, and over what period the payment shall extend.

4. On the first instalment being paid in Lagos the Roads to Abbeokuta shall be opened to the transit of goods to that place.

5. But it is to be distinctly understood that henceforth all Property, goods or merchandize shall before leaving Lagos for Abbeokuta, have ceased to be *bona fide* British property; that is to say, that the Egbas and all those residing in Abbeokuta shall purchase their goods and merchandize in Lagos, or at such places as shall be decided upon, within the jurisdiction of the Lagos Government, where a market shall be appointed to be held, and that from this time forward no further consignment of British Property shall be permitted to pass to Abbeokuta.

6. Furthermore, that no British subjects or the Agents of mercantile houses and others established in Lagos shall be permitted to reside in Abbeokuta for the purpose of trade; and that these stipulations shall be mutually agreed upon and carried out by the Governments of Lagos and Abbeokuta.

7. That all coloured British subjects who shall be permitted by the Government of Abbeokuta to reside and trade there will be considered as subjects and citizens of Abbeokuta and shall be deemed to have forfeited their rights to British citizenship and British protection, while so residing and trading in that place or its territory; these restrictions, however, are not to apply to Missionaries, either white or coloured, of any denomination or kind so long as neither themselves, their wives, children or persons comprising their households, shall be engaged in commerce. And that this

arrangement shall remain in force until such time as the Egbas may be willing to enter into a reciprocal treaty of Commerce with this Government and for the rendition of persons accused either of criminal or fraudulent offences.

8. It is to be understood that the Egbas are to sit down in peace on their own lands, and are not again to disturb their neighbours, without first submitting any cause of dispute which may arise to arbitration.

9. That the Government of Lagos shall endeavour to obtain from Ibadan and Oyo the opening of the Roads northwards from Abbeokuta via Ilugun to Ijaye and Oyo; and the Egbas shall on their part offer no further opposition to the roads from Ikorodu to Ibadan, nor shall they influence the king of Ijebu Ode to do so.

10. That Lagos, Ibadan, Oyo, Jebu and Abbeokuta shall be induced to meet at some place and there break kola together.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the Yoruba custom of settling a dispute by eating together a kola broken into its segments.

## APPENDIX F

### List of Contemporary Paramount Rulers or Kings around Lagos (1840-74)

**LAGOS:**

Akitoye . . . . .	(1841-5)
Kosoko . . . . .	(1845-52)
Akitoye . . . . .	(1852-3)
Dosunmu . . . . .	(1853-61)

**ABEOKUTA (Title: Alake):**

Okukenu . . . . .	(1854-62)
[The regency of Shomoye, the Bashorun (1862-8)]	
Ademola I . . . . .	(1869-77)

**IJEBU ODE (Title: Awujale):**

Anikilaya . . . . .	(1820-52)
Ademiyewo . . . . .	(1852-88)

**OYO (Title: Alafin):**

Atiba . . . . .	(c. 1839-59)
Adelu . . . . .	(1859-75)

**DAHOMEY:**

Ghezo . . . . .	(1845-58)
Gelele . . . . .	(1858-90)

**PORTO NOVO:**

Sogi or Sojee . . . . .	(1851-64)
Mepon . . . . .	(1864-72)
Mesi . . . . .	(1872-4)

## Sources and Select Bibliography

### A. PRIMARY SOURCES

Relevant records in the Public Records Office were examined. Most of the material used came from the slave-trade dispatches and after 1861 from the Colonial Office sources. Special attention was paid to the enclosures to official correspondence, which often gave the indigenous points of view; the Colonial Office miscellaneous correspondence with other Government departments and the general public was very helpful. Parliamentary Papers were used but frequently the full dispatches from which they reproduced extracts were more helpful. Hansard was consulted for the occasional Parliamentary debates and questions which pertained to this study.

#### (a) *Foreign Office records*

##### (i) *General consular correspondence*

F.O. 2/3	1849-51	F.O. 2/20	1857
F.O. 2/4	1850	F.O. 2/24	1858
F.O. 2/7	1852	F.O. 2/28	1859
F.O. 2/9	1853	F.O. 2/35	1860
F.O. 2/11	1854	F.O. 2/39	1861
F.O. 2/13	1855	F.O. 2/42	1862
F.O. 2/17	1856	F.O. 2/44	1863

##### (ii) *Niger expedition*

F.O. 2/18	1853-6	F.O. 2/32	1859 June-Dec.
F.O. 2/23	1856-7	F.O. 2/34	1860
F.O. 2/27	1858	F.O. 97/433	1861
F.O. 2/31	1859 Jan.-May	F.O. 97/434	1862-4

##### (iii) *Slave trade: Consular (Africa: West Coast)*

F.O. 84/775	1849	F.O. 84/1114	1860
F.O. 84/816	1850	(To Consuls)	
F.O. 84/858	1851	F.O. 84/1115	1860
F.O. 84/886	1852	(From Consuls)	
F.O. 84/920	1853	F.O. 84/1141	1861
F.O. 84/950	1854	F.O. 84/1175	1862
F.O. 84/976	1855	F.O. 84/1201	1863
F.O. 84/1002	1856	F.O. 84/1221	1864
F.O. 84/1031	1857	F.O. 84/1250	1865
F.O. 84/1061	1858	F.O. 84/1265	1866
F.O. 84/1088	1859	F.O. 84/1278	1867

F.O. 84/1287	1867	F.O. 84/1326	1870
F.O. 84/1290	1868	F.O. 84/1343	1871
F.O. 84/1307	1869	F.O. 84/1356	1872

(iv) *Slave trade: Colonial Office correspondence*

F.O. 84/1151	To C.O. 1861	F.O. 84/1230	1864
F.O. 84/1152	From C.O. 1861	F.O. 84/1254	1865
F.O. 84/1153	From C.O. 1861	F.O. 84/1269	1866
F.O. 84/1187	To C.O. 1862	F.O. 84/1283	1867
F.O. 84/1188	From C.O. 1862	F.O. 84/1297	1868
F.O. 84/1210	1863		

(b) *Colonial Office records*

## (i) C.O. 147: Lagos.

147/1 to 147/28: dispatches, public offices and miscellaneous, 1861-73.

## (ii) C.O. 420/1-420/5: Entry books for dispatches, 1861-72.

## (iii) C.O. 421/1-421/2: Registers 1861-72.

## (iv) Confidential Prints.

C.O. 806/141 Afr. 192, 1879: On Lagos.

(c) *Admiralty records*

Ad 1/5823: Africa 1863.

[Usually Admiralty and Naval officers' comments were found in the consular and other references.]

(d) *Parliamentary papers*

1840, XXXIII (57). Correspondence relating to the Niger expedition.

1842, XI, XII (551). Report of Select Committee on British possessions on the West Coast of Africa.

1847-8 XXII (272) (366) (536) (623). Four reports from Select Committee on the Slave Trade.

1849, XIX (309) (410). Two reports, following session.

1850, IX (53) (590). Report of Select Committee of House of Lords on Slave Trade.

1852, [1455] LIV. 221. Papers relative to the Reduction of Lagos by H.M. Forces.

1854, LXV (296). Quantities of palm oil imported into U.K. 1844-53.

1857, XXXVIII (255). Papers relating to the cultivation of cotton in Africa.

1861, LXI (2959). Slave-trade correspondence.

1861, LXV (2904). Dispatches relating to the taking of Porto Novo.

1862, LXI (339) (365). Papers relating to the occupation of Epe.

1863, XXXVIII (117). Papers relating to the occupation of Epe.

1863, XXXVIII (512) [3212]. Letters from the Rev. H. Venn *re* Abeokuta, with correspondence.

1865, XXXVII (287). Colonel Ord's report on the condition of the settlements on the West Coast of Africa.

1865, V (1). Report of Committee on the same: evidence, &c., 2 parts.

1865, XXXVII (533). Papers on war among native tribes in the neighbourhood of Lagos.

(e) *Hansard (3rd series)*

1850, CIX (1093-1186). Hutt Committee debate.

1857, CXLVI (605); (950). Debate on French emigration scheme.

1857, CXLVIII (516). Debate on French emigration scheme.

1860, CLX. Question on Dahomey.

1865, CLXVII (535-9). 1865 Select Committee.

1872, CCXI (501). Question on stoppage of trade to Lagos.

(f) *Manuscript collections*

Manuscript papers of Sir John Hawley Glover including Sir F. M. Rowe's papers on Glover's Volta Expedition (consulted by courtesy of the Royal Empire Society Library).

*Lagos Blue Books* 1863-73.

## B. SECONDARY SOURCES

Secondary works on West Africa are so numerous that one must select, especially as they have been consulted chiefly in order to supply the essential background to the study. Where they have a distinct bearing upon the subject, they have been used and appropriately referred to in footnotes. They are classified below and short statements are given where necessary.

### 1. *Contemporary works*

(a) *General*

ADAMS, CAPTAIN JOHN: *Sketches taken during Ten Voyages to Africa 1786-1800*. Good and semi-scientific account of the Guinea trade.

ADDERLEY, C. B.: *Review of the Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration by Earl Grey and subsequent Colonial Policy* (1869). The case for the 1865 Adderley Committee's recommendation.

ALLEN, W.: *A Plan for Immediate Extinction of the Slave Trade* (London, 1849). Scheme to 'change slavery by means of temporary bondage, into Christian Freedom'.

BANDINEL, J.: *Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa as connected with Europe and America* (London, 1842). The semi-official classic on the 'triangular' trade.

BARBER, MARY A. S.: *Oshielle* (1857). Story of missionary activities near Abeokuta.

BOSMAN, W.: *A new and accurate description of the Guinea* ((1703). 1907 edn.). Good background work.

- BOWEN, T. J.: *Grammar and Dictionary of the Yoruba Language with an Introductory Description of the Country and People of Yoruba* (1859).  
— *Central Africa* (1857). Deals with the Yoruba country and missionary activities, especially American Baptist.
- BURTON, R.: *Wanderings in West Africa* (by F.R.G.S.), 2 vols. (London, 1863).  
— *Abbeokuta and the Cameroons*, 2 vols. (1863).  
— *A Mission to Gelele*, 2 vols. (1864). Observations of a brilliant but superficial amateur anthropologist, traveller, and consul; should be approached with due caution.
- BUXTON, T. F.: *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy* (1840). Very useful.
- CAMPBELL, R.: *A Pilgrimage to my Motherland* (1860). On Negro emigration scheme to Abbeokuta.
- CARNES, T. F.: *Journal of a Voyage from Boston to the Coast of Africa* (1852). A useful trader's account and commentary.
- CLAPPERTON, COMMANDER: *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1829).
- DALZEL, A.: *The History of Dahomey compiled from Authentic Memoirs* (1793). Useful background.
- DENHAM, CLAPPERTON, and OUDNEY: *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa, 1822, 1823 and 1824* (1826). Useful travelogues, especially on the Yoruba of Oyo.
- FOOTE, MRS. H. G.: *Recollections of Central America and the West Coast of Africa* (1869). A Consul's wife's impressions of Lagos in 1861.
- FORBES, F. E.: *Six Months' Service in the African Blockade* (1849).  
— *Dahomey and Dahomans* (1849 and 1850). Journals of visits. Useful.
- FREEMAN, T. B.: *Journal of Various Visits into the Interior of Western Africa* (1844). Very valuable, especially the third Journal.
- HAMILTON, A.: *The River Niger and the Progress of Discovery and Commerce in Central Africa* (lecture delivered at the Bromley Literary Institute on 25 March) (1863). Niger exploration, trade, and cotton supply.
- HORTON, J. AFRICANUS B.: *West African Countries and Peoples* (1868). A distinguished African's views on capabilities for self-government in West Africa after the Adderley Committee's Report of 1865.
- HUTCHINSON, T. J.: *Impressions of West Africa, 1858. Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians* (London, 1861). A Consul's views and observations in the Bights of Benin and Biafra.
- JAMIESON, R.: *An appeal to the Government and People of Great Britain against the proposed Niger Expedition* (London, 1840).  
— *A further appeal* (1841).  
— *Sequel to the further appeal* (1843).  
— *Commerce with Africa* (1859).  
Useful in connexion with the 1841 Niger expedition controversy: free-trade champion.

- KOELLE, REV. S. W.: *Polyglotta Africana* (1854). Useful on the different kinds of recaptives liberated at Freetown as indicated by the different languages and dialects which they spoke.
- LANDER, RICHARD and JOHN: *Journal of an Exploration to explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, 3 vols. (1832). Vol. i especially useful on Yoruba country.
- MÉRIVALE, H.: *Lectures on Colonisation* (1862). Views of a political economist.
- M'QUEEN, J.: *View of Northern Central Africa* (1821).
- *A Geographical Survey of Africa* (London, 1840). In support of Buxton's ideas.
- RANKIN, F. H.: *White Man's Grave: a visit to Sa. Leone in 1834*, 2 vols. (1836). Good on the 'Akoos', i.e. Yorubas.
- READE, W. W.: *African Sketch Book* (1873).
- STEPHEN, SIR GEORGE: *A Letter to Lord John Russell—In Reply to Mr. Jamieson* (1840).
- *A Second Letter* (1840).
- *A Third Letter* (1840).
- Deal with objections to Buxton's scheme.
- TUCKER, MISS: *Abbeokuta or Sunrise within the Tropics* (1853). Church Missionary Society's hopes of Abeokuta as the gateway to African civilization.
- VENN, H.: *West African Colonies* (London, 1865). Church Missionary Society's views specially compiled for the committee of 1865, by the General Secretary.
- WHITFORD, J.: *Trading Life in Western and Central Africa* (1877). Useful background.
- (b) *Official and semi-official*
- HERTSLET, E.: *Map of Africa by Treaty* (London, 1894).
- SCHÉFER, C.: *Instructions générale données aux Gouverneurs en Afrique Occidentale*, vol. 2 (1831-70).
- Colonial Office Lists* (1862-73).
- (c) *Journals*
- Church Missionary Gleaner* (Annuals).
- Church Missionary Intelligencer* (1849-72).
- Church Missionary Proceedings* (1860-62).
- Edinburgh Review*, 1840, pp. 179-93: Review of Buxton's *Remedy*.
- Friend of Africa*, Journal of the Society for Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa (1841-3).
- Iwe Irohin* (bound numbers) (Jan. 1860-Oct. 1867).
- Journal of Society of Arts*, vol. xxi (1873): Sir J. Pope-Hennessy, 'British Settlements in West Africa'.
- Royal Geographical Society Journal*, vol. xxx, pp. 212-33 (1860): D. J. May, 'Journey in the Yoruba and Nupe Countries in 1858'.

- MARTIN, W. A. GIBSON: *A Century of Liverpool's Commerce (1850-1950)* (1950). Sponsored history of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.
- MATHIESON, W. L.: *Great Britain and the Slave Trade 1839-1865* (London, 1929). Best account of suppression activities in general; written largely from primary sources and humanitarian in approach.
- MCPHEE, A.: *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa* (1926). Very useful for the economic factor, though more concerned with the later period.
- NIVEN, C. R.: *A Short History of Nigeria* (1937).
- PARRINDER, G.: *West African Religion* (1949).
- PINNOCK, S. J.: *Yoruba Country, its People, Customs and Missions* (1893). A short sketch.
- *The Romance of Missions in Nigeria* (1918 edn.).
- SIMMONS, JACK: *From Empire to Commonwealth* (1949). Select documents. A history of the Church Missionary Society.
- STOCK, E.: *Church Missionary Society*, 3 vols. (1899).
- STONE, R. H.: *In Africa's Forest and Jungle or Six Years among the Yorubas* (1900 edn.). American Baptist missionary activities and an account of the Ijaye War of 1859-62.
- TALBOT, P. A.: *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 4 vols. (1926). A comprehensive survey.
- THORPE, ELLEN: *The Swelling of Jordan* (1950). Graphic historical novel about the Yoruba Mission.
- WILLIAMS, ERIC: *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). An economic interpretation of the abolition and suppression of the slave trade.

(b) *Official (confidential) reports, &c.*

- BLAIR, J.: Intelligence Report on Abeokuta, 1937.
- COTTON, E. P.: Report on Egba Boundary, 1905.
- HATCH, W. R.: Intelligence Report on the Ilaro Group, 1936.
- HERMAN-HODGE, H. R.: Gazetteer of Ilorin Province.
- MACKENZIE, J. A.: Report on the Native Organisation of Ife District, 1934.
- WAR OFFICE: Lagos, 1888.

(c) *Unpublished theses*

- HERRINGTON, E. T.: British Measures for the Suppression of the Slave Trade 1807-1833. London M.A., 1923. The philanthropic school in perspective.
- MELLOR, G. R.: British Policy in relation to Sierra Leone (1808-1852). London M.A., 1935. A useful summary of trends of policy.
- MILNE, A. T.: The Slave Trade and the Anglo-American Relations 1807-1862. London M.A., 1929-30.
- SCOTTER, W. H.: International Rivalry in the Bights of Benin and Biafra 1815-1885. London Ph.D., 1933. Very helpful; but concentrates upon rivalry amongst European Powers.

- STILLIARD, N. H.: *The Rise and Development of Legitimate Trade in Palm Oil with West Africa*. Birmingham M.A., 1938. Useful.
- WOLFSON, F.: *British Relations with the Gold Coast 1843-1880*. London Ph.D., 1950. Throws helpful light upon Glover and Hennessy.

(d) *Journals**African Society Journal*

Vol. v, 1902: ELIJAH HELM, 'The Cultivation of Cotton in West Africa'.

Vol. xvi, 1916: R. E. DENNETT, 'The Ogbonis and other Secret Societies in Nigeria'.

*Études Dahoméennes*, 1949

Nos. 1 and 2. ÉDOUARD DUNGLAS, 'Première attaque des Dahoméens contre Abeokuta' and 'Deuxième attaque des Dahoméens contre Abeokuta'.

*Geographical Society Proceedings*

Vol. xii, 1890: SIR C. A. MOLONEY, 'Notes on Yoruba and the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos'.

*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

4th Series, vol. xxxii, 1950: J. N. BLAKE, 'The Study of African History'. A timely appeal for the study of African history from the angle of the indigenous peoples.

4. *Local source-books*

In this class of books which record oral traditions, Johnson's *History of the Yorubas* stands out, though its Oyo-Yoruba bias must be admitted. Only a selected list, from the numerous booklets, pamphlets, and tracts consulted, is given below.

AJISAFE, A. K.: *A History of Abeokuta* (1924). Laws and Customs of Yoruba People.

AKINYELE, OLOYE I. B.: *Iwe Itan Ibadan*. (1930).

EGHAREVBA, J.: *History of Benin* (1936).

EPEGA, REV. D. O.: *Iwe Itan Ijebu at Awon Ilu Miran*, 2nd edn. (Lagos, 1934).

FOLARIN, A.: *Egba History: Life Review, 1829-1930* (1931).

JOHNSON, REV. S.: *History of the Yorubas* (1921).

LOSI, PRINCE J. B. O.: *History of Abeokuta* (Lagos, 1924).

OLAOPA, REV. D.: 'Iwe Itan Awe-Oyo'. In preparation.

PAYNE, J. A. O.: *Table of Principal Events in Yoruba History, &c.* (1893).

SOFOLUKE, E. AYO: *Awon Akoni Mejila* (1936).

## C. ORAL SOURCES

Oral evidence is important for this study, because the African tradition was to rely upon memory for the transmission of history. Remembered

material is suspect in many ways but it has been cautiously used after being checked and cross-checked, and divested of elements of romanticism, political propaganda, and naked fabrication. The attempt to use a carefully prepared questionnaire failed because such an approach is premature where the majority of witnesses are illiterate and in the absence of paid inquirers. It has been necessary, therefore, to rely upon personal interviews, with the aid of guide questions, and over six months were exclusively devoted to the task in the Yoruba country, visiting original sites of Egba townships and questioning knowledgeable people everywhere. I motored, on the average, over 1,000 miles per month.

Below is a schedule of places visited and the people interviewed (and their estimated ages).

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Persons and Ages</i>
July 1949		
31	Orile Kesi (old site)	Belo, Osi Imale of Kesi (60). Opajobi, Bale of Orilekesi (65). Laboku Olori Parakoyi of Kesi (65-70).
Aug. 1949		
3	Orile Emere	Akilawon, Igbakeji Bale (50). Adeoshun, Bale.
	Orile Kemta	Isaac Oluga (50). Motesho Oluga, Chief Ashero (70). The Bale (65).
17	Abeokuta	Chief G. A. Adedayo (Council Clerk) (45). Chief C. A. A. Titcombe, Administration Secretary (65).
25	Owu-Ipole	The Olowu, Amororo (65).
Sept. 1949		
2	Owu-Ipole (old site)	The Olowu and Chiefs assembled.
12	Oyo	Mr. Ilori, the Treasurer (45).
15	Oyo	Adeyemi II, the Alafin (60). The Olori-Aro (Court Historian) (65). The Kudefu (55).
19	Shagamu (Ijebu Remo)	Chief Olisa of Makun (50). The Ewusi of Makun (48).
20	Shagamu Ode Remo Iperu	Adedoyin II, the Akarigbo (70). Rev. D. O. Epega (historian) (65). A. O. Okupe, Alaperu Agbonumagbe II (55). Chief Olushola (55).
21	Shagamu	Makun chiefs: spokesman (65).
29	Ile-Ife	Mr. Ade Gunfidodo (teacher) (35).

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Persons and Ages</i>
Oct. 1949		
12-13	Oshogbo	Ademola II, the Alake of Abeokuta (then in voluntary exile) (77).
22	Abeokuta	Chief Legu of Igbore (55).
24	Ilaro	Mr. T. J. Adewale (37).
25	Ilaro	Ekundayo, the Elemu (65).
		The Olu of Ilaro (65).
26	Ado	The Bajomo (60).
		The Osolo (65).
		Olaogun, son of Falola, late Balogun of Oke-Odan (85).
	Ilaro	The Adele (55).
		Mr. Matanmi (historian) (55).
Nov. 1949		
9	Awe-Oyo	Rev. D. A. Olaopa (60).
16	Ile-Ife	Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the Oni (60).
17		The Sarun (60).
18		The Obalale (65).
		Baba Atiba Kujodun (95).
24	Abeokuta	Gbadela II, the Olowu (57).
26		Mr. Ogunsina of Owu (86).
		Chief Alaba (since deceased) (53).
		Prince R. A. Adedamola (son of a late Oshile of Oke-Ona) (38).
Dec. 1949		
	At Ibadan.	
Jan. 1950		
16	Oba (Abeokuta district).	A clergyman (65).
17	Ajura (Abeokuta district)	Sundry people.
28	Abeokuta	Adeniji Tinney Somoye (67).
Feb. 1950		
3	Otta	Mr. Durojaiye (historian) (45). The Olotta, Timothy Fadina (47), and Alhadji Shittu Bashorun, the Seriki (65).

The schedule does not include the Residents, District Officers, and other officials who helped me in my search for material, nor the many people with whom I discussed my research at Ibadan, my operational base.

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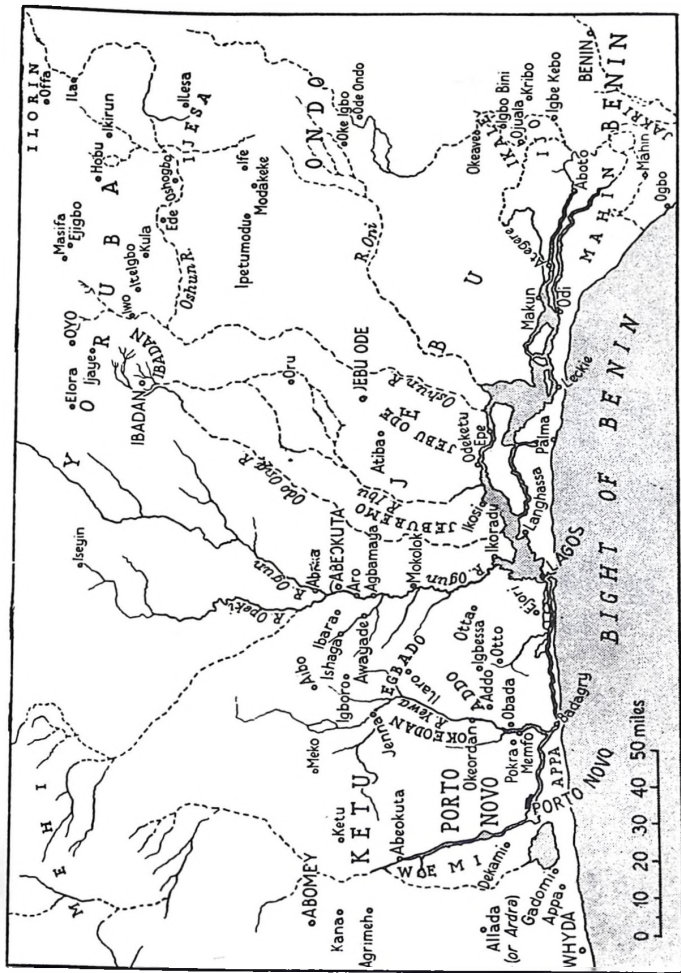
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I. MAP SHOWING EGBA FOREST





2. MAP OF THE COLONY OF LAGOS AND NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES taken (and reduced) from War Office: 'Lagos', 1888





RE ACK

*Egba and Their Neighbours, 1842-1872* tells the story of the thirty years of British penetration of the Egba Country. The book focuses on the establishment of the Egba State by the Egba at Abeokuta after their dispersal from their original habitats in the Egba Forest in the aftermath of the Owo War (1821-1825). It sets the historical scene with a prologue surveying briefly the impact of British colonization of Lagos on the people in its hinterland.

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