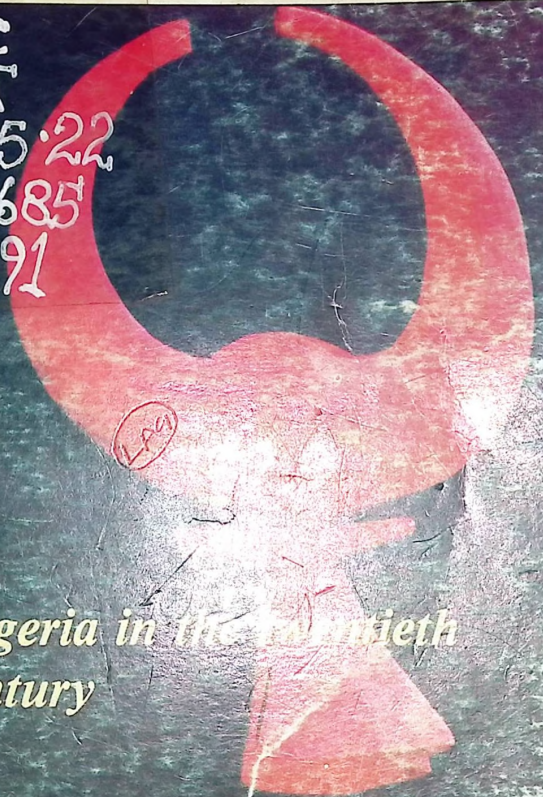


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*Nigeria in the twentieth
century*

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U Anyanwu



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Nigeria in the nineteenth century

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Preface

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History of Nigeria (in three Volumes) is written in response to the changes in the history curriculum for the Senior Secondary Schools and Colleges. These changes derive from a genuine concern that all Nigerians should have a good understanding of their nation's history.

The three books have adequately responded to both the changes in the syllabus and the need to study Nigerian history. They include all the most important themes on Nigerian history, incorporate the major findings of new researches conducted in the last three decades and expose the readers to new interpretations, even on familiar topics.

The demarcation of the three volumes of the series has been designed in such a way that the student progresses naturally in his history studies from the earliest times to the contemporary period:

Book 1 covers Nigerian history up to 1800 AD. It examines the history of centralised and noncentralised communities, the indigenous economy, group relations, as well as contacts with Europe and North Africa.

Book 2 examines Nigeria in the nineteenth century. The emphasis is on the important changes of the period, notably the jihad, military warfare, missionary activities, new commercial developments and British conquest. The impacts of these changes on the different states and peoples involved are discussed.

Book 3 deals with the colonial and post-independence periods. It covers the impact of colonial rule, the decolonisation process, the first and second republics, military rule and the country's relations with other nations.

To have a full view of Nigerian history, it is necessary to read all three books. While the teachers and general readers may read through the books at one go, it is assumed that students will study each book in one year. The summaries and questions at the end of each chapter are also meant for such detailed study by students. More information on any of the topics may be obtained from the List for Further Reading.

Toyin Falola
Abdullahi Mahadi
Martin Uhomoibhi
Ukachukwu Anyanwu



Chapter 1 The early phase of British rule 1900-1914

Introduction

By 1900, Nigeria had come to be recognised by other colonial powers as a British colony. This was as a result of Britain being the first to establish an occupation on the area by signing so-called treaties of protection with Nigerian rulers, and later by invading and occupying their territories. The desire to achieve a total and effective control over the Nigeria area constituted the prime objective of British colonial administrators in the early phase of their rule which lasted from 1900 to 1914. To achieve this, the colonial authorities used both violent and non-violent means. Before examining these means, it is important to note the problems which the colonial administration faced in those early years.

The first problem was the refusal of Nigerian rulers and peoples to accept British rule. There were resistance movements or uprisings against the British. The British, because of this, concluded that there was no law and order in the communities. The fact really was that the uprisings threatened the safety and security of British officials whose duty it was to ensure that colonial authority was established in Nigeria. This was how the need to impose law and order or 'pacification' became one of the initial problems that the colonial administration had to face in Nigeria.

Secondly, there was shortage of funds for the running of the colonial government. This was due to the fact that the British government had a policy of depending on the revenue generated from the colonial territories for running the affairs of those territories. The implication was that in the early years when the revenue base of Nigeria was poor, financial support from the British Imperial Treasury was very low and therefore inadequate.

Thirdly, there was a shortage of manpower or European staff. This was due to poor funding which made it impossible to recruit adequate manpower, and the British fear that they might not survive for long in the West African environment just like some of their men who came to the sub-region in the nineteenth century. As a result, Britons were not enthusiastic about joining the Colonial Service in the early years.

The fourth problem had to do with communication. Because of manpower shortage, the territory proved too vast for the administration, thus making communication with various parts impossible. There were also cultural and language barriers between the British administrators and Nigerians. The inadequate means of transportation further complicated the communication issue. In these circumstances, communication proved a serious problem to the administration.

Finally the First World War (1914-1918) equally constituted a problem for the colonial administration. The war came at a time when the administration was still grappling with the initial problems mentioned above. Its impact was to reduce the colonial administrative staff because some left for service in the British army. In this way the war worsened the manpower problem.

Measures aimed at effecting control over the Nigeria area

We have already noted that there were two kinds of measures employed by the British in effecting total control over the Nigeria area. These were violent and non-violent measures. We now examine the violent measure which the colonial authorities ironically called 'pacification'.

'Pacification': the violent measure

'Pacification' was the colonial administration's term for the military and police operations which she carried out against Nigerians opposing British rule between 1900 and 1914. It was the final phase of the military aspect of the imposition of British rule in Nigeria. The operations affected all parts of Nigeria. In the case of northern Nigeria, it came shortly after Britain had revoked the Charter (or authority to rule) of the Royal Niger Company in 1899 and her declaration of a Protectorate of Northern Nigeria on 1 January, 1900. The people rejected the declaration saying they did not reckon with it. And in actual fact, British control of northern Nigeria was very marginal and so the protectorate seemed to be more of paper work. Even so, the British were determined to assert their power over northern Nigeria on the basis of the declaration. On their part, the people were equally determined to resist the British. What made the peoples' determination very strong was the fact that as Muslims, they

saw the British invaders as infidels. The consequence was war between the British and the different states of northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1919. The war between the British and the states of the northern Nigeria area in this period constituted in a classical way the last phase of the military aspect of the imposition of British rule on the country. The peoples' reaction also represented the last desperate attempt to forestall the imposition of British rule.

It is neither possible nor necessary to engage in a detailed account of each of the military encounters. The essential point to mention is that in all places both parties demonstrated stiff and dogged determination to defend their positions. Thus, though the British were able, at the end, to win, the resistance of the Nigerian groups in many cases was characterised by heroic action. For instance, the *Magaji* of Keffi in 1902 personally killed the British Resident and fled to Kano. Kano herself succumbed to British rule only after some stiff resistance in 1903. In fact, it was Kano which first attacked Lugard's British forces. Kano attacked the British garrison at Zaria and withdrew only when it learnt about the death of the then Sultan of Sokoto. In general, Sir Frederick Lugard who was appointed High Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate in 1900 had a tough time trying to bring the area under control. This lasted up to 1906 by which time most of the northern Nigeria area had been overrun. Lugard's efforts at securing the control of the area was almost thwarted by the Satiru Rising led by a certain self-proclaimed prophet, Mallam Isa. The Satiru Rising was a great threat to British presence and nearly disorganised the arrangements Frederick Lugard had made for the administration of the area. Many British officers were killed while some received severe wounds. The colonial authorities ultimately suppressed the rising.

In the Nigeria area east of the Niger, there was continued resistance to British rule during this early phase. Consequently, the so-called 'pacification' exercise was also carried out there. In Igboland, for example, the British conquest of Arochukwu in 1901-1902 did not lead to the collapse of the rest of the land as they had expected. The British were later to discover that they had to militarily overcome each village or community before their security in the area could be guaranteed. Indeed, the colonial authorities had to engage in several military actions before they could secure control of Igboland. Among the notable encounters were the actions against Afikpo and Umunneoha in 1903; Akwete and Onitsha in 1904; the Ezza, Ovor, Nonya, Onicha and Ahiara in 1905, and Isuikwuato, Urualla, Etche, Ntarakpu and Isiagu in 1907. From 1908 to 1914, many military units fought and subdued several villages and settlements which regarded themselves as independent.

The situation was the same in the area west of the Niger. For instance, the British had to deal with the resistance offered by the Ekumeku Movement from 1898 to 1910. This meant that they carried out military operations or so-called 'pacification' exercises in towns like Issele-Uku, Ogwashi-Uku, Akumazi, Ubulu-Uku, Ibusa and Idumuje in the period. In the Yoruba and other parts of western Nigeria, the British also used force against groups and persons who threatened or challenged their rule in this early phase. This is why it has been pointed out that British rule in western Nigeria in the period up to about 1914 was of a para-military character. The period experienced the bombardment of Oyo, the humiliation of Alaafin Adeyemi I by Captain Bower, and the oppression of traditional authority in Ilesa, which led to the banishment of the Owa of Ijesaland to Benin for thirty-seven days.

Thus, in this early period there were evidences, especially in the hinterland, that the people were not ready to accept British rule. British 'pacification' measures were thus carried out in a way that made the rule very authoritarian. It was this authoritarian way of administration that led to risings against British policies even in the years after 1914 in parts of Yorubaland. Two such risings were the Iseyin Rising of 1916 prompted by the unilateral introduction of taxation and the protest of the Egba against indirect rule in 1918. In all cases, the colonial authorities suppressed the risings on the basis of the 'pacification' policy.

It is thus clear that Britain used violent means or measures in the early phase of her rule. She demonstrated this through the use of military and police units against any protests by the people. The result was that British rule in the period up to about 1914 was characterised by the use of force. With this military backing, the colonial administration was in a better position to implement other measures including amalgamation.

Amalgamation

A major administrative measure taken by Britain to strengthen her rule in the early phase was amalgamation. Amalgamation meant the bringing together of the various Nigerian peoples under one administrative and political authority. The background to the problem of amalgamation can be seen in terms of the way Britain occupied and administered the component parts of what became Nigeria in the period up to 1900.

By 1900 there were three separate independent territories (all of which were under British control) in the country. One was the Niger

Coast Protectorate (created in 1891 as the Oil Rivers Protectorate). It was ruled by consuls who had their headquarters at Calabar and were responsible to the Foreign Office in London.

The second was the Colony of Lagos which was ceded to Britain in 1861. This colony was ruled by governors who were also responsible to the Colonial Office in London. From 1866 to 1874, the governors were resident in Sierra Leone and resided in the Gold Coast up to 1886 when Lagos began to have a governor of its own.

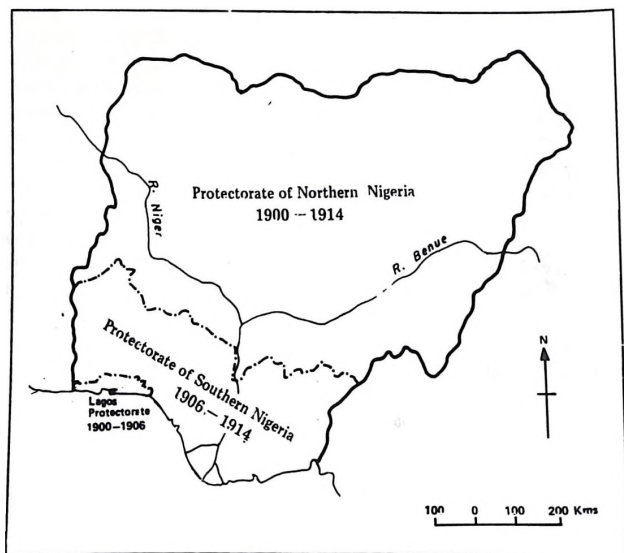
The third was the Territory of the Royal Niger Company. This was the equivalent of northern Nigeria. The agents of the company who were responsible to a Board of Directors in London ruled the territory from 1886 to 1900 when the British Government declared a Protectorate over Northern Nigeria and appointed Sir Frederick Lugard as the High Commissioner.

How to bring all these territories under one administrative and political authority was given early attention in British official circles. In fact, the need for bringing them together was recognised and confidentially discussed even before 1900. For example, Joseph Chamberlain, the then British Colonial Secretary, had in 1898 set up the Selborne Committee on the future administration of the Royal Niger Company's territory. The Committee had, among other things, recommended the fusion of the different governments into one Nigeria, ultimately leading to the appointment of a Governor-General for the whole area covered by the three territories. Also, Lugard had from the first year in office as High Commissioner showed concern for the amalgamation of what was described as the 'three Nigerias'. In a private letter to his brother, Ned, he expressed the hope that this would be achieved some day. He also expressed a similar concern in the speech he delivered to the Royal Geographical Society in London in 1903. And in his confidential letter to the Secretary of State in 1905, Lugard made proposals for the amalgamation of the various peoples of Nigeria. The proposals turned out to be similar in most parts to what came to be adopted when the amalgamation was eventually carried out. Generally, the concern for the amalgamation was an important aspect of Lugard's dream for Nigeria. In fact, by 1904 he had succeeded in winning over his counterparts in Lagos and Calabar (Sir William Macgregor and Sir Ralph Moore respectively) to the idea of amalgamating the three territories.

We can thus conclude that from 1898 the British decided to amalgamate the various administrative units in the country. The first manifestation of this policy was the creation of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in May, 1906. This was the fusion of the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos and the Protectorate of

Southern Nigeria. The new Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria had its headquarters at Lagos and was placed in the charge of a governor. A Legislative Council was set up to advise the government. Also, three provinces, namely, Western, Eastern and Central, were created. Thus, the amalgamation of 1906 brought the whole of southern Nigeria under a single administration. But this also meant that the 'three Nigerias' of the earlier years had been reduced to two, namely, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Therefore, there was still need for an amalgamation that would place all the territories under one political and administrative authority, the ultimate interest of Britain. This was achieved on 1 January, 1914.

On 1 January 1914 the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated. This involved bringing the two protectorates together under one political authority known as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. The proclamation was carried out by Sir (later Lord) Frederick Lugard who was also made the Governor-General. A number of circumstances, including the desire of the colonial authorities to strengthen their hold on Nigeria, made the amalgamation necessary.



The protectorates of Nigeria

Reasons for the amalgamation

The primary British aim in amalgamating the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914 was economic. Compared with the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria proved a relatively poor neighbour. Northern Nigeria had no direct access to the sea and so could not raise revenue from there. She had a larger area and population and spent much on railway construction and river dredging. She thus could not find sufficient funds to maintain her administration. The Imperial Treasury in Britain and the south provided some subsidy or grants-in-aid for northern Nigeria. Britain hoped that the amalgamation would relieve the Imperial Government of this financial burden.

On the other hand, the south was relatively richer than the north. The fact was that the south had a long coastline with ports from which revenue was raised. Amalgamation would make it easier to utilise the revenue from the southern ports for the development of the whole country. It would also save costs because the duplication of certain technical and administrative departments would be avoided.

In addition, amalgamation would coordinate development plans for the whole territory. For instance, there was the need to coordinate the railway policy or system. By 1914, three separate lines were in existence and a fourth line was being proposed. It was clear that rational development of the complex railway system could only be done under a unified control. This was how the railway situation became one of the reasons for the 1914 amalgamation.

There is also the other reason which had to do with the relations between the administrative and political officers in the two protectorates. There was much tension, due mainly to disagreements over policies and personality clashes between officers in the two protectorates. Amalgamation was a measure taken to reduce or indeed remove the tension. Closely related to this was the personal interest or ambition of Lugard. It has been suggested that Lugard supported amalgamation for personal reasons, namely, to secure firm control over the south as he had done in the north, and to extend the policies he had introduced in the north to the south.

These largely economic reasons were responsible for the British decision to amalgamate the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914. Having noted the reasons or objectives for the amalgamation, the next thing is to examine the extent of the amalgamation.

Extent of the amalgamation

In order to appreciate the extent of the amalgamation, a few prelimi-

nary observations are necessary. Even though Lugard was the principal architect of the amalgamation, it was not necessarily his brainchild. Instead, it was the brainchild of the British government. Secondly, amalgamation was not a moral issue. Thus, consideration was not given as to how much Nigerians would gain or lose from it. The concern was clear; how to run a more economic administration by the British. Therefore, the steps taken to implement the amalgamation were not intended to help Nigerian peoples come together as a unified or united nation.

The Governor-General, Lugard, was given great powers. The authority of the Legislative Council of 1906 was restricted to the Lagos colony. A new Nigerian Council made up of officials and six nominated Nigerians (three from the north and three from the south) was established. It was to advise the Governor-General. However, it had no powers and met only once a year and so had little or no legislative and advisory influence. In practice, therefore, full powers were exercised by the Governor-General and the Lieutenant Governors. Lieutenant Governors were appointed for the north and south respectively. Lagos remained a colony and its citizens were given rights as British citizens. People in the rest of Nigeria were called 'protected persons'.

While some departments were amalgamated, others were not. This was because Lugard firmly resolved to maintain the differences in the administration of the north and south. He did not want a centralised government. The amalgamated departments were the Treasury, Railways, Surveys, Post and Telegraph and Audit. Education and other departments like Police and Prisons were not amalgamated until the 1920s. There was no central secretariat until the 1920s. The actual control of affairs was done by the Lieutenant Governors. These referred issues that touched on the whole country to Lugard himself. For example, budgets were not centrally prepared. Instead, they were prepared locally and then submitted to the centre for inclusion in the total budget of the country.

While the south was broken into nine provinces, the north was left intact. Each province was headed by a colonial officer called the Resident. The authorities claimed that they left the north intact because it was culturally more homogeneous than the south.

The Judiciary experienced some change. A Supreme Court was established for Nigeria as a whole. A divisional court was established in the east and west respectively. Under the divisional courts were provincial courts headed by Residents. Indigenous or Nigerian lawyers were barred from practising in the provincial courts. Native courts were introduced in the south by an ordinance. Also, Lugard tried to introduce the system of native administration which had been

in use in northern Nigeria into the south. This met considerable opposition from the people and was hardly firmly rooted during Lugard's tenure. These, then, were the main features of the amalgamation as implemented during Lugard's tenure.

Effects of the amalgamation

First, we have to note that the amalgamation did not result in the unification of Nigerian peoples or even of their administrations. This was because the amalgamation preserved the differences among the peoples and their administrations. This was to have an adverse effect on the evolving nation-state because groups as well as their administrations quite often looked at national issues first and foremost in terms of their local interests.

Closely related to this was the unhealthy rivalry which developed between the respective administrations as they struggled for the different group interests which they represented. In this connection it is important to stress that colonial administrators, even during Lugard's time, were divided along north versus south line. Thus, the way in which the amalgamation was implemented left a legacy of tension among the component parts of Nigeria. Also, the boundary adjustments which accompanied the amalgamation left some geographical imbalance between the north and south thereby creating some adverse impact on subsequent nation-building efforts.

The absence of a central legislature meant that respective Nigerian groups did not have much that could bring them together to discuss the affairs of their country. A certain level of separateness was thus nurtured among Nigerian groups and their administrations. This aspect of the amalgamation was to have two opposite effects. In the first place, it laid the foundation for Nigerian federalism. Secondly, it sowed the culture of 'parochialism' in national affairs. This parochialism has in varying degrees remained a major problem in national development.

The point must, however, be made that it would be somewhat naive to expect a colonial administration to tackle in any meaningful way the problems of nation-building in the colonial state. To do so, in fact, would defeat the very purpose of colonial rule. In other words, the weaknesses of the amalgamation cannot continue to be the excuse for the failure of Nigerian leaders and peoples to build a strong and united nation.

Indirect rule

In principle, indirect rule was one of the non-violent measures

adopted by Britain in ruling her African colonies. Indirect rule in theory was a concept of local government in which it was believed that the British were to rule Nigeria and other colonies through indigenous rulers and institutions. The system was based on the belief that British officials were to be advisers to indigenous rulers ruling their communities. British political officers were to have no direct dealing with the people. For instance, all instructions or directives had to reach the people through the rulers. Indigenous institutions were to be utilised in the administration though they were to be purged of practices considered repugnant or against 'humanity'. These, in brief, were the main features of the concept or system of indirect rule.

Reasons for indirect rule

First, indirect rule was adopted in Nigeria, as elsewhere in British Africa, to enable the colonial administration win the cooperation of the rulers and people of Nigeria. At the beginning of their administration such a cooperation was necessary in order to reduce friction and opposition to the administration. The use of the rulers and institutions would create a reliable bridge for reaching the people.

Secondly, the British believed that the Nigerian, or indeed the African was at such low level of development to benefit from the so-called 'highly developed' institutions of Britain. On this ground, the British thought that imposing British ideas or government on Nigerian people would bring disaster. Indirect rule in this connection was introduced as a means of purifying African institutions and adapting them to modern or British ideas of government.

Thirdly, Lugard realised that it was important to preserve some of the customs and traditions of the people. He also realised that it would be unwise to attempt to discard with them and introduce a system based on structures completely new to the people.

A fourth consideration in the adoption of indirect rule had to do with the interest of the colonial authorities to consolidate their hold on Nigeria by winning the support of Nigerian traditional rulers in their administration of the country. In other words, indirect rule was a system that sought to strengthen British hold on Nigeria by practising a kind of divide and rule policy. The British were aware that the traditional rulers led the resistance in respective communities during their military conquest of Nigeria. Winning the support of these same rulers meant that the people would be without leaders and thus demoralised to engage in effective opposition to colonial rule. On

their part, the traditional rulers would soon realise that their interest lay in supporting the colonial administration which had found them a role in the new order. Ultimately, the colonial authorities hoped to know the feelings of the people about their administration through the rulers.

The fifth factor that made indirect rule inevitable had to do with the manpower, financial and communication problems which the colonial authorities faced in Nigeria in the early years of British rule. The circumstances which brought these problems had been explained earlier in this chapter. In connection with indirect rule, the limitations imposed on the colonial administration made it inevitable for Britain to use local rulers to run the affairs of the country. Thus, indirect rule was adopted to supplement manpower which was in short supply; to reduce the financial cost of running the affairs of the territory; and to reduce the impact of communication problems on the administration of the country.

The sixth factor had to do with Lugard. He adopted indirect rule because he had seen the system work successfully in Uganda and India and so believed that it could work elsewhere. Furthermore, he believed that the political institutions and organisations of Nigeria (and the rest of West Africa) would suit indirect rule. Specifically, he noticed that the emirate system in northern Nigeria would serve adequately the purpose of indirect rule.

Finally, we must stress that the colonial authorities emphasised only a few of these factors in explaining why they adopted the indirect rule system. While they stressed the relevance of shortage of funds, inadequate manpower and communication, they maintained a different set of political or administrative considerations. For instance, they stressed that indirect rule was adopted in order to protect and preserve Nigerian indigenous institutions; that it was a means of helping the people to rule themselves while the British officials acted as advisers; and that it was a means for preparing Nigerians (and Africans) for eventual self-government. These explanations are clearly faulty and distort the situation. They can only be seen as excuses offered after the event in order to justify the policy which Nigerian nationalists were very critical of. For instance, since the colonial authorities appointed the rulers, these same rulers were under them not only in terms of structure of authority but also in terms of source of power. Also, the colonial authorities defined the laws under which indirect rule operated and all rulers had to obey such laws. Again, the colonial officers gave 'advice' which traditional rulers could not reject or even amend. Such advice were clearly commands and those who gave them were obvious masters of the

rulers who had to implement the so-called advice. Similarly, it is a well known fact that the British were interested only in those traditional institutions which they found relevant to strengthening their hold on Nigeria. Therefore, it is difficult to accept the view that indirect rule was for the preservation of indigenous institutions and culture.

In general, it is clear that indirect rule was a child of necessity. That is, the colonial authorities adopted it in order to overcome the political, administrative, manpower and financial constraints they faced in Nigeria. This is why it is right to conclude that indirect rule was adopted as a way of consolidating British rule in Nigeria. It was a continuation of British conquest of Nigeria by other means. The recognition of this fact made a Nigerian nationalist to declare with some justification that indirect rule was a camouflage of British autocracy in Nigeria. This view will be more fully understood after our examination of the workings of the indirect rule system in various parts of the country in the next chapter. Meanwhile, we shall turn to the economic measures that British colonial authorities used to strengthen their position in Nigeria in the early phase of their rule.

Economic measures

The economic arrangements served both economic and political purposes. They contributed to the consolidation of British rule in Nigeria. British authorities took quick steps to stabilise their economic penetration of Nigeria in the period up to 1914. This is not surprising when it is remembered that economic interest was at the core of the crises which ultimately led to the British invasion and occupation of Nigerian communities in the last years of the nineteenth century.

The trade link with Nigeria was intensified. It was expanded as Nigeria began to provide products for the Western world as allowed and directed by Britain. Export figures were high especially in the southern part of the country, where Britain had been for a longer time. The years between 1908 and 1910 experienced rapid growth in Nigeria's external trade in the southern parts. A similar phenomenal growth was experienced in the northern Nigeria area from 1910 onwards. This was largely because of the extension of the railway from Minna to Kano in 1911. For instance, whereas groundnuts export from the north was about 1,179 tons in 1910, it reached 19,288 in 1911. The meaning is clear, namely, that there was an increase in the exploitation of Nigerian raw materials as British rule was being consolidated in Nigeria in the early years of the twentieth century.

Internally, British rule provided an increased opportunity for trade among Nigerian peoples. Consequently, there was expansion in both internal and external trade.

Primarily to promote the exploitation of the resources of Nigeria, the colonial authorities gave early and fruitful attention to the construction of railways, roads, ports and harbours. For the same reason, postal and telecommunication services were also introduced. At another level, these means of communication were for promoting Britain's political control of Nigeria which was essential if economic exploitation was to succeed.

Railways were constructed to enable Britain tap the mineral and agricultural resources of the hinterland of Nigeria. Through the railways the products were carried from the centres of production or the nearest railway stations to the ports at the coast for shipment to London or any other British port. This is why all the railway lines ran in north-south routes. The Lagos line which reached Kano was constructed between 1907 and 1911 to help get the groundnuts from Kano to the coast. Similarly, in the same year 1911, the railway was extended from Zaria to Jos in order to carry the tin ore in that town. Also, with the discovery of coal at Enugu in 1911, an eastern line became a necessity.

Just as railways were built, so were roads. The roads served similar purposes as the railways except that they did not run to the coast. Instead, they ran to railway stations or the trading stations of European firms. Like the railways they facilitated British exploitation of the agricultural and mineral products of Nigeria. This is why roads ran both northsouthwards and eastwestwards. Indeed as at 1912, the southern Nigeria area road system had so developed that it was possible to travel by road from Asaba to Benin or from Udi to Onitsha.

Ports and harbours had similar rapid development such that by 1914 the Lagos harbour had been dredged to make it accessible to large vessels while work started on the Port Harcourt harbour in 1913. Post and telegraph services also had such rapid expansion that by 1904 places like Forcados, Bonny, Calabar, Eket and Benin were linked to Lagos by telegraph. Five years later (1909), it reached Ikot-Ekpene, Afikpo and Bende while Zungeru was linked to Lagos in 1910.

By 1914, the British had advanced in the introduction of portable form of money in Nigeria. Beginning with British silver coins which were introduced in 1886, by 1913 the West African Currency Board which was in charge of the matter issued coins in the denominations of 2/, 1/, 6d and 3d. In 1916 currency notes of 1pd, 10/ and 2/ denominations were issued.

There is no doubt that these measures had some positive impact on Nigerian communities. For example, improved means of transport meant greater commercial interaction among Nigerian peoples. It also meant faster movement among the people. However, these advantages were drastically reduced in importance by the adverse effects of the communication system. For example, the roads, railways and so on promoted the rapid and regular exploitation of Nigerian resources by Britain. In addition, the building of the roads and railways involved considerable exploitation of the labour of Nigerians who were forced to offer their services without pay. Again the railways and roads were not built to serve the interests of the people, hence most of the communities were quite often unable to gain the so-called blessings of the roads and railways. We can thus see that the economic activities of the colonial authorities in the early phase of British rule, were like the amalgamation, another way of consolidating British rule in Nigeria in the period up to about 1914. This means that the British used the early phase of their rule to engage in political, administrative, economic and social policies that enhanced their control of the country.

Summary

1. By 1900 most of Nigeria had come under British occupation. Britain faced some problems in trying to administer Nigeria. Among them were:
 - a) communication
 - b) shortage of funds
 - c) inadequate manpower
 - d) continuing opposition by the people to British presence
3. The violent measures consisted of military and police actions against opposition groups. That is, the administration relied on military support to plant their rule in Nigeria.
4. The colonial authorities claimed that they only used force for imposing law and order in Nigerian communities. They called their action 'pacification'.
5. In reality 'pacification' was the continuation of the military aspect of British occupation of Nigeria.
6. Several Nigerian communities were victims of the so-called 'pacification'. They included Satiru in 1906 and most of Igbo-land such as Afikpo (1903), Ahiara (1905), and west Niger Igbo territory where the Ekumeku Movement took place from 1898 to 1910.

7. Two features marked the non-violent aspect of the policy of 'pacification', namely, amalgamation and indirect rule.
8. Amalgamation took place in stages. The final one took place in 1914 when the Northern and Southern Protectorates were brought together under one administration.
9. The architect of amalgamation was Sir (later Lord) Frederick D. Lugard. He was first the High Commissioner for the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and then the Governor-General of the amalgamated Nigeria from 1 January, 1914.
10. The reasons for the amalgamation were both economic and political. Economically, the colonial administration wanted to use the revenue from the south for the overall development of the country; to prevent their reliance on grants from the Imperial Government for running the administration of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria; to save money by combining the work of certain departments and to coordinate the railway system. The main political reason for the amalgamation was to reduce or remove the unhealthy rivalry between colonial officers serving in the Northern and Southern Protectorates.
11. Amalgamation did not mean unification. The different administrative units continued. All departments were not amalgamated. The Governor-General was at the centre of the administration.
12. Some of the weaknesses of amalgamation were that it strengthened local differences among Nigerians and so did not promote unity; and it created some imbalance between the northern and southern areas of the country.
13. Indirect rule involved ruling Nigeria by using indigenous rulers and institutions. But the choice of how this could be achieved was the affair of the colonial authorities.
14. Under indirect rule, British officers were called 'advisers'. But this could be misleading because in actual fact their advice could neither be amended nor rejected by the rulers. Therefore, these advisers were the masters.
15. The British colonial authorities also embarked on economic activities to strengthen their presence and rule in Nigeria in the early phase. They built roads and railways as well as other means of communication; introduced new portable currency and intensified the trade link with Nigeria.
16. The British used both violent and non-violent means to operate in the early phase of their rule. Britain laid the social, economic and political foundations of her rule during the period. These foundations were to be further developed in subsequent years.

Questions

Essay

1. Examine the initial problems Britain faced in the administration of Nigeria.
2. a) What made the Amalgamation of 1914 in Nigeria necessary?
b) How was it carried out?
3. Discuss the short and long-term effects of the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914.
4. What were the objectives of the indirect rule system in Nigeria?

Multiple-choice

1. The colonial administration in Nigeria used the 'pacification' policy in order to
 - A. bring the blessings of government to the people
 - B. fight the anarchy in Nigerian communities
 - C. dislodge internal opposition to its rule
 - D. build roads and railways
2. The Satiru Rising took place in
 - A. 1910
 - B. 1901
 - C. 1903
 - D. 1906
3. The 1914 amalgamation in Nigeria was aimed at
 - A. creating an enlarged and dynamic Nigeria
 - B. satisfying Lugard's yearning for power
 - C. consolidating Britain's economic and political gains
 - D. laying the foundations of Nigerian federalism
4. 1906 is important in Nigeria's administrative history because it was when
 - A. Britain resolved to rule the country
 - B. all Nigerian communities realised the futility of resistance
 - C. Lagos became part of the British empire
 - D. the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was created.
5. Indirect rule was adopted in Nigeria because
 - A. Britain detested direct rule

- B. Nigerian rulers desired it
- C. of the constraints of manpower and finance the colonial authorities faced
- D. there were emirates in northern Nigeria

Further reading

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Chapter 2 Political impact of colonial rule

Introduction

This chapter examines the political impact of colonial rule in Nigeria by focusing on two main themes, namely, the central administration and indirect rule. That is, examining the two main levels of political activity under colonial rule: the central and the local.

Central administration

As is well known, British occupation of various parts of the area took place at different times. Also, Nigeria as we know it now was not in existence then. The effect of these two factors on the establishment of British administration was that it was done in bits or instalments. Consequently, by 1900 and up to the end of 1913, there was no single administration in Nigeria. Instead, there were three separate administrations, as already stated in Chapter 1. Therefore, before 1914 Nigeria had no central administration. Central administration was one of the results of the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates on 1 January 1914. The reasons and extent of the amalgamation have already been discussed in Chapter 1. But arising from that discussion are a few points which need further attention in this chapter. Amalgamation was restricted in scope. That is, much of the work of government was still carried on by the respective Lieutenant Governors at Enugu and Kaduna. Many departments were not amalgamated till the 1930s. Indeed, only Lugard, the Governor-General, symbolised the centre. The Nigerian Council which was created did not include the north. All legislations were initiated from the centre. Governors were subordinate to the Governor-General who had to approve and integrate their budgets in the general budget of the country.

Lugard, in spite of the amalgamation, retained the boundary between the north and the south. He created two groups of provinces; the northern and the southern. The northern group was made up of twelve provinces while the southern had ten (including the Colony of Lagos). Each province was under the charge of an officer called the

Resident who was responsible to the Lieutenant Governor. Each province was made up of administrative areas called Divisions under the control of District Officers who were assisted by Assistant District Officers. The hierarchy of authority in each group of provinces was one in which the Governor was at the apex or peak of the structure, the Resident in the middle or second stage and the District or Assistant District Officer was at the lowest stage. Certain departments were under the direct control of the Governor-General (or the centre), namely, Railways (including the Colliery), the Military, Audit, Treasury, Post and Telegraph, Judicial and Legal, Land and Geological Survey. Directors of Medical and Sanitary Services; Forests; Railways and Works were appointed 'Advisers' to the Governor-General. Lieutenant Governors could have all or some of the following departments: Political, Medical, Public Works, Forestry, Agriculture, Education, Police, Prisons, and Mines. For southern Nigeria, Marine, Customs and Printing were included. It must be clear from all these that amalgamation, as stated in the earlier chapter, was implemented in such a way that local differences were emphasised and there was no attempt to use amalgamation to achieve political unity between the north and south.

Lugard left Nigeria in 1919 but the arrangements he made lasted in varying degrees throughout the colonial period. Thus, under his successor, Sir Hugh Clifford, during whose tenure Nigeria had the 1922 Constitution, the exclusion of the north from the Legislative Council which was created to replace the former Nigerian Council continued. There was no significant change in the powers and functions of the Central and Provincial Governments. Similarly the structure of administration initiated by Lugard continued. Even the reforms of Sir Donald Cameron who was Nigeria's governor from 1931-1935 could not change the arrangements Lugard made for the central administration. It is true that Cameron's administration was enthusiastic about getting the north and south closer than they had been previously. He also introduced significant judicial reforms especially the separation of the Executive from the Judiciary. But these measures did not affect the structure of administration introduced by Lugard.

Governor Bourdillon who succeeded Cameron also took a step which further strengthened the lack of emphasis on unity which had characterised the central administration. He created two groups of provinces out of southern Nigeria: the eastern group and the western. By the time of Arthur Richards (1943-1947), Regionalism was introduced so that there were three regional Houses of Assembly in Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu. From each Assembly, members of the Central Legislature were selected as follows: 9 for the north, 6 for the

west and 4 for the east. The Regions had a lot of power and the representatives from each Region in the Central Legislature came essentially as delegates seeking to achieve their respective regional interests. Thus, the Central Government was not representative of the whole country as such. What strengthened this was the fact that the Central Executive Council comprised mainly Europeans. The fact is that the emphasis on Regionalism or local interests which started with Lugard had not left the government at the central level. The Macpherson Constitution which came after Arthur Richards did not change the situation and by 1954 when the Lyttleton Constitution was introduced, it was clear that the Regions were to continue to retain more powers than the Central Government. This situation persisted up to 1960 when Nigeria became independent.

Observations: Central administration in Nigeria was organised in such a way that local differences were strengthened by the constitutional and administrative arrangements of the colonial period. Nigerians, especially as between the north and south, had little opportunity to interact in fashioning the affairs of their country. In fact, until the 1940s, the Central Legislature was mainly an affair of southerners. Though colonial rule did not create the differences among Nigerian peoples yet not much was done to reduce the impact of these differences on the political and socioeconomic life of the country. The net result was that various Nigerian leaders and peoples had little or no regard for national aspirations that ran counter to their respective group aspirations or interests. Central administration in colonial Nigeria in this sense was a force in the strengthening of parochialism in the development of the country. As is common knowledge, the failure to rise above parochial interests on the part of Nigerian leaders and peoples became a major legacy of colonial rule which adversely affected developments not only during the colonial period but also in the independence period. Thus, elections, political parties, revenue allocation, and other issues affecting the development of the country were most of the time tackled according to regional interests during and after colonial rule.

While this situation can rightly be explained in terms of the colonial impact, it is important to emphasise that the pluralism in the Nigerian society was so high that it could not be neglected by policy makers. This fact is clearer when it is recalled that from about the late 1940s, Nigerians began to play a prominent role in deciding the destiny of their country. Like the colonial officers, Nigerian leaders did not in any meaningful way oppose the administrative culture which had all along stressed the cultural and other differences in their country. This means that there were two sides to the problem of

central administration in Nigeria, namely, the external and the internal. Yet, it should be noted that the colonial administration accommodated and perpetuated the internal problems largely because they were not obstacles to the objectives of colonialism in Nigeria. It also stresses a fundamental fact about British rule in Nigeria: it was not designed to or aimed at building a viable and strong nation-state. The failure to do so has left the duty to Nigerians themselves. In doing so, it must be clear that structures and ideas set up during the colonial period would require considerable, or indeed radical, reforms in order to be relevant to nation-building.

Indirect rule in practice

In the last chapter, we examined why the British adopted the indirect rule system. The system served at the local government level and in the Nigerian context acquired fame in its application in northern Nigeria. Our concern here, however, is to discuss why and how indirect rule was practised in northern Nigeria, its extension to southern Nigeria, and its impact on Nigeria's development.

Indirect rule in northern Nigeria

Because of the preeminent position of Lugard in developing the theory and practice of indirect rule, there has been the tendency to argue that he introduced indirect rule in Nigeria only in the north. We need to note that every part of Nigeria experienced indirect rule almost as soon as British rule was imposed. Therefore, the best statement on the matter is that Lugard introduced and practised his own brand of indirect rule in northern Nigeria and the rest of the country. As the first High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, it was his responsibility to issue directives or proclamations on how to administer the territory. At the local government level or what was called 'Native Administration', Lugard decided to use the indirect rule system. In taking this decision, Lugard took a number of factors into consideration. These factors are thus the reasons why Lugard adopted the indirect rule system in the administration of northern Nigeria.

Why it was adopted in northern Nigeria

Generally, Lugard believed in the use of indigenous rulers in the

administration of colonial territories. He had had the experience in Uganda and India. Therefore, as the British political officer in charge of northern Nigeria, he decided to apply the system which relied on indigenous rulers in administering the territory. This means that one of the factors which led to the adoption of indirect rule in northern Nigeria was Lugard's decision to do so.

In the north, there were problems similar to those which faced the British political officers in the rest of Nigeria, namely, shortage of manpower, inadequate finance, poor communication, vastness of the territory and reluctance of the people to accept British rule. The circumstances which bred these problems have already been described in Chapter 1. The important thing to note is that these practical problems made it unavoidable for Lugard to stick to his decision to use the northern emirs in his administration. Therefore, Lugard's adoption of the indirect rule system in northern Nigeria was an answer to the practical problems his administration faced in the area.

Also, the social and political organisation of northern Nigeria made the possibility of indirect rule in the territory very real. In this sense therefore, the indigenous sociopolitical organisation in northern Nigeria was a factor that contributed to the adoption of indirect rule. But we must stress that it is not true to argue that it was the cause or reason for the adoption of indirect rule in the territory. After all, the system was also adopted elsewhere in Nigeria where similar sociopolitical organisation did not exist. All it did was that it strengthened Lugard's enthusiasm for indirect rule and facilitated its implementation in the area.

What then were the essential features of the indigenous social and political organisation which contributed to the adoption of indirect rule in northern Nigeria? Most of northern Nigeria, especially those parts that constituted the Sokoto caliphate, had a highly developed and efficient system of administration. The administration was centralised and the territory was broken into units called emirates. Each emirate was a provincial unit headed by an emir who was responsible to the head of the caliphate — the caliph. Thus, it was relatively easy for Lugard to identify the rulers he had to deal with. Also, there was a reasonably clear financial system with a tax policy called the *jangali*. The people accepted the authority of the emirates and emirs to impose this tax. Similarly, there was a well-established judicial system based on the *Sharia* and utilising *alkali* courts. As we shall see later in this section, these elements in the indigenous social and political organisation of northern Nigeria were in relative terms conducive for the practice of indirect rule. Lugard, therefore, had no reservation in adopting the system in northern Nigeria.

The workings of indirect rule in northern Nigeria

Lugard issued three proclamations in order to give legal backing to indirect rule in northern Nigeria. They were the Native Courts Proclamation of 1900, the Native Revenue Proclamation of 1906 and the Native Authority (enforcement) Proclamation of 1907. A detailed historical account of how these proclamations came about is unnecessary. What we need to know is that the proclamations had provisions which determined the structure of authority and other elements in the workings of indirect rule in northern Nigeria.

Northern Nigeria as already stated in Chapter 1, was divided into provinces made up of divisions. The divisions were the equivalents of emirates, and constituted the unit of local administration. District Officers who were accountable to the Residents (heads of provinces) were in charge of the divisions. However, emirs were appointed Native Authorities in respective emirates or divisions. In areas outside the caliphate village elders or chiefs of various grades were appointed Native Authorities. As the Native Authority, he owed his position to the British who gave him a staff of office as a symbol of his authority. An emir or village elder who was appointed the Native Authority became the head of the local government (otherwise called Native Authority Area) and was responsible for the Native Courts, collection of tax and the development of projects in his area.

Native Authorities had considerable powers though when compared to the situation before British rule, these powers were seriously limited. For example, the Native Authority for all practical purposes was subordinate to the District Officer and other European political officers. This fact was realised by both the Native Authorities and the people. Also, the laws which guided the actions of Native Authorities were those approved by the colonial administration.

Despite this limitation, the Native Authority still enjoyed more powers than the rest of the populace under the indirect rule system. He was closely associated with the administration of justice. For example, he was the President of the Native Court in his area of jurisdiction. In some cases, the representatives or appointees (agents) of the Native Authority acted as the President of the Native Court. Native Authorities also had their own *yan doka* or police to enforce law and order. In general, though ultimate power lay with the British political officers (Residents and District Officers), the emirs and other rulers who served as Native Authorities in northern Nigeria under the indirect rule system had a 'measure of recognisable power' and consequently were most of the time, able to retain the respect of their people.

Furthermore, the protocol associated with indirect rule required British officers, notably, the Residents, District Officers and the Assistant District Officers, not to issue instructions directly to the citizens. That is, all instructions from the colonial authorities to the people were to be passed on through the Native Authorities. The point is that the system was operated in such a way that it looked as if the indigenous rulers were in control of the affairs of their areas of jurisdiction while the British political officers served more or less as 'advisers'.

Native Courts graded A, B, C and D were established. The grade A courts were at the headquarters of each Native Authority Area. All courts administered native law (or Islamic Law) within the limits allowed by the Native Courts Proclamation. Thus, under indirect rule, certain aspects of indigenous law were not approved by the British and so were discarded. This statement, however, needs some qualification: while those aspects were discarded in the administration of justice through the Native Courts, they were still utilised outside those courts by the same judges who in the latter instance operated according to indigenous law. Emirs, their alikis, and district heads were the leading figures in the administration of law in the various grades of Native Courts. British political officers acted as supervisors and advisers of these courts.

The other important institution connected with the workings of the indirect rule system or what is also referred to as the Native Authority system in northern Nigeria was the native treasury. Emirs or Native Authorities and their traditional officers collected taxes in their areas of jurisdiction. Part of the money collected was paid into the colonial treasury while some went to the emir's treasury for the payment of salaries as well as for promoting social and economic development. British political officers and other clerks trained for the purpose prepared annual budgets showing expected income and expenditure. So, under the indirect rule system, an accounting system was developed.

The workings of indirect rule in southern Nigeria

It used to be held that indirect rule was not introduced or practised in southern Nigeria before 1914, when the amalgamation of the north and south took place. However, scholars have already shown that this view is untrue. The fact is that the respective British officers who took charge of the eastern and western provinces of southern Nigeria recognised the importance of indigenous rulers in administration. Consequently, in both the east and west, indirect rule was practised

before 1914. What happened in southern Nigeria from 1914 was that as a result of the amalgamation, Lugard who became the Governor-General extended the northern system (or his own brand of indirect rule) to the area. It is this extension as well as the reforms which it brought about that led some into the erroneous belief that indirect rule entered the south from the north. Also, Lugard contributed to this erroneous thinking because in trying to justify the need for the extension of the northern system to the south, he declared that what existed in the south was not indirect rule. He was definitely wrong in this opinion. To make the issue clearer, we will break it into two, namely, the situation in western Nigeria (especially Yorubaland) and the situation in eastern Nigeria (especially Igboland).

Situation in western Nigeria

Western Nigeria which included Yorubaland, Urhobo, Itsekiri, western Ijo, Edo, Ishan, western Igbo and the rest of what now constitutes the Bendel State of Nigeria came under British rule in the last decade of the nineteenth century. As the British began to administer the area, they experienced manpower shortage and other problems which they faced elsewhere in Nigeria. By 1901, therefore, the necessity for indirect rule had been recognised by the colonial authorities in western Nigeria. In fact, by the Native Councils Ordinance of 1901 the indirect rule system which had been based on a 'conciliar' system had a legal backing and became more neatly structured. The ordinance provided for provincial, district, town and village councils. Previously the Resident was the president of the council. That role became the responsibility of paramount chiefs. To ensure effectiveness, the colonial administration stressed that an important aspect of indirect rule in Yorubaland was the strengthening of the position of the paramount chiefs, notably, the Alaafin of Oyo, the Awujale of Ijebu Ode, the Alake of Abeokuta, and the Osemawe of Ondo. The councils performed legislative, executive and judicial functions. They made rules on subjects like the administration of justice, road-making, trade, agriculture and sanitation. They ensured that the rules were enforced. At the judicial level, they dealt with land and murder cases and served as courts of appeal in certain cases.

These were the main features of indirect rule in Yorubaland in the years before 1914. Similar features existed in the rest of western Nigeria in the same period. It should be noted that the indirect rule system in Yorubaland and the rest of western Nigeria prior to 1914 was different in structure to that practised in northern Nigeria in the same period. Therefore, when Lugard became Governor-General in

1914, he naturally wanted to extend the northern system which he had developed and which he also considered the ideal or right system to southern Nigeria.

Three legal proclamations, namely, the Native Courts Ordinance, the Native Authority Ordinance and the Native Treasury Ordinance were issued by Lugard between 1914 and 1916 as the bases for extending the northern or Lugardian version of indirect rule to



Frederick Lugard

Yorubaland and the rest of southern Nigeria. The provisions of these ordinances were broadly similar to those of similar ordinances issued in northern Nigeria before 1914. In brief, Native Authorities were established. The attempt was to create traditional rulers or Native Authorities with similar powers, and enjoying the same loyalty from their people as the emirs of the north. The usual four grades of Native Courts were established, with the traditional rulers or Native Authorities as presidents. As in the north, Native Authorities, were, however, subordinate to the administrative officers or political officers, namely, the Residents and District or Assistant District Officers. Native Treasuries were also established and managed along the same lines as the ones in the north. For instance, direct taxation was introduced.

The attempt to impose the northern system of indirect rule on Yorubaland affected the workings of indirect rule in the area. In the first place, Yoruba obas did not command the type of instant loyalty which the emirs of the north had from the citizens. The people soon began to accuse the Native Authorities of authoritarianism. Also, the introduction of taxation was not well received by the Yoruba. Furthermore, in some parts of Yorubaland, notably, Egbaland, the educated elite opposed indirect rule. This led to protests against the system. We can thus see that the Lugardian system of indirect rule led to considerable tension in Yorubaland. In fact, comparable tension accompanied its implementation elsewhere in western Nigeria, especially Warri where anti-tax riots took place in 1927 and Benin where the system did not adhere strictly to tradition in the appointment of Native Authorities. Despite these tensions the Lugardian structure of indirect rule persisted in western Nigeria from 1914 to the 1930s and 1940s, though with necessary modifications.

Situation in eastern Nigeria

Indirect rule was practised in eastern Nigeria before 1914. In fact, right from 1891 the colonial authorities began to use indigenous rulers or people whom they believed were such in the administration of eastern Nigeria which included the Igbo, the Efik, Ibibio and Ijo. The persons concerned were given warrants by the authorities and were thus called the Warrant Chiefs. By 1900 a proclamation gave legal backing to the indirect rule system which was referred to as the Native Court system. The fact was that the proclamation provided for Native Court Areas as the unit of indirect rule. Two categories of Native Courts were provided for. There were those presided over by a Native Authority which were called Minor Courts. The second were

those presided over by a European officer and were called Native Councils. In keeping with the provisions of the proclamation and subsequent amendments to it between 1901 and 1906, the two types of Native Courts continued to form the bases of indirect rule in eastern Nigeria in the years before 1914.

Other characteristics of the Native Court or the Warrant Chief system should be noted. Native Councils with European presidents were higher in status than Minor Courts which normally had jurisdiction in matters in which the parties concerned were indigenous. Native Councils were all located at district headquarters. Membership of both types of courts depended on the notes of authority or warrants given to members by the High Commissioner. All Native Courts were made subject to the orders of the Supreme Court which could amend, dismiss or uphold their decisions. Each Native Court had a clerk who recorded its proceedings. Each also had a treasury and generated revenue from fees and fines. Each Native Court saw to the development work in its area of jurisdiction. For example, by means of the local treasuries Native Court houses were built, roads were constructed, rest houses were built and maintained and salaries or 'rewards' were paid to Warrant Chiefs. These then were the main features of the indirect rule or Native Court or Warrant Chief system in Igboland and the rest of eastern Nigeria before 1914.

As with western Nigeria, however, Lugard was not satisfied with the system as it existed. His major criticisms of the Warrant Chief system were that he considered it different from or indeed inferior to the system practised in northern Nigeria. Second, he condemned the arrangement which made political officers presidents of Native Courts; denounced the fact that appeals were from Native Courts to the British Courts and complained about the absence of direct taxation which could strengthen Native Treasuries. He also criticised the system because it was not based on 'paramount chiefs'. Generally Lugard was of the view that the indirect rule system in Igboland and the rest of eastern Nigeria deserved to be brought in line with what obtained in the north.

A similar conclusion was reached by him on the system in western Nigeria. The result was that the three ordinances of 1914 to 1916, namely, Native Courts Ordinance, Native Authority Ordinance and the Native Revenue Ordinance whose provisions introduced the northern system into western Nigeria were also applied to eastern Nigeria. Overall, the Lugardian system from 1914 onwards attempted to create Native Authorities or Paramount Chiefs; sought to establish Native Treasuries with revenue derived mainly from direct taxation; and to separate the executive from the judiciary by discard-

ing the arrangement which enabled political officers to serve as presidents of Native Courts.

Some of these measures were difficult to implement given the social and political organisation of the Igbo, Efik, and other groups in eastern Nigeria. For example, sole Native Authorities were virtually absent in the area since there were no real equivalent of the emirs and obas there. The colonial authorities as a result attempted to create such chiefs and in the process offended the people's conception of power. The chiefs so appointed in the attempt to drum up the kind of authority their new positions gave them became authoritarian and repressive. Many of them were also corrupt. The result was that the people became disenchanted with the Lugardian system of indirect rule. However, up to 1919 when Lugard was still in the service of Nigeria, the disenchantment was not so openly expressed.

Thereafter, there was a difference. Open protest followed particularly in the late 1920s when it was believed that the Lugardian system of indirect rule was being utilised for a census that would extend direct taxation to women. This was the background to the well known Women's War (erroneously called Aba Women's Riot) of 1929 in eastern Nigeria. The Women's War ended the Warrant Chief system in eastern Nigeria. But the institutions of indirect rule which Lugard strengthened, namely, Native Authorities, Native Courts and Native Treasuries remained up to the end of the 1940s though their operations were subject to significant modifications. Therefore, as was the case in western Nigeria, the indirect rule system in eastern Nigeria was much patterned after the northern system from 1914 onwards and this caused considerable tension as well. A major consequence of the tension was the Women's War of 1929 and the collapse of the Warrant Chief system in the area.

Impact of indirect rule

For the colonial authorities, indirect rule served a very useful purpose. It helped them to rule Nigeria at reduced costs and to rely on the cooperation of the traditional ruling elite to contain the people's continued opposition to British rule.

It has also been stated that indirect rule made it possible for some aspects of indigenous institutions to be preserved and integrated with the system of government introduced by the British.

Furthermore, it is asserted that indirect rule prepared the Native Authorities for the subsequent role they came to play in the development of the local government system that came with colonial rule.

In this way, they were preserved for modern Nigeria.

It is also added that indirect rule provided opportunity for indigenous rulers and their people to contribute to the provision of social and economic amenities in their land during the colonial period even though what was provided was far below what was expected.

These are some of the points raised in favour of indirect rule. Clearly they are controversial. But there is no necessity for such a controversy or debate here. Instead, we will now identify the major criticisms of indirect rule. These criticisms constitute the negative aspects of the impact of indirect rule.

Indirect rule was a system of divide and rule which left both short and long term divisions in Nigeria. Its emphasis on tradition and local differences stiffened group differences to a point in which integration of these groups became a major obstacle to development. In a nutshell, it planted or nurtured seeds of disunity among Nigerian peoples or groups.

The way indirect rule operated made it almost impossible for the Western educated elite to have any substantial role in the development of the country. In the short run, this meant that indirect rule was an obstacle to the movement for self-government or independence since it barred the leaders of such movement from participating in the administration. In the long run, this left a legacy of unhealthy rivalry between the traditional ruling elite and the educated elite with adverse consequences for Nigerian development during and after colonial rule.

Furthermore, indirect rule did not encourage social and economic development. Instead it facilitated the colonial exploitation of the economic potentials of the Nigerian peoples. In this way it was a system of underdevelopment. It distorted the political culture of Nigerians by giving them the false impression that they were still operating their traditional political organisation when in fact colonial rule was removing that organisation. The result has been that Nigerian leaders and peoples have been trying to make their own what in fact is a foreign political system.

There is also the point that the application of indirect rule in northern Nigeria was so unrealistic that it did not insist on the development of Western education in the area despite the barriers posed by Islam. The argument here is that the British had the necessary force to encourage Western education in the area. But on the pretext of principles associated with indirect rule this was not done. This was how the educational imbalance between the north and south began with implications that have not been helpful to national integration.

In conclusion, indirect rule in Nigeria was a mixed blessing for

the people. In fact, the colonial authorities gained more from it than the people did. Generally, at both the central and local levels of political activity, the measures taken by the colonial authorities were not helpful to the evolution of positive political culture in Nigeria.

Summary

1. The administration of Nigeria under colonial rule operated on two levels, namely, the central and the local.
2. Central administration developed piecemeal because various parts of the country were occupied at different times and also because the parts did not constitute one country.
3. Central administration began in 1914 because of the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by Sir (Lord) F D Lugard.
4. Amalgamation did not bring about much unity because
 - a) respective Lieutenant Governors continued to rule their areas of jurisdiction as they had done previously;
 - b) many departments were not amalgamated;
 - c) only the Governor-General symbolised the centre;
 - d) two groups of provinces, namely, the northern and the southern were created, each running almost autonomously.
5. Lugard's successors did not change this situation and in 1939, Bourdillon divided the southern provinces into the western and eastern groups of provinces.
6. By 1946, Arthur Richards, formally made the three provinces into three Regions - northern, eastern and western - each with very strong powers.
7. Even though the Richards Constitution created a Central Legislature, members were delegates from Regional Assemblies. As delegates they worked for their respective regional interests at the expense of the whole nation.
8. Central administration in Nigeria under colonial rule left a strong divisive influence on the country because it strengthened an administrative arrangement that encouraged regional interests. The result was that during and after colonial rule, Nigerian leaders and peoples, were sharply divided over issues affecting their country. Some of the issues were elections, revenue allocation, and party politics.
9. Indirect rule was a system of local government during the colonial period. It was believed that the British colonial au-

- thorities were ruling the people through their own rulers and institutions.
10. Lugard, as British High Commissioner of northern Nigeria introduced indirect rule in that part of the country.
 11. The reasons for adopting indirect rule in northern Nigeria were:
 - a) Lugard's decision to do so;
 - b) shortage of funds, inadequate manpower and communication handicap;
 - c) the colonial authority's desire to get the people's cooperation;
 - d) the fact that the social and political organisation of northern Nigeria was suitable for the system.
 12. The unit of administration under indirect rule was the Native Authority Area which corresponded to the area of the respective emirates in the caliphate.
 13. Native Authorities, Native Treasuries and Native Courts were the three pillars of the indirect rule system.
 14. Native Authorities exercised wide ranging powers though they were subordinate to the District or Assistant District Officers.
 15. Native Authorities remained in office as long as they cooperated with the political officers.
 16. Native Authorities raised money from taxes and other fees. Part of the money was paid to the colonial treasury while some was used to run the administration in the Native Authority Area
 17. At Lugard's insistence, indirect rule was extended to the south as from 1914. But before then respective colonial officers had practised their own forms of indirect rule in the south.
 18. Indirect rule as introduced by Lugard faced serious problems in the south, particularly in the east where the new measures introduced by Lugard ran extremely counter to the social and political processes of the people.
 19. Despite the problems which faced the practice of indirect rule in the south, the system still helped the British colonial administrators to get the cooperation of the traditional rulers.
 20. Indirect rule, however, had a number of adverse effects on Nigeria's development:
 - a) it strengthened local differences;
 - b) it helped the British to impose their rule on Nigerians by a process of divide and rule;
 - c) it was an obstacle to self-government because the edu-

- cated elites were not allowed to participate;
- d) it did not promote social and economic development;
- e) it distorted the peoples' political culture by making them see as theirs a system which was clearly foreign.

Questions

Essay

1. Discuss the organisation of central administration in Nigeria between 1914 and 1923.
2. Examine the impact of central administration on Nigeria under colonial rule.
3. a) Why was indirect rule adopted in northern Nigeria?
b) Examine the workings in the area of indirect rule.
4. Discuss the application of the indirect rule system in southern Nigeria
5. Analyse the significance of indirect rule in Nigeria's development.

Multiple-choice

1. Central administration in colonial Nigeria started in
 - A. 1900
 - B. 1906
 - C. 1913
 - D. 1914
 - E. 1906
2. Which of the following departments was centrally controlled in Nigeria as from 1914?
 - A. Treasury
 - B. Public works
 - C. Police
 - D. Education
 - E. Agriculture
3. Only one of these was never in charge of Central administration in colonial Nigeria.
 - A. F D Lugard
 - B. Hugh Clifford
 - C. Lord Selborne
 - D. Donald Cameron
 - E. Arthur Richards

4. The adoption of the indirect rule system in northern Nigeria was a function of
 - A. Lugard's usual admiration for indigenous institutions
 - B. British desire to preserve the authority of indigenous rulers
 - C. The colonial administration's response to manpower, financial and other constraints
 - D. The realisation that direct rule was alien to the people
 - E. The colonial administration's commitment to the people's welfare
5. Lugard was critical of the indirect rule system in southern Nigeria prior to 1914 because he
 - A. was used to the northern Nigeria system
 - B. wanted emirate system to be extended to the south
 - C. wanted to introduce law and order in the south
 - D. believed that the northern system was superior to what obtained in the south
 - E. needed revenue from Native Treasuries
6. A major problem in the workings of the indirect rule in eastern Nigeria after 1914 was the
 - A. lawlessness of the communities
 - B. absence of strong monarchies or central leaders with control over wide areas
 - C. restlessness of the women
 - D. peoples' antipathy to central control
 - E. short sightedness of the District Officers

Further reading

Ikime, Obaro, (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann, 1980.

Isichei, Elizabeth, *A History of Nigeria*, Longman, 1983.

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Chapter 3 Economic and social impacts of colonial rule

Introduction

The last chapter examined the political impact of colonial rule. This chapter examines the social and economic aspects of the rule. At the economic level, it focuses on agriculture, industries and commerce, and indicates how colonial economic measures contributed to Nigeria's underdevelopment. The social aspect examines the agencies of social change, notably, Western education, the rise of urban centres, and health facilities.

Economic development

Agriculture

Both before and after 1914 British interest in agricultural development in Nigeria was for the raw material resource which it provided for British manufacturing industries. Despite this crucial interest, there was no real programme for the development of agriculture by the colonial authorities for most of the colonial period. And, even when some kind of programme was haphazardly introduced after the Second World War, the aim was still to encourage Nigerians to produce those crops (the so-called cash or export crops) needed by European industries. In other words, agricultural policy was not aimed at improving crops which had internal or domestic value. These crops needed for internal consumption or for inter- and intra-group trade were designated food crops by the colonial authorities and were not developed except during the Second World War years when the authorities needed some of the products (notably rice) for their own consumption. As it therefore developed, agriculture under colonial rule was to service colonial needs. This was why respective parts of Nigeria came to specialise in the production of certain so-called cash crops (or exports crops). Palm oil and kernel were predominant in parts of eastern Nigeria; cocoa in western Nigeria;

rubber in mid-western Nigeria; groundnuts, cotton and shea products in northern Nigeria. Worthy of mention were the hides and skins from northern Nigeria also.

Nigerians were forced to give almost desperate attention to the production of these crops because British rule created a lot of social and economic demands on the people (like education and taxation) which could only be met by using the new currency that came with British rule. In other words, marketing conditions placed more emphasis and greater value on these crops than the people's food crops. Large quantities of these crops were, therefore, supplied by Nigerians to European firms at prices which in some cases appeared reasonable but which in actual fact were virtually imposed on the people. The next point to note is that the techniques and methods of agricultural production were not improved by the colonial administration. By the end of colonial rule, Nigerians in general still depended on the precolonial methods and techniques in agricultural production. Thus, though from the late 1930s efforts were made to introduce some 'modern' methods and techniques of agricultural production in some parts of Nigeria (including the schools where demonstration farms were established), what was done showed that the authorities did not want any significant improvement on the pre-existing situation. The agricultural policy in colonial Nigeria was primarily designed to serve the needs of Britain.

Commerce

Commercial policy under British rule was, like agriculture, directed towards promoting export trade. That is, it was designed to encourage Nigerians to sell their raw materials in terms of agricultural and mineral products to European firms. Consequently, the communication and market networks were such that enabled the Europeans to get the respective products which they needed for their own manufacturing industries. Roads, railways, airports and other means of communication were directed to the centres of these products. In this way these means of communication were arteries of commercial exploitation by the colonial authorities. Similarly, the market centres which developed along the railways, roads and at the harbours were centres for the exploitation of Nigerian products by agents of British and other European firms. In fact, some interior markets developed in response to the presence of European commercial firms or as expansions of pre-British market centres in response to the same presence. Whichever was the case, the effect and or role of such

markets remained the same, namely, to serve as collection centres of Nigerian raw materials by European firms. Commercial penetration was thus accompanied by the increased penetration of British currency into Nigerian communities. Both then and later, Nigeria's commercial and fiscal development came to depend very much on British or overall European trading and economic terms and situation.

Though Nigerians made money from the trade of the colonial period, it was the government of the territory which reaped much revenue from it to maintain itself and sustain colonial rule while sending surpluses to the Imperial Treasury or European banks as so-called reserves.

Industries

As in other aspects of economic development, the industrial policy of the colonial administration was aimed at serving the economic interests of Britain and not that of Nigeria. This is why the only type of industrial activity was the extracting industry. That is, only industries that helped the British companies and government to extract or take away Nigerian products were started. Manufacturing industries that would produce commodities that could compete with those manufactured in Britain and the rest of Europe were not encouraged. This was particularly the case in the years up to the end of the Second World War.

The result was that mining was the major industrial activity of colonial Nigeria. Even this was restricted to products that were needed by Britain. One of them was tin ore which was located on the Jos Plateau. After the survey of the area in 1902, the expatriate mining of tin ore began in 1904 despite the resistance offered by the people. From then onwards, the British extracted large quantities of tin ore from the Jos Plateau such that by 1938 Nigeria's export of tin ore to Britain stood at 10,486 tons which was valued at £1,435,157. It rose to 11,164 tons in 1951-52 and 11,942 tons in 1952-53. Coal mining was also undertaken at Enugu as from 1911. Coal was used to fuel machinery at the Jos tinmines and steamers on Nigerian waters as well as steamships on West African ports. However, most of the coal was bought by the Nigerian railways. Part of it was sold to mining or trading firms while some were exported to Ghana. Indeed, by 1953, the volume of coal produced in Nigeria stood at 614,239 tons.

There were, of course, other minerals. They include columbite, wolfram, zinc, gold, lead, and tantalite. Petroleum which became the leading mineral was not discovered in commercial quantity until

1956. Its importance therefore was not fully recognised by the colonial authorities until after Nigeria's independence.

Generally, the technology applied in the mining centres was that introduced by the British. Indigenous technology was discarded. The people's land was appropriated either by direct force or by craftily influencing their leaders or some other local hands. Labour was either not paid for or very little payment was made. There was no effort to let the people know the use the mineral products were put to. The process of selling was also only known to the foreigner. Overall, the mining industry was a good example of the colonial administration's skill in exploiting Nigerian resources.

Assessment of colonial economic policy

It is often stated that economic development under colonial rule brought some advantages to Nigeria. Among the so-called advantages was the promotion of inter-group social, economic and political relations through measures like road, rail and port development. It is also argued that the introduction of a new portable currency facilitated trade among Nigerians.

Another of the so-called advantages was the creation of a wage earning class due to the labour demands of mining and other establishments, brought about by colonial rule. It is stressed that colonial economic measures led to the expansion of urban centres and of commerce in the country. Finally, attention is drawn to the fact that colonial rule widened Nigeria's economic relations with the rest of the world.

In some sense, these claims are true but they must be seen in a proper context. That is, we must understand them as unavoidable results of British economic policy which was clearly designed to promote the economic interests and ambitions of Britain. This is why despite these so-called economic advantages, we insist that it is more accurate to assert that British economic policy had one major result, namely, the underdevelopment of Nigeria. We only draw attention to some aspects of this underdevelopment in order to make the point clearer.

First, the railways and other means of communication made possible the evacuation of Nigerian products to Britain and other European countries on trade terms decided by the colonial authorities and, of course, to the disadvantage of Nigerian owners of the commodities. The fiscal value of such so-called exports was usually every high which shows that the fiscal or monetary loss which Nigeria

suffered was enormous. For example, the palm produce evacuated from Nigeria was about 66,000 tons in 1901; rose to 272,000 tons in 1921 and 497,000 tons in 1951. Palm oil alone fetched £981,330 for 110,243 tons in 1938. In the same year, 180,136 tons of groundnuts valued at £1,305,828 and 97,100 tons of cocoa valued at £1,305,828 were evacuated. The greater percentage of this revenue was either sent to the Imperial Treasury or overseas banks as reserves or used in servicing the colonial administration in terms of salaries, provision of infrastructures and so on.

Secondly, the British did not reinvest the large profits from the sale of Nigerian products (both agricultural and mineral) in the country. This set up a pattern of commercial relationship which helped to ensure that the British and other European firms always determined the flow of trade between the two countries. While Nigeria became poorer and thus, more dependent on the British merchants or firms, the commercial firms of Europe continued to grow richer. This marketing relationship resulted in the emergence of a Nigerian commercial elite that became mere instruments for the supply of Nigerian products to Europe and for distributing products from British and European manufacturing industries in Nigeria. This was an aspect of economic dependence which was built up by the colonial authorities to the continued disadvantage of Nigeria and her peoples.

Furthermore, the way industrial development was carried out prevented Nigerians from relying on their precolonial system of industrial technology for development. In fact, quite often indigenous systems of institutions of technology were outlawed by the colonial authorities. At the same time, Nigerians were not fully introduced to the essence of the technology that accompanied colonial rule. As a result, Nigerians lost out on both the indigenous and foreign systems. During and since after colonial rule, this underdevelopment of Nigeria's technical capacity constituted an obstacle to development. Clearly this is a negative impact of colonial economic policy and therefore a factor in Nigeria's underdevelopment.

In addition, there has been a low-level development of manufacturing industries such that Nigerian peoples and governments have had to depend on European experts and spare parts in most of the so-called industries in the country. The case of motor or vehicle assembly industries is typical of the situation being identified.

Finally, the colonial economic structure made it impossible for Nigerians to be the final source of initiative on Nigeria's economic problems. Instead, they became absorbed into an economic system in which they became mere agents of European economic institutions. In commerce, for example, commercial monopoly by Europe pushed

Nigerian merchants to a disadvantageous position and thus replaced them with European and Lebanese agents. Indigenous traders were displaced by European traders and their agents. Also, the trade relationship resulted in a situation in which Nigeria's fiscal system became attached to that of Europe such that during and after colonial rule, the value or actual worth of Nigerian money has had to be measured in relationship to that of European countries. This again has been a factor in Nigeria's underdevelopment.

In the light of the above, it must be clear that colonial rule in Nigeria left more of the legacy of economic underdevelopment than of development.

Social development

Western education

Western education was introduced in Nigeria by the Christian missionaries in 1842 when a mission school was opened at Badagry. Though the colonial government from the beginning appreciated the value of Western education, it did not do much to promote its development. Thus, as in the sphere of economic development, the colonial administration had no strong and well-meaning programme for the expansion of Western education in Nigeria. For example, Lugard's educational programme for northern Nigeria as from 1901 was one in which little encouragement was given to education. His aims according to him, were to strengthen the Islamic basis of the traditional emirate authorities and to protect the north from what he described as the 'corrupting influence' of the Western-educated indigenes of the Lagos colony and southern Nigeria. Going further, Lugard tried to segregate between the Muslim and non-Muslim areas in his view of educational development in northern Nigeria.

It must be noted that Lugard's failure to encourage and meaningfully invest in the development of Western education in the north was typical of the whole colonial attitude towards educational development in Nigeria. Thus, in all parts of Nigeria, the colonial authorities from 1914 to the 1950s, showed no enthusiasm for educational development. But for the north there was an additional restriction. Lugard and his successors did not allow the Christian missions to develop Western education in that part of the country. The result was that while the missions became the leaders of educational development in the country, their impact was most felt in the southern provinces. That is, colonial educational policy was such that

made the northern part of the country lag behind its southern counterpart.

It should be emphasised that government involvement in the development of Western education in the whole of Nigeria in the colonial period was very low indeed. In fact, until the 1950s when the eastern and western regional governments (under indigenous leaders) embarked on massive educational development, the number of Nigerians who received Western education as well as the institutions remained very low. Though the number was on the increase as the years went by, it remained very low in relation to the population.

Government's failure to champion the development of Western education was evident in other ways. She spent very little on education. For example in 1916 she spent £47,900 representing 1.3 per cent of total revenue on education. The percentage of total revenue spent on education in subsequent years was similarly low. It fell to 1.1 in 1919; rose to 1.7 in 1924-25 and the highest for the period up to 1945 was 4.5 in both 1934-35 and 1944-45. Another evidence is the disparity in the number of government schools and of mission schools. For instance, as at 1921, of the 1,574 primary schools in eastern Nigeria, only 20 were government-owned. Also in 1947, while 358,592 children in Lagos were in voluntary agency schools, only 26,040 were in government (including Native Authority) schools. This means that about two thirds of the pupils were in non-government schools.

Generally, the education policy of the colonial government was one in which the barest minimum of primary and secondary schools were built and in which government merely laid down standards for missionary and other private agency schools. Those who met such standards were given grants. In short, it was a policy of restricted direct involvement in the actual building and management of educational institutions.

The major consequence of government education policy was that the Christian missions in collaboration with the communities played a leading role in the development of education in Nigeria. At another level, it meant that government-owned schools were often at the urban centres and the administrative headquarters, leaving the larger section of the Nigerian population without access to educational institutions. Both situations affected the nature of educational development in some ways. The missions built schools to meet their primary aim, namely, to spread the gospel. Secondly, they built and managed schools according to the finance they could raise. Quite often not much was raised. These two factors affected the range of subjects as well as the number and quality of staff recruited. The subjects were usually writing, reading and arithmetic. The basic aim

was to train people who would be literate enough to assist the missions in the work of evangelisation. But with time, the aim included producing literate manpower for service in the clerical sections of the government service and the commercial firms. Furthermore, since the schools were insufficient for the population (especially in the urban centres of the south) a lot of private schools of questionable standard soon emerged. Attempts by government to close such schools were understandably resisted by the people. In the midst of these discouraging circumstances, it is not surprising that the school system was geared towards producing an elite or indeed literate class that would be subordinate to the colonial administration.

As is well known, it took some serious agitation by the Nigerian nationalists before the colonial government embarked on the building of Nigeria's first institution of Higher Education, namely, the Yaba Higher College in 1934. Entry and training conditions made the place very uninviting. In fact, the highest admission into the Yaba Higher College in its first ten years was thirty-six. Though the students spent much longer time in their training, they were awarded only diplomas and not degrees. Yaba Higher College remained Nigeria's highest centre of learning until 1948 when the University College, Ibadan, was opened. But even then, the two institutions were run on terms which made it impossible for most qualified Nigerians to gain admission. Quite a number of those who could not, went to England or America for their education.

So far, we have described the main features in educational development in Nigeria under colonial rule. It remains to discuss briefly the impact of that development.

Impact of Western education

First, Western education brought Nigerians of different backgrounds and cultures together. For instance, some of the earliest nationalists, notably, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief H O Davies were co-students at both the primary and secondary school levels in Lagos. The contact at school created for many of the students opportunities for lasting mutual relations which became helpful to nation building efforts. Under the colonial situation, it afforded them the chance to establish links which they exploited in later years as they engaged in the anti-colonial struggle.

Secondly, despite its weaknesses, the colonial education system created a literate group who later formed in varying degrees the vanguard of the anti-colonial movement in Nigeria.

Thirdly and quite similarly, it trained a corps of men and women

who were literate enough to engage in the clerical and other jobs that came with the British presence and rule. In this way, Western education contributed to the emergence of the working class elite who were later to play an important part in the labour movement in Nigeria. A notable person in this class is Chief Michael Imoudu.

Finally, the English language which was the medium of learning helped to promote communication among Nigerians of different cultures, and in this way contributed to the growth of mutual relations despite the crises which came from time to time.

Western education in colonial Nigeria was not without some unhealthy effects. There was the educational imbalance between the north and south due to the different applications of the educational policy to the two areas. Consequently as colonial rule drew on, the south in relation to the north began to dominate those sectors of national life where Western education was necessary. These included the civil service, the firms and education itself. The problems arising from this remain a serious source of distraction for national leaders and the people. That is, the nature of colonial education development left an unhealthy inequality between the northern and southern parts of the country.

Inequality was also noticeable even within the same zones. In other words, inequality as a result of Western education went beyond the north-south divide. For example, towns like Onitsha, Abeokuta, Lagos and Ijebu had far greater number of educated people by the 1930s than their immediate neighbours because of the difference in the pace of educational development. Also, some areas, for example, Ijebu embraced Western education with immense zeal. In the 1920s, school enrolment in Ijebu was seven times higher than in Oyo. Such inequalities became a problem in inter-group relations in various parts of the country. This was because those with early access to Western education tended in general to be at some advantage in occupying positions in the political, economic and social institutions of their areas. The 'late comers' have often seen this as evidence of domination. Both parties have also capitalised on the problem to promote tension in inter-group relations.

Western education contributed to the inequality in another way. Because of the nature of the colonial economy, only persons exposed to Western education could participate meaningfully in the commercial, banking, civil service and other structures of the nation. Consequently, those without training in Western education stood at the margin of the economic organisation and gained least from it.

There also emerged Westernised educated elite who in many senses could not see their country's problems except according to Western

ideas and methods. In various ways such elite tended to be neither Nigerian nor Western, displaying a confusion of ideas that was unhelpful to national development. Colonial education was basically responsible for the production of such an elite.

Finally, the nature of Western education under colonial rule produced mainly clerical and secretarial officers with an unquenchable thirst for 'office work'. Colonial education did not promote functional and vocational education as such most of the educated people were unable to contribute meaningfully to the technological and overall economic development of the country. In this sense, the nature of colonial education is a factor in Nigeria's underdevelopment. Western education did not put Nigerians in a position in which they could become the champions—on their own terms—of the nation's economic and social development.

It is therefore, right to conclude that despite its positive effects, colonial education policy was not planned to contribute to the social transformation of Nigerian communities.

Urbanisation

The rise of urban centres was an important factor of social life in colonial Nigeria. Before colonial rule, a number of urban centres existed in Nigeria, especially in the areas that make up northern and western Nigeria. Thus, some urban centres in colonial Nigeria were expansions of precolonial ones. Examples of these were Kano and Ibadan.

Some of these centres were completely new cities or towns due to various influences created by the colonial situation. Among them were Kaduna, Enugu, and Port Harcourt. Some new cities were primarily the result of settlement and migrations caused by administrative arrangements like the declaration of such places as administrative headquarters. Kaduna was indeed so established. Some towns, Kafanchan for example, developed in response to the railway. Railway stations gradually developed into important centres of migration as various peoples sought to engage in the commercial and other such opportunities which they provided. But some towns like Aba were predominantly commercial towns because they were centrally located along the railways and roads. Other towns gained their initial growth from the establishment of mining centres. Jos was a tin-mining town while Enugu had coal. Both towns later became administrative headquarters and so continued to grow. Some towns also started as ports because of good harbours. Port Harcourt was a good example.

Reasons for urban migration

Migration or movement from the rural to the urban centres was very fast. A number of reasons or circumstances were responsible for this. One was the fact that employment opportunities abounded more in the urban centres than in the rural areas. Since the towns had the commercial firms, banking institutions, civil service and other public service headquarters, they had more openings for paid employment.

The population growth in urban centres also created opportunities for self-employment for various people, notably, traders, artisans and craftsmen, hoteliers, tailors and others whose skills were needed by the urban population. Indeed, to feed and cater for the needs of this population, complex systems of trade and apprenticeship developed, thereby drawing more and more people from the rural areas to the urban centres.

All these indicate a major impact of the colonial economy on the rural areas. As it worked, most of the economic activity during the colonial period took place in the urban and semi-urban centres. It was easier to make quick money in such centres because of the opportunities they offered. Where previously, people engaged in agriculture in the rural areas for long term benefits, it was found that it was quicker and often less laborious to reap such benefits by engaging either in distributive trade or in paid employment. The promise of easier access to wealth in the urban centres was a great factor in the rise or expansion of urban life in Nigeria. Thus, as colonial rule progressed, the rural area became increasingly uninviting to those rural dwellers who were eager to gain more wealth in the new order. The result was an increasing growth in the migration of rural dwellers to the urban centres.

-Furthermore, government in keeping with the Township Ordinance of 1917 created a structure of first, second and third class townships. In that descending order social amenities like electricity, water and markets were provided. Lagos was the only first class town in 1919. There were eighteen second class towns (twelve in the north and six in the south). But by 1936 their number had been reduced to twelve (seven in the south and five in the north). Apart from some unclassified towns (which included Oyo), the remaining towns were rated third class. This classification of towns meant that some towns developed faster than others and indeed more intensively too. Despite the discriminatory policy of urban development, all urban centres in varying degrees were better catered for than the rural areas. Consequently, the quest for social amenities added to the promise of employment made many rural dwellers migrate to the urban centres.

Effects of urbanisation

A few positive effects of urbanisation in colonial Nigeria can be identified. Urban life brought Nigerians of different cultures and backgrounds together. They engaged in many mutually lucrative activities in the fields of commerce, industry and so on. In this sense, urbanisation was a source of national integration in Nigeria. This integration even included marital links. Lasting friendships were developed among urban dwellers of various ethnic backgrounds and these proved helpful to the integration efforts.

As in other aspects of social development during colonial rule, urbanisation had serious adverse effects on the Nigerian society. It is true it encouraged integration but at other times it left permanent division among Nigerians. This was because the rise of urban centres often involved the dislocation of the original owners of the land on which the urban city developed. The arrival and permanent settlement of non-indigenes in the urban centres meant that the owners of the land were required to make adjustments to their usual ideas about land use, and other property rights that would enable the 'immigrants' have a sense of belonging in the city. Their attitude to the same people would be such that they (the immigrants) would not feel discriminated against. In short, the indigenes were required to develop a 'cosmopolitan outlook' that often worked against their cherished interests and values. This demand was not easy to meet. Thus in many urban centres there were strangers quarters or sections. The tension which arose between indigenes and non-indigenes was to have lasting adverse effects on Nigeria's political culture both during and after colonial rule.

Also, rural urban migration left many rural areas very underdeveloped. Rural economic activity suffered decline and at times, outright neglect. Many of the rural youth migrated to the urban centres, thus impeding the development work of the rural communities.

As urban populations increased, the urban centres began to experience several manifestations of social tension, notably, unemployment, insufficient distribution of amenities (water, electricity and so on), increase in criminal activities and the emergence of cultures that were mere adulteration. In other words, urbanisation caused serious social disintegration in the Nigerian society.

Over time also, urbanisation resulted in the whittling down of family and extended-family ties. Due to harsh economic conditions urban residents began to resist the responsibilities usually associated with the family or extended-family ties. Many low income earners, for

example, merely had enough money to pay the various rents which urban life imposed on them and to take care of their immediate families. As a result, they paid little or no attention to the needs of members of their extended families. Clearly, urbanisation strengthened individualism at the expense of the community.

Urbanisation also encouraged the emergence and growth of institutions and practices that were totally alien to Nigeria. Such practices quite often had European or British origins and were therefore spread and consolidated in the urban centres of Nigeria. In other words, urban centres were avenues for receiving and consolidating European culture in Nigeria.

From all these, it is clear that urbanisation in colonial Nigeria had both positive and negative effects on the Nigerian society. The problems or indeed the hardship which urbanisation imposed on Nigerians did not attract any concerted programmes for their solution since the welfare of the people was not a priority of the colonial administration. The result for modern Nigeria is that problems associated with rural-urban migration have adversely affected efforts to achieve social transformation.

Health services

British colonial authorities in Nigeria also concerned themselves with the provision of health facilities especially hospitals, dispensaries, maternities, and clinics. But as in education and other spheres of socioeconomic development, the interest in the provision of such facilities was not for the welfare of the people. Therefore, government gave only very limited attention to the provision of the facilities.

The fact is that from the nineteenth century when the British and other Europeans came to Nigeria in various capacities as traders, missionaries and administrators, they were accompanied by health workers including medical doctors who took care of their health problems. Thus, even before the formal imposition of British rule in Nigeria, the need for providing health facilities to take care of the Europeans had been recognised. Such facilities were provided to the extent the Europeans needed them.

Under colonial rule, this official attitude to the provision of medical facilities did not change. Consequently, the Christian missions in collaboration with the communities began to engage in the provision of health facilities such as hospitals, dispensaries, maternities and clinics. The interest of the missions in provision of health facilities was two-fold. First, to take care of the health of missionaries. Second, to take care of the health of the converts. In a sense, the health-care

development was seen as part of the evangelisation process just as education was seen as such.

In 1895 only one hospital had been built at Abeokuta; it was the Sacred Heart Hospital built by the Roman Catholic Mission. It was in the same Abeokuta that Samuel Crowther built a dispensary in 1852. By 1917, there were 17 hospitals in Nigeria and by 1951 the number had risen to 157. As at 1960 when colonial rule ended, there were 306 hospitals, showing that hospital development was more rapid in the years of self-government than in the earlier period when the British colonial administrators predominated absolutely in the nation's development process.

The colonial government's poor performance in the development of health facilities imposed too much burden on the missions and communities. The provision of the amenities was too expensive for many missions and communities. As a result only very few were able to do so. Furthermore, the government concentrated her own contribution largely in the urban and semi-urban centres. Therefore, in addition to the low number of the hospitals, there was also the fact of uneven distribution. Added to this was the government's failure to invest early enough in the training of the necessary medical manpower in terms of doctors, nurses and others. Also, it took considerable time to complete the necessary preliminary education that would qualify people for such training. Even the training period was usually long and expensive. The net result was that there was a shortage of medical manpower in the different health institutions.

In many of these institutions, the workers were overburdened with far too many patients to attend to. Indeed, by 1960 there were only 1,079 registered medical doctors practising in Nigeria which had a population of between 50 and 60 million then. There were also only 306 hospitals and 20,000 beds. Given the population and size of Nigeria it is obvious that the state of the Nigerian medical service under colonial rule was grossly inadequate. In this connection it is important to note that the training of medical officers in Nigeria began only in the 1930s when the Yaba Higher College was built, to be joined fourteen years later (in 1948) by the University College, Ibadan. Though the opportunity of training in the United Kingdom was available both before and after the opening of the institutions at Yaba and Ibadan, only a few Nigerians could exploit this opportunity.

However, we must stress that the development of health services covered other areas as well. Vaccination and inoculation were provided for the control and prevention of diseases such as small pox, measles and leprosy. Health inspectors were also trained to oversee the sanitary conditions of the people. But these again were inad-

equate. One other fact needs to be stressed. It is the point that inadequate transportation also limited the performance of the officers in charge of the respective institutions and programmes which the colonial authorities introduced to promote health-care development. All these constitute the main characteristics of health-care development in colonial Nigeria.

Impact of health-care development

Like other aspects of social development, the colonial government's efforts were very inadequate and so the medicinal opportunities were not easily accessible to most of the people. Because of the uneven distribution of the institutions and manpower, many Nigerians were unable to benefit from the health programmes of the colonial government. Many Nigerians mainly in the rural areas but also in the urban centres, continued to depend on indigenous approaches to health-care with consequences that were often adverse to their health.

As a result of the shortage of manpower, institutions and drugs, many Nigerians began to engage in the health-care businesses operating as doctors and pharmacists without the necessary training. They received patronage from the rather desperate population who looked up in vain to the authorities for their health needs. The threat this situation posed to the people during colonial rule is still a problem for independent Nigeria.

Also since the technology behind the medical system brought by colonial rule lay in Europe, the colonial approach to health-care ensured that Nigeria did not acquire the capacity to really control the workings of the new system. Thus throughout the colonial period drugs were imported from Europe. Necessary medical machinery were also imported. In general, the health-care system under the colonial rule made Nigeria dependent on Britain and other European countries in health matters. This dependency has been an aspect of Nigeria's health-care development which has continued to act as a serious constraint on the efforts of Nigerian leaders since the 1950s.

All the same, it is true that Nigeria made some gains from colonial health-care development. The colonial authorities built hospitals and other institutions which contributed to the cure of some major diseases (like leprosy) which were almost incurable before colonial rule. They laid the foundations for the training of Nigeria's medical manpower. Preventive measures against endemic diseases (in the form of inoculation and vaccination) became a permanent positive result of the work.

In conclusion, we must stress that despite these gains which were

unavoidable, the colonial health-care development policy was unsatisfactory to the people. This provides a good example of the view that colonial rule did not care much for the social welfare of Nigerians.

Summary

1. To understand the economic and social impacts of the colonial rule in Nigeria, colonial policies as they affect agriculture, commerce, industries, Western education, urbanisation and health-care have to be examined. Generally, the policies show that British rule did not meaningfully develop any of these and instead exploited Nigeria.
2. Agriculture was encouraged mainly to provide raw materials which were called export or cash crops for European industries.
3. Other facts about agricultural development in colonial Nigeria include the following:
 - a) little or no attention was given to the planting of food crops;
 - b) the export of crops was done purely on British terms;
 - c) and the technology of agricultural production remained very much as it was before colonial rule.
4. Colonial Commercial policy turned Nigeria into a large market for the sale of European products. Other features of the commercial policy were:
 - a) Nigeria's involvement in commerce was limited to export trade;
 - b) internal marketing was not encouraged;
 - c) the internal markets which emerged were usually supply and distribution centres of European goods;
 - d) the commercial policy did not create a self-reliant commercial elite;
 - e) the commercial policy was such that the Nigerian economy became dependent on that of Britain;
 - f) the policy ultimately left Nigeria's market system to be dominated by outsiders, notably, the British and the Lebanese.
5. Industrial policy was also exploitative. Manufacturing industries were not established. Only industries that supplied raw materials to Britain were encouraged. Coal, tin, and columbite industries were good examples.
6. The industrial policy did not lay a solid foundation for Nigeria's industrial take-off.

7. Western education was developed primarily by the Christian missions.
8.
 - a) Western education was not encouraged in the northern part of the country. This was to create problems for national integration both during and after colonial rule.
 - b) The quality of the education was not the type that could produce the necessary manpower that could transform the social and economic conditions of Nigeria.
 - c) Functional and vocational education was not encouraged.
 - d) An educated elite with keen appetite for clerical work emerged.
 - e) A good number of the educated elite were alienated from their indigenous culture.
 - f) However, Western education produced men and women with various professional training who came to play crucial roles in the political, economic and social development of the country.
9. The rise of urban centres was an important aspect of social development in colonial Nigeria.
10. Urban migration was due mainly to
 - a) the poverty of the rural areas;
 - b) the employment opportunities of urban centres;
 - c) attraction urban centres offered because of the relative abundance of social amenities like electricity, pipe-borne water, health-care institutions.
11. Urbanisation caused problems such as
 - a) tension between the indigenes and the migrants;
 - b) high cost of living in terms of rents and so on;
 - c) the growth of individualism at the expense of kinship;
 - d) the rise of criminal activities due to the unemployment and other forms of hardship;
 - e) the underdevelopment of rural areas due to the exodus of many of the youths to the towns;
 - f) the consolidation of foreign culture as urban residents quite often queried the validity or relevance of indigenous cultures to modernisation;
 - g) rivalry between towns because colonial policy encouraged uneven and unequal conditions for urban development. Some towns were given more encouragement than others because they were placed in higher status or class for which they enjoyed preferential treatment in the allocation and development of social amenities.

12. a) Colonial contribution to the provision of health-care services was inadequate.
- b) Health-care facilities were unevenly distributed, concentrating more in the urban centres.
- c) Many rural areas had no hospitals.
- d) Generally, the health-care institutions were short of manpower, drugs and means of transportation.
- e) Scarcity of health-care facilities was the result of the colonial government's low interest in the matter especially before 1950.
- f) the inadequacy of health-care facilities forced many Nigerians to rely on indigenous medical system and ill-trained or indeed 'fake doctors' for their health needs.
13. Nevertheless colonial health-care policy had some positive effects on Nigeria, notably;
 - a) the building of health-care institutions – hospitals, maternities and clinics;
 - b) some incurable diseases like leprosy became curable;
 - c) foundations were laid for the training of medical manpower;
 - d) vaccination and inoculation were introduced to prevent the spread of endemic diseases.
14. Overall colonial achievement in health-care development was grossly inadequate. The people were not exposed to the basic technology which sustained the health-care system. Both during and after colonial rule, Nigeria had to depend on Britain and the rest of Europe for drugs, machinery and so on to sustain her health-care programmes. Therefore it is right to say that colonial rule did not care for the welfare of Nigerians.
15. In conclusion, the economic and social policies of the colonial authorities were not aimed at promoting the economic and social well-being of Nigerians. Whatever gains Nigerians made were just unavoidable.

Questions

Essay

1. Examine the pattern of agricultural and commercial development in colonial Nigeria.
2. How did the colonial authorities in Nigeria tackle industrial

- development between 1914 and 1960?
3. Discuss the main features of educational and health-care development in Nigeria under British rule.
 4. What were the causes and effects of urbanisation in colonial Nigeria.
 5. Outline the main features of social and economic developments in Nigeria between 1900 and 1960.

Multiple-choice

1. Agricultural policy in colonial Nigeria was designed to
 - A. raise the financial base of the country
 - B. make the country compete favourably in the world market
 - C. provide export crops for British industries
 - D. reduce the country's foreign debts
 - E. demonstrate Britain's concern for the development of its colonies
2. In colonial Nigeria, Kano became a major producer of
 - A. palm produce
 - B. cotton
 - C. cocoa
 - D. rubber
 - E. groundnuts
3. The Yaba Higher College was established in
 - A. 1924
 - B. 1934
 - C. 1944
 - D. 1914
 - E. 1954
4. The mining industry in colonial Nigeria was promoted in order to
 - A. enrich the country
 - B. diversify the economy
 - C. expand the railway system
 - D. exploit the country's mineral resources
 - E. create employment for the people
5. The Townships Ordinance of 1917 in Nigeria introduced
 - A. rural poverty in the country
 - B. three classes of townships
 - C. four classes of townships
 - D. compulsory development of urban centres in the north
 - E. none of the above

6. A major weakness of colonial health policy in Nigeria was
- A. the failure to control infectious diseases
 - B. the people's opposition to it
 - C. low development of relevant manpower
 - D. the abundance of endemic diseases
 - E. the distance between Britain and Nigeria

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Chapter 4 The decolonisation process before the Second World War

Introduction

Nigerians reacted to both the British conquest and the colonial policies. These reactions were later to take the form of nationalist movements calling for an end to the British rule. It was partly through these nationalist movements that the country eventually became independent in 1960.

The decolonisation process can be divided into two major phases. The first phase, highlighting activities before the Second World War, is discussed in this chapter. The second phase deals with the impact of the Second World War and the rapid changes which followed. This second phase will be examined in the next chapter.

Nationalism

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the term nationalism can have two meanings. The first is the 'love and pride in a country shown by its people'. The goal of every nation-state is to attain a stage where its people will be totally committed to it. The second is the 'desire by a racial group to form an independent country'. The goal of nationalism during the colonial era was to attain independence. Independence would enable Nigerians to govern themselves. In other words, nationalism was opposed to alien control. The late J S Coleman has explained the meaning of nationalism. He said that it 'includes sentiments, activities and organisational developments aimed explicitly at the self-government and independence of Nigeria as a nation-state existing on a basis of equality in an international state system'. He goes further to highlight its distinguishing features:

- a) the explicit goal of Nigerian self government;
- b) the concept of Nigerian unity;
- c) the predominance of Westernised elements in leadership groups;
- d) the development of permanent political associations to pursue

- nationalist objectives; and
- e) the predominance of modern political values and ideals.

Early resistance to British conquest

In Book Two, there are accounts on the role of such men as Jaja of Opobo, Nana of Itsekiri and Ovonranwen of Benin. There is also the history of the attack on Ijebu in 1892. What some of these indicate is that there was an opposition to the British conquest. This opposition constitutes the early phase of nationalism. A number of chiefs who knew that British rule would deprive them of their powers resisted British penetration. Some resisted to preserve cultural values or to halt the penetration of foreign traders into the hinterland. This resistance took many forms: non-cooperation with the British in trade; ill-treatment of British officials; and wars against British punitive expeditions. The British eventually succeeded in imposing colonial rule. British rule, in turn, further generated reactions that were later to end in the independence of Nigeria.

The growth of nationalism

Among the major factors responsible for the growth of nationalism in the country were:

- a) the nineteenth century origins;
- b) the colonial policies and elite discontent;
- c) economic depression in the 1920s and 1930s;
- d) the activities of the press;
- e) the activities of students;
- f) the emergence of political parties; and
- g) struggle by the masses.

Nineteenth century origins

We have mentioned the early resistance to British conquest during the nineteenth century. The examples of this provided inspirations to some nationalists. Of more significance were early thoughts on nationalism expressed during the century. Perhaps the greatest thinker of the period was Edward Wilmot Blyden, occasionally referred to as 'father of African nationalism'. Blyden's ideal influenced many elite. For over forty years, he was a writer and political thinker. He emphasised that Africans should pay attention to the original contributions of the continent and refuse to emulate other races.

A third notable development was the secessionist movement within the Church. Secession was a form of protest against domination. The first was the secession from the Anglican Church in 1891 of the United Native African Church. This decision was influenced by Dr Edward Blyden. He criticised the white-dominated Churches and urged Africans to establish their own native Churches. He visited Lagos in 1890 and spoke on how this could be done. In 1901, another group seceded from the Anglican Church to form the African Church Inc. In 1917, the Methodist Church experienced its own secessions. Other examples were to follow.

These secessions were protests against the inferior status occupied by Africans and also against white domination. A few of the organisations were anti-imperialist. Some others had members who were prominent in the protest movements organised in Lagos.

Colonial policies and elite discontent

Colonial policies did not satisfy both the traditional and the educated elite. At first, they wanted reforms. Later, they demanded independence.

The discontent took several forms. Some complained of the damage to indigenous values. Their protest was expressed through cultural nationalism. They wore Nigerian dresses, bore Nigerian names, and promoted the traditional culture. Some Christians went to the extent of forming African Churches in the attempt to reform the Church in line with some traditional values and to enable Nigerians to direct the affairs of these Churches.

There were also the protests against racial discrimination. In the civil service, many top positions were reserved for Europeans. Nigerians with the right qualifications were either denied employment or promotion. Foreigners also lived in the good parts of the town known as Government Reservation Areas. The elite saw this as another aspect of racial discrimination which must be fought.

Economic depression

The economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s also contributed to the growth of nationalism. The depression brought about retrenchment, unemployment and economic hardship. Wages fell. All these provided opportunities for the nationalists to criticise the government for its poor financial management, and to make demands for reforms. Both the demands and the criticisms helped to stimulate national consciousness.

The press

From four newspapers in 1912, the number grew to thirteen in 1926. The press was interested in policies and national issues. This concern also stimulated national consciousness. The press was the guardian of the liberties and rights of the people. It also tried to interpret the people's ideals and aspirations.

A great influence during the beginning of nationalist activity was John Payne Jackson. He was a Liberian and lived in Lagos from 1890 to 1918. While Blyden emphasised cultural nationalism, Jackson established the *Lagos Weekly Record*. As Editor, he criticised the British in the editorials and advised Africans to unite and fight for their common nationality. He championed the cause of Africans. Jackson popularised and encouraged the activities of protest movements.

There were other newspapers (e.g. the *Lagos Standard*, the *Nigerian Chronicle* and the *Nigerian Times*). After 1910, a few printing presses also joined by publishing polemical literature. These pamphlets and newspapers contributed to the awakening of political consciousness.

Students' activities: The West African Students' Union

Nigerian students abroad constituted themselves into organisations and contributed their own quota to nationalism during this period. The most important of these students organisations was the West African Students Union (WASU). The Union was founded in 1925 by Ladipo Solanke, a law student from Abeokuta. Its main objectives were:

- 1) to provide and maintain a hostel in London for students from West Africa;
- 2) to act as a centre of information and research on African history, culture and institutions;
- 3) to promote goodwill and understanding between Africans and other races;
- 4) to present to the world a true picture of African life and philosophy;
- 5) to foster a spirit of self-help, unity and cooperation;
- 6) to foster a spirit of national consciousness and racial pride among its members; and
- 7) to publish a monthly magazine called WASU

Between 1929 and 1932 Solanke toured West African countries during which he attempted to talk to, and bring together, traditional

rulers and nationalists. In London WASU called for many reforms in West Africa. It lobbied British politicians, submitted memoranda to the colonial administration on burning issues, organised study groups and public lectures, and published articles in the press. These activities enabled the members of the union to acquire political experience. Some of them were later to become major political leaders in their countries.

Its journal, *WASU*, enabled members to write and spread information. In both the journal and other manuscripts, the members spread the idea of nationalism and sought solutions to the problems of Africa. The writings served to indoctrinate many students. The Union also contributed to the development of nationalist ideas in institutions in West Africa.

Political organisations or parties

The earliest political organisations started as protest movements against particular colonial measures. They were not intended to challenge imperial rule or demand for self-government. The first major one was the People's Union established in 1908 by two African doctors, John Randle (Chairman) and Orisadipe Obasa (Secretary). It was formed to protest the proposed water-rate in Lagos by Governor Walter Egerton. The People's Union organised rallies where it called on the people of Lagos to reject the proposal. The party, however did not win the battle. Due to the failure of the water-rate agitation and the First World War the People's Union collapsed. The British officials had made it clear that they would not tolerate any form of agitations during the period of the war.

The second major party was formed in December 1920. It was known as the Reform Club, its membership was drawn from the Lagos elite. Randle and Obasa were also the principal officers. Its main contribution was its opposition to direct taxation in Nigeria.

The first sign of nationalism that sought an end to colonial rule was provided by the establishment of the National Congress of British West Africa (known as the Congress). The leader was Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast (now Ghana). He was a distinguished lawyer and politician.

Three major factors led to the formation of the Congress. The first was the impact of the First World War on Africa. The participation of Africans in the war made many of them to be aware of international problems. The elite then began to demand for freedom and equality among races.

The second reason was the ideological influence of writers such as

Edward Blyden, the West Indian who called for the liberation of the culture of the blacks from European domination, and J P Jackson, the Liberian editor of the *Lagos Weekly Record*, who criticised British rule in Africa.

The third factor was the influence of external organisations like the Indian National Congress and the Pan-African Movement. The great names in the Pan-African Movement included W E B Du Bois and Blaise Diagne. Some West African educated elite were associated with the Pan-African Movement which held its first congress in Paris in February 1919. At this meeting, the Pan-African Movement made a profound declaration that:

They (Africans) shall not be denied on account of their race and colour a share in their own government, justice before the courts and economic and social equality.

Inspired by the ideals of the Pan-African Movement, a few West African elite formed the National Congress of British West Africa. The objectives of the Congress were (a) to ensure the effective participation of Africans in their own government; (b) to promote the unity among the British West African countries; (c) to remove the discrimination in the colonial civil service; and (d) to achieve self-government.

The first meeting of the Congress was held in Accra from 11 to 29 March 1920. Representatives were drawn from all the four British African colonies – Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Ghana. Eighty-three resolutions were made, the major ones being that; half of the membership of the Legislative Councils in each country should be elected Africans; a University should be established in West Africa; compulsory education should be introduced, the partitioning of African colonies should be done with the consent of Africans and that Africans should not be discriminated against in the civil service.

The resolutions, all on the demand for Africanisation, were to enable the elite to play a major role in the colonial administration. There was no demand for immediate self-government.

The Congress also decided to become a permanent organisation and to put its resolutions before the Secretary of the State for Colonies in London. A nine-man delegation of the Congress was in London between September 1920 and March 1921. They sought the support of organisations and the public before presenting their petition. The Secretary of State for Colonies however rejected the demands of the Congress and refused to grant the delegates a hearing.

The failure of the Congress was due, first, to the hostility of the

colonial administration. The governors of the colonies were hostile to it, and warned London not to regard the delegates as the representatives of the people. Governor Clifford of Nigeria attacked the Congress in his address to the Legislative Council in December 1920. His strong words included the following;

... a self-selected and self-appointed congregation of educated African gentlemen... whose eyes are fixed, not upon African native history or tradition or policy, nor upon their own tribal obligation and the duties to their Natural Rulers which immemorial custom should impose upon them, but upon political theories evolved by Europeans to fit a wholly different environment, for the government of peoples who have arrived at a wholly different stage of civilisation.

A second reason for failure was the hostility of some chiefs to the educated elite. In Ghana, Nana Ofori Atta, a prominent chief attacked the Congress and wrote to London not to accord any recognition to the Congress. Some chiefs in Nigeria held the same view. After the second conference which was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone in 1923, the Congress lost its enthusiasm and finally died.

Though the Congress did not achieve all its objectives, it recorded some achievements. The colonial government granted a number of concessions which included: the opening of the Achimota College in Ghana as a nucleus of a university; the reconstitution of the West African Court of Appeal; the earmarking of a few senior posts for Africans in the civil service; and the introduction of the elective principle in Nigeria in 1922. The elective principle was later extended to Sierra Leone in 1924 and the Gold Coast in 1925. Finally, other parties formed after 1923 drew some lessons from the collapse of the Congress. For instance, the other parties solicited the support of the chiefs.

The Garvey Movement: This was a militant and race-conscious organisation founded by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican. It was during his visit to London from 1912 to 1914 that Garvey became aware of the discontent in Africa. He returned to Jamaica and formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association and an affiliate called the African Communities League. His aims were to unite all negroes 'into one great body' and 'to establish a country and government absolutely their own'.

In 1916, he moved to the United States where he quickly became the leader of a mass organisation. He established *Negro World*, a newspaper which enjoyed wide circulation. From 1920 to 1925, he organised negro conventions which were attended by delegates from

Africa. These conventions made plans for the creation of a Negro state in Africa. They selected a national anthem and a flag and made Garvey the provisional president of Africa.

Garvey sought political independence for Africa. According to him, there could be no other salvation for the Negro but through a free and independent Africa. He did not rule out the use of force to achieve this objective. The deportation of Garvey from the US in 1927 led to the collapse of this mass movement.

The Garvey Movement had notable impact on nationalist activity in Nigeria. His message on racial solidarity and cultural nationalism spread to Nigeria. In Lagos, a branch of the movement was formed in 1920 under the leadership of Patriarch J G Campbell (the head of an African Church), the Rev. S M Abiodun and the Rev. W B Euba. The Garvey ideal also influenced nationalists like Ernest Ikoli and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The Nigerian National Democratic Party: The introduction of a new constitution in 1922 gave birth to this party. The new Legislative Council was competent to legislate for the Colony of Lagos and Southern Nigeria. This Legislative Council had forty-six members of whom nineteen were unofficial members and twenty-seven official members. Four of the unofficial members had to be elected in the municipalities of Lagos and Calabar. These two towns enjoyed the elective principle because they had the largest concentration of educated elite who could use the franchise.

This party was formed on 24 June, 1923 by Herbert Macaulay and his friends. Macaulay was the grandson of Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He was both a civil engineer and a journalist. The party was formed to contest elections into the Legislative Council. The principal officers were Macaulay (Secretary), Joseph Egerton Shyngle (President) and Eric Moore (Vice-President). Other foundation members were Dr. C C Adeniyi Jones (he succeeded Shyngle in 1926), Dr Adeyemo Alakija and Dr J T Caulcrick.

The objective of the party was:

To secure the safety and welfare of the Colony and the Protectorate of Nigeria as an integral part of the British Imperial Commonwealth and to carry the banner of 'Right, Truth, Liberty and Justice' to the empyrean of democracy until the realisation of its ambitious goal of government of the people by the people for the people.

The party was opposed to forced labour, dispossession of land, plantation estates, and harsh laws. It wanted better transport facilities, more production of palm produce, and better health and educa-

tional facilities. It also demanded municipal self-government for Lagos, compulsory education, Africanisation of the civil service and a West African Court of Appeal.

The NNDP's programme was more elaborate than that of any of the previous political parties. The party won the Lagos seats in the Legislative Council in 1923, 1928, 1933 and 1943. Between 1925 and 1938, it also won all the elective seats in the Lagos Town Council.

The party was very successful because of its strategy and effective organisation. First, it had a newspaper, the *Lagos Weekly Record*, which propagated its ideas and criticised the government. Second, through the *Ilu* Committee (an organisation under the Oba of Lagos Council) the party was able to bring together both the traditional and modern elite. Third, the party enjoyed the support of trade guilds, market women association and the elite, majority of whom were Yoruba.

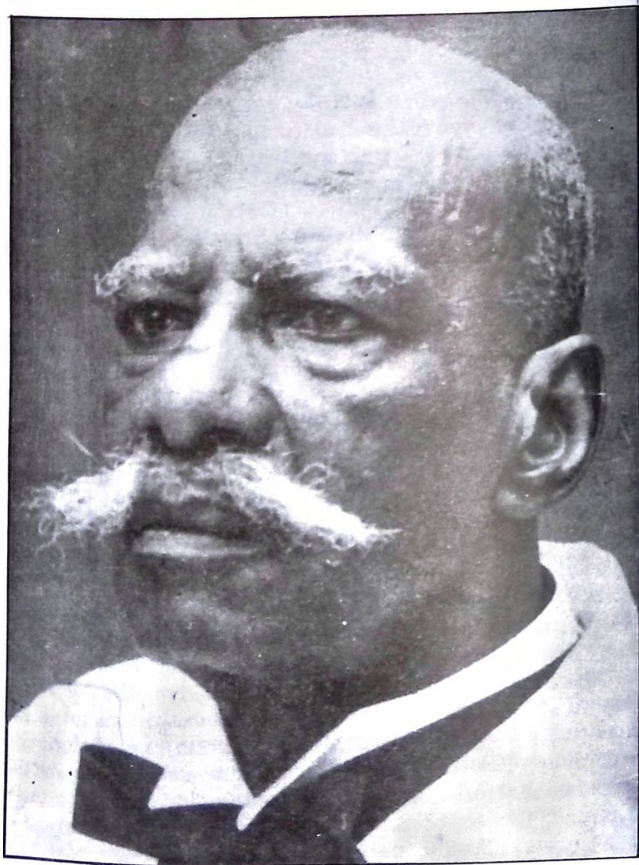
The party has been criticised for confining most of its activities to Lagos. Macaulay, has also been criticised for being overbearing. On the criticism that it was Lagos-based, the point to note is that it was both Lagos and Calabar that attracted the largest number of the elite. Individual freedom obtained more in these two places than elsewhere. The party would have found it difficult to operate in the north where there were barriers to rewarding political contacts between southerners and northerners. Another point to note in favour of the NNDP is that the colonial government was hostile to the formation of pan-Nigerian parties, so as to prevent the emergence of a strong anti-colonial force.

As for the criticism levelled against Macaulay, it should be noted that he did not see himself as just a Lagos politician but as a Nigerian nationalist. On the charge that he was ambitious it should be noted that he was a party leader without much future. He had to work behind the scenes since he could not contest elections, because of two earlier criminal convictions. Macaulay was a great champion of the national cause. He criticised the government and defended some rights. His party criticised the government over the Income Tax Law of 1927, the Appointment and Deposition of Chief's Ordinance, the reform of provincial courts, the extension of the indirect rule system to Lagos etc. The representatives of the party in the Legislative Council also asked many questions on notable occurrences in the country, such as the ill-treatment of prisoners in Jos, the deportation of the Sultan of Sokoto, the closure of the dispensary in Bonny and the spread of venereal diseases in Calabar and Port-Harcourt. Through these and other activities, the NNDP championed the national cause.

Macaulay stirred many Nigerians to national consciousness. By the time of his death in 1946, many had come to regard him as the

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'father' of Nigerian nationalism. Delegates from many parts of the country attended his funeral ceremony.

The NNDP was not without its weaknesses. First, its members were assimilationist in attitude. What this means is that they were prepared to work within the established colonial institutions. They failed to challenge the legitimacy of colonial rule and only hoped that the British would willingly leave the country. Secondly, the members of the party in the Legislative Council were too few to influence major decisions. The Governor had a veto power over decisions that ema-



Herbert Macaulay

nated from the council.

The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM): The birth of the NYM was due to the yearning of the Lagos educated elite for a new nationalist organisation and the response to the establishment of the Yaba Higher College in Lagos on 19 January, 1934. The colonial administration established the Yaba Higher College to provide education for youths to fill posts in the civil service. The college was not affiliated to any university in Britain. It was to grant diplomas in such disciplines as medicine, arts, economics, engineering and agriculture.

The educated elite criticised this college for a number of reasons. First, they said that it was inferior in status to a British university. Second, its diplomas were inferior, and its holders would work in subordinate positions to graduates of British universities. The elite thought that this was a device to prevent Nigerians from rising to the top in the civil service. Third, the diplomas would not be recognised outside Nigeria.

To put pressure on government to enhance the status of the Yaba College, the elite formed the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. It was later changed to the Nigerian Youth Movement in 1936. The NYM became the country's first multi-ethnic organisation. In 1934, the movement held a mass meeting and passed a seven-point resolution on the Yaba College in particular and education in general. Though the government went ahead with the College, the movement quickly grew to become a platform for fighting imperialism, economic exploitation and social inequality.

The political programme of the NYM attempted to foster the political advancement of the country and to enhance the socioeconomic status of its citizens. In 1938, it published its charter which outlined its objectives. This was divided into three: the political, economic and sociocultural. The sociocultural charter wanted mass education while the economic charter requested for equal economic opportunities for all, irrespective of race. The political charter demanded the take-over of the government by Nigerians, the restructuring of the Legislative Council and universal suffrage for everybody above the age of twenty one.

In 1938, the NYM candidates won elections to the Lagos Town Council and all the three Lagos seats in the Legislative Council. This victory ended the electoral monopoly of the NNDP. The prominent members of the NYM during this period included Kofoworola Abayomi, a druggist and ophthalmologist, (President), Ernest S. Ikoli, an Ijo and celebrated journalist (Vice-President), H O Davies, a lawyer and journalist (Secretary) H A Subair, S L Akintola, O. Awolowo, J A Tuyo, Duro Emmanuel and Azikiwe.

The NYM tried to be national. In 1938, it had forty branches outside of Lagos with a total membership of over 20,000. Some of its active branches were in Maiduguri, Makurdi, Ejirin, Uyo, Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode, Warri, Ilesa, Sapele, Kano, Benin, Aba, Zaria, Enugu, Kaduna, Port-Harcourt, Jos and Calabar. The NYM was spread more than the NNDP. However, the branches in the north were dominated by southerners who lived there. This was due to the hostility of the colonial administration to political parties with southern connection.

Because it saw itself as a national party, the NYM condemned all unpopular policies throughout the country. For instance, it encouraged the formation of trade unions, and demanded the representation of all provinces in the Legislative Council. The NYM attained lime-light because of some of its demands and criticisms. For instance in 1937, it supported the Nigerian Motor Transporters Union in the agitation against 'double licence'. This was to prevent lorries from plying the same routes as the trains in order to protect the latter from intense competition and financial loss. The NYM also fought against the Cocoa Pool of 1938, a measure designed by foreign firms to keep the prices of cocoa down. Two years later, the NYM also agitated against the ban on the exportation of palm kernels from the western provinces. The agitations forced the government to re-think some of its policies.

The NYM was not without its faults. First, it did not demand any rapid overthrow of the colonial system. Its members were mainly moderates and accommodationists. Second, the party experienced misunderstanding among its members which eventually led to a crisis. For instance, Azikiwe thought that the competition between the *Daily Service* and his *West African Pilot* was unnecessary. In 1941, the resignation of Abayomi from the Legislative Council brought a crisis as to who should replace him. Should the successor be Ikoli or Samuel Akinsanya, an Ijebu? The former was supported by Awolowo and some Lagos members while the latter was supported by Azikiwe and some Igbo and Ijebu members. The controversy generated bitterness among members. The NYM eventually chose Ikoli. Azikiwe and Akinsanya accused some members of tribalism, and both left the movement. Many easterners and Ijebu followed them. This crisis led to the collapse of the NYM.

The emergence of Nnamdi Azikiwe: Another major development in the decolonisation process during this period was the emergence of Nnamdi Azikiwe. In 1937 he joined the NYM and immediately became one of the most powerful leaders. Azikiwe had a varied intellectual background. He was born in the north (at Zungeru) to parents of Igbo origin. He attended a number of mission schools in

Onitsha, Calabar and Lagos. After working for a short period, he proceeded to the United States in 1925. There he again attended many schools and eventually obtained two Masters Degrees. When the government refused to employ him on his return, he went to Gold Coast to work as the editor of the *Accra Morning Post*. He also found the time to write a book *Renascent Africa* published in 1937. In 1937, he was convicted following the publication of an article by I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, a labour leader. This article, titled 'Has the African a God?' criticised the British. Azikiwe appealed against the judgment and was acquitted. He returned to Nigeria thereafter.

On enrolment in NYM, he was elected into the Central Executive Committee. In the same year, he founded the *West African Pilot*. The NYM, too, had its own newspaper, *The Daily Service*. Azikiwe thus began a new era in journalism. His paper had a wider circulation and it catered for the interests of the elite and the masses. The editorials focused on racial inequality, exploitation and injustice. The paper contributed a lot to the awakening of national consciousness.

Azikiwe was the first Igbo to become a prominent nationalist. Before him, the strength of the NYM derived from its membership in Lagos and the western provinces. Azikiwe was able to mobilise the support of the Igbo elite, and became the leader of those resident in Lagos.

It could be said that Azikiwe made three major contributions to the decolonisation process during this period :

- a) he contributed to the emergence of a more militant national consciousness;
- b) he founded an aggressive newspaper; and
- c) he mobilised a large number of the Igbo elite.

Azikiwe was very energetic. From 1934 to 1949, he was the most articulate and celebrated nationalist throughout West Africa. His background was adequate for the role he played: he grew up in urban centres, in a politically heterogeneous setting; he resented the way his father was treated in the Nigeria Regiment; he worked as a Clerk for two years (1923-1925). He was exposed to liberal education in the United States in the milieu of racial discrimination. His experience in the United States prepared him for a nationalist role: he suffered as a poor student and also witnessed several protests by the blacks.

Professor Coleman has pointed out how Azikiwe's activities were influenced by his stay in the United States. First, Azikiwe thought and acted 'along universalist and racial lines'. He conceived of the struggles between the whites and the blacks. He sought the unity of West Africa against Europeans. The second influence was reflected in the style of his journalism, modelled along American yellow journalism



Nnamdi Azikiwe

and concern for race. As he himself explained, his mission was to arouse the people through 'the power of the pen and of the tongue'. In his writings, he concentrated on racial inequality and injustice. His style was both provocative and combative. Unlike his predecessors, he tried to sell his newspapers in quantities that were large to sustain them commercially. By appointing agents, publishing provincial news and establishing provincial dailies, he further popularised journalism. His papers also spread nationalist ideas to the hinterland. **Features of political associations:** Below are the features of political parties or associations before the Second World War:

1. They emerged as protest movements in order to challenge some policies of the colonial government (e.g. the People's Union, the Reform Club, the Nigerian Youth Movement).
2. Most of these parties did not demand for the termination of British rule. They were interested only in reforms.
3. They functioned mostly in Lagos, and were dominated mainly by the educated elite.
4. They were short-lived.
5. Their achievements were limited because:
 - a) they did not enjoy nation-wide, mass appeal;
 - b) the leadership was not always united in the pursuit of their goals.
 - c) they were opposed by the colonial government which had the force of coercion to frustrate them;
 - d) the leadership sought accommodation with the colonial government.

Struggles by the people: Though political associations were organised by the elite, the masses made substantial contribution to the struggle for independence. Several of these contributions remain unrecorded. However, a few are known, notably, the activities of students, trade unions, ethnic unions based in the cities, market women, transporters etc. The activities generated anti-colonial feelings.

There were also notable events. In 1931, railway workers went on a strike led by Micheal Imoudu. In the same year, both the Railway Workers Union and the Nigerian Union of Teachers were formed. By the end of 1940 there were more than twelve trades union in different establishments. These were popular forces which exposed members to both the inadequacies and negative impacts of the colonial system. The unions pledged a more active role after 1940.

The Second World War affected the character and the pace of the decolonisation process. The impact of this war as well as the events

during the transition period, will be examined in the next chapter.

Summary

1. The primary aim of nationalism was to free the country of alien control.
2. There were nineteenth century origins of nationalism: (a) the activities of rulers who resisted British conquest; (b) the thoughts on nationalism by men like Blyden and Jackson; and (c) the secessionist movements within the Church.
3. During this century, elite discontent against colonial policies led to agitations. There were protests against racial discrimination.
4. Both the press the economic depression of the 1920s and Nigerian students abroad contributed to the awakening of national consciousness.
5. The major political associations during this period were; the People's Union, the Reform Club, the National Congress of British West Africa, the Nigerian National Democratic Party and the Nigerian Youth Movement.
6. External influences also contributed to the growth of nationalism; for example, the activities of the Pan-African Movement and the Garvey Movement.

Questions

Essays

1. What factors promoted nationalist activities before the Second World War.
2. Examine the features of early political parties in Nigeria.
3. Write short notes on two of the following: (a) Macaulay, (b) the NYM (c) the NNDP and (d) the British Congress of West Africa.
4. Examine the contributions of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe to the decolonisation process before 1945.

Multiple- choice

1. The goals of nationalism included the following except one:
 - A. To attain self-government
 - B. To share power between Nigerians and foreigners
 - C. To unite Nigeria
 - D. To use political associations to pursue nationalist objectives.

- E. To use modern political values
- 2. The first secession from the Anglican Church in 1891 resulted in the formation of a new Church called the
 - A. New Anglican Church
 - B. Reformed Anglican Church
 - C. United Native African Church
 - D. Pure Anglican Church
 - E. African Anglican Church
- 3. The founder of the *Lagos Weekly Record* was
 - A. H Macaulay
 - B. John Payne Jackson
 - C. Andrew Payne
 - D. N Azikiwe
 - E. O Awolowo
- 4. One of the leading members of the West African Students' Union was
 - A. Ladipo Solanke
 - B. Ransome Kuti
 - C. General Gowon
 - D. O Awolowo
 - E. N Azikiwe
- 5. Two of the following doctors were associated with two political parties in Lagos during the early decades of this century.
 - A. Drs Obadiah Johnson and Jeremiah Johnson
 - B. Drs John Randle and Obasa
 - C. Drs Randle and Johnson
 - C. Drs Obasa and Johnson
 - E. Drs Randle and Jeremiah
- 6. The leader of the National Congress of British West Africa was
 - A. Casely Hayford
 - B. O Randle
 - C. John Jackson
 - D. Andrew Payne
 - E. Timothy Orlando
- 7. The founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association was
 - A. Marcus Garvey
 - B. Ladipo Solanke
 - C. Herbert Macaulay
 - D. John Jackson
 - E. William Blyden

8. Which political movement advocated the establishment of a Negro state in Africa?
 - A. The Garvey Movement
 - B. The Pan-African Movement
 - C. The Congress of British West Africa
 - D. The Nigerian Youth Movement
 - E. The People's Union
9. The founder of the Nigerian National Democratic Party was;
 - A. O Olumba
 - B. Dr C. Adeniyi Jones
 - C. Dr Adeyemo Alakija
 - D. Joseph Egerton Shyngle
 - E. Herbert Macaulay
10. The establishment of the Yaba Higher College gave birth to a political association known as the
 - A. NNDP
 - B. NYM
 - C. NCNC
 - D. AG
 - E. NPC

Further reading

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Nationalist movements and attainment of independence 1945-1960

Introduction

This chapter examines the struggles put up by Nigerians against British colonialism. The struggles occurred in two major stages. The first stage was that of the struggle for independence. Here the forces of the independence movement were pitched against the forces of the coloniser. The second stage comprises the transition to independence. This began after the colonising power had given up and had decided to hand over power to an indigenous government. The usual constitutional conferences were part of this second stage of transition to independence. This second stage should not be confused with the first stage of the struggle for independence, although they are closely linked.

In the case of Nigeria, although the struggle against foreign domination started in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the late 1840s to be specific, the first stage i.e. the stage of organised struggle for attainment of independence, started in the early 1930s and ended in the 1940s. It was then followed by the second stage, which started in the late 1940s and lasted till the 1 October 1960, the day Nigeria became a sovereign state, independent of colonial domination.

It is necessary to understand these two distinct stages of the struggle towards independence, otherwise, the people who actually fought for Nigeria's independence would not be given their proper place in the history of this country. In existing history textbooks and in popular oral sources, top Nigerian politicians of the First Republic, dead or alive, have been credited with the struggle and acquisition of independence for Nigeria. On the other hand, the masses who bravely struggled against the British domination and eventually forced them

to give up control of the country have been presented as mere spectators or followers. In reality, however, most of the top politicians who are regarded as 'nationalists', founders of modern Nigeria or fathers of Nigeria's nationalism, in most cases, collaborated with the British. Most of them came to the stage only after the struggle had taken place i.e after the British had come to the conclusion that it was no longer in their interest to physically occupy Nigeria.

A few factors were responsible for this realisation by the British. Among these was the increase in the degree of resistance put up by the masses against British domination. Another factor was the various rebellions staged against colonial powers of the world in which the colonial powers suffered defeats. An example is the defeat suffered by France in Indo-China. The British, therefore, devised ways and means of handing over power to those privileged groups of Nigerians who had been educated in Britain and the United States and groomed in Western values. The British cleverly avoided handing over power to the radical groups who intended to destroy the colonial institutions and structures and embark on economic and cultural transformation for the benefit of Nigerians.

The role of the politicians who took over from the British, therefore, was to hijack the outcome (independence) of the many years of anti-colonial struggle by the masses. They were aided in this respect by the British colonial administrators. These politicians were the ones who were recruited by the British to take part in the constitutional conferences which merely involved working out arrangements for the transition to independence after it had been won by the struggles of the masses. Because of their strategic positions, either as ethnic champions, feudal leaders, or admirers of British values, these politicians were handed the mantle of leadership by the colonialists in 1960. They were the leaders whom the British could trust, people who would allow them to continue to exploit the resources of Nigeria for the use of the British people back home. These were to be achieved through the British companies and banks, such as the United Africa Company and Barclays Bank which is now known as the Union Bank.

Resistance, collaboration and consolidation of British rule

The efforts made by the Nigerian masses in resisting British colonial conquests and domination has been treated in the previous chapter. In that chapter various ways and means which Nigerians devised to

resist British penetration and domination were discussed. In this chapter attention is being drawn to the fact that while the vast majority of Nigerians resisted colonial domination, other privileged Nigerians collaborated with the British in order to safeguard their interests and partake in the British colonial exploitation of the country.

It is also important to point out that apart from the Nigerian politicians who collaborated with the British in the later part of the colonial period in order to acquire power from the departing colonial officials, collaboration between some Nigerians and the British started even as far back as the nineteenth century. At a certain stage, even Jaja of Opobo, who is regarded as one of the early nationalists, collaborated with the British. It was only when his interests were threatened that he challenged the British. But the degree of collaboration between Nigerians and the British reached a particularly high point during the colonial conquests and at the time of the establishment of colonial rule. It was the intensity of the collaboration between Nigerians and the British that enabled the latter to brutally crush patriotic resistance and establish and consolidate their domination in the 1920s and 1930s.

An important aspect of collaboration was the participation of some misguided Nigerians in the British military campaigns against Nigerians. Many of those who were recruited by the invading British army were ex-slaves, and slaves who fled from their owners. There were also some adventurers who joined the invading armies out of the quest for gainful employment. In a way it can be justifiably said that it was such Nigerians who conquered Nigeria for the British. The vast majority of the non-officer corps of the colonial forces were Nigerians. The British provided mainly the leadership, the tactics and strategies, and arms and ammunitions. Of course, with the establishment of British colonial rule in Nigeria, it was such soldiers who assisted the British in keeping Nigerians under colonial rule, right to 1 October 1960.

The British were also, in the course of the conquest of the country, able to enlist the friendship of some Nigerian ethnic groups. Those groups which collaborated with the British did so as a result of their age-long enmity with their neighbouring ethnic groups. The struggle by the Itsekiri against the British, for example, was seriously weakened by the unpatriotic activities of some of the Urhobo chiefs, for example, Dogo and Dudu. There were many other cases of collaboration between leaders of various decentralised communities and the British. But even within these communities there were cases of collaboration with the British. Some of the Itsekiri, for example, sided

with the British against Nana, their chief.

In the case of the centralised states, for example, those of the Sokoto caliphate, dynastic conflicts brought about by the degeneration of most of the emirate ruling houses especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, paved the way for certain factions, particularly those who had been edged out of power to collaborate with the British invaders. As indicated in Book 2 most of the latter generation of emirs abandoned the ideals of the Jihad and concentrated on worldly gains. In the process, they alienated not only the masses but also some of the factions of the ruling houses. By the time of the British invasion of the Sokoto caliphate and Borno, virtually every ruling house in these areas was divided against itself. Some of them had already been engulfed in civil wars or were under the threat of civil wars. Those edged out of power either became indifferent to the threats posed to their ruling kith and kin by the British or even openly collaborated with the British. They hoped that with the British victories they would be put on the thrones.

In order to establish a firm grip over the people, the British embarked on policy of wholesale deposition of rulers who showed even the slightest resistance against them. In the northern part of Nigeria, for example, all the emirs who showed the slightest signs of disloyalty to the British were deposed. They were replaced with emirs and chiefs who were regarded as 'good boys' by the British. These were people who sided with the British on their arrival and served them loyally throughout the duration of the colonial rule. Quite a number of the emirs who rejected British rule were killed, deposed, exiled or imprisoned. In order to ensure the loyalty of the new emirs and their successors, they were made to take oaths of allegiance on the Quran. These emirs religiously supported the British colonial administration in suppressing all resistance expressed through revolts, refusal to pay taxes etc. The obas and warrant chiefs played similar roles.

Being puppets of the colonial government, chiefs, obas and emirs inevitably played the roles of collaborators. In the process, they greatly helped the British in consolidating their rule in Nigeria. Being British agents, most of them did not care about the conditions of their people so long as they fulfilled the command of their British masters. They turned a blind eye to the sufferings brought about by colonial exploitation of their people. On the other hand, the British colonial administrators consciously ignored the crimes perpetrated by the emirs and their subordinate officials, chiefs and obas against the people. The British colonial administration in fact gave these 'traditional' or 'natural' rulers more powers than they exercised before the

advent of British colonialism. They were, during the period of British colonial rule, backed by the colonial military and police forces. In the northern part of Nigeria, the Native Authorities created by the British were placed at the disposal of the emirs. In fact, in the early period of colonial rule, the employees of the Native Authorities consisted mainly of the sons, relatives and friends of the emirs. The Native Authority institutions were really bastions of corruption and instruments of oppression. In southeastern Nigeria, the warrant chiefs and court clerks were hated by the masses for their oppression, exploitation and corruption. But because they served the British colonial interests they were forced on the masses by the colonial regime.

Another segment of the Nigerian population which helped in the consolidation of British colonial rule in Nigeria were the educated elite. These were found mainly in the coastal areas. Quite a number of them were ex-slaves who received their education in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. These Westernised elite initially saw the British conquest as a process of spreading 'civilisation' and, quite a number of them regarded themselves as whitemen, and superior to their fellow Africans who had had no exposure to Western influences. They were often heard to use the term 'we' to identify themselves with the colonising power. They often believed that colonialism was a blessing; claiming that it ended inter-tribal wars, facilitated the spread of education and Western civilisation generally. These so-called elite went into a ridiculous extent to imitate the whitemen in speech, dress, hobby, table habits and other forms of behaviour. They were also dependent on colonial political, administrative and commercial institutions for their employment. Almost all of them were employed in the colonial civil and military services. As clerks and salesmen, they occupied strategic positions which conferred on them powers which enabled them to accumulate wealth through bribery and corruption. They provided the badly needed cheap labour for colonial exploitation of the resources of the country. Like the emirs, obas and chiefs, they helped in consolidating British colonial rule. But much more than the traditional rulers, they suffered lot of frustrations. As shown in Chapter 4, they all fell victim to the colonial policies.

From the roles of collaborators, a lot of the educated elite, especially those who resided in Lagos, assumed the position of protesters against the discriminations by the British. Their protests were mainly motivated by narrow self interests. all the same, their protests complemented the other forms of opposition which were continually, even if subtly, mounted against British domination by other seg-

ments and institutions of the Nigerian society. These included students' protests, Christian movements, the Mahdist in northern Nigeria, women protests, etc. The significance of the contribution of the educated elite in the move towards the attainment of independence lay in the role which they played in mobilising the Nigerian masses against the various forms of colonial domination and exploitation. This started in earnest in the 1930s as a result of the deterioration in the living conditions of Nigerians.

Upsurge in nationalist activities: 1931-1947

The struggle for independence took off decisively with the formation of numerous popular organisations in the 1930s. This development was made possible by some other important developments which had commenced since the imposition of colonial rule. These included large-scale urbanisation, phenomenal expansion in Western education, unprecedented expansion in transport network and the cumulative effects of colonialism. These internal factors were also greatly strengthened by some external factors.

By the end of the Second World War, the effect of British colonial policies had started to take their toll on Nigerians. The indirect rule for example, promoted so much oppression and corruption in the Native Authorities that even some of the colonial officials at the grassroots were alarmed. Emirs were allowed to get away with all sorts of crimes against the people. Colonial administrative officers like W Crocker, left some records of abuses, oppression, corruption and extortion by emirs and their subordinate officials. In southeastern Nigeria, the warrant chiefs and the court clerks were similarly busy accumulating wealth at the expense of the people. The people were subjected to forced labour on the railway lines, roads, in the mines and on building construction sites with little or no pay. One of the warrant chiefs is reported to have declared: 'To grow fat an insect must feed on fellow insects'. In Oyo, the obas and chiefs justified their exploitation of the people by developing a theory that 'people of royal parentage are tigers and must feed upon the flesh of the common people'. These colonial agents could afford to do what they did because of the enormous amount of power they wielded on behalf of the British. The police also bullied the people to the point of hopelessness.

During this time economic power had been concentrated in the hands of the expatriate firms, especially the major firms like the

United Africa Company (UAC). By the 1930s this company alone controlled more than 40 per cent of Nigeria's import-export trade and as late as 1949, it handled 34 per cent of commercial merchandise imported into Nigeria. At the same time, it purchased on behalf of Nigerian Marketing Board 43 per cent of all Nigerian non-mineral exports. The UAC, with five other European firms, formed the Association of West African Merchants (AWAM) through which they monopolised import-export quotas. In 1949, AWAM handled 66 per cent of Nigeria's imports and nearly 70 per cent of her exports. Also, most of these firms engaged in extensive retail and semi-wholesale trade. In addition, the Europeans monopolised the ownership and control of banking and shipping facilities. This near total control of economic power exercised by a small group of European firms, together with government support, gave rise to hatred of the aliens and hence the colonial government.

The widespread belief by the Nigerians that government supported the European companies was greatly strengthened by the wartime controls imposed by the colonial government on export trade. From 1939, the government established an official monopoly over the purchase, export and marketing of all West African agricultural products. Again the large expatriate firms were appointed as buying agents. Thus the government in effect froze, legitimised and perpetuated the alien control over Nigeria's export trade. Nigerians were seriously hurt by this policy. Under the 1939 arrangements, the Nigerian businessmen were edged out of business. In the eyes of most Nigerian businessmen therefore, the obvious conclusion was that the British must be pushed out. They hoped that they would have access to adequate capital once they had their own government. That was why many businessmen were strong and active in their support of the nationalist movement.

The masses were also hurt by these policies. They held the government and European firms responsible for the low prices of Nigerian commodities and the high prices of imported goods. Popular resentment was particularly acute in the immediate post-war period when pent-up wants and expectations were at peak levels, while consumer goods were in extremely short supply. This situation led to serious unrest.

Nigerians also suffered from serious frustrations as a result of the colonial education policy. The British were playing a game which was clearly seen by Nigerians as a case of dishonesty. On the one hand, the British stated time without number that the country would only be given independence when a sufficient number of qualified Nigerians, professionally equipped to assume positions of responsi-

ble leadership, were available. Yet the British were not prepared to reform colonial education system or create opportunities for higher education. Some educated Nigerians wanted dramatic progress in mass education. The idea of compulsory, universal free education was ringing in the minds of educated Nigerians especially during and after the Second World War. It was widespread in newspapers too. From time to time, the British issued policy statements giving Nigerians false hope on the issue. In reality, they consistently treated education as a low priority.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, 12 per cent of Nigerian children of school age were attending school. Most of these were in mission or private schools. Worst still, the British, in the late 1930s and 1940s continually reduced grants to schools. This resulted in the sacking of many school teachers and consequently the closure of some schools or reduction in enrolment. To Nigerians, this was regarded as a further example of the British policy of keeping them down. The teachers were particularly bitter about the personal inconveniences and disorganisation they suffered as a result of cut in grants. It was, therefore, not surprising to find that some of the most active nationalists were former teachers of the pre-war period.

Nigerians who, through the help of their parents or ethnic associations or through their own perseverance managed to acquire higher education were often frustrated by the British officials. The characteristic attitude of resident Europeans towards educated Nigerians was one of contempt, amusement, condescension or veiled hostility. Many visitors to Nigeria up to the 1940s commented on the tension and animosity between educated Nigerians and Europeans. The antagonism of the white community, especially the British colonial officials, toward the educated elite became pronounced when the former realised not only that they were the source of political agitation, but also that they aspired to greater participation in government with the ultimate aim of displacing the white administration. Educated Nigerians were therefore denied senior positions even if they had the necessary qualifications. Some of them who were even more qualified than the Europeans were given less attractive jobs. That is why most highly educated Nigerians were self-employed before independence. This accounted for their ability to participate actively in ethnic and trade unions as well as in nationalist movements. The phenomenal increase in the number of unions was a direct response to the colonial situation.

The years immediately preceding the Second World War saw enormous increase in the number of ethnic and trade unions. The long preeminence of the Civil Service Union, formed in 1912, was broken

in 1931 when the railway workers went on a strike led by Michael Imoudu. In the same year, the Nigerian Union of Teachers was inaugurated and the following year, the Railway Workers Union was formed. These were followed by the formation of the Post and Telegram Workers Union, the Nigerian Marine Workers Union and Public Works Department Workers Union as well as several others. By 1940 there were over twelve trade unions in the various establishments.

In 1937, the Fishermen's Association was formed in Lagos. It was followed in 1938 by the Taxi Drivers Union and the Canoe Transport Union. In 1939 the Wholesale Builders Association was formed and in 1940 the Women Sellers Union. Even the Night Soil Removers Union was formed in 1942. Alongside these, old boys of various secondary schools like Kings College and Teachers' Colleges like Katsina and Bauchi organised themselves into associations.

The Nigerian Union of Students was founded in 1939. Kinship and tribal unions like the Igbirra Progressive Union, the Urhobo Renaissance Convention, the Idoma Hope Rising Union sprang up alongside older ones like the Ibibio Welfare Union and the Ibibio Farmers Association. Others included pan-ethnic unions, such as the Ibo State Union. The outbreak of the Second World War and its aftermath intensified the formation of unions. When the war broke out, the British mobilised Nigerians for large scale forced labour in the mines. In 1942-1944 about 92,000 able-bodied men did forced labour on the Jos Plateau. The number of wage and salary earners in Nigeria jumped from 183,000 in 1939 to about 300,000 in 1946. The number of labour unions rose phenomenally from five in the early part of the war to seventy later, thereby necessitating the formation of more unions.

In 1945, labour organisations felt sufficiently strong to launch a general strike. The strike lasted for fifty-two days. The impact was quite remarkable because those involved were in the main, people who provided vital social services, such as the railways. It was the first successful challenge to the colonial regime in Nigeria. The general strike of 1945 was an important event in several respects. It was the first and almost successful step in the nationalist post-war effort to politicise the labour movement and link it to the national movement. Indeed, the strike served as a dramatic opening of a new nationalist era. The strike shocked both Europeans and Africans into the realisation that Nigerians, when organised, had great power. The strike showed that Nigerians could defy the white bureaucracy, control strategic centres throughout the country, and that through force or threat of force they could compel the government to grant concessions. Above all, the general strike marked the beginning of

organised political consciousness in northern Nigeria although only a few northerners participated in it.

One of the most important reasons for the success of the general strike was the rapid development of urban centres, especially during and after the Second World War. In eastern Nigeria, for example, whereas there were no cities with a population of more than 26,000 in 1931, by 1952 there were four cities, each with a population of more than 50,000. The rate of growth of these eastern urban centres during the three decades from 1921 to 1952 was 68 per cent. Lagos and other urban centres in the western part of the country were also growing at a fast rate. The spread of the war to North Africa, the Middle East and India enhanced the strategic location of Nigeria, which became an important station for troops and supplies bound for those areas. The ensuing construction of modern airports, military camps, and new roads increased business activities in key urban centres throughout Nigeria, but particularly Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Jos, and Enugu. More than 100,000 troops and several thousand other American troops passed through West Africa during the war. Thus the war accelerated urbanisation and expanded the wage-earning force in both services and construction. The population of Enugu, for example, increased by 400 per cent during the period 1939-1946.

Urbanisation played a significant role in the development of nationalism. Cities and towns were centres of acculturation. Nigerians of different ethnic groups in urban areas only came into daily contact with European-made gadgets and goods on conspicuous display. Motion pictures and the latest newspapers and magazines were available. It was in the city that new tastes and wants were created, new values adopted and emulative urges asserted. The acculturating influence of the city was in turn carried to rural homelands through kinship associations and ethnic unions or by the vivid oral reports of returning migrants. The urban dweller also became acutely aware of the wide gap between the higher standard of living and the greater amenities of the city, especially in the European quarters, and the poverty of the rural villages. They, therefore, consciously endeavoured to take the enlightenment, modernity and 'civilisation' of the urban centres to the villages. Ethnic unions were the main agents in this process of early diffusion, just as they were later in spreading to the rural areas the political consciousness and nationalist ideas born in urban centres. It is, therefore, understandable that the inhabitants of the urban centres have proved to be more vulnerable to nationalist appeals than others not so situated. In its early stages, nationalism in Nigeria was a wholly urban phenomenon.

The rapid development of urban centres was made possible by the remarkable growth in communication system. The building of roads, railways and airports, created what can fairly be called a transport revolution. This facilitated not only movement of people in all parts of the country, it also paved the way for rapid flow of information and ideas and above all, integration of the country. Many people in the southern part of the country, notably Igbos and Yorubas moved to the northern part of the country as workers and traders.

Equally important was the expansion of education. Although the colonial government, for the already stated reasons, neglected this crucial social service, people, especially in the southern part of the country invested a lot in the education of their children. Many made sacrifices in order to send their children abroad. By 1931, the non-Nigerian educated Africans, namely Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, etc., who had hitherto been greater in number in Nigerian government service and commercial establishments, had been superseded by Nigerians. By the end of the Second World War, expansion in primary and secondary school education especially in the south had become quite impressive. This was very important for the development of nationalism. It meant that more and more Nigerians were able to comprehend political issues as preached by the nationalists as well as happenings in other parts of the world.

By the late 1930s, educated Nigerians who had gone abroad for higher education started to return. These included Nnamdi Azikiwe and H.O. Davies. These highly qualified Nigerians, especially Azikiwe contributed to the development of national consciousness through their bright political ideas, through establishment of newspapers such as the *West Africa Pilot*, and their articulation of the grievances of the masses of the people. They organised rallies, agitations, and in alliance with trade union leaders, organised strikes as well as a general mobilisation of the people. It was the arrival of people like Azikiwe from abroad which resulted in taking politics and anti-colonial agitations out of Lagos to other parts of Nigeria through the nation-wide circulation of the *West African Pilot* and his anti-colonial campaign tours. Above all, their arrival resulted in the nationalisation of the anti-colonial movement. For as stated earlier, those involved in anti-colonial policies before this time were largely non-Nigerians. That was partly why the British did not take them seriously.

The presence of people like Azikiwe abroad, especially in Britain and to a lesser extent, in the United States of America, also served a useful purpose. Through the platform of West African Students Union (WASU) they appealed to anti-colonial groups and progressive societies in Britain for the decolonisation of Nigeria. In 1941,

WASU submitted a resolution to the Governor of Nigeria, requesting among other things,

...a united Nigeria with a Federal Constitution based on a Swiss or U.S. model...local tribal loyalty (should) gradually be transcended, submerged, and suppressed by the creation and development of Nigerian National loyalty.

In 1943, WASU and eight journalists, including Azikiwe submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of State for the colonies in which they called for ten years of 'representative' government to be followed by five years of full responsible government. Similar pressures were being exerted on the British government by Nigerian students, aided by black Americans, in the United States. There can be no doubt that American influence was a crucial factor in accelerating the growth of Nigerian nationalism.

There were also other external influences which played roles in heightening anti-colonial activities in Nigeria. These included the invasion of Ethiopia by the Italians in 1935. Ethiopia was the pride of Africa and its invasion enraged many Nigerians. The invasion led to the convening of a meeting of various political factions in Lagos to protest the aggression. This further raised the anti-colonial feeling in the country. Also the attainment of independence by India in 1947 raised the hope of Nigerians on the issue of the country's independence. It was now becoming increasingly and logically difficult for the British to refuse Nigeria independence.

But the single most important external factor which accelerated the pace of winning independence from the British was the direct effects of the Second World War. What decided matters over Nigerian independence was not only the general anti-colonial upsurge throughout the world and the intensification of strikes, boycotts, petitions, riots, agitations, representations and threats of assassination of top British colonial officials in Nigeria but what the British military intelligence censors read in the letters of the 200,000 Nigerian troops, very largely from the peasantry who were returning from the war. For example, in a letter dated 17 September 1945, from Poona, India, a Nigerian soldier, private No. 82602, Theo Ayoola, wrote thus:

we all overseas soldiers are coming back home with new ideas...we have been told what we fought for. That is 'freedom' we want nothing else but 'freedom'.

This frightened the British colonial administration. Some of Ayoola's mates, like Mokugo Okoye came back and immediately joined the nationalist movement and agitation. Before the war, the soldiers and

other Nigerians had been subjected to intense propaganda over the radio, in the press and through other literature, exhorting them to join the crusade for freedom, democracy and better life after the war. The people now demanded just those things from the British. Nigerians were strengthened in their resolve for independence by the publication of the Atlantic Charter, which among other things stressed: '... the rights of peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live'. This Charter excited the hopes of colonial people everywhere. The attempt by the British Prime Minister, Churchill, to deny that the Charter included Africans was greeted with hostile reactions by many people around the world including left wing groups in Britain.

The war also demystified the theory of white superiority over the black man. The behaviour of British and American troops who passed through or were stationed in Nigeria during the war eroded the myth of white superiority as preached by British colonial administrators. For the first time in Nigerian colonial history, dance halls, bars and houses of prostitution became centres of intermingling between Nigerians and white soldiers. Nigerians realised that whitemen were not a special breed of human beings and like all human beings they had their strengths and weaknesses. Some of the British and American soldiers in fact encouraged the nationalists in their fight against colonialism. By this time, Britain was also experiencing revolts in its other colonies. In some of the colonies, it was nearly defeated by the Japanese, leading to the loss of the Far Eastern colonies.

While Britain was experiencing trouble in its colonies, it also came under intense pressure from the new Super Powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Both were hostile to colonialism, at least in theory. To a large extent, Britain could not ignore the pressures coming from these world powers. This was especially in view of the fact that world organisations, including Christian Missions, the Vatican, and the United Nations were calling on colonial powers to decolonise their colonies.

All these made matters quite clear to the British. And after the general strike of 1945, in which even according to official figures, 42,951 workers took part for fifty-two days and with many impending strikes, the British realised that their days in Nigeria were numbered.

Dismantling colonialism: 1947-1960

Within a space of fifteen years, the British were forced to leave Nigeria. Their departure was, however, preceded by constitutional conferences which dominated the period between 1947 and 1960.

These involved the coming together of influential people such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Herbert Macaulay, Rotimi Williams and H O Davies. They tried to organise new movements or rejuvenate pre-existing ones, for example, the Nigerian Youth Movement. These efforts culminated in a rally which took place in Ojokoro, on the outskirts of Lagos. Many associations and ethnic unions participated. One of the resolutions passed at the rally was significant. It called for formation of a National Front.

As the Second World War drew to an end, a new generation of secondary school students and young educated Nigerians championed the formation of an organisation which would spearhead the drive for self-government. In August 1944, a group of students and ex-students of King's College, Lagos, who were prominent members of Nigerian Union of Students (NUS) called on Azikiwe to complain of lack of leadership. Following the meeting, a conference of all the organisations was called. The purpose was to organise a national council to 'weld the heterogeneous masses of Nigeria into one solid block'. On 26 August 1944, the inaugural conference was held at Glover Hall. This led to the formation of the Nigerian National Council. Herbert Macaulay was elected President while Azikiwe was elected Secretary General. Membership was on the basis of organisations of trade unions, political parties, literary societies, professional associations as well as ethnic unions. Because Cameroonian associations in Lagos desired to affiliate, the name of the movement was changed to the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC).

Between 1944 and 1957, the NCNC was the leading all-Nigerian national organisation. Although participation in the NCNC was, initially, largely confined to southern and central parts of Nigeria, it had branches in several towns in northern Nigeria. The NCNC then started to call for self-government for Nigeria. In March 1945, the Governor, Sir Arthur Richards, presented to the Legislative Council proposals for the revision of the 1923 Constitution. These proposals fell far short of the post-war reforms anticipated by Nigerians. These expectations ranged from immediate self-government to greater share in the government for educated Nigerians. Nigerians were also angered by the arbitrary manner in which the proposals were introduced. The newly founded NCNC took the lead in criticising the Richards Constitution. Several organisations and groups therefore decided to protest against the Constitution. The NCNC decided to tour the length and breadth of Nigeria to arouse the people and, then with the people's mandate to send a delegation to the British government in London to demand reforms. During this time, develop-

ments which warmed up the political climate of the country were mushrooming and moving very fast. The banning of two newspapers, *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Mail*, and the rumours of an assassination attempt on Azikiwe embarrassed both the Nigerian colonial government and the British government. These incidents also heightened the political temperature of the country.

The NCNC tour of the provinces of Nigeria to raise funds for the delegation to London to protest against the 1946 Constitution was very important in raising national and political consciousness. For the first time in the history of Nigeria, large numbers of people were made conscious of the need for Nigerian unity. The tour commenced at the end of April 1946. It was led by Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Michael Imoudu. From Lagos the touring delegation went first to the provinces of northern Nigeria, where people were excited by the dramatic and visible nationalism. They then moved to the eastern and later to the western region.

In June 1947, the NCNC delegation left for London. Meanwhile some of the members of the NCNC became militant. They constituted themselves into the Zikist Movement. They organised public lectures, distributed literature and incited workers and other Nigerians against the British colonial regime in Nigeria. In the rest of the 1940s, there was widespread and protracted period of unrest. This led to the killing of twenty one coal miners in Enugu by the British Colonial police in 1949. This act further enraged many Nigerians and led to further condemnation of British imperialism. It also led to the occurrence of more strikes.

In 1948, the British colonial administration in Nigeria, at the instigation of the British government, took a number of measures to eliminate several of the nationalists' grievances. These included the revision of the hated Richards Constitution, acceleration of the Africanisation of the civil service, rapid and substantial democratisation of the Native Authority system and extension of facilities for higher education. The year 1948 was significant for two things. First, the political reforms for which the nationalists had agitated since 1945 were introduced. Secondly, an important segment of Nigeria's population, previously inactive or opposed to the ideas and methods of NCNC, became increasingly articulate and started to agitate, though along different lines, for the same goal of self-government. However, whereas the NCNC tended to encourage pan-Nigerian nationalism, most educated elite in western and northern Nigeria stressed upon regionalism. In 1951, for reasons of expediency, the NCNC also opted for regionalism. This resulted in the establishment of Houses of Assembly in the regions and a central Federal Parliament

in Lagos.

Meanwhile, political developments in the country were again gathering momentum. The Richards Constitution of 1946 which was intended to last for nine years had to be revised in 1949. This was due to nationalist agitation. In that year, conferences were held throughout the country at the divisional, provincial and regional levels, culminating in the Ibadan conference of January 1950. The conference contributed in no small measure to the introduction of 1951.

As was the case with 1948, the year 1951 also constituted an important milestone in the political development of Nigeria. In 1951, a constitution, partly written by Nigerians was introduced. The nationalist movement was also formally structured into political parties which functioned within the framework of the electoral system. Between June 1951 and the end of the year, elections were held into the regional Houses of Assembly. By the end of 1952, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the system. 1953 began with an increase in the intensity of political agitation. There was a constitutional stalemate in eastern Nigeria and at the centre i.e. at the Federal level. The political situation deteriorated so rapidly that the British government was forced to convene the London conference of July 1953. This conference was the most fateful constitutional conference in Nigerian history. For the first time various Nigerian political parties decided on a constitution under which Nigeria would be administered. Among other things, the conference decided that: Nigeria would be truly a Federal State; each regional government would be controlled by Nigerian ministers, with a 'premier' as their head; full internal self-government for any region desiring it would be given.

Between 1954 and the end of 1957 the country witnessed yet more important political developments. These included the holding of elections into the House of Representatives and the attainment of self-government by western and eastern regions of Nigeria. In 1954, the British, alarmed by the crisis arising from the controversy between southern and northern Nigerian politicians over the date of independence, and the northern threats of secession, held yet another constitutional conference. This gave birth to the 1954 constitution. The constitution, in order to allay the fear of the northern politicians, gave greater powers to the regions. The eastern government and western regions were to attain full internal self-government in 1957. At the last major constitutional conference, the 1957 constitutional conference, northern Nigeria opted for self-government in 1959. At the same conference, a 'national government' under the leadership of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was established.

Delay in attainment of independence

Two major issues delayed the granting of independence to Nigeria. They were the minority question and the fear of southern domination by the leaders of northern Nigeria. As Nigeria approached self-government, leaders of minority groups became more articulate and insistent on their demands, either for constitutional safeguards or for separate states of their own. Their fear was understandable. Self-government meant that power would pass from British to Nigerian hands, that is, to the hands of those Nigerians able to command a majority in the existing political sub-divisions (the regions). The major parties then represented the regions. They were the Action Group (AG) in the west, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the North and NCNC in the east. As these parties were believed to be effectively controlled by the leaders of the numerically dominant cultural groups, (i.e. the NPC by the Hausa-Fulani, the AG, by the Yoruba and the NCNC by the Igbo), it followed that the self-government would mean permanent Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo domination of minority groups in their respective regions. So the minorities called for the creation of additional political sub-divisions, i.e. states for them. This needed to be done before self-government, and removal of British presence.

The 1957 constitutional conference after detailed discussions, appointed a commission of inquiry to look into the matter. The commission held hearings throughout Nigeria during the later part of 1957 and the early part of 1958. It received lengthy memoranda from minority groups, state-creation movements, anti-state movements and individuals. The NPC emphatically rejected any idea of creation of states in the north. The NCNC and AG were inconsistent on the matter. Later, Nnamdi Azikiwe also rejected it. The minority problem was not resolved. This was because the top British officials in Nigeria then, began to have their minds on possible careers elsewhere and so were anxious to leave. And because the politicians were anxious to take over power, they could not be bothered with the problem.

As for the second problem, the fear of southern domination by northern politicians, it was taken care of with the granting of greater powers to the regions. After a series of proposals for the date of independence, the Nigerian politicians and the British eventually agreed on October 1960 as the date for Nigeria's independence. As stated earlier, the British had succeeded in handing over Nigeria to the politicians they could trust. They made sure that members of radical groups such as the Zikist Movement and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) were barred from taking over

power. The politicians who took over power from the British ensured that British economic and other interests in Nigeria were not interfered with. All the colonial structures and institutions were left intact. Within four years of taking over power, for example, the regional premiers issued a joint statement in July 1958 categorically throwing open the Nigerian economy for systematic fleecing. This was at a time when leaders of other countries were adopting policies to prevent the domination of their economies by foreigners. Soon, the Nigerian economy was being drained by British, French and other Western countries. From the economic, cultural and psychological point of view, and in spite of the efforts and aspirations of the masses of the people, Nigeria's independence was a sham.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to highlight the efforts made by Nigerians in liberating themselves from British colonialism. It has been clearly demonstrated that it was the efforts and activities of ordinary Nigerians, peasants and workers that forced the British to leave the country. But before doing that, the British carefully identified and selected influential politicians who enjoyed ethnic and religious support, to whom they handed over power. The British, with the assistance of the top politicians, had succeeded in terrorising, imprisoning and silencing Nigerians who held radical views and who wanted to establish a government that would have catered for the needs of the majority of the people. Having succeeded in recruiting those that they could trust, the British were able to secure the exploitative economic structures which they created from the time of the establishment of colonial rule. Because of this, Nigerian economy was drained and the Nigerians, although they worked hard, increasingly became poorer and poorer. This also generated a lot of political instability which resulted in the fall of the first civilian regime in 1966.

Summary

1. The attainment of independence by any colony is in two stages: the stage of revolts, strikes, petitions, representations, boycott, etc. and then the stage of constitutional conferences to prepare the way for handing over power to the colonised.
2. The fight for Nigeria's independence started long before the formal establishment of colonial rule. In the course of penetra-

tion and conquest of Nigeria, Nigerian communities put up stiff resistance. But some unpatriotic Nigerians aided the British in their conquest of Nigeria. This contributed to the collapse of the resistance.

3. After the subjugation, Nigerians did not fail to rebel against colonial rule at any given opportunity.
4. The real challenge to British colonialism in Nigeria came mainly during and after the Second World War. The war brought in its wake a number of important internal and external developments which accelerated the pace of decolonising the country.
5. Within a very short time after the war, the British were forced to hand over power to Nigerians. This happened after a series of constitutional conferences which dealt with the issues of the structure of the country, relationships between the central and the regional governments etc.
6. The granting of greater powers to the regions resulted in the regionalisation of political parties and the civil service. Before then, NCNC tried to cover the whole of Nigeria. It was pan-Nigerian in intent.
7. In the course of movement towards independence, a number of problems arose. These included the northern fear of southern domination, and the minority question.
8. Due to the anxiety of top British colonial administrators to leave and the anxiety of Nigerian politicians who wanted to take over power, the colonial structures were left intact.

Questions

Essay

1. How do you explain the conquest and domination of Nigeria by a handful of British military personnel and colonial administrators?
2. Why has it been said that the real Nigerian nationalists were the masses of the people?
3. Discuss the view that the Second World War was the most important factor in ending colonial rule in Nigeria.
4. Why didn't independence bring any benefit to the Nigerian masses.

Multiple-choice

1. One of the early Nigerian leaders who collaborated with and later offered resistance to the British was
 - A. Dogo
 - B. Dudu
 - C. Jaja of Opobo
 - D. Nana
 - E. None of the above
2. The first Nigerian to lead a successful industrial strike was
 - A. Obafemi Awolowo
 - B. Nnamdi Azikiwe
 - C. Michael Imoudu
 - D. Herbert Macaulay
 - E. H O Davies
3. The most fateful constitutional conference held on Nigeria's independence was that of
 - A. 1921
 - B. 1946
 - C. 1957
 - D. 1953
 - E. 1958
4. The delay in fixing a date for Nigeria's independence was caused by
 - A. the big size of Nigeria
 - B. British intransigence
 - C. the minority problem
 - D. the greed of Nigerian politicians
 - E. none of the above.

Further reading

Coleman, J.S, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, University of California Press, 1958.

Chapter 6 Nigeria in the First Republic 1960-1966

Introduction

As the previous chapter has shown, the move towards independence became rapid after the Second World War. Faster steps towards the attainment of independence were recorded in the 1950s. A federal constitution was adopted in 1954. In August 1957 the western and eastern regions became self-governing. The northern region joined them in 1959. On 1 October 1960, the country became independent. It was a federal system with three self-governing regions.

The attainment of independence in 1960 inaugurated a new era. Nigerians assumed the responsibility of governing themselves. The first experiment in the First Republic was short-lived. The Republic was brought to an end by a military coup in January 1966. This short period was full of major events. Some of these events were attempts at social and economic developments. Others were on politics. There were many political problems as well, notably that of ethnicity, census, elections and political rivalries. We shall examine these events and problems in this chapter.

The challenges and goals of the government

The new government (and the others after it) had to face the challenge of independence. These problems included, the following:

The difficult legacy of colonial rule: Several of the impacts of colonial rule discussed previously still abounded during the period. These included the consequences of the politics of divide and rule, and an economic structure that was geared to favour the demands of the industrialised West.

Before handing over power, the British took measures to consolidate some of their gains and interests in such a way that they would continue to enjoy these even after 1960. This point is what has been called the transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism. By imposing a political system and participating actively in the selection and

election of the new leaders, Britain ensured the survival of several aspects of the colonial political structure. This in turn helped to sustain the flow of wealth from Nigeria to Britain.

Nigeria and the wider world: Nigeria had to establish relationship with the wider world. The ties with Britain and the search for aids for development constituted some of the constraints to an active foreign policy. Nigeria and indeed many other African states found it difficult, if not impossible, to take independent actions on their own. There were cases in which they had to support policies which they did not necessarily believe in. Nigeria and the other newly independent countries were careful not to offend their former colonial masters.

Problems of integration or unity: Independent Nigeria did not inherit a united nation-state. There were many groups that were yet to be effectively integrated. The consequences of colonial rule further divided these people. The First Republic had no effective answer to the problem of unity. In 1967, a civil war eventually broke out.

Constitutional problems: The system of government that was adopted did not succeed. Politicians did not obey the rules and norms of a constitutional democracy.

Economic underdevelopment: Perhaps the major problem was how to develop the country within a short period. The country relied on primary products, that is, agricultural raw materials. These were sold to developed countries. Most of the goods that were required by the people had to be imported. To set up industries to manufacture some of these items, the country sought external aid.

Social and economic development: Achievements and failure

The new government attempted to respond to some of the problems highlighted above. By the time it was overthrown in 1966, it had recorded some achievements and failed in many others.

The new government had to address the issue of economic development. This involved the creation of another (and better) system of production different from the one inherited from the British. The national resources had to be used to produce more wealth. This was a complex thing to do: it involved a good use of available resources; an attempt to gain real independence by reducing or eliminating foreign control; and a cultural revolution on the use of new technology. The process of development also called for revolutionary changes and requirements such as: (a) the control by government of the national resources; (b) the creation of an efficient infrastructure (e.g.

better transport and communication facilities) to aid the production and exchange of goods and services; (c) rapid changes in social services, notably, in education and health; and (d) the promotion of new methods in production and exchange.

The above requirements could be achieved through a plan or strategy. The government in the First Republic had two options: either a strategy of free enterprise (that is, capitalism) or of collective enterprise (that is, socialism). It also had to choose one of two priorities: either to emphasise changes in the rural areas and in farming; or in towns and in industries.

The government chose a capitalist strategy. Its socioeconomic programme was based on the principle of 'mixed economy' which allowed the state and private enterprises to participate in the economy. It also embarked on a programme aimed at knowing the size of the population and also to know those natural resources it was endowed with. The overall capital expenditure was spelt out in the First Development Plan, 1962-1968. This plan envisaged an investment of ₦2,366m. Financial allocations were concentrated on electricity, transport, trade, industry, education and primary production. This plan did not achieve much because of political instability, the ideology that informed it, poor administrative machinery and lack of data.

Achievements

Though much remains to be done to fulfil the promises of independence, it is possible to point to a few achievements in the following areas:

An opportunity to govern: Independence provided us with the opportunity to have Nigerians govern their own country. Though the leaders in the First Republic made mistakes, the country was able to provide a set to replace them. The search for a committed leadership continued.

Progress by the individuals: Nigerians were able to take part in the affairs of their country. Some people went into banking and big businesses where they had hitherto been barred during colonial rule. Some others had the opportunities to contribute to policies or offer their opinions on them. The freedom, the new openings, as well as the self-respect were all very important, especially to those who had lived in a colonial situation. Now, the world and the gates of knowledge were thrown open to thousands of people. They had the opportunities to know more about their country, the African continent and the world. The ambassadors among them took their place in regional organisations and the councils of the world, such as the

assemblies of the United Nations.

Culture: The arts developed. Old skills in sculpture were revived. New dramatic art gained acceptance. Writing in poetry and prose flourished. So also were the 'popular arts', notably slogans on trucks, designs on woven clothes, etc. Some of these depicted the sorrows and joys of independence.

Public information: Better means of public information were created. These included radio, television, cinema and book publishing. The newspaper expanded their circulations. By 1967 Nigeria was far ahead of many other African countries with fifteen weeklies, eighteen daily newspapers and twenty-two periodicals. Added to these were seventeen radio-transmitters and five television stations. These facilities enhanced the spread of information, news and ideas.

Business Expansion: Though this was low because of the colonial legacies, some gains were recorded. Some Nigerian businessmen moved into profitable fields where they had been previously barred. The movement was slow because of the economic and other controls imposed by external powers. The new government took measures to encourage this expansion. Some were:

- a) the Nigerianising of managerial and professional jobs. Training programmes enabled some Nigerians to take the place of expatriate technicians, civil servants and managers;
- b) the development plan already mentioned had provisions to help the expansion of business; and
- c) there were policies on credit, banking and investments which assisted business.

However, this expansion did not lay a strong basis for a viable commercial or industrial revolution. The reason for this failure is that the majority of the businesses were mere extensions of European ones, and Nigerians merely served as agents of foreign capital.

Expansion in social services and education: Both the federal and regional governments allocated money for the building of new libraries, dispensaries, public toilets and hospitals. Old ones were maintained and expanded.

Education witnessed the greatest expansion during the First Republic. Basil Davidson has provided an excellent context to enable us understand and appreciate the revolution that took place in education:

Knowledge is the way to understanding; and understanding is the way to power. The colonial systems blocked each of these ways. The systems were there to keep power for the colonial rulers.

Colonial schools taught colonial values. Not only were they few, the education was inferior. The new independent country had to change this. The process of this change began in the 1950s and has continued till date.

There was an increase in the number of schools. More primary and secondary schools were built. Four new universities were established in Lagos, Ife, Nsukka and Zaria. Colleges to train teachers were increased. More girls were also admitted into these schools, thus changing the status of women in general. In the Western region, the government introduced the free education scheme on 1 January 1955.

Change was not limited to increasing the number of schools. The quality and values needed improvement as well. Colonial education assumed the inferiority of the black race, and it was not intended to prepare youths for active and dedicated service to their country. According to Julius Nyerere, the distinguished Tanzanian statesman, 'colonial education induced attitudes of human inequality, and, in practice, underpinned the domination of the weak by the strong, especially in the economic field'.

Changing the quality of education was more difficult. A few gains were recorded. There was a good attempt to Nigerianise the syllabuses and textbooks. A different type of education was provided, especially in the humanities where there was a stress on culture revolution. Students were inspired with the achievements of the past. Many minds were also exposed to technology and science. There was also a plan to provide more nurses and doctors.

Failure

By 1966 when the Republic was brought to an end, it had failed to:

- a) eliminate the devastating legacy of colonial rule. It could not decolonise the economy, that is, cut down the large amount of wealth that was going overseas. The subsequent governments also failed in this respect;
- b) create a strong basis for a sound economy. There were signs of declining food production, unemployment, and rising population which called for urgent policies;
- c) solve the problems of national unity. As we shall see in the next section, there were ethnic rivalries and competition;
- d) lay a strong basis for constitutional democracy. This is also explained in the next section.

There are many reasons for the failure of the Republic to resolve the issues mentioned above. First, political instability was an obstacle to any rapid socioeconomic development. The next section discusses

the problems in the political systems.

The second reason was the attitude of our political leaders to development. Though it is true that they stayed for a short period, not many of the politicians were genuinely interested in rapid development. Many went into politics for what they could gain for themselves.

Thirdly, neo-colonialism imposed its own limits. The new country was tied to a network of controls imposed by Europe. Some of these controls were imposed by the world economic system which, for instance, dictated the prices of goods. Some controls were simply the continuation of what obtained under colonial rule. Wealth continued to be transferred from Nigeria to the advanced (that is, industrialised) countries. There were three main methods to achieve this wealth-transfer. The first was through the exchange of our raw materials for imports of manufactured goods. When our raw materials are taken to Europe, they are turned into manufactured goods, part of which is returned to us. Foreign interests take the profits from both the manufacturing and sales of these products.

Wealth was also transferred through the fixing of prices for our products. Foreign companies determined the prices of imports and exports, and these were generally in their favour. Finally, our country had to pay interest on foreign loans.

The reliance on external aid to finance our projects was another reason for failure, especially of the First National Development Plan.

The political system and the constitution

The First Republic was an experiment in constitutional democracy. Five ideas are implied by constitutional democracy:

Popular participation: Democracy is a rule by the people. It recognises the right of the people to choose the system of government appropriate to them and to elect the leaders to conduct the government on their behalf. It also confers on the people the right to express their opinions in order to criticise or influence government actions and opinions.

Social equality: Democracy recognises a formal equality of rights among the individuals in a society. Civil rights and political participation ought to be equal between all classes in the society. In other words, there should be no discrimination on the basis of race, colour,

sex, place of origin, ethnicity, political opinion and ownership of property.

Public welfare as the aim of government: The primary aim of government in a democracy is the welfare of the people. Government is expected to respond to the needs of the people for the protection of their rights, provision of basic amenities and the maintenance of peace and order.

Limited government: A constitutional democracy is a rule by the representatives of the people subject to: (a) limitations on the extent of their powers and (b) the rules of the procedure for exercising powers. When a government is not bound or limited by rules, it becomes an autocracy. There are generally three limitations to a constitutional democracy:

- a) fundamental rights must be assured against violation by government;
- b) the functions of the legislature, executive and judiciary must be separated into three organs administered by different personnel. When power is concentrated in the hands of one man or the same persons what emerges is a dictatorship;
- c) there must be a constitutionally prescribed procedure for the exercise of power. This procedure ensures regularity in the conduct of government, minimises arbitrariness, and enables individuals to know in advance how the government can interfere in their lives.

An ethic of democratic behaviour: A constitutional democracy should be a way of life. Both the rulers and the followers are expected to develop the habit of treating the constitution of the land with a great deal of respect.

The above five principles were expected to inform the constitutional and political practice during the First Republic. While they were recognised in the constitution, they were ignored in practice.

The constitution

In 1960, a constitution for Nigeria was passed by the parliament in Britain. The country was governed by this constitution until 1963 when it became a Republic. Both the 1960 and 1963 constitutions were very similar. The 1963 constitution remained in force until 15 January 1966 when the army assumed control.

The constitution of the First Republic was copied from the British parliamentary system. The executive enjoyed power through the

legislature. The political system has the following features:

- a) There was no election to appoint the members of the executive. The system was that there would be a popular election for the members of the legislature. In the country's constitution for the Second and Third Republics, there was an election to the executive, for example, the Governor for each state and the President of the country.
- b) The government of the day received the mandate to govern through the parliament, that is, the legislature. The parliament delegated its authority to its members who then formed the executive. Not all the members of the legislature were appointed into the executive; the others were expected to remain in the parliament.
- c) There were two heads: the head of state and the head of government. The President was the ceremonial head of all the organs of government. His duties included convening the Parliament and to prorogue or dissolve the Parliament. The executive head of government was called the Prime Minister. Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was the Prime Minister throughout the duration of the First Republic.
- d) The executive was made up of the Prime Minister and a cabinet of ministers. The Prime Minister was the head of the executive.
- (e) The executive had a parliamentary character. What this means is that the ministers were chosen from the members of the parliament. This contrasted with what obtained under the 1979 Presidential Constitution when the President had the power to form his own cabinet by appointing people of his choice.
- (f) Again arising from the above point, the ministers were responsible, both collectively and individually to the Legislature.

There were three organs of government. These were the legislature (that is, the Parliament), the Executive and the Judiciary. We shall examine each in turn.

The Parliament

This was the main legislative organ of government. It was made up of a house of Senate and a House of Representatives. The President, acting upon the advice of the Prime Minister, would summon or dissolve the Parliament. The business of Parliament was regulated by Standing Orders. Members of Parliament were immune (i.e. cannot be sued in courts) from civil and criminal proceedings in respect of remarks, bills, petitions, questions, motions and resolutions made in the House or a Committee of Parliament. Members also enjoyed the power to summon witnesses, and request for documents on issues

before Parliament.

Parliament made laws through bills which must pass through both the House of Senate and the House of Representatives. After discussions, the bills would be sent to the President for his assent. Any of the two Houses had the right to initiate a bill. Only the House of Representatives had the power to originate money bills.

All bills had to be discussed and agreed upon before they were sent to the President for assent. The President had the right to withhold his assent.

Parliament did not meet often. It could in fact meet once in a whole year. In the 1979 Constitution, the members of the legislature were expected to meet more often than what obtained in the First Republic. What the legislature in the First Republic did was that it worked through several committees. Among the principal committees were:

- a) Committee of Selection: It performed the duties assigned to it by the House;
- b) Standing Order Committee: It examined the proposals for the amendment of a standing order;
- c) House Committee: It advised the Speaker on those issues relating to the welfare of members;
- d) Public Accounts Committee: It examined the accounts of the country;
- e) Standing Committee: It debated bills after the second reading.

We pointed out above that the Parliament consisted of two Houses. The House of Senate had 56 members. These members represented the regions (North, West, East and the Mid-west) and Lagos. The representation to the Senate was not based on the population of the regions but on equality. The aim was to forge national unity and protect the interest of the minority. Each region was represented by twelve Senators. These Senators were chosen by a joint sitting of the regional legislative houses from a list submitted to it by the Governor. Lagos, the federal territory, was represented by four Senators. The remaining four were selected by the President, on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Senators did not have to be chosen on political party basis.

The House of Representatives had 312 members. These members were elected on a single-constituency basis: a member represented 100,000 people. The region with the largest population consequently had more members. Out of the 312 members, Lagos had 3, the west had 62, the east 73 and the north 174. In effect, the north had more than half of the entire membership of the House of Representatives.

The President of the House of Senate (or his Deputy) presided over the House. When both were absent, the House could appoint any of its members to preside. The House of Representatives adopted a similar approach. The quorum for any of the Houses was one-sixth. The House was expected to adjourn if a quorum was not formed at the beginning of business. The discussions in Parliament were conducted in English. The use of the English Language prevented a number of parliamentarians who did not understand the language from making contributions to debates. These people simply sat down and voted as dictated to them by their political parties.

The decision of the House was reached by the required majority of the members who were present and who voted.

The Executive

This organ formulated and executed government policies. The federal executive consisted of the President, the Prime Minister and the ministers. The President, a ceremonial head, was the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He was appointed by a joint meeting of both the House of Senate and the House of Representatives. The President's office becomes vacant at the end of a five-year term or if he dies or resigns before the expiration of the term of office. He could also be removed if he commits any of the offences listed in section 38 of the constitution.

Actual powers were exercised by the Prime Minister and his cabinet of ministers. The constitution stipulated that the President should appoint the Prime Minister from a list of people capable of commanding the support of the majority of the members of the House of Representatives. The ministers were appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. The ministers cease to hold office when the Prime Minister vacates his office. This happens when the Prime Minister ceases to be a member of the House of Representatives or when the House is dissolved.

The Prime Minister and his ministers were responsible to Parliament in all functions except in a few matters. These included: the prerogative of mercy; the assignment of portfolios to ministers; the authorisation of a minister to perform the functions of the Prime Minister when ill or out of the country; the exercise of the powers conferred on the Attorney-General; the dissolution of Parliament; and the appointment and removal from office of ministers, members of the council of ministers and parliamentary secretaries.

The Judiciary

The responsibility of this third organ was to ensure that the constitu-

tion and statutes were obeyed. There was a Supreme Court with not less than five judges. The Chief Justice and other Justices of the Supreme Court were appointed by the President. This was done on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Chief Justice and the Justices of the Supreme Court could be removed by the President if the Parliament found them wanting in their performance or for reasons of misbehaviour or infirmity of mind or body.

The regions

The system in the regions followed that of the centre. Each region had two Houses: the House of Assembly and the House of Chiefs. The House of Assembly was like the House of Representatives. It was made up of elected members and it performed similar functions. The members of the House of Chiefs were not elected.



The regional structure

The executive powers of a region were vested in the governor. The premier and the council of ministers, however, acted for the governor and ran the administration. A governor was appointed by the president on the advice of the premier. The process of removal was similar.

The premier was chosen from among the members of the House of Assembly. In the case of the northern region, he could also be selected from the House of Chiefs. The ministers were appointed by the governor on the advice of the premier. Two ministers were expected to be drawn from the House of Chiefs. All the others must be members of the House of Assembly.

Every region had a High Court of Justice with a Chief Judge, and at least six other judges. These judges were appointed by the governor, who acted on the advice of the premier. All the regions were entitled to Courts of Appeal, and the north also had a Sharia Court of Appeal with proceedings governed by the Muslim law and conventions.

Political parties

Political parties were important during the First Republic. Elected members of Parliament were politicians. The Executive was formed by the party which had the highest members in Parliament. The party could dominate the Executive either singly or in coalition with another political party.

Though there were many political parties, only three became prominent. These were the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (the NCNC), the Northern Peoples Congress (the NPC), and the Action Group (AG).

The smaller parties included the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Bornu Youth Movement (BYM), Kano Peoples Party (KPP), Midwest Democratic Front (MDF) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). Though these parties did not do well in the elections (altogether, they pooled less than 15 per cent) their members were able to enter into some alliances with the big parties, and they subsequently enjoyed some patronages such as appointments to parastatals and boards. The NEPU, led by Aminu Kano, went further than the others in calling for a socialist ideology.

Of the three dominant parties, the NCNC was the oldest. It was formed in 1944. It was originally led by Herbert Macaulay until his death in 1947 when Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe took over. Throughout the First Republic, the NCNC controlled the government of the eastern region, formed the major opposition in the western House of Assembly and entered into a coalition with the NPC to form the federal

government. Azikiwe, the leader of the party, was the President of the country.

The AG was established in 1951. It attracted its members mostly from the western region though it also received some support in Calabar, Ogoja, Rivers and Benue provinces. Its leader was Obafemi Awolowo, who struggled both in the 1959 and 1964 general elections to provide a leadership at the centre. His ordeal in search of power culminated in his imprisonment which caused a major rift in his party. The AG formed the opposition in the federal legislature. Its main strategy to win support was through a welfarist programme which emphasised free education and access to medical services.

The NPC was formed in 1951, and was opened mainly to the 'people of Northern Nigeria descent'. The party penetrated the native administration where most of the staff became members. The NPC controlled the centre, in coalition with the NCNC during the Republic. It also controlled the government of the northern region. The party leader was Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, who was also the Premier of the north. His deputy, Alhaji Sir Tafawa Balewa, was the Prime Minister of the country,

There were many political problems during the First Republic. These included inter-party rivalries, intra-party rivalries, corruption, reckless struggles for power, the use of violence for political ends, failure to conduct the census, and the failure to conduct elections.

Struggle for power

Political parties and their leading members struggled for the control of the centre and the regions. One party tried to undermine the power of the other. In Lagos, where the NPC controlled the Executive, the strategy of the other parties was to dislodge it from power. The NPC had to enter into a partnership with the NCNC to be able to form a coalition government. The NCNC members joined this coalition so that its members and the eastern region would be able to benefit from the federally-controlled resources.

The AG was isolated and it became an opposition party. In the west, the party also encountered a crisis which led to a split within its rank. The west was far from being peaceful during the First Republic. There were cases of violence in 1961 when the supporters of the AG and the NCNC engaged in clashes. In the following year, there was a major rift within the party which led to open clashes in the Parliament. Two factions emerged: the Awolowo and the Akintola groups. Chief S L Akintola succeeded Awolowo as the Premier of the west in 1959. The controversies centred on personal differences between

these two politicians, the ideology that the party should pursue, as well as what their attitude to the NPC should be. Akintola supported a coalition with the NPC while Awolowo was opposed to it. As leader of the opposition, Awolowo had cause to criticise a number of the policies of the NPC. The attempt in 1962 by the Awolowo group to remove Akintola as premier led to an open combat in the House of Assembly. The federal government intervened in a manner that would favour the NPC. It dissolved the House, suspended the governor who was in the Awolowo group, and imposed a state of emergency. Chief Majekodunmi was then appointed as the administrator for six months.

Other developments followed. First there was the attempt to discredit Chief Awolowo through the Coker Commission of Enquiry. In addition, he was arrested in November 1962 and charged with treason. In June 1963, he was sentenced to jail for ten years. Second, there was the creation of a fourth region - the mid west - out of the west in 1963. Chief Osadebey, an NCNC party leader, was the first premier. Third, Chief Akintola was restored as the Premier of the west after the expiration of Majekodunmi's term. Opposition to his leadership continued. He formed a new party, the United Peoples Party (UPP) and ruled in a coalition with the NCNC. The NPC threatened by the growing influence of the NCNC in the south, persuaded Akintola to form a new party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). This party insisted that NCNC members in the government of the west should join this new party or quit.

The 1962/63 census

The 1962 census sharpened regional rivalries. The census produced returns which gave the north a voting force that was big enough to dominate the federal parliament. Both the AG and the NCNC had hoped that the census would change the representational ratio of the regions. When the results were announced in July 1962, the figures were believed to have been manipulated. The population of the east increased from 7.2 million to 12.3 million (71 per cent). That of the west increased by 70 per cent. The percentage increase for the north was initially put at 30. It was later revised to 80. The results had to be cancelled, following the controversies which they generated. A fresh one was conducted in the following year. The 1963 census did not enjoy a unanimous approval. The controversy on the figures centred on the attempt by one region to dominate the others. The federal government however succeeded in obtaining approval for the results. This was done through its control of the north, the cooperation

of the Akintola government in the west and the failure of the opposition to it by the NCNC.

The 1964 federal elections

Political parties and the public placed too much hope on these elections. The elections were the first to be conducted after independence. The NPC needed the elections to consolidate its power at the centre. The AG wanted to dislodge Akintola from power in the west. The NCNC had to improve its bargaining strength. Campaigns focused on promises to enhance the standard of living and the need to avoid the domination of one ethnic group by another.

Two main coalitions contested these elections: the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) made up of the NPC and some other minor parties; and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) comprising the NCNC, AG, NEPU and UMBC.

The campaigns by these coalitions generated much bitterness and violence, especially in the west. The elections were rigged through different means: electoral officers were harassed, and candidates were returned unopposed even in constituencies where it was clear that they would never have won. The NCNC on its own prevented elections in the east.

In spite of these irregularities, the Federal Electoral Commission announced results which gave the NNDP a majority of the seats in the west, the NPC in the north and the NCNC in the midwest. After an initial delay President Azikiwe, in accordance with the constitution, invited Balewa to form the government.

The elections revealed the fragility of the Republic. All the organs of government revealed weaknesses rather than strength, and those who controlled them showed clearly that they were more interested in personal gains. The post-elections period was marked by tensions, conflicts and controversies. By 1965, it had become clear that the entire political system and those who operated it had become discredited.

What became the last straw that broke the camel's back was the elections into the regional assembly in the west in October 1965. Through massive rigging the NNDP won the elections. Disaster followed. There was widespread violence in the west. In January 1966, the military put an end to the republic.

The fall of the First Republic

The fall of the First Republic owed to a combination of factors which include the impact of the British rule, the impact of neocolonialism

and the nature of politics in Nigeria. Each of these factors is explained below:

1. The colonial legacy

The handicaps of history, especially of the colonial period, became one of the major problems of the First Republic. Colonialism and neocolonialism placed limits on what independence could achieve. These limits were many. They affected the economy, education, culture and politics. The colonial power imposed limits on the extent to which Nigeria could govern herself. The interests of the new country was tied to that of Britain.

2. The constitutional factor

Certain aspects of the constitution were exploited by politicians for very narrow ends. First, the constitution was very much concerned with the distribution of power between the organs of government. It failed to fully explain the ends of power. What politicians did was to seek power and use it for personal advancement.

Second, the power given to the regions became a threat to the federal system. These regions, and the political parties which represented them, engaged in bitter rivalries.

Thirdly the five ideas that were implied in a constitutional democracy were ignored by the politicians. The experiment in constitutional democracy thus failed. People's rights were ignored, especially their right to be governed by the representatives of their choice. Constitutional limitations were exploited, especially those relating to the separation of powers and fundamental rights.

Finally, several aspects of the constitution were still alien to the country. They were based on the experience in Europe and not the conditions in Nigeria. The constitution for example, was not effective in dealing with the legacy of ethnicity and other divisions.

3. The ethnic factor

Ethnicity, or what used to be called tribalism, was another cause of the fall of the First Republic. Politicians struggled to defend their regions, and did not care much for the positive development of others.

There were also problems within the regions because of the domination of minority groups by the larger ones. The representatives of the smaller groups struggled with the large ones for power and resources. The minority groups generally complained of neglect and discrimination. In the north for instance, the people

in Central Nigeria complained that the Hausa-Fulani elite in the NPC wanted to dominate them politically, and also force them to accept Islam. These complaints degenerated into violent reactions among the Tiv in 1960 and 1964.

The new country inherited this legacy of division. The colonial regime regrouped the indigenous nationalities. It destroyed the network of relationships that had existed among these groups. And to achieve its own ends, the colonial government pursued a policy of divide and rule. The nationalist movements could not solve the problems of ethnic rivalries and end the legacy of internal division.

The government in the First Republic could not also solve it. Each region was governed by a political party which represented a majority ethnic group. Each region also sent representatives to the Parliament. There were problems with this. First, the political party governed each region as if it was an autonomous country. This threatened the idea of a single nation. Secondly, regionalism encouraged rivalry. There was competition for the control of Parliament and the Executive.

4. The national ethic factor

There was the absence of a national ethic which should have provided the right attitude to the constitution and the state. There were several manifestations of the lack of this ethic which combined with other factors to bring about the fall of the republic. The following include the most important:

- a) **Respect for the constitution:** It is necessary to be committed to a constitution. The use of force alone is inadequate. There should be an ethic or attitude which must respect the provisions of a constitution. During the First Republic, the constitution was abused and manipulated in the search for power.
- b) **Politics and fair play:** The rules of the game in politics assume that participants would have a democratic spirit; tolerate other people's opinions and interests; and accept that power belongs to the people. On the latter the people should exercise the right to appoint and remove their representatives. Most of these principles were disregarded during the First Republic. Rather than obey the rules of the game, the politicians perverted the democratic processes through all sorts of electoral malpractices, political coercion and the undermining of the freedom of assembly and of the press.

- c) **Abuse of power:** Politics assumes that the rulers would not abuse their power and that the people have the right to check them when they engage in abuse of power. The experience in the First Republic was that public opinion was disregarded. The democratic spirit was not complemented by a tradition which enjoined leaders to observe the limits of power, restrain themselves, and work in the best interest of the entire nation.
- d) **Respect for law:** Related to the above is the necessity of obeying laws. The leadership had a tendency to disregard the law. The people, too, understood this, and also tried to circumvent the law. As the politicians disregarded the law, the people, too, took the law into their hands through the use of violence.
- e) **Respect for individual liberty:** the habit and tradition to respect the liberty of individuals was not cultivated.
- f) **Public probity:** Bribery and corruption were common during the First Republic. Politicians made it clear they were lacking in the habit of probity in public affairs.
- g) **Commitment to national interests:** Politicians believed that the country existed to be plundered. When personal interests clashed with that of the state, the leaders in the First Republic chose the former. The overall ambition was to subordinate larger interests to that of the individual.

5. The military factor

The military put an end to the First Republic. During the period, there were politicians who thought that the military would keep to the tradition of non-interference in politics. They thought the military would confine itself to the defence of the country from external aggression, the preservation of territorial integrity and suppression of insurrection. This view was mistaken: the military, too, had become politicised. This was demonstrated when a coup was staged by the military in January 1966.

Summary

1. The First Republic was confronted with a host of problems: colonial legacy, neocolonialism, ethnicity, underdevelopment, and political instability.
2. There were some achievements during the period: Nigerians were provided with the opportunity to govern themselves; in-

dividuals exploited new opportunities; the development of the arts; the provision of better means of information; and expansion in social and educational services.

3. There were failures as well, especially in the areas of economy and political integration. The reasons for failure included, among others, political instability, the attitude of the ruling class to development, and neocolonialism.
4. The Republic was an experiment in constitutional democracy. The constitution was parliamentary. There were three organs of government: the legislative, executive and judiciary.
5. There were political parties, the major ones being the NPC, AG and the NCNC.
6. The major crises were on political rivalries, ethnicity, census and the 1964 federal elections.
7. The republic collapsed because of a combination of factors, namely, the colonial legacy, constitutional problem, ethnicity, the absence of a national ethic and the military coup of January 1966.

Questions

Essays

1. Highlight the major problems that faced the government during the First Republic.
2. Discuss some of the social and economic changes during the First Republic.
3. In what ways did the colonial era influence the political and economic developments of the First Republic.
4. Examine the features of the parliamentary constitution.
5. Account for the fall of the First Republic.

Multiple-choice

1. The administrator of western Nigeria during the state of emergency in 1962 was
 - A. Chief O Awolowo
 - B. Chief M A Majekodunmi
 - C. Chief S L Akintola
 - D. Chief Osadebe
 - E. Chief A Aderemi
2. In what year was the midwest region created?

- A. 1963
 - B. 1962
 - C. 1961
 - D. 1960
 - E. 1964
3. The President of the First Republic was
- A. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe
 - B. Alhaji Tafawa Balewa
 - C. Alhaji Ahmadu Bello
 - D. Chief Awolowo
 - E. Chief Okpara
4. The primary source of revenue during the First Republic was
- A. petroleum
 - B. agriculture
 - C. mining
 - D. manufacturing
 - E. taxation
5. The constitution of the First Republic was
- A. presidential
 - B. unitary
 - C. parliamentary
 - D. confederal
 - E. presidential and confederal
6. The major political parties were
- A. NCNC, NPC and AG
 - B. AG, BYM and NEPU
 - C. NCNC, BYM and KPP
 - D. MDF, NPC and BYM
 - E. BYM, KPP and NEPU

Further reading

1. Basil, Davidson, *Modern Africa*, Longman, 1983.
2. Toyin, Falola, and Julius, Ihonvbere, *The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic, 1979-1984*, Zed, 1985.
3. Toyin, Falola, and Leo, Dare (ed), *Nigeria Since Independence*, OAU Press, 1988.

Chapter 7 The civil war

Introduction

Nigeria was involved in civil war from 6 July 1967 to 12 January 1970. The war was between the forces of the Federal Government and those of the then eastern region which was unilaterally declared the Republic of Biafra. Nigerians, both civilians and military, took part in the war which was very costly in men, material, and services. For instance, by 1968, the Federal Government's expenditure on the war was put at £5,000,000 per month and by the middle of the same year (1968), the death toll was put at 2 million. This included civilians and soldiers. Indeed, by the end of the war in 1970, the human and material loss which the country suffered because of the war was very staggering. All things considered, the civil war was a national disaster.

The aim of this chapter is to identify and discuss some of the key aspects of the war, namely, the remote and immediate causes, its course, why it was prolonged and lessons of the war for succeeding generations of Nigerians.

Remote causes

The factors we identify here as remote causes could be called the historical roots or bases of the Nigerian civil war. The emphasis here is that the circumstances which ultimately led to the war had their origins in the colonial period as a result of the policies of the British colonial authorities as well as the roles of Nigerian nationalist leaders and politicians. Various aspects of the historical roots or remote causes of the Nigerian civil war are discussed in the following sections.

British tactics of divide and rule

It is well known that the British created modern Nigeria as a result of the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates by Lord F D Lugard in 1914. Amalgamation was not done to unite or even unify the administrations of Nigerians. Instead, it was done in such a way that differences among Nigerian groups and/or administrative areas were deepened. This was evident in several aspects of

Nigerian development or life as the discussion which follows illustrates.

There was the fact of the unevenness in the sizes of the regions created by the British. The northern region was larger than the southern regions (eastern and western) put together, thereby placing the northern region in a position in which it could dominate the political destiny of the country. As it happened, by 1949-50, the northern region had a minimum of 50 per cent representation in the House of Representatives. For the southern region, this policy was seen as a guarantee for northern domination of the politics of the south. Naturally, the leaders of the south resented the arrangement while their northern counterparts who thought they were gaining from it denounced the resentment. For the entire country, the British policy of divide and rule had worked. This also meant that the two parts of the country were not helped to develop national consciousness or outlook on issues. Certainly, the seed of discord had been sown and remained with the country in the years ahead.

Secondly, in spite of amalgamation, official pronouncements and attitudes continued to discourage national consciousness or unity among Nigerians of various cultural backgrounds. Instead, their differences were emphasised, encouraged and portrayed as beyond reconciliation. In fact, Hugh Clifford who was Nigeria's governor from 1919 to 1925 emphatically stated that the idea of a Nigerian nation was both inconceivable and dangerous (to British control of Nigeria). Furthermore, the practice of indirect rule fostered parochial and tribal loyalty at the expense of national integration. Similarly, British policy of creating *Sabon Garis* (strangers quarters) for Nigerian groups resident outside their cultural areas, particularly in the northern part of the country, had the same effect of promoting disunity and discord among Nigerian groups. The ultimate result was that the immigrants rarely identified themselves or their aspirations with those of their fellow Nigerians among whom they lived. They tended to seek social, political and economic safety by giving loyalty to leaders and governments based in their respective ethnic groups or areas, and not with those in the areas they resided.

Thirdly, at both the level of the then northern region and of the country, British colonial officials encouraged religious differences: Islam versus Christianity or Muslims versus Christians. Similarly, British colonial authorities encouraged policies that promoted the emergence of a privileged aristocracy in northern Nigeria by building separate schools for the sons of emirs on the one hand and those of the *talakawa* on the other. Interestingly, some emirs realised the unwholesome impact of this school system and strongly opposed it at various

times. Among them were Abdullahi Kadiri of Ilorin (1919-1959); Mustafa-Lamido of Adamawa (1928-1948); Ja'afaru of Zazzau or Zaria (1937-1959).

Differential educational development

In the whole of Nigeria, the British did very little to promote the development of Western education. There were two important reasons for this. Firstly, the colonial authorities did not want to spend much money on educational development in particular and social development generally. Secondly, experience elsewhere (like in India, Egypt and even Lagos) had taught them to restrict educational development in order to reduce the pace of socialisation of the people and indeed of their ability to agitate for their rights.

Primarily because of these reasons and also exploiting the religious or cultural context in the Muslim area of northern Nigeria, the development of Western education in that part of the country experienced a unique set-back and so there emerged a significant difference in the pace and volume of educational advancement of that part of the country and that of the south. This unequal development in education between the northern and southern parts of Nigeria was marked by a number features which deserve attention.

It is true that the financial investment in education was low throughout the country but that of the north was much lower. Far more children were enrolled in schools in the south than those in the north. This created a situation in which over time, far more money was spent on educational development in the south than in the north. For instance, between 1907 and 1960, while about 20 per cent of the annual budget for education was spent in northern Nigeria, the remaining 80 per cent was spent in southern Nigeria.

In addition, missionary schools were encouraged in southern Nigeria. In the north, the building of missionary schools was discouraged or indeed disallowed for most of the early decades of British rule. Recipients of Western education from schools built by defiant missions were not offered paid employment by the colonial regime; thereby ensuring that both Muslim and non-Muslim children had low interests in going to such schools. Consequently, as at the late 1940s, Christian missionary education which had made significant impact in the south had very little impact in the north.

Other features in the development of Western education which deserve mention are the fact that education for females was restricted more in the northern region than in the south. Appeals for the

expansion of education in non-Muslim areas of northern Nigeria were hardly met. Overall the number and quality of educational development in the northern area of Nigeria remained lower than that of the southern area throughout the colonial period.

Consequently, as independence came, most of the educated and thus salaried, civil service and other manpower in Nigeria were from the south. The hope of the north to get its manpower requirement before self-government was far from being realised by March 1959. Even by October, 1960, when Nigeria obtained independence, the northern region suffered severely from manpower shortage. For example, in the 1960/61 financial year, out of a total of 3,318 employees in the senior service establishment, only 53 were northerners. The western and eastern regions did not face such a situation. On the eve of independence, the indigenes of the eastern region controlled 70 per cent of the senior service establishment in the east, while the indigenes of the west controlled 96 per cent of the senior service establishment in that region. This meant that it was only the north that was not prepared for independence in 1960. As a result of the educational backwardness of the north, there were very few northerners in the federal civil service. The situation was the same in the army. By 1959, there were only 6 northern officers in the army as against 24 southern officers. Yet more than 70 per cent of the combatant non-officer corps in the Nigerian army were from the north.

It must be pointed out at this stage that tensions brought about by the disparity in educational development also existed between the Igbo and the Yoruba. The Yoruba, due to obvious geographical and historical advantages shot ahead of all Nigerians in the field of education. In the period 1920-1950, however, the Igbo, by great individual and group effort, had been able to eliminate the gap between themselves and the Yoruba, at least insofar as education was concerned. This was not the case with the north.

Beginning from 1948 the northern people were shocked into a terrifying awareness of the great divide that separated them from the south. Indeed, so wide was the gap that it was patently impossible for them to catch up. When northern leaders contemplated the rapidity of political advance and saw that the trend of events was leading inexorably to a self-governing Nigeria at a date much earlier than any of them had previously envisaged, north-south tensions greatly increased. It is against this background that the drift to regional separation must be seen. The north, due to its educational backwardness, feared the anticipated domination of their region by their much better educated southern brothers. One of the solutions found by the northern leaders to their predicament was to delay the time of

independence for the country.

When on 31 March 1953, Chief Enahoro moved in the House of Representatives 'that this House accepts as a primary political objective the attainment of self-government for Nigerian in 1956', he was opposed by Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto who moved the adoption of an amendment changing the words 'in 1956' to 'as soon as practicable'. The representatives of the western and eastern regions were angered by the position of the northern representatives. After the adjournment of the House, the northern representatives were subjected to insults and abuse by the Lagos crowd for daring to ask for the delay of the time for Nigeria's independence. The northern representatives were angered by their experience in Lagos and within a few weeks they announced an eight-point programme which, if implemented, would have meant a virtual secession of the northern region from Nigeria. This action provoked even harsher criticism from the southern press and from the Action Group (AG). The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) also criticised the action. Meanwhile the west also threatened secession if the 1953 Constitution did not include Lagos in the western region.

The leaders of the AG and the NCNC then undertook to tour the north to campaign for self-government in 1956. This tour led to a chain of events culminating in four days of rioting in Kano Sabon Gari which resulted in hundreds of casualties including dozens of deaths. This was the beginning of the shedding of Nigerian blood by Nigerians over their political differences. It was to assume a fearful and traumatic dimension in the 1960s.

In order to take care of the northern fear major changes were introduced in the constitution. This gave the regions more power at the expense of the centre, that is the Federal Government. The western and the eastern regions were also allowed to attain their self-government in 1956. The subsequent measures introduced by the north in order to guard against southern domination, such as 'northernisation policy' which meant discrimination against the south in employment in regional government departments and institutions in northern Nigeria worsened the political situation in the country as the south became embittered by the policy.

Unequal economic development

Another related factor which constituted a dangerous step to the civil war was the unequal economic development brought about by the colonial economy. The essence of colonialism is maximum exploitation. It is not the business of the colonisers to care for even economic

development in their colony. The colonisers, also, always destroy any obstacle in the way of achieving their economic objectives.

In northern Nigeria, the arch-coloniser, Frederick Lugard's first act was to initiate the destruction of the indigenous economy. The advanced textile industry of the north, notably that of Kano, which effectively challenged the textile products of Manchester was systematically destroyed. All other industries met the same fate. This was to pave the way for the penetration of British goods. The north was to produce only cash crops for the British and other European markets. These cash crops were bought at very cheap rates. The British were determined to retard the economic development of the north. This was a matter of the colonial policy. In addition to Lugard's position, A J Harding, a senior official of the Colonial Office, specifically warned in 1920 against any attempt by the British administrations in the northern provinces to encourage economic development in the area. He believed that such development was most likely to lead to rebellion and the destruction of British rule in Nigeria. The colonial administration adhered to this advice.

On the other hand, the southern part of the country had a number of advantages. This part of Nigeria, especially the coastal areas had many centuries of economic relation with the British and other Europeans and the Americans. The era of British colonialism here did not lead to destructive development. Due to its proximity to the ports and the sea, as well as the possession of educated and skilled manpower, the south benefitted tremendously from the colonial economy. In the south were to be found industrial establishments such as assembly plants, headquarters of firms and companies which provided wholesale facilities and raw material processing factories. In fact the southerners served as middlemen in their dealings with the Europeans and the people of northern Nigeria. With their good education they participated very actively in the colonial economy. Many of them also established their own companies which prospered. It was this advantageous position that enabled the people from the south to dominate economic activities throughout the country. So in addition to administrative and political power, they were also envisaged to wield tremendous economic power in an independent Nigeria. The uneven character of economic development of the two parts of the country were significant elements in the background to inter-group and inter-regional political tensions in Nigeria. The fear of total domination stared the north right in the face.

Roles of Nigerian politicians, intellectuals and the military

The Nigerian politicians

Nigerian nationalists, leaders and politicians did not fare better than the colonial authorities in promoting national consciousness. Except when it suited their personal interests and ambitions, they did not have any commitment to genuine national unity. They contributed in sowing the seeds of discord which led to the civil war. Their main interests have been the attainment of power as premiers, prime ministers, presidents, governors, ministers, commissioners, etc. These positions enabled them to amass enormous wealth at the expense of the Nigerian masses. They did not care for the interests of the masses. They only paid lip service to the suffering of the people whom they individually referred to as 'my people.' Most of them neither had the will nor the capacity to think hard and act decisively to solve the political, economic and social problems facing the masses of the country. They lacked the patience and capacity to wield the Nigerian society together and transform the enormous resources of the country for the benefit of the people. They were only good at generating crises because they thrived best in crisis situations. These were the people that were hand-picked and groomed by the British as rulers of independent Nigeria.

Instead of emphasising the numerous historical, geographical, cultural, economic and other links which for centuries had brought the various groups of Nigerians together, these politicians always looked for opportunities to emphasise their differences. As far back as 1947, for example, Chief Obafemi Awolowo referred to Nigeria as a mere geographical expression. In 1948, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa virtually said the same thing. He went as far as saying: 'Many Nigerians deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one... This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside the chamber' i.e. the hall in which he was making this statement. Many others made similar or more serious divisive statements, yet they wanted to rule Nigeria as a united country. When it suited their interests they referred to Nigeria as one nation.

The politicians were also notorious for making unguarded, inflammatory statements which led to negative reactions throughout the country. In 1945, for example, a prominent Igbo lawyer and a member of the Central Legislature in Lagos said in a public statement that 'Igbo domination of Nigeria was only a matter of time'. In 1949, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe said at a rally: '... it would appear that the God

of Africa has specifically created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages ... the martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of preserver.' Such statements which were made from time to time were not healthy for the unity of the country. Consequently such statements led to attacks on the Igbo in different parts of the country. Some politicians used these and the actual Igbo domination in the north to whip up emotions against the Igbo and what was perceived as their political party, the NCNC. Also ethnic groups, big and small, in the country resolved to unite and protect themselves and their interests against perceived Igbo domination.

In 1964 a northern politician, Jolly Tanko Yusuf, told a 70,000-strong political rally at Keffi that the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), must rule Nigeria forever. The most important reason he gave was that the NPC was the only Party that could prevent the Igbonisation of Nigeria. He warned:

There is acute unemployment problem facing Eastern Nigeria today, graduates not mentioning Secondary and Primary School leavers roam the streets aimlessly (sic). If the UPGA wins the elections their jobless fellows will not only push out few Northerners now serving (sic) in the Federal Public Services but also replace those serving in the north in the name of Nigeria.

Such anti-Igbo statements prepared the ground for the bloody tragedy of the crisis of 1966-1970.

The Nigerian politicians reinforced the divisions created by the British among the Nigerians. That is why they woefully failed to create a truly national party. They created parties which were nothing more than tribal associations which generated animosity among Nigerians. The animosity was not just between the north and the south but also between the west and the east. The politicians drummed up the concept of domination into the ears of ethnic or sectional groups. In attempts to capture or maintain a hold over power at the national level, the politicians formed pan-Nigerian alliances, such as the NCNC's alliance with NEPU or better still, with a faction of AG, and the NPC's alliance with another faction of AG just before the 1966 crises. Such artificial alliances merely generated further crises in Nigerian politics. Worse still the politicians prevented the creation of states in their respective regions. They thus maintained the imbalance in the political structure and deprived the minorities their demands for autonomy. This intensified tension in the country.

The intellectuals

It is actually difficult to draw the line between the politicians and the intellectuals as regards Nigerian politics before 1960. Quite a number of the leading politicians were intellectuals in their own right—in the sense that they were the educated elite in their respective groups. Specifically, however, the term intellectual refers to those associated with the universities. The intellectuals also played important roles in the crises which culminated in the civil war. Most Nigerian intellectuals are incredibly tribal and parochial in outlook and attitude. They failed to use their learning to provide solutions to Nigeria's problems. In fact most of them contributed to the creation and intensification of the problems for purely selfish interests. It was this disastrous failure that made the late Professor Dike to castigate Nigerian intellectuals in July 1966 to the effect that 'the Nigerian intellectual, far from being an influence for national integration is the greatest exploiter of parochial, clannish sentiment ... educated advocates of tribal division and strife, and worshippers of tribal gods...' Similarly, Sir Francis Ibiham blamed the civil war on the intellectuals. According to him their roles in terms of consolidating national consciousness was negative.

The secession document which paved the way for declaration of independence by the eastern region, for example, was produced by eastern intellectuals at the University of Ibadan in June 1966 after the May riots. Also, it was certain 'diehards', especially among the top civil servants who left Lagos after the disturbance of July/August 1966 who pressed for complete separation from Nigeria. Many other easterners, particularly those from the business community advised against secession.

The military

It was the military that sparked off the crisis which led to the civil war. By 1960, the Nigerian army had been thoroughly penetrated by politicians. The effect of this was, however, to become pronounced after the attainment of independence. The politicisation of the military increased as a result of the contest by top military officers for the post of General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army (GOC) when the departure of the British Commanding officer became imminent. Both Brigadiers Aguiyi-Ironsi and S Ademulegun were involved in political flirtations with the politicians for the purpose of securing the post. This brought about a division in the army itself. Thus in the upper echelons of the service, there was tension as relations were very bad indeed. This was as a result of the personal

ambitions and love for power of the top officers. There were also other factors that affected the desire of some officers to effect a coup in the army and take over the administration of Nigeria. The social, economic and political crises already highlighted in the chapter are such factors. The allegations of electoral malpractice in 1964 and the attendant violence provided the military the excuse to break into the country's political process.

Immediate causes of the civil war

The immediate causes of the war were the coup of 15 January 1966 and the chain of events triggered by the coup. The link between the January 1966 coup and the outbreak of the civil war in July 1967 was direct. In the January 1966 coup, the Premier of northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Brigadier S Ademulegun, Colonel R A Shodeinde, Colonel Kur Mohammed were killed in Kaduna. Several other people, including one of the Premier's wives and some policemen on guard were also killed. In Lagos, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Finance Minister, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari, Lt Colonel J Y Pam, Lt Colonel A C Unegbe and Lt Colonel Largema were killed. In Ibadan, the western region Premier Chief S L Akintola was killed.

As events unfolded, it turned out that the vast majority of those who staged the coup were Igbo officers. Also the bulk of those who were killed were top northern politicians and military officers. Until recently, sources of information on the coup claimed that the failure of the coup plotters to kill even a single Igbo politician was due to a mistake on the part of those who were assigned the responsibility of dealing with the top politicians in the east or of eastern origin. Some Nigerians, after studying the pattern of the killings have dismissed this suggestion. The recent book written by Major General David Ejoor (rtd) on the Nigerian crisis has gone a long way in shedding some light on the matter. David Ejoor, who was the Brigade Commander in Enugu has asserted that, instead of being ordered to kill the politicians and other Igbo leaders, soldiers were indeed deployed to guard the Igbo leaders. A platoon, according to him was guarding the residence of the eastern Premier, Dr Michael Okpara. David Ejoor was also shocked by the position which some of the Igbo leaders took on the coup as early as the 16 of January 1966. One of the principal figures in the coup, Major Ifeajuna was also seen holding discussions with Dr Michael Okpara. These discussions on the 16 of January resulted in the spontaneous rush of Igbo leaders out of the state capital, Enugu. All these, indeed go to show the one-sided nature of

the coup. Other developments in the months following the coup discussed below also buttress the point being made.

Chronology of developments between the January 1966 coup and the outbreak of the war

Developments between January and July 1966

The event of 15 January 1966 was received with mixed feelings in various parts of the country. It culminated in the establishment of military rule headed by Major General J T U Aguiyi-Ironsi. An uneasy political atmosphere pervaded the country although the new military regime received the goodwill of many Nigerians. The new Nigerian leader made a number of costly mistakes. A large segment of the Nigerian population expected him to put the coup plotters on trial. In fact at a meeting of members of the Supreme Military Council, a consensus was reached that the coup leaders should be tried. That was seen as the only way of restoring confidence in the new regime especially in the eyes of the people of northern Nigeria. As one of the plotters of the coup, Mr Ben Gbulie lamented recently, 'if we were shot, perhaps there would have been no civil war'.

People who were close to Major-General Ironsi have asserted that he was not strong enough to resist the pressures piled on him by Igbo military officers and influential civilians concerning their demand that he leave the coup plotters alone. This proved disastrous.

Also his appointment of mainly the Igbos into his advisory cabinet confirmed fears that he was moving along ethnic lines. The situation worsened when he appointed Francis Nwokedi, an Igbo, sole administrator 'to inquire into the unification of the regional public services'. The northerners concluded that he was determined to impose the domination of the south on them. It thus dawned on them that the prediction made by politicians like Jolly Tanko Yusuf was becoming a reality. Mr Nwokedi was reported to be arrogant and dictatorial in his handling of the matter. He is said to have merely told the northern civil servants that a unitary government was going to be established whatever opinions they held on the matter. This infuriated the north. On the 24 May 1966, in spite of the unanimous decisions of the four military governors against the establishment of a unitary form of government, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi took a contrary position. He abolished the regions. The establishment of a unitary government was a terrible mistake. For as far back as 1943 Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe saw the danger in such a form of government for Nigeria and opted

for a federation. Chief Obafemi Awolowo realising the peculiarities of the different parts of the country, also strongly rejected the idea of a unitary government as far back as 1947. The constitutional conferences of the late 1940s and 1950s which regionalised the country also had to do with the fear of consequences of a unitary form of government in Nigeria.

The timing of the decision was a bad one. Just before General Aguiyi-Ironsi announced the establishment of unitary government. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu promoted some civil servants to permanent secretary grade and told them to get ready to serve anywhere in the country. The promotion in the army also favoured mainly the Igbo officers. Added to these was the highly provocative attitude of the Igbo living in the north. They were reported to have given the impression that they were now in control. The northerners expressed their response in serious rioting in many parts of the north in May 1966. The Igbo were the target of the rioters. Many Igbo lost their lives. The uneasy situation which prevailed after the riots generated lots of rumours about planned coups in May and June 1966, by different factions in the army. The rumours intensified in July. On the 29 July 1966, a second coup took place. It was clearly a coup by northern officers and it was directed towards the Igbo military officers and men in the army. Many of them were killed.

Developments between July 1966 and July 1967

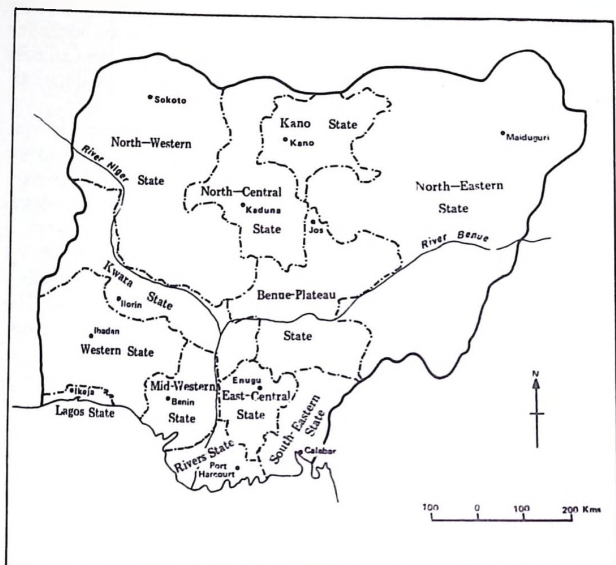
The main areas of events were Abeokuta, Lagos and Ibadan. The Head of State, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi, who was then in Ibadan was killed along with his host, the Military Governor of western region, Lt Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi. The coup was accompanied by general lawlessness and disorder, senseless looting and killings in the north. It was a tragedy. Most of those affected were innocent people. For three days there was no central government in Nigeria. The northern region contemplated secession. It was the intervention of men of goodwill, both Nigerians and non-Nigerians, including the British High Commissioner and the American Ambassador that saved the situation. Eventually, Lt Colonel Yakubu Gowon emerged as the Head of State. Among his first decisions was the abolition of the unitary government and the restoration of a federal form of government.

The July coup created new problems which compounded the devastating effect of the first coup. One of these was the virtual destruction of the Nigerian army as a cohesive instrument for the

maintenance of national unity. The chaotic situation resulted in the exodus of the Igbo. They had been brutally treated in the north. The exodus was partly induced by Ojukwu's call to the Igbo all over Nigeria to return to the east. This call was informed by the brutal treatment the Igbo received in the north.

A cloud of uncertainty hung over the country. Every move made by the federal government, including the establishment of an ad hoc constitutional conference in September 1966, was rendered ineffective by the Military Governor of eastern region, Lt Colonel Ojukwu. The Nigerian crisis now took the form of personality crisis between Lt Colonel Yakubu Gowon and Lt Colonel Ojukwu. All efforts to bring them together to iron out their differences were in vain. Eventually a meeting was held in Aburi, Ghana. Both leaders attended. The meeting ended in failure. This again led to further uncertainty about the future of the country. In addition to refusing to attend meetings. Lt Colonel Ojukwu also seized various federal government properties in eastern Nigeria. He also interfered with movement of goods to the north from the eastern parts, including those going to neighbouring countries such as Chad and Niger Republics. In spite of these the federal government tried to appease Lt Colonel Ojukwu. It was all in vain.

When it became quite clear that Lt Colonel Ojukwu had decided on secession, the federal government had to take a decisive action. On 27 May 1967, the federal government announced the creation of twelve states. The eastern region was split into three. While the bulk of the Igbo were in the East Central State, two other states, Rivers and South-Eastern states were also created. This meant not only cutting off the Igbo area from the main oil producing regions but also rendering it landlocked. The dreams of the minorities of the eastern region for their own states which went back to the 1940s was realised overnight and this gave them a stake in the federation of Nigeria. For obvious historical and political reasons they preferred to be part of Nigeria. In order to reinforce its decision and to deal with the crisis effectively, the federal government also declared a state of emergency. This included cutting off of communication links with the east. Three days later, on the 30 May 1967 Lt Colonel Ojukwu announced secession and the birth of a new republic, 'Biafra'. The crisis in the country had reached its peak. The month of June was used by both the federal government and 'Biafra' to prepare for war. Each side increased its military arsenal, mobilised its war machine and moved its troops to the border. The war broke out on 6 July 1967.



The twelve states

The course of the war

Initially the federal government termed the operation as 'a surgical police action and not a civil war.' It was intended to last only a few days, especially after the initial military successes of the federal troops. Within a short time several villages and towns, including the university town of Nsukka fell into federal hands. Early in August 1967 the 'Biafrans' successfully invaded the midwestern region. The 'Biafran' troops even made a lightening move into the western region. Their intended destination was Lagos. The invasion was facilitated by collaboration between Igbo military officers who dominated the military command in the midwest and Lt Colonel Ojukwu. This marked a turning point in the war. The federal government declared a full-scale war on 'Biafra'. The invasion also angered the non-Igbo population of the midwest and frightened the Yoruba. For the first

time, the war assumed a national dimension. It made their commitment to one Nigeria total.

In September/October 1967, the federal troops captured Enugu, the 'Biafran' capital. This was followed by the capture of the oil terminal town of Bonny and Calabar. The mid west was also liberated within a short-period. After one year of the war, more than two-thirds of the former eastern region had been liberated by the federal troops. By September 1968 the 'Republic of Biafra' had been considerably reduced in terms of the area controlled by the 'Biafrans'.

By mid-1968 and early 1969, however, the 'Biafrans' resisted the federal troops vigorously and effectively. The federal side which had hoped to celebrate victory in the early part of 1968 got bogged down and were mauled. The progress of the war had slowed down. News of the capture of towns came at long intervals. In the later part of 1968 and early part of 1969 the federal troops in fact suffered serious reverses. Earlier on, the 'Biafrans' inflicted severe blows on federal troops which twice attempted to capture Onitsha from the western side of the River Niger. The federal government suffered heavy losses in men and military equipment.

By the end of the April 1969, after nearly two years of bloody and destructive civil war, the anticipated victory eluded the federal side. The 'Biafrans' clung firmly to what was left of 'Biafra'. They had succeeded in effecting a stalemate. In addition, they scored a series of diplomatic successes by securing diplomatic recognition from four African countries, Tanzania, Zambia, Gabon and Ivory Coast. Haiti also recognised the republic. The 'Biafrans' also got moral as well material support from France and considerable sympathy from citizens of countries like Britain, Sweden, West Germany and the United States. From the very beginning the 'Biafrans' received support from Portugal, and Spain. They also received support from West Germany, Switzerland and many international agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

According to General Olusegun Obasanjo, the morale of the federal troops by the middle part of 1969 was at its lowest ebb. In March 1969, 'Biafran' troops successfully encircled 16 Federal Brigade in Owerri. They were eventually forced to withdraw in April 1969. Meanwhile riots were taking place in western Nigeria. The civilian population of Nigeria, gripped by high inflation also started to show signs of disgust with the prolongation of the war. Some people even feared that 'Biafra' might reverse the military position.

The federal government had to take a number of measures to save the situation. It changed the field commanders and reinforced the strength of the fighting force by increasing the number of fighting

men in the war front to 110,000. The morale of the soldiers was boosted by the acquisition and deployment of the heavy Soviet 122 mm guns, described by a military observer as being 'capable of hurling a shell thirteen miles with pin-point accuracy'. The guns were now trained at Owerri and a few other remaining towns in the 'Biafran'-held areas. The Air-force also intensified its operations. By mid-1969, the federal government was poised to bring an end to the war. In November 1969, the prelude to the final assault to crush the rebellion had started. The momentum was maintained until early in January 1970, when the federal army, in its first properly coordinated campaign of the whole war, cut off about 800 kilometres of the secessionists' territory by means of strategic link-up of 1st and 3rd divisions on Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene road. At the same time, the 2nd division succeeded in clearing the Onitsha-Enugu road.

By the first week of January 1970, the stalemate was over. This sudden turn of events was achieved partly by a carefully worked out federal plan which, among other things, involved full details of the exact operational tasks allotted to each division. The 'Biafran' high command itself was completely caught off balance by the simultaneous four pronged assault. Just before the collapse of 'Biafra', the 'Biafran' leader, Colonel Ojukwu fled to Ivory Coast where he settled down. Thus the war which was expected to last for only a few days lasted for thirty months.

Prolongation of the war

Nigerians and their friends, especially most African countries were eager to see a quick end to the war. This was partly due to the suffering it brought to all Nigerians and partly due to fear on increasing interference of the world powers in the war. The field commanders, and other officers notably, Colonel Murtala Muhammed, Colonel Danjuma, Colonel Benjamin Adekunle, Colonel Utuk and other officers were visibly worried over the prolongation of the war. It was also expected that the advantages which the federal government had over the 'Biafrans' in terms of resources, especially financial resources, manpower, etc would enable it to crush the 'Biafran' army in good time. Matters were not helped when the several predictions made by the Head of State, General Gowon concerning the end of the war did not materialise.

An important reason for this had to do with the extent to which Lt Colonel Ojukwu had prepared for the war. It has been asserted that the eastern region started to accumulate weapons way back in 1964.

This according to reports was intensified in 1965 and 1966. By May 1967, Lt Colonel Ojukwu boasted that he had accumulated enough weapons and had the biggest army in black Africa. Except from the middle part of 1969, he was also getting regular supply of war materials through various sources, especially France. The supply of weapons to the federal side seems to have been erratic. Nigeria's traditional suppliers of military weapons such as the USA and West Germany refused to supply weapons.

The federal field officers were also not experienced. Many of the experienced officers were tied to administrative work in Lagos and in the states. Some of the officers at the army headquarters in Lagos did not take their responsibility seriously. It was partly for this reason that the field commanders did not obey the instructions issued to them by the Supreme Headquarters. There were also conflicting orders issued by General Gowon to the field commanders. This delayed the war. Except towards the end of the war, there was no cooperation or coordination between federal field commanders. There was a lot of wastage in the human and material resources at the disposal of the federal field commanders. This was especially serious in view of the shortage of weapons and military equipment. Shortage of war materials was due partly to the tricks played by those who supplied them. Those who purchased the weapons both for the federal and 'Biafran' forces did not want the war to end quickly. They wanted to make a lot of money out of the war. So they sometimes deliberately delayed the delivery of war materials. Some Nigerians in both camps became wealthy as a result of this.

'Biafran' propaganda was also very effective. Their employment of Mark Press and other public relations agents in Europe and the USA publicised the war in their favour. The gist of 'Biafran' propaganda was that the federal government was committing genocide against the Igbo. They also claimed that the war was between Muslims and Christians. Many Europeans and Americans who accepted these views gave moral, material and financial support to 'Biafra'. Many 'Biafran' intellectuals and leaders went around the world in order to dish out propaganda and raise funds. Many of them converted the money they raised into their own use. The federal government believed that it was fighting a just war, to unite the country and so thought that it did not need to convince the Europeans and the Americans about it. Some European countries, especially France supported 'Biafra' because Lt Colonel Ojukwu promised them a free hand in the exploitation of Nigeria's mineral resources, especially oil. France contributed a great deal in prolonging the war.

The 'Biafran' soldiers also fought gallantly. Not only did they fight

in a familiar terrain, the determination to survive played an important role in the courage put up by the soldiers. It was this iron will that led the 'Biafrans' to use their initiative to produce assorted military weapons and equipment such as Molotov Cocktails, armoured vehicles, popularly known as 'Red Devils', rockets, mines, and even gas.

The war was also punctuated with peace conferences. The federal government, or at least the Head of State, General Gowon, did not want a military victory. Even when the case of 'Biafra' had become hopeless, when Lt Colonel Ojukwu fled to Ivory Coast, General Gowon still wanted negotiations rather than outright military victory. This concern was due to the belief that the war was between brothers and a negotiated settlement would lead to easy reconciliation. In the process, the federal government continually delayed the advance of its forces.

Conclusion

That Nigeria has been able to survive the terrible crises including the civil war which it passed through is a clear indication that the country has come to stay. This had to do with the degree of interdependence which has been developing between Nigerians for centuries. This interdependence has grown much stronger since the formal unification of the country in 1914. More than ever before, it is now much more futile for any part of the country to attempt to secede. The rapid pace of integration and reconciliation which took place after the war is a clear testimony to this degree of interdependence. In view of the diverse and complimentary nature of the resources of the country, a united Nigeria has the solution to the promotion of rapid development and provision for greater opportunities.

Summary

1. The Nigerian civil war which was preceded by series of crises was brought about by many factors.
2. Some of these factors were remote, others were immediate.
3. Among the remote causes of the war were the various roles played by the British colonial administration to keep the various components of the country apart, the opportunistic roles of the politicians, the negative roles of the intellectuals and the inordinate ambition displayed by many officers of the Nigerian army.
4. The immediate cause of the war was the coup of 15 January 1966. The coup was perceived as one-sided and the mistakes made

by the then Head of State, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi seem to have reinforced the perception. The suspicion which ensued from this led to the counter coup of July 1966.

5. From July 1966 to July 1967, the situation in the country was very gloomy.
6. The civil war which broke out on the 6 of July 1967 lasted 30 months. It was a bloody war. It resulted in the pathetic suffering of Nigerians, especially children and poor people in 'Biafra'.
7. The war, which should, in the first place, have been avoided, could have been brought to an end much earlier but for certain forces at work. These forces were both within and outside the country.

Questions

Essay

1. Discuss the various methods used by the British to prevent the emergence of Nigeria as a united country.
2. In what ways did Nigerian politicians contribute to the civil war in Nigeria?
3. What were the immediate causes of the civil war in Nigeria?
4. Discuss the factors which were responsible for the prolongation of the Nigerian civil war.
5. What lessons can you learn from the civil war?

Multiple-choice

1. The first political crisis which resulted in bloody conflict between the northern and the southern parts of the country took place in
 - A. 1914
 - B. 1946
 - C. 1953
 - D. 1966
 - E. 1967
2. The federal election which induced some army officers to attempt a coup took place in
 - A. 1959
 - B. 1964

- C. 1965
 - D. 1966
 - E. 1968
3. The two top Nigerian army officers who competed for the post of General Officer Commanding the Nigeria Army were
 - A. Brigadiers Zakariya Maimalari and S Ademulegun
 - B. Brigadiers Ademulegun and Ogundipe
 - C. Brigadiers Aguiyi-Ironsi and Zakariya Maimalari
 - D. Brigadiers Aguiyi-Ironsi and S Ademulegun
 - E. none of the above
 4. Twelve States were created in Nigerian on
 - A. 29 July 1966
 - B. 6 July 1967
 - C. 27 May 1967
 - D. 30 May 1967
 - E. 23 June 1966

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Chapter 8 The military administration 1966-1979

Introduction

Ordinarily, the military is not supposed to rule a country. Its primary responsibility is to defend a country against external aggression. It is only when the police and other security agencies fail to restore peace that it is called upon to provide internal security. And after this must have been done the military is expected to go back to the barracks. In Nigeria, this has not been the case. The military after restoring peace and order or established what it normally terms a 'corrective regime' falls prey to the same ills for which they had overthrown the civilian government. In addition to this the military leaves behind legacies that tend to undermine the stability of the civilian government that takes over power from it. This often generates to such an extent that the military 'feels duty bond' to intervene again. In the process, the country suffers, especially in relation to the development of political consciousness and healthy democratic processes.

This chapter examines the treatment of political and economic developments in the country in the period between 1960 and 1966. This formed the background for military intervention in government. The nature of the military before 1966 is also discussed in order to show that the military, being a product of colonial and neocolonial institution also suffered from the same ills which plagued the other members of the Nigerian ruling class. Due to the pervasive nature of the myth surrounding the military at that time, and because of the mismanagement of the country's affairs in the period between 1960 and 1966, many Nigerians welcomed the military's intervention in government. The performance of the military in government constitutes the most important aspect of this chapter. In this regard, the reality of the military regime and the assessment of its performance is discussed.

Background to military rule

The military came to power in January 1966 because the civilians

failed to rule the country properly. From the time the country attained independence in October 1960 to the time the civilian government was sacked by the military in January 1966 the country witnessed series of crises which featured oppression, political violence, corruption and other ills. By the end of December 1965 the situation in the country had reached a stage which warranted military intervention.

Political violence and oppression

Throughout the country, there was political intolerance among the major political parties which existed then. The negative attitudes which each of them adopted against opposing parties in their respective regions resulted in the outbreak of political violence.

Northern region

In this region, the major political party was the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). The NPC represented the interests of the established order in northern Nigeria. Because of this, its policies and rule were regarded as oppressive. As a result, a number of political parties emerged to challenge its dominance. These were the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Borno Youth Movement (BYM) and Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP). These largely local parties (except NEPU) declared themselves as champions of the talakawa (commoners) against the widespread abuses of the emirs and chiefs who represented the Native Authorities. These parties rose to challenge the excesses of the police, alkali courts, the tax collection agents and other Native Authority officials who controlled land and supervised activities in the markets. In this regard, NEPU stood out clearly. It was clearly the most radical, articulate, and ideologically-based party of the whole lot. It adopted an anti-feudal position and undertook to champion the cause of the masses throughout northern Nigeria. It undertook to fight for, defend and protect the talakawa's major means of existence (the farmlands), and to ensure social justice. NEPU, like all the other political parties, was indirectly fighting the northern regional government since the local feudal lords and the Native Authority which they ran formed the very foundation of the northern Nigerian government.

Because these parties were local — except NEPU which had a regional spread and to some extent, UMBC which claimed to champion the cause of the 'Middle Belt', that is, the central Nigeria area — they had to affiliate themselves to the other dominant political parties in the south. These were the National Council of Nigeria and the

Cameroons (NCNC) largely in eastern Nigeria and the Action Group (AG) in western Nigeria. NEPU, for example, allied with NCNC while UMBC, BYM and ITF allied with AG. Due to the threats which these local parties posed to the northern establishment, especially the oppressive and corrupt Native Authority system, the NPC, in collaboration with the native authorities took a number of measures to deal severely with the supporters of these local parties. The NPC which controlled the government of northern Nigeria was particularly bitter with the local parties for daring to go into alliance with the southern political parties which not only threatened the NPC-dominated federal government but were also undermining it seriously in its home base, the north. As the Native Authority system became more and more oppressive, the leaders and the members of the local parties became more vocal and uncompromising in their demand for social justice and fair play. The NPC-controlled government of northern Nigeria had to use violence to silence the protests of the people.

In 1964, the peasants of Rafin Gora in the former Kastina province, now Kastina State were severely dealt with because of their association with NEPU. The Native Authority dispatched soldiers and police to the village. And after two days of military operation the village was completely razed to the ground. At least 70 houses were completely burnt down, and many people, including women and children were killed. Those who survived sought refuge in places as far away as Borno. The villagers' properties, including cattle, sheep, goats, chicken, grains were either burnt down or confiscated by the local rulers.

The village of Dandunni in the the present day Kankiya local government of Kastina State suffered the same fate. In Dawakin Tofa, in present day Kano State, supporters of the opposition party underwent similar experience. It must be stressed, however, that it was not the talakawa who opposed the dominant party that suffered. Even princes and the educated elite who dared to challenge the status quo paid dearly for daring to raise a voice of protest. In Bida, a vicious campaign of intimidation was launched against Abubakar Zukogi and his family for being a member of NEPU. In addition to being subjected to all sorts of harassment, he was banned from attending the mosque on Fridays.

In Borno, there was a much more vicious campaign against the leadership and followers of BYM. Its leader was Alhaji Ibrahim Imam, a leading member of Borno elite, and also the first secretary general of the NPC. He resigned his post because of the undemocratic method of selecting leaders in NPC. As a result he suffered immensely. During the campaigns for the federal elections of 1959 several vehi-

cles loaded with armed thugs attacked his house, killing several people. He escaped and ended up in exile in Lagos. His supporters in other parts of Maiduguri were also attacked.

In the Tiv areas of Benue province, the same harassment, intimidation and oppression, gave rise to the Tiv riots which lasted intermittently till the military take over in 1966. During the period of riots hundreds of peasants were killed or injured, thousands of them were arrested. Their houses were destroyed during the military operations. Similar uprisings though differing in degrees also took place in other parts of northern Nigeria.

Western region

The political violence in western Nigeria was the most important and immediate reason for the overthrow of the civilian government. The violence had its origin in the crisis of leadership which developed between the then premier, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola and the founder and leader of the Action Group Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The latter was an energetic and powerful personality. As the leader of the AG he felt justified to have an interest in the day-to-day running of the AG government in western Nigeria. On the other hand, Chief Akintola complained against Chief Obafemi Awolowo's strategy of 'serving in Lagos and ruling in the Western region'. The crisis eventually degenerated to the point of expelling the premier from the AG. Akintola, however, had enough supporters to continue in office despite his expulsion.

In order to survive against the machinations of the AG however, his party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) formed an alliance with the NPC. This only worsened the crisis. It developed into an open violence in May 1962 when the members of the House of Assembly had a free-for-all fight in the House. The violence quickly spread to other parts of the region. This led to the declaration of a state of emergency in the region. Chief Akintola's premiership was consequently terminated. However, when the state of emergency was lifted he resumed office as premier. This was without consultation with the people of the region. Meanwhile, the leadership of the AG, consisting of Chief Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Michael Omosade, Grace Ikoku and Akanbi Onitiri were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for their alleged attempt to overthrow the federal government. Supporters of Chief Awolowo interpreted the judgment as being politically motivated. This further fuelled the political animosity between the supporters of the two parties in the region.

Eastern region

Here the political problems manifested less in open violence. But there is no doubt that the minority areas of the region, Rivers, Ogoja and Cross-River as well as the southern Cameroons, which then formed part of Nigeria, complained bitterly against the oppression in the Igbo-dominated NCNC. It was partly as a result of such grievances that made the people of southern Cameroons vote to join Cameroon Republic in the 1961 plebiscite. By 1966, the situation in the minority areas had reached a stage of organised violence by public-spirited individuals such as Isaac Adoka Boro.

The census and 1964 federal elections controversies

Two important national issues which heated the political climate of the country were the census of 1961 and 1963, and the federal elections of 1964. The figures produced by the census of 1961 generated a lot of controversy among politicians in the country. The figures were said to have favoured the south. The north suspected that the southern politicians, especially those in the NCNC instigated the inflation of the figures so that they could capture power at the federal level. The figures were thus completely rejected. A recount was rescheduled in 1963. The result was this time said to have favoured the north as the census gave it 55 per cent of the population of the country. The NCNC, though in coalition with the NPC in the federal government rejected the 1963 figures and suggested a recount. The federal government insisted that anyone who was dissatisfied with the figures should go to court. In this way the federal government silenced the opposition. The controversy, however, raged on.

A much more serious issue was the 1964 federal elections fiasco. In order to effectively contest the elections, the various political parties formed alliances. The NCNC which was still nursing its grievances against the NPC over the census issue was determined to capture power at the federal level by winning the 1964 federal elections. It therefore sought friends in the AG and the coalition was joined by the NEPU and the UMBC to form United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). In response, the NPC with the NNDP and the Midwest Democratic Front (MDF) formed the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). Even before the day of the election, however, the NPC, using all sorts of tactics, including refusal to supply registration papers, detention of candidates, etc, prevented the candidates of

UPGA in the north from filing their nomination. As a result of this 67 NPC candidates were declared elected 'unopposed'. This angered the UPGA. The election was therefore completely boycotted in the eastern region where NCNC was in full control. It was also partly boycotted in the west, north and mid-west.

Whereas the UPGA rejected the results of the elections, the NNA accepted them. There was a stalemate at the federal level. For four anxious days, the nation waited for a new government. The Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the President Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe each sought the support of the armed forces. Eventually a compromise was reached and on 4 January 1965, the President appointed Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as the Prime Minister.

Corrupt practices by the politicians

During the colonial period there was corruption, especially in Native Authorities and the local governments. In the First Republic corruption was also rampant among top politicians. This top politicians diverted public money into the accounts of their political parties. They also used public institutions such as Regional Development Corporation and Regional Marketing Boards to enrich individuals who were staunch supporters of their respective parties. This they did at the expense of the poor peasants whose money were taken away not only directly in the form of taxes but also through the deliberate underpricing of such produce like cocoa, cotton, groundnut, palm oil, etc. which the peasants cultivated. The huge profits made by the government agencies, notably, the marketing boards were harvested by the four regional governments and used in all sorts of dubious ways.

Equally serious was the collusion between the top politicians and foreigners to defraud the country. This was done through the activities of some banks, transport companies and other commercial institutions. In 1959, for example, the AG government of western Nigeria and the NPC government of northern Nigeria wasted about £1,600,000 of public money through the purchase of the much overvalued assets of Arab Brothers Limited. The venture proved to be worthless to the two governments.

For a number of reasons, including attempts to please the British who handed over power to them, the politicians allowed the British and European traders to purchase the various commodities produced in the country at ridiculously cheap prices while imported goods

were sold at high prices. Between 1957/58 and 1960/66, for example, while most oil exporting countries were paid £270,340 for 1000 barrels of crude oil, Nigeria received an average of only £190 for the same quantity. This amounted to an estimated underpricing of Nigerian crude oil exports to the tune, in six years, of £20,000,000. The underpricing of agricultural commodities, which dominated the exports of the country until the 1970s, was probably even more serious.

In the process of draining the country of its wealth, many of the politicians built expensive houses, bought expensive cars and indulged in all sorts of luxurious life styles. Meanwhile, the country grew poorer and poorer in spite of its enormous resources. When Nigerian politicians started to run the government in 1954, Nigeria's total foreign assets amounted to £243,700,000. But this fell to £174,200,000 in 1960 and by 31 March, 1964, it had declined to £76,800,000, much lower than in 1948. Had it not been for the inflow of foreign exchange due to the oil industry, the country would have gone bankrupt by 1964. To a large extent the military take over of government in January 1966, had to do with the mismanagement of the economy by the politicians.

Slide to military intervention: the deepening political and other crises in 1965

By the end of 1965, the civilian regime was near its collapse. The various crises which had developed in all parts of the country continued to gather momentum without being checked. The most important of these were the Tiv riots of the north and the crisis in western Nigeria. By 1965, soldiers had joined in the Tiv riots. In the wake of the riots, hundreds of innocent lives were lost and thousands rendered homeless as town after town lay ravaged by the military operations originally meant to restore order.

The crisis in western Nigeria actually was the immediate cause for the military coup. Chief Akintola was restored to power after the lifting of the state of emergency without any form of consultation with the people of the region. The electorate waited patiently for the regional election slated for October 1965 to decide who would rule them. But before the date of the election, Chief Akintola, the outgoing premier was reported to have told the electorate that whether they voted for his party or not, his party would still be in power after the election. One of the reasons for his arrogance was his belief that the federal might was behind him because of the alliance of his party with

the NPC. Akintola and his supporters returned to power in what observers regarded as a massive rigging of the October 1965 election in western Nigeria. In the face of mounting violence Akintola was reported to have said that he would rather die in office than quit voluntarily.

In response, his opponents or rather enemies used all sorts of weapons at their disposal to destroy his government. There was total chaos and hooliganism became the order of the day, to the extent that the region came to be known as the 'wild west'. One of the most fearful aspects of the violence was the practice of 'wetie' (meaning, soak him up). It was a practice in which political opponents and their properties, including houses were methodically doused with petrol and set ablaze. It led to large scale destruction of lives and property. By December 1965 there was total break down of law and order in western Nigeria. The situation in the west disrupted movements of people and goods from the north and the east to the region. By early January the violence had spread to the outskirts of Lagos.

Meanwhile all the Prime Minister could say in an interview in Accra, Ghana during this time was that the tragedy of western Nigeria was 'the handiwork of some crazy people of that part of the country'. He then went ahead with his decision to host the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in Lagos amid the serious political crisis facing the country. It would appear that the federal government, possibly at the instance of Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of northern Nigeria and the President of NPC, was more anxious to preserve Akintola as Premier of western region than to restore law and order. It was only after severe criticisms that the federal government decided to act. In December 1965, the Council of Ministers authorised the army to draw up a contingency plan to restore order in the western region. The 1 January 1966 was set as the date on which the operation would begin. But due to the forthcoming conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, the operation was shifted to 17 January 1966. The operation did not take place. Two days before the commencement of the operation, a section of the Nigerian military launched a coup.

By 1965 most Nigerians had become disillusioned and disaffected towards the various governments of the federation. The mounting political, economic and social problems facing the country were being dodged by the politicians. Nepotism, corruption, indiscipline, tribalism, sectionalism and a host of other problems became rife. Institutions which could have helped in solving the problems, for example, the courts, the Census Commission, the Federal Electoral Commission, the police and finally the armed forces, were being politicised.

It was this desperate situation that the military took advantage of and overthrew the civilian government.

The nature of the Nigerian military forces by January 1966

Until recently, the least known of our national institutions was the military. Before their entry into government in 1966, the armed forces, which until the early 1960s was largely made up of the army, had little physical interaction with the general public. The army formations were confined to the national and regional headquarters and one or two other towns, notable Kano and Abeokuta. On a few occasions, they were, as a group, exposed to the public either during important ceremonies or when called upon to suppress revolt. Their social activities were largely confined to the barracks, especially the Officers' Mess. The general public was kept out of the military barracks and military installations for security purposes. As a result of all these, the military became a mystery sort of. People began to weave myths about the military. Stories about their achievements in the Congo, their smart appearance in uniforms, especially during ceremonies all made them to be extra disciplined, tough and almost superhuman. They appeared to have remained untouched by the notoriety which plagued many national institutions and the 'bloody civilians'.

Reading through about one and a half dozens of books written by retired military officers one comes to the conclusion that the military is no different from the other national institutions. Their behaviour within the first few years in government showed that once the uniforms, the guns and pretensions to being supermen are removed, members of the armed forces are indeed a product as well as a victim of colonialism and neocolonialism and imbibed all the ills that plagued the Nigerian ruling classes.

Origin and character of the Nigerian military

For a proper appreciation of the roles of the military in government in the period 1966-1979, there is a need to know its origin and nature. The Nigerian military until the early 1960s, when the navy and the airforce were created, was largely made up of the army. The army still occupies the dominant position in the military. The Nigerian army

was transformed from a colonial army that was created for the conquest of the various parts of the Nigeria area. After the conquest, till the time of attainment of independence in 1960, it remained a colonial instrument for coercing Nigerians into submission and to assist the British to fight their wars in their far-flung empire.

Before independence, the officer cadre of the army was dominated by the British. Of the 200 officers, only 15 were Nigerians. There were 300 British non-commissioned officers in Nigeria in 1960. In 1964, there were still 250 of them in the country. The Nigerian army therefore was a dedicated disciple of the British army. By 1960, indeed by 1965 or so, the army was not a nationalistic organisation. Like its foster parent, the British army, it was far from being political, ideological or revolutionary. The army was the most conservative and least revolutionary of all the national institutions. The Nigerian army was therefore another ex-colonial institution which had an officer corps with a social ideology identical to that of the senior civil servants and the politicians. The only difference was that the officers had a dash of the Sandhurst contempt for civilians. This made the army both historically and constitutionally incapable of destroying the ills, for example, corruption, which plagued the Nigerian society. These ills had their roots in the system of the bureaucracies and in the clan and family organisations.

The Majors who planned and executed the *coup d'état* in January 1966, and the Colonels and Lt Colonels who crushed their revolt and subsequently replaced the politicians were in the same social class with the civilian elite. They had extensive personal connections with the permanent secretaries, top corporate executives, other managerial staff, emirs, obas and chiefs. Yet these and the politicians who they booted out of power, (and who were actually invited back to participate in the military administration the following year), were the people who perpetrated the ills in the society. In fact not only did the military maintain the status quo, it also compounded the country's problems.

Degree of politicisation and political ambitions of the officer corps by 1966

When we say, as we did above, that the Nigerian military was not political or ideological, we mean that they did not have the political and ideological training which would make them patriotic. By 1966, the largest segment of the officer corp consisted of very conservative elements who devoted themselves to the attainment of the very top in

their career. In some cases they did this with the aid of top politicians and senior civil servants. Partly as a result of the nature of their training and orientation, and partly due to their ambition to get to the top of their career as quickly as possible, many of them were prepared to do the biddings of the politicians. As a result the politicians and other influential individuals worked towards the total control and manipulation of the army for their own selfish ends.

These influential individuals gained control of the army by helping the members gain promotions and postings to strategic locations. In this way, the army became divided along political party lines. Before the first indigenous General Officer Commanding (GOC) the Nigerian army, in succession to the British Major General Welby Evarard, was appointed in 1964, the political fever had gripped the top Nigerian army officers. The appointment of Major General J T U Aguiyi-Ironsi as the GOC was fully politicised by the fellow contestant, Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun.

So, contrary to the well established myth, the Nigerian military was really fully politicised. The decision to conduct recruitment into the officer corps on the basis of regional representation was politically motivated. Hitherto, the eastern region dominated the officer corps by more than 60 per cent. The subsequent allocation of 50 per cent of positions in the officer corps to the northern region attracted deep resentment from the officers of eastern origin. The involvement of the army in putting down the rioters in western Nigeria and the Tiv areas were also deeply resented by some of the officers. They thought that the politicians were merely using the army to suppress their political opponents. Some of the operations were alleged to have been directed by the politicians. This further divided the army along party lines.

Some of the top military officers were openly identified with top politicians. Some of these used army resources to curry the politicians' favour. There is, indeed every reason to believe that the guts displayed by some of the top political and government functionaries had to do with the assured backing they had from the top military officers. Serious allegations were made and with some justification, to the effect that some of the top military officers attended nocturnal party meetings with politicians. Some army officers were believed to have been involved in the rigging of the elections in western Nigeria.

Quite a number of the military officers also nursed inordinate political ambitions. They saw the army as the only set-up in the country which would in time, offer them openings to exercise political power. Therefore, some of them abandoned their prestigious jobs for the army. These army officers, however, wanted power not because they would use it to better the living conditions of the masses

but just to wield influence and amass wealth. Even one of the most brilliant of the self-styled revolutionary officers, Lt Colonel Victor Banjo admired 'mixed-economy', a pervaded version of capitalism.

Limitations of the military

The books written by the retired military officers have clearly shown that all the ills which affected many of the civilian officials also affected the military officers. Tribalism, corruption, greed, gross indiscipline, professional carelessness and a host of others were rampant in the army. Ordinarily, these lapses would not have concerned us in this chapter, but they are important for understanding the role of the military in government. As a set of Nigerians with a mission of establish a 'corrective government', it would only be natural to assume that they were free of these weaknesses. The fact of the matter was that the military suffered the same ills as the governments it came to replace. This again is well-documented in the books written by the military officers themselves. The influence of corruption on the military in government is obvious. A corrupt person or corrupt government cannot be expected 'to discharge his or its responsibility efficiently or impartially. The phenomenon of the growth of corruption in the period 1966-1979 is discussed in the section dealing with assessment of the military regimes.

Another ill which had disastrous effects on the military in government was tribalism. Even some of the leading members of the self-proclaimed revolutionaries who toppled the civilian government were tribalists. It is widely accepted that the most important reason for the fall of Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi's government was his total reliance on the Igbo military and civilian advisers. This was to the extent that out of twenty-one promotions in the army in April 1966, for example, eighteen were Igbo officers. Quite a number of Yoruba officers were by-passed. Gowon, when he was the Head of State also filled the federal guards with his tribesmen. This explains their preponderance in the February 1976 coup.

Promotion in the army was not spared either. It generated so much bitterness that it caused a lot of ill-feelings among the officers. This affected their performance even at the most critical period of this nation's history - during the civil war. a number of sector commanders seriously relaxed their efforts in the military campaigns because they claimed to have been passed over for promotions, and also because of the luxurious and lavish life-styles displayed by military officers based in Lagos during Gowon's wedding ceremony. One of

them was reported to have taken to trading while still at the war front. In fact some of the field commanders were so indisciplined that they unilaterally abandoned the war front.

One could catalogue so many other limitations of the military which was to definitely inhibit their performance in government. Of course it is not being suggested that there were no upright, disciplined and patriotic military officers. There were. It must also be pointed out that not all the civilian government functionaries were bad. Many of the permanent secretaries were disciplined and dedicated to their jobs and to the country. But the military arrogated to itself saintly attributes and mystified itself to such an extent that the unsuspecting general public came to regard its personnel as saviours when they toppled the civilian governments.

Military intervention and establishment of administration

In spite of widespread rumours about an impending coup d'état in military and top government circles, the 15 January 1966 coup came to the people of Nigeria as a surprise. On the eve of the coup, circulars were sent out from the Army Headquarters, Lagos to military formations in the country warning them about an impending coup. Surprisingly, the military top brass in Lagos, instead of tightening up security, hosted a huge party in the house of Second Brigade Commander, Zakariya Maimalari. The coup plotters in Lagos attended the party and it was straight from the party that they went into action. They mercilessly gunned down top military officers who had barely returned to their homes and hotels from the party, including their host, Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari.

In Kaduna, in spite of the suspicious and fearsome military exercises which preceded the coup, and in spite of the circular concerning the impending coup, the military brass, including the Commander of the First Brigade, Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun, his second in Command, Colonel Sodeinde, were asleep when the coup plotters found them. They and their wives were subsequently killed. That the coup failed was due to the inefficiency of the so-called revolutionaries rather than the alertness, discipline and 'military preparedness' of the loyal troops.

People's reception to the 15 January coup d'état

The coup was welcomed with enthusiasm in western Nigeria and by

radical, progressive elements. In eastern Nigeria, the coup was welcomed with 'mix-feelings'. In the north, abundant evidence suggests that there was sufficient support for a change of government among the masses. Even some elements of the elite welcomed it. In several parts of the north, for example, Kano, Katsina and Zaria, many of the former ministers of the regional government, provincial commissioners, parliamentary secretaries and other top politicians were molested and jeered at on their return to their respective provinces. The local Chairmen of NPC went underground for a while because of fear of revenge for the atrocities they perpetrated against the people.

Some members of the elite in the north, especially the civil servants in Kaduna adopted an attitude of 'wait and see'. Had the new military government performed its role properly, the coup would have served as a basis for moving towards stabilising the situation in the country. But this was not to be.

Problems of the early military administration: January 1966 to May 1966

After putting down the 'mutiny' of the 'dissidents' in the army and with the collapse of the civilian government, the military government embarked on the administration of the country. It faced many problems. They ranged from constitutional, political and administrative crises to that of ineptitude, indecision, nepotism, tribalism and fear of domination. The military, for the first time came face to face with the problems of the country. These are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Politically and administratively, the military government did not effect any change in government beyond posting four military officers as governors to the four regions. These governors, with the service chiefs, namely the commanders of the army, and airforce, the Head of State and the Inspector General of Police constituted the Supreme Military Council. The council was charged with the making of laws and policy formulation for the country. The federal and regional civil services were left intact. The former civilian governors in the four regions were re-designated as 'advisers' to the new military governors. So the status quo was maintained.

Meanwhile pressures were mounting on the new military regime. One of the problems was the fate of the military officers who participated in the coup. All of them were eventually rounded up, including one of the principal plotters who fled the country, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna. They were initially detained in Kirikiri before being dispersed to various prisons all over the country. While the members of

the Supreme Military Council wanted them tried, and while the Head of State, Aguiyi-Ironsi himself was clearly afraid of them, he, as the Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces could not have the political will to bring them to trial. Both civilian and military elite of the Igbo insisted that they should not be tried. According to Major General David Akpode Ejoor, one of the loyal officers who crushed the coup and who was the commanding officer of the battalion stationed at Enugu, Sir Francis Ibiam as early as the 16 of January, when the operations of the coup had hardly finished, warned that the 'boys', that is, the coup plotters should not be 'touched'.

The failure of Aguiyi-Ironsi to bring the coup plotters to book and several other mistakes which he committed led to the 29 July 1966 counter coup by the northern officers. From then on, until the end of the civil war, the country faced a fearful degree of uncertainty. The most unfortunate events involved the killings of Nigerians of eastern origin living in northern Nigeria. This event was seized upon by the politically ambitious military governor of eastern Nigeria, Colonel Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu. From August 1966 to July 1967, the country watched helplessly a strange 'struggle' between Ojukwu and Gowon. Both officers held the country to ransom. After the collapse of the constitutional conferences and peace-meetings to reconcile the two contenders, the country moved to one of its grimmest moments, the civil war. Throughout this period, the operations of the governments of the federation were reduced to mere routine. This was a bad beginning for the military administration.

By March 1967, it was quite clear that Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu 'had laboured enough to convince himself that the Easterners were no longer wanted in the country'. Several delegations of patriotic Nigerians visited and pleaded with him at Enugu to desist from his plan to secede. The military governor of the northern region and others, including Gowon, also expressed their deep feelings over the unfortunate killings. It was all in vain. Ojukwu had made up his mind about pulling the east out of Nigeria. To prevent this the military administration for the first time, took a decisive constitutional and political decision by creating twelve new states in the country. The three powerful regions (the mid-western region had, before 1963, formed part of western Nigeria) were broken-up into states in March 1967. Soon after the creation of the twelve states the military thought it wise to establish executive councils (there had been no executive councils since the overthrow of the civilian government) at the federal and the state levels. Consciously or otherwise, the military fell back on the same 'corrupt and decadent' politicians they had overthrown barely

one year earlier. Most of the top politicians were back in power again as members of the executive councils. The country was in reality back to square one. It could even be worse than square one because the 'crafty' civilians engaged by the military administration were not accountable to anybody.

The reality of Nigeria's military regimes

Political and administrative structures of government were established at the federal and state levels as from 1967. But these structures of government did not begin to function until after the civil war in January 1970. The attention of the governments, especially the federal government was focused on the prosecution of the civil war. Priority in terms of allocation of resources were given to the military and political needs of the civil war. This meant that the newly created states, in addition to facing infrastructural problems such as office accommodation, housing for workers, etc. at their respective state headquarters, also needed adequate financing. This was particularly the case with the states which were created from the former eastern region. The would-be headquarters of the three states had to be liberated from 'Biafra'. Until the end of the civil war they were in some respects under the fear of being overrun or of sudden attacks from the 'Biafran' soldiers and planes.

The development strategies of the military administration

In the early 70s, especially from 1973 the financial situation of the country changed remarkably. This was not due to the imaginative, resourceful and disciplined management of the resources of the country. It was due to the Middle Eastern war which curtailed the supply of Middle Eastern oil to the Western capitalist countries and the insistence of some militant oil producing countries, notably, Libya on getting better prices for the crude oil. Almost overnight money started to pour into the country to such an extent that the then Head of State, Yakubu Gowon, 'complained' that his only problem was what to do with so much money.

It was from this period that the military administration mindlessly poured money into all sorts of projects. Roads, airports, educational

institutions, medical institutions, telecommunications, etc. were started without adequate plans.

Dubious foreign contractors with no financial resources flocked into the country from all parts of the world. They and the local contractors, many of whom also had no financial resources whatsoever, were advanced large sums of money from the public treasuries as 'mobilisation fees'. Many of them absconded on collecting the money or abandoned the projects after just laying the foundations. Contractors who were to supply various equipment to government institutions either failed to supply the goods or supplied old (reconditioned) ones which broke down as soon as they were put to use. The government lost huge sums of money as a result of these shoddy deals. Because of the seeming inexhaustible wealth, Nigeria embarked on an importation jamboree. From luxury cars to sand (for sports stadia), from frozen chicken to toothpicks and from professors to labourers. Nigerian children from the age of kindergarten to adulthood were sent out in thousands on government and private scholarships to study in different parts of the world. The military administration all of a sudden discovered that Nigeria had a rich culture, so huge sums of money were set aside for cultural festivals all over the country. Numerous cultural troupes were sent to all parts of the world, to prove that Nigeria and indeed Africa had a rich culture. These expensive cultural ventures culminated in the hosting of the World Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977.

The military administration under Yakubu Gowon, finding so much money left, in spite of these 'gigantic programmes', decided to send gifts to poor countries of the world, for example, countries of the Caribbean.

The civilian factor in the military administration

The question actually arises as to what was actually responsible for this state of affairs? The answer to this could be found in the organic linkages which developed and later intensified between the civilian and military elite who ran the governments. The military content in the government was actually small and superficial. This partly had to do with development in the military itself.

By July 1967 possibly 80 per cent or more of Nigeria's senior military officers had either been killed in the two coups, detained or trapped in the eastern and mid-western Nigeria. Yet, the creation of more states and the outbreak of the civil war required the services of

senior officers. This problem was solved in a military fashion. The junior officers were promoted almost 'with immediate effect'. One of the features of the Nigerian military was the rapid promotions enjoyed by military officers. This was of course not a substitute for maturity, experience, and their attendant discipline. Shortage of military personnel may account for the prominence of police officers in the military government of 1966-1979. The extent of the contribution of the police officers to the corruption of those regimes could not be underrated. The first major scandal which rocked Gowon's regime involved one of the police officers who was the Governor of Benue-Plateau State. All the police officers who were appointed governors were found to have corruptly enriched themselves by the probe instituted by General Murtala Mohammed's regime in 1976.

For all practical purposes therefore, the military administration had to depend on the civilian politicians and permanent secretaries in running the governments. The military, like the British colonial officials knew that they had no mass support in the country. The important thing to note was the calibre of people involved in the military administration. It has already been pointed out that the first set of four military governors had the former governors, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, for the north, Sir Francis Ibiyam for the east, Sir Odeleye Fadahunsi for the west and Chief Jereton Mariere for the mid-west as advisers. Their ages, experiences in government and standing in society were so important that they must have exercised considerable influence on the young military governors. Similarly, the various executive councils, were filled by former party leaders and ministers like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Aminu Kano, Joseph Tarka, Chief Enahoro, etc. Since these were politicians, every decision they took were politically motivated. They were planning for future politics. Some of them tried to accumulate money for political activities in the future. They also enriched their supporters.

There were also the powerful federal permanent secretaries. Some of them were so powerful that they were referred to as 'super perm secs'. Their guts had to do with the fact that while the military were busy trying to break-up the country especially during the second coup, they and some intellectuals and one or two foreign missions advised against it. From then, especially in view of the inexperience of the military in public administration, they arrogated to themselves the roles of advisers. These permanent secretaries became so powerful especially during the civil war that they even participated in purely military matters. It should be noted that it was they and the civilian commissioners, who as a result of their experiences and connections with the outside world that played a leading role in the

successful prosecution of the civil war. Even at the state level, the civilian officials, ex-ministers and other experienced professionals exercise a lot of power. Behind the scenes, there were also emirs, chiefs and obas who exercised a lot of influence on the military. Whereas the politicians treated the traditional rulers poorly, the military glorified them. Whatever powers the traditional rulers have today have been largely derived from the military.

Some of the military officers also belonged to all sorts of associations, including the secret societies. These and several other pressure groups such as the 'Kaduna Mafia' came to exercise a lot of influence on the military, to the extent that some civilians instigated and freely participated in military coups. So, due to a number of limitations such as numerical strength, lack of experience, legitimacy, etc., the influence of the military in the day-to-day running of the government was very limited indeed.

It would appear that the only thing military about military administrations is their take-over of government by force. Added to this are the fitful and occasional issuing of empty threats of dismissals, locking out of civil servants in the morning and the occasional purge of the civil service. It has been clearly seen that all these are counter-productive. As soon as a new military governor is appointed, the workers behave for a few days and then relapse into their slumber. From the political and administrative perspective therefore, the military occupied a largely parasitic position in government.

Assessment of the military administration

Assessment in this context involves the evaluation of the administration. That is, to weigh its achievements against its failures. In assessing an individual, institution or a regime, certain yardsticks are used. Among other things, the performance of a regime is compared to that of the one it replaced. In this case the resources available to both the old and new regimes for the implementation of their programmes must be taken into account. The reasons given for overthrowing a government, the promises made by the new regime to the general public would also be used as a yardstick. For the military, it could be assessed against the legitimate aspirations and expectations of the masses (since the masses have always welcomed military regimes as their 'saviours'). Its performance could also be viewed broadly against the general march of the country down to the present; or against the

claims of military regimes to prompt actions. The ability of the military to regiment its governors and other officials into decision making processes which is an advantage over the unwieldy situation during civilian rule, could also be seen as a legitimate yardstick. Finally the lengthy stay in office by the military, thirteen years vis-a-vis the civilians, five years, especially in relations to the material and financial resources at their disposal, provides a basis for comparison. It is also important to know how permanent and beneficial are their policies and programmes to the country and to the majority of the people.

As had been pointed out earlier, the military administration, because of the huge financial resources at their disposal embarked upon all sorts of projects. These included the creation of more states, local government reforms; introduction of Public Enterprises Promotion Decree, otherwise known as Indigenisation Decree. The military established industrial, banking, insurance and financial organisations aimed at accelerating growth and expansion in the various sectors of the economy. Education was not left out. UPE was introduced and new universities and colleges of education were established. The medical services were expanded through the building of new hospitals and clinics. Vehicle assembly plants and iron and steel complexes were established while agriculture was encouraged. Roads, airports, seaports, dams, etc. were built. Above all, the military strongmen from Major Chukuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, through General Aguiyi-Ironsi, Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Mohammed, to Olusegun Obasanjo, promised the nation the eradication of corruption and provision of social justice, etc.

All these seem to be impressive achievements. But if each of them is taken one at a time and subjected to critical examination, it will be discovered that either not much efforts had been made by government in planning or executing them or the amount of money spent on each of the projects was in many cases not worth half its value. A government commission clearly established that all the contracts were highly inflated by contractors and government officials. Some of the buildings erected, for example, the UPE buildings, collapsed as soon as they were completed. The effects of the programmes had no element of permanency or general benefit to the Nigerian public.

During the period of study many foreigners flocked into the country and ended up in defrauding it with the connivance of the Nigeria elite of billions of Naira. This is partly why the country is facing serious economic crisis today. What the military administration has succeeded in doing is the creation of a number of rich people, millionaires, many of whom are the retired military officers. In the

process of doing this, inflation and corruption have reached unprecedented heights. Contrary to the promises of the military leaders to rid the country of all traces of corruption, this national malady reached its peak in the period from 1977-1979.

It is generally acknowledged that the industrialisation programme of the military administration has not yielded any tangible result. The industries which were established had no staying power. They have been based on import substitution industrialisation strategy and they are consumer oriented. They manufacture only simple things like textiles, beverages, cigarettes, detergents and so on. The vehicle assembly plants which were established in the country have now proved to be useless, after so much money has been spent on them.

In the field of agriculture, the billions of Naira sunk into the establishment of the River and Lake Basins Development Authority all over the country did not yield much results. If they did, the federal government would not have ordered their fold-up. Instead of relying on the commodities from such huge ventures, Nigerians still rely on the products produced on the small-holdings of the peasantry. This means that Nigeria's agricultural system is still peasant-based.

A few things could also be said about political programmes of the military administration. As regards the creation of states, it must be pointed out that the hand of the federal government was actually forced into it by the pressures piled on it by the leaders of the minorities such as Chief E O Eyo and Isaac Adaka Boro and the need to crush Ojukwu's secessionist bid. Had Ojukwu not decided to secede and had he insisted on non-creation of states as a concession for abandoning secession, the federal government would not have created the twelve states. It can also be stated categorically that the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the country was not just the handiwork of the military. It was largely the determination of Nigerians, the Organisation of African Unity, the Soviet Union and to a lesser extent, Britain that saved the country from disintegration. After all, when the second coup took place in July/August 1967, the soldiers initially decided to break-up the country. The concept of *Araba* (Breakup) reigned supreme in the country in early August 1966. Actually in spite of general expectations and the 'unlimited powers' of the military, they could not tackle sensitive national political issues such as census and revenue allocation. Its attempt to solve the census problem ended in a complete failure.

Summary

1. The participation of the military in the administration of the country was made possible by the failure of the civilians to direct the affairs of the country properly.
2. When the military intervened in government in January 1966, many people welcomed it. The people had hoped that it would restore law and order, provide social justice and direct the affairs of the country towards the attainment of a better future. But since the top echelon of the military shared the same traits with their civilian counterparts, who as permanent secretaries dominated the activities of the government, the expected change for the better was quite limited.
3. The military administration, however made some achievements in education, medical services and construction of roads, airports, dams, etc. This was made possible by the oil wealth which accrued to the country.
4. Later the oil wealth became abused. This led to the abandonment of projects which had already been started. The military may have done their best but it hardly matched the people's expectations.

Questions

Essay

1. Discuss the problems which faced Nigeria in the period between October 1960 and January 1966.
2. Why did people have so much hope in the military when they took over the government in January 1966?
3. Discuss the problems which faced the military administration in its efforts to develop the country.
4. Why has the military administration failed to eradicate corruption in the country?

Multiple-choice

1. The immediate cause of the military intervention in government in January 1966 was
 - A. corruption
 - B. the census controversy

- C. the 1964 federal elections
 - D. the western Nigeria crisis
 - E. none of the above
2. The first military Head of State was
 - A. Major General Yakubu Gowon
 - B. Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi
 - C. General Murtala Muhammad
 - D. General Olusegun Obasanjo
 - E. none of the above
 3. The coup which toppled Yakubu Gowon's regime took place in
 - A. 1970
 - B. 1974
 - C. 1975
 - D. 1976
 - E. 1977
 4. The type of industrialisation strategy adopted by the military administration was
 - A. introduction of heavy industries
 - B. establishment of light industries
 - C. imports substitution industrialisation
 - D. agro-allied industries
 - E. none of the above

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Chapter 9 The Second Republic 1979-1983

Introduction

Nigeria's First Republic came to an abrupt end in the wake of the nation's first military coup, on 15 January 1966. This was followed by thirteen years of military rule. During this long interregnum the civilian population yearned for an opportunity to again exercise their political and civil rights.

There was never any doubt that those rights would once again be restored and civilians would again be allowed to participate in political activities. On 1 October 1970, the Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, outlined a nine-point programme which, among other changes, adopted a new constitution (this was the fifth point), allowed for the organisation of 'genuinely national political parties' (the eighth point), and provided for the 'organisation of elections in the states and at the centre' (the ninth point).

However, the hopes of the Nigerian people were dashed in 1974—albeit only temporarily—when General Gowon announced that the originally proposed year of 1976 as the year when a return to civilian rule would be effected was 'in the circumstances unrealistic and that it would amount to a betrayal of trust to adhere rigidly to that target date'. Then, just one year after this disappointment, the military regime headed by Generals Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo, which had come to power in July 1975, announced without equivocation that the military would hand over power to an elected civilian government by 1 October 1979. The government stated that 'the present military leadership does not intend to stay in office a day longer than is necessary, and certainly not beyond this date'.

It was actually General Murtala who made this pledge, but as it turned out he did not live long enough to see his promise fulfilled. He was assassinated on 13 February 1976. But his second in command, General Obasanjo, who succeeded him as Head of State, did keep the promise and the train of power succession was set in real motion on 12 September 1978, when General Obasanjo proclaimed in a public broadcast, 'Let the game of politics begin'.

The present chapter will continue to examine the history of Nigeria with the nation's second attempt at democratic rule, the so-called Second Republic, from 1979-1983—four years during which

Nigeria, with an estimated population of 80 million, was, after the United States and Japan, the third largest democracy in the world. Focus will be on the electoral process by which the new republic was ushered in, and on subsequent governmental expansion programmes which took place, especially in the fields of education and health care. We will also discuss the various social, economic, and political problems during the Second Republic and, finally, the factors which precipitated the military coup of 31 December 1983, and, with it, the collapse of the Republic.

The elections of 1979

The political agenda drawn up by the administration of General Murtala, which consisted altogether of six phases, called for elections as the penultimate stage in the general plan. With the previously mentioned September 1978 broadcast of General Obasanjo, an official opening shot to electioneering was fired. In this speech the General called for restraint and urged would-be politicians to play the game of politics like good sportsmen and to bear no grudges in the face of defeat:

Let all players be good sportsmen. No matter the result of the competition, let all players remain friendly and without bitterness and look forward to another competition. Let the players, the spectators and the umpires all resolve to make the competition a successful one, and let the umpire be fair and firm and just....I wish all of you peaceful excitement in the weeks ahead.

Within hours after the ban on political activity was lifted, political parties of different persuasions began to spring up around the country. At the initial stage they were not called parties. They were termed 'associations' pending the approval of the Federal Electoral Commission. (FEDECO), a governmental agency which had been set up for this purpose.

It was not long before approximately fifty of these associations had submitted their documents for FEDECO's consideration. Among the first were Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim's Nigeria People's Party (NPP). These were followed by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the People's Redemption Party (PRP). A split in the NPP resulted in the birth of another party, the Great Nigeria People's Party. In order of importance a sixth party, Tunji Braithwaites's Nigeria Advance Party,

also sprang up.

An assortment of other, smaller associations were also formed to add to the political configuration on the eve of the birth of the Second Republic. As varied in scope as they were in appeal, these associations included Fela Anikulapo kuti's Movement of the People (MOP); the Socialist Party of Workers, Farmers, and Youths; the Republican Party of Nigeria; the Nigerian Democratic Congress; and the Nigerian Welfare People's Party.

These would-be parties remained associations until the all-powerful FEDECO had had an opportunity to fully scrutinise their credentials to determine if criteria outlined in the Electoral Decree of 1977 had been satisfied. The requirements were rigorous. The name, emblem, motto, membership, and location of the headquarters of each association had to be such that they gave 'the appearance that the activities of the association [were] not confined to only a part of the geographical area of Nigeria'. In other words, for an association to be recognised as a political party it had to have a broad enough base to truly reflect the 'federal character' of the nation. In addition, it was stipulated that the membership of each association's executive body, had to reflect the federal character, a requirement intended to deal a fatal blow to those associations which did not present a balanced ethnic composition.

The requirements set down for an association to be eligible for consideration as an official political party proved to be so stringent that many embryo associations failed to meet them. These associations were subsequently disqualified from taking part in elections for political office.

The FEDECO was the most important institution in every aspect of the electoral process. In the actual carrying out of elections, its functions were threefold: it was responsible for registering voters, dividing the nation into constituencies, and setting up an electoral apparatus which would provide elections for president, governors, and delegates to the state and national assemblies.

The FEDECO's first major duty in preparing for elections was to draw up a Register of Voters. This involved displaying what was called the Preliminary List of Voters, and then the final voters list—no easy task in a nation that had not experienced democratic rule for such a long period of time. Not surprisingly, the process did not proceed without its share of frustrations. Several complaints were made after the Preliminary List was published. Several citizens asserted that their names had been left out, thus rendering them ineligible to vote.

The dividing up of the country into constituencies, too, was not an easy assignment. The FEDECO ended up breaking the nation up into

95 senatorial districts (i.e., 5 senatorial districts in each of the states), 449 constituencies for the House of Representatives, and, lastly, a total of 1,347 constituencies for the 19 states Houses of Assembly. To facilitate the voting process, the FEDECO also defined 97,000 official polling stations with each earmarked to serve 500 registered voters.

As the 1979 elections drew nearer, the FEDECO designated 18 December 1978 as the official deadline for receipt of formal applications from political associations wanting to be granted party status so that they could enter candidates. Although as many as nineteen associations finally submitted their requests—one a conglomeration of ten former associations which merged in order to meet the stringent conditions—the FEDECO qualified only five after carrying out its rigorous screening process. It was these five political parties, then, that entered candidates in the 1979 general elections.

The first of the major political parties to qualify was the earlier-mentioned Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). It was formed from an association, called the Council of Friends, which had come together during sessions of the Constituent Assembly. Its leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a veteran politician, was the former leader of the Action Group (AG), the opposition party during the First Republic. The UPN platform contained a programme of welfare socialism which placed a great deal of emphasis on free health care and free education at all levels of society.

The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the second party to announce its interest in presenting candidates for the upcoming elections, was launched under the patronage of Alhaji Aliyu Makaman Bida, a founding father of the defunct Northern People's Congress (NPC), which had formed the government of the old northern region up until 1966 and dominated the post-independence federal government before the January 1966 demise of the First Republic. The NPN grew out of a caucus in the Constituent Assembly known as the National Movement and presented a programme which promised a commitment to creating 'a land where the security of the state and of life and property [would] be guaranteed by the provision of adequate means of external defense and internal law and order'. It also pledged to create 'a land where full respect and recognition [would] be accorded to the traditional rulers'.

At its party convention the NPN came up with an idea that was termed 'zoning', a system whereby the party would stipulate the states from which the four top political candidates would come. Under this proposal, the presidential candidate would come from one of the ten northern states, his running mate would come from the states of either Imo or Anambra, the speaker of the House would come

from Lagos or one of the three western states, and the president of the Senate would come from the states of Bendel, Rivers, or Cross River. The convention approved this proposal and made its selections for candidates accordingly. Alhaji Shehu Shagari was nominated to be his party's presidential candidate, Dr Alex Ekwueme was chosen as Alhaji Shehu Shagari's running mate, Dr Joseph Wayas nominated to run for the position of Senate president, and Chief Ume-Ezeoke was selected to be the candidate for speaker of the House.

In sharp contrast to the NPN was the People's Redemption Party (PRP), led by Alhaji Aminu Kano. Whereas the UPN and the NPN were launched in Lagos, the PRP started out in Kaduna. A radical party, it was founded on the principles of what it called democratic humanism, 'an ideology which teaches self-reliance and the take-over of [the] economy from the grip of neocolonialists into the hands of the people'.

Alhaji Aminu Kano was no new comer to the world of Nigerian politics. As was the case with the other new political party leaders, he had held political office during the First Republic, and during the military rule of General Gowon he was a relatively highly placed official. He chose as his running mate Sam Ikoku, an Igbo intellectual who had been the Action Group's secretary and a one-time confidant of the former Marxist president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah.

The fourth association approved by the FEDECO as a legitimate political party was the Nigerian People's Party (NPP). It was founded by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, a business tycoon from Borno. Although its leader had held political office in the First Republic, the NPP nonetheless was different from the other parties in that it had no actual lineal connection with any political party operative during that Republic; rather, it sprang up from various political caucuses formed in the days of the Constituent Assembly. One of these was Club 19, itself a protest group made up of individuals who did not want to have the *sharia* introduced into the Nigerian constitution, did not align themselves with Chief Obafemi Awolowo, or who were afraid of minority rule. The NPP was also born from other caucuses. These included the Committee for National Unity, the Lagos Progressives, and the National Unity Council For Understanding.

The NPP's attraction may well have been its youthful image. A large proportion of the party membership consisted of individuals who were younger in both age and political experience than their counterparts in the other major parties. Its intrinsic weakness, however, may have stemmed from this very youthfulness. The party lacked any real political programme which aimed at undertaking a substantial reordering of the political life of the nation.

The NPP internally ruptured when, on 17, November 1978, it held its convention in Lagos. Led by Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya, the Lagos progressives refused to accept the nomination of Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim as the party's presidential candidate in the upcoming elections. Refusing to step down, Ibrahim broke away from the NPP and founded a new party, the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP). Those NPP members who stayed on with their party retained the NPP name and at its inaugural convention nominated Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Owelle of Onitsha and first President of Nigeria, as its presidential candidate in the forthcoming elections. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim went on to win the newly-formed GNPP nomination for president.

These, then, were the five political parties whose candidates' names appeared on the ballots for the 1979 general elections: the UPN, NPN, PRP, NPP, and GNPP. All the presidential candidates had certain characteristics in common. They were all members of the old guard, which is to say that each had been a conspicuous figure in the politics of the First Republic. In addition, each one of them was in the age bracket of 50-75. It was no wonder, then, that General Obasanjo, well aware of these old-guard elements in the current rush for power, reminded them that it was they who had been collectively responsible for the malaise of the First Republic and warned them that they must therefore ensure that history would not repeat itself by returning to the pre- and post-independence politics of hatred and remorse:

Let our political leaders learn from the lessons of the past. Let all of us solemnly resolve and pledge to learn from the past, knowing that those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it. If we have to survive as a stable, virile and progressive nation—and we will survive at all cost—then we must subjugate our passion, emotion and greed to wisdom and reason. Political recruitment and subsequent political support which are based on tribal, religious and linguistic sentiments contributed to our past political misfortune. They must not be allowed to spring up again.

The geographical size of Nigeria and the sheer number of registered voters (48 million) called for a huge electoral staff to set up and man the 125,000 polling booths where the populace could choose between the 9,555 candidates competing for 1,911 offices. To ease the problem, the government decided to spread the elections over a six-week period, allowing the population to vote during the first four weeks for the Federal House of Representatives and Senate, and then for the governorships and presidency during the final two weeks. In retrospect, the rationale for this arrangement seems to have been quite sound. It prevented a bandwagon effect from occurring as was

the case in 1983 when the ruling party arranged to have the voting process begin with elections for the president first and then proceed with elections for senators and representatives. In the 1979 elections, a two-week gap was created between the first four consecutive Saturday elections (for senators and representatives) and the final elections (for governors and president).

Prior to the elections and after all the candidates had been nominated by their respective parties, the FEDECO carried out a thorough screening of each candidate to determine if they met certain minimum suitability requirements for their candidacy. Results of this screening led to the disqualification of both Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim for their alleged failure to pay taxes. The two candidates took the FEDECO to court and won a reversal, however, thus allowing them to re-enter the race. Several other candidates were also found to be delinquent with their taxes but were not so fortunate to win reversals of FEDECO decisions. These included fifteen gubernatorial candidates and seventeen of their running mates, as well as no fewer than 300 candidates for the Federal Legislature.

In spite of all FEDECO efforts to ensure that the elections would be free and fair. Some irregularities were experienced during different stages of the process. In some cases polling started late, usually because ballot boxes were not set on time. In other instances voting was delayed or obstructed by incomplete or erroneous voter lists at the polling stations and by the absence, late arrival, or disappearance of polling officers. Cases of electoral rigging were also reported in certain parts of the country. In a statement issued on 12 July 1979 the FEDECO chairman, Chief Michael Ani, conceded that his organisation had not done an absolutely perfect job in all cases as far as organising the elections was concerned, admitting that 'no doubt, the election...of July 7, like any other any where in the world, was not without some administrative hitches'.

But the difficulties encountered during these elections were minor compared to what had taken place during the nation's previous attempts at democratically choosing its leaders. The few incidents reported of thuggery, election rigging, bitterness, and general unpleasantness were rather tame when considered in the light of what had transpired during the federal elections of the 1950s and 1960s. Certainly the presence of the army in considerable strength during the elections to maintain law and order partly explains this phenomenon.

Be that as it may, voter turnout was rather low, with a total of 16.8 million votes cast for the office of the president out of 47.7 million registered voters—and, it should be added, the turnout of voters for

the office of the president was higher than for the other offices. Several factors accounted for this low level of participation, not the least of which was the fact that a considerable number of voters were 'over polled' due to the very number of elections they had to vote in over the protracted period of six weeks. In addition, general voter apathy played no small role.

Party	Candidate	Total Votes Cast	Percent- age
NPN	Shehu Shagari	5,688,857	33.8
UPN	Awolowo	4,916,651	29.2
NPP	Azikiwe	2,822,523	16.7
PRP	Aminu Kano	1,732,113	10.3
GNPP	Waziri Ibrahim	1,686,489	10.0

Table 1 *Nigerian general elections 1979: the presidential vote*

Certainly it was the presidential election itself which generated the greatest amount of political excitement among the voters. When all the votes had been tallied, the NPN showed itself to be the leading political party in the country in terms of national support. It won 37 per cent of the seats in the House of Representatives, 36 per cent in the state assemblies, and 38 per cent in the Senate. In contrast, the NPN's closest rival, the UPN, scored 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Representatives, 25 per cent in the State Assemblies, and 30 per cent in the Senate. Meanwhile, the NPP captured 17 per cent of the seats in the three legislative bodies, while the GNPP and PRP were left to share the remaining 10 per cent of the legislative seats.

When the votes for the gubernatorial slots had been counted, the pattern set in the previous elections for legislators continued. The NPN captured seven governorships (in the states of Rivers, Cross River, Benue, Niger, Sokoto, Bauchi, and Kwara), the UPN won five (in the states of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, and Bendel), the NPP secured three (in the states of Imo, Anambra, and Plateau), the GNPP won two (in the states of Borno and Gongola), and the PRP ended up with the remaining two (in the states of Kano and Kaduna).

Although the elections made it clear that the NPN was the most popular party nationwide, the results of the presidential election aroused no small amount of political controversy. It was found that Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who had won 5.7 million votes out of a total of

State	Total			House of Representatives election seats					State Assembly election seats					Senate election seats				
		NPN	UPN	NPP	PRP	GNPP	Total	NPN	UPN	NPP	PRP	GNPP	TOTAL	NPN	UPN	NPP	PRP	GNPP
1 Anambra	29	3	-	26	-	-	87	13	-	73	-	1	5	-	-	5	-	-
2 Bauchi	20	18	-	1	-	1	60	45	-	4	2	9	5	5	-	-	-	-
3 Bendel	20	6	12	2	-	-	60	22	34	-	-	-	5	1	4	-	-	-
4 Borno	19	18	-	1	-	-	57	48	-	3	-	6	5	5	-	-	-	-
5 Borro	24	2	-	-	-	22	72	11	-	-	2	59	5	1	-	-	-	4
6 Cross River	28	22	2	-	-	4	84	58	7	3	-	16	5	3	-	-	-	2
7 Gongola	21	5	7	1	-	8	63	15	18	4	1	25	5	1	2	-	-	2
8 Imo	30	2	-	28	-	-	90	9	-	79	-	2	5	-	-	5	-	-
9 Kaduna	33	19	1	2	10	1	99	64	3	6	16	10	5	3	-	-	2	-
10 Kano	46	7	-	-	39	-	138	11	1	-	123	3	5	-	-	-	5	-
11 Kwara	14	8	5	-	-	1	42	25	15	-	-	2	5	3	2	-	-	-
12 Lagos	12	-	12	-	-	-	36	-	36	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	-
13 Niger	10	10	-	-	-	-	30	28	-	-	-	2	5	5	-	-	-	-
14 Ogun	12	-	12	-	-	-	36	-	36	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	-
15 Ondo	22	-	22	-	-	-	66	1	65	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	-
16 Oyo	42	4	38	-	-	-	126	9	117	-	-	-	5	1	-	4	-	-
17 Plateau	16	3	-	13	-	-	48	10	-	35	-	3	5	3	-	2	-	-
18 Rivers	14	10	-	4	-	-	42	26	1	15	-	-	5	3	-	-	-	-
19 Sokoto	37	31	-	-	-	6	111	92	-	-	-	19	5	5	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Nigerian general elections 1979: party distribution by states

16.8 million cast, was left fractionally short of the legislated requirement of winning at least 25 per cent of the votes cast in at least two-thirds of the states, thus affording him merely a personal lead over his rivals but no definitive mandate as required by law. Meanwhile, Shagari's closest rival, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, could claim, 4.9 million votes out of the total.

The FEDECO decided, however, to act in Shagari's favour by approaching the controversy in what they considered to be a 'literal, logical, and legalistic' way. They reasoned that if two-thirds of the states meant what it said—i.e., 12.7 per cent in the case of nineteen states—then such a formula would raise the per centage of Shagari's total votes in the critical thirteenth state from the 19.9 per cent received in Kano to 29.9 per cent ($19.94 \times \frac{2}{3}$), which would satisfy the constitutional requirements for a presidential victory. The rival parties to the NPN rejected the verdict of FEDECO with regards to the interpretation of the 'two-thirds rule'. The UPN candidate Chief Obafemi Awolowo queried the court's ruling, especially the part which stated that 'the Federal Military Government must be deemed to know that $\frac{2}{3}$ of 19 is $12\frac{2}{3}$ '. Like other opponents, he maintained that two-thirds should be interpreted to apply to the state as a whole (territorial and physical size) because a state is indivisible.

Assessment of the 1979 elections: continuity and change

A critical review of the 1979 election results reveals interesting features. A breakdown of the results by party and state is given in tables 1 to 3. The results indicate aspects of change and continuity when studied against the background of politics and elections in the First Republic. For some observers of the Nigerian political scene, the elections of 1979 gave cause for optimism that the ailments of politics which characterised the pre-independent and immediate post-independent years of Nigerian life had either been fully overcome or were close to being fully overcome. Yet for others there was no cause for relief. To them the election revealed that Nigerian history was merely repeating itself and that nothing of significance had occurred in the political mainstream.

There were definite changes, however, the most important being the way in which voting patterns had shifted to reflect the breakdown of the old federal structure of the nation from regions to states. It should be recalled that by 1963 Nigeria had four regions divided more

or less along linguistic and ethnic lines. In 1976 the federal government replaced the old regions with a new structure consisting of nineteen newly created states. Associated with this structural alteration was yet another important change, this one in the constitution, which placed repeated emphasis on what was called the 'federal character', and the related fact that there was a subsequent definite shift of power from the constituent regions (which had now become states) to the level of the federal government. The prerequisite of political acceptability as it related to the new federal character was not only that no citizen could be discriminated against on the basis of his or her 'place of origin, sex, religion, or ethnic grouping', but also that political parties would have to gather widespread support and be truly national if they were to meet the strict guidelines laid down by the FEDECO. The impacts of these changes had their visible consequences on the political trends of the new republic being born.

Yet the election results also reveal that certain similarities with pre-1966 political pattern were also in evidence. Most striking was the ethnic-bloc voting pattern evident in no small number of cases—a situation all too reminiscent of the politics of the First Republic and even earlier. The impressive support received by the UPN in the states carved out of the old, predominantly Yoruba-speaking western region could not be augmented by even modest support from other parts of the federation. Significantly, only 10 of the 264 seats in state assemblies in the Yoruba dominated states of Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, and Lagos were not won by UPN candidates, a fact clearly reminiscent of pre- and post-independence politics when the same pattern of victory was equally assured for the Action Group, out of which the UPN had been originally conceived.

Except for Bendel, which had been part of the former western regional government, the UPN could not easily point to any reasonable support outside the Yoruba dominated states. And to a lesser degree than the UPN, NPP easily identified with the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) of the period prior to 1966, and, like the former NCNC, under the leadership of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, was able to win a landslide victory in the old eastern region of the hard-core Igbo states of Anambra and Imo. The NPP, however, was able to assert a new image for itself by making a remarkable sweep of the state of Plateau in what was formerly the northern region, winning three-quarters of the seats in the State Assembly and 80 per cent of the seats allocated for the state in the National Assembly. In addition the NPP also won 65 per cent of the seats in the Rivers State Assembly.

The NPN showing in the elections appeared to project the image

of a party quite removed from the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which observers had previously been quick to link it with. Whereas allegiance to Dr Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo were clearly in evidence by the support shown for the NPP and UPN by the Igbo and Yoruba, new political realities in the former northern region and the absence of a personality as strong as the Sardauna of Sokoto meant that the north could not be as politically monolithic as it had appeared to be in the pre-1966 period. Here, then, changes were quite apparent. Benue state, a focus of opposition to the NPC in pre-1966 politics, voted solidly for the NPN, Kano, Borno, and Gongola states also broke the old Hausa-Fulani-Kanuri alliance formed during the time of the NPC in the old northern region. Borno and Gongola states voted for the GNPP, while Kano State voted overwhelmingly for Alhaji Aminu Kano, taking away from the NPN the hard-core Hausa element.

The election showed that the states of Kaduna and Gongola, both parts of the old north, were now unquestionably 'national'. The former capital of the old north became the only state in the Federation to have a majority-party governor with a minority-party legislature. Gongola won the distinction of being the only state in the country with all five parties returned to the legislature.

NPN support came from across the nation, cutting across ethnic boundaries and regional loyalties. It won in the far distant northern states of Sokoto, Kaduna, Kano, and Borno. It won in Kwara and Benue in the middle belt; and in the states of Cross River, Rivers, and Bendel in the southern part of the country. Even in the solidly Igbo and Yoruba areas the NPN came in a strong second. In addition, it established itself as the majority party in nine states, emerging as the second most important party with respect to the presidential election in eight out of the nine states, and it captured the governorships of three 'minority' states (Rivers, Cross River, and Benue) as well as four others. Finally, it won the highest number of votes throughout the nation in the presidential election (not excluding even UPN 'no-go' areas).

This impressive showing at all stages of the election gave the NPN the image of a political organisation which could be considered a truly national, as distinct from an ethnic or regional, party. Moreover, it showed that by no stretch of the imagination could the NPN be considered just a reincarnated NPC as was the case with the UPN, NPP, and PRP, which were readily likened to their predecessors, the AG, NCNC, and NEPU, respectively.

The election results also reveal an interesting political development with regard to voting patterns in so-called minority and major-

Party	Leader	House of Representatives (449)			Senate (95)		State Assemblies (1347)			State Governors (19)		Presidential Election	Aggregate Average
		(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)		
NPN	Shehu Shagari	37%	168	16	38%	36	36%	487	17	36%	7	34%	36%
UPN	Awolowo	25%	111	9	30%	28	25%	333	11	26%	5	29%	27%
NPP	Azikiwe	17%	78	9	17%	16	17%	226	10	16%	3	17%	16%
PRP	Aminu Kano	11%	49	2	7%	7	11%	144	5	11%	2	10%	105
GNPP	Waziri Ibrahim	10%	43	7	8%	8	11%	157	13	11%	2	16%	10%

Table 3: *Nigerian general elections 1979: the overall party position*

Key: (a) = per centage of seats won

(b) = total number of seats won

(c) = number of states (19) in which seats were won.

ity states. The majority states—twelve in all—were those in which one major ethnic group predominated, while the minority states were those in which no one particular ethnic group could be considered dominant. At the time of the elections there were twelve majority states (Anambra, Bauchi, Borno, Gongola, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, and Sokoto) and seven minority states (Bendel, Benue, Benue, Cross River, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, and Rivers). In order to meet the requirement of winning two-thirds of all the states in the federation, it was mandatory that a presidential aspirant win in no less than six majority and seven minority states.

In the 1979 presidential election Alhaji Shehu Shagari carried six of the majority states and all seven of the minority states. For the first time in the nation's history the minority states were actually able to have a say in who was appointed to the most important office in the federation. This is in stark contrast to the First Republic, when regions were all that mattered and the sheer weight of demographic and population figures was enough to tilt the vote one way or the other. In 1979 the creation of states to replace the former regions brought about a profound shift in the political power base, from majority to minority states.

Finally, the election results shattered once and for all the image of the 'old North' and the 'old East'. while the image of the 'old West' remained essentially unchanged. The northern states abandoned the age-old monolithic practices characteristic of election patterns established during the First Republic when the region's premier, the late Sardauna of Sokoto, held supreme sway over the entire area. Clearly, to a majority of the population the perception of Nigeria as a single entity had become more attractive a concept and ideology than the former notion of a fragmented nation. Similarly, in the 'old East' the minority states voted differently from majority parts of the former region, thus asserting their distinctiveness and independence. Only in the 'old West', where old loyalties and allegiances remained as they had been since the first elections back in the 1950s, did it seem that no visible change had taken place. On the whole, the success of the NPN in the elections signalled the acceptance in Nigeria of the idea that monolithic behaviour on the part of political parties was, according to one source, 'no longer the right model for federal nation-building'.

Expansion of educational and health services

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria inherited by the

Second Republic clearly defined social and educational objectives and those policies which the government had to follow in order to accomplish stated objectives. Section 17, specifically, dealt with social objectives, and under Paragraph 3, Sub-sections (c) and (d), it is stated that the government must adopt a policy that would ensure 'the health, safety and welfare of workers' and 'the provision of medical and health services to every person in Nigeria'. Section 18 of the constitution dealt with educational objectives: '[The] government will adopt a policy which will ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels [i.e., from primary to university, technical, vocational, extramural, adult, and other forms of education]'. The constitution also charged the government with promoting the study of science and technology and assisting in the ending of illiteracy by providing, whenever practicable, '(a) free, compulsory and national primary education: (b) free secondary education; (c) free university education; and (d) free adult literacy classes'.

In addition to the government's constitutional mandate to develop and promote educational and health care services, there were other factors which in the Second Republic precipitated a tremendous amount of expansion in these sectors. In the field of education, for example, a considerable amount of expansion in primary educational services was envisaged with the launching in 1976 of what was called the Universal Primary Educational Programme, (UPE). A truly gigantic undertaking, the UPE was backed up with the training of some 163,000 additional teachers to provide educational services to the 2.3 million students enrolled in the school system when the programme was put into effect.

Such a tremendous undertaking, however, required a great deal of training of the teachers themselves. In order to meet the manpower requirements for the programme, the government took over the financial responsibilities of 156 teacher training colleges throughout the nation, expanding these institutions to virtually double their capacities and capabilities. Plans were also drawn up to add an additional 74 new teacher training colleges with facilities for 1000 students each. In addition, the government addressed the problem of upgrading the educational levels of underqualified teachers by establishing in-service courses and 'distant learning systems'. In short, the UPE laid the groundwork during this period for an unprecedented expansion effort in the field of education.

An equally important guide to, and motivating force, behind educational programmes during the Second Republic was the Federal Republic National Policy on Education, adopted in 1976-1977. This document outlined the intentions of the federal government

with respect to educational services, while delineating federal objectives to be pursued in the various sectors of educational life up to the year 2000. In it, governmental objectives were clearly spelt out, particularly in the sectors of educational services and pre-primary, primary, technical, higher, teacher, adult, non-formal, and special education.

To be sure, the National Policy on Education drew its share of criticism, especially from professional educators who believed that the document did not go far enough in specifying philosophical ideas and goals. To these individuals the National Policy was sorely in need of change and revision. Most agreed, however, that it represented an important step in the advancement of education in the country, a document which, regardless of its limitations, had the right intentions.

This tremendous degree of development in educational and health services could not have been possible without the general improvement in the national economic climate which occurred during the 1970s. A sudden and dramatic increase in oil revenues lifted the nation's economy to previously undreamed-of levels, and with this change in economic fortunes the government realised the economic feasibility of doing everything it could to develop the educational, health care, and other sectors of the country.

An emphasis on the development of educational services was particularly characteristic of the period from 1970-1974. The National Development Plan envisaged a substantial increase in the growth rate of primary and post-primary school enrolment and budgeted for that anticipated growth accordingly. In addition, the UPE programme already referred to called for an enormous financial commitment. It was estimated that it would cost 200 million naira yearly to run, in addition to another 60 million naira which would be required to expand existing teacher colleges. This programme could not have been conceived without adequate financial means available to the federal government.

As had been the case since independence, under the Federal Constitution of the Second Republic, education continued to be a matter about which legislation was shared on both the federal and state levels. The general view towards education and the role government should play in it, however, was not always the same at both levels of government. On the federal level, for example, the government stressed a policy of qualitative education as opposed to the free and universal education proposed by some state governments (in this case the five UPN states). Whatever these differences might have been, however, Nigeria witnessed unprecedented growth in educational advancements during the period. The phenomenal increase in

the number of institutions of learning and the enrolment figures at all levels of the educational ladder point to an entirely new era in the national educational consciousness and experience.

Because of the uncertainty as to the exactness of demographic data, particularly as it applies to admissions into primary schools, high schools, and colleges, it is difficult to calculate the exact growth rate. Educational planners have estimated, however, that the number of primary school students grew from 3.7 million in 1970 to more than 13 million in 1978. From 1979 to 1981 that figure jumped by approximately another million, and it is believed that by 1983 the number of students enrolled in primary schools throughout the nation had reached approximately 15 million.

No less spectacular was the increase in the number of students enrolled in high school and teacher training colleges throughout the nation. Registration and attendance in these higher levels of the educational system was given a tremendous boost as a result of two programmes which made it financially more feasible for students to participate. First, the federal government earmarked special grants for certain students who attended these levels and, probably most important, beginning in 1979—the very first year of the new civilian government—tuition became free in all secondary schools.

In accordance with the 1977 National Policy on Education—a blueprint of which was announced by the Implementation Committee early in 1979—a new plan to shape secondary education was adopted. This new plan called for a reorganisation of the level of learning into two phases, called junior and senior secondary schools. Put into effect in 1982, just six years after passage of the Universal Primary Educational Programme discussed earlier, an estimated 800,000 students were initially enrolled in the junior secondary schools: three years later, in 1985, the senior secondary schools had approximately 300,000 enrollees.

There was also a marked expansion in university and other forms of higher education during the period. Where none had existed previously, technical schools were established in each state of the federation by the federal government. Deciding that there should be at least one polytechnic school in each of the nineteen states, the number of federal polytechnic schools was increased from the existing seven to twenty-nine. Also the number of federal universities was increased by seven, with new universities established in Bauchi, Benue, Imo, Gongola, Ondo, Niger, and Ogun states. In addition, plans were made to create an open university to provide education for students who for one reason or another could not satisfy residential requirements, thus making a university education available to a still

greater number of Nigerian citizens who might otherwise have been deprived of such an opportunity.

Meanwhile, while the federal government was establishing all of these new universities and opportunities, the state governments were also very much involved in expansion programme of their own in post-secondary educational facilities. The results of this race to establish universities were impressive. By the end of 1983 there were altogether twenty-eight universities in the nation, twenty-one federal and seven state.

This tremendous amount of expansion did not proceed without an equally great amount of strain. The accelerated degree of federal and state growth in educational facilities took its toll first in the general level of scholarship in most of the institutions. Many secondary schools, particularly in more rural areas, lacked qualified personnel to teach vital subjects. Even on the university level the quality of scholarship began to deteriorate. Not all universities were adequately financed or well enough staffed to carry out their teaching mission on a level that was expected. Inevitably, distinctions as to relative degrees of quality soon began to be made between universities, with clear lines drawn between first- and second-class institutions of higher learning by the end of 1983.

Also, various local governments ran into fiscal difficulties when faced with the awesome responsibility of footing the bill for this expansion. In some cases the paying of salaries had to be delayed, and sometimes salaries could not be paid at all, thus causing those affected to suffer a drop in morale and, in some cases, to flee their profession. Even for the federal government there were clear signs of strain when the rapid establishment of universities and polytechnic schools began to dampen the morale of university dons, many of whom went on strike for higher pay, and students who became disenchanted as government coffers became too thin to bear the full cost of effectively running the various institutions.

Finally, the proliferation of universities also portended the accentuation of unemployment problems for thousands of university graduates who expected and looked forward to government jobs. The great degree of expansion in the university sector was not matched by the creation of jobs requiring the talents of university graduates in the government and business sectors. By the end of 1983 the sight of young graduates roaming the streets in search of jobs was already becoming all too common.

Some progress was made during the Second Republic in the provision of health care, but it was perhaps not as impressive as in the educational sector. To foster preventive and curative health services

in the country, existing teaching hospitals in Ibadan, Lagos, Benin, Enugu, and Ife were expanded to cope with the training needs of the medical profession, and new teaching hospitals under construction in Zaria, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Ilorin, and Calabar were completed. In addition, a national eye centre was built in Kaduna—this at a cost of 19 million naira—and the federal government approved the upgrading of general hospitals in Jos, Calabar, and Ilorin to the status of teaching hospitals.

Rural health care, too, saw significant growth. To supplement state-government efforts, by the end of its first year in office the federal government had built 24 primary health care clinics and 362 health clinics spread throughout the country. Also during this first year, plans were completed to establish a food and drug institute in Kaduna which would train personnel needed for the control of food poisoning, drug abuse, and quality control of imported drugs. Recognising the need for preventive medical efforts, the government launched, too, an expanded immunisation programme.

One unfortunate feature of the history of health-care development in Nigeria both before and after the Second Republic was the fact that clinics continued to run short of drugs and the nation's hospitals were forced to rely heavily on imported medicines for curative services. In addition, the ratio of doctors and paramedics to the nation's overall population seemed to remain constantly low, as was the case in the ratio of hospital beds to the total number of people living in the country. But a lack of adequate medical facilities and supplies was not the only problem. The facilities that did exist in the country were often not in the best condition nor were they run in such a way that maximum efficiency and, hence, effect could be counted on to make the greatest contribution possible to health care.

The overall health of the population did not depend solely on medical facilities, of course. Other problems within the country frustrated attempts at raising health consciousness and providing for what might be termed a healthy nation. Sanitation facilities were often inadequate not only in rural areas but even in more developed regions. 'Relatively small public expenditures on water and sewage facilities (5.8 per cent under the second plan and 4.0 per cent in the first two years of the third)' were described by one writer as 'the most unsatisfactory feature of development planning in Nigeria'. Housing conditions, too, were often miserable and did not foster a healthy climate in which to live. Finally, the general level of nutrition could easily have stood serious improvement, not only in raising the quality and freshness of foodstuff but also in increasing the general level of nutritional knowledge among the Nigerian people.

Problems of the Second Republic

The 1979-1983 administration of President Shehu Shagari was particularly noteworthy for the tremendous social, economic, and political problems which characterised it. The problems were so rampant and seemingly out of control that few people were surprised when the government democratically elected into office after thirteen years of military rule was replaced after just four years by another military regime.

The reasons for this failed attempt at civilian rule are many and complex. For one thing, a thoroughly inappropriate and unworkable constitutional base worsened the problem of governing and did not provide for a high enough degree of fairness. The so-called Presidential Constitution which governed the political climate during these four years was one fashioned after the United States Constitution, a document far too difficult and expensive to be workable in the Nigerian context. Relying heavily on the spoils system of politics, the Presidential Constitution defined far too many offices which the executive branch of government, i.e., the president, had the right to fill with any individual of his choosing. The results were often inconsistent with national goals such as the desire to satisfy the principle of 'federal character'. The character of the federal government began to assume ominous forms when cronies and party faithfuls were rewarded with lucrative and comfortable government jobs provided for by the very constitution which strived for some degree of fairness in shaping the federal character.

Equally cogent arguments can be made for pointing the finger of blame not at the constitution itself but at those who were charged with operating within its context and enforcing its tenets. In the same way that the Westminster system adopted by Nigeria during the First Republic was subverted by politicians through political excesses and the overall abuse of power, so too the American presidential system was misrepresented and distorted by political leaders of the Second Republic through inept leadership and wanton profligacy. Here was a situation in which those at the top of the political ladder made a mockery of democracy through irresponsible and purposeless leadership to an extent which until this time had been unknown in the history of the country.

As a result of the chronic lack of effective leadership which marked the Second Republic, the administration proved itself incapable of satisfying the needs of the people who had given it its mandate to govern. Politicians themselves became the national symbol of immo-

ality and impropriety when they failed to provide sorely needed leadership. They came to be viewed by the masses as generally unpatriotic, selfish, and corrupt. As one source put it, '...the administration produced nothing but black embezzlers and exploiters. The nation's scarce resources were squandered and nepotism, tribalism, and thuggery reigned supreme'.

Soon various forms of social malaise began to take hold throughout the nation. Instances of armed robbery became shockingly common as respect for life and property decreased at an alarming rate. Although the problem of unemployment, particularly among graduates, continued to increase, becoming acute in some states, various companies began hiring foreigners in preference to Nigerian citizens. This evoked the anger of the masses. As a direct result of squandering, rampant unemployment, and shortages of various essential commodities, the cost of living shot up dramatically, and with this increase the general standard of living fell drastically. Those few Nigerians who were privileged to possess import licenses—usually political cronies and middlemen rather than genuine businessmen—hawked these licenses instead of actually engaging in the business of importing the essential goods for which the licenses had been issued in the first place. As a result of this and the new-found practice of hoarding the few imported goods which did manage to find their way into the country (rice, for example), prices increased astonishingly. Many warehouses were stocked to the ceiling with essential goods to deliberately create artificial scarcities so as to jack up prices and create windfall profits.

Despite the best intentions in the expansion programme undertaken in the sphere of education, it was not long before serious problems began creeping into even this sector of the society. As pointed out earlier, teachers who were owed months of back pay began to lose interest in doing their jobs. Although there was no shortage of slogans lauding the merits of the new free and qualitative education, the reality of the situation painted a very different picture. When economic difficulties began to hit hard on the resources of the nation, education took an especially hard knock.

Decay was also in clear evidence in the health-care system. Strikes were rampant in hospitals. Even doctors went on strike, wanting improved working conditions and what they considered to be fairer remuneration for their efforts. To make matters worse, drugs were in desperately short supply in both general and teaching hospitals all over the federation. Some hospitals became little more than consulting clinics.

The social decadence which had become a conspicuous trait of the Second Republic was especially in evidence in the frequency of fraud

committed by various governmental agencies and subsequent cases of arson to cover up the deceit which had become so common. A pattern quickly emerged; as soon as financial scandal was discovered in some government agency, the building which housed that office would be mysteriously set on fire to cover up the evil which had been done. Such was the fate which befell the Post and Telecommunications Building in Lagos, the Federal Capital Development Authority Accounts Office in Abuja, the Nigerian External Telecommunication (NET) Building, the Republic Building in Lagos, the Federal Ministry of Education, and the Anambra State Broadcasting Corporation, to name just a few. The government appeared to be powerless to punish the guilty parties, no doubt the result of a lack of desire to penalise their own.

Certain external forces also contributed in frustrating the already difficult economic situation in the country. The greatest of these involved the nation's most important source of revenue, oil. With the advent of a world oil glut, Nigeria's oil together with that of the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) was in reduced demand. Coupled with this unfavourable situation was the reality of a global economic recession. Apart from worsening the already bad situation with regard to oil exports, the recession precipitated a rapid decline in commodity prices on the world market, and to meet external financial commitments Nigeria was increasingly forced to borrow money from the international capital market as well as to embark on austerity measures which scarcely made the situation any better.

Whereas the world economic situation and the subsequent decrease in demand for Nigerian petroleum products certainly contributed in no small measure to the economic misfortunes in the country towards the dying days of the Second Republic, there is little doubt that mismanagement of the nation's available resources was the greatest contributor to the worsening economic situation in the country. Although the government did take monetary and fiscal measures in the form of the Economic Stabilization Act of 1982, few positive results came of it. While the government pronounced austerity as its watchword, it continued to waste resources on overly ambitious and ill-timed projects.

Totally unrealistic economic measures were taken by the government despite fewer and fewer resources available to it, resulting in mounting budget deficits which rose from ₦3,295.6 million in 1980 to ₦4,882.6 million in 1981 and ₦5,373.1 million in 1982. Total government deficits increased from 16.6 per cent in 1980 to 31.9 per cent in 1982. These budgetary deficits, financed by either internal or external borrowings or both, led to a rapid accumulation of public

debt the internal component of which increased from ₦4,635.9 to ₦15,010.5 million during the period 1977-1982, and to ₦22,221.44 million in 1983.

As if these severe economic difficulties were not enough, yet another crisis, this one in the political sector, was added in 1983 following extremely suspicious elections held that year. As the federal election moved closer, the hopes of the people to cast their votes for a government of their choosing began to build. When the election was finally held, though, it became abundantly clear to the masses that their political leaders paid only lip service to the ideals of democracy. Looting, arson, fraud, and even murder dominated the election process. Most believed that the elections were far from free and fair when it was announced that Alhaji Shehu Shagari had won re-election and that the National Party of Nigeria was once again the majority political party in the nation. It was obvious to the majority of Nigerian citizens that this government would have to go and that since peaceful change in government could not be effected through the ballot box, a repeat of 1966, when the military had to step in and take over the reigns of power, was perhaps the only way.

The December coup

African nations have been the scene of military intervention in politics since the 1960s—the period during which the various countries won their independence from former colonial masters. The first such coup to occur in West Africa was in Togo, in January 1963. Two years later, in November 1965, the army seized power in Dahomey, now the Republic of Benin. In Ghana the military took over for the first time in February 1966. As for Nigeria, the first military intervention in politics took place on 15 January 1966. Subsequent coups occurred on 19 July, 1966, 29 July 1975, and 31 December, 1983.

The 1983 coup was the fourth successful take-over by the military in Nigerian history since the country gained its independence in 1960. The New Year's Eve change of government occurred relatively peacefully and led to the ouster of the civilian regime of President Shehu Shagari, who had been sworn in three months earlier for his second four-year term. Major General Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as head of state as the military took over the reigns of power.

As we have seen, Nigeria's second attempt at nationwide democratic rule was clouded by a general failure to meaningfully address various complex political, economic, and social problems which ultimately caused the demise of the Second Republic and the re-entry

of the military. Politically, the government machinery was both over-bureaucratised and over-politicised to such an extent that it could not function effectively enough to accomplish the missions for which it had been chosen. This resulted primarily from the government's desire to satisfy party leadership and reward party faithfuls. The political situation was so scandalised by the end of the new civilian leadership's first term in office that by the end of that term they were totally powerless to organise a successful election. Government opponents quickly seized this fact to further discredit the Second Republic during the three months it managed to remain in office after the election. Election critics openly predicted, in the press and elsewhere, that the end of the regime was imminent.

As we have seen, too, declining economic fortunes throughout the country contributed heavily to the fall of the civilian government. Much as critics were willing to admit that part of the new economic woes were to be found in the undeniable reality of global recession and other external factors out of the control of local officials, it was equally clear that mismanagement of available national resources was the basic underlying cause for the nation's economic distress.

And, finally, there were the obvious social ills: government ineptitude and corruption, nepotism and bribery, armed robbery and other serious crimes against the state and against humanity. There were the ever-present threats to the social order and upsetting reminders to everyone that they were living in a society in need of profound reform. The looting and burning of public buildings, constant shortages of critical medications, and a bankrupt educational system all pointed to a general state of decay. Thus, when the tanks rolled out of the barracks on 31 December 1983, it was with no small amount of justification that the military was able to state that they were out to 'stop the drift of the nation'. It was their belief that in taking over they were salvaging the nation from undeniable economic and social ills.

In his first broadcast to the nation, the new head of state, General Muhammadu Buhari, stated that 'it was in the discharge of [the military's] national role as promoters and protectors of the nation's interest that the armed forces decided to effect a change in the leadership of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria'. He went on to point out that 'the army [had] a duty to intervene to clean up the economic mess and save the country once again and pilot its affairs from the path of insanity'.

The change of government was hailed by most Nigerians as a welcome event, and they accepted the explanation by the military that the armed forces 'could not stand idly by while the country was once

again drifting towards a dangerous state of political and economic collapse through the ineptitude and insensitivity of a political leadership which was unwilling to change'. Although they knew quite well that their country had much more to gain in the long run from a democratically elected government than from imposed military rule, Nigerians in this situation seemed to accept the designation 'corrective regime' which the new leaders gave to the military government as it assumed the reigns of power. Nigerians everywhere appreciated the role that the military had played in helping to eject a government which had laid false claims to democracy and which for all intents and purposes was incapable of good, honest government.

Summary

1. The Second Republic, from 1979 –1983 represented Nigeria's second attempt at democratic rule. The architects of the republic were Generals Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo.
2. The Second Republic was ushered in by the elections conducted in the second half of 1979. Though over fifty political 'associations' initially announced their intention to vie for offices in the Second Republic, only six were eventually qualified to participate in the electoral process as recognised political parties. These parties included; the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigeria People's Party (NPP), the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the people's Redemption Party (PRP) the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), and the Nigeria Advanced Party (NAP).
3. On account of the vastness of the country, the elections were spread over a six-week period. The results showed that important changes had taken place on the Nigerian political landscape though in other respects elements of continuity in voting behaviour and pattern were visible. In the presidential election, Shehu Shagari, an ex-teacher from Sokoto was elected Nigeria's first executive president.
4. The Second Republic's political leadership paid some attention to development on the educational and health sectors of Nigeria's national life. In the sphere of education, new universities were set up and colleges of education were boosted also in number at both the federal and state government levels. Especially in all UPN controlled states, priority given to educational development was manifested in the unsurpassed attention given to the establishment of new secondary and teacher training colleges. Impressive

though these institutions were in number, they were often short of competent staff and lacking in funds. In some cases academic standards were compromised.

5. In the health sector, existing teaching hospitals in Ibadan, Lagos, Benin, Enugu, and Ife were expanded, and new teaching hospitals under construction in Zaria, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Ilorin and Calabar were completed. Rural health care was given attention as witnessed by the establishment of a number of primary health care clinics and health clinics.
6. In spite of the achievements in the educational and health sectors, the Second Republic faced tremendous social, economic and political problems which soon brought about its demise. These problems were; (i) the constitution was far too expensive to manage and this became even difficult under a leadership that was not particularly prudent with finances; (ii) socially, armed robbery and mass unemployment were rampant and helped to fan embers of discontent; (iii) the educational and health sectors became unwieldy and over expanded; it was difficult in several cases to find drugs to run the teaching hospitals which soon became no more than consulting clinics, (iv) in the circumstances the December 1983 coup which ousted the Second Republic was hailed in some sections of the Nigeria society as a legitimate action to oust a leadership which was incapable of good, honest government.

Questions

Essay

1. Give a concise account of the 1979 general elections in Nigeria, and critically assess the results.
2. Analyse the developments which occurred in the health and education sectors in Nigeria during the Second Republic.
3. Discuss the economic, political, and social problems which existed in Nigeria during the period 1979-1983.
4. Explain the reasons behind the coup of December 1983.

Multiple-choice

1. The period of military interregnum in Nigeria between the First and Second Republics lasted

- A. 10 years
 - B. 13 years
 - C. 5 years
 - D. 8 years
 - E. 11 years
2. The governmental agency whose responsibility was to conduct and supervise the 1979 general elections was
 - A. the Federal Executive Council
 - B. the Nigerian Democratic Congress
 - C. the Constituent Assembly
 - D. the Federal Electoral Commission
 - E. the SMC
 3. One of the political parties which existed during the Second Republic but which did not qualify to participate in the 1979 elections was
 - A. the National Party of Nigeria (NPN)
 - B. the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)
 - C. the National Advance Party (NAP)
 - D. the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP)
 - E. none of the above
 4. The only political party to participate in the 1979 elections which had no lineal connections with any political party in the First Republic was
 - A. the NPN
 - B. the UPN
 - C. the NPP
 - D. the GNPP
 - E. none of the above
 5. Judging by results of the 1979 elections, the party which appeared to have the greatest nationwide support was
 - A. the GNPP
 - B. the NPN
 - C. the NPP
 - D. the UPN
 - E. the NAP
 6. Which of the following statements is *false*?
 - A. The Second Republic witnessed an expansion of existing health and educational facilities even though the government lacked a constitutional mandate to effect such an expansion
 - B. The Universal Primary Educational Programme launched in 1976 played a key role in encouraging the expansion of educational facilities during the Second Republic

Chapter 10 Nigeria since the fall of the Second Republic

Introduction

Since the collapse of the Second Republic in December 1983, Nigeria has passed through two distinct periods of military administration. The first period which lasted from December 1983 to August 1985 was under the leadership of General Muhammadu Buhari. The second period which began in August 1985 is expected to last till 1992 when a civilian administration will be sworn into office. The government has been under the leadership of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. Should the administration keep to its promise of returning Nigeria to democratic rule in 1992, the military interregnum which began in 1983 would have lasted a total of nine years.

In this chapter, we shall deal with the basic developments which have occurred since the two phases of military administration began in 1983. In this connection we will examine, specifically, the steps taken by the administrations to revamp the economy which suffered severe setbacks under the erstwhile civilian administration. We will also discuss the efforts made by government, not only in the economic sector (SAP) but also in the social plane to restore discipline through such programmes as the War Against Discipline (WAI), and the setting up of Military Tribunals, and the Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). Reference will also be made to economic and social programmes such as DFRRI, Better Life for Rural Women Programme and the Census. Finally, the Political Transition Programme of the Babangida administration which is expected to usher in the Third Republic will be discussed with particular reference to its problems and prospects.

Economic programme

From the outset, one of the problems which faced the military administration was how to revamp the ailing economy which it inherited from the civilian administration. Indeed, so grave were the

ill-effects of the dwindling economy on national life that both the financial and social well-being of the society appeared greatly endangered. The Head of State, General Buhari addressed this issue in his maiden World Press Conference, six days after he assumed office when he remarked that the top priority of his government was to resuscitate the national economy and rid the society of corruption. A revamped economy would be vital for paying up the salaries of workers which had fallen in arrears by as much as nine months in several parts of the country; it would also help to curb the rising rate of unemployment among school leavers and university graduates.

The economic programme of the military administration was aimed first and foremost at revitalising the oil sector so that it could earn more revenue for the nation. In this connection, it is worth noting that in the last days of the civilian administration little sales were actually realised from the oil sector. Coupled with this diminished sales was the collapse in the price of oil. Government was therefore determined to ensure that oil was being lifted again, and through active participation in the bargaining politics of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) ensure that the slump in the price of oil was halted and reversed to the benefit of oil exporters.

In addition to revamping the sale of oil, the government aimed to boost the economy through the following policies:

1. prudent management of the available resources and the diversification of the economy;
2. self-sufficiency in the production of the major staple food commodities and essential raw materials within a targeted period;
3. encouraging labour-intensive projects with a view to creating more job opportunities;
4. shelving development projects which involve large foreign exchange commitments;
5. upholding the principle of public accountability as well as encouraging the development of improved work ethics among workers; and
6. controlling the activities of hoarders, smugglers, oil bunkerers, and all other social and economic saboteurs.

In order to achieve the full realisation of the above objectives, the government enacted a number of decrees. First among such decrees was the Political Parties (Dissolution) decree of 1984 which empowered the government to confiscate illegal assets of political leaders and political parties. Proceeds from such seizures of illegal properties were to be returned to government coffers. Secondly, there was the Exchange Control (anti-sabotage) decree by which a strict control

measure was introduced in respect of all foreign exchange transactions in and out of the country. Contravention of the provisions of this decree was punishable with long prison terms.

Thirdly, the banking (freezing of accounts) decree authorised the Head of State to freeze any individual's or company's account and restrict the operation of such accounts if he (the Head of State) felt that such operations were fraudulent or were being conducted in a manner which was against the country's economic interest.

The Recovery of Public Property (special military tribunal) inaugurated soon after the inception of the Buhari administration, authorised the state to investigate, at its pleasure, all assets of public officers who were alleged to have enriched themselves through corrupt practices. Finally, the administration also changed the colours of the Nigerian currency in a sudden operation in April 1984. The aim of the change of currency was, among others, to regulate the amount of currency in circulation, mop up excesses and check inflation.

It should be pointed out that in spite of the drastic programmes of economic reforms pursued by the government, not much success attended the efforts of the Buhari administration to revamp the economy. The Buhari government did not articulate any new economic policies as such. The war against corruption which it waged was not much different in scope and content from similar wars waged by earlier regimes. In spite of a few 'brave' pronouncements on the need to diversify the national economy, the economy remained basically undiversified and the problems of food commodities and raw material shortages continued to hinder economic activities by undersourcing available industries and, thereby, worsening unemployment and other forms of economic hardships which faced the country.

Perhaps the most serious weakness of the economic programme of the Buhari administration was its failure to evolve any overall strategy for dealing with Nigeria's external indebtedness which at the time peaked at 20 billion dollars. Faced with an option of taking an additional loan with assorted conditions from the international Monetary Fund, and a rejection of the loans with self-imposed economic policies which would radically depart from the existing policies, the Buhari administration simply prevaricated.

Economic Development under the Babangida administration: the SAP mechanism

The Babangida administration, as did the Buhari administration

before it, came to power with a commitment to tackle the economic difficulties which faced the country. The mechanism by which it sought to achieve this was the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), launched in June 1986.

The corner stone of the Structural Adjustment Programme is deregulation and privatisation of the economy. SAP seeks to correct economic and social imbalance and inequalities in the distribution of national wealth by placing a high premium on private initiatives in key areas such as agriculture, industrial production and price adjustments. It seeks to do this in a manner which reflects domestic and international resource flows, as well as competitiveness and harmony.

Objectives of SAP

The general objectives of SAP may be summarised as follows:

1. to restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and on imports;
2. to achieve fiscal balance of payments viability, that is to say, reduction and, possibly total elimination of budget deficits;
3. to lay the grounds for a sustainable non-inflationary or minimal inflationary growth;
4. to lessen the dominance of unproductive investments in the public sector, and improve the sector's efficiency as well as intensify the growth potential of the private sector; and
5. to reduce the strangulating regime of administrative controls in the economic sector of national life.

Strategies of implementation

To realise SAP objectives the following strategies were adopted:

1. establishment of a realistic external value for the Naira through the operation of a Foreign Exchange Market (FEM);
2. Adoption of measures to stimulate domestic agricultural and industrial production including non-oil exports;
3. Rationalisation of tariffs to grant protection to local industries and, thereby, facilitate industrial growth and diversification;
4. Investment in the direction of improved trade and payments liberalisation; and
5. relation of administrative controls combined with a greater reliance on market forces for purposes of resource allocation.

The effects of SAP

Though the Structural Adjustment Programme is still being implemented by the government, it is possible to discern, even at this stage, some of its advantages and disadvantages.

Disadvantages of SAP

Among the disadvantages of the programme are firstly, a sharp fall in the value of the Naira – a development which has led to a fall in the standard of living of the people.

Secondly, the SAP increased the rate of inflation in the country for as soon as it was introduced imports became more and more expensive. Cars and other manufactured products, for example sky-rocketed in prices and soon went out of the reach of the average worker.

Thirdly, the SAP also led to the removal of the subsidies on petrol and virtually all petroleum products. The removal of such subsidies immediately led to a rise in the cost of transportation and general haulages all over the country. Wage earners were worst hit by this increase.

Finally, the reduction in the strength of the Naira vis-a-vis the United States Dollar and other foreign currencies led to the so-called brain drain. By this process, some of Nigeria's best brains in the fields of medicine, engineering, general sciences and the arts left the country in search of greener pastures overseas. This situation, in turn, not only produced an acute shortage of professionals in the country, but also undermined academic standards in Nigerian universities and higher institutions.

Advantages of SAP

Significant beneficial results have also accrued from the Structural Adjustment Programme. In the first place, the previous import-dependent industrialisation in the country is gradually giving way through SAP to a situation in which industrial inputs are increasingly being sourced locally.

Secondly, since one of the objectives of the SAP was to deregularise the economy and make for a freer business climate, an upshot of the programme has been the emergence of a new crop of entrepreneur ventures. This augurs well for the country since it enables the new businessmen to utilise their efforts and creative instincts and reap good results therefrom.

Thirdly, the SAP has curtailed the erstwhile rural-urban drift of population in the country by stimulating development activities in the rural areas.

Fourthly, the SAP has led to an overall increase in agricultural production and stimulated export of primary commodities, such as rubber and cocoa. Slowly but surely, it would appear that the economy is being made less dependent on oil export as the only source of foreign exchange.

Fifthly, the SAP has led to greater efficiency and competition by manufacturers, and a consequent improvement in their services to consumers.

Finally, the SAP has encouraged greater rationality in the use of foreign exchange. Overall, a gradual restoration of confidence is being witnessed in Nigeria's external payments arrangements. Fiscal balance of payments is being achieved. Reduction and, possibly, total elimination of budget deficits are being pursued more vigorously now than in the pre-SAP period.

Fiscal policy under the Babangida administration

The fiscal policies of a government are policies taken by the government which appertain to the public treasury or revenue. Under the Babangida administration, fiscal policies are designed to shift emphasis from wasteful consumption to productive efforts. Part of the objectives of SAP, was to curtail wasteful spending at both public and private levels as well as protect existing facilities and assets from unnecessary deterioration and disuse.

A cardinal aspect of the fiscal policy of the Babangida administration also aims at creating a more efficient tax system of lower taxes and higher incentives for the productive sector of the economy. Pending the implementation of the new tax structure, government operates a system of self assessment for the purpose of individual and corporate taxation. This approach is founded on the pledge that an individual is honest in the eyes of the law and that he would be ready to take the consequences of working and self assessment if found by law.

With respect to fringe benefits to employees, the government recognised those payable in the private sector in line with or up to the limits paid in the public sector. Efforts were made to harmonise the treatment of fringe benefits in both sectors:

To assist manufacturers of export products, the government es-

established a Duty Drawback Scheme as an integral part of its export promotion scheme. The fund secured under this scheme (N10 million in 1990 and N50 million in 1991) is intended to help neutralise the adverse effects which Nigerian manufacturers faced due to external competition. As an additional measure to assist potential manufacturers, the government also introduced the 'Manufacturing in Bond Scheme' to enable manufacturers export free of duty, raw materials for production of exportable goods.

Finally, to make extant tariff regulations more effective the government proposed a review of the Customs (Dumped and Subsidised Goods) Act of 1958, and the Import Monitoring Scheme. The exemption of imports worth \$5,000 and below from pre-shipment inspection was reviewed; and any imports worth \$1,000 and below were exempted from such inspection.

The use of special military tribunals

Military tribunals were a key feature in the administration of General Buhari. Under the administration of General Babangida, military tribunals continued to feature in the administration of justice though in a less important form.

In general terms, military administrations have tended to see military tribunals as a more effective instrument for enforcing social discipline and achieving economic health. Thus under General Buhari, special tribunals and probe bodies were set up to investigate public functionaries who might have corruptly enriched themselves under the civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari. The probes covered the federal, state and local governments, and virtually every public sector organisation in the government: ministries, parastatals and educational institutions. The objective of the probe was to investigate cases of embezzlement, fraud, bribery and theft of public money.

The Buhari administration established Special Military Tribunals under Decree No. 3 of 1984, called Recovery of Public Property Decree. The decree provided very long prison terms for any person found guilty of abuse of office. Unlike in the past when corrupt practices, if at all investigated, only resulted in dismissals or at most, short terms of imprisonment, Decree No 3 provided stiff penalties for all public officers found guilty under the relevant decree. Indeed, most of those found guilty under the decree were given long prison sentences of 21 years and above.

The Babangida administration inherited Decree 3. The most recent

trial by the tribunal was that of Tam David West, a University Professor and former Minister of Petroleum who was accused and found guilty of corruptly enriching an American Company. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

The use of special military tribunals in the enforcement of public accountability creates a major social difficulty: it de-emphasises judicial control by virtue of the suspension of all legislative assemblies. Since military decrees, including those which create special military tribunals cannot be challenged in courts, the judiciary is emasculated by being effectively barred from playing its traditional role as a check on the exercise of power.

Social policy and control measures: War Against Indiscipline (WAI)

The WAI was instituted by the Buhari administration as one of the pointers to the direction of future political development. Launched in March 1984, the WAI's objective was basically to instil in the minds of the people the ideals of national consciousness, as well as mobilise them for patriotism and discipline.

The WAI was programmed in different phases:

1. the queue culture phase;
2. the work ethics phase; and
3. the patriotism and nationalism phase.

The WAI programme differed from other social reform programmes initiated by previous regimes such as 'Ethical Revolution' programme of the Shagari era and the programme to build 'a humane' and 'disciplined society' advocated by General Olusegun Obasanjo in the Jaji Declaration of 1977. The WAI programme unlike its predecessors was more consistent and action-oriented. Little wonder, therefore, that the fruits of the WAI such as the queue culture, and the environmental sanitation programme not only outlived the Buhari administration but are still very much in evidence today.

However, not all the promises of the WAI have been achieved to their fullest. The reason for this may be found in the weakness of military regimes, for example, the absence of democratic culture. The WAI had aimed to produce a new Nigerian personality who is patriotic, nationalistic and disciplined. This goal proved difficult to achieve because the Buhari administration itself scarcely tolerated freedom of expression, or, indeed, any of the trappings which could encourage the emergence of a free and democratic society. Under

Buhari, Decree 4 'Protection Against False Accusation' was unpopular for stifling criticisms of public officers.

The Babangida administration remodelled the WAI through such programmes as the National Orientation Movement (NOM), and the Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). MAMSER has been the better known of these two programmes.

MAMSER - a synopsis

The Directorate of Social Mobilisation was established to create political awareness among the citizenry and to make them better equipped to defend their rights in the political, social and economic fields. MAMSER aims to create citizens who would be proud to defend their rights and would be willing to take up purposeful leadership role by constituting the right core of leadership. MAMSER seeks to equip the people to ask the relevant questions and insist on political accountability of leaders. It is believed that once the people are able to perform their roles and ensure justice between the various sectors of the society, government's role as social umpire would be considerably reduced.

DFRRI

The Babangida administration established the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in June 1986. The basic aim of DFRRI was to serve as a focus for rural development.

In seeking to develop the rural areas under DFRRI, the following three major objectives were envisaged. Firstly, DFRRI would improve the quality of life and standard of living of the people in the rural areas by raising the quality of rural housing, the general living environment of the areas and, by creating greater opportunities for human development and employment particularly self-employment. Self-employment, when achieved, would enhance rural income levels. Rural life would be improved thus making it possible to have a progressively wider range and variety of goods and services produced and consumed by the rural people and for exchange.

Secondly, DFRRI aims to use the enormous resources of the rural areas to lay a solid foundation for the security, socioeconomic growth and development activities of the rural areas to complement those of the Local Government areas; the States and the Federal Government.

Finally, through DFRRI, the government aims to secure a deeply rooted and self-sustaining development process based on a well-mobilised mass participation.

Organisation

The DFRRI is organised through activities of the National Directorate, State and Local Government Committees. It is through these three tiers that the Directorate carries out its core programmes of rural mobilisation through provision of rural infrastructure and other productive activities.

Main activities

Rural infrastructure: Since it was established, a major aspect of DFRRI's activities has been the provision of rural infrastructure. Indeed through DFRRI's guidance, substantial work has been carried out in the areas of construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of rural feeder roads, provision of portable water, sanitation, education and electricity in the rural areas nation-wide.

Food and agriculture: DFRRI has also concentrated its efforts on producing improved biological materials as its contribution to bridging the gap between demand and supply of these materials. Results have been seen in the areas of horticulture, arable crops production, aquaculture and livestock production.

Rural industrialisation: DFRRI has facilitated the industrialisation of the rural areas of the country – mainly through the provision of water and electricity. It has also fostered industrialisation through the creation of the awareness of investment opportunities in the rural areas.

Engineering and technology: DFRRI places high premium on the key role which engineering and technology can play in tapping the vast potentials of the rural areas. Through DFRRI-inspired technology, indigenous projects like the Ruvatsan handpump, hand-pump leather buckets and drilling rig used for rural portable water supply have been invented. Other projects of DFRRI include the production of tar boiler/spreader, tractor pulled road grader and roller used in feeder road construction, and brick moulding machine manual and motorised tricycles, cassava peeling, chopping and milling machines used for rural housing and agriculture programmes.

Rural housing: DFRRI introduced a scheme to boost rural housing. In this connection, the Directorate sponsored the training of Technical Extension Workers who were to use local raw materials to produce

durable building materials. It was hoped that the skills acquired by the extension workers would be useful in the construction of town halls, market stalls, small-scale educational and health institutions. **Credit mobilisation:** The DFRRI also contributes to efforts in tackling the general problem of credits faced by rural dwellers which hinders their effective participation in production activities. In this connection, the Federal Government has granted licences for the establishment of community Banks to complement the People's Bank in providing the urban and rural poor with credits.

Better Life Programme for Rural Women

Primarily focussed on improving the lot of the rural women, the Better Life Programme was conceived in 1987 by the wife of President Ibrahim Babangida, Mrs Maryam Babangida. Through its emphasis on rural women, the Better Life Programme complements the DFRRI programme, and in other ways, the basic policy of the Federal Government to develop the rural areas.

Objectives

There were four main objectives for setting up the Better Life Programme. First, to stimulate and motivate women in rural areas towards achieving a better and higher standard of living, as well as bringing to the attention of the general populace the plight of the rural woman.

Secondly, the programme aims to educate women in basic health care and family planning, the importance of child care and the need for literacy among women. Thirdly, to mobilise women for concrete activities towards achieving specific objectives including seeking leadership roles in all spheres of national life. Fourthly, it seeks to raise the level of social awareness of women about their rights as well as educate them on their social, political and economic responsibilities.

Organisational structure

The Better Life Programme has at the national level, the wife of the President, Mrs Maryam Babangida, as chairperson. She is assisted by the National Organising Committee. At the state level, the programme is headed by the wife of the governor of the state, who is assisted by the State Committee. At the local government, the task of mobilising the programme is headed by the wife of the local government

chairman, who in consultation with the State Committee, mobilises the women at the local government and village levels.

Achievements

Since it was established, the programme has become the focal point for mobilising rural women for self development and political awareness in the country. The Programme has organised national Better Life fairs, held in September, 1988, and March 1991, and other state fairs, during which rural women were able to display and sell their locally produced wares. Other achievements of the programme include:

1. **Health:** The programme has increased the awareness and participation in the existing primary health care programme (for example the Expanded Programme on Immunisation, EPI and ORT) and family planning.
2. **Agriculture:** It has imparted to rural women, skills in food processing, preservation and packaging. It has secured improved seeds, cassava cuttings and fertilisers, and facilitated the acquisition of farmland for rural women.
3. **Social welfare:** It has helped to increase and expand the range of recreational activities in most communities. It has also helped to promote the rehabilitation of the handicapped through rural and financial support.
4. **Education:** It has led to the intensification of adult literacy programmes.
5. **Cooperatives:** It has fostered the setting up of numerous fishing, farming, marketing, weaving and sundry craft cooperatives.

The political transition programme

The Transition to Civil Rule Programme of the Babangida administration sets out the guidelines and stages to be passed to return Nigeria to civilian administration in 1992. Among the important steps for the transition programme was the conduct of local government election for the four hundred and fifty three local government councils of the Federation. These elections were held in November 1990. Once the Chairmen were elected, councils were given administrative and financial autonomy in accordance with the spirit and letter of the constitution. The scheme showed that the two political parties

created earlier by government namely, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) had taken some root.

Other elements which are critical to the Transition to Civil Rule Programme include, the conduct of the national census; elections and the inauguration of state legislatures and governments.

Preparation for the Census is being handled by the National Population Commission headed by Alhaji Shehu Musa, former Secretary to the Government of the Federation under President Shehu Shagari. The Commission has so far carried out three pre-test surveys. The successful conduct of the census is widely accepted to be indispensable for the effective implementation of a programme aimed at evolving a new political, social and economic order for Nigeria in The Third Republic.

The elections of state legislatures and state governors are expected to be held in the fourth quarter of 1991. This means that before the end of the year, democratically elected governments should have been installed at the state level. The election of the President by the military in 1992 and the hand over of power is expected to be the last step in the political transition process.

Population census and national development

The National Population Commission is the statutory body given the responsibility to conduct a free and fair population count for the country by the Babangida administration before the handing over of power to elected civilian administration in 1992. The Commission was inaugurated on 22 April 1988, with a three-year mandate to conduct an accurate census for the country.

Census taking in Nigeria has a long history. The first was conducted for the Lagos area in 1863. The others still for the Lagos area, were conducted in 1868, 1881, 1891 and 1901. The first country wide census took place in 1911, subsequent censuses were taken every ten years until the outbreak of the Second World War when census was interrupted.

Census was again conducted in 1952/53 and 1962/63 the latter being the first post-independence census. The one conducted in 1973 flopped and was rejected. The 1991 census is expected with great anxiety in view of the failure which attended the 1973 census.

Many reasons have been adduced for the failure of census enumeration in Nigeria since 1960. Among these are sectional interests, parochialism, and inadequate planning. A no less important factor

which led to the failures was the over-politicisation of the exercise.

In spite of the setbacks which have attended past efforts to conduct country-wide censuses, the Babangida administration is optimistic that through the wide spread enlightenment campaign which it has sponsored, the 1991 exercise will be successful.

Government attaches considerable importance to these setbacks in planning the census because the census is crucial to laying solid foundation for a stable Third Republic. The benefits accruable to a nation from an accurate census cannot be underestimated. As a source of detailed statistical information, it enables the government to identify needs and priorities as well as furnish a rational basis for policy formulation from accurate population statistics. Information on birth rate, the general fertility rate, death rate and mortality rate can be obtained. Such information is important for implementing medical and educational programmes.

Finally, accurate head count is important for implementing development programmes in the fields of education, health, housing and transport.

Summary

1. The fall of the Second Republic which had lasted only four years was followed by a military interregnum comprising two administrations, namely, the administration of General Mohammadu Buhari (December 1938 - August 1985) and that of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida which began in August 1985 and is expected to come to an end in 1992 if the government keeps to its date of handing over power to an elected civilian government.
2. After the collapse of the Second Republic the two military administrations pursued various programmes which were intended to correct the ills of the society and move the nation forward economically, socially and politically.
3. On the economic front, for example, the Buhari administration did the following:
 - a) Sought to revitalize the dwindling oil sector of the economy by playing a very dynamic role in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and checking illegal bunkering of oil.
 - b) Embarked on prudent management of the available resources and diversification of the economy.

- c) Shelved development projects considered too expensive to execute.
 - d) Upheld the principle of public accountability and encouraged improved work ethics among workers.
4. Under the administration of General Babangida, economic policies centred on the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The programme emphasises deregulation and privatisation of the economy and seeks to correct economic and social imbalances and inequalities in the distribution of national wealth, through private initiatives in agricultural and industrial sectors and production and price adjustment.
 5. SAP is being implemented very doggedly. Some of the strategies of implementation include, establishment of a new exchange rate for the Naira through the Foreign Exchange Market (FEM); adoption of measures to stimulate local agricultural and industrial production; and relaxation of administrative controls in the economy.
 6. The implementation of SAP has produced both negative and positive effects for the country. On the negative side are increased rate of inflation; low value for the Naira, and the exodus of professionals and highly skilled workers from the country, otherwise called the brain-drain.
 7. On the positive side, SAP has produced the following effects:
 - a) Economy is now being re-oriented from its previous import-dependent industrialisation to an industrialisation which is being sourced locally.
 - b) Erstwhile rural-urban drift of population is being curtailed due to new efforts at stimulating development of rural areas.
 - c) Greater efficiency is being achieved in the manufacturing sector through a more rational use of foreign exchange.
 8. The administrations of Generals Buhari and Babangida made use of Special Military Tribunals in the administration of justice, as a more effective instrument for enforcing social discipline and achieving economic health. The Buhari administration established Special Military Tribunals under Decree No. 3 of 1984 called Recovery of Public Property Decree. The Babangida administration continued with this decree, though it has used it less frequently than did the Buhari government.
 9. The military administrations also initiated various policy and control measures to achieve its social purposes. Thus, the Buhari administration introduced the War Against Indiscipline (WAI), comprising among others, the queue culture phase, the

- work ethics phase and the patriotism and nationalism phase. On its side, the Babangida administration introduced the National Orientation Movement (NOM), and the Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). MAMSER is however the better known of these two social programmes.
10. In addition to NOM and MAMSER, the administration of Babangida has also established two other programmes namely, the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and the Better Life Programme for Rural Women. These two programmes have a common focus on the rural population. In spite of the criticisms which have been made against the DFRRI and the Better Life Programme, it is evident that the positive results of the programme for the rural people of the country outweigh the negative.
 11. The DFRRI has helped the development of rural infrastructure (construction of roads; provision of portable water and education); increased food and agricultural production; facilitated rural industrialisation through provision of electricity; and checked rural-urban population drift through its rural housing scheme etc.
 12. The Better Life Programme for Rural Women, for its part, has enhanced the health of the rural women and children; contributed to the social and educational well-being of the people; and in the context of agriculture, imparted relevant skills in food processing, packaging and securing improved seeds for the rural women farmers.
 13. The Political Transition Programme is the mechanism which sets out the guidelines for the Babangida administration to return power to an elected civilian government in 1992. Among the important features of the programme are the making of a new constitution (accomplished in 1989); the creation of political parties (finalised in 1990); and conduct of elections of Local Government Councils (accomplished in 1990). Other elements of the programme, yet to be concluded, include the conduct of the national census, elections and the inauguration of state legislatures and governments. The election of the President of the Federation in 1992 is expected to be the last step in the transition process.

Questions

Essay

1. Discuss the economic programmes of the Buhari administration

- and show the extent to which they were successful in achieving their objectives.
2. Examine the Structural Adjustment Programme of the Babangida administration with special reference to its objectives, failures and achievements.
 3. To what extent is it true that DFRRI has made significant contributions to Nigeria's rural development?
 4. Give a concise account of the Better Life Programme for Rural Women of the Babangida administration.

Multiple-choice

1. Under General Muhammadu Buhari, the government ensured that
 - A. the wealth of the nation was evenly distributed
 - B. the oil sector of the Nigerian economy was revitalised
 - C. labour-intensive projects already begun by past governments were rigorously pursued
 - D. the activities of oil bunkerers were allowed
 - E. the principle of public accountability was effectively ignored
2. Under the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida, the Structural Adjustment Programme aims to
 - A. restructure and diversify the economy so as to encourage its dependency on the oil sector and on imports
 - B. tighten the administrative controls in the economic sectors of national life
 - C. reduce emphasis of government on agricultural and other non-oil sectors of the economy
 - D. discourage the private sector from participating in economic activities
 - E. implement measures to achieve sustainable non-inflationary growth for the economy
3. The Babangida administration pursues a fiscal policy programme which
 - A. seeks only to create a more efficient tax system of lower taxes and higher incentives
 - B. abolishes fringe benefits for all grades of workers
 - C. promotes exports through special government schemes
 - D. abolishes existing tariff regulations
 - E. encourages excessive spending at both public and private sectors

4. The Buhari administration established WAI to
 - A. instil in the Nigerian people a spirit of patriotism and nationalism
 - B. de-emphasise the value of social discipline and self control
 - C. teach Nigerians how bad the previous governments of the country had been
 - D. emphasise the importance of freedom of expression
 - E. emphasise the supremacy of the government
5. The Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) has
 - A. done little to promote the rural infrastructure
 - B. promoted rural industrialisation
 - C. neglected rural housing
 - D. promoted rural-urban drift
 - E. stifled credit mobilisation in the rural areas
6. The Better Life Programme for Rural Women
 - A. complements the DFRRI programme in the development of the rural areas of Nigeria
 - B. is basically concerned with the development of agriculture through the use of heavy equipment and machineries
 - C. seeks to impose the dominance of women over men in the areas of education and social welfare
 - D. is an arm of the presidency
 - E. is headed by the National Organisation Committee

Further reading

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Chapter 11 Nigeria and the wider world: The ECOWAS and the OAU

Introduction

Since it achieved independence in 1960, Nigeria has pursued a policy of peaceful relations with the international community. The focus of these relations has been with the nations of the West African subregion, the rest of Africa, and, ultimately, with the remainder of the outside world. Some of the most important organisations through which Nigeria has conducted these relations have been the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth of Nations, and the United Nations Organisation (UNO).

This chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first will consist of an in-depth discussion of the fundamental objectives and principles of Nigeria's foreign policy since 1960. This is intended to underscore the extent to which Nigeria has been able to meet her foreign policy goals and objectives through the dominant international organisations of which she is a member and in which she plays an important role. In the second section, the general aims and objectives of the ECOWAS and the OAU will be discussed, as will their problems, failures, and achievements as subregional and continental organisations.

Foreign policy objectives

The earliest official pronouncement of Nigeria's foreign policy was made by the nation's first prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, on 20 August, 1960, in an address to the House of Representatives. The principles of the country's foreign policy would be 'founded on Nigeria's interest', he said. This interest, he went on to elucidate, 'would be consistent with the moral and democratic principles on which [the Nigerian] Constitution is based'. He added

that foreign policy decisions would be arrived at as a result of what he called 'independent objectivity'.

In broad terms, Nigeria's constitutions—for present purposes we may cite here the Constitution of 1979, for example—state that government policy vis-a-vis international relations aims at four main objectives which had been spelt out in more specific terms in October 1960 on the occasion of Nigeria's selection to be the ninety-ninth member of the United Nations. In turn, the four principles outlined by Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa to the General Assembly that year were in line with policies put forth in the Constitution adopted at independence in October 1960.

1. Nigeria would endeavour to cooperate and be friendly with all members of the international community on the basis of reciprocity. She would adhere to a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations, and she would expect other countries not to interfere in her internal affairs.
2. Nigeria would adopt an even-handed approach in her dealings with existing power blocs, guided in all circumstances only by her own national interest, which would be primary. In other words, like a few other third-world countries at the time, Nigeria would adopt a policy of nonalignment.
3. Nigeria would adopt a policy of fostering the closest possible ties with other African states, with a view towards ensuring mutual intra-African cooperation and development. She would also strive to assist still-dependent African colonial states to achieve independence from their colonial masters.
4. Nigeria would pursue a policy guided by the principle of the sovereignty of states, large or small, and their equality and common worth in the international arena.

As already indicated, the foreign policy principles and objectives enunciated by Prime Minister Balewa were consistent with the nation's Constitution at the time of independence. Although there was ongoing debate over the degree to which these principles guided the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy in the years following independence, for the purposes of our discussion it is interesting to note that these principles were rather reinforced, not jettisoned, when the new Constitution was adopted in 1979 to guide government policies and actions during the Second Republic (1979-1983).

Section 19 of the 1979 Constitution, the section which specifically dealt with questions of foreign policy, pledged the government's full support of the goal of promoting African unity and independence as well as the political, economic, and social growth of all African nations. Additionally, the Constitution required that the government

foster 'other international cooperation which [would strengthen] universal peace, mutual respect, and international understanding and friendship'. Finally, the Constitution charged the government with the responsibility of making serious efforts 'against all forms of racial discrimination', with the implicit understanding that apartheid was the main offender towards which this policy was intended to take aim.

The ECOWAS: Birth of an economic giant

It was clearly in keeping with Nigeria's African-centred policy as outlined in the Constitution that the government in 1975 gave its attention and support to an initiative to establish a West African economic community. The idea of such a community which would encompass all states in the subregion was mainly the brainchild of General Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria's head of state (from 1966-1975). He worked in collaboration with President Etienne (Gnassingbe) Eyadema of Togo to bring the idea to fruition.

Two main international developments helped to press it upon West Africa's leaders that it was very much to the advantage of each country in the region to unite economically rather than to continue, as in the past, to pursue their economic objectives individually. First, towards the end of the 1960s, and into the beginning of the 1970s, it was becoming shockingly evident to the nations of West Africa—and especially Nigeria and Togo—that the economic gap between them and other third world, developing nations was becoming wider and wider with respect to the process of industrialisation. It also became evident then, and to some extent is still the case, that this gap could not be closed or even diminished to any significant extent if the nations of Africa continued to deal with the international economic community without establishing some sort of united front among themselves. One particular symptom of an unhealthy state of affairs in the economic sphere, beginning especially in the early 1970s, was the issue of ever increasing debts to external sources which, as years passed, began to grow to levels unheard of prior to the period in question. Other signs of economic woes in the region included declining productivity figures, unfavourable terms of trade, and the outbreak of a particularly devastating period of famine in Sahelian parts of West Africa and, indeed, in other parts of the continent as well.

The second development which made it clear to the countries of West Africa that economic unity was an imperative issue was the significant diplomatic success in 1974 which the countries of Africa, in conjunction with other developing members of the United Nations, scored at the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Out of this session of the international body came two extremely important documents: a Declaration On the Establishment of a New international Economic Order, and a Program of Action On the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. In essence, these documents stressed, among other things, the need for collective self-reliance and cooperation among developing nations in their efforts to establish a new, more equitable international economic order.

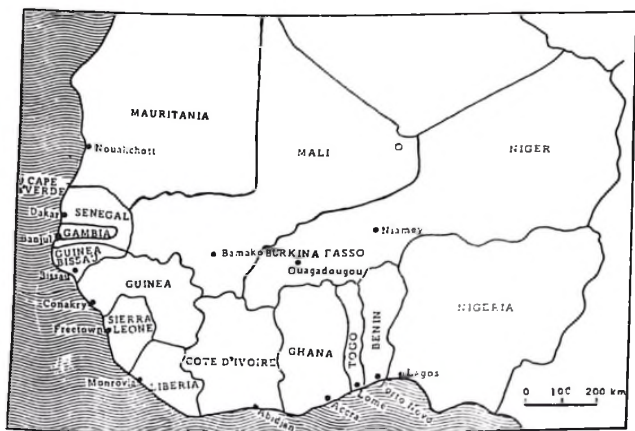
Thus, the groundwork was laid for what would eventually come to be known as the Economic Community of West African States. As we have shown, the ECOWAS was, to be sure, the result of a widespread desire on the part of African states in the West African sub-region to tackle the root causes of their economic problems. And, if not eliminate, at least reduce the inequalities and imbalances which appeared to dominate the international economic system. Yet it is important to stress that the organisation would probably not have come into being at all were it not for the special role played by a few West African states, most notably Nigeria. The leadership role played by Nigeria in the formation of this economic union was quite evident in a series of meetings sponsored by the Economic Commission of Africa, held between 1966-1968, to discuss West Africa's economic troubles. The meetings resulted in the historic Monrovia Summit of 1968, which gave Nigeria and Guinea a mandate to outline the framework of a West African economic union.

The 1968 summit was followed by a short period during which there was a lull in momentum to create some sort of united economic front in the region. But then, in 1972, Nigeria and Togo signed a treaty which became known as the 'embryo' of a West African community. This agreement went a long way in gaining the support of other West African states who, until its signing, had been reluctant to join in any movement for economic cooperation because of deep seated suspicions over Nigeria's intentions in working for West African unity.

A year later, in 1973, after intensive diplomatic manoeuvrings on the part of Nigeria coupled with numerous meetings involving other West African states, it was decided that all the nations of the region would send representatives to a meeting in Togo to discuss a precise framework of West African regional cooperation. Attended by representatives of fifteen West African nations, this meeting ended in the

drafting of what was called the Nigeria-Togo plan for West African economic unity. Two years later, in 1975, at a meeting of all West African heads of state (including the President of Cape Verde, which was not then independent), a formal treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States was signed in Lagos.

Today the ECOWAS is made up of sixteen West African nations: Benin Republic, Bourkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Considering the number of member nations, it is the largest economic bloc in the third world, and when the total number of people in all the nations which belong to the ECOWAS is taken into consideration, it is also the largest economic organisation in the non-industrial world.



Member states of ECOWAS

Aims and objectives of the ECOWAS

The aims of the ECOWAS are spelt out in Article II, Paragraph 1 of the treaty drawn up to establish the organisation. These include the following:

...to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity, particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary, and financial questions...

and to promote cooperation and development in social and cultural matters

...for the purpose of raising the standard of living of [the African] peoples, or increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among [ECOWAS] members and contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.

In order to realise these aims, Paragraph 2 of the same article in the treaty requires the gradual elimination of all custom duties and tariffs which only served to impede intra-West African trade. Also recommended is the abolition of quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade; the free movement of citizens, goods, and services; harmonisation in the monetary policies of the various countries; and the establishment of a special fund for cooperation, compensation, and development. The ultimate objective in the pursuit of these aims is to accelerate and sustain the overall economic development of member states in order to allow for the emergence of a homogeneous society united and free from all unnecessary obstacles to the free movement of individuals and the unimpeded exchange of goods and services.

The aims and objectives of the ECOWAS resulted from what now seems to be rational and sensible thinking on the parts of the leaders of the member nations. Twelve of the sixteen ECOWAS states belong to the category of countries usually classified as low-income countries. Per capita income in these countries is very low, death rates are generally high, and food supplies usually inadequate to meet population demands. To make matters worse, these low-income countries are faced with severe indebtedness to outside sources, thus making relief from the problems just mentioned much more difficult to obtain. It was therefore abundantly clear that the security and development of the West African region could only be realised through the careful pooling together of the meagre resources available in the region in order to achieve a sustainable rate of development and

growth. Emphasis was laid on the development of basic infrastructure such as transportation and telecommunications, the general policy of allowing freedom of movement with respect to citizens, goods, and services, and the further development of food cultivation. All these appeared to be appropriate if general development of the region was to be a primary goal.

More important, perhaps—and this is a point not often recognised by writers on this subject—economic integration and cooperation of the sort envisaged by the ECOWAS appears to be the best guarantee for the security and overall development of nations which fall into the category of less developed countries (LDCs). One would have expected that because of the state of their economies LDCs could not afford the luxury of participating in the arms race. However, the sad and ironic truth is that many of these nations do. In fact, they compromise the welfare of their people and the continued development of their economies by joining in on the mad race for a better gun or a more powerful bomb that more affluent states enjoy participating in—this presumably all in the name of security.

By building a framework for peaceful coexistence and regional cooperation, the ECOWAS has provided a new scope and a more assured means of security for the states of the region than any ill-advised arms build-up on the part of any collective or individual state could accomplish. One commentator has put it this way:

Economic integration and cooperation appear to be the principal option for LDCs in ensuring their security and development, particularly if one considers the complexities of the world brought home clearly to West African countries through such developments as the energy crisis, the world-wide inflation, and the continuing fall in the share of world trade by developing countries.

Organisational structure of the ECOWAS

Various organs were set up within the framework of the ECOWAS to perform specific duties as defined by Article IV. Paragraph 1 of the organisation's treaty. Below is a brief description of each of these organs:

The Authority of the Heads of State and Government: This organ refers to the supreme decision making body of the ECOWAS. The Authority as it is simply referred to is responsible for the overall formulation of general policies and the direction and control of subordinate organs of the organisation. It convenes once a year and elects a chairman on an annual and rotational basis.

The Council of Ministers: This is made up of representatives from each ECOWAS member state. It meets twice annually and, as in the case of the Authority, elects a chairman on an annual and rotational basis. The function of this organ is to review the activities and programmes of the organisation as a whole in order to ensure that they are consistent with the objectives outlined in the ECOWAS treaty. Decisions arrived at and actions taken by the Council of Ministers can be overridden only by the Authority.

The Executive Secretariat: This organ is headed by the executive secretary. It is the administrative arm of the ECOWAS. Appointed to a four-year term of office by the Authority, the executive secretary is assisted by two deputies, one for administrative and financial matters, and the other for economic matters. The executive secretary is primarily responsible for implementing the decisions of the Council of Ministers and the Authority.

The Tribunal of the Community: The tribunal acts as an arbitrator in the affairs of member nations and ensures that the tenets of the ECOWAS treaty are properly interpreted and strictly and legally abided by. When disputes arise as to legal interpretations of the ECOWAS treaty, it is this body which acts as the final mediating authority.

The ECOWAS also has four technical committees which assist in various functions. Each of these committees has at least one representative from each member state. The committees are the Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary, and Payment Commission (TCIMPC); the Industry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Commission (IANRC); the Transport, Telecommunications, and Energy Commission (TTEC); and the Social and Cultural Affairs Commission (SCAC). Committee functions include writing reports and making recommendations as a result of their own initiative or as may be directed by the executive secretary.

In addition to the above bodies, the ECOWAS also has a general fund, the ECOWAS Fund For Cooperation, Compensation, and Development. Established by Article 50 of the organisation's treaty, the Fund derives its resources from contributions made by member nations, income from enterprises set up by member nations, receipts from bilateral and multilateral sources, and various subsidies and foreign sources. With headquarters presently located in Lome, capital of the Republic of Togo, the Fund is headed by a chief executive who has the title of managing director. He is appointed by the Authority to a four-year term, renewable for only one additional term.

The purposes of the ECOWAS Fund are fourfold: to provide compensation and other forms of assistance to member states which

have suffered losses or damages as a result of the application of provisions of the ECOWAS treaty; to provide compensation to states which have suffered losses as a result of the location of enterprises run by member states; to provide grants for financing community projects such as research projects, feasibility studies, and development; and, finally, to promote development as well as provide means for the sustained mobilisation of internal and external resources for member nations.

Nigeria's role in the ECOWAS

As was indicated earlier, Nigeria plays an extremely important role in the Economic Community of West African States. This is a function of Nigeria's political, social, and economic importance not only in the subregion but also on the African continent as a whole.

Nigeria's Gross National Product (GNP) almost doubles that of all other West African countries combined. Although economic power does not confer power as a whole on any particular state, there is certainly no doubt that in the case of Nigeria and her place in the West Africa subcontinent, this economic reality meant that she, more than any other nation, had the resources to initiate the process which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the ECOWAS. And once the organisation was established, she had to support the nascent body to achieve the goals and objectives it had set for itself.

The following formula from the ECOWAS treaty will demonstrate how critical Nigerian economic support of the organisation is: 'The formula for the contribution to the ECOWAS budget is based on a coefficient calculated as half of the ratio of the [Gross National Product] of all member states, plus half of the ratio of the per capita income of each member state'. According to this method of calculation, Nigeria's contribution to the ECOWAS annual budget represents 31 per cent of the total. The next highest contributor, Cote d'Ivoire, accounts for only 12.6 per cent of the budget. The greatest portion of Nigeria's contribution to the annual ECOWAS budget is replicated by contributions to the Community's Fund for Development. Here, Nigeria's contribution, slightly on the higher side with respect to contributions to the general budget, stands at 32.8 per cent, while Cote d'Ivoire's contribution to the Fund is 13 per cent. It should be added finally that Nigeria's contribution to ECOWAS is significant not only because of the amounts involved but because these amounts are paid promptly and regularly. This is in sharp contrast to the payment situation of certain other West African states which often are

indebted to the organisation for back payments several years in succession.

Anxious to demonstrate her commitment and unwavering support to the ECOWAS, Nigeria has on numerous occasions supplied petroleum products to ECOWAS member nations at concessionary prices so that these countries could meet their domestic energy requirements and enhance productive capacities. Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, and Sierra Leone have all benefited from this form of Nigerian largesse. Another example of Nigeria's support of an ECOWAS member state involves a fifteen-year agreement concluded between Nigeria and Senegal in September 1975 which binds Nigeria to supply crude oil to the Senegalese oil refinery at Cayar.

In various other ways, too, the Nigerian contribution to the ECOWAS and its member nations has been significant. For example, military training programmes at the Nigerian Defence Academy have been made available to students sent by ECOWAS members. In addition, debts owed to Nigeria by various ECOWAS countries have been written off. These include a sizeable amount of money owed for underlifting Nigerian crude oil. Finally, and no less significant, at various times in the past Nigeria has provided substantial financial and technical aid, food, and drugs to drought-stricken ECOWAS member nations. Between 1981-1983, the Republic of Benin received \$250,000 under the Nigerian Technical Assistance Programme. In 1983, Burkina Faso was the recipient of \$100,000 to build an educational institution and an equal amount of money to foster 'political stability'. And in 1982, Sierra Leone received \$3.5 million from the Nigerian Trust Fund in the African Development Bank for its low-cost housing project.

To facilitate trade and boost contact between ECOWAS member nations, in the early 1980s Nigeria undertook the construction of roads to link up member states. One such project is the Lagos-Cotonou highway, constructed at a highly subsidised rate by the Nigerian government. In addition, at the eleventh ECOWAS summit, held in Abuja in July 1986, Nigeria announced a cash donation of N5 million to be used towards the construction of a permanent ECOWAS Secretariat headquarters in Abuja. This amounted to approximately 33 per cent of the estimated N15 million required to finance the entire project. Also at the summit, Nigeria pledged a considerable amount over and above what was expected of her to provide accommodation for ECOWAS senior staff members residing in Lagos.

As can be seen from the above, the Nigerian investment in the ECOWAS has been considerable. At the same time, it has been an investment from which Nigeria has gained much in return. In deed,

the vast sums of money and resources given by Nigeria to the ECOWAS and its member nations has been based on what might be called a general policy of enlightened self-interest. In the first place, Nigeria has realised that the promotion of regional free trade, which is one of the prime objectives of the ECOWAS, is crucial if she is to enjoy the benefits of balanced future economic development. One commentator has put it this way: 'Nigeria's national interests—the development and expansion of its economy, the raising of the standard of living of its population, and the future physical security of its territory—can only be effectively secured through joint programs of balanced production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services on a regional basis'. In the long term, an industrialised Nigeria hopes to be able to export manufactured products freely to other West African states as well as to invest directly in the production of raw materials in ECOWAS nations, which would then be used to supplement local needs.

Additionally, there are the anticipated political rewards resulting from the physical security brought about by Nigeria's membership and active support and participation in the ECOWAS. This benefit is all the more assured by better management of foreign and economic policies. Internal security as a result of sound economic development may expect to be boosted by the external security which will no doubt result from the ECOWAS Defense Pact of 1984.

The Nigerian role in the ECOWAS has not been without its problems, however. One such difficulty has involved Nigeria's inability to observe the protocol on the free movement of individuals which is required by Article III of the ECOWAS treaty. This protocol established the basis for a large settlement of West African aliens in Nigeria and led to the dramatic expulsion in 1983 and 1985 of millions of what the government considered to be illegal aliens. The Nigerian government was subjected to a great amount of criticism as a result of this expulsion:

The Nigerian action is strikingly not in consonance with the general undertaking of member states of ECOWAS to make every effort to plan and direct their policies with a view to creating favourable conditions for the achievement of the aims of the community. It is also more disturbing when it is considered against the broad background of her leadership role in Africa.

Achievements and failures of the ECOWAS

Since its inception in 1975, the ECOWAS has achieved notable suc-

cesses, particularly in its efforts to integrate the economic and, to a lesser extent, political lives in the West African subregion. Of particular note are the ECOWAS' successes in setting up the ECOBANK (which, at its inception, had initial funds of \$100 million) and the West African Chamber of Commerce, both of which were created to promote West African industrial and commercial development.

Thanks to ECOWAS' efforts, the ECOWAS Fund was also established. The fund was set up to provide loans to member states for vital projects such as the first phase of the ECOWAS telecommunications project (for which \$12 million was loaned out). Niger, Nigeria, Benin, and Ghana are just some of the countries which have benefited from loans issued by the ECOWAS Fund.

The ECOWAS has been extremely effective in facilitating the movement of goods, individuals, and vehicles between ECOWAS member nations in the subregion. This has been primarily the result of road construction coordinated by ECOWAS efforts and the establishment of the Brown Card Motor Insurance plan for intra-regional travel, which covers all ECOWAS member states. Movement of individuals between member nations has also been facilitated by ratification of free-movement protocols. In spite of the many obstacles which initially stood in the way of achieving this objective, the ultimate attainment of these protocols has proved to be a remarkable achievement for integrationists in the West African subregion and is hailed as a positive step towards effective regional integration.

Finally, the ECOWAS has also been instrumental in suggesting and implementing a non-aggression pact between member nations which has proved to be a significant step in the realisation of political security in the subregion. And with regard to monetary policy, plans are afoot to establish a common monetary system in the subregion. To this end, a West African clearing house has been established to settle trade payments between member nations.

In spite of the many impressive achievements cited above, the ECOWAS has encountered various problems which portend future difficulties in fully realising the objectives set out in the organisation's treaty. These include inherited colonial relationships and different administrative and political systems—all of which have frustrated efforts towards smooth integration. Also problematic is the multiplicity of currencies among member nations. The fact that these currencies are not easily convertible has complicated trade between the various states.

Another problem which the ECOWAS has encountered involves the fact that the economies of all member nations are basically agricultural. This is not a particularly ideal situation for effective

commercial intercourse because of a built-in lack of complementarity and competitiveness. Since adequate markets do not exist in West Africa for locally produced products, alternative markets abroad must be found. In addition, in much of West Africa there is a conspicuous absence of adequate infrastructural facilities such as road, rail, and telecommunication networks. This has made it especially difficult to accomplish efforts towards, freeing the movement of individuals, goods, and vehicles as envisaged under the ECOWAS treaty.

Probably the most important hindrance to ECOWAS success, however, is the lack of political will on the part of West African governments to unite economically. Only a few political leaders in the subregion are willing to relinquish a part of their economic sovereignty which the effective operation of the ECOWAS requires.

The OAU: From pan-Africanism to Addis Ababa

Another African organisation in which Nigeria not only showed an early interest in becoming a member but actually played a leading role in its founding was the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). In fact, from the time the OAU was founded, Nigeria has played an active and supportive role both in terms of diplomatic and financial efforts.

The OAU traces its beginnings to the concept of pan-Africanism, first conceived of and initially developed by Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean intellectuals like W.E.B. Du Bois, Casey Williams, Edmond Blyden, and Marcus Garvey. Pan-Africanism has as its goal the fostering of unity among the peoples of the African continent and all peoples of African descent throughout the world. It unequivocally asserts the fact that blacks and whites are equal human beings and that Africans have made enormous contributions to the political and cultural development of the world.

Though the concept of pan-Africanism originated outside the African continent, the ideas put forward by its originators were quickly embraced and further developed by African scholars such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone. They were students abroad at the time the concept was originated. They returned to their respective homelands after their studies to ultimately raise themselves to positions of leadership. It

was these individuals who would later broaden the scope of pan-African objectives to include the quest for immediate political independence from colonial control.

Following the winds of change which blew across the African continent, resulting in the independence of Ghana in 1957 and the subsequent independence of a great many other African nations in the 1960s, pan-Africanism crystallised into the quest for the establishment of an institutional framework, in the form of a continental organisation. The aim of this organisation would be to realise the various goals and objectives of the different African nations, a majority of which were at the same time guarding their newly won independence.

By mid-1961, Africa was divided into three distinct camps with respect to the pan-African movement. These were the Casablanca, the Monrovia, and the Brazzaville groups. The nations which made up the Casablanca group include Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), and Libya. These were the so-called radical states which believed that African unity could come about only first through political unity involving all independent African nations.

In contrast to these were those nations which made up the Monrovia group, the so-called conservative states led by Nigeria and including Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tunisia, Togo, and Somalia. They were called conservative—or, in some circles, moderate—because they favoured a step-by-step approach towards political unity on the continent. Indeed, adherents to this way of thinking insisted that African unity should ideally begin with a general coordination of efforts in every field of endeavour, including foreign affairs, economic development, health and education, the reinforcement of political ties with the West, and the noninterference of nations in the affairs of each other.

The third camp, the Brazzaville group, was comprised of twelve former French colonies, including Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Dahomey (now Benin), Gabon, the Ivory Coast (now Cote d'Ivoire), Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Upper Volta (now Bourkina Faso). These nations, bound together by the Brazzaville Declaration of December 1960, favoured the retention of close links with the former colonial power, in this case France, rather than political unity with the rest of Africa.

In spite of basic differences which existed among these three groups, efforts to bring the various African states together continued to be made by interested countries. One such effort, and an immediate precursor of the OAU, was a very important meeting which was

convened in Lagos in January 1962. The meeting was initiated by Nigeria. The Casablanca group boycotted the meeting alleging that they had not been properly invited. The meeting was attended by twenty-one African nations made up of members from the Monrovia and Brazzaville groups. At the end of the conference, the twenty-one countries became united under the Monrovia banner.

Results of this gathering in Lagos were considerable. As one group, the nations declared that they looked forward to a time when Africa would 'unite so that the welfare and well-being of [all Africans could] be assured'. The participants also declared their intention 'to safeguard and consolidate the hardwon independence as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of [African] states, and to fight against neocolonialism in all its forms'. Finally, the conference led to the adaptation in principle of a charter for a proposed African United Organisation. The document was not adopted in actual practice in order to allow those countries which had not attended the conference to still join in at some future date without feeling that they were only co-opted members of the future African-wide organisation.

Whatever difficulties might have stood in the way of agreement among African leaders, by 1963 they appeared to have put their differences aside and were now ready to establish a truly continental organisation. A summit was proposed and put together in May of that year by Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie. The conference of independent African states convened in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. It was attended by representatives from a total of thirty-two nations. Here the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was born, thus dissolving for good the two remaining African groupings, the Monrovia and Casablanca blocs.

The thirty-two nations present in Addis Ababa for the signing of the OAU Charter on 25 May 1963, were Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Congo Leopoldville, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, the Ivory Coast (now Cote d'Ivoire), Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), and Upper Volta (now Bourkina Faso).

Aims and objectives of the OAU

The aims and objectives of the OAU as delineated in Article II, Paragraph 1 of the organisation's charter signed in May 1963, are (1) to promote the unity and solidarity of the African states; (2) to



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coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa; (3) to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence; (4) to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and (5) to promote international cooperation, having due regard to the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To achieve the foregoing, the charter stressed that member states must coordinate and harmonise their policies in the fields of politics and diplomacy; economics (including transportation and communications); education and culture; health, sanitation, and nutrition; science and technology; and defense and security.

There was, however, one serious omission in the charter. This was the failure to provide for the collective security of the African nations. In other words, the charter did not bind member states to take any sort

of collective action against acts of aggression perpetrated by any outside or hostile force against any member of the OAU. This omission was corrected, though, in the form of a document adopted in Rabat, Morocco, in 1973, entitled 'Recommendations of Special Measures To Be Adopted On Decolonisation and the Struggle Against Apartheid and Racial Discrimination'. The Rabat declaration, signed by the various heads of state, contained a recommendation that 'in order to strengthen the means of defense of certain African states,...member states [must] apply themselves to making available to those states who request them, units, modern equipment, and military assistance, pending the setting-up of the Executive Secretariat of Defense'.

The declaration also indicated that while liberation movements on the continent of Africa were justified when the intention is to overthrow colonial regimes, any retaliation by the colonial powers against states which had come to the aid of these liberation movements would be considered serious acts of aggression 'against the whole of Africa'. Although the Rabat declaration is bold in concept and well-meaning in general ideals, it has nonetheless been limited in actual application because of an inability on the part of OAU member nations to create an Executive Secretariat of Defense or, indeed, to adopt any measures of collective self-defense.

Organisational structure of the OAU

The various organs which make up the OAU and exist to carry out the functions defined by the organisation's charter are discussed below:

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government: This organ is the supreme body of the OAU, and it alone has the power to make decisions for the entire organisation. The Assembly's domain is not limited by any provisions in the charter or by any other aspect of the organisation. As a result, it has the right 'to discuss matters of common concern to Africa', be they in the military, political, or economic spheres. The Assembly meets once a year. Its chairman is appointed annually. In addition, each member has one vote, and resolutions are passed by a two-thirds majority.

The functions of the Assembly as delineated in the charter, are many and diverse. They include to review the structure, functions, and acts of all other organs and any other agencies which may be created in accordance with the charter; to appoint the OAU's administrative secretary-general and his assistants; to establish specialised ad hoc commissions; to decide on any questions concerning inter-

pretation of the charter; to decide on the admission of new members; and to approve regulations concerning functions of the Secretariat and the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration (both of which are described below).

The Council of Ministers: This is made up of the foreign ministers (or other designated ministers) of OAU member nations. Also known as the 'cabinet' of the Assembly, the Council has, over the years, evolved to become the organisation's central political body. Its functions include preparing Assembly conferences; implementing Assembly decisions; approving reports and budgets prepared by specialised agencies; and, as directed by the Assembly, coordinating inter-African cooperation in the fields of politics and diplomacy, economics, education, health, science and technology, and defense and security.

The General Secretariat: This organ is headed by the secretary-general. It is the central permanent OAU organ. Appointed by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, the secretary general is responsible for all of the organisation's administrative and correspondence functions; these include the servicing of meetings, keeping of records of meetings and proceedings, and assisting the Council of Ministers in the implementation of some of their decisions. He is also responsible for preparing the OAU annual report and annual budget, which are then submitted to the ministers for their approval.

The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration: The organ was set up in accordance with Article 19 of the charter, which requires member states to settle all disputes which may arise between them on the basis of mutual agreement and peace. This commission, then, is the organ which has the mandate to foster the peaceful resolution of inter-African conflicts.

In addition to the above listed bodies, the OAU also has other specialised commissions which assist the organisation in the performance of its numerous responsibilities. These include the Economic and Social Commission; the Defense Commission; the Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Commission; the Educational and Cultural Commission; and the Scientific, Technical, and Research Commission. These commissions were created by the Assembly, which, in addition, has the right to create more such commissions, either on an ad hoc or permanent basis, as it may deem necessary. Though these bodies follow the model of similar United Nations commissions, they are not intended to replace the UN bodies as development agencies on the African continent.

Nigeria's role in the OAU

Nigeria's desire to pursue policies consistent with the greater interests of neighbouring African nations has never been in question. This is evident, for example, in the crucial early role she played in the inception of the Monrovia bloc, the counterpart of the Casablanca faction, both of which subsequently merged together in 1963 to form the OAU. Nigeria's membership in the Monrovia bloc was far from a passive one. The stance she took in the group as outlined in the Lagos Charter of 1962, which advocated a functional approach to the political integration of Africa, became the accepted tone of the final OAU Charter. It was largely to the credit of the Lagos Charter that only slight reformulations of some paragraphs had to be made in Addis Ababa. As one commentator put it, '...the new [OAU] charter is substantially the same as the Lagos Charter, as a close study of both documents would readily show'. Nigeria's role in the formation of the OAU underscored her belief that African unity must be built through functional cooperation.

In fostering cooperation among African nations in the fields of politics and economic affairs, Nigeria's contributions have been nothing short of remarkable. Both privately and publicly she has been persistent in the pursuit of African interests. Examples of this abound. In 1961 Nigeria became the only country in Africa to sever diplomatic relations with France because of the French having tested an atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert. At the same time she forbade the use of Nigerian ports and airfields by the French. Also in 1971, she led a campaign both in the OAU and in the Commonwealth against Anglo-Rhodesian proposals which tended to favour the interests of the minority white population in Rhodesia over millions of Africans.

One particular area which has attracted the concern of the OAU in inter-African relations has been the problem of trying to find solutions to various disputes between member states, mainly in the realm of boundary settlement. An example is the dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia. Nigeria has contributed more than her share in this sort of settlement issue by actively participating in various ad hoc committees set up by the OAU to resolve these disputes.

Various African liberation movements have also seen a great deal of Nigerian support. This has come in the form of both material and diplomatic support to nationalist movements, and is in compliance with relevant OAU principles and resolutions which call on African states to give full support to movements and organisations fighting for independence.

But it is not only obligatory support in strict compliance with OAU resolutions that Nigeria offers. When called upon to do so, she also lends direct financial and general technical assistance and advice to all liberation movements in the region. In fact, Nigeria is in the forefront in offering material and diplomatic support to African nations which border territories where liberation struggles are being waged. And even though she is geographically quite some distance from areas of crises like southern Africa, it is in recognition of the role which she plays in the struggles in this area that she is classified as a front-line nation in the fight for the liberation of the area. At the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and various other international fora, Nigeria played a leading role in the fight for the liberation of Namibia and currently for the eradication of apartheid in South Africa.

Struggles like those already mentioned inevitably produce their share of refugees, and the efforts Nigeria has made in support of refugees from areas of military strife are impressive indeed. She has provided homes for noncombatant victims of colonial struggles and the war against apartheid, and in numerous cases has provided these individuals with educational and job opportunities within her own borders.

Nigeria has been consistent in her support for the territorial integrity and independence of all African nations. Nigerian troops have fought to restore peace in Congo Kinshasa (present-day Zaire) under the auspices of the UN, and in Tanganyika (Tanzania). Additionally, on several occasions in the early 1980s Nigeria has played a peace role in Chad to back up OAU resolutions.

Nigeria's active role in the OAU has not only been on the political level, however. The economic sphere has also seen a great deal of change due to the direct efforts of the Nigerian government. In keeping with the OAU policy of encouraging member nations to form associations to harmonise economic policies for development, Nigeria spearheaded the formation of the ECOWAS in 1975 (as discussed earlier). It was also in this same spirit of fostering economic harmony that she played a leading role in negotiations which resulted in agreements that have tied African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to the European Economic Community.

In the face of devastating droughts, famine, and other natural disasters which have struck various African nations in the recent past, Nigeria has done more than her share of providing economic and financial assistance to help alleviate the sufferings associated with these tragedies. Cash grants and food aid have been donated, and Nigerian ports have been made available free of charge for shipment

of relief supplies to neighbouring African countries.

Finally, it should be noted that Nigeria has contributed immensely in the efforts to develop Africa. In the bid to realise OAU objectives in the economic and social sphere, she has provided scholarships to a large number of students from all over Africa as well as technical staff in instances of qualified-personnel shortages which have occasionally cropped up in many African countries. The recently established Technical Aid Scheme, under which qualified Nigerian university graduates serve for specified periods of time in certain African countries at the expense of the Nigerian government, provides one more clear example of Nigeria's support for OAU objectives.

Achievements and failures of the OAU

Since its inception in 1963, the OAU has done very well for Africa in general and for the West African sub-region in particular. Internationally, for example, the OAU has over the years established itself as the African voice in the United Nations and other international fora. This has proved to be of great advantage to the nations of Africa in their efforts to provide a more united front and exert themselves in a more powerful way, especially on matters which directly affect the continent. As a result, OAU member nations have been able to coordinate their views on racism and apartheid in South Africa.

With specific reference to the internal situation on the continent, the OAU has also been extremely effective in resolving numerous border conflicts. These include disagreements between Morocco and Algeria and between Somalia and Ethiopia. In these and other instances, the OAU has mediated between the warring nations, bringing about, in some cases, a cessation of hostilities. In the case of the civil war in Nigeria (1967-1970), the OAU threw a great deal of moral and diplomatic weight to the Nigerian government—so much so, in fact, that a few African countries which had supported the rebel cause (e.g., Zambia and Tanzania) were persuaded to switch over their support to the side of the federal government.

Various liberation movements in Africa have also gained the support of the OAU. Virtually all liberation movements on the continent have benefited from financial and moral support extended by the OAU's Liberation Committee and individual member nations. The support of the OAU Liberation Committee greatly assisted in the ultimate attainment of independence in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Present OAU efforts vis-a-vis liberation are concentrated on the eradication of the apart-

heid regime in South Africa.

The OAU recognises that regional economic groupings in Africa is an important means of fostering the economic well-being of its member states and, as such, lends its full support to causes which have as their goal the establishment of such groupings. Thus, it was in true OAU spirit that the ECOWAS was established in 1975 with the objective of stimulating cooperation and development in all sectors for the economic enhancement of the West African subregion.

Another important OAU achievement which had wide implications for the general economic climate in West Africa was the establishment of the African Development Bank, set up under the organisation's auspices in 1964. The Bank has consistently contributed to the economic well-being of the African continent by using its resources as collateral to back up loans to member nations or to issue loans to these nations itself. It also finances projects for member nations by means of capital obtained from private sources in the international capital market.

In spite of its many achievements, the OAU has had its share of problems. With a current annual budget of \$23 million—a sum barely adequate to meet the needs of the organisation—the most consistent problems over the years have been fiscal ones brought about by member nations not fulfilling their financial obligations, especially to the Liberation funds. Several OAU member nations are burdened with an inability to meet their national budgets and have therefore not been able to honour their pledges to the organisation. In the case of struggles for liberation, in particular, only a few member nations are making any meaningful contributions.

In addition to a chronic lack of funds, certain aspects of the OAU's constitutional framework also present problems. Operating solely on the basis of consensus, the OAU lacks any effective means of enforcing its decisions and resolutions on member nations. A case in point is the payment of contributions. This is voluntary and, therefore not backed up by any constitutional provisions for disciplining member nations who default on their payments. These charter weaknesses have to a certain extent helped to hinder the effectiveness of the organisation.

In addition, more than a few African countries are beset by chronic political instability. Nigeria itself has witnessed no less than six military coups, and it is not alone in this regard. Many other African countries have been the scenes of coups and counter coups as well. Apart from weakening the individual countries in which they occur, political instability also frustrates any sort of continuity in OAU

policies and continually provides an opportunity for interference from outside interests in the internal affairs of OAU member nations.

One final problem worth mentioning is brought about by a basic lack of agreement between OAU member nations with regard to how best to deal with the problem of apartheid in South Africa. Some African states advocate dialogue with the South African regime, while others oppose any form of contact whatsoever. This division has persisted for many years, indirectly giving succour to the status quo in South Africa.

Similarly, until recently, the Namibian problem had remained unresolved. Despite several UN and OAU resolutions and declarations, South Africa persisted in defying international appeals by clinging to the territory which it illegally occupied. The apparent division and ineptitude of African states with respect to the situation in South Africa, coupled with the general political instability in the southern African region, resulted in no more than empty messages of solidarity—the only form of assistance African nations have shown themselves capable of rendering.

Summary

1. Aspects of Nigeria's relations with the wider world are conducted through certain international institutions including, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Organisation of African Unity (OAU); the Commonwealth of Nations, and the United Nations Organisation (UNO).
2. Nigeria's Foreign Policy is based on four Basic principles: (i) cooperation with all members of the international community on the basis of reciprocity; (ii) even-handed approach in dealing with existing power blocks through non-alignment; (iii) close ties with other African States to ensure intra-African cooperation, development and independence; and (iv) pursuit of a policy based on sovereign equality of states.
3. **The ECOWAS**
 - a. The ECOWAS was the brain-child of General Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria's head of state (from 1966-1975). He worked in collaboration with President Etienne (Gnassingbe) Eyadema of Togo. The objectives for the creation of ECOWAS in 1975 were to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity, Social and Cultural matters within the subregion. Members of the ECOWAS include; Benin, Bourkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea,

Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

- b) The organs of the ECOWAS comprise - the Authority of the Heads of State and Government, The Council of Ministers, the Executive Secretariat, and The Tribunal of the Community. The organisation also has four technical committees to assist in various functions, as well as other specific bodies (e.g. ECOWAS Fund for cooperation, Compensation, and Development).
- c) As the largest and financially most significant state in the subregion, Nigeria plays a very significant role in the organisation. She contributes 33 per cent of the budget of the ECOWAS and another 32.8 per cent of the Community's Fund for Development. She also pays subsidies towards ECOWAS special operations and allows concessional lifting of petroleum products for ECOWAS member countries.
- d) ECOWAS has brought positive gains to the economies of member states. Examples are: (i) it has expanded the market for some states to sell their products; (ii) steps have been advanced towards economic integration for the West African sub-region, through the setting up of the ECOWAS FUND, the facilitating of the movement of goods, individuals and vehicles, and through the implementation of the non-aggression pact.

4 The OAU

- a) The Organisation of African Unity was founded in 1963. It was founded through the efforts of early pan-Africanists from within and outside the African continent.
- b) the aims of the OAU were; (i) to promote the Unity and solidarity of the African States; (ii) to eradicate all forms of colonialism from the African continent and (iii) to forge international cooperation having due regard to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nigeria has played a critical role in the OAU since its inception. Apart from helping to establish the OAU, Nigeria has played an important role in the growth and the sustenance of the organisation through the pursuit of dynamic African interests (anti-colonialism), through mediation of intra-African boundary disputes, and through financial and technical assistance, even outside statutory obligations.
- d) The OAU has had its achievements and failures. On the success side, the OAU has enabled Africa to speak with one voice in the UN and thereby exert more influence than it

would otherwise have been able to do on issues which concern Africa. The OAU has been able to deal with border issues and assist liberation movements in the struggle for independence from colonial oppression. It has also been able to achieve economic gains, notably, through the establishment of the African Development Bank.

- e) In spite of its achievements, the OAU also faces serious problems. These include: (i) shortage of capital to finance its vital projects due, in part, to the failure of some member states to pay their statutory financial obligations, (ii) politically, the OAU is handicapped by a lack of effective instrument for enforcing its collective decisions and (iii) Finally, the OAU faces problems of political instability of member states coupled with their inability to deal with the problems of apartheid and racism in South Africa.

Questions

Essays

1. Give an outline of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and show the extent to which these objectives have been met by Nigeria's membership in the Economic Community of West African States.
2. Give a concise account of the role which Nigeria has played in the ECOWAS.
3. Discuss Nigeria's role in the OAU.
4. Assess the contributions of the OAU to the political and economical development of Africa.
5. Discuss the major problems faced by either ECOWAS or the OAU

Multiple-choice

1. Which of these principles does not guide Nigeria's foreign policy?
 - A. Nigeria relates to all members of the international community on the basis of reciprocity
 - B. Nigeria is guided by the interests of its leaders in foreign relations
 - C. Nigeria adopts a policy of close friendship with all African countries

- D. Nigeria is guided by the principle of the sovereignty of states
 - E. None of the above
2. Which of these countries took the lead in establishing the Economic Community of West African States?
 - A. Togo and Benin
 - B. Nigeria and Togo
 - C. Nigeria and Ghana
 - D. Ghana and Guinea
 - E. Liberia and Togo
 3. Which of the following is not one of the organs of ECOWAS?
 - A. The Authority of the Heads of State and Governments
 - B. The Council of Ministers
 - C. The Executive Secretariat
 - D. The Court of Equity
 - E. The Security Council
 4. Who was the Nigerian Head of State who contributed to the formation of ECOWAS?
 - A. Tafawa Balewa
 - B. A Ironsi
 - C. Yakubu Gowon
 - D. Murtala Mohammed
 - E. Ibrahim Babangida
 5. In 1961, African countries were divided into three district groups as follows:
 - A. The Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville groups
 - B. The Nigeria, Ghana and Liberian Groups
 - C. The Algerian, Nigerian and Ghana groups
 - D. The North, South and West groups
 - E. The Islamic, Christianity and Traditional groups
 6. Which of the following statements is *false*?
 - A. The Organisation of African Unity traces its origins to the concept of pan-Africanism
 - B. with the attainment of independence by many African nations in the 1960, pan-Africanism crystallised into the quest for the establishment of an institutional framework for a continental organisation
 - C. The OAU was essentially a product of the so-called Monrovia group
 - D. The OAU was a fusion of the Monrovia, Casablanca, and Brazzaville groups
 - E. none of the above
 7. The OAU came into being on
 - A. 25 May 1963

- B. 31 December 1962
 - C. 28 May 1975
 - D. 15 January 1966
 - E. 25 April 1961
8. Which of the following institutions is not an organ of the OAU?
- A. The Council of Ministers
 - B. The General Secretariat
 - C. The Security Council
 - D. The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration
 - E. The International Court

Further reading

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Nigeria and the wider world: The Commonwealth and the United Nations Organisation

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations Organisation with special reference to their origin, organisational structure, and membership. We shall also explain the achievements, failures, and problems of both the Commonwealth and the UN. Finally, Nigeria's role in these organisations will be discussed against a background of the reasons why she opted for membership in them.

The Commonwealth

Formation and membership

The Commonwealth is a free association of countries which were originally part of the British Empire. The original nucleus of the organisation consisted of Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. After the Second World War, and following the granting of independence to former British colonies, the Commonwealth expanded in size and came to include the newly independent British colonies as well. It is important to note that no former colony was bound to join the Commonwealth as a precondition of independence. Whether or not any individual former colony became a member of the organisation was entirely a matter of free choice. Nevertheless, almost all former colonies freely associated themselves by voluntarily becoming members of the commonwealth upon at-

tainment of independence. Exceptions include Burma, Pakistan, and the Irish Republic. Thus, the Commonwealth may truly be termed a free association of independent nations.

The nations which comprise the Commonwealth include four of the five members which originally made up the international organisation. These are Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. South Africa, the remaining original member, was expelled in 1961 because of its apartheid policies. Other members now include Antigua, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Lucia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

There are certain important features which are characteristic of most Commonwealth members. These features revolve around the common cultural ties which these countries shared as former members of the British Empire. The primary feature is the use of English as their official language. This trait is almost universal, although in a few isolated cases (e.g. Swahili in East Africa) local languages are gradually replacing English. Also inherited by all Commonwealth countries is the parliamentary system of government, and with it the principles of freedom of speech, equality of individuals before the law, and freedom of the judiciary—all widely held in Commonwealth nations. In those cases where military dictatorships have replaced elected representatives, however, such principles and ideas are scarcely practised.

Finally, governmental services offered in Commonwealth countries are similar to the British system in a number of respects. This is particularly true of the educational systems in all member nations, which are modeled after the British system.

Aims and objectives of the Commonwealth

As an organisation which evolved from a colonial past, the Commonwealth is important for its tradition of shared values and practices among member nations. The exact relationship between these nations, however, has always been nebulous. Also, the specific aims and objectives of the organisation have never been clearly defined. Some attempts at definition have been made, however. In 1971 the heads of state of all Commonwealth nations met in Singapore and formulated what was called the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. Six

years later the organisation issued a statement on apartheid, 'Apartheid In Sport', and in 1979 the Lusaka Declaration of the Commonwealth on Racism and Racial Prejudice appeared.

A close reading of these documents reveals a set of principles and goals which the Commonwealth hopes to accomplish, although on some occasions the behaviour of certain members has contradicted the thinking contained in these declarations. One common ingredient is the promotion of equal rights between member states. The principle of individual liberty is shared by all member nations. The organisation also seeks to strengthen the United Nations in its efforts to remove tensions between nations and foster international peace and order. It opposes all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression. It therefore aims to foster human equality and dignity everywhere by supporting the principle of self-determination and insisting on the elimination of racism.

The Commonwealth also believes that 'the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated'. It therefore aims to improve living standards and encourage the development of a more equitable society through the eventual elimination of poverty, ignorance, and disease. Finally, the organisation strives 'to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice, and secure development among the peoples of the world'.

Organisational structure of the Commonwealth

Because of its historically informal nature, attempts to impart on the Commonwealth a structural basis failed until the mid-1960s, when the majority of member nations became dissatisfied with the British policy towards developments in southern Africa. In July 1964 the prime ministers of the various Commonwealth nations met and agreed to establish a Secretariat, thus effectively institutionalising the organisation. Previously, the British government had performed the Commonwealth's executive functions and arranged periodic meetings among the prime ministers of the member nations. Contacts between members also manifested at diplomatic levels, with a number of ad hoc bodies set up to engage in economic and social matters. These functions were now taken over by the new Secretariat and its Secretary-General. The Secretariat was charged with promoting Commonwealth co-operation.

The British monarch is the official head of the Commonwealth, although this office mainly exists in title only since most member nations are republics and consider themselves sovereign and inde-

pendent states. There is no general assembly of the sort found in other international organisations, but there are gatherings of heads of state every other year with meetings between senior officials in the intervening years. Although no legislation results from these various conferences, pledges by member nations to act in certain ways do come out of them.

To carry out its mission the Commonwealth has various organisational units responsible for particular duties or functions defined by member nations and the organisation as a whole. These include, for example, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, and the Industrial Development Unit. These units are funded by contributions made by member nations.

Achievements and failures

Though the Commonwealth does not rank with the United Nations, the OAU, or the ECOWAS in terms of effectiveness as an international organisation, it is nonetheless extremely valuable in bringing together peoples of different races and enabling them to cooperate in a relatively practical way in various fields of human endeavour. Arnold Smith, the organisation's first Secretary-General, makes this point in the following way:

The majority of problems of world politics in the last years of this century arise from the relations between races, between rich nations and poor nations, between continents. The value of the Commonwealth is that it straddles these divisions, providing a unique opportunity not only for dialogue but also for political cooperation between men of goodwill in countries in every continent, at every level of economic development, and from every one of the main racial groups who make up the human family.

Relatively small member nations of the Commonwealth—Gambia, for example, with a population of 500,000—also derive a certain amount of value and a sense of safety and security from belonging to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth, unlike other international organisations, makes no particular demands and places no obligations on them. Commonwealth heads of state meet regularly to discuss world problems and issues which specifically affect the African continent. Technical assistance has often been an important component of relations between member nations. The organisation does everything possible to foster efforts by richer members to assist the poorer ones. The Commonwealth Fund For Technical Coopera-

tion, begun in 1971, receives contributions from the membership for development projects in Commonwealth countries. And, similarly, in an effort to promote the general advancement of education within the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Scholarship Programme, founded in 1959, helps students from member nations to enhance their educational opportunities.

Day-to-day operations of the Commonwealth extend beyond matters of education and trade. They include, also, the social and cultural spheres. In the field of sports, for example, the Commonwealth Games is a rich opportunity which helps the youth of member nations improve their sporting skills and social relations.

Despite these positive sides, the Commonwealth has had its share of problems. One critic has described the root cause of these problems in the following way:

To sustain the pretence that nations are associated which are not associated, that they hold principles in common which some do not hold at all, that they are friendly when they are bitterly hostile, that they have mutual interests when some have opposing interests—the effect of doing all this is not merely neutral, it is positively harmful.

To a certain extent this indictment is justified. Members of the commonwealth today hardly speak with one voice on a number of issues which contradict principles they claim to hold dear. One clear example of this is the issue of apartheid in South Africa and the question of whether or not to impose economic sanctions against the Pretoria government. Although the other Commonwealth member nations are unanimous in their support of economic sanctions against South Africa, Great Britain firmly opposes it.

The Commonwealth no longer serves the cooperative defence function it once did, although cooperation does exist between certain member nations in providing military training facilities on a bilateral basis. Although trade preferences did exist between richer and poorer member nations between the 1930s and the 1970s—by which is meant that Commonwealth countries would give special and favourable treatment through lower tariffs on goods from other member nations—membership in the European Economic Community has put an end to special treatment for goods produced in Commonwealth countries and sold on the British market.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Commonwealth has generally failed to effectively negotiate between member nations antagonistic to each other. It could not mediate between the federal government and the Biafran side during the Nigerian Civil War. It

failed to prevent war between India and Pakistan in the early 1970s, and had no meaningful influence on the settlement which resulted after the independence of Bangladesh was effected.

Nigeria's role in the Commonwealth

Nigeria has played and continues to play an extremely active role in the Commonwealth. As is the case with her membership in other international organisations, this is at least partially accounted for by the size of the country and the value of its petroleum assets. Because of these advantages, Nigeria is perhaps more able than other nations to involve itself in the organisation's activities. In fact, she joins the ranks of Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as the largest contributors to the Commonwealth budget, and, because of this, Nigerian influence is considerable in the Secretariat, where Chief Emeka Anyaoku, a Nigerian, holds the office of Secretary-General, and in the various Commonwealth committees.

In 1964, barely four years after gaining independence, Nigeria, together with Ghana, Trinidad, and Uganda, helped to stimulate the establishment of the Commonwealth's Secretariat. Prior to that time the affairs of the Commonwealth had been run from Whitehall, the seat of the British government. This tended to insult the pride and call into question the sovereignty of many former British colonies which were now mainly independent African and Caribbean states. Apart from helping member nations shed their former subordinate status, establishment of the Secretariat was an important step towards stimulating the development of a regional focus for Commonwealth activities in places which had such a need.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, perhaps one of the most important principles which guides Commonwealth activities is its opposition to all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression. In this regard, the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, ratified in 1971, defines racial prejudice as 'a dangerous sickness'. Nigeria has played a critical role in fostering these principles through her sustained campaign to advance the cause of racial equality in South Africa by demanding the eradication of apartheid. To accomplish this, Nigeria has used the Commonwealth as an instrument for exerting influence on certain aspects of British policies, especially with regard to the situation in South Africa. In 1986, for example, a Nigerian-inspired boycott of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games was able to bring the weight of the Commonwealth to bear on international public opinion concerning the South African issue.

Nigerian influence was no less important in forcing the British to convene the Lancaster House Conference, which culminated in the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980.

Finally, Nigeria has consistently strived in the Commonwealth to advance the ideals of nonalignment. The Commonwealth aim of minimising the wide disparities which exist between developed and developing countries is also the underlying principle behind the New International Economic Order, a restructuring of the international economic system advocated by member nations of the nonaligned movement. Nigeria's other interests as a nonaligned country—disarmament, for example—are also not at variance with Commonwealth principles.

In the recent past, calls have been made in Nigeria for a review of her membership in the Commonwealth. Indeed, one of the recommendations of the Kuru Conference On Nigeria's Foreign Policy, held in April 1986, specifically requested that Nigeria withdraw from the Commonwealth on the grounds that the organisation no longer meets the needs of an independent Nigeria or befits her position of leadership in African and third-world affairs.

Whatever the arguments for or against membership in the Commonwealth, one fact which seems incontrovertible is that what ultimately happens will depend upon the extent to which the organisation is seen to serve Nigeria's best interests. For now, as one commentator has put it, 'the evidence suggests that...the Commonwealth remains a useful instrument for the promotion of Nigeria's interests'.

The United Nations

Formation and membership

The United Nations Organisation was established in 1945, at the end of World War II. It replaced the leading international organisation of the post-First World War era, the League of Nations, which for various reasons had failed to prevent the outbreak of the devastating Second World War. The name was thought up by American President Franklin D. Roosevelt and first used in the 'Declaration By United Nations' of 1 January 1942, best known as the Atlantic Charter.

The United Nations Charter itself was drawn up by representatives of fifty nations at a conference held in San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. At this conference debates were held on proposals which had been worked out by delegates from Britain,

China, the United States, and the Soviet Union a year earlier. The UN officially came into being on 24 October 1945, when the Charter was ratified by fifty-one member nations which had previously signed the organisation's Charter.

Presently the UN is made up of 160 member nations, a more than 300 per cent increase in membership since 1945. The ranks of the organisation have been swollen mainly by new states which have become independent since the 1960s following their attainment of freedom from colonial tutelage. The UN Charter defines original members as those 'which having participated in the United Nations Conference on International Organisation at San Francisco, or having previously signed the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942, sign the present Charter and ratify it...'

Chapter II, Article 4 of the Charter explains which countries are eligible for membership in the UN: 'Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgement of the Organisation, are able and willing to carry out these obligations'. Such new members are admitted by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. Articles 5 and 6 in the same chapter of the Charter stipulate disciplinary measures which may be taken against members who default on charter principles. In this connection, for example, 'A member of the United Nations against which preventive or enforcement action has been taken by the Security Council may be suspended from the rights and privileges of membership by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council'. It is also stated that any member who has 'persistently violated the principles of the Charter [can] be expelled from the Organisation'.

Aims and objectives of the UN

Chapter I, Article 1, of the United Nations Charter delineates the purposes for which the UN was established. These include, first and foremost, maintaining international peace and security by taking 'effective and collective measures' to prevent or remove threats to peace. In addition, the UN is to develop 'friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples'; to achieve 'international cooperation in solving international problems', be they economic, political, social, or cultural; and, finally, to provide a forum for the harmonisation of policies and attitudes of member nations in the resolution of common ends.

The UN is guided by clearly defined principles in the pursuit of these objectives. These principles are based upon the beliefs that the sovereign equality of individual states must be upheld, there must be no interference in the internal affairs of individual nations, all conflicts can and must be peacefully resolved, and individual nations must act in good faith.

Organisational structure of the UN

The United Nations functions through six main organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. We will discuss each of these separately:

The General Assembly: This has been described as the supreme body of the United Nations. Made up of representatives from all member nations, it conducts its affairs during its annual session, which usually lasts several weeks. In addition to covering matters of international concern at this session, the Assembly discusses the annual report submitted to it by the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly following the recommendation of the Security Council. On all important issues about which the Assembly may exercise a final decision—the expulsion of a member state, for example—a two-thirds majority is required. The political, economic, social, and humanitarian work of the Assembly is carried out by committees set up by it.

The Security Council: This organ is made up of fifteen member nations, five of which are the world's big powers (the US, the USSR, Great Britain, France, and the People's Republic of China). These five are permanent members of the Council. The other ten are chosen from among the remaining UN member nations for a two-year term of office. Because of its primary concern of maintaining peace and security throughout the world, the Council is in session all year round.

The Security Council has at its disposal various powers to aid it in carrying out its mission. For example, it has the authority to investigate circumstances considered likely to disturb international peace, and it can apply both economic and diplomatic sanctions, or either one of these, in order to achieve this end. In certain extreme cases the Council may even recommend military action against aggressor nations. An example is the recent decision by the Council to forcefully remove Iraq, which had occupied Kuwait.

Each member of the Security Council is entitled to one vote and at

least nine affirmative votes are necessary to implement any decision. In addition, the Council's permanent members enjoy the right to veto any decision. This means, in effect, that in cases where a veto is actually cast no action can be taken, or, to put it another way, a single veto by a permanent member of the Council overrules any majority decision.

The Secretariat: This organ is responsible for the general administration of the United Nations. It has its headquarters in New York. The head of this body is the Secretary-General, who, as mentioned earlier, is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. Apart from his administrative role, the Secretary-General, who holds office for a renewable five-year term, is expected to be alert to potential trouble spots in the world and report such areas of tension to the Security Council for possible action. With its Dag Hammerskjold Library, the Secretariat is also a rich source of information for researchers around the world.

The Trusteeship Council: This organ was set up to supervise the administration of trust territories i. e., territories put in trust to member nations (e.g. Tanganyika to the British and Namibia to the South Africans) until such a time that they can be granted independence. While day-to-day administration is in the hands of the trust powers themselves, the Trusteeship Council, responsible for safeguarding the political, social, and economic interests of the trust territory, has ultimate control. Most member nations to whom territories have been put in trust have granted independence to their respective trust territories.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): ECOSOC deals, through the General Assembly, with all economic and social matters of the UN. It conducts studies and prepares reports on a wide range of social and economic issues related to humanitarian questions, food and agricultural matters, and the fundamental rights of mankind. It also coordinates the activities of specialised UN agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation, the World Health Organisation, and the International Labour Organisation.

The International Court of Justice: This is the main judicial organ of the United Nations. Comprised of fifteen judges elected by the General Assembly and Security Council to a nine-year term, the Court deals only with cases involving nations and corporate bodies, not individuals. Its weakness is its inability to enforce decisions. It exerts, therefore, only a moral influence.

In addition to these permanent bodies, the UN also has specialised agencies with equally important roles and functions. Examples include the World Health Organisation (WHO); the Food and Agricultural

Organisation (FAO); the International Labour Organisation (ILO); the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); and the United National Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF).

Nigeria's role in the UN

On 7 October 1960, Nigeria became the ninety-ninth member of the United Nations. In a speech delivered on the occasion, Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa pledged to uphold the principles of the UN Charter and to actively participate in the world body. On balance, it may be said after nearly three decades of membership that this pledge has been consistently upheld.

In her 1960 maiden address to the General Assembly, Nigeria pledged to contribute her share to the cause of world peace and disarmament. Since then she has consistently worked in the UN to achieve these ends. In 1962 Nigeria became one of the original members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee On Disarmament (ENDC). The ENDC was the single UN multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. It later became the Conference on Disarmament (CD) when it expanded to include forty nations.

Nigeria has also made serious efforts internationally to prevent nuclear proliferation. In 1963, she played a leading role in rallying support for UN efforts which resulted in a partial test-ban treaty that sent all nuclear tests underground. And since 1969 as a member of Group Twenty-One at the Conference On Disarmament, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and within the framework of the General Assembly she has played a prominent role in conferences set up to review the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. In addition, Nigeria is leading a campaign in the UN to stop Western powers from aiding the nuclear capability of South Africa and to promote the general denuclearisation of the African continent. Through disarmament fora she continues to exert political and diplomatic influence to help UN efforts to control and ultimately halt the escalating arms race in both conventional and nuclear weapons.

In addition to promoting the goal of disarmament, Nigeria, has performed an extremely important role by participating in UN peace-keeping efforts in the Congo (Zaire) in 1960 and in India-Pakistan and Lebanon in the 1970s. Besides serving on the Economic and Social Council, she is one of only four African countries which have served on the UN Security Council for more than two terms.

Nigeria has continuously played an active role on various UN

legal committees, too. These include the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the United Nations Special Committee On the Charter, the UN Commission on International Trade Law, the Preparation Committee of the Seabed Authority, and the UN International Law Commission. As a regional power, Nigeria has been able to play a vital role by being elected to virtually all of these bodies and participating in their activities.

Also of note with respect to international legal efforts, it should be mentioned that Dr Taslim Elias, Nigeria's former chief justice, was president from 1981-1985 of the International Court of Justice in the Hague and is presently serving a second nine-year term as a judge on the world court. In addition, Nigeria has been a member of the forty-seven member UN Charter Review Committee, which has been working since 1975 on a general review of the UN Charter with the object of making the world body more reflective of a balance between developed and developing member nations.

But perhaps being a member of the Fourth Committee has seen Nigeria playing her biggest role in the activities of the UN. The Committee is concerned with decolonisation and questions of apartheid and racism in general. As does the United Nations itself, Nigeria regards apartheid as a crime against humanity; as such, she has provided a tremendous amount of financial assistance to the liberation movements and forces fighting for racial equality in southern Africa. In 1986, for example, she rushed a \$10 million contribution to the front-line states when the South African government raided Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, while at the same time pledging \$50 million more in aid over a five-year period.

Convinced that cooperative international efforts aimed at forcing South Africa to abandon its racist practices was the only way to avoid a blood bath in that country, Nigeria has been consistent in her efforts to urge the nations of the world to impose mandatory economic sanctions against the Pretoria government. In fact, it is partly in recognition of the important role which she has played in the UN crusade against apartheid and racism in South Africa that Nigeria herself is considered a front-line state in the struggle being waged in that part of the continent. Nigeria's efforts in this regard have also resulted in the fact that for over twenty-three years she has held the chairmanship of the UN Special Committee For Action Against Apartheid, originally established (under a different name) in 1962.

Achievements and failures of the UN

Certainly the greatest achievement which can be attributed to the

United Nations is its contribution to the preservation of world peace. The General Assembly has provided an appropriate forum for member nations to air their views, and in some cases has produced spectacular results. The fact that the cold war which until recently had existed between East and West since the end of World War II and had not escalated into full-fledged hostilities may in large measure be attributed to the United Nations.

The UN has kept the peace in many other cases as well. Through the mediation of the Secretary-General, a major confrontation between the superpowers was avoided during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Since the UN's inception, its peace-keeping forces have been involved in ensuring a peaceful state of affairs in various parts of the world, too. For example, UN initiative in 1950 prevented the annexation of South Korea by the North, and in 1960 UN forces intervened in the Congo (Zaire) to prevent what otherwise would certainly have turned into a blood bath. Today UN peace-keeping forces are still very much active in the Middle East and Cyprus.

In addition to keeping the peace, the United Nations has been extremely successful in helping colonised nations achieve independence. This has been especially true of the trust territories discussed earlier. As for the present, although there have been setbacks, the UN has not equivocated in its condemnation of the South African government, which is antithetical to the organisation's position on human rights.

The situation in Rhodesia before it became independent Zimbabwe deserves special mention. Here the UN was especially effective in speeding up the decolonisation process by successfully imposing a mandatory arms embargo on the illegal regime of Prime Minister Ian Smith. The arms embargo, coupled with a general trade embargo imposed afterwards, played no small part in compelling Smith and his followers to grant independence to the black majority.

Finally, the United Nations has enjoyed a tremendous amount of success on the social and economic fronts, especially in developing countries. This has been particularly the result of projects undertaken by the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agricultural Organisation, and the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation, to name just a few.

The UN has not been without its weaknesses, however. One criticism often made of the world body is that it has been noted more for high sounding declarations and principles which are of little practical consequence than for its substantive actions. on this account reference is often made to the flamboyant Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of Freedom of Information, both

of which all member nations claim to respect but which in fact are in most cases ignored when they are inconsistent with national interests. Even in the cases of disarmament and apartheid, although there is no shortage of rhetoric, too little action comes out of the impressive speeches and accusations.

Another serious weakness of the United Nations is the veto power granted to permanent members of the Security Council. The use and abuse of this privilege can easily frustrate the Council's taking positive action and, undermine the efforts of the General Assembly. The United States used its veto power to block the Security Council from acting to stop the Vietnam War, which constituted a threat to world peace, just as the USSR used its veto power to prevent any discussion of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the UN has been faced with serious financial problems due to the failure of some member nations to pay their dues to the international organisation. This shortage of funds has resulted in a decrease in both the quantity and quality of social and economic projects.

Summary

1. The Commonwealth

- a) The Commonwealth emerged as a free association of countries which were originally part of the British Empire. The first five original members were; Britain, Australia, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand. Subsequently the organisation included, Antigua, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji, the Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, St. Christopher and Nevis, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, The Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Recently, Pakistan became the newest member of the Commonwealth.
- b) The Commonwealth aims to eradicate disparity in wealth between sections of mankind, reduce poverty, ignorance and disease among peoples which impede development and progress. In the achievement of these lofty goals, the Commonwealth uses ad hoc institutions and a Secretariat headed by a Secretary-General. Heads of Governments and States of

the Commonwealth meet every two years and take vital decisions.

- c) Membership of the Commonwealth gives a lot of advantages to states, in the same way that problems arise from such status. For example, the Commonwealth, on the negative side, is not able to encourage effective economic cooperation among states: the organisation is also not able to mediate in inter-state conflicts and achieve positive results.
- d) Nigeria has played a significant role in the Commonwealth since she became a member. She has used the forum of the organisation to fight apartheid in South Africa and advance the ideals of non-alignment. Though arguments are being advanced now for Nigeria to reconsider her status in the organisation, it can be said that she will continue to belong to the body so long as her interests are served by the forum as they apparently appear to be.

2. The United Nations

- a) Established in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, the United Nations was made up initially of fifty-one states, today the organisation has increased to 160 member states. Its aims are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. In terms of organisational structure, six organs are worthy of note - the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the international Court of Justice, and the Secretariat.
- b) Nigeria joined the United Nations as its ninety-ninth member on 7 October, 1960. In the UN, she has contributed immensely to its work by assisting in the fight against proliferation of nuclear weapons both at the Disarmament Conference and within the frame work of the General Assembly of the United Nations. She has participated in several peace-keeping efforts of the world body, besides serving in the Economic and Social Council and in the Security Council. Nigeria has also helped to promote respect for international law. On the Fourth Committee, Nigeria has played a leading role in the fight against apartheid and all forms of colonialism.
- c) Among the UN's notable achievements are:
 - (i) maintenance of world peace and security for example in Korea, in the Congo, and in Cuba (during the so-called Cuban crisis of 1962);

- (ii) campaign against colonialism and apartheid;
 - (iii) social and economic development through ECOSOC, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO).
- d) In spite of its notable achievements, the UN has faced considerable difficulties which have hampered its development;
- (i) over-pre-occupation with rhetorics, rather than the implementation of concrete resolutions;
 - (ii) use and abuse of the power of veto sometimes impedes unanimity of decisions in the Security Council;
 - (iii) financial difficulties arising from non payment of statutory dues by member states.

Questions

Essay

1. Discuss the assertion that 'The Commonwealth of Nations is anachronistic and of little relevance to contemporary Nigerian Foreign policy.'
2. Show the extent to which Nigeria contributes to the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of the United Nations.

Multiple-choice

1. Commonwealth countries have common ties with one of the following imperial powers.
 - A. Portugal
 - B. France
 - C. Britain
 - D. Belgium
 - E. USA
2. The language used in Commonwealth meetings is
 - A. English
 - B. French
 - C. Spanish
 - D. German
 - E. Russian
3. Which of the following countries was not an original member of the Commonwealth of Nations?
 - A. South Africa
 - B. Great Britain

- C. New Zealand
 - D. India
 - E. Australia
4. Which of the following descriptions does not truly represent the Commonwealth?
 - A. A useful association of independent nations
 - B. A free association of nations bound together by common language and colonial experience
 - C. A free association of nations with identical political beliefs and practices
 - D. A free association of peoples of different races and different standards of economic and social well-being
 - E. All of the above
 5. Which of the following statements is *false*?
 - A. The General Assembly conducts its affairs during its annual sessions, which lasts several weeks
 - B. The Secretariat of the UN is responsible for the general administration of the world body
 - C. The Trusteeship Council supervises the administration of all UN trust territories
 - D. The Secretary-General of the UN is appointed by the Secretary
 - E. None of the above
 6. Which of the following statements is *false*?
 - A. Nigeria became the 99th member of the UN on 7 October 1960
 - B. Nigeria has contributed considerably to prevent nuclear proliferation
 - C. Nigeria has helped the cause of peace by participating in UN peace-keeping efforts in the Congo (Zaire) and Lebanon
 - D. No Nigerian has served as the President of the International Court of Justice, a United Nations Organisation.
 - E. None of the above

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