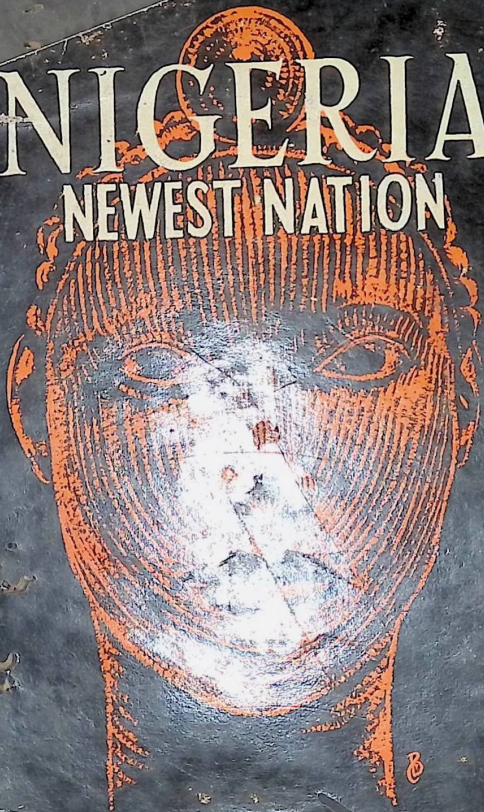


NIGERIA

NEWEST NATION



Lois Mitcheson

DT
515
M58

CALL MALL

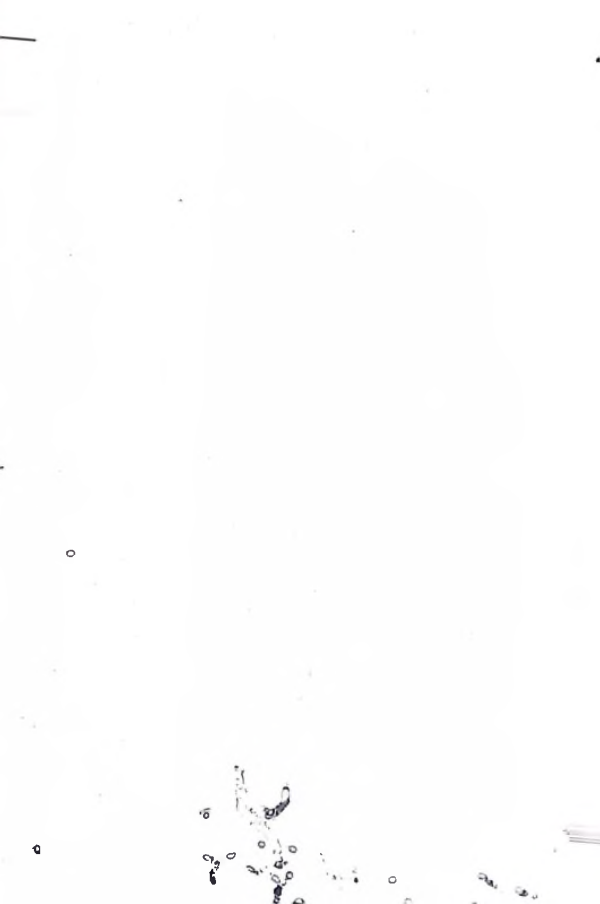
"What struck me most about the Nigerians," says Miss Lois Mitchison, "was their uncomplicated friendliness."

This, too, is a friendly book. Though Miss Mitchison does not pull her punches when she finds matter for criticism, she is at pains to bring out all the best in this newest addition to the company of free African nations.

Lois Mitchison, an experienced journalist with a quick eye for the facts that underlie the appearance, recently travelled through Nigeria from the 'shanty town' capital of Lagos to the University of Ibadan and the picturesque northern and eastern countryside. In this book she uses stories and conversations from her travels to illustrate Nigerian history and economics, together with topics varying from the colourful personalities of Nigerian politicians to the merits of Nigerian cooking and the Victorian solemnity of the Nigerian schoolchild.

Though written for the general reader, it will prove a most helpful guide for the growing numbers of people whose business takes them to this new, economically expanding area of a continent that is still too little known to the white man.

113
DT
515
158
12s 6d net





0

NIGERIA: NEWEST NATION

82



N S R

NIGERIA:
NEWEST NATION

LOIS MITCHISON

PALL MALL PRESS

• LONDON •

© Copyright: LOIS MITCHISON 1960

First published — 1960

NC

DT

515

,M58

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY CHARLES WILKINSON AND SONS, LTD.
LIVERPOOL AND LONDON

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	vii
Acknowledgments	x
A VISITOR'S NIGERIA	1
<i>Journey in the East</i>	3
<i>Calabar</i>	8
<i>Lagos</i>	14
<i>Ibadan</i>	23
<i>Kano</i>	29
BACKGROUND	35
I FIRST VIEW	37
II HISTORY	42
<i>North Nigeria</i>	42
<i>South Nigeria</i>	45
<i>The Coming of the Europeans and the Slave Trade</i>	48
<i>European Explorers in Nigeria</i>	51
<i>Calabar and Bonny</i>	54
<i>The Establishment of British Rule</i>	59
III THE WAY PEOPLE LIVE	62
<i>Farming and Farmers</i>	62
<i>The Farming Future</i>	66
<i>Trade</i>	71
<i>Industrial Possibilities</i>	74

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>Page</i>
IV	POLITICS AND POLITICIANS	78
	<i>Nationalists in Two New Countries</i>	78
	<i>Indirect Rule</i>	82
	<i>The Rise of Nationalism and Dr. Azikwe</i>	86
	<i>The Action Group and Chief Awolowo</i>	91
	<i>The North</i>	95
	<i>Divisions in the Way of Self-Government</i>	99
	<i>The Central Government</i>	101
	<i>The Civil Service</i>	104
	<i>The Regions</i>	107
	<i>Nigeria and Foreign Countries</i>	112
	Some Suggestions for Further Reading	116
	Index	119

MAPS

NIGERIA	2
NIGERIAN TRIBAL AREAS	38

INTRODUCTION

NIGERIA is the nearest a British African country has yet come to being a success story. In striking contrast to Central and East Africa, Nigeria, with independence due in October, 1960, is a peaceful and comparatively prosperous country. Instead of being in prison or exile, Nigerian political leaders are ministers in regional or national parliaments heading departments staffed by Nigerian and British civil servants, Federal police officers, again of both races, are generally trusted, and their presence is thought to be a guarantee of peaceful political assembly. European visitors who are spat at in remote Kikuyu villages in Kenya, are instead laughed at, given beer and generally welcomed to equally remote Nigerian villages. Murder, cannibalism, slavery, and pagan oaths celebrated with blood sacrifices occur in Nigeria, as they must in any African country trying to span several hundred years in a few generations. But they are condemned by Nigerian leaders, often in stronger terms than British officials would dare to use.

Compared to its neighbour, Ghana, Nigeria is politically divided. But, just because there are three big political parties and three obvious political leaders instead of one leader and one party, parliamentary democracy and the right of individuals to criticise their government in speech and writing may well survive better in Nigeria than they have in Ghana.

Nigeria, of course, has problems. The country as a whole has fewer educated people and is rather less prosperous than Ghana. But there are Nigerian plans for new schools, new universities, new ways of farming and new factories. If oil is found in substantial quantities in places that are easier to work than the present wells in the coastal swamps of East Nigeria, the country will have fuel for new industries and more foreign exchange.

The main problem Nigerian politicians will have to face after independence is keeping their country together. 'Nigerian unity is only a British intention,' the federal Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubaker Tafewa Balewa, once said. North and south Nigeria have very different histories, and have only been administered by the same central government since 1914. In the south, particularly in the south-east, a thousand years ago people were less advanced in their social organisation, ideas and culture than they were in the north. They suffered later from white exploitation, and notably from the horrors of the slave trade, but during the four hundred years southerners have been in contact with Europeans, many town dwellers have learnt to deal with European ideas, methods of government, and with some mechanical gadgets. In contrast, the north today is a far more old-fashioned society. It is strictly and intolerantly Moslem, relatively little affected by the few Europeans who have entered it during the last fifty years, and mediaeval in its ideas of government and the relationships of society. Only a handful of northerners have a western type of education. But the north has administrators who, however mediaeval in their ideas about their emirs, are able and experienced; it has half the population of Nigeria and more than half the land area, and since the elections at the end of 1959, the most important of the northern political parties in the biggest bloc in

the central House of Assembly. Both south and north are jealous of each other and afraid of being dominated, held back or urged forward too fast by the other half of the country.

If the two halves of the country are to be spun together into real unity, Nigerian politicians will need all the capacity they have so far shown to compromise in the final resort and avoid violence. Fortunately time is on their side, educated young northerners and educated young southerners are more like each other, and more sympathetic to each other, and indeed more like and sympathetic to their contemporaries in London and New York than they are like their uneducated fathers and grandfathers; and the number of educated all over the country is growing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to Mrs Sally Chilver, Mr David Henderson, Mr Guy Wint, Mr John Godfrey, and Mrs Naomi Mitchison for very kindly reading and commenting on parts or the whole of this book. The criticisms they made were most useful, but they are not, of course, responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation that I may have made. I am also grateful to friends in Nigeria who helped me; to Messrs. Hamish Hamilton for their permission to reproduce the pidgin extract from John Gunter's *Inside Africa*; and to the *Times Educational Supplement*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Guardian*, and the *Medical World* in whose columns a few of the stories in this book have already appeared.

PART I

A VISITOR'S NIGERIA

I was fortunate enough to be able to visit Nigeria in the late summer and autumn of 1958. I wanted then to write about the country, not only because it is now an important country and likely to become more important, but also because I enjoyed the people I met there. They were kind and cheerful: an easy people, it seemed, to make friends with and talk to. Perhaps I should be ashamed that I was so often irritated by technical inefficiency and the conditions people lived under; but since this irritation, along with the smiling people and the earnest young men, is part of my picture of Nigeria I have let it stand in my personal description of the country.



A VISITOR'S NIGERIA

Journey in the East

THE first people I saw in Nigeria had come out of a bus. The bus had its name painted on it, 'God Sends the Safe Journey',* and it was in a ditch by the side of the road with a creeper of bright red flowers tangled in the bundles tied to the luggage rack. The passengers were scattered in cheerful family groups over the road. Some of them had their cooking pots and were frying up the bananas and stew they had carried with them, some of the men were chatting together, and several had settled themselves comfortably to sleep.

Everybody seemed pleased to see our car, and one of the cooking women pressed a banana on me. The bus would be there two hours, three hours, or perhaps a day or so, she said. It depended on when the men from Mamfe came to drag it out of the ditch. We tried to edge past the bus—carefully—because we had seen further back the burnt-out wreck of a lorry which had got too close to the side of the road, and rolled over into the trees down the bank. Several of the bus passengers woke up or left their food

*All buses have names in Nigeria. They are generally painted above the windscreen, and suggest pious hope, local patriotism, or the excellence of the driver. I saw buses called 'Show Boy Driver', 'God Protects Us', 'The Good Ife Air', and 'Get You There'.

and lined the side of the bank, testing the mud, pushing at our wheels, and telling us to an inch how near the ditch we could go.

We were on our way from Bamenda in the Cameroons to Calabar in East Nigeria. Mostly we had travelled on the worst road I had ever seen. It was narrow and twisting, and open to one way traffic only, the direction of the traffic changing on alternate days. During the Rains one day each week was reserved by the Public Works Department for running repairs. But even so the ruts in the road were deep enough to make ordinary English saloon cars stick with their wheels hopelessly turning inches above the hard surface. The cars that can manage these roads are Continental, American, or best of all, long wheel-based land rovers with four wheel drives to get them out of the worst mud patches. In a French car we got through, but at the end of the journey our exhaust pipe had been knocked off and was tied to the roof-rack and we had also stuck four times between Mamfe and Calabar. But this did not matter much because even the emptiest bit of jungle miraculously produced a crowd of people within a minute or so to help push us out. They were always cheerful people: partly because we were, after all, a break in the monotony of farming or road repairing; and partly because we left cigarettes as small payment for a good deal of hard work.

It was a good way of coming into Nigeria. For most of the journey the road was a narrow track through very dark, very dense forest; with tall straight trees, almost branchless, but with festoons of creeper hanging from them. Everything was trying to push its way up into the sun above the level, and after a time I wanted to see the sun too. . . . anything except the shade of the road and the trees going on and on. Very occasionally there was colour

in the dark green . . . flame coloured flowers, or leaves striped with white . . . but mostly it was frighteningly monotonous: easy to see how anyone who strayed off the road or the bush paths could lose themselves.

In the villages the cleared space widened, and there was room for small flower gardens, mostly of cannae, outside some of the bigger houses. The dead Ibo tribesmen in the country we were travelling are buried just outside the houses they once lived in, and their families inherit. By the doorsteps of the more prosperous homes there were statues over the graves of the late fathers of the family. (Women did not rate statues.) All the statues we saw were in formal European dress: ties, shirts, knife creased trousers, and shoes: every detail down to the shoe laces brought out by the sculptor.

Most of the living men in the villages wore singlets and shorts, but the women wore draped skirts of their traditional cloths in reds, yellows, browns and the brightest blues. The most popular village pattern, so far as I could see, was the Queen's head in yellow on a red background. The driver said it was a pattern that was now out of date in towns. But the fashion in the women's patterns changed every month or so, he said; most townswomen insisted on wearing only the newly fashionable cloths, and it got very expensive.

He was a careful driver, and he went particularly slowly in the villages. This, I gathered, was partly because of ducks. A 'bush superstition', the driver said, but still it did no harm to be careful. Running over a duck will bring bad luck to a Nigerian driver, and means that the next thing he runs over will be a human being. If you do run over a duck the driver said, the best thing to do is to stop at once, arrange the body tidily, and put a shilling in the dead duck's bill.

Our driver had another, more sinister story—about what happened to a prominent Nigerian businessman who ran over a man in an isolated village. It was not the businessman's fault, but he got out of his car and walked down the village street looking for help. A crowd gathered behind him, someone said that the man who had been run over was dead, someone else threw a stone, knives were waved, and in a fit of fury the crowd fell on the businessman and killed him. Then they went back to the man who had been run over and found he was not dead, but only unconscious, but they killed him themselves. 'We were ashamed that he should still live', one of the men from the crowd said later, 'and we had our knives in our hands'.

Men in the villages always carry their knives—long curved ones—which they use normally to hack paths through the jungle and clear farm land, but they are also horribly handy for murder, of which there is more in the east of Nigeria than anywhere else in the country. A police sergeant, a Yoruba from the west, told his inspector in Calabar: 'These people, too much bush people, sir, they use machet like stick.' He had just dealt with a murder case which everyone in the village declared had been caused by two minutes of lost temper.

But nothing worse than sticking in the mud happened to us, and the machets we saw were all waved at us in the most friendly way. I found the general friendliness astonishing, partly because the last time I had travelled outside Europe had been in the Far East where people do not smile, do not go out of their way to help push you out of the mud, and do not crowd shouting and cheerful round strange cars and strange people. The Nigerian children particularly longed to be photographed, and, if I moved, grouped themselves instantly in stiff military formations with fixed stares and linked arms. Afterwards they wanted

a copy of the picture sent to them, and generally asked for money . . . 'a pound', 'a shilling', or 'a sixpence' . . . a little more than they thought they could get. I took in the end to carrying a bag of halfpennies around with me, but if I ran out of money the most feeble joke by me or against me generally did instead. 'Look, I eat your thank-yous,' said one girl with large, expressive face, mimicking my polite English smile.

But this was in Lagos. Beyond Mamfe, before we reached Calabar, I was mostly trying to photograph dancing and local musical instruments. Women and men dance separately at initiation ceremonies (which still continue over most of the eastern countryside), weddings, housewarmings, or whenever they feel like it. Sometimes the women decorated themselves with what remained of their traditional costumes: anklets of small bells or back shields of bells dropping from their waists to their knees and swaying as they danced. Some of the women had long coloured feathers stuck in the back of their head cloths. It was the older women who had the fullest costumes, and sometimes painted their faces in triangles of yellow and white. The younger women giggled as they danced, and wore purple English lipsticks and sometimes purple rouge.

Most of the dances, both men's and women's, were rhythmical shuffles with bent backs and everybody clapping their hands to music from bamboo rattles, flutes, bells or whatever the village had in the way of instruments. One of the villages had a schoolboy who played a mouth organ for a men's war dance we were invited to film. This was one of the most exciting dances with the men jumping, sweating and shouting suddenly as their faces twisted. Mostly it was the older men doing it, the younger men no longer knew the dance.

The local council who had arranged this dance for us,

had also suggested that their choir would like to sing us a few songs: some hymns and a song made up in English by a local man praising the beauty of the village. The men in the church choir wore white shirts and shorts, and the little girls in a separate choir had pink satin frocks.

I was with a Lagos Radio party, all Nigerians, who were trying to record eastern folk songs and music before they are completely lost. They were the most patient men I met in Africa. They had heavy equipment with them, and a very limited time to do the work in. Everywhere we went the local council was not quite ready with the songs and dances they had promised to arrange for us, there was a lot of shouting up and down the village streets, and always boys who tried to pull out the flex from the recording machine or turn the wheels of unwatched bits of machinery the wrong way. The only time I heard a cross word, and that was a muffled one, was from the engineer when the church choir insisted that instead of the folk songs which were so out of date, and sometimes with dubious moral endings, he had better take a third tape of their new hymn about the evils of alcohol!

Calabar

The country we had been travelling through mostly belonged to Ibo tribespeople. On the coast, in the Efik people's towns, the past was much more talked about and tradition was more popular. Calabar, on the east coast, is an Efik town and very full of past glories. This was impressed on me when I was taken to see the most important of the Efik chiefs, Archibong V, the Obong of Calabar. He was over 90, and received me sitting in a handsomely carved chair with an embroidered antimacassar over its back.

'Calabar,' said the Obong, interpreted by his second son, 'is not good like in ancient times.' Children no longer respected their parents, morals were bad, and the streets were dangerous. And all this, said the Obong was entirely the fault of Zik, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, the man who, according to the Obong, had refused to allow the Efiks to set up their own separate state. The Obong said, shaking a little with old age and anger, that he no longer had any powers at all. But his son told me that his father was still greatly respected in Calabar, and that several members of the family had been elected to local councils.

The Efik lady who had introduced me to the Obong was the headmistress of a Calabar girls' school. She too talked about the old glories of Efik life and culture, and said, surprisingly I thought, that an institution she regretted was the Fattening House. There were still Fattening Houses in some villages, she said, but hardly any in Calabar. They used to be the places where adolescent girls were shut up and plied with fattening food to make them beautiful, and strengthen them before their marriages. The girls had no hard work to do, and it was an old woman's duty to press them constantly to eat more and more. How fat they got depended on how rich and important their fathers were or wanted to be. A chief might keep his daughter, particularly his eldest daughter, in her Fattening House for several years until she weighed twenty stone or more, but a lesser man could only afford to keep his daughter in the Fattening House for a few months. But the actual fattening was only part of what went on in the Fattening House, the headmistress said. Girls were also taught 'the duties of married life', and examined to see if they were virgins. If they were not virgins 'they were sang at and sang at, and people threw mud and laughed at them and their families'. Now, said the

headmistress sadly, there was no proper way to ensure the morality of local young women.

I asked if Efik husbands were really pleased with their twenty-stone brides, and the headmistress said, perhaps not always, but it showed that the girls had been well looked after, and come from good families. The ideal beauty in Nigeria, she said, was plump, not over fat, but well covered particularly on her arms. She should have a marked waist and hip line, good teeth and well done hair. Hair was particularly important. It should be done in elaborate plaits. Hair cut short, in the way many Calabar young women wore it now, was properly a sign of mourning for a dead husband or parents.

In the English part of the town there was a very similar atmosphere of past glory and the declining importance of Calabar as an imperial outpost. Government Hill, the first English settlement in Calabar, is a green slope looking down, romantically, through trees to the ships moored in the Cross River. It has, as the main district office and a hotel for distinguished visitors, a house originally built as a model colonial building for a nineteenth-century London exhibition. After the exhibition, the house was taken to pieces and shipped out to Calabar complete with two silvered London lamp-posts which now light the scarlet and yellow cannae in the front garden. The outside of the house is romantically scalloped and curlicued in the best Victorian manner, and inside it is furnished with the solidest brass and mahogany, and one of the largest punkahs in existence. It was worked in the old days by a small boy whose only duty it was to pull the cord and keep the punkah flapping through solid, and climatically unsuitable, meals of beef, suet pudding and claret.

Next door another Victorian built, large house is said

to be haunted by Sir Roger Casement. Early in his career, Casement worked as a vice-consul in Calabar, and was once nursed through an attack of yellow fever in this house. When I lunched there Casement had appeared the night before and tried to strangle a policeman who was staying in the bedroom he normally haunted. Several other people had also recently seen the ghost, and one district officer who refused to credit silly stories had had the Casement wing turned into a nursery for his singularly unimaginative children. But he had to move them when they woke screaming several nights running. Casement's ghost has however not been seen by any Nigerians (nor do Europeans generally see Nigerian ghosts), and the next official who will live in the house is expected to be a Nigerian.

Later, a visitor to this house told me about a grimmer survival from the Calabar past—the local slave markets. Round Calabar there are men who walk through the village markets carrying sticks of different lengths. Each stick is the height of a slave the man has hidden away. Most of the buyers are looking for young women to send to Fernando Po, the Spanish island just off the east coast of Nigeria. This is because Nigerian labourers go to Fernando Po on long-term contracts carefully looked over by the Calabar Labour Department, but they are not allowed to take their wives with them. More prosperous homes on the island want girls to work as housemaids and nurses. Nowadays Calabar parents mostly do not let their children travel alone.

The Calabar man who talked most about this trade also said that there was another slave route—from Lagos and west through Kano—where boys and girls were sent to Sudanese and Saudi Arabian households. It is only fair to remember though, he said, that the present trade is on a

small scale compared to the past, illegal, and much deplored, not only by officials, but also by ordinary people in Nigeria.

Calabar has one of the best known schools in Nigeria, the Hope Waddell, run by Church of Scotland missionaries. I was asked to talk to the sixth form about journalism in England, but instead the boys questioned me about what I was going to write on Calabar. They suggested I should visit new shops in the town, a new school building, and a church a village was building by co-operative effort. It was important, one of the Ibo boys said solemnly, that visitors should have the correct—the modern—impression of Nigeria.

The boys talked more freely about national affairs than a similar group of school children would have done in England, and one of the masters told me that all the sixth-form boys read at least one newspaper a day which they bought themselves out of their own pocket money.* Organised games, except table tennis, the master said, were not popular. The school clubs with the biggest membership were the Debating Society (which posed questions as close to politics as the school authorities would allow) and the Student Christian Movement, which ran literacy classes for adults in Calabar town.

The small boys at the school had very few toys (the only toy I saw commonly in Nigeria was a hoop made from the frame of a bicycle wheel), and their families had trained them not to bother adults, including school-masters, with questions. Because they wanted to behave well they did not ask questions in class, and instead they

*They also read the novels of Marie Corelli, the Sherlock Holmes stories, and as much popular psychology as they can get hold of.

tried to learn textbook passages they did not understand off by heart.

All the children worked very hard. Teachers straight from England found it odd to be faced, as one was, by a class protesting furiously because one of them had been kept in to do extra work as a punishment. It was unfair, the class said, to reward naughtiness. The privilege of extra work should be reserved for the most conscientious and best behaved. Another class protested when their weekend homework was excused them because of a film show. They could easily get up an hour earlier in the morning, the class spokesman said, and could they have the homework re-set?

The home pressure on most of these children to succeed is enormous. The Hope Waddell fees are around £100 a year (there is, as yet, no free secondary education in Nigeria), and many of the boys are sons of small clerks earning perhaps ten pounds a month, domestic servants earning less, or small farmers. What happens is that uncles, grandparents, elder brothers and cousins will all contribute to the education of a likely boy. It is a sort of investment in the boy's success and the people who have contributed expect that the boy will pay the family back by contributing at least equal sums of money to the education of another younger member of the family, supporting the old and unemployed, and finding jobs for all members of the family who apply to him.

This family system means that Nigeria is full of boys from poor families who have succeeded in establishing themselves in the professions. But they must be profitable professions. Schoolboys and college students in Nigeria if they are Christians, which many of them are, are generally more regular in their church attendance than English boys and readier to work for church causes. But very few

of them become ministers or priests because they would not earn enough to help the relations who have helped them. Instead the boys, so a Hope Waddell master told me, aim at becoming doctors or lawyers . . . the two best paid professions at present in Nigeria.

A more unfortunate result of families paying jointly for education is the pressure on the successful young man to make money and get jobs for his relations in every way he can. Most educated Nigerian young men dislike the idea of corruption or nepotism, but their relations cannot understand what looks like their ingratitude if they refuse to take a small sum out of, say, government funds to help an uncle who spent his own savings on their education.

Lagos

Lagos could make a good claim to the title of the world's Least Attractive City. The main trouble is that the town has grown far too fast. Nobody knows what its present population is, but it is guessed to be around a third of a million; more than double what it was twenty years ago. Large sections of Lagos now are shanty towns, and even in the main streets there are shacks of corrugated iron, sacking, and thrown-out packing cases leaning against the walls of more solid buildings.

There are no proper pavements even in the centre of the town. But there are open drains running beside the main roads, and edges of dirty sand where the tarmac stops. Little traders' booths on the sand edges grow from a woman squatting under her umbrella and selling from a tray full of pink plastic combs and shoelaces, to a proper, big stall spreading onto the motor road. Then the police come and pull the stall down. The woman's neighbours sympathise, write to the papers and point out that this is

another instance of administrative tyranny. But the police point is that the stall has been edging out into a street already barely wide enough for all the city's enormous shining motor cars, and scarcely less shining bicycles.

Rush hour in Lagos is as bad as in London, partly because the town is built on several islands in a lagoon, and the main bridge is far too narrow for the amount of traffic that now wants to cross it. At the right time in the morning and the evening it can take an hour, I was told, for a car to get from one side to the other of Carter Bridge.

Outside the rush hours, Lagos is still a maddening town. Most business offices work from around ten until five in the evening with a normal lunch break. Government offices work officially from eight in the morning to two in the afternoon (just the right time for the home going officials on Carter Bridge to meet the businessmen coming back from lunch) with no lunch break. But because officials are human, very few of them arrive before 8.30, and most of them are understandably irritable with hunger and tiredness by 1.30. Semi-official organisations work either business hours or government hours—for the visitor there is no way of telling which.

Stealing is something else that complicates life in Lagos. The city is haunted by gangs of small boys, some of whom have run away from their country families, who live by pilfering what they can. But there are also well organised professional burglars. One flat I dined in had been burgled six times within a year. The last visit had been from a man known as the 'electric thief' whose speciality was taking the light bulbs and electric fittings.

A local English manager of a business firm told me about another Lagos difficulty: the trouble he had finding good artisans and clerks. Lagos business and government

offices, Nigerian or English run, are inefficient. Goods and travel documents are not delivered when they are promised, letters are not answered, and everything always costs a little more than the original estimate. The man I was talking to had just spent most of his working week teaching his accounts clerk some of the elements of double entry book-keeping. The accounts clerk was a young man who had been born in a village several hundred miles from the nearest big town. His family were very poor, living in the most primitive conditions. By very great efforts the boy had put himself through primary and secondary school. He had learnt to wear alien European clothes, to speak and write English, and to use the strange gadgets of towns—electric light, waterborne plumbing, doors on hinges. It had all been new to him, and the boy had learnt so much, so quickly, that he could not believe he had anything left to learn. When he was employed by my acquaintance's business firm he had refused more than five minutes discussion of the accounts he was to do. He knew about them, he said, he had learnt 'every sort' of arithmetic at school. Unfortunately he had not learnt double entry book-keeping, but it took several weeks for him to admit that he even sometimes made mistakes.

This sort of overconfidence, born of having come so far and so fast in a few years, applies also to many artisans. Dry cleaners whose signs boast 'The Most Excellent: Trousers—White as Angels' Wings,' shrink the clothes they are given. Lagos residents have several stories of cars taken to pieces by mechanics who then said they were sorry, but they were not sure how to put the car together again. An Englishman told me how a town garage had put water into his car's petrol tank, and petrol into the sump. The mechanic had never seen that make of car before and was afraid of asking about it because he thought he would

expose himself to European jeers at his ignorance.

The same Englishman also told me that he had been twenty years in Nigeria, and nobody who had not seen it happen could imagine that a country could change so quickly. Twenty years ago most Nigerian towns had no mechanics of any sort, good or bad. Twenty years ago, the Englishman said, it was the professional people and the politicians who were inefficient and overconfident. Like today's mechanics they refused the assistance and advice that was offered to them because they were afraid of being patronised. As the doctors, lawyers and politicians grew more efficient themselves, they talked less about European patronage. But the fear of it still lingers in many other sections of Nigerian society. Patronage, young Nigerians had told my English acquaintance, was the thing they disliked most and met most often in Europeans. One student said he would prefer the 'outright', South African, 'damn Nigger' attitude to the condescending politeness he met with from some English people. He was particularly bitter about a woman who had looked him up and down and then started to explain her errand to him in carefully enunciated simple words and phrases of pidgin English.

Pidgin, the language used all along the African coast, is a trap for travellers. Originally it was simplified English, but now it has its own grammar, its own words and its own flatter pronunciation.* Many coastal West Africans from

*John Gunther in his book *Inside Africa* quotes a translation of part of the Book of Genesis into Pidgin. The struggle of Gabriel with Lucifer reads: 'De headman of dem angels, dey call um Gabriel. When dis palaver start for heaven there be plenty humbug by bad angel, dey call um Lucifer. An Gabriel done catch Lucifer and go-beat um. An palaver stop, one time. An de Lord tell Gabriel he be good man too much, and He go dash Gabriel one trumpet. Lucifer he go for hell-fire where he be headman now'.

British, French and Portuguese territories speak it when they do not speak the European language proper, but to talk to educated Nigerians in Pidgin is an insult implying that they do not understand ordinary English, and are 'bush' people. 'Bush' is about the most insulting term in modern Nigeria. It means: of the forest, of country people, primitive and backward. 'Bush man' is what Nigerian taxi drivers shout when a car stalls in the rush hour over Carter Bridge. 'Bush manners', a Nigerian clerk apologised to me, when we were talking together and two staring countrymen edged me into the main road.

Some English people have picked up the term 'bush' too, and I sometimes heard it used indiscriminately to cover most Nigerians and most Nigerian institutions. The trouble about Nigeria at present, and Lagos in particular, is that colour prejudice or national prejudice is only too easy. Very few countries can have roused such a number of recent travel books by travellers who obviously had a very unpleasant time travelling and remembered their visit with dislike. Partly this is because hotels are indifferent or bad, servants pretend to understand instructions which they have not understood at all, and the car runs out of petrol while the driver swears that it was not his fault because nobody had specifically told him he should fill the tank up when the petrol gauge registered empty.

But what I found particularly sad was that the English people I met, who were most disillusioned with Nigeria and Nigerians, were those who had started with the highest ideals of sympathy for 'downtrodden peoples', and the conviction that Africans were all very much like English gentlemen but with some novel and interesting ideas drawn from a fascinating savage background. Nigerians not unnaturally resented being thought of as

'downtrodden people', and most of them are not very interested in abstract ideas. I met one particularly disillusioned woman who had arrived in Nigeria from Dakar where Paris-trained African intellectuals had told her about '*Nègritude*': the Sartre- and Senghor-inspired theory that because of the misery in which most of the race live negroes are brothers to the poor everywhere. The Nigerian professional families with whom this woman tried to discuss *Nègritude* had indignantly rejected the idea that they were miserable, or that they had any connection with the international poor.

The English people who seemed to get on best with Nigerians were the more successful younger businessmen. (The less successful complained bitterly that the Nigerians had unfair business methods.) This seemed to be partly because they did not expect so much from their Nigerian friends. They did not want to probe into village customs and initiation ceremonies which most town Nigerians find embarrassing to talk about—even if they know about them. Nor do they want intellectual discussions on abstract subjects. A Nigerian shipping clerk told me that he thought he got on particularly well with his English business friends because both he and they liked talking about business and girls, and they all liked making jokes. I also noticed that they liked drinking together at large parties with gramophone records playing very loudly.

At one very successful businessman's party I was taken to, one of the most cheerful mixed groups round me was discussing horses and another the latest iniquities of the marketing board. I found it a particularly good party because it was here that a young lawyer told me about the differences between Nigerian women and English women.

English women, he said, were 'far too bossy'. Their

husbands had no say at all about what they did or where they went. 'An English woman,' the young lawyer said, 'comes home one night in a mink coat. Does her husband say anything? No, he says nothing. Here it would not be like that at all. A Nigerian husband would say, "Where did you get that coat? Who paid for it? Who gave it you?"'

The lawyer may have exaggerated the meekness of English husbands, but it is certainly true that Nigerian husbands have a very cosy position in their own homes. A Nigerian wife, an Ibo woman, told me, however educated she is, and however prosperous her family, would never dream of questioning her husband about his movements, and asking him, for instance, why he didn't come home one night. Nor would most older women object to a second or third wife being installed in her house. To the older generation, the Ibo woman said, polygamy was a mark of prosperity, and some women were glad to have extra wives to talk to and share the housework with. But among younger women there is a growing feeling that polygamy is old-fashioned, even though one woman schoolteacher in the west told me that she found it remarkably convenient to have a senior wife to look after her children while she was teaching. Nigerian men said that it was less cruel to take a second wife in a polygamous marriage, and send the old wife into the country, than it was to divorce a woman you were tired of.*

Polygamy is financially possible for many Nigerians because very few husbands reckon to support their wives and

*A Lagos social worker, a middle-aged Nigerian woman, told me that many girls nowadays made their husbands promise before marriage that they would be the only wives. But the husbands after a year or so denied that they had ever made any promises, and brought back younger wives. 'Men,' said the social worker sighing into her desk, 'are very wicked.'

children completely. Even in prosperous town families most wives are traders, dressmakers, or, if they are educated, teachers. They use what they earn to pay for their clothes, and generally part of the household bills. In the country a man pays a bride price of up to £200 for his wife, and reckons to have a good bargain. The wife will manage a good deal of the farming, and perhaps she will trade as well. Traditionally she cooks her own and her children's food from crops she herself has grown, and shares with her co-wives the duty of providing food for her husband. In some villages each wife offers a taste from her cooking pot to her husband, and he settles for the night with the wife whose cooking and company he prefers.

General manners reflect the superior position of men. There is no tradition of precedence for women, or of offering bus seats, to even obviously pregnant women. A doctor at a maternity hospital told me how he had watched his patients leave with their husbands after they had had their babies. The husband walked first, unburdened, with his wife following behind him carrying her new baby in her arms, with her suitcase and bundles balanced on her head. A Northern Hausa woman, after a few days in London, commented that what she found most astonishing was the way Englishmen treated their women 'like eggs'. Other Nigerian women have told me that while they agreed with their country's tradition that a man should be master in his own house, they did envy the manners of Englishmen towards their wives.

One of the Nigerian wives I talked to was actually a Scots woman married to a Nigerian. Her own marriage was obviously happy, but she owned that other mixed marriages had been less so. She thought that too many British girls married without realising how different

Nigerian conditions were to those in Britain, and that for most mixed marriages to work it was essential that the husband should be fairly rich. If he was not there were bound to be difficulties: the British wife would want more privacy and therefore a larger home than what would satisfy a Nigerian wife, she might want waterborne plumbing, an expensive luxury outside the big towns, and she might find that she had to have different meals from the hot, spicy dishes her Nigerian husband liked.

A Nigerian woman who had just heard that her nephew was engaged to marry an English girl was not, she said, altogether happy about the marriage. She had seen, she said, mixed marriages where the English girl could not appreciate the importance of Nigerian family relations. She said that she had known one English wife who had tried to stop her Nigerian husband sending money to his old mother at Christmas, because the wife had said she wanted to spend it on their own home. No Nigerian wife, my friend said, would have been 'so selfish'. She also quoted cases where English wives had refused to give room in their houses to unemployed uncles and aunts, or had refused to spend their evenings entertaining remote relations in from the country. This entertainment of country relations, another English wife of a Nigerian businessman told me, had caused one of her few quarrels with her husband. Cousins from his village came to Lagos and they came round evening after evening, and sat in straight rows of chairs, eating and drinking, but not saying anything however much she tried to make conversation. Finally she had said she could not stand another evening of it, and the cousins had withdrawn to the village bitterly offended at her inhospitality.

Ibadan

Ibadan, so I was told, is the biggest truly African town in the world. It has a population of half a million, and European settlement has had very little to do with the way the town has grown . . . except that as the capital of the Western Region of Nigeria it has some government buildings. Like Lagos it's a corrugated iron and shack town when you first look at it, although even from the main street I thought Ibadan looked cleaner, greener and generally more pleasant.

Behind the shack fronts the houses go back several courtyards deep, and the families from the big houses—Yoruba tribespeople—are mostly educated, prosperous and polite. (There are said to be forty different ways of greeting someone in Yoruba according to their rank and yours, how well you know each other, and what time of day it is, and what you are both doing at the time.) People are proud of Yoruba traditions and history, and I was told several times that I ought to go to Ife, and see the beginnings of the Yoruba nation in the shrines and museums there. It was better, it was impressed on me, to be a Yoruba than to belong to any other of the tribal groups in Nigeria. Other tribespeople, particularly eastern Ibos, a Yoruba man assured me, were savages and cannibals, educated for only one generation. But Yoruba families had a tradition of western education going back to the grandfathers of present students.

It is apparently an accepted part of tradition for an aristocratic Yoruba to be proud of his riches. People boasted of the amount they had spent on parties, on educating their children, or on building their homes. I was asked, as a polite conversational gambit, how much my clothes had cost, and what I earned in Britain. Groups of

houses I saw, when I did get to Ife, had concrete fences built round them with the palings patterned into recurring £4,000, £5,000 and £8,000. The sum the householder had on his fence was either the amount of money he already had in the bank, or his ambition. Nobody wanted to seem less ambitious or less rich than their neighbour so the newer the house the larger the sum of money you put up as palings.

What people wanted to buy when they had money, I was told, were first of all cars, then new clothes and then refrigerators: an Italian way of spending money rather than English. People bought cars that were much too big for them, and I saw monster-finned American models in red, cream, and electric blue parked outside the most miserable shack-like entrances. British models are less popular; in the big towns all over Nigeria it is much easier to get a good chauffeur to drive a big red American car than a small black British car. The hooters on most British cars are also unsatisfactory by Nigerian standards. What people do mostly is to change them for the louder two-toned sorts.

At night the coolest and pleasantest thing to do in Ibadan was to go and look at the market. Each stall carried its own small oil lamp shining on the women's faces, and on the blue patterned cloth that Yoruba women wear. Stalls selling the same kind of goods were grouped together: the largest group in Ibadan sold cloth and brilliantly patterned Palm Beach type shirts for men. I found a stall selling mixed medicines—liver pills, aspirins in bottles and in lots of five, and several well known brands of laxatives. The old woman who kept the shop also had bits of dried monkey, chameleons, shells, and red birds'

feathers for her more conservative customers. She said that many people tried both sorts of medicines, old and new. It was always as well, she thought, to be doubly sure.

In the evening the roads round Ibadan are lined with files of women walking into the market. They carry what they are going to sell on their heads—vegetables, loads of yams, or jars of home-made beer. It was the rainy season and most women balanced their large black cotton umbrellas on top of their market goods, and also, if they were sophisticated, a two-coloured plastic handbag. If the women came from the villages they were mostly tattooed on their faces and backs in the traditional patterns, and sometimes their teeth were filed. An elderly Yoruba woman once told one of the Ibadan University College lecturers that nothing had horrified her more in her life than the unfiled teeth of the first Europeans she saw. 'When they smiled I thought I was seeing animals not human beings,' she said.

One of the things I had most wanted to see at Ibadan was the new University College there. It is a place that has not been out of trouble and argument in Nigeria since it started in 1948. It is built on what was a patch of farmland and uncleared bush so dense that the staff members had to hack their own pathways to the sites planned for their houses. The buildings went up to constant bickering between the various people concerned with them, and Dr. Kenneth Mellanby, the first principal of the College, tells the story of the academic staff offering to forgo part of their salaries to pay for changing the architects. The College buildings are still only partly finished, they are built of cast concrete—painted orange, yellow and red—

honeycombed and verandah-ed, the honeycomb patterns in the outer walls repeated in sun and shade on the verandahs.

The buildings were cheap to put up, but they are very noisy. Fortunately Nigerian students do not seem to mind this, and there are fewer quarrels than there are in English college buildings about loud gramophone records and late parties. When I was there the outside verandah walls had recently had several feet of wire netting put on them. This was to stop the students climbing in and out at unauthorised times, and much less savage looking than the commando courses of barbed wire and broken glass on Oxford college walls. But the fencing caused the only students' riots Ibadan has had so far. The students staged stay-in strikes, and had themselves photographed clinging to the wire netting, 'like monkeys in a cage', they said furiously.

The main argument in Nigeria about the College is whether it is too good and too expensive for the country. The College is affiliated to London University, and takes London examinations in which the students do well. The atmosphere is consciously moulded on Cambridge. The students live in 'halls' where normally each student has his or her own study bedroom, the College does its best to foster 'hall spirit', and tutors are responsible for groups of students. Some Nigerians say that Nigeria cannot afford this sort of a university. Better, it is said, to put students into Nissen huts and dormitories, lower entrance examinations, and produce more educated, or half-educated, men and women. There is also criticism of faculties like theology and classics as being unnecessary in a country which needs doctors and engineers so badly. At present the majority of the staff is British and it is said that more Nigerians should be sent to England to get post-graduate

degrees, and then come back to professional posts.*

At the College, members of the staff pointed out that there was a strong feeling in Nigeria at the time it was founded against having a 'half-baked university'. Nigerian members of the governing body insisted that Nigerian standards must be as high as those of other countries, and Ibadan must have everything other universities had. It was actually a particularly eminent Nigerian who insisted on the need for a faculty of theology. (The faculty is very small, but students of other subjects are better church-goers and seem more interested in religion than their English opposite numbers. The other main student extra-curricular activities are ballroom dancing and the debating society.)

The College's aim about the British staff is to replace them with Nigerians as soon as possible but without lowering standards. One difficulty is that not all students, and not all their families, are happy when a Nigerian, however well qualified, replaces a Briton. One parent, a farmer, complained about the London-qualified Nigerian lecturer his son was taught by. He had not paid Ibadan fees, he said, for 'native teaching'. †

*Many Nigerians share this rather Chinese feeling that a qualification gained by an examination should be the opening to every job. I asked an eminent and very talkative lawyer why he had not gone into politics. 'I've been asked to fill several high political jobs,' he told me, 'but I've always refused. Not that I couldn't be a politician, I've got all the necessary degrees.'

†Primary schoolchildren and their parents also complained bitterly when their reading textbook about robins in the snow, thatched roofs in English villages and Westminster Abbey was replaced by a book of the same standard about Nigerian animals, Nigerian villages and Nigerian monuments. The children and their parents said that they were being fobbed off with the second best: the sort of book European children did not use.

However the main Ibadan difficulty at the moment is to get enough good staff of whatever nationality. Most of the departments are under-staffed, and in the medical school visiting specialists have to be flown out at great expense for six to eight weeks to fill what would otherwise be a training gap. The difficulty in Britain is that young university teachers say that they do not want to get out of touch with their colleagues, miss possible chances of promotion, and perhaps have to explain later why they went to a foreign job with low academic status. In Ibadan, the heads of departments say that if other academics knew about the sort of research work that could be, and is, done in Ibadan there would be no difficulty in filling vacancies.

The most obviously interesting research at Ibadan, I thought, was medical. The five million pound teaching hospital attached to the College has been criticised in Nigeria, not only because it cost so much (the money spent on it would have built at least ten ordinary cottage type hospitals in Nigerian villages at present miles from any clinic or hospital), but also because it is in Ibadan, and Ibadan people benefit most from it. In 1958, the hospital had its first eminent northern patient, an elderly emir who arrived with bodyguards, his own cooks, and several wives who he insisted should share his room.

About ordinary patients, the trouble is, said one doctor, 'we're in a state of siege from all over Nigeria.' He showed me the waiting room, already emptied once that morning, and now crammed again with patients including a number of, apparently, very ill children. Admissions, he said, had to be based on what the students needed to see of different diseases, and not on the patients' needs. But, once in, the patients were treated and kept for as long as they would be in a good London teaching hospital. The children's ward is a good deal better than many London wards,

partly because the mothers are kept in a special home near the hospital while their children are ill. They sit by their children's beds during the day, and sometimes help with the nursing.

To British doctors the pattern of disease in Nigeria is at first very different from what they are used to. Cancer of the lung is comparatively rare in Nigeria. (Nigerians smoke cigarettes, but they don't live in British industrial towns, the doctors said.) Peptic ulcers are common: the same sort of peptic ulcers that are also common in south India where people live in the same climate and eat the same highly spiced food.

In the hospital Bacteriology Department they were trying to find out the pattern of Nigerian disease by investigating three different tribes in the north east: nomad Arabs, settled farmers and another group of farmers who had recently come down off the hills to live in lower country. You had to know what sort of diseases groups of people had, Dr. Patrick Collard, the Professor of Bacteriology, said, before you could be sure which disease should be treated first. If a group of people all have hookworm, as many Nigerians have, and are always working a little below their best because of it, it is better to get rid of hookworm before you tackle dramatic killing diseases. But here again the difficulty is how little is known as yet about what diseases Nigerians suffer from, and how best to treat them. 'Sometimes,' said one of the hospital doctors, 'I'd like to tell my patients to go away and not to come back for a hundred years. By then we should know enough to help them.'

Kano

In Kano I asked a taxi driver to take me round the

parts of the town he thought best worth seeing. He pointed out to me the covered cinemas, the hospital, a new school and the foundations of a new cotton mill. On the way, we went through streets of houses, painted green and yellow with arabesques scrolled over the solid windowless mud and plaster walls they presented to the streets. We passed bicyclists with white embroidered robes billowing behind them, herds of goats and donkeys loaded with grain, and a laundryman pounding his clothes in an enormous pond in a main Kano square. The taxi driver did point out to me the Emir's palace with guards in red and green, carrying great curved swords, standing outside, but he was much more interested in the new buildings, a motor bicycle, and the make of the cars we passed. 'Kano,' he insisted, 'is a modern city. We have many buildings two storeys high and more.'

In Kano, more than any other northern city, there are some signs of the northern attempt to catch up with the south. The hospital is better than most northern hospitals, more people are educated, and there are even schools taking girl pupils. But the story is told that the day after the sixth form of the girls' school was inspected by a group of eminent northern politicians, no sixth formers came to school. They had all been snapped up as wives by the visiting committee.

On the whole the north seemed to me an even worse place than the south for women. The Hausa women, from the biggest of the northern tribes, work in the fields as southern women do, and for an orthodox Moslem country there are surprisingly few women kept in *Purdah*. Some rich households vary from month to month: one month the wives are kept in the house or only let out veiled; the next month they walk round the city with nothing over their faces and go to mixed parties. But, veiled or unveiled,

it is very difficult for a northern woman, unlike a southern woman, to establish herself in any of the professions normally reserved for men, and northern men know all the sayings that ever existed about the evils of managing, emancipated women who work outside their homes. Yet even these homes are insecure, as northern Nigeria has one of the highest divorce rates in the world. It is quite usual for a man or woman to have had four or five different partners. Sometimes a man who is childless in one marriage goes on looking for a woman who will give him children. A young and beautiful woman often marries well, and then is divorced by her husband as she grows older and uglier. The next time and the next time she marries progressively less well, slipping further and further down the social scale.

On the other hand when I said much of this to a Hausa woman she laughed, and said it was true that she had been divorced three times. But each time she had been glad to leave her last husband, and she thought that she had married better and better. She was now very happy, and her husband encouraged her to work for women's charities. She thought that I underestimated not only northern progress in the last ten years, but also the importance of traditional Moslem culture. Her parents, she said, had been educated in Arabic to read the Koran. Her father knew Moslem law, had been able to argue about theology with some of the first Christian missionaries admitted to the north, and had travelled not only to Mecca, but through Persia, Egypt, and much of Moslem West Africa. He had found the laxity of Moslems in Egypt rather shocking, and preferred the more orthodox society of the Sudan. The Hausa woman's mother had played the zither, painted and written Arabic poetry. She had been very insistent that her daughters take advantage of what

western education they could get, and had tried when she was 58 to teach herself to read English.

All the same, in spite of the handful of educated men and women and a few modern buildings, the main impression most travellers take from Kano and the other northern cities is of how little things have changed over the centuries. Kano market is still very much as the earliest visitors described it. There are far fewer car spares, and fewer mechanical gadgets than in the great southern markets, although there is a row of straw huts whose occupants sell and repair bicycles. Behind them is another row of huts selling millet, guinea corn, rice and peanuts: the different grains piled up in heaps so that buyers can run their fingers through them and choose the quality they want. In the main market men, sitting cross-legged in stalls built into brick arches, sell tasselled bridles and red and gilt high-pommel saddles to nomads from the edge of the desert. In the cloth shops there are fewer Palm Beach shirts than in the south: instead the biggest sale is of the traditional white embroidered and collarless Moslem shirt. It is worn under flowing cotton robes in pale blues and pinks.

One stall holder tried out the sharpness of his curved swords with inlaid scabbards on a cork for me. He wanted a shilling for doing this, and two shillings if I photographed him as 'that was against the Moslem religion'. Further along the row a stall holder was selling Arabic copies of the Koran, and a resident scholar read aloud from the copy he had propped on an ornamented desk in front of him. Theoretically Nigeria then had much the same currency restrictions as Britain, but the money changers in Kano market continued to sell currencies that would be most useful to travellers: French colonial francs

(cheaper in terms of Nigerian pounds if they are bought in the market than if they are bought legally in the Kano City banks), American dollars, gold, and Marie Theresa silver dollars. These last are still one of the most popular currencies in the northern countryside.

Just inside the ruined city walls Kano still has its weavers' and dyers' workplace producing the blue cloth that has always been one of the most valuable of the city's manufactures. During the Fulani Empire the cloth was for royal use only, but now it is mainly sold to tribespeople in the Sahara. 'One cloth,' said a dyer to me, 'buys a man slave, two a woman.' 'Bought a slave nowadays,' he explained that he meant, only the slave would not be taken into Kano. He was dyeing bleached cloth in an enormous pot of indigo dye sunk twelve feet into the ground. After he had finished the dyeing the cloth went across the yard to the hut of two men who gave it a much admired polished shine by beating it rhythmically for several hours with wooden hammers greased with butter and glue. In the past, another of the dyers said, all the unbleached cloth had been woven in Kano, but now they used mostly imported cloth. All the time he was talking and showing me the cloth, there were vultures watching him from the city wall, and one perched on the edge of his pot poking its bald head at him.*

The Kano city authorities realise that hovering vultures worry some visitors. When the north was celebrating its regional independence in 1959, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester made a formal tour on behalf of the Queen. Before they reached Kano seven horses were

*The nicest animals were the lizards, large green, orange and blue ones. They were everywhere, very tame, but they always dodged just before I could catch them.

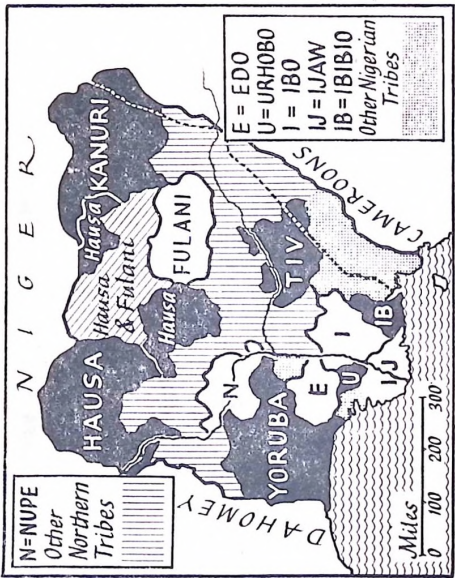


I

FIRST VIEW

ON the map Nigeria looks a square, large country: more than four times the size of England, Scotland and Wales. Geographically some unity is given to it by the lower reaches of the River Niger and its tributary the Benue. But to the air traveller flying into Nigeria from the north, it is a country in contrasting layers. The first layer is desert, getting greener and more cultivated as the Sahara is left behind; further south, more trees in the rolling orchard country of the Savannah; and then a dense green carpet of forest broken occasionally by the sudden flash of a flowering creeper or by ribbons of roads or sluggish looking green-brown rivers. Near the coast, the tall trees give way to a low swampy growth, mostly of mangroves. The final coast line is sand beaches with heavy Atlantic surf breaking on them. To early sailors it was one of the most desolate coast lines in the world; and the coastal sand bars and mangrove swamps mean that good harbours are extremely rare all along the West African coast. Lagos owes its present importance as a port to the fact that it is the only navigable opening along the whole West African coast line between the river Volta and the Niger at Benin.

The different layers of desert, trees and swamp are also different layers of climate. All Nigeria is hot, but the north has a dry heat with maximum temperatures of over a hundred degrees in March and April. The south has a



less intense, but very enervating damp heat. In both parts of the country the four seasons of Europe are replaced by two seasons—'dry' and 'rainy'. There is a quite short rainy season in the north with annual rainfalls sometimes of under 20 inches, and a long rainy season in the south, heaviest in the south east. A district under the Cameroon mountain, just over the eastern border of Nigeria, has a rainfall that has reached 400 inches a year, making it the second most rainy place in the world. Most Europeans find it impossible to work hard for long periods in the damp, hothouse atmosphere of the south. But to nearly all Nigerians the most disagreeable feature of their climate is the Harmattan, a dry, dusty wind off the Sahara, very cold at night and very hot in the daytime. It blows during the dry season, and little bits of grit penetrate everything from the teeth of a man who is not well muffled up, to the food that is being set upon the table.*

There is no accurate modern census of Nigeria, but the country probably has a population of around 35 million. In the north many Nigerians have bony, Arab-type faces reflecting their long history on the terminus of the Saharan caravan routes from North Africa. The majority in the north are Hausas, dark skinned and the keenest traders in West Africa. The largest northern minority are the fairer skinned, straight nosed and straight haired Fulani. They were originally an entirely nomad people (supposedly related to the Jews or the gypsies), and the migrant Fulanis of the present day have the fairest skins and straightest hair. In the towns, Fulani families have intermarried with the Hausas and often it is difficult to tell

*A district officer from north Nigeria where the Harmattan is worse than it is in the south told me that in his district there was always a dramatic rise in the number of murders when the Harmattan was blowing.

townsmen of the two tribes apart. Both the Hausa and the Fulani are Moslems; but scattered in pockets in the more inaccessible parts of the north are pagan tribes, of which one of the most studied by anthropologists are the Jukon, who once had a large empire in North Nigeria. The Jukon have a semi-divine king whose uncovered hands or feet must never touch the ground or the crops will be ruined. In the past the Jukon king was killed ceremonially at the harvest festival at the end of his seven-year reign. But the present king has refused to hold any harvest festivals at all, and the old men in the tribe say that crop yields have declined disastrously in consequence.

The further south you go in Nigeria the more negro-looking people become, and the less Arab. In the south-west, over the last thousand years or so, the major tribal group has been the Yorubas who had a civilisation about which something is known historically. In the east, the major group are Ibos about whose traditions less is at present known. All over the south are scattered pockets of other smaller groups, Efiks, Kwas and Ijaws, for instance. Today they all complain bitterly about the uppishness of the Yorubas and Ibos.

The modern Ibos are often likened to Scots and Jews because they have the same thrusting ambition, energy and democratic traditions of these peoples. Traditionally, the Ibos had no large national or imperial organisations, but Ibo villages had enemies and friends among other villages. Villages were policed and religion preserved by semi-secret societies some of which have since decayed into criminal groups aiming mostly at blackmail and murder,* but it has been found that some-

*Like the Leopard Men who wear a special dress in imitation of a leopard and kill their victims with steel 'leopard claw' hooks.

times even apparently pointless and brutal murders eventually appeared as village attempts to right what they saw as the injustices of foreign judges.

Traditionally the richest and most respected of the older men of the village joined these semi-secret societies; and today Ibo villages are still largely organised by age group societies which manage path and schoolbuilding and similar public works for the general good of the villages. The culminating point of the Ibo year is the yam festival when the new yams of the main harvest are declared fit to eat. In the past, the villages, if they could afford it, sacrificed a slave, a prisoner or an orphan child to the harvest god; today, most villages celebrate the harvest festival by a feast, and sometimes an animal sacrifice. At one Christian village I was told that the most recent celebration had been a bus outing to the local town's cinema.

II

HISTORY

North Nigeria

It is one of the many paradoxes of Nigeria that the north with its ancient tradition of civilisation is today generally described as the least 'progressive' part of the country. For more than a thousand years, caravan routes have crossed the Sahara, and the countries on the southern edge of the desert have been in constant contact with North Africa and the Arab world. From the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries onwards, the Hausa city states in North Nigeria were outposts of Islamic culture, linked by pilgrimage and trade to the rest of the Islamic world and famous for the fertility of their farm lands and the excellence of their craftsmen.

Herodotus gives the first European description of the fertile country in Africa beyond the Sahara. He tells the story of five young men, sons of a desert chief, who set out to explore 'West Libya'. After many days they came out of the desert onto a plain where fruit trees were growing. They were captured by dwarfish negroes who took them to a town where a great river, containing crocodiles, flowed past. Herodotus, making the mistake of many later geographers, called this river the Nile, but it was probably the Niger.

The Hausas arrived in Northern Nigeria about the tenth century. Originally, they were probably a northern Berber

people, and their own legend of their beginnings is that the race hero, Abu Yazid, arrived at the town of Daura, slew the sacred serpent, and* married the local queen. The sons of their marriage founded the seven original Hausa states.

Around the fourteenth century, the Hausa states were converted to Islam by the Mandingo people of the empire of Mali in what was to become Senegal. Politically through the next centuries north Nigeria alternated between independence in separate and rival city states and ties to the empires centred to the north and west. During the fifteenth century the state of Zazua grew in importance under a Queen Amina who moved from place to place, taking a new lover wherever she stopped, and having him put to death when she left.

Two centuries before this, the second great people of the north, the nomad Fulanis, had arrived in Nigeria. The local farmers welcomed them for the milk, butter and manure provided by their herds of cattle. Some of the Fulani remained herdsmen and some settled in towns, did well and intermarried with the Hausa. It was from among these Town Fulani that their national hero, Usman Dan Fodio, was born in 1754. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Usman led a successful Jihad, a holy war, against the Hausa Emirs, and he gave to each of his captains a flag which he blessed. Today most of the emirs of the northern cities proudly claim descent from Usman's flag bearers.

In the newly conquered country Usman's judges were instructed to use strict Koranic law; and Usman set up a complicated feudal system of administration which subjected the cities in the west of the Fulani Empire (the

*In the best international traditions of heroic behaviour.

country that now includes most of North Nigeria) to the Sultan of Sokoto.*

The most important fief of Sokoto was Kano. This city had become the greatest commercial centre of the Fulani Empire, and its weavers and dyers were particularly famous. Cloth in the nineteenth century was sent from towns just outside Tripoli to Kano to be dyed, and then sent hundreds of miles back for sale in the Tripoli markets. In 1824, Captain Hugh Clapperton, the British explorer, was at first disappointed with the city he had heard so much about. † Later the Captain owned himself astonished by the market regulations and the variety of goods in the Kano market. He bought for himself a green cotton English umbrella from one of the market stalls.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Henry Barth, another explorer, described Kano as having in the trading season about 30,000 foreigners living in the city. He called it 'the emporium of central Africa'. At this time Kano imported silk from Tripoli, cotton from Manchester, sword blades from Solingen, and paper, mirrors and needles from Nuremberg. It was also one of the centres for the salt caravans from the Sahara. (Salt is so scarce in West Africa, north of the coast, that at one time an ounce of salt was traded for an ounce of gold.) In return, Kano sold its own woven and dyed cloth, corn from Hausa farms, kola nuts, natron from Lake Chad and a growing number of slaves.

This slave trade flourished throughout the nineteenth

*The first Sultan of Sokoto, Usman's son Muhammed Bello, was a notable patron of the arts, and himself wrote several books of history, geography and theology.

†It hardly seemed worth while, he wrote, putting on his naval uniform and making himself 'as smart as circumstances would permit'. Nobody looked at him.

century as the Fulani Holy War degenerated into slave raiding on the pagan tribes still left in the north. It was a wasteful as well as cruel traffic. In the villages they raided, the Fulani horsemen killed all the old, young and infirm and kept only men and women in the prime of life for the slave markets. Some of the men were then castrated to produce the eunuchs needed for the harems of the Arab world, and out of these men about one in ten survived the operation. From the Hausa cities the slaves had to march across the desert to the northern African markets and the routes they followed were lined with skeletons. The bones were particularly numerous round the desert wells where the slaves had died in the last struggle to reach water. Slave trading and slave raiding died as British influence spread over the north during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and British courts did not return to their masters slaves who had escaped. But domestic slavery in the private households of rich men has survived to the present day. These elderly slaves have sometimes told visitors that they are better off and better looked after in their masters' households than they would be looking for work in the cities.

South Nigeria

Far less is known about the early history of south Nigeria than about the north; and one of the difficulties is separating tribal legends from historical facts. Nigerians themselves quote as examples of southern civilisation the outstanding works of art produced by the Yoruba people, particularly the Ife portrait heads of the sixth century and onwards, and the Benin brass work made in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yorubaland is in south-west Nigeria, and today the majority of townspeople in Nigeria are Yorubas.

Historically, the first Yoruba ancestors probably arrived in west Nigeria sometime in the second millenium B.C. coming originally perhaps from Egypt.*. They knew how to work iron and bronze, and how to make pottery although not how to use the potter's wheel. Their capital was Ile Ife (the present city of Ife), and remains of their earliest work still exist there: what is now known as the Opa, a phallic pillar, 11 feet high and 3½ feet wide; and, in a sacred grove near the town, there are two statues said to be of a slave and one of the Ife high priests. When I visited Ife the statue grove was pointed out to me as the place where life began and the world was created.

Between 600 and 1000 A.D., new migrants came into Yorubaland, conquered the inhabitants, and moved their capital from Ile Ife to Oyo. They seem however to have assimilated much of the earlier cultural traditions, and Ife remained the religious and artistic capital of the Yoruba state. It is the leader of these conquerors, King Oduduwa, and his son, Awranyan, who are today said to be the founders of the Yoruba people. Politically the new state was organised under a number of governors and sub-kings.

In the Yoruba state, religion and politics were closely connected. The chief god was Olorun, the god of the sky, but under him there were a variety of minor deities who were more directly concerned with humanity. Some of them, like Shango, the god of thunder, are said to be past

*In 1944, skilfully made terracotta heads and animals were found at Nok near Zaria in North Nigeria. The Nok work is about 2,000 years old, Nigeria's earliest discovered sculpture. Modern Yoruba art parallels the narrow Nok heads and slanting eyes, but it is at present only archaeological guesswork that connects the Nok sculpture with Yoruba migration from North Africa.

Alafins (supreme kings of Oyo), and the Alafins were, and are, all believed to be able to cause lightning and rain. But, notwithstanding their divinity, the Alafins ruled through hereditary councils, and were traditionally expected to commit suicide if their subjects sent them parrots' eyes as symbols of their discontent.

Throughout Yoruba society suicide was an honoured part of ceremony. At the Alafin's death his eldest son, who had been associated with him in the government of the country, had to kill himself, and so did members of his household who spent the day of their deaths feasting with their friends and families and putting their affairs in order. No European visited Oyo when Yoruba civilisation was at its height, but the accounts the men of Benin gave the Portuguese about the Alafin and the glories of Yorubaland convinced them that this king was the mythical Prester John of Abyssinia for whom they were looking.

The city of Benin was originally a Yoruba colony, founded during the fourteenth century. When the Portuguese captains landed there, about a 100 years later, they found walls nine miles in circumference built round the city. A seventeenth-century Dutch visitor described the king's inner court as:

'quite as large as the town of Haarlem and surrounded by a special wall. It is divided into many magnificent dwellings, and has beautiful long square galleries which seem about as big as the Exchange at Amsterdam, but one is larger than the others. Its roof rests on wood pillars carved from top to bottom with cast copper . . . engraved with war deeds and battles. Everything is maintained very clean. Most of the king's houses are roofed with palm leaves instead of shingles and every gable is ornamented with a turret ending in a

point. On these stand birds cast out of copper with wings outspread, very artistically done and from life.'

Benin was the Yoruba outlet to the sea, and in the sixteenth century visiting English merchants bought there 'pepper and elephant's teeth, oil of palm, cloth made of cotton wool very curiously woven, and cloth made of the bark of palm trees'. The Benin money then was white shells. The English captain finishes his account of the city by noting that 'the people are very gentle and loving and go naked both men and women until they be married.'

There have been suggestions that the Binis were taught their arts of bronze casting and wood carving, not by Ife workmen, but by their early Portuguese visitors. Other historians however point out that although Benin workmen sometimes made brasses of visiting Portuguese soldiers, their work is of a much higher standard than anything in Portugal at the time. Both Benin and Ife workers used the *cire perdue* method of brass casting. Wax, taken from the forest bees' nests, is modelled on a clay core and then covered with a second layer of clay. The wax is melted out of the clay 'sandwich' and its place taken by molten brass. The clay, inside and outside, is broken away when the brass has cooled.

The Coming of the Europeans and the Slave Trade

The first explorers to find West Africa by the sea route were North Africans from Carthage. Their naval expeditions in the fifth century B.C. sailed down the African coast until they reached 'a land covered in flames from which streams of flames flowed into the sea. Towering high overhead was a fire, greater than the rest, which appeared to touch the sky.' This was probably the Cameroons coast with Mount Cameroon in eruption.

Later exploration from Europe was hindered by the common belief that the end of the world lay a little beyond Cape Bojador on the north-west African coast. There were mists there, it was said, which got deeper and deeper until the reckless ship that sailed beyond the Cape was sucked into a whirlpool, and then swept over the huge falls that ended the world. There the captain and his sailors burnt for ever in liquid fires. But in 1434 one of Henry the Navigator's squires picked a sprig of rosemary from the mainland beyond Cape Bojador, and brought it back to Portugal. Afterwards Portuguese ships pushed slowly round the coast until, by the fifteenth century, they had reached the coast line of what is now Nigeria, and, in particular, had traded with, and admired, the port of Benin.

At first the Portuguese, and the Dutch, French and English who followed them, were looking for a sea route to India, gold and spices, and the court of the mythical Prester John, the Christian King. But at the same time as the African coast was being explored so was south and central America and the West Indies. The men of the new colonial nations, the Portuguese, Spanish and English, made sugar plantations and then other sorts of farms in the Americas, and what they needed was cheap labour to work the farms; too many of the local people had been killed by the ruthless methods and the diseases of their conquerors, and there were not enough of them anyway. In the sixteenth century a Spanish Bishop, horrified by what he had seen of the sufferings of the South American Indians in the silver mines, proposed that tougher African labour should be shipped across the Atlantic. He later declared that if he had known the extent of the trade that would follow his advice he would never have given it. Altogether between 10 and 20 million

Africans were landed in America during the next three centuries, and millions more died crossing the Atlantic and in the slave raids on Africa. Probably about half the total number of the slaves came from what is now Nigeria, and in the eighteenth century, when the trade was at its height, the majority of the slaves were carried in English ships.

It was a singularly horrifying trade. Slaves came mostly from peoples living away from the immediate coast line. Generally their villages were raided at dawn and set on fire by rival tribes, and the fit men and women taken from those who ran out of the flames. Other slaves were sold directly to Europeans or to Arab slave traders as a punishment for crime and debt. Slaves taken in any of these ways were marched down to the coast and crowded into slave barracks to wait for the coming of the European ships. Some of them saw the sea for the first time as they were driven through breaking surf into the loading boats. In the passage across the Atlantic the slaves were chained ankle to ankle and wrist to wrist. They were made to lie on their sides to save room in the four foot high space between the decks, and to keep some of them alive the slaves were made to exercise at the end of a whiplash, dancing in their chains on deck.

This slave trade did induce a sort of prosperity on parts of the coast. Towns like Bonny and Calabar grew up because of the trade, and their political organisations and a certain civilisation depended on it. But apart from the cruelty to the people who became slaves, the trade destroyed more political and economic organisations than it helped. Economically it was not worth a village's while to become rich and prosperous and so attract the attention of slavers. Politically the kingdoms of Benin and Oyo were at least partly destroyed by the slave trade. The country

round Benin was depopulated by slave raids, and as the European slavers found that too few slaves were provided to make it worth their while to call at the port, the slave raids into the interior continued, but now their purpose was to provide for the increasingly numerous human sacrifices that marked the Benin funerals and festivals. In the Oyo kingdom, provincial governors strained their ties with the central authority of the Alafin, as both the centre and the provinces tried to grab larger and larger shares of the new trade for which the material was either their own subjects, or prisoners taken in war on neighbouring peoples.

European Explorers in Nigeria

In 1807 slave trading became illegal for British subjects. One reason for the new law was that the Industrial Revolution in England was absorbing capital and ships at such a rate that not enough was left over for the slave trade. Moreover the Evangelical Churchmen of the early years of the nineteenth century were horrified both by the idea of slavery and by the cruelties associated with it. These men, Grenville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and others, roused Parliament and the country by lectures and exhibits—like the iron chisel Clarkson bought in Liverpool; it had been used on slave ships to knock out men's teeth and stop them committing suicide by starving themselves to death.

Denmark had prohibited slave trading to its nationals three years before Britain, and other countries were pressed into following suit in the first decades of the nineteenth century. A British naval patrol, and for a time a French patrol, were stationed in West African waters to stop slave trading, but the patrol was probably never suc-

cessful in stopping more than one boat in four. At the beginning of the century (until the Industrial Revolution in America) more slaves were carried across the Atlantic than ever before, and they were worse treated. A slaver would commonly throw his chained slaves overboard if he were chased by a patrol, in order to destroy the evidence against him.

British Evangelical Churchmen who had formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, believed that a positive policy (which became known as 'Christianity, Commerce and Colonisation') was necessary to replace the slave trade. For any of the three 'Cs' the first essential was to explore the interior of Africa about which remarkably little was known at the time. The maps in use were mostly those drawn up by mediaeval and Renaissance geographers relying on the stories of Arab travellers. The coast line was gradually becoming known; but the great rivers in West Africa, the Niger, the Senegal and the Rio Grande (the modern Jebbe river), were all thought to be one, except by those who still thought that the Niger and the Nile were the same. The Niger's course was bound to baffle early geographers. It rises only a 150 miles from the sea in Sierra Leone, and, after several broad bends, finally flows almost parallel to its original course out to sea in east Nigeria through one of the most complicated delta systems in the world. Apart from wishing to solve the geographical problems, many of the early explorers still hoped to find the great rich empires and marvellous cities said to exist in the interior of Africa. These legends of magnificence and riches partly account for the acid disappointment with which Clapperton first described Kano, the city whose splendour everybody he had met impressed on him.

The solving of the problems of the Niger was due

mainly to two men: Mungo Park, a Scots doctor from Peebles, and Richard Lander, a valet, who first came to Africa with his employer Clapperton. Mungo Park was employed by the Association for the Exploration of Africa, many of whose members were active in the fight for the abolition of the Slave Trade. On Park's first expedition to Africa he eventually reached the Niger at Segou, and described it as 'glittering in the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster and flowing eastward'—eastward away from the mouths of the Senegal and Rio Grande rivers. Later in the same day Park had another, less often recorded adventure as he waited hungry and uncomfortable in the shade of a village tree. An African woman found him, took him to her hut, cooked him a fish and gave him a mat to sleep on. As he dozed the women of her household sang their new song: 'The winds roared and the rains fell. The poor white man faint and weary came under our tree. He had no mother to bring him milk; no wife to grind his corn. Let us pity the poor white man, no mother has he, etc.'

Richard Lander visiting Wawa in North Nigeria had a rather less pleasant experience with traditional African hospitality and kindness when the fat widow Zuma fell in love with him. 'In my delicate state of health,' Lander wrote, 'I was positively afraid that from the warmth and energy of Zuma's embraces I should actually be pressed to death between her monstrous arms.'

This was on Lander's first visit to Africa with Clapperton in 1825. In 1830 he persuaded the British Government to send him back to West Africa to solve finally the mystery of the Niger's course. Park's discoveries had been interpreted to mean that the Niger went on flowing eastward and ended in a great lake or swamp—the Sink of Africa'. The Niger delta was known to the coast traders as

'the Oil Rivers', and was not generally connected by geographers to the Niger proper. In 1829, the preposterous and fire-eating General Donkin was still able to find a respectable audience for his theory that the Niger flowed north under the sands of the Sahara Desert and into the Mediterranean. Lander was officially instructed to follow the Niger to Lake Chad and even to 'Borunou'. Instead he and his brother followed it southwards down the coast to the Brass River, part of the delta, and so out to sea, thus solving the main problem of Nigerian geography.

All through the nineteenth century, other explorers filled in the geographical gaps left by Park, Lander and their contemporaries. The most notable of these later explorers was Henry Barth whose great five-volume work, published in 1857-1858, on his six-year travels through North Nigeria and the surrounding country is still the standard work on the customs of many of the tribespeople he visited. Neither Barth nor his book have perhaps received the fame they deserved: but this is possibly because Barth's five volumes are not only long, but also, to most non-specialists, very dull.

Calabar and Bonny

After the slave trade had been made illegal for British subjects, ships and capital were in part diverted into the trade in palm oil. Along the Niger Delta, in the Oil Rivers country, most of the old slave trading African ports turned also to palm oil trading—with slave trading sometimes continuing as a side-line to supply ships prepared to run the naval blockade.

The palm oil traders lived, during the trading season, in Noah's Ark-like ships whose decks were protected from the sun and rain by matting awnings. At first they moored

these ships in the Oil River ports because local chiefs would not let them live ashore, and then it became the theory that it was healthier to live away from the African town. The traders were known as 'the palm oil ruffians', and in the mid-nineteenth century they deserved their name. Richard Lander, after his successful descent of the Niger in 1830, wrote that the coast captains 'seemed to vie with each other in acts of cruelty and oppression. The captain of the oil brig *Elizabeth*, now in the Calabar River, actually whitewashed his crew from head to foot while they were sick with fever and unable to protect themselves: his cook suffered so much in the operation that the lime totally deprived him of the sight of one of his eyes, and rendered the other of little service to him.' The captains also quarrelled among themselves and with the Africans ashore about their shares of the oil trade, and over whose laws and customs should be used in judging disputes.

The towns they traded with were, in a different way at least, as barbaric as the traders if not as lawless. Professor Ken Dike, Nigeria's leading historian, has described the House system on which Calabar and Bonny (the two most important Nigerian ports) were organised during the nineteenth century. Each House consisted of a group of free kinsmen with their families and a group of slaves and their families. These slaves might be servants of the home or farm, working on the plantations outside the town but belonging to 'the House'. Trusted slaves traded with their masters' money and became important and respected men. (King Jaja who founded his own trading town of Opobo started life as a Bonny slave.) To begin with many of the Houses sent their more intelligent slaves to the new schools started by missionaries instead of sending free born

children. 'Why should a free born child sit still all day and be beaten by his master?' one old Calabar resident recently asked a missionary.*

The Houses were organised under chiefs whom the English traders, by way of flattery, called kings; they greeted them by firing royal salutes when the 'king's' canoe came out to visit them. One of the first of the Scottish missionaries to Calabar, Mr. Hope Waddell, gives an account of a return luncheon held by King Eyamba of Duke Town, Calabar, for the traders and other friends of the king. 'At two o'clock a large gun fired on the beach summoned the company to dinner. They assembled in the courtroom of the Iron Palace. Eyamba entered dressed in his best style—broad silk waistcloth, hat and feathers, a profusion of beads, but neither shirt nor shoes. He went round shaking hands with everyone and then paraded admiringly before the mirrors as his manner was.

'In the dining room,' Mr. Hope Waddell continues, 'a long table was laid out, and properly furnished. Eyamba took the head, his white guests sat on his right, his black on his left. The foot remained vacant, to be filled as his friends arrived. A basin, ewer and towel were carried round for everyone to wash hands which was by a little water being poured on the hand in eastern style. Then came in a file of stout girls in native undress, each bearing on her head a large covered calabash, with an ornamental cloth thereon, which she placed on the table. Their contents had a novel appearance—yams and fish stewed together

*This has meant that in Calabar today the descendants of the free born still enjoy special social prestige and marry, if they can, only into other free born families. But the descendants of slave families have mostly benefited by several generations of education, and are now richer and in higher positions in the government.

with palm oil, vegetables and pepper filled yams, goat flesh similarly dressed and so on. They looked savoury and had a fragrant odour but their appearance was not tempting. A native earthenware pot with rich 'black soup' as it was called, accompanied by a dish of pounded yams or 'fufu' held a prominent place.'

Elsewhere Hope Waddell describes the mixtures of goods piled up in the chiefs' houses, some of them rotting through disuse, and some, like the four-wheeled carriages he saw in one courtyard, entirely useless in a town where there were no roads which could take them.

In Calabar the body that kept order in the town was the Ekpo secret society to which nearly all free born men belonged. The Ekpo punished criminals and disobedient slaves and collected debts on behalf of their members. Their messengers ran through the town in a special costume carrying a whip, and women, slaves and non-members of the society had to hide themselves. In the special Ekpo meeting place there was a tree on which convicted murderers were made to hang themselves; and for lesser offenders Ekpo powder could be blown on them and their goods or houses, and they would then be boycotted until they conformed with Ekpo laws.

Ekpo and the system it enforced could be cruel. Disobedient slaves and criminals were punished by being left tied to stakes in the river until they were drowned in the rising tide, or they were impaled on stakes driven through their bodies until they came out of their skulls. Women unfortunate enough to give birth to twins were driven away from their villages and their babies killed. There were human sacrifices at big festivals. Once to bring back the white traders in a bad trade year, an albino, a fellow white skin, so it was argued, was sacrificed at the sea point of the Cross River. When chiefs died, their slaves and wives

were massacred so that they would have attendants in the spirit world. Hope Waddell describes how, at the funeral of King Eyamba V, hundreds were killed and the widows of the king were called to their deaths with the summons 'the King calls you'. Whereupon each woman dressed herself in her best clothes, drank a mug of rum and went out to be strangled by a silk scarf. Several more of the family were made to undergo the local ordeal by swallowing a distillation of the poisonous Esere bean to show whether they had been accomplices in the witchcraft presumed to have killed the king.

These coastal African towns shocked the Scottish missionaries and many other visitors. Today, the picture the missionaries drew of barbaric, cruel Africa as seen in these towns is still many British people's typical picture of West Africa, more vivid and far more often described than say Mungo Park's hospitable village women or the skilled artists of Ife and Benin. But Calabar and Bonny had been corrupted by slave dealing, great fluctuations in wealth, and the malpractices of most of the European traders they dealt with. The chiefs, in whose compounds Hope Waddell saw piles of wasted goods, and the town's leading men, dressed in footmen's uniforms, which they had been told were worn by the British nobility, were victims of the traders' lies. One remedy the towns themselves threw up for the chiefly excesses and the tyranny of Ekpo was the associations of 'Bloodmen', slaves from the country. In the years after King Eyamba V's death, the Bloodmen came into the towns to stop the massacres at the deaths of later chiefs, and forced the punishment of men who had maltreated their household slaves without cause. Other evils in southern societies might also have been dealt with within the societies if the African people had had the time and opportunity.

The Establishment of British Rule

In the mid-nineteenth century the British public was by no means sure that it wanted an empire in Africa. In 1864 a parliamentary committee recommended that all British settlements on the West Coast of Africa (except Sierra Leone) should be given up and the natives in them urged to prepare for self-government. The African west coast had a well deserved reputation as 'the white man's grave'. In expeditions up the Niger in 1832 and 1842, 38 out of 48 Europeans died, and Sir Richard Burton described the nineteenth-century consulate at Lagos as 'a corrugated iron coffin or plank-lined morgue containing a dead consul once a year.'^{*}

In spite of this official and unofficial dubiousness the flag of British rule followed trade in Nigeria as it had done earlier in India. The first British consul, John Beecroft, was appointed to settle disputes between the British palm oil traders and the African chiefs, and he interpreted his job to include ensuring conditions that would safeguard a trade then worth more than a million pounds a year. A landmark of the growing British power along the coast was Beecroft's deposition of King Pepple of Bonny in 1854. King Pepple had quarrelled with his chiefs and also with the white traders whose rival he was. The new king was forbidden to engage in trade of any kind, and was not allowed to go to war with any African state without the consent of local British traders.

By the 1880's imperialism had become fashionable not only in Britain but also in Europe generally. Nations who had not acquired an early, accidental empire by trade were afraid that their European rivals might outstrip them, and

^{*}There is also the well known cautionary rhyme: 'Beware and take heed of the Bight of Benin; Few come out, though many go in.'

the riches of Africa were grossly exaggerated in nationalist publications. In 1885, the most powerful European countries met at Berlin and agreed to divide Africa among themselves. Each country was given an area to be kept on condition that their existing position as dominant power was backed up by treaties with local chiefs and effective rule. Nigeria was part of the British sphere of influence; and its chiefs were forced into alliances—or, more rarely, the countries were conquered to safeguard British interests against the German advance from the Cameroons and the French from the north and west.

In the north the first successful trading expedition up the Niger had taken place in 1852, when Dr. Baikie used quinine against malaria for the first time and none of the Europeans on the expedition died. By the time of the Berlin Conference, the middle Niger and the north were being regularly visited by the trading company organised by George Goldie, one of the most convinced of the new Kiplingesque imperialists. At first, individual traders had been protected by naval ships (some of whose officers protested at the slaughter of villagers who opposed their passage), but from 1886 Goldie's Royal Niger Company was empowered to administer justice and maintain order on the model of the East India Company half-a-century before. The Niger Company however only lasted fourteen years, before it was replaced by a government protectorate of North Nigeria.

The actual conquest of the north was not completed until around 1914. The British at first had little power beyond the Niger banks, and one emir confidently asserted that the British could be attacked with impunity by people based away from the river. The British were a fishlike people, the emir said, and could not live away from the water.

Meanwhile in the south, the reasons the British gave for taking over territories were sometimes the need to establish order and public morality;* sometimes the need to punish attacks on British property or subjects, as at Benin in 1897.† The last major southern expedition, in 1902, moved against the Aros and their oracle at Aro-Chuku which had been used to established Aro trade domination through much of East Nigeria. The Aro priest speaking through the oracle's mouthpiece had settled disputes among villagers in the interests of Aro domination. Those who lost their disputes were either sacrificed to the oracle or sold into slavery. *The Times* newspaper, in publishing its account of the oracle, commented that the success of the British expedition would mean the spread of 'civilised, that is, white government'. This was to be practically universal opinion for around 40 years.

*In 1861 Lagos, after accusations of continued slave trading, became a Crown Colony, the first British possession in Nigeria.

†The horrified comments of the British soldiers, who first entered Benin and found the streets lined with the crucified half-dead, and the decomposing bodies of earlier sacrifices are in striking contrast to the earlier comments on Benin, before the slave trade, as a city of 'gentle and loving' people.

farm houses are pulled down from time to time and ploughed back into the land.

The normal farming method however all through Nigeria needs much more land and less work from the farmer. The farmer takes a patch of uncleared land, rings the bigger trees to kill them, and cuts and burns the small scrub. The soil is, in theory, virgin or has lain long fallow and the ashes from the burnt scrub fertilise it, so that the farmer should get big crops. In some areas he, or more often his wife, will weed the crops, in other areas he will not bother.

In the next year, or perhaps the year after, the farmer will move onto a new patch of land and let the forest grow back over his old patch. Most families have a small garden near their huts as well, which is kept in permanent cultivation, and manured with household rubbish. They may also own valuable trees, palm or coconuts, growing almost wild in the forest. The amount of land a farm family cultivates in a year varies from about one acre in Iboland to 15 acres in some northern districts. Generally farm work does not occupy the farmer and his family for more than six months of the year, and there is little for them to do about their houses or in outside work during their enforced leisure. This is the reason for the classic picture of a lazy, leisurely Africa with men asleep under their trees and women spending long hours in gossip at the markets.

European economists and agricultural experts used to cluck disapprovingly about this system of 'shifting cultivation'. They said it wasted land and manpower; but so far nobody has found an effective substitute for it in Nigeria. The old belief that the thickness of the tropical rain forest showed the fertility of Nigerian soil has been proved not to be true. Nigerian soil is generally less fertile than soils in many other farming areas of the world, and

crop yields are lower. If the ground is not allowed to lie fallow, a great deal of fertiliser, more than the Nigerian farmer can afford, is needed to put it back in good heart after a year or two's cropping.

If the system of shifting cultivation is to work properly, there must be a considerable period of fallow to allow the forest to grow back. But in some areas, particularly in the Ibo country, the population has grown so fast that the fallow period is now not long enough for the land's needs. In the east today, land lies fallow for only three or four years instead of 18 or 20. Old men complain that yams that used to weigh 50 pounds apiece when they were young men now weigh only ten. A second difficulty in the east has been that on constantly cropped land where the bush does not have time to grow again the country is not properly protected against erosion in the heavy rains and long dry season. In some areas land which was once used for farming has degenerated into bare gullies and stone and mud slopes.

Even on bad farm lands Nigerian farmers mostly look healthy. They are big built, cheerful looking people, but their looks cover the general malnutrition of ordinary Nigerian families, particularly during 'the hungry season' before the harvest. The majority also suffer from some crippling, but not killing disease like hookworm, malaria or anaemia. It is said that about half the babies born in Nigeria die in childhood, and in West Nigeria one of the worst killers of children is Kwashiorkor . . . a perfectly preventable and curable protein deficiency disease. It is caused by weaning children straight from their mothers' milk* onto a porridge made of 'gari', starch from cassava

*Probably inadequate milk. Because of their poor diet a large number of Nigerian women die in childbirth or have labour and post-natal difficulties.

roots whose natural poisons have to be counteracted by elaborate cooking preparations. The only argument for cassava is that it is easy for the farmer's wife to grow while the farmer is working on his cocoa bushes. All over Nigeria a starch porridge of some sort is the staple diet of most families. It is made from yams or plantains in the east, and millet or other grain in the north. Ideally, this porridge is eaten with a sauce made of meat or fish or vegetables, cooked in oil, but most farm families cannot afford these extras all through the year.

The Farming Future

What is going to be the future of Nigerian farming? Can farmers and their families be helped towards a better standard of life? Can malnutrition be got rid of together with eroded land and children sick with disease that could be prevented by good food?

One answer should lie, in theory, in the population map of Nigeria: moving people from the very overcrowded lands, particularly the south-east, to the emptier lands immediately north of them or to the far north. But one practical difficulty about this is that the Ibos, the people of the east, are particularly attached to their home country, their own villages and their farming customs. In other regions, too, families are not going to leave their villages unless sufficiently attractive conditions are offered them elsewhere . . . something more than just new empty land.

Difficulties like this have meant that most of the government resettlement and development schemes have had to offer settlers from crowded parts of the country some incentive to open up new lands, while leaving the settlers enough to do on their few farms to discourage any feeling

that it is the government's job to supply all the money and all the hard work needed to get a farm going. Where the Government has failed to maintain this balance and convince the settlers about the reasons for any new work they were asked to do, new agricultural schemes have failed after a good deal of public money has been spent on them, and disgruntled settlers have drifted back to their old homes and old farming methods.

One of the most successful agricultural development schemes is in Sokoto province in the far north. Heavy clay soils here have made farming prohibitively hard for men using the primitive hoe which is all that most Nigerians have to work their land. In the development scheme, government owned tractors are used to plough the land, and it is then distributed to individual farmers for sowing. But mechanisation is not always an answer to Nigerian farm problems, particularly in the heavily forested south. Land which is to be ploughed by tractors has to be completely cleared of the tree stumps which a man with a hoe can work round. At Irele, in west Nigeria, farmers were at first very enthusiastic about tractor ploughing, but they did not understand why they should spend five times as long clearing forest land for it, as they would have spent clearing land to be farmed by traditional methods. The result was that the farmers worked badly, and the original scheme of co-operative mechanical farming was not successful.

To western farmers one of the most obvious differences between their own methods and those of Nigerians is how very few farmers in Nigeria keep farm animals. If more Nigerian farmers would keep cattle, and they could then use ploughs roped to them, their land would be manured, and they would need less fallow. Nigeria does possess large herds of cattle, but nearly all of them are in the northern

part of the country and owned by migrant Fulani who are as reluctant as western gypsies to settle with their herds in permanent farming villages. The Fulani herdsmen manage large herds, and over much of the country, if they did settle down, these herds would quickly exhaust local grazing and water. But in the north the Fulani herdsmen and the Hausa farmers do often co-operate and cattle are pastured on farm land after the harvest. A difficulty about similar arrangements in the south is that Fulani humped cattle are very susceptible to tsetse fly infection, and much of the untouched forest in the middle belt of Nigeria is heavily infected with tsetse. Another very real difficulty is that southern farmers do not know anything about looking after cattle. No one in their villages knows whether it would be a man's job or a woman's to milk them, and take them into the fields.

This village conservatism has interfered with other schemes of improved farming. In the Tiv Division of the Benue River belt the local people do less well than they ought to from their benniseed crop. Benniseed needs weeding. It is known in the villages that weeding yams is women's work. But there is no tradition that a new crop like benniseed must be weeded by women. Anyway, say the women, they have no time for extra weeding. No man however could demean himself to do this feminine chore, so the benniseed has to stay unweeded!

The same sort of difficulties hold back individual farmers who want to improve their land, and do something which is not honoured by years of practice and the approval of the village elders. It is partly that the farmer is considered not just as a man altering his own land and farming methods, but as someone experimenting with tribal property. Some years ago a Nigerian chief told Dr. C. K. Meek, the then government anthropologist: 'I conceive

that land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless members are still unborn.' In one district near Lagos no farmer is allowed to plant trees on his land because it might prejudice tribal rights to redistribute the land to other people who also had claims on it.

All the same it is not fair just to dismiss the ordinary Nigerian farmer (and his wife) as completely unwilling to change except under very special conditions in a few resettlement schemes. At Ibadan University Hospital, in the centre of a district that suffers badly from Kwashiorkor, the hospital doctors advised mothers to include guinea corn or beans in their children's diet instead of feeding them on nothing but cassava. Some mothers, I was told, have themselves found out how to grow the new crops and are doing so.

But very few farmers have the knowledge, the spare money and the will to defy local public opinion and start experimenting with new farming methods on their own. Agricultural officers should help them, but in the past farmers have sometimes been given advice that would have been excellent for an English farm but not for Nigeria.* Very often bad or irrelevant advice is not the fault of the man who gives it. Nobody knows in many districts what the local farmers want; what fertilisers they will be able to use easily; what new foods they and their families will enjoy and will fill the gaps in their diet, what new methods of farming will fit into the farmer's calendar and into the traditions of the village. There is a great need in Nigeria

*I heard of a case in Ghana, not in Nigeria, where snails were the most popular local delicacy. People would have welcomed a bigger and better breed of snail, but they were entirely uninterested—and the country was entirely unsuited—to the official attempt to get them to breed bigger Berkshire pigs.

for research into exactly what are the conditions and difficulties of ordinary farm families, but it is research which means joint work, actually in the villages, by agricultural experts, sociologists and doctors. This is already being done on a small scale in the Western Region, but it needs to be done on a large scale all over Nigeria.

The people who find it easiest to adopt new methods of farming are farmers and plantation managers on land used for growing cash crops, particularly cocoa in the west and oil palm and rubber trees in the east. Among the western Yorubas, land used for new crops like cocoa is not considered to be tribal property in the same way as land used for food crops; and so the farmer does not suffer the same traditional restraints on buying new land or using new methods of farming. This has helped some Yorubas (working either as individuals or in co-operatives) to build up sizeable cocoa plantations, and generally the bigger their plantation the better the farming: the profits on successful plantations are often invested in planting new cocoa bushes.

In the east, some of the new plantations set up in the last few years are partly owned by western businesses and others are wholly or partly financed by the British Colonial Development Corporation or by the Eastern Region Production Board. The people working on these plantations are well paid by local standards, and they and their families do better in housing, health care and education than small farmers outside the plantations. There is an obvious contrast between the plantations' weeded rows of neatly planted trees and the overgrown surrounding small farms; and, on these small farms, what rubber and oil families do get from their one or two trees is often wastefully and dirtily processed.

Economists are now suggesting that setting up more

plantations, both Nigerian and foreign owned, would be one way of raising Nigerian standards of living and productivity. Foreign owned plantations in particular bring money and much needed technical skill into the country. But one of the difficulties of setting up a new plantation in Nigeria that is wholly or partly financed from abroad, is that the land laws lay down conditions and carefully limit the amount of land which may be sold or leased to foreigners. The point of these laws was to stop local farmers losing their traditional lands to white settlers. But if local farmers are to gain a proper living from their traditional lands, they may have temporarily to surrender some of them. An independent Nigerian government would be able to impose what terms they wanted on plantation owners . . . no white settlement for instance, a proportion of Nigerian managers, and a proportion of profits to be ploughed back into the Nigerian countryside. The balance the Nigerian minister would have to strike would be between this kind of conditions and making Nigerian farming sufficiently attractive (perhaps by tax concessions) to encourage European businessmen to invest in it.

Trade

I did not realise just how many people are traders in Nigeria until I went to call on a junior government minister in Lagos. The junior minister had a large elegant house separated from the street by high walls. There was a front garden that had once had a carefully pampered green lawn, a fountain and some flower beds. The flowers however had gone, and over the remains of the lawn and round the edge of the fountain were squatting the cousins, aunts and female dependents of the minister selling matches, cigarettes, kola nuts, chewing gum and socks.

Some of these ladies were quite well off I was told, but they were trading with their housekeeping allowances to earn pin money.

Somebody from every family trades in Nigeria, and in some towns like Onitsha (the great market in east Nigeria) probably nearly everybody of walking age is a trader. What they do varies from men with big stalls in the enormous local market to small girls selling sweets from a tray balanced on their heads: the favourite boast of most of the big market women, whose monthly turnover may run into four figures, is that they started with a few pennyworth of goods sold from a 'head tray'. In most towns in south Nigeria the majority of small traders are women because, as I was told, women naturally drive the hardest bargains; and in the old days men were afraid to walk far from their villages carrying trade goods: their tribal enemies would attack other men but not women.

Western goods first came into Nigeria as the imports mostly of big foreign owned firms run by Europeans or Levantines (Lebanese or Syrians). The biggest foreign firm of all in Nigeria, with a giant's share of the import trade, is the United Africa Company, now a subsidiary of Lever Brothers. In Lagos the United Africa Company shop is one of the most fashionable social centres of the town.* But big shops like this only sell goods in the amounts that are usual in Europe: cigarettes by the packet, matches by the box, sugar by the carton. The demand of most Nigerian customers is however for smaller quantities—a single cigarette, three cubes of sugar at a half-

*But during two days, while I was in Lagos, just after the shop put in a new moving staircase, its normally tidy and prosperous shoppers were swept aside each morning by a flood of ragged children and barefoot women from local stalls determined to try out the novelty.

penny, or ten matches. This means that outside most of the big stores, in the markets, and on the doorsteps of suburban houses in Lagos you see women with their stock in trade laid out in front of them: two or three boxes of matches, or a carton of sugar being sold off in tiny lots. Sometimes these women make a small profit by selling, say their lumps of sugar, at slightly more per lump than they would cost if they were bought in the carton; sometimes they make their profit out of the containers. Kerosene tins, used for suitcases or the rural transport of palm oil or water, are worth one shilling and sixpence in the Nigerian countryside. Flour bags are made up into shirts; cigarette tins are used as inner boilers in Nigerian cooking pots, or as kitchen measures, and they can also be turned into small lamps.

The export trade used to be organised in exactly the same way as the import trade, only in reverse. Small traders bought from the farmers, sold very small quantities to the larger traders, and so on up to the big export firms of which again the biggest was the United Africa Company. But since the war there has been a change at the top of the export trade in the most important crops: cocoa, palm oil, ground-nuts and cotton. The big private export firms have been replaced by publicly appointed marketing boards. The boards use the big firms as agents, pay the farmers a fixed price for their crops, and sell them, generally at a considerable profit, in the world market. Marketing board officials boast that there are no longer disheartening day-to-day fluctuations in the prices paid to farmers. Another less publicised argument for the boards is that until recently no Nigerians paid any substantial income taxes, and it was and is still very difficult to collect any tax from anybody³ except officials and businessmen with regular salaries. The marketing boards,

it is said, are an easy way of taxing some of the most prosperous people in the country.

All the same, the marketing boards are a form of tax on only one group of people. Many town traders for instance still find it easy to evade paying any direct taxes. But farmers growing export crops sometimes get only half of what their crops are really worth. The money kept from them by the boards is used for financing other public projects, like a new university or a new factory, and these institutions benefit other citizens as well as the farmers whose money is being used.

Industrial Possibilities

Everywhere I went in Nigeria I met Nigerians who insisted on showing me every sign of industrial development down to the very smallest, two-men-and-a-boy local workshop, and they told me that Nigeria was rapidly becoming an industrial country. This is undoubtedly what many Nigerians would like to happen. Some of them see industrialisation as an essential part of Nigeria's development as an independent country. Non-industrial, agricultural countries are automatically classified, according to this line of reasoning, as colonial, backward and exploited. Other Nigerians hope that industrialisation offers a solution to Nigeria's poverty, the half-time unemployment of many farmers, and the total unemployment of men who are living entirely on their family's charity.

Economists differ about how much industrialisation they think Nigeria should aim at. It has been said that Nigeria would do better to increase her production of tropical agricultural crops rather than try to produce manufactured goods. But some industrialisation could well be combined with agricultural development, as it already has

been in the Western Region of Nigeria. Ibadan, the Western Region's capital, has a new industrial estate, and there are a growing number of efficiently run cocoa plantations in the surrounding country.

At present however, in spite of the assertions of hopeful Nigerians, there are only a handful of factories in Nigeria. Most of them process Nigeria's agricultural products: timber at the sawmills and plywood factory at Sapele in the Niger Delta, oil mills in the east for palm fruit pressing, and cotton mills in the north. New factories are mostly planned to use local products to satisfy common Nigerian needs: soap from local oils, for instance.

One of the difficulties facing industrialists in Nigeria is the present shortage of skilled workmen, accountants and managers for new enterprises. There are, anyway, too few educated men and women in Nigeria, and school and university graduates generally prefer government jobs or the professions to industry. Many of them are afraid that in a factory they would have to work with their hands and be despised by their families for wasting their education.

A second problem is paying for industrialisation. At present capital is so short in Nigeria that ordinary Nigerians who can raise money can turn it over quicker by lending to individuals than by ordinary business investment. In the Yoruba country the standard rate of interest on money lent is sixpence on a pound from one market to another. (There are generally about five days between markets.)

Much of Nigeria's industry and business has, up to now, been financed from abroad . . . particularly from Britain. Nigerian nationalists have complained that British firms take money out of the country that has been earned by Nigerian work and produce; but these firms are useful to Nigeria because they have business knowledge,

skilled staff and the connections necessary to raise further capital for investment in Nigeria. Possibly some of the Nigerian objections to foreign firms could be met if there was more Nigerian investment, public and private, in them. There are already several business enterprises jointly owned by foreign and Nigerian capital, generally Nigerian government capital or marketing board surpluses. Big plans for Nigerian industrialisation would however need foreign investment and technical help on a much larger scale than the present. An American trade mission that visited Nigeria in 1959 was greeted enthusiastically in the Nigerian newspapers as 'dollar missionaries', and there have been recent Nigerian negotiations with Germany, and international organizations, particularly the World Bank, as well as Britain. As with the foreign financed plantations the Nigerian government's problem will be to keep control of new industrial investment while making proper use of foreign skill and money and continuing to attract new investors.

One of the difficulties I heard Lagos representatives of big foreign firms and official funds complain of was that Nigerian ministers and departments asked for money for 'general development', instead of producing detailed plans of particular projects. Both Nigerian officials and foreign businessmen have however been encouraged by the successful planning of the large new railway in Bornu which will be paid for by a ten million pound loan from the World Bank guaranteed by Britain.

The most likely big new industrial centres in Nigeria are Lagos, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt. These towns already have some industry, they are road and rail centres, and Lagos and Port Harcourt are ports. Port Harcourt is particularly important potentially because Shell—B.P. have found oil in commercial quantities in the surrounding

country. By the summer of 1960 it is expected that these Nigerian wells will produce 60,000 barrels of oil a day. This oil could be used for industrial development, and it is one of the few obvious sources of power in Nigeria.

Other areas could well become important as industrial investment in Nigeria increases. Kaduna, the northern capital, already has a large cotton mill, and the Sardauna of Sokoto, the then Prime Minister of the Northern Region, himself wrote the review of northern industrial development for a supplement of *The Times*. But Kaduna is at present poorly connected with the ports and with the surrounding country.

Poor transport is a problem all through Nigeria. The existing railway system is unlikely to grow much further once the Bornu extension is finished, as roads are generally cheaper to use and build. For many villages what is needed are small 'feeder' roads to connect them to the main transport system. Everything they need and produce at present has to come into or go out of the village loaded onto bicycles (the 'steel horses' of south Nigeria) and wheeled down narrow bush paths, or balanced in the traditional way on the heads of professional carriers or women going to and from markets.

Apart from roads another obvious and neglected transport system for some of the potentially most fertile districts in Nigeria is the Niger-Benue River system. In the past, silted up stretches, sandbars and shifting channels stopped the rivers being as much used as they could have been, but recently Dutch engineers have been trying to open up new stretches of the Benue and to make the river navigable during the dry as well as the wet season. If these engineers are successful, the production and the prosperity of these thousands of villages near the rivers will be enormously increased.

IV

POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

Nationalists in Two New Countries

In October 1960 Nigeria will become independent—thirteen years after India became the first Commonwealth Dominion of peoples not of European descent. Independence so far has come to Nigeria more easily than to India. The particular Nigerian contribution to the history of national struggles for independence has been the capacity her leaders have shown to accept political realities, compromise when necessary and avoid civil war. But just because of these qualities (signs of political maturity which many Englishmen would claim as particularly English rather than West African) the Nigerian history of independence does lack some of the romantic appeal of the much longer struggle in India. Instead of 'the prison graduates' of India (and of Ghana) only one of the present Nigerian political leaders of the first rank has been arrested, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, and even he was not finally imprisoned. There is an almost embarrassing shortage of modern political martyrs.

Because the British gave ground so quickly before the demands of the nationalists there has been no need to develop particularly Nigerian ideas or methods of fighting for independence, or even to use many of the new ideas and methods evolved in India. Most of the Nigerian political leaders have in their time paid lip service to the

ideal of non-violence, but their followers tend to find it a rather pallid doctrine.)

All the same, there do seem to be certain basic conditions for the success of modern nationalism in a colony which are shared by Nigeria and India. One of these conditions is the emergence of an educated middle class and the growth of towns where they live. Without the backing and control of an urban middle class, nationalism in Africa can take the form of Kenya Mau Mau—primitive terrorism mixed up with magic. Nigerian leaders have always been anxious to point out that their nationalist movement is influenced by the west, particularly, they often say, by America, and has nothing primitive about it. As in India, most of these nationalist leaders in Nigeria started life as lawyers, junior civil servants, journalists or schoolteachers. They were sometimes backed by money from local traders, but most business men, in both India and Nigeria, have waited cautiously to see how their profits would be affected before committing themselves firmly to one side or another.

The early missionaries to both Nigeria and India would have been horrified by their responsibility for the countries' later independence. Missionaries at the beginning of this century talked about several hundred years of benevolent imperial rule being necessary for all African peoples. But nearly every mission built schools, and until very recently these schools were the only ones in southern Nigeria. In them, missionaries taught the virtues of democracy, and encouraged their students to read English seventeenth-century history, and the works of Shelley and John Stuart Mill. Nigerian students added to these foreign revolutionary doctrines their own version of Nigerian history with its roll of men considered to be fighters for Nigerian freedom. Two of the most important were King Jaja of Opobo, the Calabar ex-slave who rose to become

a trading rival to British merchants and was deported from his town by trickery, and King Kosoko of Lagos, another chief deported by the British and replaced by a nominated stooge.

Many of these mission-educated schoolboys found it very difficult to get what they considered to be suitable employment. Young Nigerians, aware of the difficulties they and their families had surmounted in sending them to a mission school for a few years, were not going to return to the old village life. But there were few openings in the towns for men with only the arrogance of the barely literate in a generally illiterate country, and an education, which had taught them to read and write shaky English, and do little else. Discontented, unemployed 'Standard Six Boys', who had graduated from a primary school, blamed the British for their personal failures, and joined the new nationalist parties. Nigerian students with technical qualifications would have found it easier to get work, but there were, and are, too few technical schools, and they lacked the prestige of schools providing a literary 'English' education.

In their schools and outside them missionaries made more converts in Nigeria than they had in India, but at the cost of very many deaths among British missionaries and their wives. The churches needed and trained African recruits, and African congregations generally preferred African clergymen because they were tolerant of African customs and particularly of polygamy. Several completely independent African churches were founded which were important to the nationalist movement because they trained future African leaders and sometimes because they directly encouraged nationalism. The National Church of Nigeria and the Cameroons had prayers to the God of Africa, hymns to freedom, and a litany asking for deli-

verance from imperialism. God, in this Church, was represented as a black man, the devil was white.

Nigerians have been quicker than Indians to learn how to form and run societies for mutual aid in the new conditions of the towns, and these groups, like the African churches, have helped to build up national self-confidence and train political leaders. Nearly every townsman in Nigeria keeps his link with the country by joining a tribal union—much the biggest is the Ibo State Union—and this union generally organises evening classes and political lectures as well as providing some welfare services. None of the trade unions proper have the power and membership of the Ibo State Union, but they did run a successful strike in 1945 which immensely stimulated the nationalist cause; the younger trade union leaders were valuable recruits to national politics.

New younger leaders were particularly important to the political parties after the last war because so many of the older leaders were tainted by what Dr. Azikwe, the most noted nationalist of all, called 'a hat-in-hand Uncle Tomism'. They had been too ready to compromise with the British in the old days and accept British organised institutions condemned by the new generation of Nigerian nationalists. Today a relatively high proportion of Nigerian politicians are in their late twenties and thirties: younger men on the average than the political leaders of newly independent India.

They were men however who were nourished, in Nigeria and in India, on much the same type of political grievances. In both countries many nationalists have resented the exclusive British hold on the top ranks of the civil service, and in both countries nationalists have attacked what they considered was the economic exploitation of their country in the interests of Britain. Aggrava-

ting other grievances in both India and Africa were suspicions of British motives and the existence of an open or disguised colour bar. Educated Africans like educated Indians before them were laughed at for wearing English clothes wrongly, or using English slang that was slightly out of date. An even more exasperating attitude of superior patronage is reflected in the instructions given to British troops who were stationed in West Africa in the last war. A passage, of course soon widely publicised among Nigerians, read: 'In all contact with the natives let your first thought be the preservation of your own dignity . . . The British are looked up to, put on a very high level. Don't bring that level down by undue familiarity.'

Indirect Rule

Nowhere in the British Empire did nationalism at first make sense to the local British officials. In India, in the Far East and in Africa officials have protested that the people who were asking to rule themselves were not 'the real people'. In Nigeria, early nationalists were at first dismissed as city men who had lost all contact with their 'real' country, and who wanted to impose an alien ideal of all-Nigerian patriotism.

It was not that there was ever any permanent intention of continued British rule in any part of West Africa, and the climate and general conditions were against white settlers.* But British officials remembered that Nigeria was a purely artificial union for administrative purposes of the Crown Colony of Lagos and the very different Northern and Southern Protectorates. The people to whom they had at first expected to hand over power were

*'The mosquito has been the greatest friend of the Nigerian people,' said Dr. Azikwe, thinking of malaria.

not Lagos politicians, but the traditional chiefs, the people they looked on as 'the real' authorities of the country.

The traditional position of these chiefs had been strengthened by the British practice of indirect rule. In both Africa and Asia, indirect rule through local potentates⁷ has been the particularly British contribution to the theory of modern empire. The British had already tried to rule through the local princes in parts of India; but it was in Nigeria that, for the first time, indirect rule became the dominant theory of government. It is a particularly good theory for those who are not entirely convinced of the virtue of their own position. The French, who have seldom doubted the universal improvement that there would be if the world was universally French, can afford to impose French administrative practice, French petty officials and entirely French education, on the people they rule. The British, whose favourite Colonial people are always the most primitive and the least like themselves, hanker slightly after the golden age they sometimes fear they have destroyed. Typically, they have doubts about the legality of their position and some sympathy for the rulers they have displaced. Indirect rule seems an ideal halfway house. Civil servants will safeguard British interests and end barbaric customs; while, it is hoped, local rulers ensure the continuity and the development of the best side of local life and traditions. The British, wrote Lord Lugard, the first governor of united Nigeria, in his book *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, were in Africa for two reasons: trade and altruism. Only by ruling through African rulers could these two reasons be reconciled, and Africans helped to advance without a damaging break with their traditions and backgrounds.

Unfortunately indirect rule seldom works out so well in practice as it does in theory. The wrong local potentates

are foisted on credulous foreign officials, traditional safeguards against their abuse of power are not understood, conscientious civil servants, appalled by alien customs, particularly over women and money, interfere increasingly in the affairs of native states. And indirect rule is expensive; the price of the local ruler's court rises as the women of the harem demand bathrooms and lipsticks, the sons are sent to English public schools, and the ruler himself discovers the pleasures of British racing and French yachting. In the end the local people denounce the system as a British trick to prop up local tyranny and suppress new men. Finally, when the British go, indirect rule is one of the most awkward of the legacies they leave behind them. In India what happens to the Princes, in Malaya to the Sultans, in Nigeria to the northern Emirs and the western Chiefs?

In Nigeria, indirect rule had the best chance of working in the north, and even today 'government' to most ordinary northerners means the emir and his officers. All that the British had to do was to attach a resident to the emir's Courts to check really gross excesses, to simplify the old tax system and to see that part of the area's taxes went to the central treasury to provide for services like the railways. But the difficulty about northern indirect rule is that the character of the government depends on the individual emir. Nearly all the emirs follow tradition by appointing their relations to administrative posts under them, and ordinary farmers may be afraid to complain to the emir about his family. Recently the Emir of Kano dismissed his son from his post as district head after complaints had been made about him, but not all emirs are so conscientious. The Emirs' Councils have been widened, in the last few years, to include men chosen or elected from outside the traditional Fulani ruling class, but there are not

enough of them to enable them to control a bad or stupid emir.

In south Nigeria, indirect rule worked less smoothly than it did in the north. In the west, there were great traditional chiefs like the Alafin of Oyo whom the British recognised, but without recognising the traditional restraints on them. As the west's leading politician, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, pointed out, western chiefs had not been dictators, and councils had controlled most of their actions. Besides, Awolowo points out in an early book he wrote, *The Path to Nigerian Freedom*, the wrong candidates to minor chieftaincies were often appointed by the British, and members of chiefly families who were illiterate or who had been dismissed from other jobs for corruption or misconduct were still given posts in the native administration.

In the east, indirect rule never worked properly. There had never been big traditional chieftaincies there, and the old society had been broken up first by the slave trade and then by the European penetration of the country. Finally the British gave up the attempt to find out who were the traditional authorities in the east, and Warrant Chiefs, holding office by virtue of their British warrants, were appointed. They were unpopular because people did not recognise them as the real rulers, and because they imposed the first direct regular taxes most easterners had ever paid.

In 1950, the basic idea of indirect rule was abandoned in the east, and a modified version of English local government was introduced there. But the elected local councils still suffer, as the local authorities do all over Nigeria, from the very great differences in size, and so in their revenues and powers of government. Awolowo quotes the instance of the 94 authorities of the eastern region dividing

between them a total revenue of £250,000, compared to the 63 authorities in the much larger north dividing between them a revenue of £1,239,808.

Educated south Nigerians have generally been very critical of indirect rule. Most of the traditional rulers were not prepared to introduce the kind of reforms educated Africans thought were essential if their country was to be modern and independent. Moreover, the educated men saw that they were excluded from local government because they were not the traditional authorities, and excluded from the central government and the central civil service because the central government, according to British theory (as expressed by a leading scholar, Dr. Margery Perham), was 'a temporary scaffolding' with no place on it for the permanent inhabitants of the country. If Africans were allowed to share in the central government, the official fear was that central parliaments might then become more important than the traditional rulers. In fact this fear, at any rate in South Nigeria, has been fulfilled. It is the elected members of the central and regional governments of Nigeria who are most important today, but the traditional authorities even in the east are still not powerless. The problem that indirect rule has bequeathed to independent Nigeria is how to weave the powers and prestige of the rulers into a pattern of modern local government.

The Rise of Nationalism and Dr. Azikwe

However much British theory favoured small independent states, there had in fact from 1914 onwards to be central institutions covering the whole of Nigeria. It would have been expensive and inefficient to have separate, specialised civil service departments for, say, transport

and health in every different native authority. Moreover, the towns were growing fast and among their populations were more and more educated men who had left their tribal country and the authority of their tribal chiefs. These men increasingly thought of themselves as Nigerians first, and Yorubas, Ibos, or Hausas second.

The 1939-1945 war quickened the spread of nationalism in Nigeria. Nigerian servicemen saw the world, and came back and told their villages about the new idea of democracy and self-government they had heard discussed. By the end of the war, independence was obviously near for several British colonies in Asia. In Britain itself, the war had seen a change in old attitudes. New men at the Colonial Office realised that the colonies were going to want to become really independent western type nations, strong enough to make themselves felt in the post-war world, and not go back to small, easily dominated tribal groups. The Nigerian constitution produced at the end of the war was a compromise between these new views, and the old theory that the powers of the traditional native authorities must be protected and that Nigeria was not really a united nation.

The constitution was called after Sir Arthur Richards, the then Governor, and it divided the country into three regions: they were the East, West, and North: the Northern Region being bigger than both the East and West put together. Members of the new regional Houses had powers to debate and pass budgets and they were chosen by the existing native authorities in some of the most complicated election procedures ever invented. The members of each regional House then chose five members to send to a central house, with very limited powers, sitting in Lagos. The established government was protected by central and regional governors' vetoes, and by majorities of chiefs,

European members, and official members sitting in all houses.

The main opponent of this constitution, on the grounds that it did not go far enough to help forward Nigerian independence and unity, was Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, backed by his party the National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons. Dr. Azikwe, 'Zik' as he is generally called, has been the most outstanding political personality in Nigeria for twenty years. In any random group of Nigerians there will be men who call Zik a self-sacrificing saint in the cause of African freedom, a brazen and corrupt hypocrite, or the most practical politician in the country. After these highly coloured descriptions, the first impression Zik, as a person, makes on most visitors is almost disappointingly mild: a handsome quiet, modest-spoken man, devoted to his wife and family, and fond of listening to western classical music.

Azikwe's family were Ibos from East Nigeria, but he himself was born in the north in 1904. His father was an army clerk who resigned after he had been insulted by young British officers. Azikwe was educated at mission schools, and one of his school prizes, his followers say, was a life of President Garfield, *From Log Cabin to White House*. Azikwe then worked as a clerk in Lagos until his own and his father's savings were enough to pay his fare to America where he took degrees and a doctorate at the negro universities of Storer, Lincoln and Howard, and then at Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania. Journalists have suggested that his often expressed sympathy for the underdogs of modern society was fostered by the jobs he did in the college vacations to keep himself in America. He worked as a dishwasher, coalminer and boxer, suffered miserably from cold and hunger, and met racial discrimination in the southern states. But Azikwe

himself now speaks rosily of his stay in America, and is apparently convinced that many American institutions and the American system of education are better models for Nigeria than anything Britain offers.

Meanwhile Azikwe's bitterness at the racially inspired British insults to his father was added to by what he saw of the workings of race prejudice in the American south, and by the refusal of the British Amateur Athletic Association to allow him to run as a Nigerian in the Empire Games of 1934. This was a slight that apparently rankled more than the refusal of King's College, Lagos (the best Nigerian secondary school), to accept him in spite of his qualifications, as a teacher.

Instead of teaching, Azikwe turned to journalism, at first on the Gold Coast, the modern Ghana, where he was once arrested for sedition although his prison sentence was quashed on appeal. Back in Nigeria, he became the owner of a country-wide chain of newspapers, of which the most important is the *West African Pilot* published in Lagos. These newspapers were all valuable instruments in his political campaigns, and adopted the forceful insults, the elaborate nineteenth-century language, and the learned references to Hobbes, Aristotle and John Stuart Mill which are accepted journalese over most of West Africa. Meanwhile, Azikwe also made a personal fortune as a businessman, mostly by investing in and managing African transport and commercial firms. His nominal capital has been estimated as half-a-million pounds invested in 12 concerns in all of which he has a controlling interest.

Azikwe's first political party was also the first party joined by most of the men who are now middle-aged leaders of the Nigerian professions and of every brand of politics. It was the Nigerian Youth Movement, an old party rejuvenated by Azikwe, which in 1938 was esti-

mated to have 10,000 members. The party decayed during the war when Azikwe turned his attention to the Nigerian Reconstruction Group, founded originally as a Fabian Society to study Nigerian problems. In 1944 this Nigerian Reconstruction Group was incorporated into the party Azikwe now heads, the N.C.N.C. In the publications of the new party, the socialist leanings of the Reconstruction Group were repeated, but mostly as a background of general sympathy with the poor rather than as detailed plans for nationalisation or methods of paying for a welfare state.

Azikwe himself was the point of union for the whole party, and most of the members idolised him. One of them published a popular life of Azikwe in cartoons showing the main stages in his career: 'The Young Soldier of Africa' being girded for battle by 'The U.S. Educator'; 'The Black St. George' riding to the headquarters of 'Dragon Imperialism'; 'The Socialist', where the cartoon shows a White Imperialist riding on a bridled African Colonial while Zik says: 'Stop this man's-inhumanity-to-man business'; and 'A Hero Immortalised', carrying a banner 'Zikism, the Cult of Universal Brotherhood'. The book ends in capital letters 'MAY LONG LIVE OUR GREAT AND NOBLE ZIK'.

Part of Zik's personal appeal lies in his oratory, which is ornate by modern western standards, but brings African crowds to the verge of hysteria. 'Though I have eaten the sweet mango of business success,' goes an often quoted passage in one of his speeches, 'and the delicious orange of popularity among my own people, yet am I one of the rebellious sons of Africa because my people have been made to suffer the pangs of bitterness.' Young Nigerians today know whole speeches of Azikwe's by heart, and they find his life, particularly as it is drawn by faithful

members of the N.C.N.C., an inspiring example. Azikwe is a successful Ibo, from a tribe which took comparatively late to western education, decades after the Yorubas of the west and the coastal Efiks in the east. He comes from a lower middle class family, not one of the hereditary aristocracy, and he was a success while he was still a young man—in spite of white prejudice against him.

Just after the war, Azikwe enormously, if temporarily, increased his popularity when he claimed that he was about to be assassinated, and sent telegrams of appeal all round the world. At the time, the Nigerian Government's protests that the Nigerian police had been given no details of the assassination plot were mostly ignored in Nigeria, or dismissed as government propaganda. Then, as the most popular leader Nigeria had yet produced, Azikwe in 1946 organised nation-wide meetings of protest against the Richards Constitution. At these meetings £13,000 was raised to send Azikwe himself and some of his supporters to London. But the then Colonial Secretary refused to alter the Richards Constitution, and, not unnaturally, there were questions in Nigeria, even among some N.C.N.C. supporters, about whether it had really been worth sending a delegation all the way to London to receive nothing but a snub.

The Action Group and Chief Awolowo

By 1950, the nationalists and the British were getting on better than ever before. There was growing British recognition that the nationalists were patriotic men working for a respect-worthy ideal, and a new, more popular Governor, Sir John Macpherson, agreed to the revision of the Richards Constitution.

In the new Constitutions of 1951, 1954 and 1957 the

three Regions of the East, West and North became better established and relatively more powerful compared to the centre. By the summer of 1959, all three Regions were self-governing in internal matters, and Nigerian ministers fully controlled their senior civil servants of whatever nationality. Lagos was the federal capital, and a federal government had limited powers over a few central services.

In the country, Azikwe had lost his old position as the universally acknowledged spokesman for nationalists all over Nigeria. 'The Black Traitors', as an N.C.N.C. member called them, had set up two important rival parties to the N.C.N.C., the Action Group in the west and the Northern People's Congress in the north. Both in the west and in the north, people were afraid that, in spite of Azikwe's disclaimers, the N.C.N.C. was an Ibo party. The party was most powerful among the Ibos in East Nigeria, and Ibo ambition combined with their educational and business success were making the tribe generally feared among the less forceful peoples.

Azikwe himself was less popular than he had been. There were questions not only about the £13,000 collected for his delegation's journey to London and, after the first excitement had died down, about his allegation of an assassination plot aimed at him, but also later in 1956 about his part in the African Continental Bank. When he was inaugurated as Prime Minister of the Eastern Region in 1954, his speech had been on 'Rectitude in Public Life', and it was particularly unfortunate that two years later the Commission appointed to investigate the affairs of the African Continental Bank should have characterised his conduct as an adviser and interested party in the bank as 'short of the expectation of honest and reasonable people'. However within the N.C.N.C. and among the great majority of the Ibo people, nothing could shake Azikwe's

position. A few educated Ibos declared that they could no longer trust him, but he was still powerful enough to ensure that critics within the party were promptly expelled.

In the west, however, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was building up a new, mainly Yoruba party, the Action Group. Compared to Azikwe, Awolowo is a much less colourful figure with fewer stories, creditable or discreditable, told about him. Senior civil servants find him, as a Minister and Prime Minister, an excellent and considerate superior, and in Lagos popular rumour credits him with never having taken a bribe or acted politically in his family's material interests (which is not universal in Nigerian politics). He is a Methodist, a regular churchgoer, and does not drink or smoke. He is married, with a young family, and Mrs. Awolowo is a noted cloth trader in Yoruba country.

In spite of his title, Awolowo comes from a comparatively poor Yoruba family. He was born in 1909 in the township of Ikanme in the south-west. His father died while he was still a young schoolboy at the local mission school, and Awolowo worked to support his family, sometimes by cutting wood and selling it himself in the market. At 16 he had saved enough to become a full time scholar again, at the Methodist school at Abeokuta, and the next year he went to another Methodist college to train as a schoolteacher.

While he was teaching, the young Awolowo also taught himself shorthand and typing, and passed his London University degree examination as a Bachelor of Commerce. By 1944 he had saved enough to take him to London to study for the bar. He lived in West Hampstead lodgings, and his only London relaxation was politics. He worked with the Fabian Bureau on African Affairs, and helped fight an election campaign for the British politician he most admired—Sir Stafford Cripps.

Long before his student days in London, Awolowo had entered Nigerian politics by joining the Ibadan section of Azikwe's Youth Party. While the rest of the Youth Party died of neglect during the war, Awolowo and his friends kept the Ibadan group going. Members of it joined the new group of Yorubas Awolowo had first brought together in London to form the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, the Society of the Sons of Oduduwa, the Yoruba legendary hero. It started as a cultural and educational society and was expanded in 1948 to include the protection of the Yoruba way of life, the western system of chiefs, and 'to accelerate the emergence of a virile, modernised and efficient Yoruba state' (so the society's Constitution said) 'with its own individuality within the federal state of Nigeria.'

In 1952, the society became the nucleus for a new political party the Action Group. It quickly became as powerful in the west as the N.C.N.C. was in the east, although both parties had supporters in the others' territory. The Action Group's constitution was typical of Awolowo's and his followers' reaction from the strongly personal leadership of Azikwe and his somewhat vague, if noble sounding, descriptions of party policies. There is a committee leadership of the Action Group, and its policies are outlined in carefully drawn up pamphlets containing articles written not only by Awolowo but also by other members of the party. All the same, in spite of the generally calmer party atmosphere very violent newspaper articles and pamphlets were written for the Action Group in the years following its foundation. Awolowo's Ibadan and Lagos newspapers denounced Azikwe in the same eighteenth-century terms Azikwe's editors used against Awolowo, and at the height of the press war both leaders had libel suits pending against each other,

The North

In the north, neither Yoruba nor Ibo political parties were popular, partly because they were foreign and partly because the northern administrators took a long time convincing themselves that they needed to have any dealings with politics at all. The conditions which had caused nationalism and the spread of political feeling in the south were mostly absent in the very different atmosphere of the north. In particular there was no northern middle class, half-educated and sometimes unemployed. This was because, when the British first entered the north, Lord Lugard promised the northern emirs that missionaries, and the Christian schools they set up, would not be forced into northern territory. So even today only one child in a thousand in the north goes to a western type school, and the children who are educated generally belong to the princely families.

Politics were for a long time dismissed as a pagan affair—an attempt by the despised southerners to get rid of all proper government. For all ordinary northerners it is anyway more difficult and more dangerous to express political discontent than it is in the south. It is a crime punishable by flogging or imprisonment to criticise the emir or his Government, and political meetings need the emir's permission.

The colour bar and English rudeness to Africans which roused so much nationalist feeling in the south was less marked in the north. There are fewer Englishmen and Englishwomen about there anyway, and they often genuinely respect the northerners with their warrior tradition and elaborate court ritual. It is very like the fondness of many English civil servants in the old imperial India for Moslems (particularly from the princely states) rather

than for the less romantic, more educated and politically conscious Hindus from Calcutta.

The first political stirrings in the north were gentle. In 1943, a very moderate General Improvement Union was founded at Bauchi. It soon died, but not before several of the north's future leaders had had their first taste of political discussion. In 1947, one of these men, Mallam Aminu Kano, one of the few northerners who had been educated abroad in England, founded the Northern People's Congress. But in 1950, he, with a group of others, decided that the N.P.C. had become too conservative and too much on the side of the emirs, and they left it to found the Northern Elements Progressive Union, a party aimed at fighting for more northern democracy. In 1951, conservative nationalists and the Fulani aristocracy saw to their joint alarm that the N.E.P.U. was doing well in the Kano elections, and the N.P.C. was revived as a rival to northern radicalism.

The new leader of the Northern People's Congress was Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna* (the chief political adviser) of Sokoto. The *Sardauna* is a Fulani aristocrat, the great-great-grandson of the crusading founder of the Fulani Empire, Usman Dan Fodio. His town of Sokoto was the chief city of the Fulani Empire and is still generally considered by Moslem northerners to be a holy city. The *Sardauna* himself has been on pilgrimage to Mecca, and is said to be devout Moslem. Personally he is tall, with clear cut Fulani features, a cricketer and, to many English people, exactly what they think of as a typically exotic, foreign nobleman. The *Sardauna* always wears white, flowing Moslem robes, and he has both the suave manners, and the capacity to be curtly rude of an accomplished diplomat.

He was born in Sokoto in 1910, and educated at the

Sokoto provincial school and then at the Katsina Teachers' Training College. This college is the highest educational institution in the north, and the majority of northern politicians have graduated from it. Ahmadu Bello taught for a few years, and then worked as a district head in the administration of his relative, the Sultan. In 1938, he was appointed Saradauna, and in 1944 he became the chief secretary of Sokoto Native Administration. He is generally acknowledged to have been a hardworking and competent administrator, and when he decided to turn to politics he had had more than 15 years of practical administrative experience. Unlike either Azikwe or Awo-owo he knows, from his own experience, how administrators translate political edicts into everyday life, and how government actually works. This knowledge has helped him, it is said, both to hold power in the north, and to bargain for northern interests with the south.

Since he became the Prime Minister of the Northern Region, the Saradauna's main interests have been the development of northern industry and the education of northerners. He has his own pet scheme for sending north Nigerian schoolboys to British public schools. The Saradauna considers that British public schools will be less likely to make northern boys discontented with life in the north than south Nigerian schools or Ibadan University. In Britain itself the Saradauna is perhaps best known for his retort when a reporter asked him whether the north would let women vote in the forthcoming Nigerian elections. The Saradauna said: No; but, he added, southern agitation for women's suffrage in the north was anyway misplaced. If northern women voted, he said, the north would never lose an election. In the north, as Moslems, men had four wives, Christians, in the south only one!

The Sardauna himself has three wives, and a family of small children.

Another leader of the Northern People's Congress is theoretically the Sardauna's superior in national politics, the federal Prime Minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Alhaji Abubakar was born in 1912 in Bauchi into a family of the Jere tribe, unrelated to the Fulani aristocracy. He was a contemporary of the Sardaunas at the Katsina training college and like him a cricketer and an athlete. He taught in Bauchi, and was one of the first northerners to be sent to England for further study at the Institute of Education at London University. Of his English stay, the Prime Minister later said, 'I returned to Nigeria with new eyes because I had seen people who lived without fear, who obeyed the law as part of their nature, who knew individual liberty'.

This liking for individual liberty is one of the qualities that distinguishes the Prime Minister from many other northern politicians. When he first became a member of the northern House of Assembly he was looked on as a dangerous man, and he has often, and mostly unsuccessfully, asked for moderate reforms in northern local government, thus putting himself on the left wing of the N.P.C. But, in spite of his position in the Federation, the Prime Minister has nothing like the prestige and the power of the Sardauna in the north itself. I was told that some northerners contemptuously describe him as a 'black man' because his skin is darker than a Fulani's; and when he travels from Lagos to the north the Sardauna does not always bother to meet him at the airport.

In the south, the Prime Minister is universally acknowledged to be an honest, conciliatory and hardworking man. He is a good speaker in the Lagos House of Representatives, where his nickname is 'the Golden Voice of the

North'. British civil servants find him one of the most polite, efficient and sensible of the ministers they work with. His common sense and his integrity strike casual visitors too, but he is not a glamorous figure, and so far he has shown little power of appealing for emotional mass support among ordinary Nigerian people.

Divisions in the Way of Self Government

The main aim of the Northern People's Congress was to stop the north being dominated by the south. At first, northerners believed that continued British rule was their best protection against a future controlled by southerners in Lagos, and an influx into the north of senior southern civil servants and southern politicians. This meant that the north pointedly held back while the southern parties rivalled each other in their demands for early independence: the more conservative Action Group pressed forward to support the dates suggested by the N.C.N.C. as any holding back would have lost them southern supporters.

To try and rouse the northern peasantry against the mainly Fulani leaders of the N.P.C., the Action Group and the N.C.N.C. sent delegates to campaign in the northern cities for self-government. In Kano in 1953, a scheduled Action Group meeting touched off riots in which the city mob swept through the southerners' settlement and 36 people were killed. Some of them had petrol poured over them and were then set alight. Today the Kano riots are remembered in both north and south as a warning of how the north may react to over-great southern pressure.

At the time, the riots had a sobering effect. Both northern and southern politicians realised that they had gone

further than they meant, and that both halves of the country needed each other. The north would have no ports without the south, the south would be a poor, small country without the north. Moreover, the north was comforted politically by the promise of half the seats in the federal house, and the forming of a coalition government under a northern Prime Minister. Finally during 1956, the north agreed to join the east and west in asking for self-government—first scheduled for 1959, and then 1960.

Meanwhile the country and the political parties had again been divided over what was to happen to the minorities within each region: the non-Yorubas in the west, the non-Ibos in the east, and the pagan and Christian peoples in the otherwise Moslem north. These minorities had organised themselves into political parties asking for their own semi-independent regions. In the north the people of the Middle Belt, the southern edge of the northern region, were mostly the remnants of pagan tribes driven southwards by the Fulani slave raiders. Missionaries had not been excluded from their territories, and the Middle Belt has a far higher proportion of educated people and schools than the Moslem north. In the northern administration, southern clerks were being increasingly replaced by Middle Belt men, technically northerners, but very unlike the Moslems from the emirates. These non-Moslems in the north complained of northern autocracy and particularly of the disadvantages they suffered under Moslem law. Many of them wanted as slight a political connection with the Northern Region as possible.

A special group of Middle Belters—Yorubas living just north of the western region borders round the city of Ilorin which had once been part of the Yoruba Empire—asked for a plebiscite about immediate union with the Western Region. In the west itself non-Yorubas, particularly round

Benin, asked for a separate state, and so did the non-Ibos of the Niger delta in the Eastern Region.

Of the regional governments, the N.P.C. in the north was firmly united against any creation of a new middle belt region. Their motto was 'one north, one people,' irrespective of religion, rank or tribe. The two big southern parties hesitated, and counted both principles and the possible national and regional votes to be lost and won. The N.C.N.C. finally came down in favour of leaving the existing regional borders unaltered. The Action Group decided to press for at least three new regions and a plebiscite for the Ilorin people. The official British Minorities Commission reported against the creation of any new regions partly because, even in the new regions, there would be problems concerning people who were minorities within the minorities: Ibos within the mostly Efik town of Calabar for instance. Azikwe and the Sardauna publicly approved of the Commission's report, and Awolowo condemned it as 'a bad and astonishing document'.

This minorities problem was the main difficulty of the Constitutional Conference held in London in 1958. Finally, a compromise settlement was accepted by the Nigerian leaders and the Colonial Office. Nigeria, with its existing regions, was to become independent on October 1st, 1960. To calm minority fears, fundamental democratic rights were to be written into the new Constitution, and there was to be a federal police force as well as regional forces. All the Nigerian leaders agreed that the problem of new regions and the Ilorin plebiscite should be settled after independence.

The Central Government

Is independence going to work in Nigeria? Will the

forms of parliamentary government be overthrown? Will the north, as the northern demagogues once threatened, continue the 'interrupted march to the sea'? What is going to happen to the regions? Will the present regions keep their existing boundaries, and if so what will happen to minority areas within the regions? What will be the future of the southern chiefs and northern emirs? How will life change for ordinary people in Nigeria when their country is independent?

These are the kind of questions which, during 1959 and 1960, were being asked and sometimes very gloomily answered by Nigerians and by English residents in Nigeria. In Lagos, I heard men of both nationalities prophesy corrupt chaos, anarchy and civil war. Some of these gloomy prophecies centred on the elections of 1959 in which the new Lagos House of Representatives, and also the central government for independent Nigeria, were to be elected. These elections, it was said, would mark a preliminary breakdown of law and order. As it turned out, the elections were fought with an eighteenth-century gusto; the federal police and troops stood by in several cities, candidates described each other in terms that would have brought out slander writs in any British election campaign, and local election tactics included the loosing of a head of wild cattle into a crowd gathered to listen to Awoowo and the chopping down of a bridge before Azikwe could cross it on his way to a meeting. But the elections themselves were orderly, a high proportion of those eligible voted, and the honesty of returning officers was testified to by the lack of 100 per cent victories and the occasional return of candidates who were extremely unpopular with local officials.

On the whole, Nigerians voted for those they felt would look after their tribal and regional interests. The Action

Group, the smallest of the three major parties in the new House, did best among the Yorubas of the western region: the N.C.N.C. best among the Ibos of the eastern region; and the N.P.C., which became the biggest single party in the House, best among the Hausa and Fulani Moslems of the north. The non-Moslem Middle Belt people of the north returned several Action Group members and several members of the N.C.N.C. allies, Northern Elements Progressive Union. Similarly the N.C.N.C. did well in non-Yoruba areas of the western region, and the Action Group in non-Ibo areas of the east. With the House of Representatives as it was elected, Alhaji Abubakar, the N.P.C. Prime Minister, can only maintain himself in power by an alliance with one of the two southern parties—his first alliance was with the N.C.N.C. This need of the N.P.C. Government for an alliance with a southern party, if it is to command a majority in the House, is one answer to southern fears of a northern dictatorship.

A second safeguard of parliamentary government and the rights of minority parties is the realisation of every Nigerian statesman that Nigeria has got to be kept together. No region can be discriminated against or interfered with so much that its leaders will feel that secession is preferable to staying in the federation. Nor do the N.P.C. leaders favour a strong central government which might be prone to interfere in regional affairs. Paradoxically, it is the southern opposition, particularly the Action Group, who are likely to press for increased interference by their parliamentary opponents' central government into what are considered to be scandals or ill-government in the regions.

What the northern leaders do however expect from their election victory is an increased share of federal revenue for northern development. In particular, the

Yoruba (and mostly Action Group) farmers of the west, the most prosperous people in Nigeria at present, are likely to have to pay increased direct or indirect taxes, which will be used to build new northern factories, schools and roads. But here again, the need to keep Nigeria together, as well as the economic good sense of preserving the taxable riches she enjoys at present, prevent any penal taxation aimed with gross unfairness at any particular region or tribal group.

The Civil Service

A major problem facing the new central government and the regional governments is the rebuilding of the civil service. The majority of the present British civil servants will retire at Independence or shortly before it. These civil servants have been offered lump compensation sums (known as their 'lumpers') on terms which for a middle-aged man make it far more worth his while to retire to Britain and perhaps try to get another job, while he is still young enough to be considered, than to continue working in Nigeria. In East Nigeria, I talked to a Scot who had been pressed to stay on after Independence, was liked and trusted locally, and would be difficult to replace. He said that he could not afford to let an opportunity slip which would give him a capital sum (around £8,000 in his case) large enough to let him buy a house in Britain and pay his children's school fees. His second reason for retiring, he said, was that he was no longer able to dismiss his subordinates for corruption or gross inefficiency, and he saw dishonesty winked at by men who were senior to him in the Civil Service and Government. He had spent twenty years in Nigeria, and said that he could hardly imagine living anywhere else. He hoped, rather sadly, that

he would become equally devoted to the English county council that was going to employ him.

Nigerians are mostly indignant about the mass retirement of the British civil-servants. The Western Region has said that it will not re-employ, even on a short-term contract, anyone who accepts compensation. It is said that the Colonial Office and the Nigerian Federal Government should never have accepted recommendations for such generous compensation terms. British civil servants are buying their houses and educating their children at the expense of Nigerian taxpayers in one of the world's least well-off countries. But Nigerians also say, with a slight sniff of sour grapes, that British civil servants need not think they are indispensable.

It has always been a nationalist point that the District Officer's clerk, a Nigerian, or one of the junior Nigerian civil servants actually prepared the papers and did much of the work the senior British civil servants were credited with. Moreover, since Sir James Macpherson started the Nigerianisation Board (with Azikwe as one of its first members) in 1948, the accepted Nigerian policy has been not to appoint an Englishman where there is a Nigerian who could do the job, and today there are a number of experienced Nigerian civil servants. These Nigerians have the advantage over the British that they know the conditions of the country, speak local languages and understand local difficulties. Where more senior civil servants are needed, Nigerian politicians now say, more can be promoted or trained, and meanwhile the Nigerian government hopes to recruit civil servants and technicians on short-term contracts, advertising not only in Britain but also in Germany and America.

One advantage of an entirely Nigerian civil service is that it should be cheaper than one made up of expatriates.

British civil servants were highly paid by Nigerian, and indeed by British, standards. They were entitled to six months' leave every two years, and large furnished houses were provided for them. These employment terms now apply equally to Nigerian civil servants of the same rank, but more and more articles in the Nigerian press comment that Nigeria cannot afford and does not need this 'luxury' civil service.

Another advantage Nigerians expect from a knowledgeable, local civil service is that corruption will lessen.* It became a kind of patriotism in some men, Nigerians say, to cheat and disobey British superiors. British civil servants sometimes did not know what went on in the waiting room outside their offices, and recently some of the most notorious jobbery over contracts has been associated with corrupt British civil servants. The old boast that an Englishman's integrity was never doubted in Nigeria is certainly no longer true. But meanwhile many Nigerians have themselves become increasingly critical of corruption. There is a well publicised 'League of Bribe Scorners' in Lagos, and in the country, particularly in the east, men complain vigorously if the bribes asked for rise above the accepted level of what a clerk is expected to take.

What may be as much of a danger to the efficient administration of independent Nigeria as corruption is the difficulty some senior Nigerian officials find in working with their juniors. Ibos, in particular, have a reputation for rudeness not only to the British officials over whom they are placed, but also to their juniors of the same nationality and tribe. I was told several times of men who

*To see a senior official today, there is a regular scale of tips which must be given to the juniors in his office; and even government-employed and British-trained hospital nurses charge a penny each time patients want to use a bedpan.

were shouted at when they made legitimate requests for leave or promotion, or who had been refused their proper travel allowances. Senior Ibo officials, it was said, used their office juniors to run their own, and even their wives' errands, clean their cars, or mind their children. In the north and west senior men treat their juniors better, but the eastern difficulty is said to be that Ibo traditional life is so democratic that Ibos are not used to power, and customary and polite restraints on it. Some of them, at present, are apt to think that the only marks of a powerful man are bullying, and a refusal to do anything for himself that he can order a junior to do for him.

The Regions

What makes most difference to the lives of ordinary people in Nigeria is not what happens to the Central Government, but the future of indirect rule—what happens locally to their regional government and local councils: how democracy and tradition are being fitted together. In the past, elected and traditional authorities and the people they governed were dependent, in fact if not in theory, on the advice given by centrally appointed and generally British civil servants. Local authorities are, however, becoming increasingly more independent and more confident, and local government less subordinate to central planning. Those who feel they have insufficient influence in their local governments are often frightened of what the independent future will be.

The Nigerians who are least happy about the growing independence of regional and local governments are the minority groups who saw their hopes for more clearly separated regions defeated in the general election victory of the Northern People's Congress. This party is pledged

to keep the present regional boundaries of Nigeria unaltered.

In the North itself the non-Moslem Middle Belt people told British members of the Minorities Commission that they were afraid that after independence the few democratic experiments that had been started in the north would stop, and the powers of the emirs and the Moslem courts would grow. At the time, Moslem courts in the north could not legally accept a pagan, a Christian, or a woman's testimony as equal to a Moslem man's, and the fine payable for the murder of a Moslem man was fifteen times the fine payable for the murder of a Christian. However, after the Minorities Commission's Report was published, northern jurists agreed to adopt the Sudan Penal Code which allows Moslems to follow Moslem law in civil suits, but in criminal cases and in civil suits involving non-Moslems follows British and Indian law very closely. In non-legal government matters, Middle Belters are to some extent protected by the north's need for them as clerks and teachers among the less well educated Moslem population.

There is hope too of greater democracy even in the most orthodox of the Moslem northern emirates. The N.P.C. leaders realise that, to run a successful government and to industrialise northern cities, more educated men are necessary.* Too many educated men are needed for them all to be contented members of the Fulani ruling class; the newly educated are already exerting a slowly growing pressure to

*But probably not educated northern women. The northerners are almost alone in the modern world in daring to say openly that they object to educating women. Their objection is based partly on religious grounds and partly on the fact that the labour of northern women is essential to the running of northern farms; educated women might make less docile farm labourers.

curb the emirs' powers and to introduce more elected men into their local government.

In the East, non-Ibos are frightened of the way some Ibos talk of the whole region as 'belonging' to them, and of the efficiency with which Ibos are organised. Traders who incur Ibo dislike, justifiably or unjustifiably, are boycotted. The Minorities Commission quoted the sad case of Mr. Andrew Bassey of Calabar who said that Efik girls should not go to an Ibo dance. A boycott was organised against him, and the band he had hired for his restaurant was left standing on the quay, with its trumpets scattered around it, because no Ibo would give it transport.

However Ibo abilities to organise and look after themselves are the best guarantees the East has against general dictatorship: the replacement of the regional Parliament by a permanent N.C.N.C. caucus. Azikwe's critics—Ibos and non-Ibos—think this is a very real danger. They point out Azikwe's increasing reliance on the Zikist National Vanguard, a movement sworn to support him under all circumstances, whose members wear uniforms and have adopted the scorpion as their emblem: because, they explain, of the sting the scorpion can give its opponents.

But dictatorship runs contrary to Ibo traditions of government by age group societies and village elders rather than by strong chiefs. At present these age group societies, not the regional government, have provided what small roads, churches, schools and village halls most eastern villages have. The young men of the village are organised by the older men into doing the work village councils think should be done. But beyond the villages the larger Ibo councils and the Regional Government have suffered because, since 1950, they have been too democratic: too

in this case, be somewhat blunted by the solid profits of union with the west.

Nigeria and Foreign Countries

To an English visitor one of the startling things about Nigeria is the different order of importance given to news stories in his breakfast paper. What takes up space is first of all Nigerian topics, then news from Nigeria's neighbours and the rest of Africa, and then, a long way back in the paper, Asia, Britain, America and Europe.

This means that items of news from the French Union in Africa are well publicised in Nigeria—but they are also often misinterpreted. Very few Nigerians understand the French Union's conception of countries remaining voluntarily French in culture, with a joint foreign and financial policy arrived at by all their representatives sitting together in Paris. French African leaders, like Houphuet-Boigny, are often looked on as French dupes. What adds to Nigeria's ignorance of their French African neighbours is that very few British West Africans can speak French, and few French Africans English.

Nigeria's nearest English-speaking neighbour, Ghana, is much better known but not very popular. Most Nigerians are jealous of the publicity Ghana gained when she became independent, and they resent what they see as a Ghanan attempt to establish Ghana as the leading country in West Africa and to run a Pan-African movement from Accra. It is not that the idea of Africa, or at least West Africa, as a cultural and perhaps a political unit, is unpopular in Nigeria; but no politician there wants to help Dr. Nkrumah become the first leader of united Africa. In 1958, Nigeria refused to send observers to the Accra Conference of Free African States, and Nkrumah

compared the Nigerian boycott to South Africa's refusal to attend the conference.* The *Lagos Daily Service*, an Action Group newspaper, commented that 'it is an egregious insult for the Prime Minister of a small country like Ghana to essay to be Nigeria's spokesman'.

Comment in Britain and the West African capitals about pan-Africanism has mostly suggested a union of independent coastal West African people aspiring towards an American-influenced way of life. But rumours, particularly in south Nigeria, have suggested that north Nigerian leaders would like to see a different union of Moslem people in the interior of West Africa and in North Africa linked perhaps with the Arab Union through Egypt. Recently Cairo Radio has been increasing its broadcasts in Hausa to north Nigeria, and stressing the common Moslem links, but northern leaders officially deny that they have any alliance with Egypt or that they want to split Nigeria by joining a separate Moslem union. All the same, the rumours persist, sometimes unofficially encouraged by northerners who think they make a useful weapon against possible domination from south Nigeria.

Questions of foreign policy outside Africa do not rouse anything like the same interest in Nigeria. This is partly because Nigeria's future foreign alliances are taken for granted by all politicians: a balance in the Commonwealth somewhere between the policies of India and Britain—just where the balance should rest depending on the individual politician. Azikwe and members of the N.C.N.C. are generally rather to the left of northerners and the Action Group.

*The biggest insult of all on the West Coast. In Nigerian political pamphlets South Africa is often described as the supreme enemy—threatening war against newly independent African states.

Continuing ties with Britain, and Commonwealth membership, seem the obvious policies for Nigeria, partly because the country on the surface looks so very British. There is a great snob appeal in British friends, British goods and British universities, and Nigerian politicians also hope that Commonwealth membership will bring Commonwealth investments and Commonwealth technical help. All the same, there is under the surface a considerable history of bitterness about past British policies in Nigeria, and some Nigerians are now contemptuous of British weakness in world affairs. Adegoke Adelabu who was until his death the leader of the N.C.N.C. opposition in the west, wrote that Europeans were 'mature and over-ripe people struggling under violently anti-pathetic ideologies to readjust themselves to the post-war Atomic age.' But he considered that the United States and Canada were 'weaving a destiny for their citizens which are worthy objects (*sic*) of envy to less favoured people.'

Russia has something of the same glamour of novelty, power and fast moving events that America and Canada have. Both Awolowo and Azikwe have written with admiration about the speed of Russian industrialisation and the rapid rise of standards of living particularly among the Soviet Asian peoples—the colonial subjects of the old Russian Empire. Less politically prominent Nigerians, particularly in front of shocked American listeners, ask why Nigeria should not take 'the best in communism and reject the worst'. Fear of communism, they say, is a purely European and American phobia. But very few of these Nigerians know much about the details of communism, or seem particularly interested in learning about it. There does not at present seem to be much opposition to the official Nigerian policy of banning a Communist Party and refusing visas to Nigerians who want to attend communist

organised conferences. As one of the more prosperous and contented nations in Africa, Nigeria is at present unattractive to international communist efforts to establish their party. Nigerians themselves say that Nigerian family feelings and attachment and tradition, colour and gaiety are too strong to allow for the growth of orthodox communism in their country.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

(There is a much fuller bibliography in *Books About Nigeria* by John Harris, published by the Ibadan University Press in 1959.)

FOR GENERAL BACKGROUND (Education, Anthropology, Travel, Autobiography, Art and Novels):

- Mellanby, K. *Birth of Nigeria's University*. Methuen. 1958.
Gorer, G. *Africa Dances*. 2nd Edition. Lehman. 1949
Leith-Ross, Sylvia *African Women: A Study of the Ibo of Nigeria*. Faber. 1939.
Nadel, S. F. *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*. Oxford University Press. 1942.
Smith, Mary F. *Baba of Koro: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa*, Faber and Faber. 1954.
Crowder, Michael *Pagans and Politicians*. Hutchinson. 1959.
Gunther, John *Inside Africa*. Hamish Hamilton. 1955.
Huxley, Elspeth *Four Guineas: A Journey through West Africa*. Chatto and Windus. 1954.
Mitchison, Naomi *Other People's Worlds*. Secker and Warburg. 1958.
Ojike, M. *My Africa*. Blandford Press. 1955.
Elisofon, Eliot *The Sculpture of Africa*. Text by William Fagg. Thames and Hudson. 1958.
Achebe, Chinua *Things Fall Apart*. Heineman. 1958.
Ekweni, Cyprian *People of the City*. Dakers. 1954.
Smith, Anthony *Sea Never Dry*. Allen and Unwin. 1958
Tutuola, Amos *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm-Wine Tapper in the Dead's Town* Faber and Faber. 1952.

FOR HISTORY:

- Biobaku, S. O. *The Egba and their Neighbours. 1842-1872.* Oxford University Press. 1957.
- Bovill, E. W. *The Golden Trade of the Moors.* Oxford University Press. 1958.
- Burns, Sir Alan *History of Nigeria.* 5th Edition. Allen and Unwin. 1955.
- Davidson, Basil *Old Africa Rediscovered.* Gollancz. 1959.
- Dike, K. O. *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885: an introduction to the economic and political history of Nigeria.* Oxford University Press. 1956.
- Fage, J. D. *An Introduction to the History of West Africa.* Cambridge University Press. 1955.
- Forde, C. Daryll (ed.) *Efik Traders of Old Calabar.* Oxford University Press for the International African Institute. 1956.
- Howard, C. (ed.) *West African Explorers.* Selections (World's Classics). Oxford University Press. 1951.
- McFarlan, Donald M. *Calabar.* Revised Edition. Nelson. 1957.
- Park, Mungo *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa.* Reissued in Everyman's Library. Dent. 1907.
- Perham, M., and Simmons, J. *African Discovery.* Faber and Faber. 1942.
- Talbot, P. A. *Peoples of Southern Nigeria.* Oxford University Press. 1926. (Also for Anthropology.)

FOR GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS:

- Bauer, P. T. *West African Trade.* Cambridge University Press. 1954.
- Buchanan, K. M. and Pugh, J. C. *Land and People in Nigeria: The Human Geography,* University of London Press. 1955.
- Onabamiro, S. D. *Food and Health.* Penguin Books. 1953.
- Pedler, F. J. *Economic Geography of West Africa.* Longmans. 1955.

118 *Some Suggestions for Further Reading*

FOR POLITICS:

- Adelabu, A. *Africa in Ebullition: being a handbook of freedom for Nigerian Nationalists*. Ibadan, the author. 1952.
- Akpau, N. U. *Epitaph to Indirect Rule: a discourse on local government in Africa*. Cassell. 1956.
- Awolowo, Obafemi *Path to Nigerian Freedom*. Faber² and Faber. 1947.
- Azikiwe, N. *Renascent Africa*. Lagos, the author. 1937.
- Azikiwe, N. *The Development of Political Parties in Nigeria*. The office of the Commissioner in the U.K. for the Eastern Region of Nigeria. 1957.
- Coleman, James S. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. University of California Press. 1958.
- Hodgkin, Thomas. *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. Muller. 1956.
- Obi, Chike *Our Struggle*. Ibadan, the author. 1956.

AND TWO REPORTS:

- Commission to inquire into the position, status and influence of chiefs and natural rulers in the Eastern Region*. By G. I. Jones. Enugu, Government Printer. 1957.
- Commission appointed to inquire into the fears of minorities and the means of allaying them*. (Lord Willink: Chairman.) H.M.S.O. 1958.

INDEX

- Abu Yazid 43
 Abubakar, Alhaji Tafewa Balewa
 (*see* Balewa)
 Action Group 92, 93, 94, 99, 101,
 102-103, 104, 110-111, 113
 Adelabu, Adegoke 114
 African Continental Bank 92
 Agriculture viii, 21, 62-71, 108
 Ahmadu Bello, Alhaji (*see* Sokoto,
 Sardauna of)
 Amina, Queen 43
 Archibong V (Obong of Calabar)
 8-9
 Aro people 61
 Aro-Chuku, Oracle of Aro (*see*
 people)
 Art 45, 46n, 48, 58 (*see also*
 music and dancing)
 Awolowo, Chief Obafemi 85,
 93-94, 101, 102, 111
 Awranyan 46
 Azikwe, Dr. Nnamdi ("Zik")
 9, 78, 81, 88-91, 94, 101, 102,
 105, 109, 113

 Balewa, Alhaji Abubakar Tafewa
 VIII, 98-99, 103
 Barth, Henry 44, 54
 Bassey, Andrew 109
 Beecroft, John 59
 Benin brasswork (*see* art)
 Benin town and history
 47-48, 50-51, 58, 61n 111,
 Benue, River 37, 68, 77
 Berlin, Conference 60
 "Bloodmen" 58
 Bonny town 50, 55, 58, 59

 Bornu 34
 British Amateur Athletic Asso-
 ciation 89
 Burton, Sir Richard 59

 Calabar 4, 6, 7, 8-14, 50, 56-58,
 79, 101, 109
 Cameroons 4, 48
 Casement, Sir Roger 11
 Christianity 8, 12, 13-14, 27, 31,
 79, 80-81, 93, 95, 97, 108
 Clapperton, Captain Hugh 44,
 52, 53
 Clarkson, Thomas 51
 Clothing 5, 7, 8, 24, 32, 33
 Cocoa 63, 70, 73
 Cocoa Marketing Board 73, 111
 Collard, Dr. Patrick 29
 Colonial Development Corpora-
 tion 70
 Colonialism, British: vii, 10,
 15, 49, 51-52, 59-61, 78, 79-80,
 82, 82-86, 104-106, 114;
 French: 18, 19, 60, 83, 112;
 German: 60; Portuguese: 18;
 Spanish: 11
 Commonwealth 113-114
 Communism 114-115
 Constitutions 1947 (Richards
 Constitution) 87, 88, 91; 1951,
 1954 91; 1957 91-92
 Colour Bar (*see* European atti-
 tudes to Nigerians, and Niger-
 ian attitudes to Europeans)
 Corruption 13-14, 104, 106
 Cotton 34, 75, 75
 Crime vij, 6, 15

- "Daily Service" 113
 Dancing 7
 Dike, Professor Ken 55
 Donkin, General 54
- Eastern Region 85-86, 87, 92,
 101, 109-110
 Eastern Regional Production
 Board 70
 Education: General: viii, ix,
 12-14, 16, 31, 79-80, 89, 96, 97,
 100, 108, 110, 111, 114;
 university: 25-28, 97, 110;
 women's: 9-10, 30, 31-32, 108n
 Efik people 8, 9-10, 40, 91, 101,
 109
 Egbe Omo Oduduwa 94
 Egypt 113
 Ekpo Society 57, 58
 Elections, 1959 102-103
 European attitude to Nigerians
 17, 19, 82, 95-96
 Eyamba, King 56-58
- Fernando Po (*see* colonialism,
 Spanish)
 Food 3, 21, 29, 56, 65n, 65-66,
 69
 French Union 112, (*and see*
 Colonialism, French)
 Fulani people 33, 38-39, 43-45,
 63, 68, 84, 96, 98, 99, 100, 103,
 108
- General Improvement Union 96
 Ghana vii, viii, 69n, 78, 89,
 112-113
 Gloucester, Duke and Duchess
 of 33-34
 Goldie, George 60
 Ground Nuts 63, 73
 Gunther, John 17n
- Hausa people 21, 38-39, 42-43,
 44, 45, 63, 87, 103
 Henry the Navigator 49
 Herodotus 42
- Hope Waddell School 12-14
 Houphuet-Boigny, Félix 112
- Ibadan City 23-29, 75, 76, 94
 Ibo people 5, 8, 12, 20, 23, 40, 62,
 63, 64, 66, 87, 88, 91, 92-93,
 95, 100, 101, 103, 106-107,
 109-110
 Ibo State Union 81
 Ife City 23, 24, 45, 48, 58
 Ijaw people 40
 Ile Ife (*see* Ife)
 Ilorin Plebiscite 100
 India (compared to Nigeria)
 79-82, 84, 95-96, 113
 Industry viii, 34, 74-77, 104
 Irele (farm scheme) 67
 Islam viii, 30, 31, 32, 42, 43, 96,
 97, 108, 113
- Jaja, King 55, 79
 Jere people 98
 Jukon people 39-40
- Kano City 29-34, 44, 52, 62, 63,
 96, 99
 Kano, Emir of 84
 Kano, Mallam Aminu 96
 Kano riots 99
 Kaduna City 34, 77
 Katsina Teachers Training Col-
 lege 97, 98
 Kosoko, King 80
 Kwa people 40
- Lagos City 7, 14-22, 23, 37, 59,
 61n, 71, 72, 72n, 73, 76, 80,
 82, 89, 92, 93, 94, 98, 102, 106,
 113
 Lagos Radio 8
 Lander, Richard 53-54, 55
 Leopard Men 40n
 Lugard, Lord 83, 95

- Mali 43
 Mamfe town 3, 7
 Mandingo people 43
 Marketing Boards; general :
 73-74; cocoa : 111
 Marriage 19-22, 31
 Mau-Mau 79
 Medicine 24-25, 28-29, 65, 65n, 69
 Meek, Dr. C. K. 68
 Mellanby, Dr. Kenneth 25
 Middle Belt (country and politics)
 62, 100-101, 103, 108
 Minorities Commission 101, 108,
 109
 Minority groups 107-108 (*see*
 also Efiks, Ilorin plebiscite,
 Middle Belt, Niger Delta
 Minorities)
 Mohammedanism (*see* Islam)
 Moslem (*see* Islam)
 Muhammed Bello 44n
 Music 7-8
 MacPherson, Sir John 91, 105

 National Congress of Nigeria
 and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.)
 88, 90, 91, 92, 99, 101, 103,
 109, 110, 113, 114
 Négritude 19
 Niger Delta minorities 101,
 111-112
 Niger, River 37, 42, 52-54, 77
 Nigerian Reconstruction Group
 90
 Nigerian Youth Movement 89-90,
 94
 Nigerian attitudes to Europeans
 vii, 26-27
 Nigerian Independence vii,
 78-82, 99, 100, 101
 Nigerianisation Board 105
 Nkrumah, Dr. Kwame 112-113
 Nok 46n
 Northern Elements Progressive
 Union 96, 103
 Northern People's Congress 92,
 96, 98, 99, 101, 103, 107-108
 Northern Region 33, 34, 84-85,
 87, 92, 95, 99-101, 108-109
 Nsukka University 110

 Oduduwa, King 46, 94
 Oil, palm 54-55, 59, 63, 70, 73,
 75
 Oil, petroleum viii, 77-78
 Onitsha town 72
 Opobo town 55, 79
 Oyo 46, 47, 50-51, 85

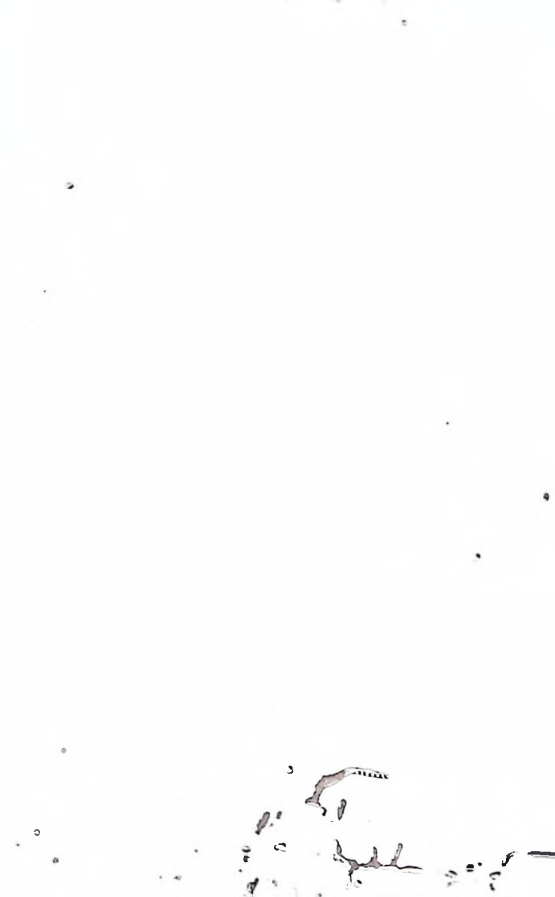
 Pan-Africanism 112-113
 Park, Mungo 53, 54, 58
 Pepple, King 59
 Perham, Dr. Marjery 86
 Pidgin 17-18
 Police, federal vii, 101, 102
 Port Harcourt 76
 Prester John 47, 49

 Religion, pagan 5, 40, 41, 46-47,
 57-58, 108, (*see also* Christ-
 ianity, Islam)
 Richards, Sir Arthur 87
 Royal Niger Company 60
 Rubber 70

 Sapele 75
 Sardauna of Sokoto (*see* Sokoto
 Sardauna of)
 Senegal (*see* Mali)
 Sharp, Grenville 51
 Slavery vii, viii, 11-12, 33,
 44-45, 49-52, 54, 55-56, 56n,
 85
 Sokoto province 67
 Sokoto, Sardauna of 77, 96-98,
 101
 Sokoto, Sultan of 44, 97
 South Africa 113, 113n

 Technology, difficulties viii, 1,
 16, 18, 75, 80
 "The Times" 61, 77
 Tiv people 68
 Trade 21, 71, 32-33, 71-74
 Transport 3, 4, 15, 24, 77, 104

- United Africa Company 72, 73
 United States 52, 76, 88-89, 105,
 112, 114
 University College, Ibadan
 25-28, 97
 Usman Dan Fodio 43, 44n, 96
- Waddell, Hope Masterton 56-58
 "West African Pilot" 89
 Western Region 23, 70, 75, 85,
 87, 92, 100, 105, 110-112
 Wilberforce William 51
- Women: beauty: 7, 10, 25;
 education: (*see* education:
 women's); position and work:
 5, 21, 30-32, 68, 72, 97, 108n,
 World Bank 76
- Yorubua people 6, 23-25, 40,
 45-48, 62-63, 70, 87, 91, 94, 95,
 100, 103, 104, 111
- Zaria province 34
 Zazua state 43
 Zik (*see* Azikwe, Dr. Nnamdi)
 Zikist National Vanguard 109





**OTHER IMPORTANT
BOOKS**
from the Pall Mall Press

**A SHORT POLITICAL GUIDE TO THE
ARAB WORLD**

Peter Partner 16s 6d

HOPE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Alan Paton 10s 6d

DRAGON AND SICKLE

How Communist revolution came to China
Guy Wint 10s 6d

THE THIRD WORLD WAR

Trade and Industry—the new battleground
Harry Welton 21s

**REFLECTIONS ON BRITAIN AND THE
UNITED STATES—MAINLY
ECONOMIC**

E. Lipson 12s 6d

*Write for a full list of
Pall Mall Press Books to*

THE PALL MALL PRESS LIMITED
(Editorial Office)

Wood End, Broomfield, Essex.





LOIS MITCHISON had a taste of travel and her first post-university job teaching in a women's college in Pakistan. Her earliest attempts at journalism were in writing about her journey from Karachi back to England by bus through Afghanistan and Persia. After working as a reporter in Manchester and London, she was sent by the *Manchester Guardian* to cover the end of the war in Indo-China. After that, Miss Mitchison spent two-and-a-half years in the Far East, working mainly as a freelance in Formosa, China, Outer Mongolia and most of the countries of south-east Asia.

This book is the result of a recent visit to West Africa, starting in the French Cameroons, where Miss Mitchison judged a beauty contest of local girls while she was collecting musical instruments for an Oxford Museum. In Nigeria she was particularly struck by the uncomplicated friendliness of Nigerians, compared to most Asians, and by the potential riches of the country. Her present interests include the differences in the lives of women and children in various parts of the world. West African women, she thinks, work harder and enjoy fewer privileges than any other group she has met.

Miss Mitchison is the daughter of novelist Naomi Mitchison and Dick Mitchison, Labour M.P. for Kettering. She is married to the zoologist, John Godfrey, to whose constant encouragement this book is largely due.