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Nigerian nationalism: a case study in southern Nigeria, 1885-1939

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Bassey Edet Ekong for the
Master of Arts in History presented May 18, 1972.

Title: Nigerian Nationalism: A Case Study In Southern
Nigeria 1885-1939.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:


F. Cox, Chairman


John I. Olivier


Franklin C. West

Modern Nigeria is a creation of the British, who because of economic interest, ignored the existing political, racial, historical, religious and language differences. The task of developing a concept of nationalism from among such diverse elements who inhabit Nigeria and speak about 280 tribal languages was immense if not impossible. The traditionalists did their best in opposing the British who took away their privileges and traditional rights, but their policy did not countenance nationalism. The rise and growth of nationalism was only possible through educated Africans. Colonialism brought Nigeria in contact with the West and western culture, but the impact of it was felt differently in different parts of Nigeria. By debarring

Christian Missions, lawyers and merchants from the North, the British deliberately allowed Northern Nigeria to retain its customs and social structure. This further increased and complicated the problems of modernization, nationalism and unity, as Nigerians were influenced by two opposing outside cultures, one Western, the other Oriental. The basic problems: social, racial and political were result of the superstructure creation of Nigeria and they unmistakingly affect nationalism, as some of the ethnic groupings which make up Nigeria were large enough to constitute nations in themselves. Because of strong ethnocentrism existing in Nigeria, it has sometimes been argued that Nigeria has not one nationalism but many nationalisms. The educated elite have succeeded in winning statehood for Nigeria, but they have yet to succeed in bringing about cultural and political nationalism in Nigeria.

NIGERIAN NATIONALISM: A CASE STUDY
IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA 1885-1939

By
BASSEY EDET EKONG

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

HISTORY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of foreigners on nationalism in Nigeria. Southern Nigeria is chosen for this study because it is the birth place of Nigerian nationalism and as such has a great deal to contribute toward the unity and progress of Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

The second reason for the study is the fact that the influence of those foreigners is still being felt in Nigeria today. At present there is much talk about African unity, Pan-Africanism, African personality and modernization of Nigeria. These ideas are traceable to those foreigners of the colonial period. The third reason is that Nigeria is continuing the process of modernization and the world is watching her as the custodian of democracy.

Throughout this paper emphasis has therefore been on the impact of foreigners on Southern Nigeria, because nationalism in Southern Nigeria was not a conscious effort on the part of the people of Southern Nigeria. As a matter of fact there was no concept of "Nigerians" or "Nigeria" before the mid-nineteenth century. There were tribal groupings very much different from one another in culture, religion, custom and history and very loosely organized. The idea of a nation was first brought to them from outside but by people of their own descent.

The term 'foreigners' as used in this paper, is meant the liberated Africans from either Sierra Leone, West Indies or

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Liberia and the Afro-Americans. For the purpose of this study, the liberated Africans who came back and resided in Nigeria are considered as Nigerians, and as such, the term has been used interchangeably. They were indeed, citizens of Nigeria or put it another way, they were the naturalized Nigerians. They considered themselves Nigerians even before the territory was christened 'Nigeria' in 1899.¹ Only very few of them ever went back to the place of their birth; the majority lived and died in Nigeria.

This paper is a social history of heterogenous people and the thesis is therefore on their attempt to evolve a national consciousness. The discussion is therefore restricted to the cultural, economic and political aspects of that consciousness. The nationalism that eventually won independence from the British is outside the scope of this paper.

Finally, there are many people and friends who deserve thankfulness for their suggestions and wonderful co-operation which made possible this paper in this final form. But I regret that it is not possible to name all of them here. However, special mention must be made of my adviser, Dr. F. Cox. To him I offer my special thanks for his wonderful co-operation and guidance. I also thank Dr. J. I. Olivier of the University of Portland, who had spent about thirteen years in Nigeria, for his kind suggestions and corrections. I would also like to

¹ I. F. Nicolson. The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press 1969), p. 35.

thank Dr. G. Carbone, who had given me valuable help at the early stages of this paper; to Mr. L. Davis, head of the Black Study Program, I extend my thankfulness for his suggestions. And to my fellow Africans and the Nigerian nationals in the Americas, I thank them for their wonderful co-operation.

CHAPTER II

THE BRITISH IN NIGERIA

Nigeria came in contact with European civilization in the fifteenth century. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to visit the coast of Nigeria. They reached Benin city, the capital of the Benin Empire, in 1485 where they traded with grains, tusks and later, slaves. There they were amazed to see a well organized Empire flourishing in the heart of tropical forest in contrast to the primitive tribes under petty chiefs who inhabited the coastal region. The Portuguese traders were followed by the Roman Catholic missionaries who tried to evangelize Benin, but their work there seems to have had little impact upon the people.

The discovery of the New World in 1493 by Columbus had a great effect on West Africa and Nigeria in particular. Soon the trade in grains and tusks was replaced by trade in slaves. The slaves were bought in West Africa and taken to West Indies where they worked in silver mines and sugar plantations. The profits made from the slave trade by the Portuguese and Spaniards soon attracted other European nations. When in 1553 William Hawkins brought the first English ship to the Bights of Benin and Biafra a long British connection with Nigeria was started.

Through the work of the abolitionists, people like, Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, and Thomas Clarkson pressure was brought upon the British Parliament to outlaw the slave trade in 1807 and slavery in 1833.¹

¹Denmark was the first to abolish slave trade three years before Great Britain.

Once the slave trade had been abolished legitimate trade was established in its place; trade now consisted mainly of palm oil. Trade in palm oil was very profitable for oil was needed as lubricant for machines and for soap manufacturing which was sent back to Nigeria as import. The palm oil was obtained along the coast especially on the Niger delta areas known as the Oil Rivers through African middlemen who in time became very powerful economically and politically. The middlemen did not want the European traders to trade directly with the interior but the latter insisted and soon bad relation developed between them. The British then appointed a consul whose main duty was to mediate between the Africans and the European traders. John Beecroft was the first consul so appointed and his headquarters was first at Fernando Po and later transferred to Calabar.

The establishment of the consular system in Nigeria marked the real beginning of British involvement in Nigeria. Soon Beecroft became involved in politics, took sides in the Lagos chieftaincy dispute and saw that Kosoko who usurped the Lagos throne in 1845 was dethroned and Akitoye restored. He also used his position to remove King Pepple of Bonny in 1852 and to intervene in chieftaincy disputes in Calabar. In 1861 the island of Lagos was ceded to the British by King Dosemu, the son and successor of King Akitoye, and was made a colony.

Although the slave trade was abolished in 1807, slaves were still bought and sold in the interior. The attempts by the humanitarians to penetrate into the interior had failed

because there were no good roads and navigable waterways. Then began the search for the Niger the existence of which had been known for centuries but the actual course and its mouth were not known. In 1795 the African Association sent Mungo Park, a young Scottish doctor, to explore the Niger and having been unsuccessful in his first attempt, Mungo Park made a second journey in 1805 and lost his life at Bussa rapids inside Nigeria. Clapperton made two unsuccessful attempts but in 1830 the Lander Brothers, John and Richard Lander discovered that the mouth of the Niger was at Brass, thus solving one of the great African puzzles of the age.

The newly discovered waterway was soon put into commercial use. The first initiative was taken by Macgregor Laird, a Liverpool merchant, who organized two trading expeditions up the Niger in 1832 and 1854. By 1857 the exploration of the interior parts of Nigeria mainly by doctors Barth and Baikie was completed and in time trading stations were established at Aboh, Onitsha and Gbegbe.

The second way in which the British became involved in Nigeria was through missionary activities. The European traders were soon followed by the Christian missions which arrived in Nigeria in the 1840's. Through the invitation of the liberated Yorubas the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Wesleyan mission started work in the Yorubaland in 1841 and 1844 respectively. In 1846 another religious body, the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) arrived at Calabar from the West Indies and started work among the Efik-Ibibio. In 1857 the CMS established the Niger Diocese in the Niger Delta under

Bishop Crowther.

There was a great deal of opposition to Christianity because it opposed such traditional institutions as secret societies, polygamy and slavery. When such opposition arose the British did not fail to intervene militarily in behalf of the Christian missions. One such instance occurred in 1892. The Okrika people had asked the High Commissioner, Sir Claude Macdonald, to remove a missionary from Okrika and Macdonald answered by sending troops to Okrika whereby the people were scared to death and agreed to allow the missionary to stay. That same year the British appointed a lady missionary of the Scottish mission, Mary Slessor, Vice-consul at Okoyong in Calabar area.

Although Lagos was made a colony in 1861 there was no effective government in Nigeria till 1900. Between 1865 and 1874 Nigeria was administered from Sierra Leone and later from Gold Coast (Ghana) till 1886, when a separate administration was established in Lagos. For fifteen years Southern Nigeria was administered by three different bodies: the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, the territory administered by the Royal Niger Company, and the Oil Rivers Protectorate, administered by the Foreign Office.

Because of the monopolistic policy of the Niger Company and the French threat to Northern Nigeria, in 1900 its charter was revoked and the British then took over the direct administration of the North. Frederick Lugard (later Lord Lugard) was appointed the administrator of the territory and he immediately was faced with the problem of governing such an immense

territory. He had neither adequate resources nor enough manpower and for these reasons, he allowed the Fulani rulers to continue in their posts but they were to be advised by British officers. This system of Government, whereby the British ruled the territory indirectly through the traditional rulers, was called 'Indirect Rule'. In order to preserve the custom and the social structure of the North, Lugard did not allow missionaries, traders and lawyers to enter the North and thus Northern Nigeria was culturally separated from the south, where western influence was strong.

Speaking of Northern Nigeria, long before the advent of the British in Nigeria, the territory was civilized by the Islamic culture. Islam came to Northern Nigeria in the tenth century through the Arab traders who reached the area through the trans-Saharan routes. It was well received in Bornu but elsewhere, especially in the Hausa states, it had little impact upon the people. In 1804 Usman Dan Fodio, a Fulani religious fanatic, took advantage of the politically disunited states, led the Fulani in an uprising and overthrew the Hausas and established Fulani hegemony in the north.

In 1907 Lord Lugard left Nigeria for Hong Kong after he had planned a railway for the north. He returned in 1912 and in 1914 carried out the amalgamation of northern and southern Nigeria and became the first Governor General of Nigeria. He left the country finally in 1919.

There is no doubt that Lugard's administration had a great impact on Nigeria. He was the person who laid down the foundation of political education in Native Administration

which he introduced. Native administration was based on local institutions and powers were concentrated in the hands of the chiefs. Lugard ignored the principle of democracy but adopted autocracy and centralized bureaucracy.

There was no major political development during the period of World War One. However, indirect taxation was introduced in the South in 1915 for the first time amid strong opposition and riots. In 1922 the Nigerian Council was replaced by the Legislative Council which legislated for Southern Nigeria only, Northern Nigeria was governed through the Executive Order-in-Council. The 1922 constitution gave elective principles to the people of Southern Nigeria, the first time in the history of the British in West Africa. Four Africans, three of them representing the municipality of Lagos and one the municipality of Calabar were elected by adult male suffrage. That same year the British Cameroons joined Nigeria and became a province of Eastern Nigeria.

The only administrative change during the inter-war years was the division of Southern Nigeria into Western and Eastern Nigeria with capitals at Ibadan and Enugu respectively. This is the genesis of regionalism in Nigeria. Each of the regions was administered by a High Commissioner based in the capital of each region.

The 1922 constitution continued to be in use till 1946 when it was replaced by a new constitution which came to be known as the Richards' Constitution. The significance of this constitution is that it legislated for the whole country for the first time with the hope that it would bring about unity in

the country. The Richard's Constitution was replaced in 1946 by a new constitution which later became known as the Macpherson Constitution. The new constitution was more radical than the old constitution; it created bi-cameral legislatures for both the North and West; the East had only a House of Assembly. In 1954 a new constitution set up a Federal structure which made the Federal Government weaker than the Regional Governments and thus laying the foundation for much of Nigeria's difficulties in the post-independence era. On October 1, 1960 Nigeria became a sovereign nation and three years later she became a Republic.

The economic policy of the British was that of non-interference or laissez-faire and as a result the Nigerian businessmen could not compete successfully with foreign firms operating in the country. But the British were all out to protect the indigenous lands from passing into the hands of Europeans and commercial interests. They did not establish industries as they did not want Nigeria to become an industrial country; Nigeria was to serve as overseas market for their manufactured goods. On the other hand, they did improve communication by building roads and railways connecting the principal parts of Nigeria.

Their policy on education was inconsistent. The Christian missions were given free hand in education; the government only supported education by making grants to the missions and by making inspections to schools. The Government, however, built the Yaba Higher College in 1934, Ibadan University College in 1948, the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology

in 1950 and a few Secondary schools and Teachers' Training Colleges. These, of course, were inadequate for the teaming children leaving primary schools.

Before 1946 the British administration was based on a strong center through which the British were able to unite the diverse elements of Nigeria, the situation which was lacking in the post-colonial era. The country was divided into regions, East, West and North, and the regions were subdivided into provinces and the provinces were further subdivided into districts. Each of the administrative divisions was administered by a British officer.

CHAPTER III

THE AWAKENING OF NIGERIAN NATIONALISM 1885-1918

The year 1885 is year one in the history of Colonialism in Nigeria. It was in this year that the British officially claimed Nigeria as her sphere of influence before the assembly of European diplomats in Berlin. This was immediately followed by the British expansion into the interior parts of Nigeria. The British expansion in the post-Berlin Conference was a violation of the Parliamentary Select Committee's recommendation of 1865 which said:

that all further extension of the territory or assumption of government, or new treaties offering any protection to the native tribes, would be in-expedient; and that the object of our policy should be to transfer to the natives the administration of all government with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all except, probably, Sierra Leone.¹

Had the recommendation been faithfully carried out, perhaps there might have been no Nigeria. The territory might have become enclaves of the British and the French along the coast. The motion clearly reveals the attitude of the British public at a time when their sentiments in regard to West African Colonies was at the lowest ebb. But the motion was overtaken by the events of 1885. Between 1885 and 1906 protectorates were established in the East, West and North; Lagos was made a colony in 1861.

With the establishment of colonial rule in Nigeria, the

¹John D. Hargreaves. Prelude To The Partition of West Africa. New York: St. Martins Press, 1963, pp. 76-77.

Africans came in contact with western culture. European technology and education impressed them so much that they wanted to learn Western culture so as to be as powerful as the Europeans. But during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the educated Africans began to search for their own identity. This was the beginning of Nigerian nationalism. There were many factors which were responsible for the awakening of nationalism in Nigeria. These included Christian missions, native churches, taxation, the press and land tenure.

The Christian Missions

The first Christian missionaries to come to Nigeria in the fifteenth century accompanied the Portuguese. They tried to convert the people of Benin, but their work seemed to have had little or no impact upon the people. It was only in the nineteenth century that missionary activity in Southern Nigeria was revised on a large scale. At first the missionaries devoted themselves to the conversion of Africans to Christianity, but later on they turned to education.

At first Christianity was not readily accepted by the Africans. The people resisted it because it opposed traditional customs and shared values. In Western Nigeria the people of Ijebu did not receive Christian missionaries until 1892 despite the fact that there were Christian Ijebus who had returned from Sierra Leone in the 1840's.

In Eastern Nigeria Christianity also met with strong opposition. In 1892 the people of Okrika in the Niger Delta, after they had received a letter of support from Ijebu, stiffened

their opposition to Christianity. They asked the High Commissioner, Sir Claude Macdonald, to remove their African pastor and at the same time threatened the lives of the converts. The High Commissioner answered back by sending troops to Okrika and promised to destroy it if the Christians there were molested. In Opobo, King JaJa had refused to allow a missionary to settle there; Consul Hewett had, time without number, unsuccessfully negotiated with JaJa to allow a resident missionary at Opobo. This opposition might have been the underlying cause for his deportation in 1887. As early as 1883, Hewett had urged that JaJa be removed on the ground that he practiced juju. King JaJa was a strong believer in the indigenous religion and would not give it up in place of a foreign religion. Since he was regarded by the people in and around Opobo as a strong man, his removal had a great impact on the neighboring states. At once, the head-strong states such as Ohambele and Abo accepted Christianity in order to escape the British expedition.

At Old Calabar, King Eyo Honesty of Creek Town had to patronize Christianity in order to gain protection over the hinterland tribes of Akunakuna, Umon, and Enyong. Because of this King Eyo had all the protection of the missionaries and the British man-of-war on the coast and with this advantage he had the predominance in commerce. At Asaba, Christianity was resisted but only briefly. There a female regent had invited missionary despite opposition by the chiefs; this action on the part of regent led to the revival of the ancient secret society, the Ekumeku, which attacked missionaries and the Niger Company personnels. The British responded by sending troops

to Asaba and the people were forced to accept Christianity. Thus, throughout Southern Nigeria, Christianity was accepted either, because it enabled some tribes or chiefs to gain their political or economic freedom from their neighboring tribes or rival chiefs, or because it enabled the opposition to escape the British expedition.

The missionaries were assisted in their work by the liberated African who had returned to Nigeria in the late thirties and early forties. Most of them had found it difficult to settle down in Sierra Leone or adapt themselves to the new environment. The problem ranged from the scarcity of women and land to lack of skills and capital. Therefore by 1839 many liberated Africans had expressed the desire to go back to their homes. The first group of the immigrants who arrived in Nigeria settled at the coastal ports of Lagos, Badagry, Bonny and Old Calabar. In Western Nigeria they spread into the interior centers, such as Abeokuta, where they once again reunited with their families from whom they had been separated for many years. From 1839 the immigration of the liberated Africans continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century.

When they arrived home they did not fit into the society easily despite the fact that it was their ancestral land. While in Sierra Leone they had been converted into Christianity and were literate and most of them spoke fluent English. They were also accustomed to European dress, food and a whole new set of values and beliefs. Their task was to convert the traditional society into a new environment with foreign culture.

Thus they became agents of missionaries, philanthropists and even the government in spreading western culture and in the extermination of slavery and slave trade in the interior. They were trained in Sierra Leone to man the missionary stations since by then Africa was considered unhealthy for the Europeans.

There was a conscientious opinion among the repatriates that Nigeria should receive Western civilization. They deplored ignorance, poor sanitary conditions, poor diet, primitive methods of farming, poor clothing, housing, and polygamy, as they saw in the interior. Worst of all they denounced the worldliness as existed in the coastal towns particularly among the women who were after jewelry and expensive clothes.² The task of acculturation was not simple but through education it was easier and faster especially among the youth.

Of all the good things that Christianity brought to the people of Southern Nigeria, education was valued most because it was regarded as a magic word unlocking the door to social status and higher standard of living. It was Christianity that was opposed and not education. "Africans saw in literacy the key to the 'white man's magic.'³ The English language was needed to replace the 'pidgin' English which was used as the lingua franca between the Europeans and Africans. Those who were able to speak English language were needed as interpreters and in business. Long contact with the Europeans had encouraged the chiefs and the commercial middle men to want to educate their

²Robert W. July, The Origins of Modern African Thought. (Frederick A. Praeger. New York, 1967), p. 190.

³Victor C. Ferkiss. Africa's Search For Identity. George Braziller. New York, 1966, p. 151.

sons so as to use them in their business. Thus in the eighties many Nigerians were sent to England for education. King JaJa of Opobo, who opposed Christianity, sent his son, Sunday JaJa, to study at Liverpool and Glasgow, and King Pepple of Bonny also sent his brother, Charles Pepple, to England for education. Another Nigerian, Herbert Jombo was sent to Glasgow College.

Through missionary activity a whole new set of western culture was brought to the people of Southern Nigeria. The Africans being told that Western Civilization was responsible for European technological power were eager to learn the new culture so as to measure up with the Europeans. The rush for western culture resulted in the abandoning of healthful African cultures and the loss of identity. In time some Africans became accustomed to European ways of life, in dress, eating habits and in manners. In the Niger Delta the coastal chiefs were quick to assimilate the new European economic methods but were very reluctant to accept Christian morals and ethics; in Abeokuta, the traditional rulers accepted the European political organization and the Egba Administration under the leadership of the liberated Yorubas was set up. But in Ijebu the people bluntly refused European shoes, socks and umbrellas.

The first generation of educated Nigerians were 'native foreigners' from the West Indies and Sierra Leone.⁴ Although they were the minority in the country yet they exercised greater influence though the command of the English language which most Nigerians did not understand. They were the in-

⁴James S. Coleman, Nigeria. University of California Press. Berkeley. 1965, p. 154.

terpreters, clerks, lawyers, doctors, heads of some departments, and middlemen between the Europeans and the Africans.

In 1880's the number of educated Africans in Southern Nigeria had increased but they were still a minority. They had hoped that education had qualified them to measure up with the Europeans in the country, but to their greatest shock they discovered that they were rebuffed by the Europeans. This is not surprising for in that time and age Europeans did not believe in the capabilities of the African race no matter how Europeanized the Africans were. The anthropologists had told that African race was inferior to the European race and was incapable of governing themselves. The educated Africans felt that they were discriminated against in promotion and salaries despite their education and experience. The educated Africans who were mostly the liberated Africans reacted, though emotionally at first, by asserting their Nigerianness in cultures which they had abandoned, and later, they demanded political and economic independence.

First let us examine cultural nationalism which incidentally took place at a time when the British expansion reached its peak. The cultural renaissance in Southern Nigeria was mainly the work of the liberated Africans. Among the cultural nationalists, Edward Blyden stands shoulder high above his contemporaries. He is sometimes known as the father of cultural nationalism. He was the first person who stimulated the imagination of Africans and at the same time became a source of inspiration to them.

Blyden was a West Indian negro and was born in 1832 in St. Thomas, and migrated to Liberia where he distinguished himself as a man of great intellectual ability, mastering Greek, Latin, Spanish and Arabic, the latter enabled him to study the Islamic religion. He was a devout Christian and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1858. At Liberia, he held many important posts and traveled extensively in West Africa, Europe and America and gained international recognition.

His philosophy on African culture was that African culture was unique and worth preserving. He admired the African family system which according to him is full with love and responsibility and praised African religiousness, the institution of communality as the basis of co-operation and mutual aid and saw nothing wrong with institution of polygamy. He argued that polygamy was a natural way of birth control and urged for the preservation of secret societies as institutions of order and good government; he repudiated the anthropological findings of African inferiority. It must be made clear that Blyden did not condemn European culture at all but only wanted to make African culture co-equal.

It is not known what prompted Blyden to formulate his philosophy of African Culture at a time when Africans were attracted to western culture. It might have been an emotional reaction to European expansion in Africa at that time, or it might have been from his stay in the U.S. in 1850 when he experienced racial discrimination, or still, he might have been inspired from classical reading which he loved very much. Nevertheless, his philosophy had a great impact and is still

felt today; current emphasis in Africa is on African personality and the dignity of the African race.

The reaction of the educated Africans in Lagos to European bluff and arrogance might have been influenced by Blyden's call to cultural nationalism. Whatever the case, Nigerian nationalism was under way. The first sign of 'Nigerianness' was seen in the casting off of foreign names in favor of African names. Before this time the liberated Africans were very proud of foreign names; most of them bore the names of their former masters while others bore the names given them by the white missionaries. Those who bore their masters' names did so in gratitude for having been liberated. But the second generation owed nobody any-thing to be grateful for. Of course, not all who were liberated were happy with foreign names. In 1883 Isaac Willoughby wrote to the Lagos Times, angrily, saying:

What on earth have I to do with the name
Willoughby, or my wife with Puddicombe?
What had my mother to do with Mary Easment?
What do these names mean?.... It is not known,
it is unmeaningful what I am called by.⁵

Then began the movement for dropping foreign names and the adoption of Nigerian names. Thus David B. Vincent became Mojola Agbebi; Joseph Pythagoras Haastrup became Ademuyiwa Haastrup; George William Johnson became Oshokale Tejumade Johnson, and the Rev. J. H. Samuel became Adegboyega Edun. These people changed their names because foreign names made

⁵ Jean Herskovits Kopytoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria. (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison. 1965) p. 276.

them strangers in their own country. Foreign names were meaningless to them since they only distinguished one person from another and do not tell history about the person bearing the name. African names are memorials of events or incidents in the family, or, show the circumstance of the parents when the child was born. They also tell whether the child is from royal family or tell the day of the week in which the child was born or, tell the name of the family god. Although there was a 'name rush', not all the educated Africans denounced their foreign names. There were some who retained their English names such as James Penson Lablo Davis and Johnathan John Thomas. Also Edward Blyden, the apostle of cultural nationalism and James Johnson, the militant nationalist, retained their names.

A great majority of the converts did not like to adopt African names. In 1883 the CMS decided that converts retain their Nigerian names except when they had heathenish connotation. This decision was taken following the Commission on crimes by the converts bearing illustrious name such as Wilberforce. This ruling created sensation among the Christians. When Rev. James Johnson insisted on baptizing only the children with African names many parents left the Anglican church and sought membership in the Wesleyan church where there was no such ruling. However, some accepted the ruling only to drop the African names soon after the baptism.

The historiography was the next thing to which the nationalists turned their attention. Before this time much of the

country's history was remembered by oral traditions. The attempt to write down the history was to save the past history which otherwise would have been forgotten. As a practical step toward the preservation of the past history, the colonial government at Lagos was urged to substitute West African History and Geography for the British History in schools.⁶ In 1894 J.A. Otunba Payne published a Table of Principal Events in Yoruba History in Lagos and the West Africa Almanack which became a very useful reference book for lawyers and judges in Lagos during that time. A more detailed research was done into the origin and the migration of the Yoruba tribe to their present country. In 1897 Samuel Johnson completed this research which was published as the History of the Yoruba in 1921.

The cultural nationalists were also interested in the indigenous religion which the missionaries had condemned. Before the end of the century the nationalists had lost confidence in the Christian religion and were very critical of the type of Christianity that was being spread in the country. They discredited the missionaries and all Europeans and dumped all of them into one category as Christians whose main goal was to exploit the people of Nigeria for the benefit of the white race. They began to look for a national church of Nigeria which was to be what the Anglican Church was to England. Then Mojola Agbebi advocated radical study of the indigenous gods, stones, designs and images. In 1895 the Rev. Moses Lijadu studied Yoruba mythology and discovered that Ifa, the

⁶Kopytoff op. cit; p. 246.

palm-god, had a legend of creation very similar to Christianity, in that the redeemer is hidden in the mystic rites of the god. In Iboland the people were impressed with the action of Bishop Shanahan, an Irish priest, who was so deeply interested in their religion and studied it. He had discovered that Ibo religion was not "destructive but transforming;" he was therefore able to explain "Mass in terms of spirit worship and the Supreme Being in terms of Tshuku."⁷ In the Yorubaland the ancient Ogboni was reformed to become the Christian Ogboni Fraternity. In time the reformed Ogboni Society rivaled foreign Lodges like the Masonic and Macdonald Lodges and spread throughout the country with a branch in London. In the Niger Delta area George Pepple headed the reformation of Owu-Ogbo, an Ijaw freemasonry fraternity. In Calabar Ekpo was reinstated. (Ekpo is still used in Ibibioland, where the writer comes from, as a political institution in governing the traditional society.) In Iboland the Ekumeku movement was revitalized. It resisted strongly the British court system and Christianity, both of which were contrary to the established tradition. In 1902 the movement attacked and destroyed schools, court and church buildings, and attacked the personnel of the Niger Company at Onitsha and Asaba. Troops were rushed in to disperse the rioters and as a punishment the people were forced to rebuild the buildings they had destroyed.

To complete the list of the customs and institutions which

⁷E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria. (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd. 1966) p. 265.

were rehabilitated, mention must be made of the return to African dress. From the nineties the radical nationalists had become very much interested in African dress. The man who led the way in casting off foreign clothes was Mojola Agbebi. He was very proud of his native dress agbada, and when he toured England and America between 1902 and 1903 he proudly wore this gorgeous robe, the cold winter notwithstanding. Today agbada is regarded as national dress of Nigeria.

The rise of Nigerian cultural nationalism must be seen in terms of a strong resistance to the alien culture which the Nigerian elite had come to detest. It was also an attempt by the elite to re-establish Nigerian leadership in culture, economics and political life of Southern Nigeria. The educated Africans were looking to their leadership in these institutions and organizations as a step toward political power. Very surprisingly, the missionary reaction to the cultural revolution was that of restraint and caution. In Lagos, the Niger Delta and Calabar the missionaries left participation in these institutions to individual conscience. In Egbaland the white missionaries, Townsend, Faulkner and Wood actually joined the Ogboni Society and participated in its rites.⁸ Their aim was to find out what the Society really was, so as to be able to control it.

Between 1900 and 1914 cultural nationalism was at the root of opposition to the administration's measures affecting the indigenous institutions. Thus we see the opposition to the

⁸Ayandele op. cit; p. 270.

government's proposal for the installation of electric light and water works for Lagos. In 1895 the people of Lagos staged a 'lamp march' in protest against the proposed electric light. They told the Governor that their lamps were better than European electric light and, when the plant was finally installed they boycotted it. And in Ibadan the people refused to allow the government to survey their land. When Governor Macgregor introduced the Forest Ordinance and the Native Bill, the nationalists accused him of violating the indigenous forest regulations and the Yorubaland tenure. They also argued that European amenities were responsible for all sorts of evils such as brevity of life and women sterility. In 1908, when Governor Egerton introduced a water bill for Lagos the vulturalists opposed it partly for political and partly for ecological reasons.

The Native Churches

The educated Africans were not only interested in Nigerian culture but also in church government. Long before 1890 most of them had hoped that as members of the Christian church they would be allowed to play an important part in the church government. They were encouraged to hope for self-government of the church when they were told that they were the future leaders of the church. They were also told that the white missionaries would be withdrawn from West Africa and after that they would take over the management of the church. It was the policy of the CMS that the West African churches be-

come 'self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.'⁹

The man who was behind this brilliant policy was Henry Venn, the Secretary of the CMS Parent Committee 1842-1872. Venn was the lover of Africans and their culture which he urged the white missionaries to preserve.¹⁰ He had also called for the appointment of the African laymen to the local boards and committees. Venn's revolutionary policies were very popular with the Africans but unpopular with the white missionaries out in the field. The local white missionaries had regarded the converts as well as the educated Africans as 'infants' who had recently been rescued from ignorance and superstitions, and as such, they had to go through a long period of training and guidance. To Venn's charge that African culture be preserved, they answered that there was nothing good in African culture worth preserving, except the language.

The main reason behind Venn's self-governing church policy was to relieve the Parent Committee of financial burden as all the white missionaries were taken care of by the Committee. But for the educated Africans the self-governing church policy meant something else altogether. They were looking to the church government as a stepping stone toward political power. To them self-government of the church was not an end in itself but a means to an end. Thus they became more frustrated when

⁹ Philip D. Curtin. The Image Of-Africa. (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964), p. 424.

¹⁰ Venn was the same person who recommended a lower salary for African clergy. The aim was that they should not be materially minded. (Curtin op. cit; pp. 423-424).

their chances of advancement were denied them through the church hierarchy. The laymen were also frustrated as they were not allowed to exercise their majority votes in the boards according to the principle of democracy.

Between 1880 and 1890 the anti-white sentiment had spread throughout Southern Nigeria. The first reaction of the nationalists was to protest against the type of education the CMS was providing in Lagos. At that time Christian education was literary and religious, elementary school was the highest ceiling in education and only in few cases were African clergy allowed to receive college education. Higher education was not the policy of the church, the aim was to keep the Africans as religious as possible. After elementary school a child had an opportunity to continue some training in trades. In the post World War Two era missions have reversed their earlier policy on education and awarded few scholarships to their members to study overseas. The recipients of such scholarships were bound to come back and serve the missions which sent them in various capacities upon the completion of their study.

The educated Lagosians considered this type of education as poor, inadequate and inferior; two men, Charles Foresythe and Otunba Payne, founded the Society for the Promotion of Religion and Education in Lagos. The aim of the society was to force the CMS out of Lagos and after that take over the control of the education and the church and when the missionaries got wind of this they suppressed the movement. The significance of the society is the fact that it had some kind

of political flavor since it was a multi-tribal organization, open to muslims, Christians and pagans alike.

By 1891 the educated Africans were ready to carry their nationalism to the Christian church. Those nationalists who subscribed to this course of action called themselves the Ethiopians and their movement 'Ethiopianism'.¹¹ The term, 'Ethiopianism' originally referred to the evangelism of Africa. But it meant different things in different parts of Africa. In Central and South Africa it meant the independence of the church as well as anti-colonialism; in Nigeria it meant anti-white missionary and self-government of the church and in Ivory Coast, the Ethiopian, William Harris, preached submission to the secular authority.¹²

In Nigeria the Rev. James Johnson spearheaded the 'Ethiopianism.' Johnson was born in Sierra Leone of Yoruba parents and was educated in Furah Bay College, where he later taught. He came to Nigeria in 1874 and in 1876 he was appointed the superintendent of the CMS stations in Yorubaland. Because of lack of cooperation from the white missionaries and his failure to end the domestic slavery he was recalled to Lagos in 1880. Thereafter, he became a radical nationalist. As far as he was concerned, Christianity for Africans was not divorced from politics. For him the church was to provide a platform

¹¹Ayandele op. cit; p. 177.

¹²Thomas Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa. (University Press, New York, 1957), p. 109.

for nationalism and because of his militancy, Governor Carter called him a 'mischievous patriot,' and when Johnson criticized him for invading Ijebu in 1892, he was removed from the Legislative Council. Although Johnson was a nationalist and patriot, yet he had no political program for the people. His kind of nationalism was Christian in character for he was thinking of Christian West Africa.

The missionaries were unable to check the wave of Ethiopianism. As early as 1869 the cry, 'Africa for the Africans' was heard and by 1880 the anti-white missionary feeling was widespread throughout Lagos so that in 1886 a layman wrote,

... We cry aloud complainingly, an echo reverberates the sound and a voice in reply comes to us ringing the words in our ears SECESSION! SECESSION!!¹³

With this type of rebellious ferment it was not long before the Ethiopians struck. The first Christian mission to be affected by Ethiopianism was the Southern Baptist Mission which came to Nigeria in 1850. In 1888 the African members of the church broke away from the Baptist Mission leaving only eight members and founded the Native Baptist Church. The occasion which touched off the secession was when a Nigerian pastor, Moses Ladejo Stone, was summarily dismissed by a white missionary from Mississippi, the Rev. W.J. David. David had accused Stone of engaging in a trade to augment his meagre salary which he (David) had refused to increase. Although David was not a racist, yet his action was regarded by the

¹³ Ayandele op. cit; p. 198.

nationalists as racist, which they were not prepared to allow in Nigeria. Thus, Stone became a national hero.

With the first successful rebellion against the American Baptist Mission other rebellions against other denominations were in the offing. In 1891 a group of Nigerians founded the United Native African Church in protest against the CMS ill treatment of Bishop Crowther, the bishop of the Niger Mission. Ajayi (later Bishop Crowther) was a freed Yoruba slave. He was born in Yoruba land of Western Nigeria and was given the native name Ajayi. At about the age of fifteen he was captured during one of the Yoruba civil wars and was sold to a Portuguese slaver; ^{but} was saved when the British man-of-war intercepted the ship bound for the New World. Ajayi was taken to Free Town in 1822 where the CMS took him over and educated him in Sierra Leone and in England. In 1825 he was baptised and christened Samuel Crowther, and in 1845 he was ordained and sent to Abeekuata in Western Nigeria. In 1864 he was elevated and consecrated Bishop of the Niger Diocese. This was a great honor to him and to the African race for at that time and age no one dreamed that an African would be so honored. This was unprecedented even in the administration and the credit went to Henry Venn, the Secretary of the CMS Parent Committee, who had a devoted love for the African race. Henry was a man who believed in an indigenous church supported by the indigenous economy or what was popularly known as the 'Bible and the plough.'¹⁴

¹⁴Robert W. July. op. cit; p. 184.

When Crowther set out to evangelize the Delta country through African agents, he was of the opinion that Africans were better educated by the Africans.

Crowther's authority in the Diocese after some time diminished and as he became older his agents took advantage of him and misbehaved. In 1884 he was severely criticized for his weak administration and from then on his authority was stripped of him gradually by the CMS, till in 1891 he was relieved of it altogether and his African agents were either suspended or dismissed on the grounds of immorality. This incident sparked up severe criticism by the nationalists who saw the dismissal of Crowther as an indictment on African capabilities. It is true that Crowther's authority in the diocese was weak and that some of his agents were misbehaving, but the nationalists felt that Brooke's Report was generally too severe on a man who was about ninety years old and who throughout his life time had been humble and devoted to western culture. They saw the dismissal as a pointer of things to those who had imbibed western standards. They also saw Robinson and Brooke, who made the investigation, as representatives of a new generation of white missionaries who no longer believed in Venn's policy of an African church and clergy supported by African economy, but rather as representatives of the new imperialism of the late nineteenth century. Brooke in his report had recommended that white missionaries be sent to work in the Delta diocese.

The reaction of the nationalists was wild, ranging from threat to secession from the CMS. James Johnson, the militant

nationalist, said:

It was Africa that was on trial and it behoved all Africans, whether Christian or Muslims or 'pagans' to rally round the Bishop and the agents in the mission.¹⁵

In the north the Emir of Bida asked David Mackintosh, an agent of the Niger Company, to send all the CMS white missionaries away from his territory, and in the Niger Delta the people promised to kill either Robinson or Brooke should any of them set his foot in the area. By far the wildest reaction was the secession from the CMS by a group of Nigerian professionals and businessman who founded the independent United Native Church. This action marked the beginning of Nigeria on a long road to independence, also a high water mark of Blyden's Africanism. But Blyden was ^{not} connected with the founding of the church. He might have influenced it but did not cause it. His presence in Lagos on 2, January 1891 was not in connection with the launching of a native church. The idea of founding a native church had existed before that day. The United Native African church was a medium of expression through which the educated Africans reacted against Europeans and their culture. In a meeting of the Lagos bourgeois it was resolved "that a purely Native African Church can be founded for the evangelisation and amelioration of our race to be governed by Africans."¹⁶

¹⁵ Ayandele op. cit; p. 217.

¹⁶ Kopytoff, op. cit; p. 257.

Between 1888 and 1917 more native churches were founded in Southern Nigeria. In 1901 a group of Nigerians seceded from the Breadfruit Church and founded the Bethel African Church and in 1917 another group from the Methodist church and founded the United African Methodist Church. The founding of native churches in Southern Nigeria put the country on the road to independence. At the Breadfruit Church the Prayer Book was revised and prayers for the native kings and chiefs were introduced in place of prayers for the English monarch. This was to make the church as native as possible.

The establishment of the native churches was the only way the Nigerian elite could demonstrate their opposition to the rigid church structure. This was their own nationalism and, although they were concentrated in Lagos it does not mean that they did not concern themselves with what affected other parts of the country. As a matter of fact they were; they were concerned with the Niger Crisis and protested the conquest of Northern and Eastern Nigeria. On the eve of the invasion of Ijebu in 1892 by Governor Carter, a nationalist, Mojola Agbebi, wrote the following:

The fathers of revolution are beating the air, and revolution is profilic of results.... The Car of Jehovah has unloosed itself... and in its onward progress through the length and breadth of this country, willing as well as unwilling man who obstruct its pathway will be reduced to atoms.¹⁷

Already the nationalist press had advocated the building of a railway line to reach north before it actually started in 1898 and reached Kano in the north in 1911. Only in Calabar the people were not actively involved in the nationalist move-

¹⁷ Ayandele op. cit; p. 221

ment which resulted in the formation of the native churches. We have to appreciate the fact that they had no press of their own as was the case in Lagos. Nevertheless, they shared the same sentiment and vision as the Lagos nationalists. The other thing about the early educated Nigerians is the fact that they were not tribalists; all of them had an universal outlook.

There is no doubt that the high water mark of racial tension between 1890 and 1894 following the Niger Crisis and the greatest nationalism before 1900 centered round Bishop Crowther. Although the bishop in his early life was not a nationalist and did not approve of nationalism, yet in 1891 he had become a symbol of nationalism and a rallying point for the elite.

Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the so-called 'Native Churches' were native in name only. For an example, the Delta Pastorate did retain all the Anglican forms of worship, liturgy, music and ceremonies. However, mention must be made of the Native Baptist Church under the Rev. Mojola Agbebi, which tried to be indigenous by retaining native names, native dress, vernacular in worship and some healthful native customs and habits. On the whole the Ethiopians were not as successful as the cultural nationalists. The delta Pastorate finally re-joined the Anglican Church in 1897, thus ended her brief independence.

The founding of the Native Churches did not satisfy every nationalist. Therefore other religious movements, more radi-

cal than the first movement arose; their main aim was anti-imperialist. In 1905, a fanatical religious movement, Mahdism, broke out in the north. The local Mahdis attacked both the British officials and the local chiefs who supported the British. In 1915, a puritanical religious movement broke out in Opobo, Eastern Nigeria. Its prophet, Gabriel Braid, who called himself the Second Elijah, took advantage of the war and the rumors that the British were leaving Nigeria to promise the people of the Delta area independence. The promise had special appeal to the people for soon after the war broke out, palm oil trade which the people depended on temporarily collapsed. Braid had a large following and after he had been jailed by the British on charges of sedition his movement split into further sects under different leaderships. Another separatist group called for the spiritual emancipation before political emancipation. Its prophet called for God and angels to be painted as Africans but Satan to be painted in any color. In 1948 a radical religious movement, the National Church of Nigeria, was founded at Abain Eastern Nigeria, as a political wing of the Zikist Movement. The Zikist Movement was a militant youth wing of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) which regarded Dr. Azikiwe, the leader of the NCNC, as the evangelist of Africa. The National Church of Nigeria directed its prayers to the God of Africa, its hymn for the freedom of the people and its litany beseeching deliverance from the British imperialism.¹⁸

¹⁸ Coleman op. cit; p. 303.

The general weakness of the separatist movement was the tendency toward endless split. "Small differences of opinion or petty personal rivalries would frequently cause the leader of one faction to break off and establish his own little sect."¹⁹ One other point about the Separatist Movement is the fact that only the older established churches have had some influence in Nigeria. Almost all the educated Nigerians, the writer included, owe their education to these older churches.

Political Nationalism

The general effect of the Separatist Movement was the awakening of national consciousness which resulted in the demand for self-government in the Post War era. Not all the educated Nigerians were satisfied with the overall achievements of the Native Churches. Before the outbreak of war in 1914, a number of educated Nigerians had increased rapidly due to learning facilities which Lagos as the premier city of Nigeria had provided. In 1906 when the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Colony and the Protectorate of Lagos were united, Lagos became the capital and has remained so ever since. In addition to being a political center, Lagos is also a commercial center where the exchange of ideas and cultures take place. With this background it is not difficult to see why Lagos during the first decade of this century became the birth place of political activities in Nigeria. The new middle class of doctors, lawyers, teachers and engineers began to pay particular attention to political grievances. Thus, in 1909 two doctors, Obasa and Randle formed the People's

¹⁹Coleman op. cit; p. 177.

Union. This was the first attempt at forming a political union quite independent of religious movements. Ethiopianism was by this time a spent force and its place was taken over by the Anti-Slavery Aborigines Protection Society, a branch which was formed in Lagos in 1910. The Society had a very conservative goal which was to protect traditional land tenure and the interest of a few chiefs.

The People's Union was, as described above, an organization of the elite. Its first political action was to oppose the proposed water scheme for Lagos. It organized the demonstration which resulted in the stoning of the government offices and a riot at the Tinubu Square. An encounter between the police and the demonstrators ensued and the latter were dispersed. The demonstrators had complained, though, without justification, that the water scheme would benefit only the Europeans, since most Lagosians were too poor to pay the water rate. In spite of strong opposition the water rate was, however, passed by the Legislative Council. The failure to stop the water bill had some psychological effect upon the members of the People's Union. In the words of Professor Coleman, the Union became 'moribund' and an attempt to revise it in 1923 was not quite successful.

The water rate protest was not the first political protest in Lagos before 1909. Shortly after Nigeria had been separated from Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1886, Governor Denton, the then Governor, had introduced a 'House tax' which was to yield revenue for road and sanitary developments in Lagos. These projects were to have been under taken by the Lagos council,

a process toward self-government. Citizens numbering over 5,000 and led by the educated Africans marched to the Governor to protest against the proposed 'house tax'. The Governor was told that the majority of people of Lagos were poor and would not be able to pay the tax. Secondly, the people complained, that the majority of the people of Lagos were not represented in the Legislative Council. In actual fact, what the people were complaining about was taxation without representation. The Colonial Government had no intention to grant the elective principle to the people, rather, it continued to nominate people to represent special interest groups. Those African members of the Legislative Council as well as the professionals in the administration who supported the tax were denounced by the people. In Ijebu the matter was different. There the people lost confidence in their spokesman, John A. Otunba Rayne; he was told not to be their spokesman again.

Taxation

The next great national issue in Southern Nigeria was the proposed introduction of direct tax. The people were so agitated about it and when it was finally introduced in 1916, protests in the form of riots broke out throughout the South and culminated in the Aba Women Riot of 1929. The opposition to direct tax in the South cannot be discussed or understood without saying something about the Anti-Liquor Movement.

The effect of alcohol on the people of Nigeria was the most controversial and debatable issue both in Nigeria and in

Britain. The humanitarians, missionaries and some educated Nigerians had condemned traffic in alcohol. All sorts of evils ranging from drunkenness, laziness, to infant mortality, were attributed to alcohol. In some quarters, it was believed that traffic in alcohol was worse than the slave trade. From 1884 Britain assumed the leadership of an international anti-liquor movement and in 1886 the CMS with the support of the Wesleyan and the United Presbyterian Missions formed a committee to press the Imperial Government to check traffic in alcohol in Nigeria. At the Brussels Conference of 1890 a high tariff of 7 shillings a gallon was proposed either to cripple or kill the trade. But this was rejected by the French and the Germans who did not want to destroy their African trade. As a result a tariff of six pence per gallon was agreed upon. It was also agreed that Northern Nigeria be regarded as the territory of prohibition.

In Nigeria the prohibitionists were very active. They brought pressure to bear upon the government to raise the duty on alcohol from time to time, something that the government felt reluctant to do. In 1895 the duty was raised to 2 shillings and in 1899 it actually rose to 3 shillings and in 1908, the year that the Commission on alcohol was held, the duty was 5 shillings a gallon. This was a violation of the Brussels Agreement.

The leaders of the Anti-Liquor Movement in Nigeria had suggested to the Lagos Government that direct taxation be introduced into Southern Nigeria to take the place of duties on spirits. It was also believed that the introduction of

direct taxation would mark a step toward self-government. As the government derived its revenue from duties on spirits it was not possible for it to ban the traffic in alcohol. For example, in 1913 duties derived from spirits amounted to £1,140,000 which was over 30 per cent of the total revenue for that year.²⁰ Therefore a ban on the sale of liquor was to deprive the government from revenue. Secondly, a ban would have brought about the introduction of direct taxation into the South. This was what the educated Nigerians were not prepared to allow.

In 1908 the Anti-Liquor Movement gathered momentum as the moralists were on the warpath. It was here that the nationalists stepped in to oppose the ban on spirits. Herbert Macaulay, a surveyor by trade, but turned a journalist and a politician, led the opposition. In 1908 he published a pamphlet, Governor Egerton and the Railway in which he alleged that the administration had misappropriated funds in connection with the building of the railway. He also alleged that the administration was contemplating the introduction of taxes in order to wipe out the Public Debt.²¹ With this kind of propaganda the people of Lagos were aroused to action.

²⁰ Alan Burns, Sir. History of Nigeria. (London: Ruskin House 1964) p. 232.

²¹ Other taxes Macaulay was having in mind were: Hut Tax, Land Tax, Income Tax, Export Tax, and Poll Tax.

They besieged the government offices and threw stones at them. The Nigerian press joined in the protest by denouncing the leaders of the Anti-Liquor Movement as 'blatant ecclesiastics.'

The educated Africans were accused by Bishop Tugwell, the leader of the Anti-Liquor Movement in Nigeria, of being unwilling to bear the burden of direct taxation, which he considered to be a 'product of Civilization.' The educated Nigerians did not oppose the steps that would have brought about self-government. What they were arguing about was that the government was sitting upon a huge revenue derived from duties which was not spent in the interest of the people. This view seems to coincide with that of the traders as seen from the following letter written by John Holt traders in 1901:

Truly our rulers are Shylocks! Can you tell us what this government has to show for the \pounds 1,327,546 custom duties paid to it since it started in 1891 up to 31 March 1900? They have no great interior roads made open and secure for trade. They have a few fine houses such as would delight the heart of Major Ross. They have a beautiful yacht called Ivy to buy and keep and what else? Let trade since their advent answer. It is positively disgraceful.²²

In 1909 a Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the British Government to Nigeria. The Commission was headed by Sir M.D. Chambers, a retired lawyer, who had served in Britain, Gibraltar and in India. The Commission heard evidence from both Africans, Europeans and experts and received sixty four written statements. When the Report was out it denied the accusations of the prohibitionists and ruled that the people of

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Ayandele op. cit; p. 319.

Southern Nigeria are generally sober people. But this might not have been the case had the Imperial Government and the administrators cooperated with the Commission. Professor Ayandele maintains that the Colonial Office had some facts in its possession which it suppressed and did not make available to the Commission and as a result a 'Pro-government Report' was produced. The aim was to turn the British press against the prohibitionists who raised such a huge international cry. The Commission's ruling was a triumph for the nationalists. But it was a short triumph, for in 1916 when the war had curtailed the importation of spirits into Nigeria, direct tax was introduced. The loss of revenue from duties on spirits as a result of the war could be seen in 1917 figures which was £89,000 as against £1,140,000 in 1913.²³

In 1916 when the direct tax had finally been introduced into Southern Nigeria, riots broke out. The first disturbance in connection with the tax took place in Iseyin in Benin Province. We recall that in 1897 King Overami was deposed and sent into exile to Calabar following the murder of seven Britons. When the ex-King died his people selected his son to succeed him to the throne. At the time of his inauguration the British had made a secret deal with the king to introduce direct tax in Benin. As the people refused to pay the tax, riots broke out in Iseyin. The revolt was crushed with the loss of lives. By asking the King to impose the tax, the British were giving the King the power which he tra-

²³ Burns op. cit; p. 232.

ditionally did not inherit; the British were ignorant of the tradition. This was what the people of Iseyin were protesting against. But by far the most serious riot in connection with direct taxation occurred in 1918 in Egba division of Western Nigeria. Here a train was derailed, a railway station was burnt down, telegraph lines were destroyed and the Alake, the traditional ruler of Abeokuta, nearly lost his life. It took two months, June-July, before the riot was crushed by the Nigeria Veterans of World War One at a loss of many lives.

The Egba people had long standing grievances against the Lagos Colonial Government; they had not forgotten that their land at Ikorodu was annexed in 1865, and worst of all, in 1914 they lost their independence. Long before the advent of British administration, the Egba people had enjoyed semi-independence and when their homes were destroyed by the Dahomeans, they found shelter in Abeokuta where they continued to enjoy their independence. In 1865 under the leadership of the liberated Africans, the Egba Board of Management was set up. The aim was to deal with the Lagos government diplomatically in connection with trade and most importantly, to take over the government of the country after the British had withdrawn. A national flag was designed and a national anthem for the Egba nation was composed, envisaging national unity. In Ghana a similar arrangement was made, mainly through the inspiration of Dr. James Horton, to take over the administration there. This was the Fanti Confederation which was short lived due to internal dispute. But in Nigeria the Egba Administration con-

tinued to 1914 despite Colonial attempt to crush it and to declare a protectorate over the territory. In 1893 when Governor Carter made his triumphant entry into the interior of Yorubaland after the defeat of the Ijebus, the independence of Egba-land was formally recognized. But in 1914 Lord Lugard withdrew the recognition following the charges of oppression against the management by the Abeokuta people and a protectorate was declared over the territory. With this background in mind it is not difficult to understand why the Egbas opposed the direct tax the way they did.

The Press

Nigerian nationalism was aided by the Nigerian press which during the nineteenth century enjoyed great freedom. The first newspaper editors were not professional journalists but men of various professions such as clergymen, lawyers, doctors and businessmen who were concerned citizens. Again, these people were not Nigerians in the true sense of the word but liberated Africans from Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Among them were Mojola Agbebi and James Johnson, both clergymen, who edited local papers; R. B. Blaize, a merchant, and Kitoyi Ajasa, a public figure who owned and edited The Nigerian Pioneer. In the twentieth century, newspaper editors, although they were professionals, exercised moderate views on the administration. Most of the early newspapers were founded in the 1880's when national issues such as the founding of native churches and the British expansion were widely discussed in many quarters. The Lagos Times was founded in 1880; the

Lagos Observer in 1887; the Eagle and Lagos Critics in 1883; the Mirror in 1887 and in 1890 the Lagos Weekly Times became the Lagos Weekly Record edited by John Payn Jackson, a Liberian, who had become a naturalized citizen. The Lagos Weekly Record was the most militant paper and was the people's spokesman. At first Jackson supported the administration policy and praised the penetration and pacification of the interior which according to him were necessary for commerce. For this reason Jackson had welcomed the strong measures the administration took against Ijebu in 1892 while militant nationalists, James Johnson and Agbebi condemned it. Later, Johnson had to make a complete reversal of his stand from support to criticism of the administration's policies in the interior. He made frequent attacks on the government's policy on land, being afraid that Government was going to make native squatters on their own land and strongly criticized the replacement of African leaders and the maintenance of military rule in the interior. Jackson and his paper supported the cultural nationalists and strongly criticized the replacement of African clergymen by white ministers, the action, which he saw as a step backward; Governor Carter was very frightened of this paper and so tried to be friendly with Jackson. He therefore advertized regularly in the paper and paid an annual subsidy of £150, but in 1902 the new governor, Governor Macgregor, cut off the subsidy and instituted the Newspaper Ordinance by which the press had to register the names of owners and printers with £500 deposits. This was a fantastic sum of money for any ambitious young man

wishing to enter into journalism. The aim was simply to kill the press in Nigeria for a similar Bill had killed the Tobago News of Trinidad. The Trinidad Press Ordinance had called for ₦200 deposite, but in Nigeria the Governor demanded ₦500 deposite.

The newspaper Ordinance was strongly denounced by the nationalists; the press also denounced the measure as a calculated attempt to kill the people's only representation. A petition signed by 300 persons forced the Governor to shelve the bill for a while only to reintroduce it in 1903. This time the bond was reduced to ₦250 and in spite of protest by the three unofficial members of the Legislative Council the Bill was passed. A petition signed by 200 persons was sent to London only to be rejected by Chamberlain. In spite of this law the press did not stop from attacking Government policy which was not in the interest of the people. Governor Egerton was very much scared by the Nigerian press that in 1909 he introduced the Seditious Offenses Ordinance to curb militant nationalists like Herbert Macaulay, who had published a pamphlet in 1908 criticizing the administration. The Bill had stipulated that offenders were to be punished by two years imprisonment and or by a fine which was not fixed. In 1916 Lord Lugard also introduced the Censorship Bill which was intended to cripple the power of the press. On the whole the early Nigerian press was quite moderate in their criticism of the Colonial Government. But in the interwar years and especially in the Post World War Two era, the press was more radical than the old press because the editors were radical nationalists.

Another great national issue in Lagos during the first decade of this century was land tenure in Southern Nigeria. Land in Nigeria is traditionally owned by the community and any male adult member of the community has the right to the use of community land. But a problem was created in 1912 when the Lagos Government instituted the West African Land Commission with a view to introducing into the South the Northern land system. In the North the land belonged to the people but it was the Governor who had the right to dispose of land as he wished. In Lagos this move was seen by the nationalists as a threat to communal land in Southern Nigeria. Already in 1910 the Supreme Court of Southern Nigeria had ruled that the Lagos land belonged to the Crown for it had been transferred at the time of the treaty with King Dosumu in 1861. The nationalists had told the government that land traditionally belonged to the White Cap Chiefs and not the King, hence, it could not have been transferred unilaterally. The proposed Land Commission brought a strong protest from both the urban elite and the rural masses, the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery Aborigines Protection Society also protested. A joint action by Ycruba Chiefs, the Society and the nationalists was planned and out of this meeting a delegation was sent to London to protest the administration's action. Although the delegation did not accomplish much due to lack of funds and internal dispute yet it was the first time that the educated few and uneducated many came together on a common cause.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 the political activities in Nigeria were suspended. But the war had disrupted the social and the economic life of the people. Shortly before the outbreak of the war Nigeria had become a great supplier of palm oil and palm kernel, cocoa and groundnuts (peanuts). These were the new cash crops which had been introduced into the country early in the century to supplement the food crops. During the war the shipment of these farm products were tied up at the port due to lack of shipping vessels. As the war had curtailed the importation of spirits, which meant the loss of revenue to the government, and in order to make good for the loss, the government imposed export duties on local products. And although tropical products were in great demand in Britain and sold at high prices, yet the export duties took away the profits that the Nigerian farmer would have received. As such the export duties did not escape severe criticism from the nationalists and the press.

The war also disrupted the development of transportation in the country. Luckily, the Lagos - Kano railway line had been completed before the outbreak of war, but work on the Eastern railway line which began in 1913, was halted at Enugu. The Enugu coal mines, which were opened in 1911, were supplying coal to the Nigerian railway, while tin mining was going on at Jos. Port Harcourt, the Nigerian second most important city was founded in 1913. As new towns and industries were opened more people from the countryside moved to these centers to find employment. Thus, on the eve of the Great War, with the agricultural development and a money economy, a class

of workers was created. They were the people who were bound to play an important part in the future development of modern Nigeria.

CHAPTER IV

THE EDUCATED ELITE AND MASSES REACT 1919-1939

When the First World War broke out in 1914 the resistance to British imperialism in Nigeria was temporarily suspended and after the war it began to gather momentum once again. In the inter-war period the pressure groups, political parties, the masses and the educated Southerners through the use of violence and constitutional means were hoping either to replace the Colonial Government or gain some kind of self-government measure. During this time new factors such as the congress system and student movement came to replace the old forms of resistance and nationalism. In this chapter, the activities of the National Congress of British West Africa, the Pan-African Congress, the West African Student Union, the Nigerian Youth Movement, the Nigerian National Democratic Party, tribal unions and the reaction of the masses will be examined.

The National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA)

The National Congress of British West Africa was organized shortly after the First World War. It was an affair of the intelligentsia who hoped to achieve some measure of self-government from the Colonial Government, leading eventually to the political and economic union of the British West African colonies. The idea of the Congress was first conceived in 1914 by two West Africans, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford,

a famous Ghanaian lawyer, and Dr. R.A. Savage, a Nigerian medical doctor, who lived and practiced medicine in Ghana. Dr. Savage was also the editor of Gold Coast Leader, a very West African influential paper. In 1913 Savage lost his job because the Government had taken over the post and refused him employment in the civil service. This incident might have contributed to the idea of launching the West African Congress. Having lost his job, Savage returned to Nigeria and tried to revise the People's Union.

Because of the war, not much was done till 1918 when the Gold Coast Leader sent out a call to the educated elite of the British West African Colonies to a conference to discuss ways and means of achieving greater African participation in the Colonial Governments of West Africa. Other West African newspapers such as the Sierra Leone Weekly and the Lagos Weekly Record joined in issuing the call for the Conference. Since the idea of the Congress came initially from Ghana, she was looked upon as the leader which had to launch the Conference. But because of an internal struggle within the local branch of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, Casely Hayford, the leader of the movement, found it difficult to get the Conference off the ground. The delay lasted till 1920.

On March 15, 1920 the Conference finally opened. Delegates from the four British West African Colonies attended. Nigeria was represented by six delegates all of them from Lagos and Calabar, the then two most important cities of Southern Nigeria. During the two weeks of deliberations, emphasis was on the most serious grievances of the elite. The resolutions passed

at the end of the Conference portrayed the concern of this emergent group. The resolutions could be summarized under three headings, namely, the land question, the administrative reforms and the alien question.

Land question was probably the most sensitive issue during the colonial era. Both the natural rulers and the educated elite were very much concerned about colonial alienation of valuable land. In their resolution they aimed at strengthening the position of the natural rulers and to assure the peasants the right to live off the land. It was therefore resolved:

That the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinances by which West African Governments acquire land compulsorily on payment of a nominal compensation and afterwards let the same land to private companies at higher rents should be modified...order to give owners of the land the benefits of the bargain.¹

With regard to the administrative reforms, it was resolved:

That the principle whereby the Governor nominates unofficial members of the Legislative Council is suspect and should be abolished and in its place should be substituted the principle of enfranchisement of the people.

That this Congress demands that the discriminatory practices which now exist in the West African Civil Service should be abolished and that all appointments be made subject to merit and not by reason of color, race or creed.²

With regard to the alien question, the delegates were thinking exclusively about the Syrians and the Lebanese who competed

¹Okoi Arikpo, The Development of Modern Nigeria. Baltimore, 1967, pp. 56-57.

²Arikpo, op. cit; pp. 56-57.

keenly with the African businessmen. The Lebanese were portrayed as 'undesirables' and a menace to good Government of the land' and the Congress asked the administration whether they should be repatriated from West African Colonies.³

As for the economic policy the Congress called for the formation of a Corporation to be known as the British West African Co-operative Association which was to be responsible for the founding of banks, promoting of shipping, establishing of cooperative stores and buying centers. The Congress called for cooperation in agricultural products whereby the producers' bargaining position would be strengthened and be able to compete effectively with the rival expatriate firms. Thus the economic policy of the Congress coincided with Garvey's and as such the Congress urged for cooperation with Garvey's Black Star Line. The economic program of the Congress was to have been realized within the political framework of self-government. But self-government for the West African colonies was in the future. However, the only time that the economic policy of the Congress was actually put into practice was in the 1930's when Winifried Tete-Ansa tried to unite West African farmers and businessmen to capture the market from the expatriate firms.

The Accra Conference accomplished very little because it was mainly devoted to finding a better place for the educated Africans within the existing system rather than to overthrow

³ Ali Magrui and Robert I. Robert, ed. Protest And Power In Black Africa. Oxford University Press. New York, 1970, p. 580.

it altogether. They had hoped to achieve the reforms by non-violent methods even though violence was in the air throughout West Africa. In Ghana, in 1920, riots broke out whereby chiefs were attacked by the peasants and resulted in the dis-
toolment of those district Chiefs. In Nigeria a district chief in Benin was attacked by the people who accused him among other things of maladministration and exploitation of the people for his own personal gain, and in Sierra Leone a railway strike against the Lebanese cost some £250,000 damage to property.⁴

The analytical data of the background of the delegates to the Conference show that the lawyers and merchants dominated the Conference. Take the case of the Ghana delegation. Of the 35 delegates 15 were lawyers and eight were merchants who made up 66 percent of the total delegates and this was true of other delegations. The Conference was, therefore, trying to adopt policies to meet the needs of the rising bourgeoisie. The leaders failed to put forward radical programs which would have attracted the masses including wage earners, labourers, artisans and the lower clerks.

The second reason for the failure of the Accra Conference is that the leaders were short sighted about the attitude of the British with regard to the position of the educated Africans. Six weeks after the Conference, the leaders were able to collect

⁴ Ali Magrui and Robert I. Robert, ed. Protest And Power In Black Africa. (Oxford University Press. New York, 1970) p. 578.

10,000 and despatched a delegation to London to press for the Conference resolutions. In London the delegates talked to the liberal Britons and the British League of Nations Union to enlist their support. Even with that not much was accomplished as the British did not want to change their attitude. The colonial administrators were the main opposition; they opposed the idea of a political unity of West Africa on the ground that great differences in customs and language exist between the four West African Colonies. Governor Clifford of Nigeria denounced the Conference as follows:

... a self-selected and self-appointed Congregation of educated African gentlemen who collectively style themselves the "West African Conference"... whose eyes are fixed, not upon their own tribal obligations and their duties to their natural Rulers which immemorial custom should impose upon them, but upon political theories evolved by Europeans to fit a wholly different stage of civilization.⁵

Clifford went on to dismiss the idea of a "West African Nation" as an absurdity, and at the same time dismissed the idea of a 'Nigerian' nation on the ground that the tribal states are separated from one another by religion, custom, language, history, politics and race.

It was very unfortunate that the British adopted this type of attitude toward the educated Africans. These were the people they had to work with if power was to be transferred to the Africans.

⁵Michael Crowder, West African under Colonial Rule. (Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1968) p. 428

The blame was not entirely that of the British; part of it lay with the Africans themselves. While the Conference was still going on in Accra, the traditional rulers were circulating protests about the activities of the educated Africans. Sir Clifford claimed to have received such protests from the Nigerian chiefs. The chiefs were suspicious of the educated Africans and saw the Accra Conference as an attempt by the elite to undermine their position under the Indirect Rule system. The British on their part, regarded the elite as a minority who did not represent the majority. Hence they styled them 'self-appointed and self-selected' who did not know anything about their own customs. Indirect Rule was introduced so as to preserve the customs of the people and for the British to work with the chiefs, the traditional custodians of the customs. It is true that the elite were in the minority and it is also true that they did not know about their own customs as they knew about foreign customs. The blame is not entirely of their own volition. We have to remember that their education was geared toward foreign culture. They were expected to act like Europeans and after their education which was mostly abroad, they returned home and became Europeanized Africans, keeping themselves aloof from the society, strangers in their own homes. Thus a communication gap between the educated Nigerians and the traditional rulers was one of the problems affecting the elite-mass type cooperation in Nigeria in the early twenties.

Two years later, in 1922, a change of heart on the part of the British occurred. Interestingly enough, the man who

initiated the constitutional change in line with the wishes of the educated elite was the same man, who, back in 1920, had denounced the educated Africans in uncompromising terms. In 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford, who succeeded Lord Lugard in 1919, carried out constitutional changes replacing the old Nigerian council with the Legislative Council. The new constitution gave for the first time the elective principle to the people of Southern Nigeria. Four unofficial Africans were elected, three of them to represent the municipality of Lagos and one was to represent Calabar municipality. The four members were to be elected ^{by} adult males, 21 years of age and earning £100 a year income. This was a limited constitutional change, for the British were not in a hurry to hand over power to Africans. Even with this change unofficial African members of the Legislative Council were still in the minority. It is difficult to say what brought about Clifford's change of heart. But the influence of the Lagos branch of the NCBWA should not be ruled out. This concession had led to the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party led by Herbert Macaulay. Similar constitutional changes took place in Sierra Leone and in Ghana in 1924 and 1925 respectively.

It must be pointed out that before 1930 any demand for constitutional reform in Nigeria was for the Legislative Council and not for the Executive Council. The Accra Conference asked for only the Legislative Council reforms. It was rather the government which took the initiative in the thirties for African representation in the Executive Council. The demand for an unofficial African representation in the Executive Coun-

cil was first made in 1905 by C.A. Spara - Williams when he visited London. He took the occasion to raise the question of executive reforms with the Colonial Office. Spara-Williams was a Lagos lawyer and an unofficial member of the Legislative Council since 1901.

Even though the British administration started in 1861, following the cession of Lagos, the establishment of the Executive Council did not take place until 1886. The reason for this is that from 1866 Nigeria was administered as a province as a province of West Africa from Sierra Leone. Ghana was also administered from Sierra Leone. From 1874 Nigeria was separated from Sierra Leone and was administered from Ghana till 1886. From then on Africans began to be represented in the Legislative Council and not in the Executive Council.

In 1906 the Colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated. The Educated Africans including S.H. Pearse and Herbert Macaulay felt that they were not consulted before the amalgamation took place and in a resolution urged Governor Egerton to appoint Africans to both the Executive and the Legislative Councils. But the Governor rejected saying that "the present condition of West Africa renders it desirable that any unofficial should be appointed members of the Executive Council of British West Africa."⁶ This might have meant the consolidation of the British administration in West Africa.

⁶ Tekena N. Tamuno, "Unofficial Representation on Nigeria's Executive Council, 1886-1943." A Journal of West African Studies No. 4 October 1970, p. 51.

The Colonial Office and Lagos administration did not want to consider the unofficial African representation in the Executive Council. The reason they gave was that there were no 'suitable candidates.' By 'suitable candidates' they might have meant loyal candidates or pro-government candidates. In this the British were correct for in the inter-war period where Africans were demanding de-colonization it was impossible for the Colonial Office to have faith in any of them. The Executive was the inner council where policies were made and secrets kept. It was also the central system of colonialism and its proceedings were confidential; members of the Executive Council were expected by oath to stand with the administration even in unpopular measures. This, undoubtedly, would not have suited the Africans who wanted decolonization and their presence in the council would have inconvenienced the government. However, there were some pro-government candidates available but the fact is that the administration felt reluctance to share the decision-making process with the Africans.

Beginning 1928 the NCBWA began to change its attitude and demanded executive reforms. In its fourth annual meeting in 1930 the Congress made specific demands that the constitutional change in line with that of Ceylon be applicable to West African Colonies. The report of the Donoughmore Commission on the Ceylon Constitution published in 1928 had called for the granting of responsible government to Ceylon. The NCBWA did not follow up their demand for at the end of that year it became a spent force following the death of the leader of the movement, Casely Hayford.

Neither the Nigerian National Democratic Party nor the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which were the political parties in Nigeria then made any specific demands for Executive Council reforms which would have led to responsible government in Nigeria. Specific demands for executive reforms came from the West African Student Union (WASU) in 1943.

The West African Student Union

The WASU was founded in London in 1925 by Ladipo Solanke, a Yoruba law student. Its declared objectives included the following:

- (1) To find dwelling quarters for African Students.
- (2) To foster spirit of self-help, unity, and cooperation.
- (3) To foster a spirit of national consciousness and racial pride among its members.⁷

The WASU had a great impact on Nigerian nationalism. Apart from being a meeting place for Nigerian law students and other West African students, the leaders toured West African major cities to wake up national consciousness. In 1934 Ladipo toured West African countries soliciting funds for the establishment of branches of WASU and the building of a student Hotel. It was mainly through his efforts that the traditional rulers such as the Alake of Abeokuta, the Emir of Kano and Nana Sir Atta of Ghana were made patrons of WASU. The WASU was the most radical organization then existing in West Africa and its members came in contact with the communists and socialists who

⁷ J. S. Coleman, Nigeria. (University of California Press. Berkeley. 1965) p. 204.

had radical views on Imperialism. In 1934 when the Colonial Office decided to build a new student hotel, the Aggrey House, the WASU opposed it. It is unthinkable that the WASU should have opposed the building of the new hostel which was to have been more attractive than the old one.

Between 1930 and 1941 the WASU was more politically minded than ever before. In 1941 at the London Conference a resolution was passed demanding constitutional reforms for West African countries. They demanded that the executive be reformed and that six Africans be appointed to the executive council while the Governor retained the casting vote. This was a radical as well as an important resolution which had to have a profound effect upon Nigeria. In 1942 colonial officials in Nigeria brought the WASU resolution to the attention of the northern Chiefs meeting in May. The views of northern Chiefs were expressed by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alubaka Musulmi as follows:

.... we do not consider that in the territories of Northern Nigeria there is a single man who is sufficiently qualified to enter the Executive Council. We therefore do not agree with the proposal, because we do not think it right that the horse should hold the reins and control the rider. For a big country like Northern Nigeria it is not good that there should be a council in which no representative of the North sits.⁸

The meeting and the reply of the Northern Chiefs seem suspicious. It might have been pre-arranged by the British who did

⁸ Tekena N. Tamuno, "Unofficial Representation on Nigerian's Executive Council 1886-1949." A Journal of West African Studies No. 4 October 1970 p. 54.

not want constitutional change by then. Most importantly it is not on record that the chiefs of Western and Eastern Nigeria were consulted and what their replies were.

But in 1942 when Britain was hard pressed by war, the Colonial Office ordered executive reforms. In Ghana two Africans, Sir Ofori Atta K.B.E. a lawyer and Mr. K.A.Korsah, O.B.E. were nominated to the Executive Council, while in Nigeria three people, two of them Nigerians and one a European were nominated. The two Nigerians were Mr. (later Sir) Adeyero Alakija CBE a lawyer; and Mr. S. Bankole Rhodes a lawyer; the European was Mr. G.H. Avezathe, the manager of the Elder Dempster Lines. Avezathe's appointment should be regarded as the recognition of the importance the British attached to shipping during the war time. The appointment of three lawyers to Ghanaian and Nigerian Executive Councils was an indication of the importance the British attached to the educated elite in the forties. This was really a change of heart.

The admittance of Africans to the Executive Council one year after Northern Emirs had opposed the WASU resolution meant that the British had dismissed the Emir's argument of lack of suitable candidates.

The Pan-Africanism

The Pan-African Congress and Garvey's 'Back to Africa' Movement were two outside movements which influenced nationalism in Nigeria. The Pan-African Movement was launched in the U.S.A. in 1919 by one of the prominent negro leaders, E.W.B. DuBois. The actual meeting of the Congress took place

in Paris February 19-20, 1919 while the Paris Peace Conference was still in session. Mr. Blaise Diagne, a Senegalese, who was at the same time a deputy in the French National Assembly, was elected president. Africans who attended this first Congress were only twelve out of over 150 participants. It is not on record that Nigeria was represented in this first meeting, but in the last Conference held in Manchester, England, in 1945 Chief Awolowo attended. Other Africans who attended were Nkrumah of Ghana and Kenyatta of Kenya.

The Pan-African Congress passed resolutions urging the Peace Conference to see that the natives of Africa be allowed to participate in the Government as fast as development permits. It is quite clear that the Congress did not call for immediate granting of self-government to the African countries.

The Pan-African Congress accomplished very little in its life time. There are many reasons for this. Principally because the idea of Pan-Africanism was Afro-American rather than African. All the meetings of the Congress were held outside Africa and were attended mostly by people from outside Africa. Another most important reason is the fact that the movement was that of the intellectuals and as such did not appeal to the masses. The movement exercised restraints and accommodated colonialism. The president, Diagne, actually praised colonialism and went as far as to identify himself with the French. In 1922 he wrote in reply to Garvey's 'Back to Africa' call, challenging his claim to represent African people. He wrote: "We French natives wish to remain French,"⁹ and went on to

⁹Martin Kilson, And Rupert Emerson, The Political Awakening of Africa. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliff 1965) p. 21.

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proclaim that they "were Frenchmen first and Negroes afterward."¹⁰

Garvey's 'Back to Africa' Movement was the most popular of the two outside movements. It was a radical movement which called for radical nationalism. The movement was started by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican Negro. Garvey had hoped to unite the Africans on both sides of the Atlantic and since this could not be realized while European powers were still in Africa, he called on these powers to leave Africa for the Africans, and threatened to use force if the British and the French would not leave Africa voluntarily. His movement was very popular in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. The Colonial Governments were nervous about Negro influence in Africa particularly about Garvey's. In Ghana the immigration laws were tightened to prevent immigration of the 'undesirables' from across the Atlantic who happened to associate themselves with the movement. In Northern Nigeria a horse-boy was arrested by a local Emir and sent to a district officer on a charge of sedition. The boy had told the people that "a black king was coming, with a great iron ship full of black soldiers, to drive all whites out of Africa."¹¹ In Nigeria Garvey's paper, the Negro World was not allowed to circulate in public. The elder Azikiwe warned his young son, Nnamdi Azikiwe, of the consequence of reading it in public. Dr. Azikiwe while a young man at the Hope Waddel Institute had heard about Garvey as a redeemer of Africa and

¹⁰A. Ayo Langley. "Pan-Africanism In Paris 1924-36," The Journal of Modern African Studies Vol. 7, No. 1 (1969) p. 71.

¹¹Michael Crowder op. cit; p. 414.

had wanted to read more about him. He was fortunate to get hold of an old copy of the Negro World from his classmate. He was particularly impressed by Garvey's motto: 'One God, One Aim, One Destiny' which he immediately accepted as his philosophy and promised to delegate his service to Africa. But later in 1935 after he had completed his study in the U.S. and was ready to return to Nigeria, he wrote to Herbert Macaulay, "... I am returning home semi-Gandhic, semi-Garveyistic, non-chauvinistic, semi-ethnocentric, with a love for every one, of every clime on God's earth."¹²

In 1920 a branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was founded in Lagos by prominent church leaders who included the Rev. J.G. Campbell, and Rev. W.B. Euba, and the Rev. S.M. Abiodun and supported by John Payne Jackson, the editor of the Lagos Weekly Record and Ernest Ikoli, then a young man who later became the co-founder of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). Garvey had established the UNIA and the African Committee's League through which he hoped to accomplish the Unification of Africa¹³ and the Black Star Line which he founded was to open up trade between the American Negroes and African Negroes. Poor administration of the funds led to his arrest and imprisonment in 1928 on a charge of using mail to carry out fraud. Garvey was elected the temporary president of the Republic of Africa; a national flag and a national anthem

¹²Nnamdi Azikiwe, My Odyssey. (Praeger Publishers, New York 1970) p. 162.

¹³Coleman op. cit; p. 189.

were designed for Africa.¹⁴

There is no doubt that Garveyism had some impact on some eminent African leaders such as Azikiwe of Nigeria and Nkrumah of Ghana. Professor Coleman says: "Many themes in the latter day Nigerian nationalism have been cast in the spirit if not in the exact words of Garvey."¹⁵

The Nigerian Democratic Party

We had earlier noted that one of the outcomes of the 1922 Constitutional reform was the founding of political parties. The Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was founded in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, the grandson of Bishop Crowther. Macaulay was a civil engineer by profession but became interested in politics during Egerton's administration 1906-1912. From 1923 to 1938 when the Nigerian Youth Movement captured all the three Lagos seats in the Legislative Council, Macaulay had dominated Nigerian politics and he is now fondly remembered as the father of Nigerian nationalism.

Although the NNDP claimed to be a national party, yet it was basically a Lagos party, very much devoted to the restoration of the ancient House of Dosumu. It had no branches outside Lagos, not even in Calabar which was the second municipal city of the South. Between 1908 anti-water rate campaign and

¹⁴Crowder op. cit; p. 189.

¹⁵Coleman op. cit; p. 190.

the 1946 'Obnoxious Ordinances' campaign,¹⁶ Macaulay had demon-⁶⁷strated his anti-government activities in various ways. He led protest-delegations both inside and outside Nigeria and wrote pamphlets attacking colonial policies. Although he did not get along with the Lagos intelligentsia because of his autocratic attitude and romantic idealism yet he is regarded as the gadfly of the nation who attacked the government everywhere. There is no doubt that during the first three decades of the century, he was the leading agitator of nationalism.

The Nigerian Youth Movement

Beginning in the 1930's more Nigerian students who studied abroad returned home and together with those who graduated from Secondary Schools they congregated in Lagos. As their numbers increased they became more dissatisfied with the incumbent leaders and with the administration's policies. The political and national consciousness of the new generation was stimulated by the controversy over educational reforms. The government, in its new policy on education, had planned to provide technical training to Nigerians through Vocational schools and graduates from these schools were expected to take subordinate posts in the administration. To most educated Nigerians

¹⁶Macaulay died in 1946 while campaigning against the "Land Ordinance" which was passed in 1945. The Ordinance had converted the government acquired land into Crown land. Macaulay and others saw in this as a calculated attempt by the government to deprive the peasants of their land and sub-lease it to private interest or for the benefit of the white community.

of that time, this was a reverse of the educational policy from liberal to non-liberal education, hence they protested strongly. The timing for the reform was wrong in that it happened at a time when demand for the Nigerianization of the civil service was heard loudest. The radical youth felt that the reforms were calculated attempts by the government to delay the Nigerianization of the civil service by providing sub-professional education for Nigerians. Another source of anger was that the time required for a degree course in Yaba was longer than it took to do the same degree in the same subject in England.

The matter came to a head when in 1934 the Government, in spite of opposition, went ahead and inaugurated the Yaba Higher College. It was not attached to any English university but was authorized to issue its own Nigerian degrees in a number of faculties, including arts, medicine, engineering, economics and agriculture. Then the irate youth responded first by demanding that government provide scholarships to deserving Nigerians to study in England, and secondly, by inaugurating the Lagos Youth Movement. The founding fathers were Ernest Ikoli, a journalist, Dr. J.C. Vaughn, Oba Samuel Akinsanya and H.O. Davis, an economist, who was the president of WASU while in Britain.¹⁷ The Lagos Youth Movement was later, in 1936, changed to the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) owing to popular demand for the movement to extend its activi-

¹⁷ In 1944 H.O. Davis went back to England to study law; in 1959 he was one of the two Nigerians appointed Queen's Council.

ties to other parts of the country.

The period 1928-1934 marks the time when the Nigerian youth were dissatisfied with the Government over educational reforms. In 1929 the Government had contemplated substituting a Nigerian School Certificate for the Cambridge and Oxford School Certificates. In the wake of opposition the Government had to drop the plan and under the prevailing emotional atmosphere, a National School Committee was formed which was entrusted with the building of a national school. The National School Movement did not last long because of poor response from the public, only ₦1,600 out of the proposed ₦10,000 was collected. It, however, succeeded in forcing the Government to drop its plan, and directly or indirectly influenced the establishment of Secondary Schools in the South in the thirties.

During the thirties the new generation of educated Nigerians was actively more involved in the national affairs than ever before. For instance, they had successfully opposed the 1929 educational reforms and again in 1938 they successfully challenged the leadership of Macaulay. Among this group was Chief Awolowo, who later founded the Action Group Party; Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who later became the leader of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons and Eyo Ita, the educationalist and founder of West African Peoples' Institute, Calabar.

The arrival of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria in 1937 greatly strengthened and put new life into the Nigerian Youth Movement. Dr. Azikiwe was born in Northern Nigeria where his

father was working as a clerk in the Nigerian Regiment. He attended the Wesleyan Boys High School, Lagos and the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar before proceeding to America in 1925 for further studies. In his early days he was inspired by Garvey's 'Black Zionism'.¹⁸ On his return from the U.S.A. in 1935, he was the editor of the African Morning Post, an influential Accra daily newspaper and when he returned to Nigeria in 1937 he edited the West African Pilot.¹⁹ Through his column 'Inside Stuff' by 'Zik' he was popularly known as 'Zik'. For twenty years the Pilot was the only nationalist paper which published radical views about Colonial administration as in one instance when it warned the British that all subordination to Uncle Tomism was gone. Both Dr. Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Owolowo joined the Nigerian Youth Movement.

Although the Nigerian Youth Movement was primarily a Yoruba Organization, yet it had some national characteristics. Its declared objectives included the unification of the various tribes of Nigeria by means of better understanding and cooperation between the tribes; complete autonomy within the British Empire; equal economic opportunity for Nigerian entrepreneurs as enjoyed by foreigners and higher education for Nigerians. The NYM was the first truly national organization which attracted people from all over the country and could boast of speaking for the whole country. It was only in Lagos and Calabar, the two most advanced cities of the South that organi-

¹⁸ Richard L. Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) p. 49.

¹⁹ The first issue of the Pilot appeared in 1930 (Sklar op. cit; p. 50).

zations were able to press for political changes. The vast majority of the people of the South had no machinery of expression; they could only make known their grievances by means of petition to the government. It was only in Lagos that true freedom of expression existed since it was a British Colony. The people of Lagos had also another advantage over the rest of the people of the South, and this was in the establishment of the press since the 1880's. In the protected area, where Indirect Rule was introduced, not much freedom was allowed.²⁰ Throughout the South, the people generally supported what the people of Lagos were doing and for that reason the NYM received such unprecedented wide support. The North was unconcerned with what went on in the country.

The NYM had branches all over the country including the North, where the membership in the movement was confined to the people of Southern origin. The first northerner, Mallara Jumare, a teacher, who joined the movement lost his job. The NYM fought national issues such as the discrimination in the civil service and in commerce, the elimination of what was known as the European posts which were reserved specially for the Europeans irrespective of their experience and qualification. It also fought against the discriminatory policy of the European banks and against the 'cocoa pool' of 1937 by the big expatriate combines which monopolized the marketing of cocoa throughout Nigeria.

²⁰ Obafemi Awolowo, Awo. (Cambridge University Press, 1960) p. 177.

In 1938 the NYM won a land slide victory by winning the three Lagos seats in the Legislative Council and also controlling the Lagos city council. This victory was significant in that it signalled the death of the NNDP and its leaders. But it was in turn replaced by the more zealous, radical youth of the third generation of the post war era. In 1943 when Colonial Secretary, Colonel Stanley, visited Nigeria, the NYM in a memorandum urged the establishment of responsible government for Nigeria and demanded that eight ministries, education, health, information, Agriculture, public work, rail and road transport, labour, commerce and industry be reserved for Nigerians. But the British were not in a hurry to grant ministerial responsibility to Nigeria. That had to wait till 1951 when the Council of Ministers replaced the Executive Council.

The NYM was plagued by internal disputes and therefore became ineffective toward the end of its life. The dispute arose over the election of Ernest Ikoli as the president of the NYM over Akinsanya, a Yoruba. Hence, there were two factions, one supporting Ikoli and the other supporting Akinsanya. Chief Awolowo became disinterested and devoted all his time to organizing the Action Group party. Dr. Azikiwe also resigned from the movement and began to prepare for the establishment of a new party, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons.

Tribal Unions

Tribal Unions also played a very important part in the growth of nationalism. As the name implies the Tribal Unions were originally intended for the improvement of respective

tribal areas. The idea of a union originated from young people who had immigrated to the urban centers and became wage and salary earners. They usually held their meetings on Sundays and from these meetings ideas of educational improvement were born. For this purpose they contributed money to award scholarships or assistance toward Secondary and University education to deserving young men and women of their respective tribes. As the Unions grew, branches were established in the villages, in urban centers in the North and the South and in places as far away as Ghana, Cameroons, Fernando Po, Britain and America. All the branches were linked to the Parent Body through correspondence and contributions. In time big Tribal Unions or Improvement Unions such as the Ibibio Welfare Union (later Ibibio State Union) the Ibo Union and the Calabar Improvement League came to be formed. In most instances the Unions became pressure groups advocating for local and national administrative reforms. They also demanded such things as health improvement, better roads, good water supply and schools. Education was the single most important project the big Unions undertook to provide. Both the Ibibio and Ibo Unions built Secondary Schools, the Ibibio State College at Ikot Ekpene and the Ibo National College at Aba respectively. In addition, the Unions awarded overseas scholarships to their deserving sons and daughters. The Ibibio Union was the first Tribal Union to award overseas scholarships to its sons. In 1938 it awarded six scholarships to six Ibibio youth to study in America, Canada and England.

The Tribal Unions had an important impact on Nigeria as they were used as platforms for nationalist propoganda and most

of the post-war leaders were (and are still now) members and leaders of the unions. The unions also promoted social links between the elite and the masses through tribal meetings and anniversary celebrations.

The Masses React

Before 1929 opposition to the British came mostly from the educated few in urban centers for the masses were inarticulate. Up to 1929 the British had hoped that they had consolidated their rule in Nigeria; but the events of December of that year proved them wrong and shattered the myth that the British rule in Nigeria experienced little opposition. The Aba Women Riot of 1929 took the British administration by surprise. Never before was such violence experienced in Nigeria or in British West Africa where women played the major role in attacking Europeans. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield, had this to say:

The situation with which the various officers were confronted were without precedent, so far as I can judge. I might almost say in the history of the British Empire. Disturbances in which women have taken the foremost, or the only, part are unknown here and elsewhere in the Empire ...²¹

The Aba Women Riot was a political and social protest; the economic grievances featured little, if at all. Before examining the riot and its impact it would be better to examine first, the background which gave rise to the riot.

The indirect cause of the riot was the indirect Rule which

²¹Crowder op. cit; p. 475.

was a new thing in Eastern Nigeria. Indirect Rule, as we know, was first introduced in the North soon after it had been conquered by Lord Lugard. It worked well in the North for there the traditional authority had existed before the advent of the British and the people were used to obeying their rulers. From 1914 Lord Lugard had sought ways of introducing it into the South. In 1915 the opportunity arrived when the ex-King of Benin, Oba Overami, who was deposed in 1897 and sent into exile in Calabar, died. The British agreed to the installation of the new King on condition that he would introduce direct tax into his kingdom. In 1918 Indirect Rule was introduced in Abeokuta of Western Nigeria. In both places, Benin and Abeokuta, riots had broken out in protest against the indirect tax and were put down with the loss of many lives.

In Eastern Nigeria things were different. Since the region had never had traditional rulers the British had to create them artificially. They appointed some influential men who had no traditional authority as chiefs. Because their power to exercise authority depended on a warrant issued to them by the government, they were known as the 'Warrant Chiefs' and as a symbol of their authority they were given white caps.

Most Warrant Chiefs abused their authority and the people disliked them. The semi-illiterate native court clerks and the court messengers were corrupt extortioners and terrorized the peasant population. Further-more, the great Depression of 1929 brought economic hardship to the people of the region as the price of palm produce went down considerably and the rumour that women were to pay tax increased the discontent.

The incident which touched off the general disturbance throughout the region was when a local warrant chief, Okugo of Oloko village in Owerri province was instructed by a district officer to make a re-assessment of the taxable property of the people. An attempt was made to count children, and domestic animals. As the rumor spread that women were to pay tax, the women held mass meetings and decided to resist the British and the chiefs. At one compound a court messenger who was there to carry out the census asked the house wife to count her children and domestic animals. The house wife asked the messenger, "was your mother counted?"²² This clearly reveals the social grievances of the women. The counting of women in those days was against African tradition and before this time women had not been counted and no woman paid tax. It was a novelty which the women did not understand. The misunderstanding reveals the failure of the chiefs to represent the British and in helping the people to understand the census. The attempt to count the domestic animals was wrong. In Africa domestic animals constitute petty economy of the women, and any attempt to count them meant a threat to their only means of livelihood.

From the village of Oloko the riot spread to the rest of Ibo and Ibibioland. At Aba, a railway and commercial city, thousands of women armed with sticks attacked the chiefs and Europeans and looted the European stores and the Barclays Bank.

²² Mary Perham, Native Administration In Nigeria. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) p. 207.

From there the riot spread to Opobo, Calabar, and other urban centers. The men also accompanied the women armed with sticks and cudgels. At Utu the women were on the warpath as they attacked court buildings, factories and houses. They went after the chiefs and destroyed their white caps which were the symbol of their authority. The Colonial Government responded by ordering the troops to disperse the rioters. Altogether fifty women were killed. The fact that men joined in the riot shows that they too had grievances against the British. For the first time the British were asked to leave the country. The women said, "all white men should go to their country so that the land in this area might remain as it was many years ago before the advent of the white man."²³ Earlier, in 1925, the women had shown their disgust with the British by demanding the return to the traditional currency and native institutions. The women's disturbances during the inter-war years were more disturbing to the British than the men's. The significance of the riot is the fact that it was the first time that the rural and urban women united in resisting the British rule.

The Economic Nationalism

The economic aspect of Nigerian nationalism was the result of two things: One was the attempt by the Colonial Government to replace the Nigerian middlemen by Europeans,²⁴ the second was

²³ Coleman op. cit; p. 125.

²⁴ King JaJa of Opobo and Nana of Itsekiri were deported by the British on the ground that they obstructed free trade.

the discriminatory policies of foreign banks against Nigerian business and the monopolistic practices of the commercial firms. In the 1880's the economic protests were mostly by individuals whose position as middlemen were threatened by the free trade policy of the British. In the Niger Delta area the Brass people in 1885, protested against the monopolistic practices of the Niger Company by attacking the company's headquarters at Akassa. The Akassa raid marked the end of individual protests and the beginning of mass economic protests which continued into the twentieth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century the old Nigerian middlemen were replaced by the expatriate firms which were well-organized and well-financed. In the twentieth century the new Nigerian middlemen were exporting cocoa, cotton, palm produce and ground-nuts (peanuts). But the two inter-war depressions, that of 1921-23 and the great Depression of 1929-31 practically wiped them out. Since Nigerians had less money to spend, imports also fell, and as the Government revenue also declined since most of its revenue was derived from custom duties, many development projects were halted. People were unemployed and those fortunate to be working had their wages and salaries cut. The declining wages and unemployment caused the railway men, miners and others to form unions. But in the thirties trade unions played very little part in the national affairs of the country. It was in the post war era that they played major role in the economic and political life of the country. This was due to rising prices in the war time economy which affected many wage earners.

In the thirties the economic discontent was wide spread throughout West Africa. Prices were falling, wages were cut and many were out of jobs. The masses accused the European firms for the low prices paid to the farmers and for the high prices on the imported goods. The most dramatic economic development of the thirties was the formation of a huge combine by six European firms known as the Association of West African Merchants (AWAM) whose aim was to control imports and allocate export quotas of cocoa between them. This was known as the 'Cocoa Pool'. In this way the AWAM was able to control the price and production of cocoa and prevent inter-rivalry between them. The Colonial Government did nothing to save the poor farmers who were suffering under the viscious price-ring. The nationalist reacted by criticizing the actions of the big six.

In Ghana the cocoa farmers responded to the AWAM's monopolistic practices by refusing to sell cocoa. This was the famous 'cocoa hold' up of 1937-8. Nigerian cocoa farmers of Western Nigeria did not join their Ghanaian counterparts in the boycott. Members of the Nigerian Youth Movement therefore toured Western Nigeria and urged the farmers to join in the boycott. The boycott did not last as long as the farmers would have wanted; it was over in about five months. The boycott failed largely due to lack of space to store the stock and secondly it affected the small farmers who depended on ready cash more than the big firms. The aftermath of the 'Cocoa Pool' was that the European firms were no longer trusted.

The NYM were all out in their attacks on the European firms especially the United Africa Company (UAC) which led nine other firms into a large combine and controlled about 90% of the country's trade. Since the UAC controls the economic life of the country Nigerians have a deep-seated hostility toward it. In 1930's it controlled about 40% of all Nigeria's export-import trade and in 1949 it controlled 34% of all imports to Nigeria.

Due to keen competition by expatriate firms in the thirties and forties, many Nigerian businessmen were unable to compete in the external trade. They withdrew and assumed the roles of the middlemen and retailers. There was severe criticism of those firms which jumped into the retail trades; they were asked to limit their business to wholesale and manufacturing. In Eastern Nigeria they were asked to leave buying of palm produce to the buying agents who played the role of middlemen, buying from the retailers and selling to the firms which shipped the produce to England. Almost all the buying agents depended on the commercial firms for cash advances and for their commissions.

The institution of buying agents was a recent innovation and played an important part in the economic development of the country. Its growth and development was influenced by the Marketing Boards established in 1933 by the British. Their aim was to assure the steady supply of Nigerian export crops to the United Kingdom and to control prices. In 1939 when World War Two broke out the Boards undertook the buying and marketing

of cocoa and thus assured Britain of the steady supply of cocoa and guaranteed the Nigerian producers of a stable price and market for their products. For the first ten years, the Boards were manned by British Officials and the nationalists did not fail to criticize this policy. Since the Boards were mainly for technical development any demands for reforms by the nationalists were largely ignored. By paying lower prices for the export crops than the world price the Boards were able to accumulate sufficient reserves which were used in the development of Nigerian industry, agriculture, education and roads. The wartime marketing controls were for economic reasons but they drastically curtailed the opportunities of the Nigerian businessmen to accumulate capital. In the post war period the marketing boards were gradually Nigerianized and this enabled many Nigerian buying agents to obtain licenses. Each of the former three regions had its own marketing board which was responsible for the marketing of that region's produce and when in 1960 the nationalists took over the government from the British, regional governments took over their own Marketing Boards which became sources of revenue to them.

The Financial Institutions

The second problem the Nigerian entrepreneurs faced during the inter-war period was the discriminatory practices of the financial institutions. The major financial institutions by this time were the Bank of British West Africa and the Barclay's Bank (DC and O). These two foreign banks controlled the capital market and with other minor European banks con-

trolled about 90% deposits. Although the economic development of Nigeria required credit facilities for Nigerians, the foreign banks refused to give credits to worthy Nigerian businessmen while such credits were made readily available to the Syrians and the Lebanese. Part of the reason for this discrimination arose from the myth that African businessmen were not honest. The other reason was the fact that African businessmen were unable to provide collateral for the loans. Land was not a suitable collateral since it was owned communally. Since the foreign banks had failed to help Nigerian businessmen it was left to the Nigerians themselves to establish their own banks so as to provide credits.

Nigerian banking is a recent accomplishment. The first attempt was made in 1928 when Minifried Tete-Ansa, a Ghanaian businessman established the Industrial and Commercial Bank Ltd. in Lagos with a small branch at Accra. The bank was to serve Africans and to provide credits to African businessmen. The bank was originally registered in England in 1914 but acquired in 1924 by Ansa and subsequently transferred to Nigeria in 1928. Ansa formed two other limited liability companies, the West African Cooperative Producers Ltd. in 1925 but registered in England in 1927 with authorized capital of £250,000 of which only £3000 was subscribed; the second company was the West African American Cooperation incorporated at Delaware in 1930 with the authorized capital of \$1,000,000. The aim was to market the Cooperative's cocoa in the US and in return export manufactured goods to West Africa. It was thought that

business with America would attract Negro support and a lucrative market as America was the largest consumer of cocoa.

Tete Ansa was born in Ghana in 1889 and after his primary education, he worked as a commercial clerk and later became the head of the account department of F and A Swanzy Ltd. in Accra. In 1914 he left the firm and went into partnership with Mark Gombie Steedman and established the Gombie Steedman's Ltd. In 1915 he left the firm and established his own business and in 1919 he closed it and went to England to study Commerce and banking. He returned in 1928 and began to make his views on business known to many nationalists. Because of his desire to put into practice the economic policy of the Congress of British West Africa, he was able to gain a place among the West African elite even though he was neither a lawyer nor a doctor. Like many of his contemporaries, Ansa believed in a West African Commercial Empire. All his programs failed because the new generation of the thirties did not believe in Pan-West Africanism and were ready to replace the old leaders of the twenties.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank Ltd. did not last long. In 1930 it went into liquidation following poor management and disunity among its directors, but in 1931 Tete-Ansa formed a new company, the Nigerian Mercantile Bank Ltd. with authorized capital of £10,000.

The Nigerian Mercantile Bank Ltd., like its predecessor the Industrial and Commercial Bank Ltd., also got into difficulty. Because of disunity among its directors, in 1933 three Yorubas, Chief T.D. Doherty, Dr. A. Maja and H.A. Subair re-

signed from the Mercantile Bank and formed the National Bank of Nigeria Ltd. with authorized capital of £1,250,000 of which £1,131,930 was paid. The formation of the National Bank Ltd. was a pointer to the end of Pan-Africanism and the beginning of nationalism based within the territorial boundary of the nation. Tete-Ansa realized this fact and in 1934 he left Nigeria for Ghana. The successful operation of the National Bank did influence the establishment of other indigenous banks in Nigeria. Between 1933 and 1952 there were eighteen indigenous banks. These banks were founded to give financial help to the indigenous businessmen, but many of them did not survive for a long time. In the fifties most of these mushroom banks had collapsed and this prompted the government to regulate the establishment of new banks. Each new bank had to have a paid-up capital of £121,500 before it could start operation. (The African Continental Bank Ltd. was originally incorporated in 1937 and assumed its present name in 1945 after Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had purchased it.)

The Nigerian banks rendered financial assistance to the nationalists and when the nationalists took over the government they rewarded these banks by awarding them contracts and by making them government bankers. Thus the National Bank Ltd. served exclusively the Western Regional Government while the African Continental Bank Ltd. served the Eastern Regional Government. Northern Nigeria did not have its own indigenous bank until 1959. The Bank of the North was not a pure indigenous bank; it was a joint enterprise between Nigerians and the Leganese; the latter controlling it.

The growth of nationalism in the thirties was temporarily halted in 1939 when the Second World War broke out. Throughout the War, Nigeria, as in the case of the First World War, remained loyal to the British. All anti-British propaganda and ceased while the nationalists/militant press turned their attention to support the British war effort. Calls were sent out for the young Nigerians to enlist in the army. The result was amazing. Thousands of young men who otherwise would have had no employment took the opportunity to join the army.

"Altogether fifteen battalions were raised."²⁵ The Nigerian units together with other West African units fought the Italians in Ethiopia and Somaliland. Their contribution to the defeat of the Italians should not be overlooked. They also saw action in the Far East and the Middle East; the 81st and 82nd Divisions which were three quarters Nigerians fought meritoriously against the Japanese in the Burma jungle. At home, Nigeria was threatened in the west and north when the French territories joined the Vichy Government. This threat was removed when the Allies successfully landed in North Africa and Europe and were able to destroy the Vichy influence in French West African territories.

Nigeria's contribution to the British war effort was not only in men, she contributed money and materials. Throughout the country 'Win the War' campaigns were organized. Every primary school child, every civil servant, every worker and

²⁵ Burns op. cit; p. 247.

some peasants contributed by buying poppies and giving donations. Throughout the war Nigerian export materials, palm oil and palm kernel, rubber and tin were in great demand and were exported to Britain.

After the war had ended, political and labor unrest continued in Nigeria. The unemployment increased as the veterans filled up the labor market. In 1945 there was a general strike in demand for better wages and salaries. The British were blamed for the rising prices and unemployment and the nationalists capitalized on this and called on the British to make constitutional changes in order to give Africans greater participation in the government as a first step toward self-government. There were disturbances at Aba, Calabar, Port Harcourt and Onitsha following the Enugu shooting by which twenty-one miners who were on strike were shot and killed by the police. Thus the real fight for Nigeria independence began after World War Two.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Nationalism first started in Europe and later moved to the New World and then went back to Europe but reached its climax in Africa and Asia in the post war era. Nigerian nationalism during the period under discussion did not demand immediate self-determination. It only stimulated national consciousness among the different peoples of Nigeria. In Southern Nigeria the first generation of educated Nigerians tried to assert their 'Nigerianness' and leadership in politics, economics and especially in culture. Their aim was not to destroy or reject the European culture as such, rather it was to make African culture co-equal. They were encouraged and stimulated by men like Edward Blyden who preached race-consciousness and the uniqueness of African culture. The cultural nationalists were successful in restoring some of the African past while their contemporaries, the Ethiopians in their radical reaction showed their own brand of nationalism by secession and the founding of native, and independent churches.

In the twentieth century Nigerian nationalism took on a new form, the idea of a nation, given to the second generation of educated Nigerians by the Afro-Americans who demanded political and economic powers from the British. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey preached into the ears of Nigerians the need for a nation, the dignity of the African race and Pan-Africanism. Garvey's militant nationalism had great impact upon eminent Nigerians such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who, after he had become semi-

Garveyistic decided to dedicate his service to fight against colonialism and for the freedom of Africans.

The stimulus given by the Afro-Americans resulted in the formation of political associations in the twenties by the Nigerian elite who were mostly lawyers, doctors and merchants. These were the people of means and had the command of the English language which became the medium of communication. They were the people who had control of the national life of the country for they were privileged to be trained to solve practical problems, the opportunity which the first generation did not have. However, they were neither radical nor militant as the third generation. Their organizations were 'gentlemen clubs' and their activities were restricted to a few coastal towns - Lagos and Calabar. They were mainly concerned with promotion and better conditions of service in the civil service and some kind of constitutional changes. It was mainly through their activities that the British finally made some concessions by granting a limited enfranchisement to the Africans for the first time in the history of British West Africa. In the thirties nationalism spread from the two urban centers of the south to other centers including the Islamic north through the activities of the Youth Movement. Even so, Northern Nigeria was still isolated and did not like to participate in the national activities of the day. The return of Nigerians from overseas notably from America on completion of their studies brought new life to the Youth Movement. The movement drew also strength and encouragement from the Nigerian press which on the eve of the Second World War had begun to attack colonialism in

all its ramifications.

The reaction of the masses, as it was expressed in the Aba Women Riot in such a strong language that even the British were forced to heed. For the first time they were told to leave Nigeria.

On the whole, Nigerian nationalism unlike the Arab and the Pan-Slav nationalism was not radical or militant. The radical nationalism was only expressed in the form of religious fanaticism when Gabriel Braid and the Mahdis attacked the British. Others demanded spiritual emancipation before political emancipation; the separatist movement was not an end in itself but a means to an end as it became one of the factors that sharpened political and national consciousness.

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