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EDITORIAL POLICY

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Vol. 2, No. 2

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Articles

1. Some Thoughts on the Teaching of History in Nigeria *by A. E. Afigbo* 1
2. Arms and Ammunition, and their Embargo in British West African History, 1823-1874 *by P. M. Mbaeyi* 14
3. The Provident Fund on the Nigerian Railway, 1915-1943 *by Wale Oyemakinde* 32
4. Great Britain, Germany and Wartime Economy in Nigeria 1914-1918 *by Jide Osuntokun* 49
5. The Impact of the Haile Sellassie I Scholarship-Students on the Ethiopian Student Environment. *by R. R. Balsvik* 60
6. The Background to the East Central State Public Education Edict, 1970 *by E. Amucheazi* 72
7. The Concept of God Among the Urhobo of the Niger Delta *by S. U. Eriwo* 83

Book Reviews

8. Nigeria Through Missionary Eyes *by A. E. Afigbo* 90
9. Towards Definitive Igbo Dictionaries—A Review of Dr Williamson's Igbo-English Dictionary *by E. 'Nolue Emenanjo* 93 ✓

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN NIGERIA

E. AFIGBO

Introduction

THE 1956 Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria devoted its time to examining "the content and methods of history teaching in the schools (secondary and teacher training)"¹. The main points of the discussion were (a) to press for the inclusion of a paper or two in African history properly so-called in the syllabuses of the secondary schools and colleges and (b) to highlight the inadequacies of existing textbooks in order to encourage the production of more up-to-date works. By and large, within a decade of that congress the two objectives had been more than fully realised with the result that African history came to its own—crowding out the histories of Europe, Britain and the empire from the syllabuses of schools. Furthermore it came to be taught with the aid of books written by Africans, or at least by those non-Africans who accept the view that African history should be about Africans mainly.

Since that break-through in the history of history teaching in Nigeria, itself one of the many side effects on our educational system of the nationalist movement, the Society would appear to have come to regard the problem of history teaching in the country as largely solved—except probably in so far as it feels that there is not a satisfactory textbook for the schools and colleges in the area of Nigerian history and is in the process of making good that shortage. In any case it has not since been thought worthwhile to devote another congress to an appraisal of the effects of the break-through in order to determine if and when the next step should be taken. This short paper, written rather in a hurry and in response to the President's circular letter of about mid-November last calling for papers, does not pretend to be anything like a major attempt at tackling the problem. It is conceived more as a notice to the Society that some such colloquium on the study of history and the problems of teaching it in a developing country like ours is overdue. The tone and intent of the discussions of 1956 were those of a colony on the eve of independence which was calling for the recognition of its historic past from the educational authorities of the day. This recognition was to be accorded through the inclusion of its history in the school curriculum. One feels that the time has come for the Society to organise a more embracing discussion on the subject.

In any case I feel so myself for the following reasons. First, as already pointed out, the discussions of 1956 were a campaign for the recognition of African history as an academic discipline in schools and colleges. There was hardly any concern at that stage, and this is understandable, with the methods and the purpose of teaching history in Nigeria, nor could there have been an appraisal of the textbooks which we now have but which then did not exist. Second, it was concerned with the syllabuses of the secondary schools and colleges rather than with those of the universities also. One is not suggesting that the Society should draw up a uniform syllabus for all Nigerian universities. But at least about this point in time it should be able to take a critical look at the history syllabuses operative in our universities as of the development of teaching and research in the field generally. From such a review the Society should be able to draw

1. See the Preface to the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (JHSN) Vol. 1, No. 2. December 1957

up some broad principles to guide not only the faltering steps of the apprentice historians of the present and foreseeable future but also the revision of university syllabuses and teaching methods along lines calculated to ensure that the discipline does not atrophy and become an insipid and largely socially irrelevant pursuit.

Third, I came to realise the urgency of this matter when on 21/11/73 I held fairly extensive discussions on history teaching and textbooks with the East Central State History Panel. This is a group of between twelve and fifteen seasoned teachers of history extensive discussions on history teaching and textbooks with the East Central State History Panel. This is a group of between twelve and fifteen seasoned teachers of history charged with reviewing the secondary school syllabus in history, recommending suitable textbooks, and if need be writing books specially designed to meet the needs of their students. In the course of the discussions it became quite clear to me that we need to state firmly what our ultimate objective is in teaching history—that is beyond the vague objective of general education. Finally we are all familiar with the general cry from lovers of the subject that history is now in the doldrums.² It is treated with contempt by the very brilliant students who see engineering, medicine, pharmacy and law as more challenging and more lucrative. It is underrated by the governments which think that anyone can teach history, that teachers of history need neither inducement nor equipment and that it is no longer necessary to award bursaries to students reading history. Of late there have been a few cases, of holders of the Ph.D. degree in history who, frustrated by lack of jobs, started thinking of retraining in some other discipline, or at least were forced to undergo a period of exile: teaching in the secondary schools before joining the universities where they properly belong. When a discipline finds itself facing such a crisis, it is about time for its practitioners to ask themselves and their subject “whither are we bound?”

For now I shall content myself with doing only three things—tracing briefly, and therefore hurriedly, the history of history teaching in Nigeria and highlighting what appear to me to be some of the main shortcomings of history teaching in the secondary schools and colleges on the one hand and in the universities on the other. Finally I shall make a few tentative suggestions for the solution of some of the problems examined here.

History teaching in Nigeria from the Colonial Period to Now: We are yet to have for Nigeria, or for any large fraction of it, a systematic account of the evolution of policy and practice in history teaching, or in the teaching of any other subject for that matter, during the colonial period. However, it would appear that when such an account comes to be written for history teaching, it would be found that in the early years of European rule some educators considered somewhat seriously the teaching of local, or at any rate African history. Thus Sir Ralph Moor, for instance, in drawing up the syllabuses for the schools which his government established, or was prepared to aid with grants early in this century, included the following entry under standard five history: “History of Africa—if possible.”³ This attempt at indigenisation was probably for Moor not just a momentary aberration. It was part of a definite policy of retaining the African character of the school children while they were being taught to read and write. Thus, for instance, on the issue of school uniform he said:

2. Alluding to this matter recently Professor T. N. Tamuno talked of “enormous problems in sustaining public interest in History in an era which has witnessed giant steps in science and technology” *Department of History (Ibadan) 1948–1973. Commemorative Brochure* (Ibadan, 1973) p. 3.

3. Enclosure No. 2 in Despatch No. 485 of 29.10.02 in C. S. O. 1/13, Southern Nigeria Despatches to the Colonial Office.

On one point I would venture to lay great stress... and that is that some distinctive native uniform should be provided for the students such as I propose providing for the Ogugumanga (Bonny) school. This should be of a distinct native character and not in any way ape the European style of dress which is certainly not suited to natives in this climate during school days. The aping of the European destroys the independence of character and initiative of the natives of these territories, and certainly during the period of their education I consider it infinitely preferable to clothe them in some suitable native garb with a view to maintaining their distinctive native character.⁴

There may well have been many other European educationists in early colonial Nigeria who shared Moor's ideas and like him attempted to implement them. What is important here, however, is that such early romantic ideas of teaching Nigerians some form of African history were soon abandoned. For one thing the problems which beset the implementation of the scheme were many. Not only were there no books on the subject, but for years most of the teachers were either Europeans or repatriates or members of that coastal elite whose education at no stage included the study of Africa—historical or contemporary. It was probably these problems which Sir Ralph Moor had in mind when he qualified his projected African history for standard five with "... if possible". Practical experience showed that it was impossible and so it had to be quietly dropped.

But it was not just practical difficulties which in time led to the abandonment by colonial educationists of all thought of teaching Nigerian school children African history properly so-called. Probably more important than practical obstacles was the fact that even the most far-sighted European scholars and statesmen of the period believed that Africans had no history of their own as such, except probably the history of the impact on them of the two world civilizations of Christian Europe and Muslim East. As a corollary to this it was generally agreed that Nigerian students could not do better than study the rise and expansion of these two civilizations which had helped to redeem their continent from "utter savagery". But since the white educationists were either ignorant of the history and achievements of Islam, or in any case were both prejudiced against Islam and in opposition to it, what happened in practice was that the history taught in the schools boiled down simply to the history of Western Europe and her expansion overseas. Justifying the virtual exclusion of Islamic history from the history actually taught in the schools Mr M. C. English argued, even as late as 1956, as follows:

There may be a case for the inclusion of the early history of Islam in the syllabus in those parts of the country where Mohammedanism predominates. I think it is unnecessary elsewhere, and I have in practice found it difficult to arouse any enthusiasm for a subject which is too remote from the local environment.⁵

It must be observed here, however, that judged in the context of the prevailing intellectual climate of the time, as by the concept of education as the means by which the young are prepared for life and work in the world of actuality, the history syllabuses based on the above assumptions were not as utterly irrelevant to the actual social needs of the children in those days as they would appear to day. The years 1900 to 1945 were among the most glorious in the history of Western imperialism, at any rate in Africa. And it was assumed by most educators that the Nigerians who were in school then would grow up and live their lives in a world dominated by Western might and Western values. If therefore the education of the children of the day was going to prepare them for the world of actuality, then it had to fit them for a world being recreated along Western lines. It had to make them capable of appreciating Western culture and civilization and of operating within its context. This meant, among other things, that the children had

4. Letter No. 51 of 18.6.01 enclosed in Despatch No. 160 of 18.6.01 in C.S.O. 1/13 Southern Nigeria Despatches to the Colonial Office.

5. English, M.C., "What History Does the Nigerian Pupil Need?" *JHSN* Vol.2 No. 2 December 1957 p. 114.

to learn to see as heroes those whom the West saw as heroes, to appreciate and aspire to the values which the Westerners appreciated and aspired to, and in the same way abhor those things which the Westerners abhorred—like such vague monstrosities as “barbarism” and “paganism”. Only by so doing would the new generation of Nigerians be able to fit into the colonial world of their day. In this light, therefore, the kind of history which was taught in the schools then was precisely what was needed to achieve this objective.

Thus just as Western European children were firmly grounded in European history as part of the process of preparing them for life and work in Western European society, colonial children were made to undergo detailed instruction in such aspects of history as would help them to understand the colonial world in which they were expected to live their lives. They were taught ancient history (mainly about Egypt, Greece and Rome) so that they would appreciate the foundations of Western society and civilization and thus the values which were being bestowed on them through colonial rule.⁶ Classical history, it was argued, would also prepare them to read and understand Western literature with its many classical allusions. Then they were taught the history of medieval and modern Europe as well as of European expansion so that they would equally appreciate the process by which they came to be “rescued” by the West from a life of “purposeless savagery”.

With this background it is easy to understand why the course on “The Development of Tropical Africa” taught the children very little about tropical Africa as such. Instead the detailed description of the course emphasized (i) the background to European expansion before the 19th century especially with reference to European expansion in Africa and the New World, (ii) the expansion of Britain as a typical example of Western expansion, (iii) the history of British colonialism in Africa before and since the 19th Century (iv) the rise of Islam and its expansion in the Western and Central Sudan. The same thinking determined the first history curriculum of the University College of Ibadan under the special relationship regulation with the University of London. One of the two history courses done by B.A. General students who took history was “Outline of the History of Modern Africa”. Later was added “History of European activities in Africa from the middle of the 14th century to the present day.”⁷

These same assumptions explain the kind of text-books which were written to meet the needs of students and teachers doing “The Development of Tropical Africa”. Among the most celebrated of these were T. R. Battern: *Tropical Africa in World History* in four volumes published between 1939 and 1940 by the Oxford University Press, and then M. Potts, *A School History of Nigeria*. These books carrying very little about the African background against which the European influence worked, took most of the available space talking of explorers like Mungo Park, John and Richard Lander, Heinrich Barth, Hugh Clapperton etc.; of traders, conquerors and administrators like Sir George Goldie, MacGregor Laird, Lord Lugard and so on. There is hardly a more revealing testimony to the enduring influence of the above assumptions on the text-book writers of the period than Professor Fage’s recent explanation for the fact that his book, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa* (1955), was written with an emphasis on European activity. “In the early 1950s”, he wrote later in 1969:

6. On this contention Mr H. F. C. (later Professor Abdullahi) Smith rightly observed: “The misconception underlying such treatment in this syllabus may well, I think, be the idea that the importance of such an influence is to be indicated by an intensive study of its origins outside Africa, while, in fact, the importance of an influence of foreign origin can *only* be indicated by an intensive study of the effect on the society concerned” See H. F. C. Smith “School Certificate History Syllabuses in Nigeria” *JHSN* Vol. 1 No. 2 December 1957, p. 127.

7. *Department of History (Ibadan) 1948-73* etc p. 5.

when, except for Liberia, all West Africa was under European control, and only a percipient few had realised how quickly its colonial territories would become completely independent, it seemed permissible, advisable even, to make the growth of European influence in West Africa one of the principal themes of the book.⁸

The history syllabus and history text-books of the early and middle periods of colonial rule may have been adequately designed to achieve the educational needs of a colonial society, but the whole system rested on insecure foundations owing to the failure of the colonial policy makers to "divine" that Western political domination of Africa would come to an abrupt end a mere two decades or so from the outbreak of the Second World War. If this had been realised, it is possible that the need for another kind of history to prepare the children for another kind of social and political milieu might have been appreciated; that suitable syllabuses might have been designed and possibly suitable text-books written. But the colonial authorities were content to believe that Western colonialism in Africa was going to last a long, long time indeed.

But unfortunately for the educationists of the day, Western colonialism in Africa did not last as long as was expected by its advocates. Its very nature challenged those who were brought up under the educational system which it had patronised. The immediate result was, especially after 1945, the rise of militant African nationalism which had as its ultimate objective the attainment of sovereign independence by Africans. The nationalist movement had repercussions on all facets of African life, not least on African education. And in the area of education its effect was most noticeable in the study of African history. This was so largely because one of the ideological bases of European colonialism was the denial of a valid and meaningful past to Africa, and the assertion of the superiority of Western civilization and the continuing relevance of Western history and experience to the contemporary world. If, therefore, Africans were to succeed in undermining Western colonialism totally, they had, *inter alia*, to assert the validity and continuing relevance of African history, at least as far as Africans are concerned. It was this quest for a cultural and historical base for Africa's claims to sovereign independence that led to what has been described as a revolution in the study, writing and teaching of African history.

In brief there were four related aspects of this revolution. The first, and the fundamental one at that, was the development of a positive faith in the fact that Africa has a history, that this history is a glorious one, that it is discoverable and that when discovered it is as relevant to contemporary African life as European history is to contemporary European life. To the new African political and intellectual elite, this was a matter of national creed which did not admit of questioning or debate—not even proof was necessary. All that was required of scholars was to sally forth in faith and discover as fully as possible the character and trends of this history.

The second feature of the revolution was the insistence that African history should be about Africans rather than about Africa's invaders. Here the intention was not to deny the importance, for the development of African societies, of contact with non-Africans; but rather to insist on this contact being seen in its proper perspective as only one out of many factors (and a late one at that) in the making of African history. Above all the intention was to show that the dominant element in the making of African culture is what has been variously described as either African genius or African initiative, which carried the main burden of adjusting Africans to their environment—geographical and psychological.

8. Fage, J. D., *A History of West Africa* (Cambridge, 1969) p. 9

The third feature, which derived directly from the second, was the insistence that if we were going to succeed in revolutionising African history in the manner indicated here, then it is necessary to handle the sources available for the writing of African history in a radically new way. Among these sources, we had the written documents which, from the circumstances of our largely non-literate culture, were produced by foreigners—mainly Europeans and Arabs, or at any rate by people who through years of brainwashing had absorbed the values and prejudices of Europeans or Arabs. It was insisted that African historians should ask these sources new questions in order to arrive at African-oriented deductions. The other main source of evidence was oral tradition and this had hitherto been relegated to a limbo by the European historians in the belief that it was an unreliable source of historical evidence. But under the revolution being sketched, oral tradition was enthroned as a valid source of historical data. It was considered particularly vital as providing some form of check to the written sources, especially with regard to perspective and interpretation.

The fourth and last, but not the least important, feature of the revolution was a certain emphasis—in fact over-emphasis—on political history. This derived from the circumstances in which the new movement took its rise. African nationalism demanded, as a matter of urgency, political independence for Africa. But the colonial powers contested this demand claiming that to give Africans political independence would ensue in disaster as, they argued, the African had neither the tradition nor the capacity for running a complex government. To refute this argument, Africans went into their history specifically to show that they are not politically inept and inexperienced, but on the contrary had on their own built and run empires and kingdoms of varying sizes and complexity from at least about the third century A.D., and had continued to do so until the interruption caused by Europe's imperial aggression.

The triumph of those ideas had far-reaching effects on education generally and on the teaching of history in particular. Specially note-worthy was the fact that by the early 1960's African history had come to be accepted as a respectable academic discipline not only in schools and universities in Africa, but also in Europe and America. The other important effect was that it led to a spate of text-book writing in a bid to replace the old-fashioned text-books emphasizing European activity with others more in line with the new thinking on African history. This effort could be said to have begun in earnest with the two *Handbooks for History Teachers* which resulted from the History Workshop held at the University of Ibadan in 1965. The new set of text-books inspired by the above four revolutionary principles of African historiography constitute the furthest advance we have made on the road to producing school books suited to our conditions. They have helped to consolidate the place of African history as an academic discipline.

The Shortcomings of History Teaching Today: But as Professor Philip Curtin observed on another occasion "many problems remain" in spite of these advances. In any case these developments do not appear to have given history and history teaching an assured place of importance in our national life. Yet those who pressed for the establishment of an honours degree course in history at the University College, Ibadan, in 1952 did so in the belief that:

it would be a good preparation not only for students who become specialist teachers in training colleges and schools but also for students who will later enter political life, the administrative and other government services, the churches, journalism and broadcasting, commercial and industrial work and many other fields of public life.¹⁰

9. Curtin, Philip D, *African History* (N.Y. 1964) p.8.
10. Quoted in *Department of History (Ibadan) 1948-1973* p. 5 from *Report of Visitors to University College, Ibadan, January 1952* (I.U.P. 1952) p. 21.

Is it that those who held out this vision and hope were unduly optimistic, or is it that we history teachers have failed to develop and interpret our subject in a way that would assure it obvious social relevance. In short what is responsible for the present low priority placed on history by all and sundry in Nigeria? During a History Week at Nsukka in 1971 an attempt was made to investigate this question under the general theme of "History and the Nigerian Society". The chief speakers on that occasion, I was not one of them, thank God, laid the blame for the decline in the popularity of history at the door of secondary school teachers of the subject who were believed to be either incompetent or uncommitted or both. I disagreed with this view contending that since most of the secondary school teachers of history were the products of us university teachers, the ultimate responsibility should be ours if they are incompetent or uncommitted or both.¹¹ This was, and I dare say still is, a very unpopular stand. Few welcome blame if they can find a scapegoat.

But talking much more seriously here, and if we leave out the more obvious attractions of science, I am inclined to contend that the present lowly condition of history derives, to a large extent, from two features of the subject as it is now pursued. The first is that the kind of history we teach appears to lack obvious social relevance. The second is that the way it is taught from the secondary schools and colleges up is calculated neither to excite enthusiasm nor to produce specialists in an age that worships narrow specialism and expertise.

First, let us examine briefly the kind of history we teach. Much of what we teach in the schools, colleges and universities may be described, borrowing the phrase from Professor G. M. Trevelyan, as "history on the grand scale."¹² This is history in which most of the emphasis is placed on political history—the lives of emperors and kings, the rise and fall of empires and kingdoms, the art of state-building with attention focussed much of the time on warfare and military manoeuvres. Any cursory look at the standard texts used in schools and universities shows that more than 75% of the space available in each book is taken up by history of this kind—and when, the empires and kingdoms are not indigenous like Meroe, Ghana, the Almoravid state, Mali, Songhay, Oyo, Benin, Monomatapa, Buganda, Luba, Lunda etc., they are non-indigenous like the Portuguese, French, German, Dutch, Belgian and British empires.

As already pointed out this pre-occupation with political history owes something to the fact that African history came to its own during the period of nationalist movement when Africans, concerned primarily with creating sovereign states, were anxious to find historical justifications for their claims to political ability and statesmanship. It would also appear that we have been influenced in this matter by the tradition of Western European historical studies which at the time similarly tended to see history as "past politics"¹³ and laid emphasis on the rise, expansion and fall (as the case may be) of the Greek city states, the ancient world empires of Assyria, Egypt, Carthage, Rome, the medieval empire of Charlemagne and the nation states of Western Europe etc. This kind of history is generally written and studied around the famous kings and captains of the day.

But however this tradition came to afflict history teaching in Nigeria, there can be no doubt that it is partly responsible for having stultified and impeded the full development of the subject. First it has tended to make African history the history of the "imperial" peoples and thus led to the virtual neglect of the "non-imperial" peoples whose histories cannot be written in heroic terms. Second in the days of delirious nationalism

11. I based my argument on the (was it Bertrand Russell's?) famous contention that a Member of Parliament can never be more stupid than those who elected him, for the more stupid he is, the more stupid they are for electing him.

12. Finberg, H. P. R. (ed) *Approaches to History* (London, 1962). quoted on p. 113.

13. The phrase is Sir John Seeley's *Ibid.* p. 1.

it was fun to celebrate the great rulers and empires of the past. That was the time when historians applauded Mansa Musa's reckless prodigality as evidence of the splendour and magnificence of pre-colonial Africa. But with the attainment of political independence and the sad discovery that if one first sought and found the kingdom of political independence all the rest might not necessarily be added unto him, this kind of history lost some of its appeal. It would appear that the shift of emphasis and interest in national life, especially for the masses, from politics to economic and social development, demanded from history teaching an appropriate shift in emphasis which it has so far not made. This is not to say that there are not still among the elite a certain maniacal preoccupation with politics and political power. But their concern now is how to acquire and manipulate political power and for this they seem to find Machiavelli more relevant than Thucydides. Thus in continuing with the emphasis on political history, we have not only so far lost the opportunity of serving the masses who want to turn attention away from factious and divisive politics to economic and social development. We have also failed to catch the ears of the elite who no longer appreciate the hallelujahs we lavish on empires long since dead.

Closely linked with the kind of history we teach is the method by which we teach it, which in turn is closely bound up with the question of our ultimate objective in teaching history. There is probably no doubt that if the conditions were ideal most Nigerian scholars would support the idea of teaching history to the young for no higher purpose than to enable them discover what actually happened in history, that is for the sake of pure knowledge and to satisfy healthy curiosity. But conditions are hardly ever ideal and as a result, even in the developed societies of the West, history is taught largely for a better understanding of the present. This is what has been described as "the utilitarian motive which springs from the recognition that the structure of our present day society and issues that confront it have their origins in the past" and that "the better our knowledge of the origins is, the better equipped we are... to discharge the responsibilities to which we are committed as members of that society."¹⁴

In other words though history could also be taught to inculcate knowledge and to give pleasure, most people expect it to play an active part in contemporary social engineering, that is to be socially relevant and problem-solving. If this is so, the question then arises as to what purpose history teaching could serve in a developing country where the most vital problems appear to be economic and technological? The fact is that a close examination reveals that history, if properly developed, organised and taught can play a major role in creating the Nigeria of our dreams in spite of the widespread erroneous belief that it is largely an irrelevant pursuit.¹⁵

Even in the developed and fairly stable societies like Britain and Germany there still exists a continuing problem of inducting the young into the national culture and society. And part of this problem is solved through the teaching of national (if not nationalistic) history. In a developing country like Nigeria the problem exists in a more complex form. Not only have the young to be inducted into the emerging national culture, but even the various peoples and linguistic groups have to be fully integrated into the emerging national society. Here Nigerian historians, if they define their objectives, courses and methods clearly will find a vital role to play. Second, the problem of economic and social development is not entirely an economic matter. It also has its historical dimension. It requires, for instance, that the past trends and tendencies of the economic and social systems, institutions and work ethos should be closely analysed.

14. Carpenter, P., *History Teaching* (Cambridge, 1964) p. 1.

15. This point was examined at some length by Professor J. F. A. Ajayi in an address entitled "History in a developing Society" which he delivered to the Second International Congress of Africanists at Dakar in December 1967. I thank Professor Ajayi for drawing my attention to this paper after the Zaria congress.

For unless we understand these institutions, systems and the work ethos which go with them, we shall not be able to build on existing foundations, and unless we build on existing foundations we may find ourselves imposing on the people economic and social patterns which are totally alien to them and to which they are in no way prepared or equipped to respond. The work of uncovering the economic and social foundations of our people's culture, identifying the growth points and constraints and making all this knowledge available to those charged with planning our economy and hammering out a national work ethos belongs essentially to the historian.

A look at our syllabuses and methods would seem to suggest that we have so far not been fully aware of these challenges and promises and so have not met them fully, if at all. Take the case of helping to induct the young into our emerging national culture. I do not know what the history syllabuses for the first two years of the secondary school are in other states of Nigeria, but in the East Central State it is still largely what it was in my time—Ancient history (mainly the fertile crescent, Greece and Rome) in class one, and Medieval European history in class two. Then from class three the children begin their school certificate syllabus which is either West African history or the history of Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I am told that the purpose of the syllabuses for classes one and two is to make the children aware of the world beyond their African environment, to give them as broad an education as possible.

I find this argument a little astounding. In the first place how did it come to be thought that the histories of ancient Greece and Rome and of Medieval Europe (not of modern Europe, America or Russia) equip our children to understand the world beyond Africa? How does the study of ancient Greek democracy or the Peloponnesian war equip our children to understand what has been happening in Greece since the last two centuries? How does a study of medieval Christendom, of Charlemagne's empire and of feudalism enable our children to understand what has been happening in Europe since the industrial and French Revolutions? It would appear to me that the claims made for these two syllabuses are largely unjustified.

In the second place if we remember that in many schools the children are made to choose in class four the subjects they take in the School Certificate, and that most of them drop history at that stage, we are in a better position to see that history teaching in the secondary schools (at any rate in the East Central State) is not guided by a national objective. For those who drop history after class three it means they have done only one year (in class three) of African history, whereas they did two years of foreign (*i.e.* European) history. One would like to know how many countries in Europe, for instance, start off history teaching at that level with foreign history. For them the kind of wide knowledge of the world beyond the immediate environment which we are struggling to make a mass attribute is an elite attribute—reserved mainly for those who go to the universities. For them history teaching in pre-university institutions is largely part of the process of inculcating national character and way of life. Since many more people go through the secondary schools than go through the universities, they thus have a greater opportunity of attaining their objectives. For us the reverse is the case.

In the third place such a history curriculum as that operative in the East Central State totally violates the fundamental principle of teaching the young which recommends going from the known to the unknown. Under it an Igbo child who probably has never travelled beyond a radius of fifty miles from his village, is made to read of Greeks, Romans, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Vikings, Burgundians, Angles, Saxons, Slavs, Avars, Wends etc. whose institutions and ways of life are totally beyond his comprehension. Also at such an early stage in his educational career when he is just struggling to acquire a working knowledge of English, the language in which this alien history is written and taught, he is also called upon to study and master foreign concepts and institutions which cannot be illustrated by reference to local institutions and experience.

If many secondary school children abandon history after class three, it may well be not just because science is more fashionable, but because interest in the subject was killed in the first two years of secondary school life.

Then we come briefly to the organisation of history teaching beyond the secondary school level. Here one can easily observe that the way the subject is organised does not make it obvious what the difference is between junior and advanced history—in the same way as by merely looking at the syllabus one can say this is the difference between junior and advanced history—in the same way as by merely looking at the syllabus one can say this is the difference between junior and advanced physics or zoology. Whether in the secondary school or higher school or the university what we teach is what may be described as *Regional History*. This is clearly indicated in their titles—African history (at times further broken up into sub-regions: West, North, South, East, Central etc.), European history, American history etc. Usually each of these is taught mainly as political history with a grudging attention being paid to economic history. Rarely is attention given to social, intellectual, legal or diplomatic history. This is not to say I do not know that the Department of History, University of Ibadan, has about three courses in international relations, or that the Department of History, University of Lagos has a course in the economic history of West Africa. But these are largely recent developments and in any case do not lead to the kind of specialised training I have in mind.

The idea of regional history reminds one that at one time regional studies were very popular in geography, for instance. In those days a geographer could pick on West Africa, for example, and discuss its geology, vegetation, climate, economic and human resources and so on all by himself. Since no one man could claim to have the talent and interest necessary for attaining expertise in all these different aspects of geographic knowledge, invariably the regional geography book was a huge tome containing in places information of the most superficial kind on all kinds of things under the sun. Fortunately for geography its practitioners soon discovered the limitations of the regional approach and began specialising and so developing the various branches of their discipline. And now one is not just a geographer, but either a climatologist or geomorphologist or an economic or political or social geographer. For geography this now means that in the pre-university institutions one could do it at the general level, but if one decides to pursue the subject up to the university he could easily see that he is not simply going to acquire more information on the regions he had already studied. Instead he is going to acquire in addition a specific technique and training as a geomorphologist or what you will.

But this kind of revolution has not yet taken place in history teaching in Nigeria. The interested student of the subject who takes it up at the university level sees himself still faced with a syllabus dominated by the kind of history which he did in the secondary or higher school, namely regional history. The main difference at this stage is that he is now able to read it from fatter books written in more pompous language with the facts discussed at greater length. But he is not necessarily made to acquire a kind of specialised technique and skill which could be compared to that acquired by his counterpart who in reading geography graduates as an economic or political geographer for instance. In the event our history courses are still organised in the old-fashioned manner which gives a good general education, but not in the rigorous manner now characteristic of disciplines like geography, economics and so on which train students in special techniques and thus prepare them for specific positions in accordance with the demands of our contemporary society.

The result is that while other disciplines have grown and continues to grow through the creation of new areas of specialisation history in particular, and the humanities in general, have remained largely static. The impression has also been created in certain

quarters that there is only one branch of history and probably one technique for studying and teaching it. Many intelligent, and in fact highly educated, Nigerians believe that reading history is merely a question of cramming the dates around which particular events happened. The existing situation has also affected the career prospects of Nigerian historians. Whereas it would be relatively easy to argue for the creation of departments (or at least chairs) of political, economic, social, diplomatic, military and legal history, it would sound absurd to argue for the creation of independent departments, or even chairs, of regional histories—African (or even sub-regional divisions of this) European, American, Russian, Chinese etc. history. The fact is that while the techniques, methods and objectives of political, economic, social etc. histories are different and require full encouragement, those of regional histories are basically the same and therefore can be pursued in one department or even under the guidance of one professor. Also whereas it would not be easy to convince those who hold the nation's purse-strings to see the importance of financing the full-scale development of American or Chinese history here in Nigeria, it would be relatively easier to make them see the need for encouraging intensive work and teaching in political, economic, social, military, diplomatic, legal and administrative histories. These cover areas of national endeavour where specialists should be as much in demand as they are in geomorphology or mineralogy or medical microbiology.

Suggestions and Conclusions: Again I must re-emphasize the point I made earlier that what I have here are just my first thoughts on the matter and they are set down not as the solutions to the existing problems but as points for discussion. I am yet in no position to offer firm solutions to the predicaments of the historian and his craft in contemporary Nigeria.

First, let us take history teaching at the secondary school and college level. I think it should continue to be, as it is now, regional history of the most general kind aimed at introducing the children to the discipline of the subject. But in doing this we should bear in mind social relevance, the need to use history teaching as an instrument of national policy for inducting the young and the "tribes" into the Nigerian society of our dreams. We should also bear in mind the growth or well-being of the subject, the need to arouse interest in, and enthusiasm for, it among the young.

To achieve these ends it would be necessary to start off the children in class one with purely local history of the linguistic group in which the school is located. But in doing this the history of the group must be seen and presented as an integral part of a much larger whole—national history. Thus, while local institutions, heroes, traditions etc. are studied, emphasis must also be placed on the issue of longstanding contact and co-operation between the local group and its immediate neighbours. Then in class two the child should move from purely local history to national history. The remaining three years would then be spent, as is now done in the East Central State, in doing the School Certificate history syllabus.

The advantages of this approach are many and obvious. Children will begin the study of history, which could be a dull and difficult business if not properly introduced and handled, with the history of their own society whose institutions, heroes, legends, traditions and so on they probably already know something about. In this way during their early and sensitive stage of development the children will be able, as Mr Carpenter has said, to see "that the past does not only exist in books"¹⁶ or that history is not a dead and pointless subject, but is a living reality. Lessons learned or only half-learned in the class-room could be reinforced with visits to the important local centres, to heads of local institutions and deities, and to holders of traditional insignia of office etc. men-

16. Ibid. p. 34.

tioned in the stories. Also the efforts of the teacher could easily be supplemented by those of parents who would in that case be in the position to answer their children's questions—which most would otherwise be unable to do if the questions turned on the Albigenses or Peter Abelard.

The scheme suggested here thus has the advantage of introducing the child to the unknowns of foreign history through the knowns of local history. "We may", says Mr Finberg, "picture the family, the local community, the national state and the supra-national society as a series of concentric circles".¹⁷ Now it appears to me utterly unrealistic to expect the child, located as he is in the innermost circle, to appreciate the properties of the outermost circle before even he has appreciated those of the circle immediately around him.

This idea of introducing children to the study of history through local history is actually not a new one, though it has not usually been taken into account in drawing up the syllabuses of our schools and colleges. As long ago as 1908 the British Board of Education had issued a circular on history teaching which insisted that it was "essential that in each school attention should be paid to the history of the town and district in which it is situated."¹⁸ Coming nearer home, in 1956 Mr M. C. English pointed out to members of the Historical Society of Nigeria the importance of local history (what he called *tribal* history) in making history teaching lively and socially relevant.¹⁹ If one followed this principle he said, "the normal proceeding would be to teach Nigerian history first on the principle of starting from what is familiar and can be locally illustrated". But he would not actually recommend this in the Nigerian situation, he said, because the material did not exist, the teachers knew next to nothing in Nigerian history and in any case "the subject matter itself is not ideal if our purpose is to encourage a time sense." In his view it was necessary "to give the Nigerian pupil as early as possible a firm and clear chronological framework and that Nigerian history does not do."²⁰ But not only are Mr English's reasons for not teaching Nigerian history no longer tenable, but I do not think that our main aim in teaching history should be to give "a clear chronological framework."

Finally, that is for history teaching in schools and colleges, since at present many of our school children tend to drop history after class three, the curriculum proposed here will ensure that every one of them has at least three full years of local, Nigerian and probably West African history. This is a more satisfactory way of ensuring that all those of our children who go to the secondary schools and colleges have some background of their national history and culture and are able to appreciate to some extent the need and problems of fitting the new scientific techniques and ideas which they may be imbibing later into our own peculiar socio-cultural circumstances.

Then we come to history teaching at the university level. Here the problem is probably straight-forward. It is simply a question of de-emphasizing regional history and recognising, as Mr Finberg has said, that specialisation in history "has been carried to greater lengths, and in a fashion which cuts right across the simpler frontiers of yesterday."²¹ In this way we may be able to re-design our courses to emphasize the difference between junior and advanced history and thus make the pursuit of the discipline at the university level more challenging to the gifted students. What is needed is to draw up our courses in such a way that after a year or so of more advanced (that is more detailed) general history, students will have the opportunity of specialising in any of the major branches of history—political, economic, social, military, diplomatic,

17. Finberg, H. P. R. "Local History" in *Approaches to History* pp. 121-2.

18. Ibid. quoted on p. 111.

19. English, M. C., "What History etc." *loc. cit.* p. 113.

20. Ibid. p. 116.

21. Finberg, H. P. R. *op. cit.* p. vii.

legal and administrative. Necessarily this will involve the students in taking subsidiary courses in related departments. For instance a student specialising in economic history may need two or three courses in economics, a course in statistics and another in agricultural economics and so on.

What, one may ask, are the advantages of this proposal? The first is, as already mentioned, it may make the discipline more challenging and attract the better type of students. The popular idea of history as mere story-telling may in this way be laid to rest. The second is that we will be graduating students who have not only gained general education, but have acquired specialized techniques, and who therefore are likely to be more in demand than our current graduates are. The student who specialises in administrative history, having taken also a course or two in administrative law and practice will have an obvious advantage over all other graduates if he wants an administrative job. Similarly the graduate who specialises in diplomatic history having also done courses in international law and diplomatic practice is likely to have an assured place in the diplomatic service as in such international institutions as the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity and their agencies.

Thus if we revise our history teaching in such a way as to inculcate in our students special skills needed in specific jobs, we are likely to get over the current problem of jobs for our graduates—one of the main reasons why the subject is no longer popular. We are also likely to get over the problem of bursaries for those taking to these specialised trainings. In any case all those we graduate will not be scrambling for the same kind of jobs as is the case now.

Another advantage of this suggested reorganisation of the subject is that it will help us solve a problem which is becoming increasingly insoluble—how to give adequate coverage to all the regions of the world whose histories are important to us. The fact is that for as long as we adopt the regional approach there can be no satisfactory solution to the problem. There is almost an infinite number of regions and sub-regions, and as Africa extends her contacts the histories of all regions of the world will become increasingly necessary reading for us. But if we adopt the approach suggested here, then it will not matter whether or not we include all the regions of the world in the syllabus we teach. The techniques and methods of economic history, for instance are basically the same whether we are dealing with Africa, Europe, America, or Japan. The same is true for any of the other specialised branches of history. In that case, therefore, what we need is to teach the necessary techniques and methods by concentrating on a few representative samples. And if the graduate has acquired enough of the necessary technique, he can apply it with little difficulty to the study of the economic or diplomatic history of any part of the world when and if his duties make such application necessary.

Finally, and this is important for us in the discipline, this suggested re-organisation while posing new challenges, is likely to engender a rapid growth of the discipline, creating more jobs and more positions.

It would be unrealistic, and in fact dishonest, to pretend that the suggestions put forward above do not pose for us some serious problems. In the first place, for the great majority of us who were trained in the old way, it may entail retraining and reorientation. In the second place, and this would appear to be more serious to some, we shall have to discard our old reliables—those lecture notes on regional histories on which we have found it convenient to rely year after year—and draw up entirely new notes. It would be hypocritical to pretend that for some these are not strong enough reasons to cry “let well alone”.

ARMS AND AMMUNITION, AND THEIR EMBARGO IN BRITISH WEST AFRICAN HISTORY, 1823-1874

By P. M. MBAEYI

ARMS and ammunition have always been important for the military strength and wars of most states. In West Africa, by the nineteenth century, the weapons of war used by the indigenous Africans included bows, arrows, spears, cutlasses, clubs, and swords. But the most formidable were muskets or 'Dane' guns. These and the gun-powder that worked them were normally obtained at or from the coast, from foreign, mainly European, mercantile houses. Trade to the coast and the control of a port or stretch of coast were therefore important for the acquisition of these munitions of war. The denial of such munitions was something that could influence wars, conflicts, and the powers of states. Wherever, they were involved or established on the seaboard between 1823 and 1874, the British made efforts to diminish or cut off the supplies of the munitions that could reach their African opponents. Naval blockades occasionally enforced or helped British embargoes. The arms trade and the embargoes of them from time to time thus form a distinctive aspect of importance in the history of West Africa in the nineteenth century, and this paper seeks to look at the subject.

The Position Before the Nineteenth Century

It is probably good to point out at the beginning that the arms trade and the interest in their embargo pre-dated the nineteenth century contacts between Europe and West Africa. In the three and a half centuries from the middle of the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, European traders who took slaves and other goods from West Africa provided the Africans in return many European cottons, drinks and wares which included 'all kinds of firearms, gun-powder and shot...'¹ The embargoes also began early. For example, in 1460, when a Portuguese trader, Diogo Gomes, made his second voyage to the Cape Verde area of the Guinea Coast, he heard of an interloper, de Prado, who had also come to the area. Gomes sent an armed ship to arrest him. De Prado was sent to Portugal, 'put in irons for selling arms to the Moors in exchange for gold, and afterwards... burnt as a heretic.'² Also, King Alfonso V of Portugal, on 12 June 1466, when granting the colonists of Cape de Verde Islands a concession to trade to the mainland of Upper Portuguese Guinea, excepting Arguin, followed 'one of the strictest rules of medieval Christendom' and 'forbade them to sell arms, iron, ships or naval equipment to the heathens...'³

The 'papal prohibitions on the sale of arms and iron to non-Christians' have also been stressed in connection with the history of Benin in early modern times.⁴ The Portuguese observed the prohibitions and the pilot of one of their ships, the *Sao Miguel*, which left Sao Thome in April 1522 towards Ughoton, the port for the Benin Kingdom, was warned to keep careful watch over the arms in the ship so that they did not come

1. J. D. Fage, *A History of West Africa: An Introductory Survey*, (Cambridge U.P., 1969), p. 89.
2. J. W. Blake, *European Beginnings in West Africa, 1454-1578: A Survey of the First Century of White Enterprise in West Africa With Special Emphasis Upon the Rivalry of the Great Powers*, (Longmans, London, 1937), p. 23.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Alan Ryder, *Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897*, (Ibadan History Series), (Longmans, London, 1969), p. 41.

into the control or the hands of the negroes of that area, so that 'no mischance shall befall'⁵ the expedition or the Europeans in the area. In 1514, the Portuguese had also seized a cannon from a royal caravel in the Benin River.⁶ And in 1721, William Butler, the Director-General of the Dutch Company that traded to the Guinea Coast caused a proclamation to be issued forbidding the sale of guns and powder in the Benin area.⁷ This was a counter to the Portuguese who, it was thought, had then begun selling arms and powder in the area, and some unconfirmed English sales had also been speculated about.⁸ The nineteenth century ideas and practices about embargoes on arms and ammunition therefore were a flow from what had occasionally been witnessed in the previous centuries.

African Practices Over Arms and Ammunition

It should also be noted that the denial of munitions of war to potential or actual opponents was not practised by the Europeans alone. Some of the indigenous African peoples also had the same policy. For apart from their use against Europeans and European fears of them, the 'Dane' gun and the musket were equally important in indigenous wars and power politics. The rise, successes, and strength of the inland kingdoms of Asante and Dahomey mainly rested on the possession of these weapons, and they then took as much care as they could to prevent their neighbours from acquiring them. On the Gold Coast, in the three-year war that lasted from 1698 to 1701 during which Asante won independence from the Denkeria (Denkyira) and so started the career of the Asante Empire that was famous by the nineteenth century, arms were important and there was a policy about them towards the Denkeria. In the conflict, the Asante were helped by aid which included 'the supply of guns and powder from Akwamu...' Denkeria was, on her part, cut off from supplies of arms from the coast by a conspiracy of those who opposed them in the war. Denkeria was thus defeated, her collapse making way for the rise of Asante.⁹

Writing in 1819, about his Mission to the Asante Empire, T. E. Bowdich noted that it was Asante policy not to permit the export of guns or powder to Inta, Dagomba (Dagwumba) or any of the other nations contiguous to them. This arose, Bowdich said, from an Asante fear that 'if these powerful instruments of war should reach the possession of the populous inland states, 'this could bring about the end of Asante conquests and hegemony; it could even, they reasoned, not only undermine Asante power but lead to the loss of independence by that Empire.'¹⁰ William Hutton in 1821 wrote in the same vein about Asante policy and the reasons that evoked it.¹¹ Similarly, Dahomey was, in the 1840s, reported to have prohibited the transport of fire arms through the kingdom to the Mahi and the other interior peoples such as the Hio.¹² Amongst the

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 297.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

9. J. D. Fage, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109. On the Asante defeat of the Denkeria (Denkyira), also see, William Bosman, *A new and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided into the the Gold, the Slave and the Ivory Coasts, Containing A Geographical, Political and Natural History of the Kingdoms and Countries: With a Particular Account of the Rise, Progress and Present Condition of All the European Settlements Upon that Coast, and the Just Measures for Improving the Several Branches of the Guinea Trade*, (London, 1705), pp. 370-371.

10. T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee: With a Statistical Account of That Kingdom and Geographical Notices of Other Parts of the Interior of Africa*, (London, 1819), p. 335, f.n.

11. William Hutton, *A Voyage to Africa, Including A Narrative of an Embassy to One of the Interior Kingdoms in the Year 1820*, (London, 1821), p. 348.

12. John Duncan, *Travels in Western Africa in 1845 and 1846*, 2 Vols. (London, 1847), Vol. II, p. II.

Yoruba in the time of the Ijaye wars which began about 1859, the Ijebu of the seaboard tried to prevent their opponents, the inland people of Ibadan, from obtaining muskets and ammunition. Expedients such as burning the market sheds at Ikorodu were resorted to so as to effect this, but Ibadan obtained arms from the Ijebu-Remo branch of the Ijebu peoples, stored up large quantities of these, refused to supply others, and with them, won decisive victories at Ijaye in 1862 and at Ijesha in 1870.¹³ The British practice about arms embargoes was thus in keeping with the policies already pursued by some of West Africa's powerful indigenous communities.

The Arrival of the Musket and Arms Gifts to West Africans

Muskets arrived in parts of West Africa at slightly different times. Despite the attempts to prevent them already mentioned above, they seemed to have reached the Cape Verde, Upper Guinea and Benin areas from the fifteenth century. They were imported into the Niger Delta sometime after 1670.¹⁴ Asante established commercial contact with the European trading companies on the Gold Coast through Osei Tutu's victory over the Denkira in 1701; thereafter a supply of guns and powder was ensured.¹⁵ Lieutenant Forbes, R. N., wrote in 1851 that, 'The earliest intercourse between the Dahomeans and Europeans... dates from the year 1724, when the then King of Dahomey (Agaja the conqueror or Guadja Trudo of Archibald Dalziel's *History of Dahomey*) over-ran the kingdom of Ardrah that lay between his capital and the sea-coast...'¹⁶ The regular supply of 'Dane' guns for Dahomey was secured from about this period. In the Yoruba country, muskets seem to have been first used by the Ijebu who lived on the Lagos seaboard during the Owu war of the 1820s.¹⁷ By 1862, these guns or flint-lock pieces of the double-barrelled kind were being sold at 21s. 6d each in Yoruba land.¹⁸

Access to the coast or the possession of a port was thus vital for the supplies of the ammunitions and arms used by the indigenous forces. This question became one of the issues that ran through and affected the policies of Dahomey in the eighteenth and of the inland peoples of Asante and Ibadan during the nineteenth century. But although most of the guns and gunpowder used by the Africans were obtained through the normal process of trade, some were sometimes supplied by the British to the indigenous peoples as 'presents,' at times obtaining African presents in return. For example, when Joseph Dupuis left for his embassy to Kumasi in February 1820, Governor John Hope Smith and his ruling merchants' council at Cape Coast added not only rum but also 'one hundred kegs of gun powder (and) one hundred musquets' to the ceremonial presents that the mission took with it for the *Asantehene* Osei Tutu Kwame.¹⁹ In Kumasi, Osei Tutu Kwame returned the gesture of goodwill, and at an audience at which he delivered something to Dupuis, the monarch said, 'The king gives you seven ounces, two acheys of gold, as a token of friendship.' Afterwards other little parcels of gold were distributed to the others in the mission, Messrs Coltins, Hutton, Salmon and Graves.²⁰ Presents for the King of England were also later produced by the *Asantehene*.²¹

13. Bolanle Alake Awe, 'The Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power in the Nineteenth Century' [Oxford D. Phil. Thesis, 1964], pp. 197-8, 245.

14. G. I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, (Oxford, 1963), p. 45.

15. William Tordoff, 'The Ashanti Confederacy', *Journal of African History*, Vol. III, No. 3, (1962), p. 40.

16. Frederick E. Forbes, *Dahomey and the Dahomans: Being the Journal of Two Missions to the King of Dahomey and Residence at His Capital in the Years 1849 and 1850*, 2 Vols. (London, 1851), Vol. I, pp. 2-3.

17. The Rev. Samuel Johnson, (Edited by Dr. O. Johnson), *The History of the Yorubas* (1921), (CSS edn., Lagos, 1969), pp. 206-210.

18. J. F. Ade Ajayi and Robert S. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*, (Ibadan and Cambridge U.P., 1964), pp. 18, 134.

19. Joseph Dupuis, *Journal of a Residence in Ashantee*, (London, 1824), p. xxxv.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

In the Niger Delta, King Amakiri of the Kalabari or New Calabar was on 10 April 1855, supplied 50 half-barrels of powder, 7 cases of guns and 5,000 musket flints in accordance with the provisions of an agreement entered into between him and the British Consul John Beecroft on 8 August 1851.³⁰

The Arms Trade

Despite the fitful supplies obtained as presents as above however, the normal way that the Africans acquired arms and ammunition was through purchase from the European merchants on the Coast. Munitions of war therefore increasingly formed a part of the foreign trade to West Africa. Figures fluctuated from year to year, but in 1827, the total value of British arms and ammunition sold on the 'West Coast of Africa' was given as being around £47,000; in 1831, £74,000; in 1836, £138,000; in 1841, £91,000. Of lead and shot, British sales were of this order:³¹

In 1827	—	33 tons worth	£700
1832	—	86 " "	£1,230
1836	—	77 " "	£1,800
1839	—	79 " "	£1,560
1841	—	70 " "	£1,400

In subsequent years, the West African imports continued to fluctuate. The Gambia imported £8,600 worth of British guns and £5,700 of gun-powder in 1854; £2,500 of guns and £2,300 of gunpowder in 1861; and £13,600 of guns and £4,000 of gunpowder in 1863.³² Sierra Leone and the peoples around it took £975 worth of guns and £1,180 of gunpowder in 1855; £3,600 of guns and £5,340 of gunpowder in 1858; and £1,800 of guns and £8,600 of gunpowder in 1863.³³ Into the Gold Coast, the British imported guns to the value of £2,000 in 1857; £1,580 in 1859; and £3,200 in 1862; of gunpowder, £13,400 in 1854; £5,500 in 1859; and £2,000 in 1863.³⁴ Between July 1862 and the end of 1864, munitions of war to the value of about £23,000 were landed at Lagos and taken into the interior through the Ijebu at Ikorodu to Ibadan for use in the Egba-Ibadan conflict then in progress.³⁵

All the above figures must be considered conservative, including only what the customs records at ports about importations showed, supplemented in the earlier years by merchants' returns. Large quantities of warlike stores were also imported into the Niger Delta states, into the Dahomey port of Whydah, at Porto Novo, at Keta and the ports of the Awuna seaboard and the Volta mouth, at Grand Bassam and Assinie, and at other ports to the northward which were not under the jurisdiction of British or other European customs posts, where, therefore, the reckoning of landings and sales was difficult. As well as the British, the Americans and the French shipped increasing quantities of guns and gunpowder to West African ports. For example, the French mercantile house of Mm. Daumas, Lasnier, Lartigue and Company which was established in 1866, sold in 1868 on the West Coast of Africa, not only guns but also some 600,000 musket flints.³⁶ French merchants were particularly active at Albreda and Galam in the Gambia basin, and along the Senegal River; in the Mellicourie and the Rio Nunez regions near Sierra Leone; at Grand Bassam and Assinie in the Ivory Coast, and at Whyday, Porto Novo and Palma. American importations went to the Liberian Coast and to the mainland opposite the free-port of Goree.

30. P. Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 1926), Vol. I, pp. 260-1

31. *P.P.*, 1842, XII, (551), Appendix No. 36.

32. *P.P.*, 1865, XXXVII, (170), Appendix No. 2

33. *Ibid.*, Appendix No. 9.

34. *Ibid.*

35. C. W. Newbury, *The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers*, (Oxford, 1961), pp. 72-3.

36. Bernard Schnapper, *La Politique et le Commerce français dans le Golfe de Guinée de 1838 à 1871*, (Paris, 1961), p. 118.

Partly on account of the importation of arms and ammunition, the control of the seaboard of West Africa, or a portion of it became of very great importance. Inland indigenous powers, in pursuance of security over their supplies and supply-routes, sought coastal ports under their control or jurisdiction. As already noted, Dahomey obtained this coastal base or port in Whydah in the 1720s when Agaja invaded and conquered King Huffon (Hoofon) of Savi as well as the maritime Kingdoms of Allada and Ardra. Whydah (or Huedah) was called, by Agaja, *Grehwe* or *Glewhe*, that is to say, 'Garden House', meaning that that port should supply 'necessaries' to the capital of the kingdom.³⁷ these 'necessaries' would include muskets and gunpowder. During the 1840s, Badagry was an important port for the Yoruba people, particularly the Egba who went down to the market at that town every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday to purchase European goods.³⁸ Badagry was not controlled by the Egba but it was free and friendly, and they had uninhibited access to it until 1862. When the British occupied that port in 1862, the Egba tended to shift their point of coastal contact further west to the port of Porto Novo. Governor John Glover of Lagos tried in 1871-72 to blockade and control Porto Novo (which in 1872 he described as 'the last mouth left to the Egbas.') and this was an effort to deprive the people of Abeokuta of their last open sources of arms and ammunition. In that attempt, Glover's control of a steam gun boat enabled him to institute blockades.³⁹

For the exchange of African produce with European wares including munitions of war, routes led from the interior to the coast, from Wuli, Bondu and the other interior states of the Gambia to Bathurst and the European factories in the river basin. Around Sierra Leone, trading caravans travelled from Timbuktu, Bamako, Segou (Segou), Kankan and other places of the Futa Jallon districts to the ports and towns of the Sierra Leone sea-board. The numerous rivers in that area formed one of the chief links between the coast and the interior. Falaba and Tembo, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, formed prominent nodal points in the interior from whence the caravans moved coastwards. By the latter part of the century, Sigui, Faranah, Musaia, Bumban and Samaia were also noteworthy centres where traders collected before striking out to the coast in the direction of the riverain ports of Kambia, Mange, Port Loko or Mabelly (Magbile),⁴⁰ guns and gunpowder being some of the chief items taken back in the return journey.

Concerning the Asante, their wars of the nineteenth century were provoked partly by their desire to reach and obtain a footing on the sea-board for the greater security of their supplies. For guns and powder, as for many other European goods, all Asante roads, as in other places, led to the coast. In 1820, whilst Dupuis and his colleagues were on their way to Kumasi, they met 'a party of five Ashantees who. . . were journeying to Elmina for gunpowder. They had left Coomassy (Kumasi), they said, twenty-one days before. . .'⁴¹ Shortly after they had passed the town of Emperou where an Asante-

37. J. A. Skertchly, *Dahomey As It is: Being A Narrative of Eight Months Residence in that Country, With A Full Account of the Notorious Annual Customs, And the Social and Religious Institutions of the Ffons; Also An Appendix on Ashantee, And a Glossary of Dahoman Words and Titles*, (London, 1874), p. 45.

38. *Methodist Missionary Society Archives, London*, (MMS.): T. B. Freeman, 'Memo. on the Slave Coast', (Undated); *Ibid.*, Letter from William de Graft, Badagry, 21 Mar. 1843.

39. P. M. Mbaeyi, 'Lagos and the British, 1871-1874', *IKENGA Journal of African Studies*, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Vol. I, No. 1, Jan. 1972, pp. 33-39.

40. Major Alexander Gordon Laing, *Travels in the Timanee, Kooranko and Soolima Countries in Western Africa*, (London, 1825); Document No. 4; pp. 247-9 in C. W. Newbury, *British Policy Towards West Africa- Select Documents, 1786-1874*, (Oxford, 1965); For the routes in the later 19th Century, see P. K. Mitchell, 'Trade Routes of the Early Sierra Leone Protectorate', *Sierra Leone Studies*, New Series, No. 16, June 1962, pp. 204-217.

41. Dupuis, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Fante engagement was fought in 1807, Dupuis and his escorts met another group of traders, Assins and Asantes, who were again travelling to the sea-board.⁴²

The incentives to reach the coast were great because prices there were cheaper than in the interior. Bowdich noted that gunpowder which was sold at the rate of £4 per barrel of 25 pounds weight at Cape Coast on the sea coast was retailed at 7½d a charge of 16 ackies (¾ of an ounce weight) at Kumasi, giving a profit margin of 400 per cent. Iron bars for ammunition were bought at £1 a bar at Cape Coast but £1. 15s. a bar at Kumasi (giving a profit of 75 per cent) and £3 a bar at Salaga (Sallagha) and Yahndi (giving a 300 per cent profit). Lead cost 10s. a bar at Cape Coast and was 7½d per ½ inch at Kumasi (75 per cent over and above the Cape Coast figure).⁴³ Thus a direct access to the seaboard sources eliminated the profits of the Fante middlemen and made the guns and ammunition cheaper. From the time of President Maclean in the 1830s, the Asante increasingly had this access to the coast, uninterrupted by intermediaries, and trade increased therefrom. The Reverend Edward Schrenk of the Basle Mission on the Gold Coast confirmed the new system of trade when he told the 1865 Select Committee of Inquiry on the British West African settlements that, at that time, it was 'not the custom of traders to go to the Ashantee country', but that instead, the Asante 'came down to Cape Coast, and to other ports on the coast, and exchange gold dust especially for powder, guns, salt, and tobacco, which are the chief articles that they buy on the coast.'⁴⁴

Dupuis wrote in 1824 that there were 'four great maritime causeways, from whence the Ashantees derive all their supplies of powder, guns and European merchandize.' These routes radiated from Kumasi to the coast. The first, the Aowin road, led to the Western coast, to Appolonia, Assinie, Grand Bassam and Cape Lahou. The second was the Wassaw road leading through Denkera to Wassaw, whence it again branched east and west, the former leading to the River Prah which it then crossed to Elmina, Komenda, Shama (Chamah), and so on, whilst the latter struck through the Ahanta country to Cape Three Points and the European establishments in that area. The third route led through Assin and the Fante country to the village of Dunkwa where it divided into two branches: the one to Anomabu and the other to the Dutch fort of Mouree, located about four miles to the east of Cape Coast Castle. The fourth major route running in a South-East/North-Westerly direction through Juaben, Yomoho, Akim and part of Akwapim, led to Accra and the ports in the Awuna seaboard and the Volta region.⁴⁵ These roads did not appear to have changed much over the ensuing decades. Alfred Swanzy, a trader to West Africa for twenty years during six of which he lived on the Gold Coast told the 1865 Select Committee that 'the principal route by which European produce finds its way into Ashantee' were,

By the paths; there are three or four paths; one to Accra, another to Anamaboe (Anomabu), and the Elmina, branching into Cape Coast.⁴⁶

The Asante plied these paths between Kumasi and the coast, and other wares could be re-exported north to Dagomba, Inta, Salaga and Yahndi excepting guns and gunpowder which were retained for the use of the Asante only.⁴⁷

The free intercourse with the coast from the 1830s notwithstanding, the idea persisted in Asante that the greatest security for their supply of arms and ammunition lay in the actual possession of a strip of the coast under their immediate jurisdiction. About 1871, Colonel Nagtglas, the Dutch governor of Elmina, re-emphasized that it had long

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

43. Bowdich, *op. cit.*, p. 331: 'Trade Table.'

44. *P.P.*, 1865, XXXVII (170), Q. 3268.

45. Dupuis, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

46. *P.P.*, 1865, XXXVII (170), Q. 4837. Alfred Swanzy was on the Gold Coast from 1844 to 1850 and again in 1853.

47. Bowdich, *op. cit.*, p. 335. f.n.

been Kumasi policy to control a port on the Gold Coast like Dahomey at Whydah.⁴⁸ In 1874, Skerthly also observed that, 'The non-possession of a coast-line, which debars them from a direct traffic with Europeans, has led to innumerable feuds with the Fantees (the Fante) and other tribes,'⁴⁹ the British taking part in the resultant wars with their naval and military forces. Like the Egba at Badagry up to 1862 and afterwards at Porto Novo, the Asante had friendly free ports in the Dutch forts on the Gold Coast, principally Elmina. In 1872 however, Elmina was transferred to the British and so important was that matter to the inland peoples that that transfer formed one of the chief causes of the Asante-British war that began in December 1872. The Asante also bought munitions of war at or through Assinie and Grand Bassam in the Ivory Coast to the west and through Keta and the Volta valley ports in the east, all places outside the jurisdiction or effective control of the British government of the Gold Coast.

Indigenous African desires for a port stemmed partly from the knowledge that the power that controlled the coast controlled the importation of munitions of war and could stop landings and sales whenever it felt inclined to do so. The period between 1823 and 1874 saw the enforcement of such restrictions and embargoes by the British authorities on the seaboard from the Gambia to the Niger Delta. No hard policy was laid down on this issue but the practice was to stop the importation and sale of guns and gunpowder when there was tension or war involving British interests or authorities. During the continuance of restrictions, British naval forces or gun boat detachments were frequently called in to enforce and maintain a blockade of the coasts.

The Embargoes and their Enforcement

By the time that the Asante-British war of 1823-6.⁵⁰ started, the Asante had 'given up resorting to the British establishments' on the Gold Coast, then chiefly the forts of Cape Coast, Accra, Anomabu and Dixcove. Instead, they went to the Dutch and Danish forts where no duties were charged on imports and which remained friendly to them. To cut these Asante sources of supply as well as to benefit British trade, Sir Charles McCarthy, the governor-in-chief of the British West African settlements, proposed that the British should somehow acquire and control the Dutch fort of Elmina and the Danish fort of Christiansborg, known as Danish Accra.⁵¹ The British merchants on the Gold Coast, in a letter to McCarthy in which they offered 'a few observations' on the state of the Gold Coast and Asante at that time made the same proposal. They urged the British government to 'enter into arrangements with Holland and with Denmark for the purchase of their forts' on the Gold Coast, and declared that 'the overthrow of the King of Ashantee' was an object which, in their view, was of 'the greatest importance' for the development of British trade with the countries and peoples beyond Asante. They also felt that British acquisition of the Dutch and Danish forts would, 'in a political light,' affect Asante a great deal, their opinion being that 'no more effectual means could possibly be adopted to subvert or control the power of the Ashantees' than the British control of the whole of the seaboard of the Gold Coast. Through this measures they added, the Asante 'would then be (made) necessarily dependent on... (the British, for all their supplies both of war-like stores and articles of commerce, all of which they could... (at that time) as readily procure as well at Elmina or Christiansborg Castle a

48. C.O. 96/87. Nagtglas to Ussher (Undated—but C. 1871).

49. Skerthly, *op. cit.*, p. 512.

50. P. M. Mbaeyi, 'Military and Naval Factors in British West African History, 1823-1874: Being An Examination of the Organization of British Naval and Military Forces in West Africa and their Role in the Struggle for the Coast and the Principal Rivers', (Oxford D. Phil. Thesis, 1965), pp. 113-133; J. K. Fynn, 'Ghana-Asante (Ashanti)' in Michael Crowder (Ed.), *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation*, (Hutchinson, London, 1971), pp. 29-32; J. D. Fage, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134; W. Walton Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, 2 Vols. (London, 1915), Vol. I, Chaps. xix-xxi, pp. 334-391.

51. C.O. 267/56, No. 32. McCarthy to Bathurst, 11 Nov. 1822.

at any of the British settlements. Thus sub-servient to... (the British) and their power crippled, the Ashantees would be unable to exert the means of annoying (them) and would no longer be capable of obstructing... intercourse with the nations in the interior.⁵²

This merchants' argument about the impact of British control of the seaboard held good not only for the Asante and the Gold Coast but also for much of West Africa wherever a struggle for the control of the coast ended with the success of the Europeans. It was true of Barra when the British began to regulate affairs at the base of the Gambia River; the establishment of British authority on the Lagos seaboard eventually led to a similar result of dependence and absorption for the Egba, the Ijebu and the entire Yoruba hinterland. French influence in the Senegal and Ivory Coast and later off the Dahomey seaboard produced similar effects. With regard to the Gold Coast during the 1820s, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, agreed with both governor McCarthy and the merchants 'that the possession of the neighbouring Danish and Dutch forts would prove of the greatest advantage' to the British presence. He directed that a representation on the subject should be made by the Colonial Office to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs but, at the same time, he did feel that 'the Powers to which these possessions belong will not be so ready to relinquish them.'⁵³ In fact nothing came of these proposals until 1850 when the British acquired the Danish forts and 1872 when they acquired Dutch Elmina, and thus obtained the power to control the importation and sale of munitions of war along the entire Gold Coast seaboard. The full effect of this over-all control was felt in Asante and beyond during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In the absence of this full and undivided control in the 1820s, the British resorted to blockades so as to diminish Asante military resources. Because the trade of the people of the inland power with the British settlements was in abeyance by 1823, no proclamation was formally issued when the war broke out prohibiting the importation of munitions of war for sale at, or export into the interior from, the British posts and forts, although such a decree would have been normal with the British authorities during the continuance of hostilities. On this occasion, a prohibition Ordinance must have seemed superfluous since there was, by 1823, no trade at the British forts to prohibit. Instead the importations through the Danish forts but principally through the Dutch forts of Elmina. Shama (Chamah) and Sekondi were the main sources of Asante guns and gunpowder which the British worried about. Suggestions about what measures the British could take over the importation of munitions of war were therefore chiefly with an eye to these non-British ports.

On 30 January 1824, Major Chisholm, then in charge of the British forces on the Gold Coast, and Captain Woolcombe, the commander of H. M. S. *Owen Glendower* at that time in Cape Coast waters, exchanged correspondence 'respecting the stoppage of communication' between the Dutch settlements and all in-coming merchant-ships. Chisholm told Woolcombe that the British position at that time 'imperiously demands that communication between merchant vessels of every description and the natives of Elmina, Chamah and Succondee is prevented as without such a step... it will be impossible to prevent those peoples from selling munitions of war to or otherwise assisting... the Ashantees'.⁵⁴ Thus, without resorting to the technicalities of a legal proclamation (and it will be seen later that these sometimes had their own loop-holes in the circumstances of other foreign-controlled and British-controlled forts being contiguous) a *de facto* blockade of ports not under British jurisdiction was asked for, and then determined upon by the British authorities on the spot.

52. Ibid., British Merchants on the Gold Coast to McCarthy, 30 Sept. 1822.

53. C.O. 268/20, f. 6. Bathurst to McCarthy, 20 Aug. 1822.

54. C.O. 267/72. Chisholm to Woolcombe, 30 Jan. 1824.

On 3 February 1824, it was reported that Woolcombe had ordered the British guard boats which were then off the coast 'to prevent all merchant vessels from anchoring' at or off Elmina or any other Dutch fort.⁵⁵ How effective this action was is hard to say because, exactly a month later, Captain Courtenay, then the acting commander of the *Owen Glendower* warship, stated that 'it was ascertained' that 'supplies of gun-powder, lead and muskets... were readily furnished... (to the Asante) from Elmina, and other Dutch settlements.'⁵⁶ No direct British intervention took place at Elmina, Dutch authority being well established there. But at Shama at the mouth of the River Prah, leading to the borders of Asante, Dutch authority had been almost totally withdrawn so that the British could take action there to prevent the Asante from acquiring arms and ammunition from there without the expectation of much Dutch opposition. Captain Courtenay using H. M. S. *Owen Glendower* and H. M. S. *Swinger* forced a landing and an occupation of that town on 7 March 1824.⁵⁷

In 1853, when the Asante moved to occupy Assin after their diplomatic efforts to recover that country peacefully had been thwarted by the Cape Coast Government, war seemed imminent. The Gold Coast Governor Stephen J. Hill called in the British brig, the *Britomart*, and the steamer, the *Alecto*, to Cape Coast waters in order to establish a British naval presence. No formal blockade of the coast was announced, and no prohibition of the importation of munitions of war was decreed. But there had once more resulted from the crisis a total 'stoppage of trade' between Kumasi and the coast, so that no guns and powder were being sold to the Asante.⁵⁸ When a few months afterwards, in August 1853, the first party of Asante traders were expected to visit the coast, governor Hill was about to go on leave. The acting governor, James C. Fitzpatrick, asked Hill just before he left for instructions whether he 'should permit them (that is, the Asante) to purchase warlike stores' or whether he should 'place any obstacle in the way of their doing so'. Hill asked the acting governor to exercise his own discretion on the subject. In pursuance of this, Fitzpatrick advised 'the merchants in the British settlements on the Gold Coast to abstain... from selling such commodities' to the Asante. He asked the merchants to do this 'in a manner as little calculated as possible to cause annoyance or distrust in the minds of the Ashantees,' and later reported that, 'This advice, having met with general concurrence, was acted on almost universally.'⁵⁹

Fitzpatrick thought that this embargo had had a powerful effect at Kumasi. When soon afterwards, the *Asantehene* Kwaku Duah sent a peace mission to Cape Coast Castle, the acting governor attributed this move to the effect of the embargo. Duah hoped that the officer administering the government would 'direct the merchants to sell powder and guns, etc. to his people, as he wants these for his customs and hunting.' To this request, Fitzpatrick replied that, 'as there was a good deal of uneasiness in the minds of the Fantees still' about Asante moves and intentions, he thought it better that the Asante traders 'should for the present supply themselves with the other articles they required and defer their purchase of guns, etc., for a short time, at least until the Governor returned.'⁶⁰ About the same time, the French squadron on the West Coast of Africa was said to be blockading the coast from River Lahou to River Assinie in an attempt to coerce the people of Grand Bassam.⁶¹ The effect of this was that the Asante could not, for a time, as they had done in the past and were to do again in future, procure some of their munitions of war from those places to the west-ward of the Gold Coast. It was not until January 1854, when peace was re-established between the Cape

55. *Ibid.*, Woolcombe to Croker, 3 Feb. 1824.

56. *Ibid.*, Courtenay to Chisholm, 3 Mar. 1824.

57. *Ibid.*, Courtenay to Chisholm, 7 Mar. 1824.

Ibid., Courtenay to Croker, 10 Mar. 1824.

58. C.O. 96/27 No. 30. Hill to Newcastle 8 Apr. 1853.

59. C.O. 96/28 No. 66. Fitzpatrick to Newcastle 3 Aug. 1853.

60. *Idem.*

61. *Ibid.*, No. 82. Cruikshank to Newcastle 6 Oct. 1853.

Coast government and the Kumasi authorities that 'all restrictions upon the sale of war-like stores' were lifted along the Gold Coast sea-board for the Asante.⁶²

The British power of control over the arms trade at the coast, backed up by naval blockades, had thus become one important way by which the British asserted their will in the political and military struggles of the Gold Coast seaboard. The same control factor and means of enforcement were also used in the Gambia, in Sierra Leone, in the Niger Delta and on the Lagos seaboard.

During the Barra-British war of 1831, lieutenant-governor George Rendall of the Gambia caused several of the colonial craft owned by his government to be employed to maintain 'a severe blockade upon the Barra shore,' the aim being to cut off Barra 'supplies of corn, munitions of war, etc.'⁶³ In 1855, while he was engaged in operations against Sabaje and while wars were being fought between Marabouts and Soninkes in Barra and Kombo, territories which were close to Bathurst and the places which had been ceded to the British, governor Luke Smyth O'Connor placed an embargo on the sale of munitions of war in the Gambia.⁶⁴ During war in 1861 between the Koya Temme and the Freetown authorities, the Sierra Leone Executive Council which met on 5 December 1861 'decided that the sale of powder should be stopped until the war had ceased.'⁶⁵

From the time that the British formally occupied Lagos in August 1861, her representatives on that coast were anxious to intervene in the Egba-Ibadan conflict that had grown out of the Ijaye War. As governor Henry Stanhope Freeman, the British Governor of Lagos in 1862-63 put it, he wanted 'to convince the surrounding tribes of the necessity of their conforming to the views and policy of the British Government' at Lagos. For a time, opinion in the Colonial Office was somewhat equivocal about this.⁶⁶ Freeman's wish for military intervention was however eventually accomplished by his dynamic and forceful successor, Glover, at Ikorodu in March 1865.⁶⁷ In addition, another important method employed by the Lagos authorities for influencing Yoruba politics around Lagos and in the interior, was the prohibition, from time to time, of the import, sale or export to the hinterland of arms and gunpowder. On 4 October 1861, the merchant William McCoskry, who had assumed the title of acting governor of Lagos in the interval between the island's cession on 6 August 1861 and Freeman's arrival early in 1862, had commented on Egba unwillingness to accede to the mediation of the new Lagos government in their war with Ibadan. McCoskry stated that 75 per cent of the munitions of war for the Yoruba country passed through Lagos; the remainder was imported through Porto Novo, Badagry and Palma. The acting governor then suggested that an appropriate way to put pressure on the Egba would be by stopping the supply and the passage of arms from Lagos to the interior.⁶⁸

No action about McCoskry's recommendation was taken until early 1863 when governor Freeman closed all trade with Abbeokuta from Porto Novo to Epe' and using H.M.S. *Investigator* and H. M. S. *Handy* which were then in the lagoons of Lagos, 'blockaded the entrances to all the creeks... stopping the markets' in the process.⁶⁹ This action affected not so much the Egba as the trade of Lagos which became depressed; so, the blockade was lifted on 6 April 1863, after it had been in operation for only a

62. C.O. 96/30 No. 2. Cruikshank to Newcastle 12 Apr. 1854.

63. C.O. 87/5. Rendall to Hay, 28 Oct. 1831.

64. C.O. 87/60. O'Connor to Molesworth, 24 Sept. 1855.

65. C.O. 267/273. Meeting of the Executive Council, 5 Dec. 1861.

66. C.O. 147/1, No. 28. Freeman to Newcastle, 4 July 1862; *Ibid.*, Minutes on above.

67. C.O. 147/8. Glover to Cardwell, 8 Apr. 1865.

68. C.O. 147/2. McCoskry to Russell, 4 Oct. 1861.

69. C.O. 147/5. Freeman to Russell, 3 Jan. 1863;
C.O. 147/3, No. 18. Freeman to Newcastle, 2 Mar. 1863.

month.⁷⁰ In November of the same year however, Glover reimposed the restrictions on the sale of powder at Lagos, the aim again being to cut off Egba supplies of this commodity.⁷¹ Until the middle of 1865, all roads from Abeokuta to Lagos were closed and the blockade was strictly maintained. Glover hoped that, denied of necessities and munitions of war, the Egba would be brought to end the war with Ibadan on peace terms agreeable to the wishes of the Lagos and Ibadan governments, to both of whom the Egba had been opposed.⁷² Glover's blockades of Porto Novo between 1865 and 1872, using steam gun vessels of the Lagos government, were further attempts to cut off or control similar supplies and supply-routes to the Egba and the other Yoruba people. In 1871, an embargo was reimposed by him, and the Egba were not happy about it.⁷³ His proposals for widening this into a total cessation of all trade and contact between Abeokuta and Lagos, the Administrator acting, if need be, by decree, led to his recall in 1872.⁷⁴

Even in areas where there was no formal British authority over indigenous territory, as in the Niger Delta and basin, there were occasional suggestions about preventing the indigenous peoples from obtaining armaments. In those regions, the development of inland trade had followed the successful Niger expedition of 1854. From 1857 onwards, Delta middlemen had sometimes attacked British merchant vessels whose inland operations were undermining their means of livelihood. The weapon for these attacks was chiefly the musket, obtained from the trade with the Europeans, and discharged from war-canoes and the bushes around. But in October 1866, Akazue, the *Obi* or King of the riverain port of Onitsha apparently also asked for cannons. This led the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Stanley, to say that he did not think the British should supply the peoples of the Niger basin with large cannons or arms. On 2 January 1867, he directed Mr Fell, the acting British Consul at Lokoja to

... point out to the merchants and others engaged in the Niger trade the impolicy of their acceding to any requests that may be made to them by native Chiefs for a supply of large guns, which, in the event of a difference between the Chiefs and Traders, might be used against the latter, and be the means of putting a stop to the navigation of the River.⁷⁵

In the spirit of this despatch, Consul William McLeod later asked the authorities at Lagos to stop whatever importations of heavy guns into the Niger area might be made through Lagos (or by Lagos merchants who traded to the Niger).⁷⁶ In 1869-70, during the Bonny civil war which resulted in the break-away move by JaJa to Opobo, the British Consul in the Bight of Biafra, Charles Livingstone, was also asked to warn British merchants not to supply arms to either side.⁷⁷

On the Gold Coast again, the extent of sales or purchase of munitions of war came to be regarded by some as an index of the possibilities of war with the Asante. In 1860 when the inland people were said to be 'purchasing large quantities of gun powder, guns and lead,' T. C. Hutchinson, the agent of Messrs F. and A. Swanzy and Company of London, told governor Edward Andrews that there might be some truth in the feeling which some people then had that an Asante invasion might be imminent.⁷⁸ Advance purchases such as that mentioned above usually made the Ordinances of prohibition

70. *Ibid.*, No. 40. Mulliner to Newcastle, 7 May 1863;

Ibid., Nos 49 and 54. Glover to Newcastle, 8 June, 7 July 1863.

71. C.O. 147/4, No. 101. Glover to Newcastle, 6 Nov. 1863.

72. C.O. 147/8. Glover to Oton of Ibadan, 17 Apr. 1865.

Ibid., No. 56. Glover to Cardwell, 9 June 1865.

73. C.O. 147/21. Glover to Solanke, Jaguna of Igbain and Chief Balogun of Abeokuta, 15 Nov. 1871.

74. C.O. 147/23, No. 11. Glover to Kendall, 3 Feb. 1872.

Ibid., No. 36. Glover to Hennessy, 8 Apr. 1872.

75. F.O. 84/1278 Stanley to Fell, 2 Jan. 1867.

76. *Ibid.*, McLeod to O.A.G., Lagos, 14 June 1867.

77. F.O. 84/1326 No 25. Clandon to Livingstone, 23 June 1879.

78. CO. 96/47 No. 58. Andrews to Newcastle, 12 June 1860

on the outbreak of war a little late, since the powder magazines in Kumasi would already be well stocked up. The premonitions of 1860 however proved groundless. When the war did break out in 1863, commercial contacts between the Gold Coast seaboard and Kumasi were totally stopped. But the Asante were said to be getting arms and ammunition through the Volta valley route and lagoons. Hence the British measures of control that were proposed were mainly for that quarter.

In 1860, it had been suggested that Ada (Addah) and Keta (Quittah), as well as Whydah and Lagos, should be placed under the regular charge of the British naval force on the West Coast of Africa. To this proposal, the British Admiralty had replied that they were 'not prepared to station a vessel of war to be employed exclusively in communication with those places,' but they asked the Commodore or chief naval officer on the station to detach a man-of-war to visit the ports east of the Volta mouth from time to time as necessary.⁷⁹ During the crisis and war of 1863-4, Commodore A. P. E. Wilmot who commanded the warships in the area sent a gun boat to blockade the ports east of Accra. Also, he thought that Keta, one of the chief ports on that stretch of coast where much landing and selling of arms and ammunition were alleged to be going on, should be re-occupied by the British.⁸⁰ Additional to the soldiers despatched for re-occupation, the Commodore suggested 'that a regular organized body of intelligent natives should be taken into... (British) pay, whose principal duty would be to watch the lagoons in their canoes, and report to the officer in charge of Quittah the result of their observations.' Wilmot said that these men, forming what could be called an observation corps, would watch the lagoons for 'slave-dealing,'⁸¹ but the detection and prevention of arms arrivals and sales, and their conveyance to the Asante through the intermediate tribes of the Volta valley, would no doubt engage the men as well.

About the same time, from Cape Coast Castle, governor Richard Pine proposed not only the re-occupation of Keta by a detachment from the troops then in the Gold Coast, but also the supply of a colonial steamer to his government for watching the seaboard and the Volta, in the same way that the *Dover* steamer had been working at the Gambia since the 1840s. The Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, turned down Pine's suggestions.⁸² Instead the watch on the Volta and the eastern seaboard and lagoons was, as before, done by a gun vessel detached from the regular British African squadron on the coast.

By October 1864, Pine firmly believed that arms and gunpowder were still being supplied to the Asante through the Volta valley area. The Volta riverain port of Ada received particular mention, and to deal with this, Lieutenant Hewett who commanded H.M.S. *Investigator* cruised off the Awuna seaboard for some time. At Ada, the warship captured 'a small British vessel containing guns and powder, took her to Lagos (and) placed her in the Vice-Admiralty Court' there. Commodore Wilmot had also apparently wanted to institute a complete blockade of the whole coast. Pine thought that that would be 'impossible' because of the long line of seaboard involved, and instead proposed a new arrangement, in his opinion, 'the only practicable mode of operating,' if all munitions supplies for the interior were to be stopped. This involved the placing of 'a military body at Kpong' which was 'a depot or halting place *en route* to a portion of Ashantee.' Kpong was said to be 'some sixty miles up the Volta' and a force stationed in such a strategic position would, Pine hoped, be able to intercept all arms shipments destined for Asante even if these had eluded capture or their landing eluded observation along

79. C.O. 96/50. Parnell (Admty) to Rogers (C.O.), 26 July 1860.

80. A British occupation force, drawn from the Gold Coast Corps had been sent to Keta following the British acquisition of the Danish forts in 1850. That force was however withdrawn by governor Andrews in 1860. See, C.O. 96/47, No. 67. Andrews to Newcastle, 4 July 1860.

81. *P.P.*, 1864, XLI (10122), No. 12, p. 195. Wilmot to Walker, 22 Nov. 1863.

82. *Ibid.* No. 1, p. 184. Newcastle to Pine, 23 Dec. 1863.

the seaboard and lagoons. The officer commanding the British forces on the Gold Coast, Colonel Edward Conran, however told Pine that he had no men to spare for Kpong. Thus frustrated in his new proposal, Pine returned to the policy of asking for a cruiser to watch Ada, Keta and the Awuna coast.⁸³

Henceforth, British gun boats visited the region now and again, and in 1869, Administrator John Glover of Lagos sent one of his colonial steamers, the *Eko*, to ascend the Volta River. In 1871, the Gold Coast government was supplied with a colonial steamer of its own, the *Nelly*, but from the start, that vessel had had boilers and was never of much use,⁸⁴ so that blockades continued to be mainly by the regular British squadron.

Naval blockades by sea were not the only means by which the British controlled arms destined for Asante. Other expedients were occasionally tried on land. For example, after the inconclusive war of 1863-4, there had been 'a want of free communication' between Kumasi and the Gold Coast seaboard west of Accra,⁸⁵ and this continued, with few intermissions, for nearly nine years, until about the middle of 1872. One of the few intermissions seemed to have taken place early in 1865 when King Kwaku Mensah of Western Wassaw and his people were said to have opened their paths to the Asante. The reaction of the Cape Coast administration was swift and peremptory. Governor Pine sent Elmes, the Assistant Commissary-General at Cape Coast to investigate. Elmes 'imposed heavy fines' on Mensah and his chiefs, and cause the paths through their country to be closed once more.⁸⁶ Again, although in 1871, the Cape Coast government opened the trade routes for a time, it took measures inland along the River Prah to blockade the roads so that no supplies would go beyond into Asante.⁸⁷ It was not until the British acquired the Dutch fort of Elmina in April 1872 that the governor-in-chief, John Pope Hennessy, re-opened all the paths of trade between Kumasi and the coast.⁸⁸ Ramseyer and Kuhne, the Europeans whom the Asante captured in their Volta campaigns of 1869 and who were in Kumasi until 1874, thought that the interval between April 1872 and the start of hostilities in December 1872 was used by the Asante to replenish their powder magazines and amass large stores of guns, other ammunition and salt, in preparation for a pre-meditated invasion.⁸⁹

Despite measures taken inland as above, the normal blockade action at the coast remained very important and was employed by the British shortly after it was known in Britain early in 1873 that a new war had broken out from December 1872 between the Fante Protectorate and the Asante. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, stated that he had heard that some British merchants had lately shipped arms and other war-like stores to the Gold Coast and suggested to the authorities on the coast 'that immediate steps should be taken to prohibit, under the severest penalties, the sale of any munitions of war to the Ashantees, or to any other tribes who may be combining with them in attacking the Kings and chiefs within the Protectorate.'⁹⁰ Before this despatch reached Cape Coast however, Administrator Robert William Harley had promulgated and proclaimed *Ordinance No. 2 of 1873 (Gold Coast)*. This prohibited the sale of arms or other ammunition to the Asante and their allies, and restricted the importation of these stores into the Gold Coast to the ports of Cape Coast, Elmina and Accra, where the

83. C.O. 96/85, No. 102 Pine to Cardwell, 12 Oct. 1864

84. C.O. 96/110. Salmon to Holland, 7 Mar. 1873.

85. C.O. 96/67, No. 28. Pine to Cardwell, 8 Mar. 1865

86. *Ibid.*, No. 30. Pine to Cardwell, 11 Mar. 1865. The fine on Mensah was one of 400 oz. of gold. He refused to pay it but latter, the King of Anamaboe paid 100 oz. of it for him and the rest was remitted. See, C.O. 96/68, No 93. Conran to Cardwell, 5 Sept. 1865

87. C. O. 96/92. Coffie Calcalli to Ag. Administrator of the Gold Coast, 23 Nov. 1871; *Ibid.* Salmon to the King of Ashantee, 23 Jan. 1872; *Ibid.*, No. 144. Salmon to Kendall, 2 Feb. 1872,

88. *P.P.*, 1873, XLIX (0.92). Encl. 3 in No. 61, p. 547: Hennessy to the King of Ashantee, 20 Apr. 1872.

89. Ramseyer and Kuhne, *Four Years in Ashantee*, (London, 1875), p. 204.
C.O. 96/96, No. 255. Kimberley to Keate, 28 Feb. 1873.

British could exercise effective control over the destination of the landed wares. Even this landing could only be done with the consent and permission of the Gold Coast Collector of Customs.⁹¹

While forbidding supplies to the Asante, Harley, in the same February

... issued to the kings and chiefs of the Protectorate ... 80 barrels of powder, equal to 8,000 lbs., 10 tons 18 cwt. of lead, 190 muskets and 5 kegs of flints: also 200 muskets for the Cape Coast Volunteers.⁹²

Before the beginning of May, 100 barrels of gunpowder had altogether been issued to the Eastern and Western districts of the Protectorate. Between 1 May and 31 July 1873, 30 barrels of gunpowder and three tons of lead were further issued by Cape Coast authorities to the Western, Fante districts; in the same period, 30 more barrels of powder went to the Eastern districts.⁹³

So once more, the power of control at the seaboard was being used to stop the augmentation of Asante military strength, whilst the British allies, the Fante, were being armed. Keta and the ports east of Accra were mentioned as before as sources of arms for the Asante. As in 1863-4, there were suggestions that the British should re-occupy Keta and that British gun boats should be ordered to cruise in that area so as to prevent 'the landing of fire-arms and munitions of war' there.⁹⁴ These suggestions and the Ordinance of 8 February notwithstanding, some munitions of war were said to have been landed at Keta on or about 28 March 1873, reaching Asante through the intervening peoples, in particular, the Awuna and the Akwamu who were friendly to them. In order to ensure a safe landing, merchant vessels anchored beyond Keta, well beyond British control but 'within easy distance of the lagoon communicating with the Volta, and so evaded) the proclamation' of 8 February. Lieutenant Stubbs of H. M. S. *Seagull* took the gun boat *Coquette* over to Keta in April 1873, and proposed to seize merchant vessels suspected of carrying war-like stores on the high seas. No captures took place anyway. Stubbs also suggested the stationing of a British 'Customs House Officer' at Keta to watch all landings.⁹⁵ This was not done but the government landing waiters at Ada and Jella Coffee were instructed to seize whatever arms were landed at those ports.⁹⁶ Also, the Sierra Leone government interpreter, Thomas George Lawson, who was on the Gold Coast during the crisis, was sent to the Kings and chiefs of Awuna, Akwamu, Keta and Jella Coffee to persuade them to co-operate with the British.

A further Ordinance to regulate the importation and sale of arms was passed on 29 April 1873 by the Executive Council at Cape Coast.⁹⁷ Attempts to enforce this revealed a rift in opinion between, on the one hand, the British government at Cape Coast which was prosecuting the war and, on the other hand, the mercantile community who thought purely on business lines. In June 1873, J. J. Kendall, formerly an acting administrator-in-chief at Freetown, and Captain Law of H.M.S. *Coquette* went to Keta to meet the European merchants regarding the importation of war-like stores at that place. A meeting was held on the 6th at the Bremen factory, the house of a Mr Rotham, a German merchant whose 'principal trade' was in guns and ammunition. Rotham made a statement on behalf of the European merchants deploring the Ordinance of prohibition, adding that the traders were 'of opinion that ammunition imported into and sold at Quittah does not serve to supply. . . Ashantees, for the simple reason that no

91. *Ibid.*, Proclamation, 8 Feb. 1873.

92. P.P., 1873, XLIX (0.12) Encl. 3 in No. 14,9 p. 723: Harley to Admin.-in-Chief, 14 Feb. 1873.

93. C.O. 96/101. Encl. in No. 193. Harley to Kimberley, 13 Aug. 1873.

94. P.P., 1873, XLIX (0-92), No. 140, .. 704. Fitzgerald to Knatchbull-Hugessen, 27 Feb. 1873.

95. *Blue Book on Military Affairs*, (hereafter, B.B.) 1874: No. 1 (C-962). Encl. 7 in No. 23, p.49. Stubbs to Harley, 18 Apr. 1873.

96. C.O. 96/96. Chalmers to Fox, 3 Mar. 1873.

97. B.B. 1874, No. 1 (C-962), No. 52, p. 87. Harley to Kimberley, 3 May 1873.

gold-dust is coming down this way.' Rotham also said that 'the distance between Aungla (Awuna, on whose seaboard Keta was located) and Ashantee is too far,' for arms and ammunition to be passed through. The merchants further complained that since the Proclamation of 8 February, the trade of Keta had been 'severely injured' and asked that the Administrator of the Gold Coast permit them 'to import ammunition & c. as before.'

About 'the feasibility of indirect trade of munitions of war between Quittah and the Ashantees', Kendall told the merchants that it did not appear to him to be as impracticable or unlikely as they claimed. He also informed them that he did not think that the prohibition Ordinance would be lifted. On hearing this, 'The merchants, one and all, protested that neither Jella Coffee nor Quittah were in the Protectorate, nor within British jurisdiction, having been already abandoned, and therefore were not subject to the proclamation.' Kendall replied that the arguments of the merchants were 'entirely novel' to him.

But whatever the exact position of Keta was, the British administration at Cape Coast did not propose to allow legal finesse to come between it and the prosecution of the war with the Asante. Kendall therefore first asked Captain Law to blockade Keta for forty-eight hours with H. M. S. *Coquette* and then proceeded to suggest that 'the whole line of coast from Addah to Quittah' should be systematically watched and blockaded with armed boats. Kroomen and armed Hausa Police men should, he said, patrol the lagoons, and British Customs houses should be established at Keta and Ada.⁹⁸ Harley agreed. He also hoped that a resident magistrate and a sub-collector of customs would be placed at Keta and that the *Nelly* steamer, which was then away for re-fitting, would soon be available for active service on that seaboard. In addition, he proposed that the British should acquire full command of the Volta river so as to have an 'undisturbed water highway to the borders of Ashantee,'⁹⁹ this being deemed useful for the control of all stores exported to Kumasi from the coast.

Apart from the Volta valley and the Awuna seaboard routes, arms for the interior were also said to have been landed at and passed through the French-controlled ports of Assinie and Grand Bassam to the westward of the Gold Coast.¹⁰⁰ In June 1873, the British Foreign office approached the French government on the issue, requesting them to stop the importation of armaments into the area.¹⁰¹ In August, an American vessel, the *Albertina*, was stopped by the order of the Cape Coast authorities on the suspicion that she was selling munitions of war that could reach the Asante. British merchants in the windward coast, principally the agents of Messrs F. and A. Swanzy of London, were then reported to be landing guns and gunpowder at Assinie. To stop these sources of arms for the interior, another Proclamation was issued at Cape Coast on 25 August 1873 empowering the Administrator of the Gold Coast and the naval authorities in Cape Coast waters to institute a naval blockade of the seaboard from River Assinie to Cape Coast, and the ports in between those two places.¹⁰² Harley also asked M. Verdier, the agent of the French government at Grand Bassam and Assinie, to assist in preventing anyone from landing munitions of war at any of the ports in that area.¹⁰³

The legality of Harley's Proclamation of blockade was questioned respecting places which were beyond British jurisdiction. In order to answer the objections raised, the Proclamation was amended. The *de facto* blockade of the whole coast however continued.

98. *Ibid.*, Encl. 3 in No. 52, 51. Kendall to Harley, 22 June 1873.

99. *Ibid.*, No. 53, p. 60. Harley to Kimberley, 14 July 1873.

100. C.O. 96/97, No. 24. Harley to Kimberley, 21 Mar 1873.

101. B.B., 1874 No. 2 [C-891], No. 30, p. 37 C.O. to Admty, 12 Aug. 1873.

102. C.O. 96/101. Minutes of Executive Council, 29 Aug. 1873; *Ibid.*, Proclamation of 25 Aug. 1873.

103. *Ibid.*, Harley to Verdier, 30 Aug. 1873.

But early in September, it was reported that the *Alligator* vessel, belonging to Messrs F. and A. Swanzy, had landed 370 kegs of powder at Grand Bassam.¹⁰⁴ On 2 September, a French sloop of war, *Le Bregant*, under the command of a Captain Mathiu, arrived at Cape Coast on its way to Grand Bassam and Assinie. Harley and the British Captain Fremantle in the headquarters met Mathiu and solicited his aid in stopping the further landing of guns and powder at those ports. Mathiu assured them 'that he had already received instructions from the French Admiral whom he had just left at Gaboon (Gabon) to afford every assistance he possibly could in the matter to Her Majesty's Government' at Cape Coast.¹⁰⁵

Mathiu visited King Amantifou of Kinjarbo, the trading town situated on the the River Assinie and reported afterwards that he felt he had succeeded in inducing Amantifou not to permit the sale or export of arms to the Asante at that time;¹⁰⁶ so, he did not need much persuasion to enforce the embargo. During the middle of September also, four merchant vessels were detained at Cape Coast, suspected of carrying munitions of war towards land.¹⁰⁷

In these several ways, it was hoped to weaken Asante by blocking the landing and selling of war-like stores at Grand Bassam, Assinie, Keta, Jella Coffee and Ada. Wider, concerted European action was even proposed so as to tighten up the restrictions on supplies that could reach the indigenous armies. In October 1873, there was talk in Britain about securing 'an agreement between England, France and Portugal to stop the importation of arms' into the several territories which they then ruled on the West Coast of Africa. It was hoped that this joint action would diminish the military power of the indigenous states with whom these Europeans were likely to come into armed collision. Sir Garnet Wolseley, the chief British civil and military officer on the Gold Coast from 4 October 1873, commented on the idea, pointing out that Europeans did not control the entire seaboard. His view was that, 'To exclude arms from the possessions of the three powers and to permit their entrance into native ports would merely increase the importance of those ports and probably also increase the relative power of tribes' and indigenous states over whom the British and other Europeans had then won neither control nor hold of any sort. And after all, war with these latter group of peoples was usually more likely than with those already occupied and ruled by the Europeans. Wolseley's suggestion was for 'a common understanding' not just between Britain, France and Portugal but between all the European powers so that 'the importation into Western Africa of munitions of war from Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope should be effectively stopped.'¹⁰⁸

No general action was taken on the lines proposed by Wolseley but the British naval blockade, designed to restrict Asante supplies of guns, gunpowder and musket flints, was continued. As has been stated, the *de facto* blockade of the windward coast which Harley had notified and caused to be enforced in August 1873 was questioned. In Britain, the Proclamation was referred by the Colonial Secretary to the Law Officers of the Crown; they declared it invalid but told the Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, that a blockade limited to those parts of the coast actually occupied by the Asante or their allies, 'as distinguished from a blockade of the whole coast by whomsoever occupied', would be valid.¹⁰⁹ The new blockade arrangement, based on this advice, was announced in the middle of December 1873. The principal ports being watched now included

104. *Ibid.*, No. 216. Harley to Kimberley, 1 Sept. 1873; C.O. 96/105. Fremantle to Admty, 6 Sept. 1873.

105. C.O. 96/101, No. 219. Harley to Kimberley, 2 Sept. 1873.

106. C.O. 96/102, No. 249. Harley to Kimberley, 26 Sept. 1873.

107. *Ibid.*, No. 236. Harley to Kimberley, 13 Sept. 1873.

108. C.O. 96/103, No. 314. Wolseley to Kimberley, 15 Nov. 1873.

109. B.B. 1874, No. 3 (C-892), No. 145, p. 157. Kimberley to Wolseley, 5 Nov. 1873.

those in the districts of Elmina, Komenda, Shama, Sekondi, Takoradi, Bushau, Aquidah, Axim, Brandenburg and Appolonia.¹¹⁰ This blockade remained in force throughout, the war of December 1872 to February 1874; thereafter, the restriction on the sale of arms on the Gold Coast or their export into the interior was kept up by British civil power at Cape Coast until 1876, a crucial period for Asante power which was beginning to be confronted by revolts of various provinces of the Confederacy.

Conclusion

Thus, despite occasional gifts, indigenous arms and ammunition supplies in West Africa depended heavily on the trade between the Africans and the Europeans and Americans. The seaboard was the point of first contact for the trade and the rivers helped the commercial communications between the coast and the interior. In a strategic sense, the coast and the rivers formed the natural defences of West Africa, and their control was of the greatest importance in the realm of supplies. The power which controlled the seaboard and rivers, and whose customs posts and officers arranged the landing and the disposal of munitions of war could stop the sale or the supplies for the interior and African opponents. The embargoes and blockades of our period show that this power conferred by entrenchment at the coast was frequently used. The struggle for the seaboard and the rivers that led to and from it was of paramount importance for the military well-being of the indigenous states, as well as for their economic life, and to the extent that the political order depended on these other two aspects of affairs, for the political situation too. During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, Africans gradually lost the control of the coastal and riverain natural defences of West Africa to the Europeans, who established their own sway either in a formal or in an informal way and this had important meaning and consequences for the history of the area in the nineteenth century. African loss of control at the seaboard and the European control of the importation of arms and ammunition all helped to create the situation from which West Africa fell to European conquest in that century.

110. C.O. 96/103. Hewett to Wolseley, 14 Dec. 1873.

THE PROVIDENT FUND ON THE NIGERIAN RAILWAY, 1915—1943

By WALE OYEMAKINDE

THE task in this paper is to examine what role the provident Fund played in the industrial life of the indigenous railway servants between 1915 and 1943 when the Fund was their Scheme for social security just as the Pension Provision served their counterparts in the Civil Service. Starting with an account of railway workers' agitation before the Administration conceded the Provident Fund, the paper attempts a detailed analysis of the Fund and discusses the struggle for its change when with the growing significance of trade unionism in the Nigerian Railway the contributors denounced it as a bad alternative to the Pension Scheme.

Prior to the unification of the Lagos Government Railway and the Northern Railway in 1912, thinking had taken place both on the Nigerian workers' side and the Railway Administration on the formulation of clear policies for indigenous workers.¹ Especially as the settler element was unknown in the country, and also for reasons of economy, the Nigerians themselves were looked upon as potential railway workers.² They had been used for early construction, they were ready for future construction works and they would further be used for railway operation.³

The Southern population in general responded to opportunities for work on the railway while their Northern neighbours were somewhat unenthusiastic. And particularly the Yoruba were looked upon as the hope of railway labour in Nigeria and even in West Africa at least until the others could share the same enthusiasm for Railway labour.⁴ For when in 1901 the Gold Coast could not provide railway labour above the inadequate number of 600,⁵ the importation of 13,000 Yoruba young men saved the situation.⁶ Floating Yoruba population was also found as far as Lokoja and Zungeru.⁷ And so when the railway construction went north from Ibadan the Yoruba still formed the main labour force until some Gwari and Hausa accepted railway labour, specifically outside their planting and harvesting seasons,⁸ and not as a way of life for a long time.⁹

Indeed, when the survey parties got to a number of Yoruba towns on the northern route head chiefs requested the construction of railway lines into their towns as railway

1. F. Bedford Glasier, *Report on the Lagos Government Railway for the half year ending 30th June, 1902*, p. 2.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Details of their contribution to railway construction and operation exist in Wale Oyemakinde, 'A History of Indigenous Labour on the Nigerian Railway, 1895-1945', Ibadan, Ph.D. Thesis, May 1970.

4. Cd. 2325, *Papers relating to the construction of Railways in Sierra Leone, Lagos and the Gold Coast, December 1904*, p. 19.

5. The cocoa production in the Gold Coast, an entirely indigenous enterprise, had greater attraction for the Fante and their neighbours. For details see R. Szereszewski, *Structural Changes in the Economy of Ghana, 1891-1911*, London, 1965.

6. Cd. 2327, *op.cit.*, p.19.

7. Cd. 2787, *Papers relating to Railway Construction in Nigeria, December 1905*, p. 180.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

9. There was again the deliberate policy of the northern political Administration which discouraged them from permanent employment on the Railway. See Wale Oyemakinde, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-57.

labour would provide employment opportunities for their youths.¹⁰ There was the specific case of the Owa of Ijesaland who in 1901 boastfully promised Governor MacGregor that he could make his people produce any crop in commercial quantities if that would cause the Government to make the railway line pass through his land and thus provide employment opportunities for his subjects.¹¹ This abundance of floating labour in Yorubaland requires some explanation. Perhaps the most important point one can make in this respect is that the Yoruba society of the 1890s and early 1900s was a product of military revolution.¹² Youths had been very mobile as civil wars called them into the service of their towns. But with peace the people involved found a substitute employment in railway labour. And of course railway labour had attractions for all, free or bonded. The free born sometimes needed money to marry.¹³ And if one was a domestic slave, railway labour brought in enough money for him to pay off his ransom.¹⁴

From this start an indigenous labour force became a realistic hope on the Railway. This chance the Railway Administration could not afford to lose. But in actual fact it did nothing positive in this direction. It only vaguely expressed the desirability of building up permanent labour rather than migrant labour so that a distinct railway workers' class would emerge in Nigeria.¹⁵ In spite of its inactivity, however, the much needed labour force was gradually building itself up. Already by the happy occasion of the opening of the Lagos-Ibadan line on 4th March, 1901, the railway became cherished by the people and workers started to accept railway service as a vocation and began to identify themselves permanently with the Railway Establishment.¹⁶ But towards the close of 1903 the short but marked enthusiasm of the previous two years when railway service was accepted with romantic excitement vanished with such suddenness as to amaze the Administration which accordingly faced the problem of a lost opportunity as will be seen below.¹⁷

In the meantime those Nigerians who had accepted railway employment began to see what implications it had.¹⁸ Also, with the railway came increased urbanisation as railway stations attracted large populations to themselves. Railway workers almost

10. N. A. I. CSO 1/1 Vol. 47. *Confidential Report on the Oshogbo Extension of the Lagos Government Railway, 6-7-1904*. Enclosure in Lagos Governor to S. of S. No. 258 of 22nd July, 1904.
11. Calprof 10/9 African (West) No. 647—*Correspondence relating to Railway Construction in Lagos and Nigeria between 11th August 1897 and 31st December 1901*, p. 100.
12. These wars have been studied in J. F. Ade. Ajayi and R. S. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*, C.U.P. 1964 and S. A. Akintoye, "The Ekiti Parapo in the Kiriji Wars Ibadan Ph.D. Thesis, 1966.
13. Calprof 10/9 African (West) No. 647, op. cit., pp. 100-101.
14. This significant effect of railway labour opportunities was noted as early as the first two years of construction. See N.A.I. CSO 1/1 Vol. 20 Governor of Lagos to S. of S. 20 December 1897.
15. F. Bedford Glasier, *Report on the Lagos Government Railway for the half year ending 30th June, 1902*, p. 8. See also W. Buttler Wright, *Chief Accountant's Notes on the Revenue Accounts for the half year ended 30th June 1902*, p. 10.
16. On the Railway the short period of 1901 to 1902 were no years of labour shortage. This qualifies Dr Hopkins' thesis of persistent scarcity of labour from 1897 to 1909. See A. G. Hopkins, "The Lagos Strike of 1897: An Exploration in Nigerian Labour History" *Past and Present*, No. 35 of December 1966, pp. 133-155.
17. For instance the Railway General Manager talked of the "Irresponsibility" of the Nigerian workers who were said to be rejecting railway employment because nature had been too generous to them by giving them rich environment which yielded enough food to keep life on. See F. Bedford Glasier, *Railway Annual Report for the year 1903*, dated 21st January 1904, p. 9.
18. Wage employment required a definite commitment to duty hours. Whereas human activities in the traditional economy had allowed considerable flexibility such that a farmer could go to farm late if he would also return late thus ensuring a good day's work, the new way enforced rigidity since the mechanical clock was the task master. See W. M. L. Bispham, "The Concept and Management of labour Commitment and its relevance to Nigerian Development" *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 1 of March 1964, pp. 51-59. See also P. Kilby, "African Labour Productivity Reconsidered", *Economic Journal*, Vol. LXXI No. 282 of June 1961, pp. 273-291.

invariably left their villages to live around the railway stations to follow their new activity.¹⁹ And sometimes their new job took them fairly far from their home environment. But whether they operated at or away from home, the fact of course remained that they were a part of a new way of life. Their new position in wage employment carried both responsibilities and privileges.²⁰ The former which involved serious commitment to labour was naturally stressed by the Railway while the latter which concerned the workers' own interest tended to be glossed over, to be stressed by the workers themselves.²¹

Even more than their desire to have the best of the new economy was their wish to consolidate their stand in it.²² Theirs was a search for future security, an endeavour for a future within the new way of wage and credit culture. Nor is it difficult to understand the anxiety of these workers who in anticipation of their old age realised that they could no longer hope to live on yields from cash-crops such as oil palm, cocoa and kola-nuts which would have been the case if they had not accepted to work in the railway. There was no hope for food crops either for they could not expect to be fed from farms which they no longer possessed.²³ No wonder therefore that when they chose railway labour for a career they expected "Master Railway" to care for their future security. Little did they then realise that they would continue to hope for a long time.²⁴

Promises were not wanting. As early as 1903 the General Manager of the Lagos Government Railway had proudly reported that His Excellency the Governor had approved the institution of a "Railway Guarantee and Provident Fund on the lines generally adopted on Government and other Railways."²⁵ Even though this was only approved in principle and its provisions were not clearly defined, the General Manager expressed the hope that it would be a beneficial plan. He further hoped that a uniform provision could be in operation on all British West African Railways so that railway workers could conveniently transfer such accounts to their new destination should they be transferred to any British Colony within the sub-continent of West Africa.²⁶

Nothing came out of this promise for over a year. Indigenous railway workers then become anxious. They suspected very much the unexpected silence over the conditions of their service. They knew their grievances and sought expression for them. But those were the days before proper machinery for negotiating industrial dispute were established on the Railway and in Nigeria in general. The initiative was theirs. And towards the close of the year 1904, the Traffic and Clerical Staff went on strike.²⁷ This strike naturally caused business dislocation, but its full impact was not felt through the effort of the European members of Staff who kept trains on the run. It is reported that the staff returned to duty "in a few days" after a "seeming" adjustment of the difficulty. But the "settlement" was not better than the expressed promise that they would be accorded such recognised conditions of service as were in operation in railway service everywhere. And with the renewed assurance that the Government was still considering

19. This was necessary for railway servants were theoretically on duty for all the 24 hours of each day.

20. For workers' experiences in the new set up, See Immanuel Geiss, "Some Remarks on the Development of African Trade Unions", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. III No. 2 of December 1965.

21. See a List of early strikes in the Lagos area in A. G. Hopkins, *ubi supra*.

22. W. Butler-Wright, *Report of the Acting General Manager of the Lagos Government Railway for the year ending 30th September, 1904*, p. 10.

23. The railway servant worked in any station that pleased Management and this might be quite a distance from his home with the result that he could not be in good touch with the farm.

24. Until 1915.

25. F. Bedford Glasier, *Report of the General Manager and Chief Engineer on the Working of the Lagos Government Railway Open Lines for the half year ending 30th June, 1903*, p. 9.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

27. W. Butler-Wright, *Report of the Acting General Manager of the Lagos Government Railway for the half year ending 30th September 1904*, p. 10.

the establishment of the Railway Provident Fund and the Guarantee Fund which had been theoretically approved by the Governor the previous year, things appeared normal.²⁸

However, that the indigenous workers' confidence in the Railway Administration began to wane did not augur well for the Nigerian Railway. Even though the European members of staff were ready to help in cases of emergency as seen above, they were too few to cope with the task for a long time. Nor was it realistic to think of building up their numerical strength to spite the indigenous workers. For one thing, their availability was most uncertain and even when available, they were too expensive to be economical.²⁹ Both in salaries and allowances, they cost much more than their Nigerian counterparts.³⁰ And on top of it all, they caused the Railway to lose much precious time as they often kept off work either staying in hospitals, or going on leave in order to avoid the enervating effects of an unfamiliar climate.³¹ Importation of West Indian labour could not even solve the problem as skilled railway men were also in high demand in the West Indies.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the West Indian Governments always censured requests from Nigeria and recast advertisements for skilled railway workers, making sure that their much needed men were not attracted away. When similar skills were in demand both at home and in Nigeria, they were careful not to advertise Nigeria's needs.³² It was then clear to the Nigerian Railway and Government that no amount of inducement would bring men who could not be reached through advertisement. The few who could come did not wish to remain for long. They were expatriates like Europeans and would stay in Nigeria only to go at will.³³ While West Indian labour was definitely cheaper than European labour, it was not as healthy as Nigerian labour which enjoyed immunity to many of the prevailing tropical diseases.³⁴ In any case, indigenous people appeared to be particularly suited for some aspects of railway service in the peculiar situation of Nigeria. For instance when in 1905 it became necessary for the Railway to canvass for traffic in competition with other means of communication, a Nigerian Traffic canvasser was appointed.³⁵ Moreover, to use the Nigerian worker in Railway operation was to make the people feel, as the Administration wanted them to, that the Railway was Nigerian.³⁶

Much as they were needed,³⁷ the Nigerian Railway workers at this time did not think the Railway deserved their services for they believed the Railway showed no concern for their well-being.³⁸ Some were prepared to leave railway service if other

28. *Railway Report* for 1904, p. 10.

29. This point was well known by Management itself. See *N.A.I. CSO 1/1 Vol. 48*, Governor W. Egerton to S. of S. 21st October, 1904. It is however surprising that even though Management kept on writing of the inevitability of the indigenous railway servants it did nothing to build up their confidence in Railway Service.

30. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, Vol. II part 2*, London, 1942, p. 193. Col. F. D. Hammond calculated the relative costs of European, West Indian and African railway driver's emoluments as ₦1,800, ₦900 and ₦500 respectively. See F. D. Hammond, *Report on the Railway System of Nigeria*, London, 1924.

31. See Railway Annual Reports for the period under discussion *Passim* to appreciate what a threat tropical climate and diseases were to expatriate railway workers. See also *N.A.I. CSO 1/1 Vol. 48*. Governor W. Egerton to S. of S. 21st October, 1904.

32. National Archives Headquarters, Ibadan, File No. 2216/114, *Importation of West Indians for Railway Service*.

33. *Railway Annual Report* for 1908, p. 15.

34. *Railway Annual Report* for 1908, p. 15.

35. *Railway Annual Report for the year ending 31st March, 1905*, p. 14.

36. Governor Sir W. MacGregor to Mr Chamberlain, Extract from Governor's Speech on the occasion of the Railway Inauguration Ceremony at Iddo, March 5th, 1901, as reported in *Lagos Weekly Record*, Enclosure No. 52 in *Calprof. 10/9 African (West) No. 647*. *Correspondence re. Railway Construction in Lagos and Nigeria, 11th August, 1897-31st December 1901*, pp. 55-58.

37. See Acting Governor's Address to the Legislative Council as quoted in *Railway Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 1903*, pp. 15 & 16.

38. They had expressed such grievances during the railway strike of 1904.

opportunities became open. And as fortune would have it, the very opening up of the country for commerce offered increased and varied opportunities for gainful employment.³⁹ The Railway therefore had to compete for the services of the Nigerian workers. Banks and mercantile houses paid more than the railway did.⁴⁰ Even other departments of the Government undermined the position of the railway by paying more.⁴¹ The Railway Administration was particularly depressed to find that her well trained staff ran away from railway services to offer their skills to other employers who had not the patience to train people but had the money to attract them. Some actually paid a month's salary to the Railway in lieu of notice.⁴² The Railway Administration at first argued that it could not offer lavish conditions of service since it dealt with much greater number of workers than its competitors.⁴³ Although it was true that banks and mercantile houses and other government departments had smaller work forces and probably treated them well for this, this argument did not appeal to the workers on the Railway.⁴⁴ And unfortunately for the Railway this was a time when it needed more and more Nigerians in its service as new construction works had to be undertaken and operational activities also increased substantially.

Confused and confounded by circumstances, the Railway Administration, as if it forgot that non-government bodies were also formidable employers, attempted to solve this problem by persuading the other government departments to co-operate with it in offering workers low wages.⁴⁵ But not surprisingly, this method failed to improve the precarious fate of the Railway. For instance as noted by General Manager Bedford Glasier in his Report of 1907: "Unskilled Labour was being diverted to the more profitable work of the cultivation of cotton."⁴⁶ He further noted that the extension of the business of mercantile firms who had opened numerous branches in the interior complicated issues for the Railway.⁴⁷ Indeed the supply of clerical labour was so inadequate that the Nigerian Railway Administration had to rush to employ a number of the disbanded West Indian troops in Sierra Leone through the Government of that colony.⁴⁸ Although these West Indian ex-service men were useful both for Open Lines and Construction Services, they were too few for the need,⁴⁹ apart from the fact that they refused to remain long in the job. At this juncture the Railway was forced to increase wages to cope with the problems it was facing.⁵⁰ But this did not have the desired effect. Indeed the supply of clerks was so inadequate that even at the Headquarters the Railway lacked men to deal with the greatly increased correspondence entailed by larger traffic operations and the extension of the railway.⁵¹ For about a whole year the General Manager himself lacked the services of a Chief Clerk, the late holder having resigned the office in July 1907 while a successor was not available until March 1908.⁵² Unskilled labour was not available either. It was noted in 1908 for instance that progress in the construction work

39. *Railway Annual Report for 1908*, p. 16.

40. *Railway Annual Report for 1910*, p. 25.

41. *Railway Annual Report for 1903*, pp. 16-17.

42. *Railway Annual Reports for 1920*, p. 13.

43. *Railway Annual Report for 1903*, p. 17.

44. It would have been helpful here to give a quantitative comparison of wages on the railway and elsewhere but unfortunately this is not possible with the records now available.

45. *Railway Annual Report for 1905*, p. 17.

46. *Railway Annual Report for 1907*, p. 9.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Railway Annual Report for 1907*, p. 14.

49. This was a period of expansion on the Railway, it should be noted. Salaries paid to the station staff alone steadily increased: N3855 in 1905; N5452 in 1906 and N11550 in 1907. The chief item of increase which was in station staff was directly due to the larger number of stations opened for traffic, and to the increase in the tonnage handled both at stations and at Iddo Wharf. See *Railway Annual Reports for 1907*, p. 14.

50. *Railway Annual Report for 1907*, p. 14.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

52. *Ibid.*

on the Northern railway was unsatisfactory "owing to the inadequate labour supply."⁵³

What the Railway Administration failed to realise was that the workers were not only seeking a rise in current wages but also a definite policy on service conditions and future provision.⁵⁴ In the meantime, further trial was to be made of West Indian labour which now refused to come out because they found it more paying to work on the Panama Canal.⁵⁵ And so by 1911 the General Manager of the Lagos Government Railway was still worried over scarcity of indigenous labour.⁵⁶ The search was intensified.

The Deputy Director of Education now allowed the Railway Traffic Training School Instructor to interview out-going pupils, in an attempt to attract School Leavers into Railway Service. But not much came out of this either.⁵⁷ Yet by 1912, the General Manager had no good news for the Nigerian Railway workers for his Report on labour conditions showed no more than that "the method of providing for the retirement of the Native staff is also still under the consideration of Government".⁵⁸ This remained the case until World War I came in 1914. But before the war ended, the long requested for policy on service conditions for African employees had been clearly defined.

It was in 1915 that the Government issued the Railways Provident Fund Ordinance which applied to all railway servants on monthly salary.⁵⁹ By it every railway servant had to make uniform monthly deposits at the rate of one twelfth of his salary. At the end of the first six months of any year, the depositor's account would be credited with a bonus to the value of one half of his compulsory deposits for the half year.⁶⁰ At the end of the full year, his account would be credited with a second bonus equal to one half of the amount of compulsory deposits paid by him for the latter half of the year. His third gain was to come after the Railway Management would have declared the year's revenue when every depositor had a bonus of at least a quarter of the year's total compulsory savings. The third bonus could even be as high as one half of the depositor's total compulsory savings for the year (but not higher) if the aggregate amount payable by way of third bonus to all depositors in the scheme was less than one per cent of the net earnings of the Railway.⁶¹ But by 2nd April, 1928 the third bonus had been completely scrapped, leaving only the first and the second.⁶²

The provident fund regulation further allowed the depositor to make some amount of voluntary contributions if he so wished.⁶³ Such voluntary deposits should not be less than fifty kobo a month and were limited to ₦60 in any one year and a maximum of ₦400 exclusive of interest. Whether deposits were voluntary or compulsory, interest was reckoned from the first day of the month following the date on which the Railway Chief Accountant received the deposits. To begin with, it was stated that the rate of

53. *Railway Annual Report for 1908*, p. 1.

54. This they realised when by 1915 railway workers received the Provident Fund with utmost enthusiasm.

55. *Railway Annual Report for 1908*, p. 15.

56. *Railway Annual Report for 1911*, p. 19.

57. M. Y. Grant, "Extracts from the Report of the Traffic Superintendent for the year 1911" in *Railway Annual Report for 1911*, p. 47.

58. *Railway Annual Report for 1911*, dated 10th August, 1912, p. 19.

59. F. D. Lugard and F. A. Clinch, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 1.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

61. The term "net earnings" has been defined in the document as "the balance remaining after deducting working expenses incurred under authority of the Annual estimates from the gross revenue earned, including Government transfers, and excluding from the account all extraordinary works debitable to capital accounts, interest on capital sinking under and depreciation of assets." See *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 3.

62. F. M. Baddeley and H. E. Priestman, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 8 of 1928*.

63. F. D. Lugard and F. A. Clinch, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance. Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 1.

of interest over all deposits and accrued bonuses on compulsory deposits would be determined by the Governor and announced annually at the start of each financial year.⁶⁴ Interests were to be added to the principal once in twelve months. But by 1928 it was specifically stated that the rate of interest on compulsory deposits and on bonuses would not be less than 4 per cent per annum, while interest on voluntary deposits was fixed at the rate of 2½ per cent per annum.⁶⁵ The governor was empowered to make upward adjustments in the rate of interest on compulsory deposits and on bonuses once in five years.

Withdrawal of deposits was much easier with voluntary contributions than in the case of compulsory ones. The former only required three days notice to the Railway Chief Accountant provided only one withdrawal was made during the month. If more than one withdrawal was requested in the month, the depositor needed the Railway General Manager's special permission. On the other hand, withdrawal from compulsory savings could only be made on the written permission of the Governor.⁶⁶ Such withdrawals were treated as temporary loans which must be repaid to the fund, on a monthly basis, as early as possible within twenty months.⁶⁷

The year 1923 brought an amendment which empowered the Railway General Manager to take various interests into account in granting permission for temporary withdrawals from compulsory deposits.⁶⁸ If he was convinced of the need, the General Manager could authorize temporary withdrawals to railway servants who sought to pay the financial expenses of father, mother, wife or children, or to pay the hospital bills or some other money spent in restoring the health of the dependants mentioned above but no other relation. The General Manager was to make sure, however, that the withdrawal did not exceed one half of the contributor's compulsory deposits. A circular from the Railway General Manager subsequently reviewed this new policy paper to provide for funeral expenses of contributors' dependants as specified above, and to define the limits of claims in various circumstances.⁶⁹

Conditions remained unchanged until they were modified in 1928.⁷⁰ The new order of the said year allowed a railway servant to withdraw from his compulsory deposits only if he had been a contributor to the Provident Fund for at least five years. And he could not make a fresh withdrawal until he had repaid the previous one in full. It then became specifically known that financial expenses over family (wife or children) should not exceed ₦20 in each instance. At the same time was added a clause which set a maximum of ₦100 exclusively for the education of each child of the railway servant in a higher professional course in institutions situated in West Africa. The new measure further provided that temporary financial assistance within the limit of ₦20 could be rendered to a depositor in case of an 'extreme necessity' not covered in the other clauses. Contributors were, of course, expected to leave details of their family with the Chief Accountant whose register thus became a source for such information when required.⁷¹

The General Manager retained the authority to approve all applications. From this time he was to be advised by a Committee of two officials, the Chief Accountant and one

64. *Ibid.*, p. 8

65. *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 8 of 1928*, pp. 6 & 7.

66. F. D. Lugard and F. A. Clinch, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 5.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

68. Hugh Clifford and G. O. Nugent, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 29 of 1923*.

69. E. M. Bland, *Railway General Manager's Circular No. 642 of 7th February, 1924*. For example, the amount allowed for the purchase of a coffin to bury a dead relation was ₦10.50 while ₦3.00 was fixed for the shroud.

70. F. M. Baddeley and H. E. Priestman, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 8 of 1928*.

71. *Ibi.*, p. 3.

Ebute-Metta based African contributor who would have been elected by the Nigerian Railway African Staff Union.⁷² All applications, supported with relevant evidence, were to be submitted to this two-man Committee which reserved the power to co-opt the applicant's Head of Department and another African member of the same department to help it in reaching a decision.⁷³

There is no doubt that the provisions of the Provident Fund Scheme worked well and served good purpose. At a time when commercial banking was only beginning in the country, this scheme provided banking facilities to a considerable extent. Railway servants in both big and small stations had to save money and thus provide for the rainy day. They did not need to entertain any anxiety over the money thus kept, for it was secure and under normal conditions it made profit. Short of an outstanding debt owed to the Railway which a servant must in any case make good before leaving the service, under no circumstances could compulsory or voluntary deposits be forfeited.⁷⁴ Should the servant be transferred to another Government department or should he retire for ill health or old age, or should he die,⁷⁵ he or his legal representative was entitled to the benefit of the bonus in proportion of the total of his compulsory deposits. According to the 1915 Provisions, if he was discharged on account of reduction in the establishment before the railway yearly revenue was declared, he could seek the approval of the General Manager to be paid a bonus of one half of his compulsory deposits for the year in question.⁷⁶ By 1928 such a person was even entitled to full bonus.⁷⁷ But if a depositor absconded or he was dismissed from the Government service, the General Manager reserved the right to cancel the bonuses and interests provisionally allotted to him.⁷⁸

As years rolled on from 1915 when the Nigerian Railway Provident Fund was instituted, the regulations governing its operation were improved to the advantage of the contributors. For instance by 1918, the General Manager was empowered to withhold bonuses and interest provisionally allotted to a contributor's account if he resigned before he completed 10 years of unbroken service in the railway or in some other Government Department.⁷⁹ By the same provision, full bonuses and interests were only granted if he served up to twenty years before resigning, and a half of it if he only served above 10 years. But about a decade after this became law, a more generous regulation came into operation.⁸⁰ Under the new terms a contributor only needed to have put in ten years of service on the Railway or some other Government Department to earn full bonuses and interests. He, however, had to content himself with one half only, if he just completed three years of service before resigning.

In addition, the 1928 regulation awarded special gratuities to railway servants who satisfied the necessary requirements for making the award.⁸¹ To a depositor who had registered not less than ten years service before his retirement at the age of fifty-five was

72. This Union of railway clerks had been formed in 1919. See, *A report of the proceedings of the Nigerian Railway Native Staff Union for the period 22nd January, 1919 to 31st December, 1920* in Nigerian Railway File No. SC 24.2 Vol. I.

73. F. M. Baddeley, & H. E. Priestman, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation: No. 8 of 1928*, p. 3.

74. F. D. Lugard and F. A. Clinch, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 5.

75. Government Gazette No. 48 of 14th August, 1930.

76. F. D. Lugard and F. A. Clinch, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 5.

77. F. M. Baddeley & H. E. Priestman, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 8 of 1928*, p. 4.

78. F. D. Lugard and F. A. Clinch, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 3 of 1915*, p. 6. The amount would be directed to Government Treasury.

79. F. D. Lugard & G. S. Browne, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 44 of 1918*.

80. F. M. Baddeley & H. E. Priestman, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 8 of 1928*, p. 5.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 7 & 8.

due a gratuity reckoned at one-twentieth part of his annual salary for each completed year of service up to a maximum of a year's salary.⁸² A railway servant with the same length of service received that much if he became redundant and so was compelled to retire to allow the railway to re-organise for greater efficiency and economy.⁸³ The same amount of gratuity went to any one who after a minimum of three year's service became invalided from the service of the Railway and had to leave. And should he die from an injury received in the execution of his duty in the Railway, the money went to his heirs. It is noticeable that such special gratuities were a reward for devoted service. They were not extended to people who transferred to other posts in the public service or resigned for some other cause.⁸⁴

Basically the regulations governing the operation of the Provident Fund Scheme remained as described above until 1937 when the Nigerian Railway Provident Fund Board of Management was constituted and assigned to control the operation.⁸⁵ The Governor appointed the Chairman of this Board and one other member while the contributors elected the third member by ballot, each contributor casting one vote. The Chief Accountant acted as the Secretary to this three-member Board.⁸⁶

In the meantime the Colonial Office had addressed itself to the task of drawing up a "Model Provident Fund Ordinance" which was intended to guide all colonial governors in stipulating service conditions for non-pensionable employees of the Government.⁸⁷ A year after the publication of the above, 14th February 1938, the Governor-in-Council decided to amend, as far as possible, the existing Ordinance for Nigeria in terms of the new policy which embodied the recommendations of the Watson Report.⁸⁸

Briefly put, the Watson Report had contended that the gratuity system was foreign to the financial structure of Provident Funds and so should be abolished. This privilege of granting special gratuities on retirement, invaliding, retrenchment or death had been approved for Railway workers as far back as 1928 when it was considered that the Railway would be disadvantageously placed in attracting African staff in competition with other Government Departments if Railway conditions of service were not close to those in non-railway Government Departments. This background explains the dilemma in which the Government was placed when in 1938 it had to choose between making railway service attractive and obeying the new policy.

The situation was only met in 1941 with a compromise arrangement by which railway servants were divided into two classes for the purpose of the Provident Fund Operation.⁸⁹ Special gratuities were retained for those who were listed under what was known as "Schedule B". Railway appointments which the Authority thought would be adversely placed for staff recruitment without the attraction of the additional privilege were carefully noted and placed in this category. And in this new provision, contributors under Schedule B were expected to subscribe only one-twentieth part of their monthly salary. The remaining positions were placed under what was called "Schedule A". In this schedule which henceforth lost the extra privilege of gratuity, monthly contributions remained at the usual one-twelfth part of the salary. It was however made abundantly clear that railway servants who had been contributing into the Provident

82. Calculation was based on the actual salary of the contributor at the time of retirement or death. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

85. J. H. McEwen, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Financial Year 1938-1939*, p. 36.

86. Nigerian Railway: File No. GMS. 337/15 Labour and Welfare Office & Provident Fund Board.

87. See copy in Nigerian Railway: File No. L.887/1935 Provident Fund for African Staff.

88. *Ibid.*

89. B. H. Bourdillion and A. G. Dalglish, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 15 of 1941*, pp. 7, 18 & 19.

Fund before 1st April 1941 continued exactly as before while the subsequent holders of their offices would lose such privileges.⁹⁰

Also in 1941 the Provision for the Establishment of the Board of Management for the Provident Fund Scheme was amended to allow for a Chairman and a membership strength of three minimum and five maximum, holding office for one year.⁹¹ As usual the Governor appointed the Chairman, and in addition the former was empowered to appoint a maximum of three others. The depositors retained the right to elect one member by ballot while the General Manager this time nominated one. The Chief Accountant remained the Secretary to the Board. He was now empowered to pay the family of a deceased depositor an amount not exceeding ₦30 or ten per cent of his total credit to a maximum of ₦50 in any one case, if he was satisfied that such an immediate relief was needed to meet the funeral expenses of the deceased or give urgent aid to the widow, or children, or other dependants before the procedure for final payment was completed.⁹² Other provisions of the 1941 Provident Fund Regulation stipulated that if a female contributor resigned from the Railway either because she was married, or in order to marry, after completing at least three years, she would be given her bonus and interest in full provided she could produce the necessary evidence of marriage to satisfy the requirements of the Board.⁹³

And as this was war period when railway servants were recruited into the Armed Forces, the issue of their service conditions had to be determined. This decision was accordingly made with regulation 60 of 1941 which stipulated that a depositor who had joined the armed forces of the Crown with the permission of the Governor would be regarded as a non-pensionable railway servant in all respects and so remained under the Provident Scheme on the same terms as he would normally enjoy if he had not left Railway service for the military.⁹⁴ It was indeed very necessary to give this assurance so as to allay the fears of these much needed men during the crucial time of military emergency. To have allowed them to mix uncertainties of the battle field with anxieties over service policy would have done a lot to sap their energy.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that the Provident Fund summarised the service conditions of indigenous railway servants in the period under study. Irrespective of the railway departments in which they were employed, the railway servants were equally treated within the provisions of this scheme. On the occasions when there were arguments on the interpretation of its terms, railway servants in a particular department usually joined with their counterparts in other railway department to write petitions to the Administration. For example in 1935, 39 railway servants drawn from the Printing, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering Departments petitioned the General Manager to approve the payment of bonuses over contributions they had mistakenly made when they were scholarship and indentured apprentices between 1924 and 1932.⁹⁵ Indeed as one would expect from a scheme whose provisions evolved over a number of years, a petitioning tradition came into being as railway servants, in their belief that they could influence the changing terms of the scheme, indulged in forwarding pleas over one clause or the other of the Provident Fund Regulations. The carry-over value of this petitioning tradition was later clearly reflected in the constant agitations which featured prominently in the relationship between the Railway Trade Unions and the Railway Administration from the middle of the third decade of this century.⁹⁶ It is in

90. *Ibid.*

91. B. H. Bourdillon and P. F. Campbell, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 60 of 1941*, p. 2.

92. *Ibid.*

93. B. H. Bourdillon & A. G. Dalglish, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance: Regulation No. 15 of 1941*, p. 12.

94. B. H. Bourdillon and P. F. Campbell, *Railway Provident Fund Ordinance, Regulation No. 60 of 1941*, p. 3.

95. Nigerian Railway: *File No. L. 887/1935, Provident Fund for African Staff.*

96. J. H. McEwen, *Railway Colliery Annual Report for the Financial Year 1936-37*, p. 8.

this sense that the scheme helped in the formation of the character of the Nigerian Railway Community.⁹⁷ Indeed, turbulent trade unionism on the Nigerian Railway especially in the years of the second global war infected the entire Nigerian work-force as the events of the 1945 General Strike very eloquently demonstrated.⁹⁸

The point to note here is that railway servants had by the close of the third decade of this century emerged as a sensitive and articulate group anxious to persuade if possible, or force if necessary, their employer to improve prevailing conditions of service. And in this connection, the issue of future security was a basic consideration. Before 1915 when railway servants were agitating for service conditions and social security, anything that came could be tolerated. But if the Administration felt that the Provident Fund definitely met railway workers' aspirations they were grossly deceived. It is clear from the records that most railway men envied their counterparts in the Civil Service who were under the pension scheme.⁹⁹

The Pension Scheme and the Provident Fund were two dissimilar forms of social securities. Whereas in the former the worker did not contribute part of his salary to the scheme, in the latter case he contributed as outlined above. Again, whereas the worker enjoyed pension payments for the rest of his life after retirement, the one under the Provident Fund received his bonuses and gratuities *en bloc* upon retirement. The Administration no less than the railway workers agreed that such lump sum payment soon vanished leaving the retired worker in abject poverty till his death which could even consequently be hastened.¹⁰⁰ The money could, of course, disappear more rapidly if he (the retired worker) allowed himself to be deceived by "money doublers" as some railway servants actually did.¹⁰¹ It is therefore not difficult to understand why the contributors were very critical of the Provident Fund provision. In 1939 for instance the officers of the Association of Nigerian Railway Civil Servants poured strictures on the Fund before the General Manager in the following words: "Owing to its non-pensionable character, the Railway service is already at a disadvantage in the matter of recruiting clerks as only those who fail to secure employment in a pensionable post will accept a Railway appointment."¹⁰² While one should allow for some exaggeration in this statement in that the latter part might have been said in order to score a point in the negotiation, there is no doubt that most railway workers wanted a change to the Pension Scheme; or, as a second best, and that very reluctantly, favourable changes in the Provident Fund Regulations from time to time.

The administration, on the other hand, considered the Provident Fund particularly suitable as a relatively inexpensive way of providing social securities for workers on the Railway where a pension scheme, because of the number of workers involved, would be

97. By the Nigerian Railway Community I refer to the entire indigenous railway workers as a body with common interest and goal, and actively pursuing the same all over the railway system as if they were in one geographical locality. By March 1935 this body totalled up to 17,420 men with 11,101 labourers and 6,319 skilled ones "trained under the comprehensive system of traffic school and technical apprenticeship course." See G. V. O. Bulkeley, *Annual Report of the Government Railway and Colliery of Nigeria for the Financial Year ending 31st March, 1965*, p. 5.

98. For details of this See Wale Oyemakinde, *op. cit.*, Chapter 7.

99. Oresanya, Shodeinde, Nicholas and Adebo to the General Manager, Nigerian Railway, dated 6th December, 1939. Nigerian Railway: *File SC. 24.2. Vol. I Association of Nigerian Railway Civil Servants*, p. 56.

100. C. E. Rooke, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Financial Year 1942-43*, p. 4.

101. Perhaps for delight in sensation Oral Evidence stresses such unfortunate cases rather than the instances when the big money was spent to build a house, or buy a plot or establish a trade.

102. Oresanya, Shodeinde, Nicholas and Adebo to the General Manager, Nigerian Railway, dated 6th December, 1939. Nigerian Railway: *File SC. 24.2. Vol. I Association of Nigerian Railway Civil Servants*, p. 56.

a big drain on the Treasury.¹⁰³ Moreover, capital projects on the Railway, and even in the country as a whole, could be readily financed from the Provident Fund contributions since the rate at which the fund was gathered was obviously much greater than the rate at which it was disbursed, contributions being made by all railway labourers at the same time while retirements, deaths and dismissals only affected a few at a time. The Provident Fund deposits actually accumulated to such an extent that its stocks were sold to finance development projects in other parts of the British Empire and elsewhere.¹⁰⁴

But as far as the indigenous railway workers were concerned they wanted improved conditions of service. They accordingly furthered agitation against the fund and stressed its inadequacies as a substitute for the pension scheme. This renewed agitation coincided with the second world war and the unrest which characterised railway labour in those war years. With the start of the war in 1939 the British Empire was involved in serious war efforts. As farmers were urged towards greater production,¹⁰⁵ bumper produce awaited haulage to the coast.¹⁰⁶ Here in Nigeria as elsewhere those were very active years for the indigenous workers on the Railway.¹⁰⁷ Work multiplied and continued to increase in volume at a time when new European railwaymen were not available on the Nigerian Railway and the old ones even resigned from the said service to enlist in the army.¹⁰⁸ As Germany waxed strong, war efforts warmed up. While some Nigerian families willingly or reluctantly sent their sons to the armed forces, others at home were variously engaged in the cause of war emergency production of food and other services. Opportunities for service were numerous: people learnt new trades and spent long hours practising those trades to win the war for the Empire.¹⁰⁹

Particularly on the Nigerian Railway the indigenous workers were in fact regimented to contribute to war efforts.¹¹⁰ Daily overtime became normal and to refuse to work after the bell was to face indictment and gaol according to War Emergency Regulations. Those who had stamina taxed the same talent almost to exhaustion while the less fortunate ones had no choice but to acquire stamina by the hard way of prolonged activity.¹¹¹ In the absence of better qualified and more experienced seniors, junior men acted creditably in capacities which would not normally have been entrusted to them. The chance to gain skill was of course theirs and many certainly took the advantage. As the indigenous railway workers produced in home workshops locomotive parts and various tools which could no more come upon order due to war conditions, they learnt the know-how and rapidly added competence.¹¹² Both the Administration and the

103. Indeed, Lt. Col. F. D. Hammond who in 1924 investigated the operation of the Nigerian Railway to suggest steps towards economy and efficiency praised the scheme for this reason and even recommended that European staff serving on the Nigerian Railway should no longer be placed under the pension scheme but should contribute to a Provident Fund like the indigenous railway servants. See, F. D. Hammond, *Report on the Railway System of Nigeria*, London, 1924, p. 138.

104. Details of this exist in *Railway Annual Report for 1927-8*, p. 87; *Railway Annual Report for 1929-30*, p. 79.

105. J. H. McEwen, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Financial Year 1940-41*, p. 3.

106. Thomas Ade Onitiri, President of the Station Staff Union to all Station Staff, Wharf Staff, Motor Transport Staff, Train Guards, etc. *Headquarters Circular No. 3 of 1943 in Nigerian Railway File*, L.W. 16, SSU, p. 46.

107. *Ibid.*

108. J. H. McEwen, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Financial Year 1939-40*, p. 4.

109. J. Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee, 1901-1951*, pp. 25-28. See also: *Railway Annual Reports from 1939-45, Passim*.

110. See Wale Oyemakinde, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

111. John Stocker wrote: "The strain upon staff working under intense effort was acute and began to tell upon their health." *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

112. Gilbert Walker, *Traffic and Transport in Nigeria*, London, 1959, p. 74.

Railway Trade Unions preached and sang the lessons of hardwork.¹¹³ And very responsibly, workers put forth the effort for which they were praised by the Administration.¹¹⁴ They however demanded the price plus the praise. While the latter was cheerfully given, the former was grudgingly conceded after serious agitation which ushered in the Railway Labour unrest of the 1940s.

It should be noted that active trade unionism had by this time started. In fact about a decade before this date, specifically on 29th November 1931,¹¹⁵ the Railway Workers Union had been formed. The craftsmen of the Mechanical Engineering Department who were its foundation members later showed that they were out to introduce turbulent unionism on the Railway in place of the "paper unionism" of the preceding Clerks' Union. And at this juncture they were fortunate to have courageous leadership in the person of the indefatigable Michael Imoudu.¹¹⁶ The occasion which brought him to the presidential chair is itself noteworthy. Towards the close of 1939 the Union gave serious consideration to the idea of registering under the Trade Union Act. But at the turn of the New Year when the Union had decided to register and the relevant forms were to be filled, A. N. Ejikeme, the then President of the Union started to nurse fears and eventually refused to sign the papers in spite of all entreaties. There and then Michael Imoudu declared his willingness to sign the document.¹¹⁷ He was hurriedly made acting President and immediately after appended his signature and thus enabled the Railway Workers Union to be the first Union to be so registered.¹¹⁸ The rank and file there after saw in him a man who was not selfishly after the employer's favour, a champion who could be depended upon to brave things at no small personal risk for risk in fact it was to be a bold unionist in those days. He was however properly rewarded with election to the presidency at the next opportunity, a post which he has occupied since 1940.

Within the first two years of Imoudu's leadership the Railway Workers Union became an organisation whose tentacles reached every remote station all over the Railway System. The Railway Administration indeed immediately noted that labour had become more vocal. In his 1941 Annual Reports, the General Manager noted the following: "With the introduction of Trades Union Legislation the various branches of the Railway gradually became more articulate."¹¹⁹ They in fact did more than talk.

In the meantime the war had brought with it rising cost of living. This is understandable in the sense that the circumstances of the war occasioned movements of population. First there was the movement from town to war followed by a similar transfer from country to town with the result that food coming from country to town became scanty since the hands producing the crops diminished. And to add further to the difficulty, food arriving in town which of course was too small for the enlarged urban population did not even stay as a part had to be sent abroad to meet the needs of the Nigerian soldiers in the service of the Empire. The ugly story of long queues for short supplies is not the concern of this paper. Neither are we now examining why and how the Government failed in an attempt to ration food.¹²⁰ Suffice it to note here that

113. Thomas Ade Onitiri, President of the Station Staff Union to all Station Staff, Wharf Staff Motor Transport Staff, Train Guards, etc. *Headquarters Circular* No. 3 of 1943, in Nigerian Railway File L.W. 16, SSU, p. 46.

114. See *Nigerian Railway Annual Reports* for World War II years, *Passim*.

115. I am grateful to Mr Michael Imoudu for this piece of information.

116. A useful but humbly written biography of Michael Imoudu exists in P. I. Omo-Ananigie, *The Life History of M. A. O. Imoudu*, Lagos, 1957.

117. L. M. E. Emejulu, *A Brief History of the Railway Workers Union*, Lagos, 1949, p. 21.

118. The certificate of registration which was signed on 17th January 1940, can still be seen by the wall at the Railway and Ports Workers' Union Head Office, Yaba.

119. C. E. Rooke, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for 1941-42*, p. 2.

120. This was the Pullen Marketing Scheme. See Wale Oyemakinde, "The Pullen Marketing Scheme: A Trial in Food Price Control in Nigeria, 1941-47" *JHSN*, Vol. VI, No. 4, June, 1973.

the real value of money fell. Wage earners generally wanted more cash since more of it was needed to exist on the old standard.¹²¹ And as we have seen, indigenous workers on the Railway were particularly prepared to do something.

Already the slogan had gained currency that Management should be dealt with in the language it understood. This was meant to be the hard language of strike action. The story started with the staff of the Mechanical Engineering Department who very indignantly viewed what they regarded as the Railway's indifference to their fate in face of the rising cost of living. This was Michael Imoudu's Department and the birth place of the Railway Workers Union whose officers quickly drew up a memorandum calling on the Government to meet certain six demands without which they would after one month, which was to expire on 28th September 1941, refuse to work. The six-point demand was contained in leaflets which were sent to workers in Lagos and the hinterland as well. In it Government was asked to grant:¹²²

1. Restoration of full pay for Saturday
2. Monthly fixed rate with better scale of salary
3. Annual Leave with pay
4. Free service ticket when going on leave
5. Sick leave with full pay
6. General increase in wages to meet the rising cost imposed by the war.

In those days before proper machinery for negotiating industrial disputes were instituted crisis were handled in a way that would now be called most irresponsible.¹²³ This was a case in point, a crisis that was ignored rather than solved. Tension rose but nobody tempered it. There was no day of grace yet Management appeared not to bother to grasp the situation. September 28th passed and the 29th came with workers by the early morning scheming stoppage of work until their demands were granted. When the Chief Mechanical Engineer, W. G. W. Wilson, saw angry-looking men around the gate of the Mechanical Engineering Department, he was so much embarrassed that he anticipated big commotion, violence and unbridled destruction of workshop machinery, locomotive engines, rolling stock and all. He probably thought he could ward off danger by keeping men out of the Railway Yard and so ordered, or personally effected, a lock-out.¹²⁴ Nothing pleased railway men better than this action of his which they definitely knew to be a grave error on his part, the advantage of which they wanted to take to put him in trouble.

Workers had seen Wilson as a "wicked White Man" who did not have their interest in mind. A tactless officer indeed, Wilson had taken no care to hide his contempt for the indigenous workers. He most annoyingly openly dismissed workers' petitions and demands as unreasonable. No other Head of Railway Department was like him. He would not suggest any way to improve their service conditions any time the General Manager called on Heads of Departments to advise him on the question. Records show abundantly that he actually opposed schemes designed to better workers' conditions when such were initiated by other Heads of Department.¹²⁵ And as the 1941 lock-out was a clear case of contravention of the Defence Regulations on the part of an unwanted master, workers were very happy. Thus Wilson fell into the trap of his adversaries as if he had been charmed to err. For under the same Regulations workers could probably have been indicted if they had carried out their strike plan. Now they had what they wanted without being outside the law.

121. This period of inflation went up to the General Strike era. In fact, it was a cause of the General Strike.

122. See FML File No. 93/S.5 Vol. I pp. 3-5.

123. This was only instituted on the Railway in 1945. See, NRC, *Notes on Industrial Relations, Submitted to the Elias Commission of Enquiry*, Ebute-Metta, May 1960, p. 3.

124. Wale Oyemakinde, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

125. See instances of this in Nigerian Railway: *File L 887/1935 Provident Fund for African Staff*.

When a few minutes after the seventh hour of the morning the door remained locked, Michael Imoudu headed a procession of the workers to the Governor's House at Marina Street.¹²⁶ The five mile journey was in progress when Wilson realised the implications of what he had done and attempted to right the wrong by sending envoys to call the men back. His envoys were nearly beaten up as the workers continued to march to the Governor's residence. The Western Railway System came to a temporary standstill as staff and apprentices including Running Shed workers and locomotive drivers joined in the demonstration. National war songs were chanted as the march to Lagos moved on while traffic stopped and market women waved to approve and encourage the forward-looking men.

As they approached the Governor's House he sent for them to wait for him at the Race Course where he would like to listen to them. There he condemned Wilson's action as a "silly mistake" and promised to meet their demands the following day. It was 30th September and the Governor was there as he had promised. The men had assembled too, ready to listen to him. He delivered his long Address¹²⁷ in which he praised the men for their war efforts and stressed the need for persistence in industry as required by war emergency. He announced that he granted all their six demands except the question of cost of living allowance which he promised to place before a Special Committee for investigation.¹²⁸ He assured workers that awards consequent upon the recommendations of the proposed committee would take effect from 1st October 1941, just as the five other points previously granted. He followed up his promises by a confirmation in one of his broadcast appeals.

Immediate steps were taken to deal with the question of monthly fixed rate with better scale of salary which had been second item on the demand list. The Railway Management presented a scale which was quickly rejected by the Union as inadequate. His Excellency upheld the rejection and agreed to give every consideration to an alternative scale if the Union could present the same the following day. And to comply with the Governor's condition the Union Executive worked throughout the night and eventually succeeded in drawing up a new scale which was favourably considered by the Governor.¹²⁹ At the same time also the Governor granted their newly added seventh demand which called for the termination of Wilson's appointment for the infamous lock-out involving him. The latter was sacked and put on the next available boat for England.¹³⁰ All told this victory of October 1st, 1941 marked a happy era in the life of the indigenous railway workers as a whole for the greatly improved service conditions did not only affect the men of the Mechanical Engineering Department who initiated the crisis but Nigerian Railway workers in general.¹³¹ It was for this victory that indigenous railway staff until recently celebrated October 1st as their FREEDOM DAY.

The General Manager who followed a calculation of what it would cost the Railway to pay the final award reckoned it at ₦420,000 per annum.¹³² The effect as it concerns our analysis here was that 4,744 daily rated employees were promoted to the permanent staff in personal emoluments while 5,808 transferred from daily to monthly rates.

The implication of this change for the Provident Fund operation was great. Many more Railway employees now qualified to contribute into the Provident Fund since they were now on monthly payment. The number of contributors rose from a modest 2,014

126. In this era of crises down to the General Strike the indigenous railway workers enjoyed the support of local newspapers: the West African Pilot and the Comet.

127. See FML File No. 93/S.5 Vol. II, pp. 194-202.

128. The COLA award came later in 1942.

129. L. M. E. Emejulu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

130. Gilbert Walker saw this as a blow to the prestige of European officers on the Nigerian Railway as a body, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

131. C. E. Rooke, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Year 1941-42*, p. 2.

132. C. E. Rooke, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Year 1941-42*, pp. 2-3.

on 1st April 1941, to a relatively high 6,876 on 31st March 1942. This shows that while 76 old accounts were closed, 4,938 new ones were opened all within one year.¹³³ And in the following year 422 additional accounts were opened for the same reason.¹³⁴

Considered in terms of the general progress of the railway indigenous work force, this was a welcomed improvement. Viewed in terms of the result of trade union agitation, this was an evidence of great achievement. And finally when it is assessed in terms of early progress in the formation of the Nigerian working class, this 341% increase in permanent indigenous staff on the Railway was a noteworthy jump. But looked at from another angle, from the point of view of the few who had exclusively been on the Provident Fund basis before, there was nothing to rejoice upon. The new provision undermined to a very great extent the class structure of the Nigerian Railway Communalism.

Prior to October 1941, the daily rated employees had looked on the established staff as better placed people. Indeed the permanent staff snobbishly arrogated great prestige to themselves and usually refused to fraternize with the less fortunate ones who were not a part of the Establishment.¹³⁵ But after 1941, as we have seen, the gap had been bridged to the joy of the one group and the dismay of the other which now, more than ever before, wanted to be placed higher than the new comers. They did not immediately succeed in this ambition but two years later met with some success. As from 1st April 1943, pension status was granted to 2,143 railway employees previously on the Provident Fund basis.¹³⁶ The immediate advantage of this was that they no longer contributed one twelfth of their monthly salary; the ultimate advantage was that they received a pension instead of a lump sum "so frequently rapidly dissipated".¹³⁷ Added to this was the pride of status, the joy of being placed above the common herd.

Thus ended the twenty-eight years of the general operation of the Provident Fund on the Nigerian Railway. As from 1st April 1943, indigenous railway workers of the staff grade came under the Pension Scheme like their counterparts in the Civil Service and henceforth it could not be said that would-be workers rejected railway employment because it carried an inferior scheme of social security. Although it never again assumed its previous significance, the scheme remained to cater for the interest of monthly paid workers of the pre-staff grade who did not in fact qualify to enjoy pension privileges even by the standard of the Civil Service. To them, indeed, the Provident Fund Scheme was just good. As new comers to a scheme which for twenty-six years had been outside the reach of their rank, they naturally did not consider it inadequate. They continued to contribute monthly as they had done for the past two years. They were also probably happy to note that a few men of the established staff who from 1943 had qualified to transfer to the Pension Scheme actually chose to remain under the Provident Fund Scheme either on the argument that they were too used to the old scheme to want to change or that they had set their minds on a forthcoming lump sum which they personally preferred to the small monthly benefits from the Pension Scheme. A further consideration in the minds of such people was that they might not live long enough to claim much from pensions.¹³⁸ Oral Evidence however shows that those of this group who did not die soon after retirement regretted having made such a decision.

Only very few chose the old scheme as mentioned above. Most railway servants who had a choice between the two schemes of social securities chose the pension scheme.

133. C. E. Rooke, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Year 1941-42*, p. 45.

134. C. E. Rooke, *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Year, 1942-43*, p. 52.

135. See: *A Report of the proceedings of the Nigerian Railway Native Staff Union for the period-22nd January 1919, to 31st December 1920*, p. 7 of Nigerian Railway File No. SC. 24.2 Vol. I.

136. *Railway Annual Report for 1942-43*, p. 4.

137. *Ibid.*

138. Oral Evidence is very strong on this.

And as they opted for pension they were allowed to withdraw their contributions which had accumulated over the years. Oral Evidence shows that those who were fortunate to have a considerable amount of money to collect wisely built or bought houses with it. Others with some humble amounts accomplished less expensive projects ranging from purchase of building plots to marriage of extra wives.

Withdrawals only held good for actual deposits. Interests were treated differently. Government did not pay the contributors the interests yielded by their deposits. On behalf of all contributors who in this case had no choice, Government converted such interests to investments. And till today the railway servants then concerned still draw yearly dividends from the said investments whether or not they are still in the service.

But one does not need to be counted among those who now receive profits from the old interests of the Railway Provident Fund to appreciate its significance. One only needs a little reflection to note that it was significant both for the Administration which operated it and to the indigenous railway workers for whom it was operated. The case of the former was probably more obvious. Rather than put railway servants on pension scheme like civil servants, the Administration quite naturally preferred the relatively cheaper form of social security which the Provident Fund represented. The latter had the added advantage that its accumulated deposits were used to finance development projects in Nigeria and the Empire as a whole. To the Administration, therefore, great was the scheme which for close on thirty years put something in the Treasury before taking out of it. The Pension Scheme, on the contrary, gave out without receiving. And for this it was less cherished by the Administration which considered the Provident Fund a better opposite.

As far as the indigenous railway workers were concerned on the other hand, the Fund probably meant more to them materially during the first half of its operation than in the latter half. For until the third decade of this century when railway trade unionism began to assume turbulence and railway workers very critically viewed the Provident Fund as an inferior alternative to the Pension Scheme, the former had served some useful purpose by providing both social security and banking facility. But the wider significance of the scheme which was probably not then apparent to its contributors was that it served as a factor of cohesion to the Nigerian Railway Communalities. Perhaps more than anything else the Provident Fund distinguished service conditions of railway workers from what their counterparts experienced in the Civil Service. And in this way it helped them to attain an identity. For as we have seen, praise and protest over one or the other of the clauses of its provision got railway workers into concerted action irrespective of the departments in which they worked.

And finally the Provident Fund significantly helped in inculcating a voting behaviour in the minds of the contributors. They voted secretly by ballot as they elected their representative into the Nigerian Railway Provident Fund Board.¹³⁹ In those days before broadbased party politics featured in Nigeria, rival railway trade unions nominated candidates for the Board election and so made their members vote along group lines. This training in democracy which extended all over the railway system and antedated the days of general elections in Nigeria shows something of the political aspect of the Nigerian Railway Provident Fund Scheme.

139. A specimen ballot paper is preserved in Nigerian Railway, *File L. 887/1935 Provident Fund for African Staff*.

GREAT BRITAIN, GERMANY AND WARTIME ECONOMY IN NIGERIA 1914—1918:

By DR JIDE OSUNTOKUN

WARS are unnatural phenomena, they cause as much human suffering as material damage. Countries that are unlucky to lie within the sphere of military operation usually suffer from these hardships more than those outside, but even those whose involvement is limited to providing human and material resources have to forego well-laid out plan of economic development and even structural or political changes until the return of peace and 'normalcy'. The latter situation was the case in Nigeria during the First World War.

The First World War upset the gradual economic development of Nigeria which had begun as a result of the progressive modernisation of the country's infrastructure from the beginning of the 20th century. The War caused a great deal of dislocation in the internal as well as the external flow of the trade of the country. The fact that an event involving at first primarily European powers should have such an effect on the economic life of Nigeria, showed the extent to which Africa, especially West Africa, had become part of the Western European economic complex. The seriousness of the effect of the breakdown in international relations becomes more apparent when it is realised that before the war Nigeria's economy, particularly its external trade, was very closely tied up with Western demand and need for vegetable oils. The British had more or less encouraged this development. They had always believed, at least until the outbreak of the war, in a policy of healthy economic and commercial competition of citizens of all nations in their colonies, but they were to find to their chagrin at least in Nigeria, that an 'open door' policy could not but lead to economic disaster when the abnormality of war removed the prerequisite of peace necessary for the exchange of goods and the normal economic interdependence of nations.

Nigeria's revenue was largely derived from two main sources which the war seriously affected. Two-thirds of the revenue came from railway receipts and custom duties.¹ The duties were more or less those levied on trade spirits (cheap gin) which were carried in German bottoms and which came mainly from Holland.² The other sources of revenue were direct taxation which was in force in Northern Nigeria, yielding about £300,000 in 1914, and court fees and fines collected mainly in the Southern Courts where litigation was rampant and where the so-called native courts had increasingly been used to raise revenue through the infliction of heavy fines.³ The first source of revenue was adversely affected when it became necessary to cut off the connection between Nigeria and Germany and later on during the war between her and Holland. Attempts were made to replace those two customers by finding other markets in foreign countries and by expanding the market for Nigeria produce in the British Empire.

Up to the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1914, Nigeria had come to be heavily dependent on German capital and enterprise because of the presence of very powerful German firms in the country. At the outbreak of the war, there were nineteen German

1. C. O. 583/39/504: Harding's minute 7 Feb. 1916.

2. C. O. 583/17/29836 A. J. Harding's minute 12 Aug 1914 ¹/₃ total of Nigeria's total revenue came from duties on liquor in 1913/amount of liquor was over 4 million gallons, with Rotterdam accounting for 3 million, Hamburg 1 million and Liverpool 60,000

3. C. O. 583/45/20906 A. J. Harding's minute 17 May, 1916

and Austro-Hungarian firms in Nigeria.⁴ The German firm of G. L. Gaiser dominated the Lagos export trade and to a certain extent the import trade as well. G. L. Gaiser was the successor to the German firm of William O'Swald and company established in Lagos some years before the cession of the colony to Britain. As from 1865 the Germans not only dominated Lagos trade, but also controlled the affairs of the Chamber of Commerce which one of the agents of G. L. Gaiser had helped form in 1865. In fact, as from this time down to the outbreak of the Great War, the Germans held the most prominent place in the commercial life of Lagos colony and the firm of G. L. Gaiser had immense good will and trade connections in the Southern Provinces generally.⁵ The firm of Pagenstecher and company was very strong in Warri and Benin divisions whilst the Niger-Benue Transport company with the Woermann *Line* constituted the biggest shipping conglomerate in West Africa. Then, there was the old German firm of Witt and Busch which since 1877 had been one of the most formidable rivals to English firms in Southern Nigeria.⁶ The Germans, on the whole, were more popular in Nigeria than the English because of the generous credit facilities which they gave to their African customers. In turn these agents carried German goods and goodwill far into the interior. Nigeria was better linked with Western Europe than even with Britain commercially. Ships of the German shipping line, Woermann Line called at Nigerian ports with cargo three times a month. Although Elder Dempster ships competed favourably with the German shipping company, the German company had an edge over the British line, since the German vessels that plied the West African route were better built and especially adapted to West African trade,⁷ it is therefore not surprising that Germany took a substantial amount of Nigeria's agricultural products, especially vegetable-oil-producing nuts, before the war. More than half of the total products exported in 1913 went to Germany; these included four-fifths of Nigeria's palm-kernel, fifty per cent of Nigeria's untanned hides and skins, fifty three per cent of her groundnuts, thirty four per cent of her sheanuts, thirty per cent of her timber and twelve and half per cent of the country's palm oil.⁸ Germany took agricultural goods from both the Southern and Northern parts of Nigeria and the geographical distribution of their imports was significant in the sense that a general trade depression as a result of German withdrawal was bound to be felt all over the country.

Before the war, the value of the imports from Germany was considerable and Germany's import market in Nigeria was still expanding at an extra-ordinary pace and it was surmised by the British commercial intelligence officer for Nigeria that if the upward trend had been maintained Germany and Holland combined would have reached parity with Britain in the import sector of Nigeria's trade by 1922.⁹ German traders

4. C. O. 583/33/36251 Lugard to C. O. 19 May 1915. The German firms were (1) Behrens and Wehner & Co. (2) Bey & Zimmer & Co. (3) Deutsche Camerun Gesellschaft (4) Oskar Kaiser & Co. (5) Paul Guericke & Co. (6) J. W. Jackel & Co. (7) W. Mertens & Co. (8) Paul Meyer & Co. (9) Niger-Benue Transport Co. (10) Holtmann & Co. (11) Morin & Co. (12) Ring & Co. (13) Witt & Busch & Co. (14) German West Africa trading Co. (15) L. Pagenstecher & Co. (16) G. L. Gaiser & Co. (17) Woermann Linie (18) Lohmann & Vietor & Co. (19) Sachse & Co.
5. C. O. 583/73/13284' undated 1918. *memo on enemy firm in Liquidation* by T. F. Burrowes. see also Ernst Hieke: *G. L. Gaiser: Hamburg West Afrika: 100 Jahre Handel mit Nigeria* Hoffmann & Campe Verlag. Hamburg 1949 pp. 5-37.
6. *Hieke op. cit.*, p. 38.
7. In 1911 for example 197 German ships with total tonnage of 339,507 tons visited Nigeria compared with 347 English vessels with 476,175 tons. The German ships can be seen to be larger than the British ships. see, 'Denkschrift Über die Bedeutung des deutschen Handels mit West-Afrika' film A 9 V 68 (Firmenarchiv—Hamburgisches Weltwirtschafts-archiv Hamburg West Germany).
8. C.O.583/19/44174. Harding's minute of 27 Aug. 1914 The total value of all produce exported in 1913 was £7,097,646 and £3,693,941 of this went to Germany and this included £2,005,626 worth of palm kernels—which could not be easily absorbed by the British market. see C. O. 583/17/31122. A. J. Harding's minute of 10 September, 1914.
9. C. O. 583/19/44174. A. J. Harding's minute 27 Aug. 1914 see A. Birtwistle (commercial intelligence officer) in Cd. 6771, 1913 LXVIII 361.

came to Nigeria primarily for palm kernels for which they had a better market in Hamburg than the British possessed in Liverpool. When once established in Southern Nigeria, where for quite a considerable length of time trade by barter was the practice of commercial transaction, the German firms naturally took up the sale of tobacco, trade spirits and general manufactured goods. The great fidelity of large German firms in various parts of Nigeria to their country's trade interests contributed to the success of the Germans. As an illustration of this fidelity, Manchester goods consigned to German firms in Nigeria were usually sent to Hamburg in order that they might come out in German ships. The Germans also were faster in the delivery of goods to both English and German firms, so that even some of the British firm preferred their goods to come to Nigeria in German ships.¹⁰

The Germans specialised in bringing to Nigeria articles like Fez caps of various kinds, most of which were made in the Austro-Hungarian empire; they supplied practically the whole of south-western Nigeria with gun powder as well as 'dane guns' most of which they themselves bought in Belgium. Other trade items carried by the Germans, not surprisingly, were lager beers, coal, cordage and twine. Nigerians preferred German twine because it was more durable and was widely used for making fishing nets on the coast. The Germans, favoured by Geography, were also in control of the rapidly increasing trade in stock fish which was developing between Nigeria and the Scandinavian countries and which was worth £111,000 in 1913.¹¹ The Germans were the only traders who sold cutlasses or matches in Nigeria around this time. This item of trade was important not for its monetary value to the Germans, but for its use and popularity throughout Nigeria for agricultural purposes. The British could not compete in this line because German cutlasses were far too cheap. These cutlasses were hafted by home industry in Germany, women, and children being often thus employed in their own village. The Germans also intruded into a predominantly British sphere by selling textiles. They specialised in velvet and velveteens. Some of the velvets were actually made in Lancashire, and later sent to Germany for finishing. German dyers being cleverer than the British in making relatively low quality cloth look, when finished, equal to one of higher value, were thus able to easily undersell their English rivals. The Germans also carried into Nigeria a large proportion of the trade gin 'rum'¹² which were considered necessary items of trade since they were consumed and perhaps liked by many Nigerians.

When war broke out it was necessary to re-channel the country's trade to avoid aiding the enemy and with the execution and prosecution of this policy the economic well-being of Nigeria had to be sacrificed on the altar of Imperial survival. The government was faced with the problem of not only finding markets for Nigeria's main staple—palm kernels but also with the problem of finding alternative sources of revenue to the duties levied on trade spirit. It also had to find alternatives to German imports.

The Germans were suspended from trading on 21 September 1914 by A. G. Boyle, the acting Governor, on his own initiative, but realising how involved the Germans were in the economic life of the country, the colonial office counter-manded the order a week later.¹³ The Germans recommenced trading but under certain restrictive conditions they were made to report daily to police officers and to be in their houses before nine o'clock in the evening. They were not to transfer money to Germany, or get in touch with their headquarters in their homeland, for reasons of security. These stringent measures were the prelude to the eventual cancellation of trade with Germany

10. Ibid.

11. C. O. 583/19/44174 Memo by C. A. Birtwistle on "goods of German & Austrian origin imported into Nigeria."

12. This was not really rum, but cheap spirit from potato or grain which was later flavoured and called 'rum'.

13. C. O. 583/20/47126 Lugard to C. O. 6 November, 1914.

and Germans. On November 17, 1914, the Germans were interned as prisoners of war, following protests from London and Liverpool Chambers of Commerce, coupled with the allegation that the Germans were fomenting rebellions in the southern part of Nigeria.¹⁴ The controller of customs, T. F. Burrowes, was subsequently appointed to supervise the disposal of German owned goods and liquidation of German firms, as well as paying British, Allied and Neutral creditors of the German firms, in that order.

With the shut-down of the German firms the colonial office was faced with the problem of finding markets for about four million pounds worth of Nigerian produce which had hitherto been channelled to Germany by the German firms based in Nigeria. The most difficult problem was finding market for palm kernels in particular since Germany practically took all the Nigeria kernel worth over two million pounds. This was not an easy task since no other country except Germany had enough crushing mills to deal with about 131,886 tons of palm kernel.¹⁵ Since setting up mills in England or converting some that already existed, needed a lot of capital, the Colonial Office in conjunction with the Nigerian government arranged a meeting with Sir William Lever of Lever Brothers Ltd. and the London and the Liverpool chambers of commerce to find out what could be done to save Nigeria from economic disaster. At this time there were only three small crushing mills for palm kernels in England and they were grossly inadequate for handling the consignments of palm kernels which had accumulated with the ban on German trade.

The soap and margarine making companies told the Colonial Office, that even if they wanted to build new crushing mills, these would take at least six months to complete. Besides, the time that was needed to erect the new mills, the industrialists saw a golden opportunity to seek government aid in monopolising the palm kernel trade during and after the war. They asked the Colonial Office to give a firm understaking that once the mills had been erected they would be protected against foreign competition, by prohibiting exportation of the vegetable oil producing nuts to places outside the British Empire.¹⁶ This of course ran completely counter to the still firmly held British policy of free trade with the colonies. The Colonial Office while not in a position to refuse outright the offer to erect new palm kernel crushing mills on conditions favoured by Sir William Lever and his competitor, Joseph Crosfield & Sons Ltd., promised that further investigation into the matter would be ordered.¹⁷

Whilst the home government was trying to grapple with the problem of markets for Nigeria's agricultural products, the Nigerian government too was faced with all kinds of problems connected with the country's internal flow of trade. There was the problem of shortage of credit, because the Bank of British West Africa which had a monopoly of the banking business in Nigeria and other British possessions in West Africa, refused to grant loans to trading firms as it used to do before the war. This action led to shortage of silver coins which were only obtainable from the bank and this more than anything unsettled the commercial life of Nigeria, since merchants were not able to buy produce offered to them by Nigerian farmers.¹⁸ The government for sometime had to intervene by accepting bills from commercial firms in exchange for cash because the bank refused to buy such bills. The mining companies, being the hardest hit, were loaned money by the government in order that they might continue working so as to avoid laying off of thousands of their employees. As government intervention increased, other firms

14. A. Osuntokun: 'Disaffection and Revolts in Nigeria 1914-1918' *Canadian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 5 No. 2 1971.

15. C. O. 583/20/45046. Lugard to C. O. 15 Nov. 1914. see also C. O. 583/17/31122 A. J. Harding's minute 10 Sept. 1914.

16. C. O. 583/17/29836 Lugard to C. O. 10th Aug. 1914. see also Cd. 8247, 1916, IV 15 Report of Committee on Edible and oil Producing nuts and seeds, p. 7.

17. C. O. 583/17/31122 Strachey's minute, 21 August 1914.

18. C. O. 583/19/44174 Lugard to C. O. 27 Aug. 1914.

connected with Nigeria's trade tried to shift their burden to the government which could hardly bear its own. For example, the Niger Company claimed that since their market in Europe had been affected by the war, the Nigerian government should give companies using the Niger River and the railway for hauling their accumulated produce the option of payment of duties and railway charges by three months acceptances, payable in London.¹⁹ The government did not of course agree to a proposal whereby large companies would be allowed to pay customs duty and rail charges some three months later than the date they were due. This would have amounted to giving large companies substantial loans, free of interest, whilst not extending the same facilities to smaller ones. The Niger Company with its huge capital should have been the last to seek this kind of concession, but of course it is generally known that while large companies shout loudest about their patriotism, are not averse to using war-time economic difficulties to rake in large sums of unearned profit.

The Colonial Office advised the Nigerian administration, that if intervention was necessary, it should only be done when the price of palm kernels fell so low that government had to step in to prevent permanent crippling of the industry. If such a situation were to arise the Nigerian government could purchase from the exporting firms, so that they in turn could keep buying those offered by the middlemen and primary producers. The produce could then be stored in Britain, if possible by arrangement with manufacturers and sold as opportunity offered, at a price sufficient to cover all expenses. But even if this was possible, neither the home government nor the Nigerian administration had the necessary machinery for carrying out such a grandiose plan of state monopoly. The plan was thus abandoned and free-market forces, as much as was possible in war time, were allowed to continue to operate.

Meanwhile the Nigerian government faced a shortage of three-quarters²⁰ of a million pounds out of a total revenue of just over three million pounds. In fact Nigeria's revenue went down from £3,462,507 in 1913, to £2,703,258 in 1915²¹.

This fall in revenue was due largely to a fall in imports on which custom duties were levied and to a fall in railway revenue following a decline in the purchasing capacity of British firms following increasing cost of sea insurance and shipping and the dislocation in the normal system of commercial credits. The Nigerian government in reaction to its dwindling revenue embarked on a policy of economic austerity. The government curtailed the railway building programme as well as other capital projects. But this had to be done in such a way as would cause a minimum of damage to work already begun. At the time the war broke out work was going ahead on the Eastern railway which was to link Port-Harcourt to the existing line at Kaduna. By September 1914 more than half a million pounds, out of an estimated four million for the entire project, had been spent. Other projects like the extension of the Lagos Harbour and wharves, the completion of the Lagos Water Supply, building of a new Capital in Kaduna, as well as the building of railway headquarters and workshops were all under way with estimated costs totalling some millions of pounds. The projected total expenditure was well above the funds

19. C. O. 583/25/33348. A. J. Harding's minute 4 September 1914.

20. C. O. 583/25/33348. A. J. Harding's 4 Sept. 1914. The actual fall in revenue was £470,000 fall in customs receipts and £225,000 in railway receipts.

21. C. O. 583/50/842 Lugard to C. O. 17 Feb. 1917.

Year	Total Revenue of Nigeria	Expenditure
1913	£3,462,507	£2,917,602
1914	£3,048,381	£3,596,764
1915	£2,703,258	£3,434,213

held by the Crown Agents in Nigeria's accounts;²² and since the possibility of raising loans was nil, the government had no alternative to drastically reducing her financial commitments. Work was therefore stopped on the project for a new capital at Kaduna as well as the newly projected Yaba Headquarters near Lagos. Work was also suspended on the railway from Udi (Enugu) to Kaduna Junction, although construction from both the Port-Harcourt and Kaduna ends had started in 1913 and large quantities of material had been bought and conveyed to each of these points, and in fact, thirty miles from the Kaduna end had been completed before the outbreak of the war. The curtailment of these large capital projects caused serious loss and inconvenience to the Nigerian authorities in many ways. Houses for example were left uncompleted in Kaduna causing some deterioration in the unfinished structures.

Efforts to raise money by direct taxation in the Southern Provinces met with stiff resistance and outright refusal by the Colonial Office. Lewis Harcourt the secretary of state for the colonies, described Lugard's direct taxation proposal as "ludicrous suggestion in such a crisis as this"²³ and warned him not to take any action that might cause disaffection and agitation during the war. Lugard therefore resorted to the age-long expedient of indirect taxation through raising of the customs dues on tobacco and some foodstuffs such as rice and increasing the tax on corrugated or galvanised iron sheets, kerosene, as well as imposing a *surtax* of twenty five *per cent* on all other dutiable articles, and in a rather honest way he admitted that his intention was to tax the people of Southern Nigeria. He said the increase would fall principally on people in the old Central and Eastern provinces of Southern Nigeria who had benefited greatly before the war from the great rise in the price of palm kernels.²⁴ He surmised that it was not unlikely that tobacco might, to some extent take the place of trade spirits as a medium of exchange if there should be a deficiency of trade spirits. The wisdom of a policy which based war-time indirect taxation on pre-war prosperity is subject to question. So also was the point that tobacco might become a substitute for trade spirits; for hardly can their importance in the life of the people be compared in terms of their use not only as drink, but as something essential in solemn ceremonies and rituals. Lugard however conceded the point that if the trade in spirits was desired, there was no reason why it could not continue but that foreign liquor should be superseded by cheap spirits from Britain. Assuming that ocean trade routes remained open there appeared, he contended, no reason why the export of Holland's liquor should be interfered with by the war. He did not foresee the problem of German origin of the raw materials that went into the making of Dutch 'gin'. The *Surtax* on all other dutiable goods affected textiles, wearing apparel, salt, gun-powder, guns, soap, matches, hardware, earthenware and furniture. The taxing of foodstuffs was regretted, but it was found necessary if only as a temporary war measure. The Colonial Office continued to explore all possible ways of finding market for the surplus Nigerian exports. France was made to abolish the *surtax d'entrepot*²⁵ on palm kernels, since this had tended to keep out foreign palm kernels from French market by taxing kernels coming from colonies other than those of France. Capitalists in Britain were persuaded to erect palm kernel crushing mills in spite of their fear of unprofitability of the venture. The British industrialists were not sure they could sell the palm kernel oil as well as the cake profitably. The Germans before the war had been able to make profits out of the industry because the cake was popular in Germany and Denmark among the farmers there. British farmers preferred linseed

22. C. O. 583/41/6774. Harding's minute 23 Feb. 1915. On Dec. 31 1913 Nigeria had a debt of £8,267,500.—which were largely used to build railways, harbours and other public works. The balance of loan funds available was £1,111,500. Ordinary surplus funds invested on stocks stood at £1,164,500 and Nigeria before 1916 would have to borrow £4,223,000 to pay off the unconverted 5 years debentures issued in 1911.

23. C. O. 583/17/29836. Harcourt's minute 17 Aug. 1914.

24. C. O. 583/20/48789. Lugard to C. O. 20 Nov. 1914.

25. C. O. 583/45/20906 C. O. to F. O. 8 April, 1916.

and cotton seed cake. It took quite an effort by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to overcome British farmers' prejudice against palm kernel cake. In short by the end of 1915, a substantial amount of Nigeria's palm kernels was being processed in Hull, London and Liverpool.²⁶ The industrialists however, sought and got guarantees that the trade would be kept in British hands during and after the war. The government set up in 1916 a select committee of the House of Commons under Arthur Steel-Maitland, parliamentary under-secretary in the Colonial Office, to look into how the trade could be permanently retained by British manufacturers. The Committee in its report recommended an export duty of £2 per ton on any palm kernels exported outside the British Empire. Critics of this export duty accused the British government of imposing a monopoly on West African trade for the benefit of a few British traders and industrialists, notably William Lever.²⁷ Africans, it was contended, were being forced to sell their palm kernels two pounds below the actual price.²⁸ The existence of this export duty led to 'Combinations' or 'pools' among merchants as well as crushers in Britain, for the purpose of fixing the producer price at the lowest minimum. In fact the export duty only benefited the big companies like Lever Brothers and not the British consumer who still had to pay considerably high prices.²⁹ Agitation for the repeal of this duty by doctrinaire free traders and others with vested economic interests in West Africa continued without success until after the war. As far as the Nigerian government was concerned a solution, if only a temporary one, had been found to the problem of finding a market for the palm kernels which on the outbreak of the war had seemed impossible.

So serious was Nigeria's financial crisis that even after the Colonial Office had vetoed the idea of introducing direct taxation into the southern provinces Lugard was still compelled to argue for its introduction into what he called "advanced" areas like the Oyo and Abeokuta provinces and into the Benin Division. He claimed that direct taxation was acceptable to "all native rulers concerned" as if it was the rulers who were to pay the taxes. The permanent officials in the Colonial Office remained unconvinced by his many arguments. Sir George Fiddes disallowing the proposal commented: "I think it would be madness to allow it to proceed while the Cameroons campaign is still in progress. . . . it would only be prudent to wait till the troops return and we have their bayonets to support our philanthropy"³¹ Concurring Sir John Anderson, permanent undersecretary minuted ". . . . it is difficult to find any justification for the Governor's haste".³² Lugard checkmated here, tried to use the "hard times" argument to bring the native treasuries in the Northern provinces under direct government control, but his action was again disallowed by the Colonial Office on the grounds that it would defeat the aim of native treasury organisation which was "financial Independence"³³ from the colonial government. The Nigerian government was back to square one, and had to continue to soldier on with whatever funds were available. Lugard came up with another suggestion to raise money. This time it was the replacement of import duty by export duty. This was necessary because the expulsion of the large German trading Community from Nigeria had proved from one point of view "a calamity" by making possible the formation of a combine by the Liverpool firms with the sole aim of fixing prices. The merchants as a result were making huge profits on their export trade rather than on imports. This he felt, constituted a complete reversal in the trade pattern of Nigeria. He felt any export duty on major agricultural staples would fall on

26. (Cd. 8247) 1916, IV 15 'Report of Committee on Edible and Oil producing nuts and seeds' p. 21.

27. Cd. 8247 1916 IV 15. Report on "edible and oil producing nuts and seeds. Minority report by T. Wiles M.P.

28. *The Times* Aug. 4 1916. see Hansard 3 August. 1916.

29. See *The Manchester Guardian* July 17, 1916.

30. C. O. 583/31/15673 Lugard to C.O. 13 March 1915.

31. C. O. 583/31/15673 Sir George Fide's minute 19 April, 1915.

32. Ibid. Sir John Anderson's 19 April, 1915.

33. C. O. 583/39/504 C. O. to Lugard 7 Feb. 1916.

the "combines" since they had already reduced prices to the lowest possible limit.³⁴ Lugard had a case here and plausible as some of his arguments were, there were obvious points against taxing exports. There was the possibility that the measure might not hit the merchants since the tax could be passed on to producers thus further depressing prices and discouraging peasant farmers from working owing to lack of incentive. Export duty might be beneficial if the country imposing it had a monopoly of the produce on which it was imposed, but that was not so in the case of Nigeria. Even if it were so, ships were not available to carry the produce offered, so while effective demand for palm produce in the United Kingdom was good, the demand for it in Nigeria was poor and while the supply in Nigeria was ample, the supply in Liverpool was not, hence the high prices in Liverpool. There was also the possibility that if prices of palm kernel oil went up margarine makers might shift to coconut oil since both oils were interchangeable. Lugard nevertheless imposed export duties on palm kernel, palm oil and cocoa in August 1916. What decided the issue really was the arrogance of the Liverpool merchants who had formed themselves into a combine to exploit the economic weakness arising from war-time difficulties.

The Combine firms used to purchase produce sufficient to fill all the ships available, thus squeezing out of business all other competitors, African and European. They even forced Elder Dempster, the shipping line into their ring by threatening to charter ships to compete with it. The effect of this monopoly on Nigerian farmers was profound. The groundnuts growers in the Northern provinces who had experienced a fifty *per cent* fall in prices, held back their stock of produce waiting for better offers than those made by the "Combine" or their associate, the Royal Niger Company. The producers were however fighting a losing battle since no other trader would offer prices higher than those already agreed to by the European firms. As a result of the depressed prices the Nigerian producer suffered severely at the hands of the merchants and he in turn was shy of growing and collecting produce since he earned so small a profit from it. As a consequence, the less remunerative produce was abandoned. A case in point was the shea nut industry; cotton growing was another and the fear was that the extremely promising trade in groundnuts in the North would soon suffer similar neglect. Another produce affected was the Copra industry along the Lagos Lagoon which also was being crippled by the same problem.³⁵ All efforts to break the ring failed and in desperation Lugard suggested that powerful American capitalists should be encouraged by the home government to invest in Nigeria with the hope that this would counterbalance the influence of the British monopoly. This suggestion was as usual turned down. "The American," wrote A. J. Harding, "as a cure for combines is rather a speculation—he might be worse than the British combine, especially as combines are regarded as rather an

34. C. O. 583/45/20906 Lugard to C. O. 8 April, 1916. The following table gives an idea of price reduction.

Pre-war price per ton

Nigeria (Lagos)	Liverpool	Nigeria (Lagos)	Liverpool
Palm oil £14. 15	£19. 5	£16. 17	£44. 0. 0
Palm Kernel £21. 11	£29. 11	£9. 10	£26. .
Cocoa (per cwt) £1. 12. 8	£2. 7. 6	£1. 17	£3. 8
Groundnut £8	£20.	£2. 10	£16.

it can be seen that profit ranged from 100% to 700% though allowance must be made for high insurance and shipping rates.

35. The firms involved were:- Miller brothers Liverpool Ltd., African Association Ltd., the F. A. pany of African merchants, the African traders Co., Mcneil Scott & Co., H. B. W. Russell & Co., F. & A. Swanzy Ltd. Compagnie Francaise de L 'Afrique Occidentale (C. F. A. O.)

36. C. O. 583/38/59211 Lugard to C. O. 4 Dec. 1916.

American specialty which we can only immitate at a respectful distance"³⁷. The British merchants of course saw nothing wrong in making profits at the expense of Nigerian producers, government and British consumers. They claimed rather unconvincingly that because of various increases in labour costs, insurance and shipping; the "cost to market" of Nigerian produce had increased five fold and that what seemed a huge profit was marginal gain. They maintained that any departure from old methods which had taken place was forced upon them by circumstances. The merchants claimed that even if they made huge profits, they were liable to excessive war profits tax of sixty *per cent*. When accused of lack of interest in the welfare of Nigerians, the merchants answered that were it not because of the "enterprise and importunity of British merchants there would have been no colony or protectorate of Nigeria"³⁸.

The Nigerian trade eventually began to interest bigger capitalists. Principal margarine and soap manufacturing companies like Lever Bros. Ltd., the Dutch firm of Antorn Jurgens and Co. and Van den Bergh which had established early in 1917 soap and margarine branch factories in England, began to take interest in the vegetable oil trade. For Lever, it was not a new venture. They had in 1910 erected at Opobo in the Niger Delta and at Apapa in Lagos, palm kernel crushing mills, but these mills had been closed down after a loss of £13,000 in 1913.³⁹ These mills were reactivated in 1916 in order to avoid paying the high shipping rates which were levied on uncrushed palm kernels. The Dutch firm of Anton Jurgens & Co. the biggest margarine manufacturing firms in the world acquired their first trading premises in Lagos in 1917, and made an attempt to buy Miller Bros. Ltd. so as to secure adequate palm produce, but the Ministry of Food blocked the deal with the argument that "the object to be kept in view is not merely to bring trade to U.K., it must be kept in British hands"⁴⁰. The problem really was how to harmonise private British interests with Nigerian and imperial interests. The stand of the Lugard administration was clear on this but the home government seemed to have continually prevaricated throughout the period of the war, whilst companies like Lever Brothers and Elder Dempster & Co. and the Niger Company recorded thousands of pounds of profit during the war.⁴¹ By 1917, owing to government commanding of ships plying the West African route, Nigerian Produce began to be evacuated at a faster rate than hitherto. This made certain that with the imposition of revenue yielding export duty the revenue of Nigeria rose correspondingly. By 1917 Nigeria's trade with the United States gradually replaced the trade with Germany with the result that the total value of exports in 1917 exceeded any previous records;⁴² the pre-war years included.

Finding outlets for the country's exports did not however, necessarily lead to prosperity among the people. The gains that were made still went into the pockets of the large European firms which were engaged in export business, to the soap and margarine manufacturers in England and to the imperial government which collected war tax. At this same time when Agricultural products fetched very little on the Nigerian market, the price of imported textiles was so high that cotton growing provinces like Zaria

37. C. O. 583/45/20906 Harding's minute, 25 July 1916.

38. C. O. 583/53/54100 "Association of West African Merchants" C. O. 9 Nov. 1916.

39. Charles Wilson: *The history of Unilever: a study in Economic Growth and Social change*. Cassell & Co. Ltd. London 1954 Vol. 1. p. 181.

40. C. O. 554/36 60567, Ministry of Food to C. O. 7 Dec. 1917.

41. C. Wilson *Unilever* op. cit. 253. Lever brothers bought the Niger Coy. for a sum of £8,000,000 on July 1920.

42. C. O. 554/35/47011 Harding's minute 14 Sept. 1917. see also *Colonial Office List* 1919. Waterlow & Sons. London p. 294.

Total value of exports for	1913—£7,097,646
	1914—£6,420,461
	1915—£4,946,228
	1916—£6,029,546
	1917—£8,602,486

and Kano stopped exporting cotton and reserved them for their own looms. The prices of the other articles in great demand, like salt, kerosene increased from one hundred and fifty to three hundred *per cent*. The price of imports was so high that, for example, in 1917 the volume of commercial imports fell by over six thousand tons but their value increased by £634,000.⁴³

The shortage of silver coins further drove prices of imported goods up while depressing the prices paid to primary producers. The middle men and merchants in the North and areas outside the Lagos hinterland resorted to trade by barter, since it gave them an advantage over ignorant peasants. But as the prices of imports increased beyond all sane expectation, Nigerian farmers began again demanding cash rather than exchange their produce for cloth or some other imported goods. When they managed to get cash they hoarded this, waiting for price of imports to fall, thereby contributing to the problem of scarcity of acceptable currency. The government unable to get coins from the Royal Mint which had been taken over by the ministry of munitions had to issue currency notes in 1917 which proved so unpopular that they were replaced by nickel-bronze coins later in the year.⁴⁴ In spite of this the shortage of coins continued to play into the hands of exploiters throughout the war.

The British government was forced to intervene in the vegetable oil trade both at home and indirectly in Nigeria because of the irresponsibility of the traders in ignoring the well-being of the primary producers, the Nigerian and Imperial governments and the British consumers. The British government assumed full control of the trade on 1st July 1918 when the "United Kingdom oil seed products Association Ltd."⁴⁵ was formed. This association was formed at the request and with the backing of the Ministry of Food. This body was empowered among other things "to control and regulate, or to assist in the control or regulation of the trade of seed crushers, oil extractors and oil refiners in such a manner as may be deemed expedient by the Food Controller, or other competent authority in the National interests"⁴⁶ The association was to remain until the end of the war and did not disband until October 1919. Although purchasing of vegetable oils in West Africa remained in the hands of the merchants, they were hemmed in by the condition that they could only sell their purchases to the Food Ministry at fixed prices.

The effect of this government control, which meant reduction of profit accruing to the vegetable oil merchants slowed down the purchase of palm produce in Nigeria because the measure served as a disincentive to buyers. During the 1917-1918 buying season, palm oil bought in the old 'Western provinces' showed a decrease of forty-two *per cent* and in the Central and Eastern provinces' there was a decrease of twenty-two *per cent* in palm oil and fourteen *per cent* in palm kernels.⁴⁷ To make matters worse the world-wide inflation really cut into the real income of the average Nigerian primary producers. The whole operation—the maintenance of cheap prices in Britain, and the export prohibitions to enemy and neutrals were prejudicial to the oil palm industry in Nigeria. In spite of this adverse situation of the oil palm industry, the consensus of opinion in Nigeria in 1918, was that the minimum prices paid for palm kernels and palm oil should not be increased. It was the belief in this period that if producers got more for their labour, they might stop harvesting since it was wrongly conjectured that the producers' wants were limited and furthermore, British officials used to think that not much labour was expended in collecting palm fruits. In short, Nigerian primary producers never really benefited from the astronomically high prices of vegetable raw

43. (Cmd 469) 1919 xxxiv 609. Report by Sir F. D. Lugard on the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and administration 1912-1918 p. 32.

44. C. O. 554/34/5777 W. A. F. Wickhart, Assistant Secretary West African Currency Board 16 Nov. 1917.

45. C. O. 554/35/35530: Ministry of Food C. O. 1 July 1918.

46. C. O. 554/39/35530: Ministry of Food C. O. 1st July 1918.

47. C. O. 554/37/5409 A. G. Boyle to Walter Long 20 Dec. 1918.

materials in the world market. The Nigerian government however was able to raise some money through the imposition of duty on exports, but by and large it was the British government and British merchants who raked in large profits during the war.

In many cases war tends to act as a stimulant to economic development especially in the realm of industrialisation and intelligent use of local resources when imports are difficult to get. This happened to a certain extent in Nigeria and led to the saving of substantial amount of money. The war and the scarcity of imported goods in general led Nigerian authorities to look carefully at local materials before clamouring for goods from Britain. There was certain absurdity for example in importing meat when large herds of cattle estimated at about three million, sheep and goats were herded in the savannah region of Northern Nigeria. Thousands of pounds were saved on coal as from 1917 onwards when the colliery at Udi became operational. The government erected sawmills to provide timber for furniture instead of importing it. A carpentry workshop was established in Lagos to make furniture for all government houses. Limestone was discovered in several places in Nigeria, one deposit was found eleven miles from the coal field where it could be cheaply burnt and transported by rail. Limestone was also found at Itobi, twenty miles below Lokoja, and the government decided to make use of the various deposits to make cement because of the prohibitive prices charged by the importing firms. Roofing tiles were also produced to replace iron sheets which were hardly obtainable during the war. All these saved the government thousands of pounds.⁴⁸

Finally the economy was maintained at its war-time level by an export duty on three staples increased to six in 1918 and by the 25 *per cent* surtax on all imports and a surtax of 30 *per cent* on railway freights as from 1917 onwards. There was increase also in the yield of direct taxation in the North and in Yorubaland excluding Egband where the programme was abandoned because of serious political agitation and disturbance. The high prices of tin⁴⁹ and consequent increase in royalties, all led to an increase in revenue for Nigeria over that of the first two years of the war. This increase helped to sustain the country in 1917 and 1918. When finally the war ended in November, 1918 Nigeria, in spite of the post-war economic boom and the Allied Powers' demand for her exports of vegetable oils, was faced with many economic problems. Owing to the war, the public works and railways had been starved of capital. Their needs had become cumulative and by the end of the war the government found itself faced with a massive programme of expenditure almost every item of which taken separately could be shown to be a matter of pressing urgency and which collectively presented demands that clearly could not be met easily. Although Nigeria ended the war with her balance sheet on the credit side,⁵⁰ this was done at the great price of almost permanent damage to the transportation grid of the country. In view of the crying need for capital after the war, Sir Hugh Clifford the new governor ended the wartime economic story of Nigeria by disavowing the £6,000,000 which Lugard had in 1916 promised Nigeria would contribute to the Imperial war debt.⁵¹

48. (Cmd 468) 1919 xxxiv, 583. Lugards Report p. 35. approximately about £160,000 was saved in this way.

49. See *Colonial Office List* 1919 p. 294.

Nigeria's Tin Production rose from 5, 530 tons in 1913 to 9,966 in 1917 valued at £1,485,887
Total revenue of Nigeria during the war years was as follows:-

1914—£6,420,461

1915—£4,946,228

1916—£6,029,546

1917—£8,602,486

1918—£9,511,970

50. C. O. 583/6883. *Blue Book* for 1918 on Dec. 31 1918. Nigeria had to her credit surplus funds amounting to £702,785 plus £321,482 belonging to Native Administrations. Her public debt stood at £8,470,593 and accumulated sinking fund amounted to £580,071.

51. C. O. 583/79/69455. Clifford to Lord Milner 12 Nov. 1919.

THE IMPACT OF THE HAILE SELASSIE I SCHOLARSHIP-STUDENTS ON THE ETHIOPIAN STUDENT ENVIRONMENT

By RANDI RØNNING BALSVIK

It is a fact that Ethiopian students in the Haile Sellassie I University and in the secondary schools have emerged as the most outspoken and visibly the only opposition group to Haile Sellassie's government until the beginning of 1974. While Ethiopia had no legal channels of political opposition, the Haile Sellassie University walls acted in the 1960's as an enclosure surrounding an island on which political thinking, debating and questioning increasingly thrived together with student unions and a student press. All was fairly well as long as this activity was contained on the campuses but led to increasingly uncompromising confrontations with the government as the students tried to extend their political activism to the Ethiopian population at large.¹ Numerous factors have influenced the students' increased consciousness of Ethiopian reality, such as for instance modern education, foreign teachers and the increasing inflow to Addis Ababa of representatives from other African states having recently obtained or being in the process of obtaining independence from European colonialism. The purpose of this article is to examine whether the impact of the students from other African countries who came to study in Ethiopia at the end of the 1950's contributed to this process.

In order to do so, this article will attempt to evaluate the confrontation between the two groups of students. What did each of them represent and how did they look upon each other? We will look for possible influences of the foreign African students in the fields of student press and unionism hypothesizing that their most important impact was on the Ethiopian students' attitude to the concept of authority.

The last years of the 1950's had seen a sudden change in Ethiopia's relations with the rest of the African continent. Ethiopia had been isolated from the rest of Africa and had shown little or no interest for the African continent's plight under colonialism. The ruling class identified itself—not with Africa—but rather with Europe—and a feeling of superiority towards negroid Africa prevailed. Then emperor Haile Sellassie energetically entered upon the political scene of the continent² seeking external African recognition and leadership, a position thought to be expedient by most African leaders due to Ethiopia's long independence, the stability of the regime and the recognition and respect commanded by the Emperor in the world. Emerging Africa needed these qualities

On the first Conference of Independent African States in Accra in March 1958, 200 *scholarships** were offered to English-speaking students from other African countries to

1. The writer is working on "The Rise of Social and Political Awareness in the Ethiopian Student Body 1951-1973", a work based on research in Ethiopia from 1970-1973.

2. Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, London 1969 pp. xlvii-lv.

*They were termed Haile Sellassie I Scholarships and the students who received them were commonly referred to as scholarship students.

come to study in Ethiopian institutions of higher learning, which had been established during the previous 8 years.+

The foreign students started to arrive in 1958. That autumn there were 15, while at the beginning of 1960/61, 27 scholarship—students were enrolled at the University College of Addis Ababa, the institution to which this study is connected. The same year the total enrolment of Ethiopian students there was 381,³ a small fraction of which came from the foreign, Greek, Armenian, Indian, American and English, communities of Addis Ababa. These lived off campus while the Ethiopian and other African students were residents on the campus.

By 1963 the majority of the 54 scholarship-students at the University College had come to Ethiopia from Kenya and Tanganyika, the rest from Ghana, Sudan, Nigeria, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Southern Cameroons and Basutoland.⁴ Other possibilities for further education had seemed closed to them, as expressed by a student from Tanganyika: "Many young people do not sleep at night because they dream of a place to go for education. . . . We students of Tanganyika will never fail to pray day and night for a long life for His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Haile Sellassie I, and the people of Ethiopia for the golden opportunity of being able to study in Ethiopia."⁵

Sincere gratitude was expressed to the Ethiopian government for "the only opportunity in life to strive for a better living."⁶ These students knew Ethiopia as the source of pride and inspiration to the anti-colonial struggle on the African continent, but apart from the glorious history of Ethiopian independence, her defeat of the Italians at the battle of Adua (1896) and the myth around Haile Sellassie's statesmanship, they were almost ignorant of the country they went to study in. Most of them became initially very impressed with Ethiopian culture: the orthodox church and its music, manuscripts and paintings, the way people dressed, their greetings and courtesy, and the fact that the people had been weaving for centuries their own cotton cloth with the most beautiful geometrical designs.⁷ They were also impressed with the power of the Emperor, the splendour of his palace and the respect he commanded: "How could such a small man wield so much power!" But even if they were impressed with the Ethiopian culture, the power of the Emperor and felt a strong satisfaction to see an African country have such a strong background, they were on the whole shocked, surprised and disappointed to find the country so backward. "How could a country that hardly had been under the colonial yoke at all, be more backward than the colonial territories?" Ironically this also referred to the lack of political freedom and freedom of discussion in the country—which they had revered from afar.⁸ For most of these students, it was almost a shock to experience the apathy of the Ethiopian student body, their lack of consciousness of the African freedom movement, of the realities around them and their subservience to the Jesuit authorities of the University College. At the time of the first scholarship-students' arrival, when Ethiopia was beginning to aspire for a leading position in Africa,

3. "News and Views" Published by the students of the University College of Addis Ababa (abbreviated N & V) 13.10.1958.

4. Statistical Abstract 1964. Imperial Ethiopian Government. Central Statistical Office, p. 147.

5. "Ethiopia Observer" Addis Ababa, London vol. 3, no. 3, February 1959 p. 76.

6. N & V 29.12.1960.

7. LC nr. 45, 14.6.1971, LC nr. 85, 3.10.1972, LC nr. 86, 6.10.1972. To publish the names of the informants would serve no useful purpose. LC means List of Conversations which refers to source material in the possession of the writer. The number of the informant on this list is given and the date of the conversation.

8. Ibid and Perham p. lxxiii.

+ The University College of Addis Ababa was founded 1951, the Imperial College of Engineering, Addis Ababa, opened 1953, the Ethio-Swedish Institute of building Technology, Addis Ababa, opened 1954. The College of Agriculture was established at Alamaya, 500 kilometres to the east of Addis Ababa and the College of Public Health at Gondar, 740 kilometres to the north, both in 1954.

the scholarship-students found, to their disappointment, that there was a conspicuous lack of Ethiopian student identification with the African cause and the African continent. Somehow, the Ethiopian student did not feel he was an African. There was a pride and complacency in Ethiopian uniqueness and independence and a stubborn belief that Ethiopia was far above other African countries—both in indigenous culture and technical development. “They looked down upon the Negro in us, and they were surprised to find that we were intelligent.”⁹ Ingrained traditional prejudices which looked upon the Negroid peoples as racially and culturally inferior¹⁰ strained the relationship between the Ethiopian and the scholarship-students even if hardly ever openly expressed. The scholarship-students’ perception of the Ethiopians’ ambiguous attitude to being African, was reflected in a comment from one of them in “UCAA Newsletter”, a paper issued by the Student Council of the college, to the effect that an Ethiopian student in the same paper had called a group of scholarship-students “African”, “a phrase carrying a conception that he or you. . . . are not Africans. This is not only incorrect but also embarrassing, insulting and provoking.”¹¹ One of the foremost Ethiopian student leaders of those days commented in retrospect: “At that time we didn’t identify ourselves as Africans. We even disliked Africans. We had no idea of the real content of the African freedom fight. Ethiopia was a closed society. We didn’t get in touch with the writings and thinking of Kenyatta, Nyerere, Senghor, Nkrumah and Nasser. Nobody urged us to read extensively, and we didn’t. The scholarship-students were far, far ahead of us. They wrote and spoke infinitely better English than we did the first two years of College. They were schooled in ideologies, they knew about the different-isms, we had never heard of such concepts.”¹² The Ethiopian students soon understood that the educational background of the scholarship-students had been much better than their own—and this fact although creating some bitterness—also contributed to put Ethiopia and her development in a proper African perspective.

“Ethiopia Observer” published some essays by scholarship-students in the beginning of 1959.¹³ In many respects these essays reveal a contrast to the Ethiopian student situation: The essays were mature and well-written, amazingly so to be written by 1st year college students. They revealed ardent and intense interest in their respective countries and the African cause and an astonishing knowledge of concrete facts and happenings compared to the Ethiopian situation where material on Ethiopian affairs was all but non-existent in the schools. These students might have been the best in their group, but nevertheless, they were far ahead of their Ethiopian fellow students as far as expression and political thinking were concerned. They felt they were part of a great movement, they were never in doubt of their cause: The injustice done to the African was acutely felt.

Intellectuals in their home countries, ahead of them in age and education, had set a pattern for political behaviour. They felt themselves to be leaders of their countries’ destinies. Many of them had been working in their home countries, as teachers, in medical services and even with political parties.¹⁴ The new intellectual elite in Ethiopian

9. LC.nr. 86, 6.10.1972.

10. Donald N. Levine, *Wax and Gold, Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian culture*. Chicago 1965 p. 141.

11. UCAA Newsletter, 22.5.1959 (Published by the students of the University College of Addis Ababa)

12. LC nr. 76, 3.5.1972.

Levine p. 141 comments on how college students in the middle of the 1950’s responded with ridicule and disdain to an ethnographic account of some East African tribes. Since political discussion was consciously suppressed in Ethiopia the College library either did not have or withheld literature on modern African political thinking and books which put Ethiopia in a true African perspective. Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia, A new Political History*, London 1967, p. 319.

13. Ethiopia Observer vol. 3, 3. Feb. 1959.

14. Ibid. pp. 86, 81, 73.

had set no pattern of intellectual political behaviour for the young Ethiopian college students. Their position in the African context was somewhat unique. While in most African countries the modern intelligentsia was one and the same as the power elite, on the contrary, in Ethiopia the most powerful politicians were still men without western education.¹⁵ The new intellectuals had so far been absorbed by the traditional elite in the government helping to make the highly centralized, highly autocratic regime more efficient. Politicians were hardly known outside the inner and upper circles of bureaucracy and were never known to take a stand on or debate any issue of national concern.¹⁶ There were no organized groups of any kind. Thus the Ethiopian students knew no national groups with a purpose or an ideology from which to draw inspiration for meaningful engagement and activism. This was bluntly expressed by an Ethiopian professor, — a former student: "Our concern and protests then were connected to the way our eggs were fried and our tea boiled."¹⁷ Discussions on social and political issues were all but non-existent.¹⁸ The Ethiopian student's attitude to his environment can be described as deeply influenced by what an Ethiopian intellectual has termed the Ethiopian "psychological heritage of fatalism."¹⁹ To this state of affairs the scholarship-students brought with them the idea of the African revolution. They had witnessed, some participated in, great movements that produced great changes.²⁰ Their background was one of political fighting in the final stage of their countries' combat for independence from European colonial rule. These students therefore were highly politicized. They came from areas in which authority was constantly challenged to a country where the questioning of authority was the one thing not to be done.

A prominent Ethiopian student leader exclaimed in retrospect: "They were used to fighting, criticism, challenge and abuse, we were extremely excited about them."²¹ An examination of student publications before and after the time of the arrival of the scholarship-students is indicative of their impact on the student body of the University College of Addis Ababa.

The first serious attempt to start a student press at the University College of Addis Ababa had been a magazine called "UC Calls", which was issued 1956/57. Its content was unrealistic—artificial—centred around reflections on personal moral values, "Pride" "Responsibility"—"Problems in life"—with no perception of the social environment of the students. There were quotations with high moralistic appeal of speeches of Haile Sellassie and St. Augustine. The paper was to a large extent the work of one student who in vain repeatedly encouraged his fellow students to contribute to the paper. He complained bitterly that students had shown the paper but "cold indifference."²²

Due to the lack of contributions of student articles a much less ambitious attempt at a college paper was started in November 1957. This was a 1-2 page bulletin called "UCAA Newsletter" published by the Student council the following two years. The reason for this apparent lack of interest in a press—apart from the students' lack of familiarity with any kind of local press—must partly be explained by the fact that the Canadian-Jesuit Administration of the University College, definitely in accordance with national policy, did not allow anything written on topics related to religious, political

15. Girma Amare, *The Modern Ethiopian Intelligentsia and its Evolution*. Unpublished paper. Interdisciplinary Seminar of the Faculties of Arts and Education, 1966-76. Haile Sellassie I University, p. 4.
16. Christopher Clapham, *Haile Sellassie's Government*. London 1964. p. 24.
17. Clapham, pp. 23-33.
18. LC nr. 106, 7.11.1972, comments of a similar nature are numerous in my conversational material.
19. Girma, p. 9.
20. Mesfin Wolde Mariam, *Cultural Problems of Development*. Paper presented for the Seminar of Ethiopian Studies, HSI University, 1966. Unpublished p. 10.
21. Girma p. 9 1960/61 Dean of Students, UCAA.
22. LC nr. 76, 30.5.1972.
22. "UC Calls", published by the students of the University College of Addis Ababa, 8.6.1957.

and tribal issues.²³ However, before the arrival of the scholarship-students, this lack of freedom was not openly challenged.

At the beginning of March 1959, a Kenyan student, Omogi Caleb, started a wall-paper called the *Campus Star*.²⁴ Unfortunately, none of the 3-4 issues seems to have been preserved. The group around the *Campus Star*, was the first to raise the question in writing of a free press in the University College.²⁵

They criticized violently the "UCAA Newsletter" for being merely an official communique of weekly events²⁶ under the "authorities' whip", claiming that the *Campus Star* was run by students only.²⁷ The editorial board of the *Newsletter* found it necessary to disassociate themselves from the *Campus Star*.²⁸

Very little is remembered of the topics presented in the *Campus Star* except the exciting fact that the paper was a challenge to the Jesuit administration and the notion of untouchable topics. "They wrote about Marx and began to question the existence of God in a college run by Jesuits."²⁹ After 3-4 issues the Jesuits stopped the paper.³⁰ The straw that broke the camel's back was an article on the papacy expressing the hope that the new pope, John XXIII, would not stab Africa in the back as was the case with Pope Pius XI who had blessed the undertakings of the Italian armies that set out to "conquer and murder in Ethiopia in 1935", a presentation that was meant and understood as a challenge to the Jesuits' catholic faith.³¹

The attitude of the Ethiopian students to this paper was a mixed one: Silently they admired and loved the challenge to the administration and some Ethiopian students were also in the group around the paper,³² but they also felt hurt and bitter about the scholarship-students' direct attacks on the apathy of the Ethiopian student body.³³ A comment in the Editorial of the "University College Journal" was charged with resignation, irony and understatement: "The *Campus Star*. . . . was a bold attempt at presenting bold opinions. It was, as long as it lasted, a bold attempt."³⁴

At this time there was not enough indignation on the part of the student body to make them speak up or act concerning the banning of a student paper. It seemed to be accepted as a necessity. The effect of the little wall-paper *Campus Star* was considerable. In the May 7th issue of the *Newsletter* it was announced that the bulletin would include a new section called "News and Views" where students would have the opportunity to express themselves. It was admitted, with no reference to the *Campus Star*, that the *Newsletter* had not fulfilled the "most important duty of a paper—that is, the expression of one's thought and ideas, it is to this effect that criticisms arouse from everywhere and was heaped upon us."³⁵ It was expressed that the "illfated" *Campus Star* failed because the "African students" were less experienced than the Ethiopian students in dealing with the authorities of the college.³⁶ There were students ready to admit the impact of the *Campus Star* on the change of the *Newsletter* set-up. *The Campus Star*

23. UC Calls, 24.11.1956, undated second issue 1956, UCAA Newsletter 26.3.1959.

24. UCAA Newsletter 26.3.1959.

25. Ibid, and Stanislaw Chojnacki, the Function of Students' Magazine: News and Views. Unpubl. paper presented for the Conference On The Role of A University In A Developing Country HS I University February/March 1967 p. 5.

26. Ibid.

27. UCAA Newsletter 22.5.1959.

28. UCAA Newsletter 22.5.1959.

29. LC nr. 76, 30.5.1972.

30. LC nr. 84, 16.9.1972: "The Jesuits killed the *Campus Star*." LC nr. 85, 3.10.1972, LC nr.86, 6.10.1972.

31. LC nr. 87, 29. 1. 1973, also nr. 76 and nr. 86.

32. LC nr. 85, 3.10.1972.

33. LC nr. 76, 30.5.1972.

34. The University College Journal, no. 2 June 1959, p. 4.

35. UCAA Newsletter, 7.5.1959.

36. Ibid., 15.5.1959.

was "incarnated" in the Newsletter: "No one, who has his heart on the right place, will deny this fact.....we are morally obliged to give the devil his due."³⁷

The scholarship-students' criticism of the fact that the college had no medium for the expression of personal student opinion led to the establishment of a News and Views section in the Newsletter. From the beginning of the academic year 1959/60 this second section was adopted as the name of the student paper, "UCAA Newsletter" became "News and Views."³⁸

The problem of lack of student contributions continued after the establishment of "News and Views"³⁹ Thirty percent of the contributions in the year 1959/60 came from the HSI scholarship-students, but this dropped conspicuously the following years as there was an increase in the interest of the Ethiopian students for the paper.

Why did not the Ethiopian students support their paper by contributing to it? The editorial board complained that they were hopelessly indifferent.⁴⁰ and that the core of the problem was the students' inability to write, not the lack of freedom of expression.⁴¹ The former editor of *Campus Star*, Omogi Calleb, saw the problem related to the fact that a press was a strange feature in the college community and that students didn't know how to handle it.⁴² However, the most important means to ignite student interest in the paper was to create an atmosphere in which a "free press was a declared undreaded policy."⁴³ He also lamented the all-pervading fear of criticism among both members of staff and students: "The leaders of tomorrow must learn to speak the truth today"—the college was the obvious place to start.⁴⁴ according to his opinion.

In 1959 and 1960 the scholarship-students were the only students whose concern for a free student press was so strong that they would demand it openly. Towards the end of 1960 they were however strongly supported by Ethiopian students and the initiative in this debate was taken over by a newly returned Ethiopian student who had been on a one year scholarship to Norway and who in a speech to the students, received with the utmost enthusiasm, gave detailed arguments for the necessity of the students to demand "unconditionally" a free paper.⁴⁵

Whatever action the students might have contemplated connected to this suggestion had to be shelved for a long time due to the events of December 1960 when a big Ethiopian student demonstration, the first of its kind in the country, supported the abortive coup d'état against Haile Sellassie's government,⁴⁶ an act making the position of Ethiopian student activities precarious indeed.*

Half a year passed before the question of a free press was again taken up by Ethiopian students who now pointed out that freedom of press had been granted in the Ethiopian constitution and that students had the challenge in front of them to test the validity of this freedom.⁴⁷ A scholarship-student enthusiastically supported this statement and called for a student press free of censorship.⁴⁸

37. Ibid., Letter to the Editor.

Ibid., 22.5.1959, Letter to the Editor.

38. N & V, 10.10.1959.

39. N & V, 24.12.1959.

40. N & V, 24.6.1960.

41. Ibid.

42. N & V, 10.6.1960.

43. Ibid.

44. N & V, 14.5.1960.

45. N & V, 3.11.1960.

46. Greenfield, p. 414.

47. N & V, 1.6.1961.

48. N & V, 8.6.1961.

*The actual participation by almost the total number of Ethiopian college students in Addis Ababa in this demonstration definitely contributed very much to the rise of political consciousness in the Ethiopian student body.

The fact that a Kenyan student, Stanley Gulavi, was elected Press and Information Officer of the Student Council in the autumn of 1961 "on the basis that he would give more freedom to the press"⁴⁹ indicates that the notion of a free press had become important in the college, that students in general demanded it and that they were prepared to elect a foreigner to help push through these new ideas.⁵⁰⁺

We have so far identified the considerable influence of the scholarship-students on the development of an openly expressed demand for a free Ethiopian student press. Can a similar influence be found within the field of student unionism? The Ethiopian government did not encourage, but in fact deliberately suppressed the formation of associations and unions. Thus, it is true to say that Ethiopian students were unfamiliar with these concepts in practice before they entered the University College.

The first stage in the concrete planning of a national union of Ethiopian students took place at the beginning of 1959. The initiative came from the President of the Student Council, Hagos Gebre Yesos and just after he had attended the 8th International Students Conference held in Peru in February 1959.⁵¹ His attendance at the conference in Peru was definitely a most important factor in the decision to form such a union.^{52*} Thus the idea of student unionism was not born with the scholarship-students, but turning to the Student Council's affairs of the University College of Addis Ababa it is obvious that the foreign African students played an important role in defining the status of the student council's relationship to the Dean of Students. Attitudes created here were important for Ethiopian student unionism because students from the University College of Addis Ababa became the most dominant group within Ethiopian student unionism.

The Dean of students had full authority and responsibility for students' non-academic activities.⁵³

During the year 1959/60 there was rising opposition in the student council against its being the "assistant"⁵⁴ and "mouth-piece"⁵⁵ of the Dean of Students. At the end of January 1960 the council wrote a letter to the college authorities in which they condemned "the long existing encroachment on its rights" to be independent in its deliberations from the presence of the Dean.⁵⁶

49. N & V, 9.11.1961.

50. Ibid.

51. N & V, 11.1.1965 p. 2.

52. N & V, 3.3.1966 p. 11.

53. UCAA Newsletter 23.4.1959.

54. LC nr. 84, 16.9.1972.

55. E. Trudeau, Higher Education in Ethiopia. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Colombia University, New York 1964 p. 84. Jesuit father, then Dean of Students.

56. N & V, 12.2.1960.

57. N & V, 27.10.1960.

58. N & V, 5.2.1960.

+In the two elections of editor of News and Views at the end of 1964⁵¹ and at the beginning of 1966⁵² the Ethiopian students nominated declined to stand for election and a Tanzanian student Husein Muhammed-taki, was elected. Editor and remained editor of News and Views until its last issue, June 1966. This fact cannot but be partly explained by the difficulties faced by the Ethiopian students with the authorities, university and government. The Ethiopian students wanted to stay out of trouble, stay out of the vulnerable position in which pressures would be put upon them to act defiantly. Since then groups of Ethiopian students have time and again fought with the University administration over the principle of the right of free expression—the confrontations have been increasingly serious—and the battle so far has been a losing one from the students' point of view.

*For 1½ years the students tried in vain to obtain recognition for this union from the Ministry of the Interior.

At the end of the academic year the President of the Council, Fantaya Biftu, stated that the autonomy of the council had been the "common outcry" of the student leaders that year, a growing consciousness of student responsibility to carry out their own affairs had taken place. The students opposed what they found to be autocratic in the attitudes of the Jesuit administration towards the students. Student organizations had to be "basically democratic" and the president stressed that there was no longer any "demand for people who support autocracy".⁵⁹ It was strongly felt that the "wind of change" similar to the one felt in international and national politics of African countries was sweeping the Campus,⁶⁰ carrying with it enthusiasm and a "craze for knowledge of world affairs" transforming the "closed society" of the University College of Addis Ababa.⁶¹

There is no doubt that the year 1959/60 marked a kind of watershed in the rise of awareness of the status of the Student Council—and in the context of this article it is important to stress that judging from the written sources, scholarship-students were by far the most critical of the relationship between the students and the college administration—and the first to hail the letter of protest as a "milestone" in Ethiopian student effort towards independence.⁶² They had to a considerable extent been instigators of the "wind of change." The Kenyan student, Omogi Calleb, merciless in his criticism of Ethiopian student life⁶³—and so outspoken that the College Authorities found it necessary to arrange a scholarship for him to the USA,⁶⁴ was chosen by the Ethiopian students to be the Secretary of their student Council.⁶⁵ He saw its main responsibility in training future political leadership.⁶⁶

In connection with the student council actions of 1959/60 it is more than a mere coincidence that the East, West, Central African Study Seminar arranged by the Coordinating Secretariat of National Unions of Students took place in Addis Ababa at the time the above mentioned letter was written. 30 student leaders from other African countries were together with the Ethiopian students for a full month in January 1960, discussing the role of the student in emerging and independent Africa—searching for unity and purpose of action.⁶⁷ The topic in the debating society on January 28th was "should students participate in national and international politics",⁶⁸ a most surprising topic in the Ethiopian context. The proposers in the debate were two officials of Co-Sec, the opposers two Ethiopian students.⁶⁹

Co-Sec officials admitted then to staff members of the College that they organised the seminar in Addis Ababa to stimulate Ethiopian students into greater political activity.⁷⁰

Apart from being a matter of principle, the purpose of fighting for freedom of expression and autonomy of the student council was to instigate immediate reforms within the daily lives of the students.⁷¹ The scholarship-students rebelled against and to a considerable extent completely disregarded the paternalistic rules and restrictions of the Jesuit Administration governing all aspects of students' affairs even to a considerable extent their private lives—and they very soon clashed with members of the Jesuit staff.⁷² The petty rules had caused extreme irritation also among the Ethiopian students

59. N & V. 24.6.1960.

60. Trudeau, p. 86.

61. N & V, 1.4.1960.

62. N & V, 5.2.1960, 12.2.1960, 10.6.1960, 27.10.1960.

63. N & V, 10.6.1960.

64. Greenfield p. 369.

65. N & V, 30.10.1959.

66. Ibid.

67. The University College Journal, no. 3, July 1960, pp. 22, 26.

68. N & V, 5.2.1960

69. Ibid

70. Greenfield p. 369.

71. N & V, 10.6.1960.

72. LC nr. 87, 29.1.1973, nr. 85, 3.10.1972, nr. 76, 30.5.1972.

and they welcomed enthusiastically the behaviour of the scholarship-students.⁷³ An assessment of the achievements of the council at the end of the academic year 1959/60 stated: "Gone are the days when members of Johannes Hall used to be forced to bed by 10 p.m. sharp! Gone are the days when the college ladies never had the right, of going to the library after supper." Equally, the days were passed when "whistling in the Campus was a grave offence" and when it was disliked that students left the campus after 7 o'clock in the evening. Optimistically—it was also felt that "a scene of a male and female student chatting" was no longer "disgusting."⁷⁴

Apart from the very different background of the foreign students were there other conditions which may explain their activism in the University College? Indeed there were. When considering the courage of these students from outside, it must always be kept in mind that they risked very little with their criticism or actions. They had a privileged position compared to the Ethiopian students. Being considered guests of the Ethiopian government they were in reality, if not formally, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, not the University College authorities. Several times, when clashes occurred between these students and the College authorities Lij Endalkachew Makonnen, Vice Minister of Education intervened on behalf of the foreign students.⁷⁵ They were frequent guests at the palace and in the houses of prominent Ethiopians in the government.⁷⁶ Diplomatically, on the African scene it was important for the Ethiopian government to please the foreign students. They on their part soon realised that their presence in Ethiopia was often used as political propaganda by the Ethiopian government and exploited the situation to their own advantage.⁷⁷ The Jesuit administration feeling their authority being eroded, understanding but little of the great movements sweeping the African continent⁷⁸ were highly suspicious towards the scholarship-students and are said to have played deliberately on the differences between the Ethiopian and the foreign students. They tended to let the scholarship-students know that they were continuously being reported on to the administration, that they would never be accepted by the Ethiopian students who would call them *baria* (slave) behind their backs. Scholarship-students initially were indeed puzzled to hear from the administration what they had talked to Ethiopian students about. The Ethiopian students tried hard to convince them that they were not the only ones to be reported on in the college—that the administration in fact made use of informers in their efforts to control the students.⁷⁹ The object of the administration was clearly to make a break between the Ethiopian and foreign students. To them the foreigners represented an uncontrollable element in the college and therefore it was important to minimize their effects on Ethio-

73. Ibid. Student rebellion against Jesuit school administrators was not new in Ethiopia. At the end of the 1940's there was a strike against the Jesuit administration of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School, Addis Ababa—so serious that the Emperor himself had to appear on the spot to intervene. The students then primarily opposed what they understood to be attempts to convert Ethiopian students, most of them Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, to Catholicism their protest being inspired by a sense of national pride. LC nr. 94, 1.5.1973.

74. N & V, 10.6.1960.

75. LC nr. 85, 3.10.1972, nr. 83, 12.9.1972, Greenfield, p. 368.

76. LC nr. 85, 3.10.1972.

77. Greenfield p. 368.

78. Ibid. The intolerance of other ideas and thoughts, the "monolithic thinking" of the Jesuits are often stressed in conversations. LC nr. 83, 12.9.1972, nr. 87, 29.1.1973. The students of the University College studied scholastic philosophy for four years in those days, (LC nr. 93, 13.4.1973) and the pressure for ideological conformity with the teachers was great (Ibid).

79. LC nr. 87, 29.1.1973.

pian students.* In December 1960, just after the attempted coup d'état in Ethiopia, 13 scholarship-students left the country. They had got the opportunity to study in Moscow, Britain, USA and Western Europe.⁸⁰ The reasons they officially gave for leaving were their opposition to the University College's philosophy of "suppression" when faced with complaints—its "obsolete" philosophy of education and its refusal to improve this.⁸¹ This was the view of many Ethiopian students who were not in a position to express it.

When the question of the scholarship-students' impact on the development of Ethiopian students' political consciousness is raised to active students of those days, the answer varies from an enthusiastic affirmative statement to the effect that politics as combat, as struggle started with the foreign students⁸² to the opposite that this was true to a negligible extent.⁸⁴ Those who got into the closest relationship with the foreign students—as friends or classmates, experiencing personally this influence,—tend to represent the first view, while the latter is held by students either ahead of them in the college, communicating insignificantly with the foreign students, or the few students who in the Ethiopian situation could be called politically conscious. They had their roots in the group which called itself the Kotebe Alumni,⁸⁵ an association of former Haile Sellasie I Secondary School boarding students whose president was Girmame Neway, the USA graduate in political science who became the instigator of the attempted coup d'état in 1960. This association had in vain tried to be recognized by the government, and existed as a closed informal group of friends. Characteristically of the Ethiopian situation, Girmame was not known to student leaders outside this group.⁸⁶ Ethiopian students connected to this group tend to stress that the scholarship-students were so occupied with national liberation from colonialism that their political thinking had little relevance for Ethiopia, although they concede that they had something to learn from the active and passionate concern of the foreign students. The small core of politically interested Ethiopian students were concerned with the internal problems of Ethiopia, and they tend to stress that the scholarship-students were used by the Ethiopian student activists as their frontlines to fight their battles with the college administration for greater freedom within the campus.⁸⁷ The fact that scholarship students, as stated above, were chosen into leadership positions supports this view.

The debating society, led by Samuel Alemayehu, a former student of Haile Sellasie I Secondary School, reached an unprecedented level of activity during the year 1959/60, taking up topics related to Ethiopian affairs.⁸⁸

Ministers were invited to panel discussions.⁸⁹ The fact that they came proves, by the evidence of later events, that there was hardly political challenge or opposition as such expressed by the students, but certainly a new demand for knowledge about the affairs of their own country, which in the broader perspective of events was very significant and to the government ominous. Members of Parliament were invited to the debating society, the intention being to raise their level of consciousness, also quite a few other educated Ethiopians in the lower governmental strata attended the debates; delighting in the new feeling of outspokenness prevailing.⁹⁰ The debating society took up

*The trouble of the Administration is reflected in the change of Dean of Students twice during 1960. A non Jesuit Englishman and later an Ethiopian were appointed.⁸²

80. N & V, 5.1.1960.

81. N & V, 29.12.1960.

82. N & V, 19.2.1960, Greenfield p. 370.

83. LC nr. 76, 30.5.1972.

84. LC nr. 75, 29.5.1972.

85. Ibid.

86. LC nr. 77, 19.6.1972, nr. 76, 30.5.1973.

87. LC nr. 75, 29.5.1972.

88. An impressive number of subjects was touched upon as if to make out for all opportunities neglected in the past: "The Social, Economic, Educational, Foreign Relations, Public Health and Legislative developments in Ethiopia." (N & V, 11.12.1959) "How best to remedy the social abuses in the country." (N & V, 4.3.1960).

89. N & V, 11.12.1959.

90. LC nr. 75, 29.5.1972.

topics concerning the "intolerable limitations" of the college restrictions and free speech.⁹¹ No doubt, the scholarship-students by their mere presence spurred the Ethiopian students into greater activism.⁹² The foreign students', especially Omogi Calleb's public oratory is remembered as being extremely impressive. They knew how to attract public attention—they knew the art of persuasion and it is told that they set the future style of election campaigns for student offices.⁹³

Those who hold that the foreign African students only to a very limited extent contributed to the rise of political consciousness in the Ethiopian student body are right in the sense that the foreign students never challenged or criticized the national government of Ethiopia.⁹⁴ They were very careful not to, being guests—and the government their host and protector. However, the Ethiopian students couldn't but understand that the scholarship-student did not admire the policy of Ethiopia in the least, to them it was an appalling anachronism and they succeeded however indirectly, in opening the eyes of influential student leaders to Ethiopian realities.⁹⁵ But it is very important to stress that the widespread view that the foreign African students contributed a lot to the rise of political consciousness must be seen in the light of their impact on Ethiopian student attitudes to authorities. Probably in this field is to be found the heart of the matter when speaking of their impact on the Ethiopian student environment.

It is an often repeated statement by Ethiopian intellectuals that the cultural environment in Ethiopia stresses the values of blind obedience to parents, elders, church and Emperor—and that the most outstanding feature of traditional education is its emphasis upon "obedience and subsequence to authority." "Individual initiative and inquisitiveness are considered as defects that have to be discouraged at every manifestation by severe chastisement."⁹⁶

This attitude—if certainly modified by modern western education, was by no means eradicated—and in the Ethiopian context it is probably no coincidence that the Emperor chose to let Jesuit scholars build up his first institution of higher learning in the Empire.

The pages of "News and Views" clearly indicate how the attitude to authority was felt to be a dividing line between the Ethiopian and the foreign students.

Some Ethiopian students were annoyed at what they felt was a constant attack and criticism of their relationship to authorities "if a person is not against his superiors, it does not follow that he is their employee as it is popularly believed in certain circles."⁹⁷ They felt their attitude to superiors to be an integrated part of their culture and they opposed what they felt to be criticism and dictation from outside. "We will never submit to being carbonpaper—we will maintain our traditions and our own mode of life within the University College."⁹⁸ The above mentioned letter to the administration demanding autonomy for the student council was far from supported wholeheartedly: Some protested against the letter's reference to the "mental and social background" of the Ethiopian people, indicating that they did not feel the time was ripe in Ethiopia

91. N & V, 18.3.1960 and 19.2.1960.

92. Greenfield, p. 366.

93. LC nr. 88, 29.1.1973.

94. LC nr. 85, 3.10.1972.

Scholarship-students did not participate in the student meetings during the attempted coup d'etat nor did they demonstrate.

95. LC nr. 45, 14.6.1971. The foreign students' preoccupation with politics was an accepted fact about them. (N & V, 8.6.1961).

96. Girma Amare, Education and the Conflict of Values in Ethiopia: A Study of the Socio-Moral Problems arising out of the Introduction of Modern Education in Ethiopia. Unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University 1964, p. 42, p. 66.

97. N & V, 20.5.1960.

98. N & V, 5.2.1960.

for a challenge of autocracy. To the foreign students this kind of attitude belonged to "14th century Europe."⁹⁹ The scholarship-students' attitude was certainly to some extent determined by their colonial background in the sense that they extended their opposition of colonial authorities to include the University College administration. The librarian of the college at that time wrote a few years later about the foreign students: "To a certain degree they set a tone of bitterness in tackling all problems and brought with them a complex of distrusting authority."¹⁰⁰

A most surprising statement by a student from Ghana who left the college stresses the importance of the clash between the Ethiopian and the foreign students' attitude—at the same time as it shows that the influences were not necessarily only one way. He gave as one of the great benefits of his stay in Ethiopia a changed attitude to authority: "I have acquired what had been lacking in my entire life. humility before my superiors."¹⁰¹

It was the scholarship-students' commitment to a cause, to ideas; their activism and passion, their frontal assault on authority which became important in the Ethiopian student situation. Right, the scholarship-students did not challenge the government of Ethiopia, but to the Ethiopian student, then as later, the authorities of the college were given their position by the Ethiopian government—it was an institution most intimately connected to the government. Thus, indirectly, all assaults on the administration of the college were from the Ethiopian student point of view considered as having reference to the government—it further inspired the erosion on their traditionally anchored subservience towards authority. When the whole Ethiopian student body in December 1960 were swept away on a wave of enthusiasm and demonstrated for a change of government¹⁰² they were less unprepared than they would have been a year earlier for these unprecedented events in Ethiopian history.

The new sudden contacts between Ethiopia and the rest of Africa at the end of the 1950's, intensified by Ethiopian students' close contact with other African students, brought home the shocking and bitter pill to swallow that Ethiopia with her praised 3,000 years of history was lagging behind the rest of Africa in most respects—the realization of which, together with a new courage to challenge and criticize seemed to be the driving force behind the students' support of the coup.¹⁰³

99. Ibid.

100. Chojnacki, p. 5.

101. N & V, 29.12.1960, p. 4.

102. N & V, 16.12.1960.

103. The December 16th issue of News and Views, all but a handful burnt later the same day, gives a vivid impression of what students wished the change of government would represent.

'THE BACKGROUND TO THE EAST CENTRAL STATE PUBLIC EDUCATION EDICT, 1970'

By ELOCHUKWU AMUCHEAZI

CHURCH-STATE relations have not always and everywhere been cordial. The history of Europe is replete with stories of major confrontations between these two authorities. But such confrontations are now largely a thing of the past in European and most developed countries of the Western world, but not so in the developing countries. At least in one State in the Federation of Nigeria there is currently a serious conflict between the church and the government, the major cause of which is the issue of educational administration.

The East Central State is one of the twelve states that now make up Nigeria and one of the three carved out of the former Eastern Nigeria.¹ As in the days of the regions each State has a wide range of powers and to a large measure constitutes a different political system of its own.² Like the regions then, the State offers a solid base for comparative political analysis.

Shortly after the Nigeria Civil war (July 1967–January 1970) the State government passed a Public Education Edict which provided, *inter alia*, that:

there shall, on the appointed day, be transferred to and vested in the State... all interests in or attaching to premises used for the purposes of a voluntary agency or private school and in equipment furniture or other removable property used in or in connection with such premises, being interests held immediately before the appointed day by the proprietor of the school or by trustees solely for the purposes of that school and all rights and liabilities to which any such proprietor or trustees were entitled or subject immediately before the appointed day, being rights and liabilities acquired or incurred solely for the purposes of managing any such premises or property as aforesaid or otherwise carrying on the business of the school or any part thereof.³

It further provided for a State School Board to administer all post-primary institutions as well as for Divisional School Boards for managing primary schools. The only educational institutions excluded from the powers of these boards were the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the Advanced Teacher Training College, Owerri, and the College of Technology, Enugu.

The edict evoked a great deal of interest throughout the State and beyond.⁴ In some quarters the edict was hailed as revolutionary in the history of school administration in Nigeria as a whole. This is so in that, for the first time, a government in the Federation has successfully taken over school administration from the voluntary agencies (as the christian missions in their capacity as participants in educational administration

1. Until May 1967 the Federation of Nigeria consisted of four regions—the East, the West, the Midwest and the North and a Federal territory of Lagos. On May 27, 1967 the country was regrouped into the present 12 states.

2. This is true in spite of the fact that the country is under a military government. The East Central State is headed by a civilian with the title of Administrator, but all other states are run by military and police officers. On the distinctive character of the former regions see K. W. J. Post's observation in "Modern Education and Politics in Nigeria" in Hans N. Weiler (ed.) *Education and Politics in Nigeria*. Freiburg in Breisgau, Institute for Socio-political Research, 1964 p. 139.

3. East Central State: *Public Education Edict 1970. Edict No.2 of 1971*. Enugu, Government Printer, 1971, p. 4

4. These views were bandied about on the pages of newspapers for a considerable length of time.

were designated.) But the edict, in substance, was hardly different from the Education (School Boards) Law, 1965. As we shall show later, the government of the former Eastern Region, had, from early 1950's attempted to take-over the school administration and only in 1965 was it able to pass a law to that effect. This law could not be implemented before the civil war. The current edict was in fact a resuscitation of that law. The government of the East Central State in obvious reference to that law indeed clearly admitted that "the idea of control of education which is envisaged under the Public Education Edict is not one of recent origin, nor is it the brainchild of the government of the East Central State."⁵

But there were others who criticised the timing of the edict on the grounds that the implementation should have been postponed until the overseas headquarters of the christian missions had helped in the reconstruction of the war-damaged school buildings. At the end of the war there was widespread speculation that the overseas headquarters of these missions had voted vast sums of money to rebuild and re-equip the schools. It is reasonable to expect that out of christian fellow-feeling and sympathy, some assistance would come from various christian organisations outside the state for the reconstruction of the schools. But it would appear that those who disagreed with the timing of the edict based their argument on the assumption that the cost of running the schools in the former Eastern Region had been borne largely by the voluntary agencies with the strong financial backing of their headquarters overseas. This assumption has been refuted a number of times and in a well-documented publication, the government of the State once again proved that the former governments of the Eastern Region had been largely responsible for the cost of education in the region while the voluntary agencies had actually made profit from school management.⁶

The cost of education in the former Eastern Region was borne by the government through what was known as grants-in-aid system by which the government gave grants to cover the recurrent expenditure of schools calculated on the population of the students less the school fees paid by the students usually termed "assumed local contribution," which is fixed on a stipulated number of students in each class. In addition, the government provided some allowance for capital expenditure of the schools. The total sum spent by the government was often staggering, and in the 1950's usually exceeded 40% of the region's recurrent budget.⁷ In fact one of the reasons given by the government of the former region for its bid to assume overall control of the schools was the soaring cost of education: it wanted to be in the position to trim its expenditure on schools. The control of schools by voluntary agencies had led to proliferation of these institutions as a result of rivalry between the denominations. If the government assumed control, it could merge the schools into economically viable units.

In other words, if the experiences of the past were anything to go by, the government of the East Central State had reason to think that the burden of restoration of the educational institutions was principally its own responsibility which should be tackled with despatch. It did not at any rate reject well-meaning aid; thus the Administrator observed, "nonetheless, government will continue to welcome the assistance of private- and public agencies by way of grants in kind or cash towards the cost of re-equipment

5. East Central State: *The merits of the Public Education Edict No. 1*. Enugu, Government Printer p. 1

6. East Central State *The merits of the East Central State Public Education System No. 2* Enugu, Government Printer, pp. 13-16.

7. For instance, the Eastern Region's expenditure on education as percentage of total recurrent, budget was 41.92 in 1957, 42.71 in 1958, 44.61 in 1961. See the Author's "Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria, 1945-1966. A study in Pressure Group Politics." University of Ibadan, M.Sc thesis 1972. Table 3 (c).

and reconstruction of the schools."⁸ The point, however, is that those who had assisted in the past and had hoped to do so again on the grounds of particularistic interest rather than from purely humanitarian considerations would no longer be keen to do so. But if this is the case, the state could be said to have lost money but avoided, in the words of a Nigerian weekly paper "the risk of acquiescing in possible ideological brainwashing of its children."⁹

The timing was dictated by circumstances. As we shall notice later, for a whole decade the government battled with the churches over the implementation of a similar programme. The traumatic effect of the war on the people and the partial dislocation of the churches offered an opportunity that could not be allowed to slip by. If the churches were allowed to regain their vitality before such a policy was introduced it is possible the old confrontation would have started all over and could have hampered its implementation. Indeed, in spite of its diminished strength, the church was still able to put up an impressive struggle to frustrate the implementations of the edict.

By far, the most canvassed interpretation of the edict was that it was anti-catholic church in intention. It was argued that during the war the Federal Military Government had become resentful of the catholic church authorities for their alleged political role during the civil war and was likely to adopt a hard line towards them at the end of the hostilities. The war was fought between the breakaway Eastern Nigeria (called Biafra) and the rest of Nigeria. Eastern Nigeria was predominantly occupied by the Igbo who according to 1953 census numbered 5½ million out of 7½ million people of that region in 1953.¹⁰ Igboland happened to be the catholic stronghold in the entire Nigeria. In 1963, for instance, the catholic authorities reckoned the population of their flock at three million of whom two million were in the Eastern Nigeria,¹¹ and most of whom were Igbo. A Roman Catholic publication in 1960 noted that:

... the Ibibios and Efik whose territory lies by the coast would be traditionally Protestant. It is among the Ibos that the real strength of the Catholic Church lies. The Ibos are often called the Irish of West Africa. The faith is strong in their midst and wherever they go they bring the faith with them.¹²

The figure of two million is in fact misleading. It undoubtedly covers only those whose names appeared in the church registers and perhaps regularly paid their annual church dues. In that case it tells us nothing about nominal catholics¹³ and catholic sympathizers most of whom proudly go by christian names. It therefore gave little clue as to the strong influence of the catholic church in the region. The same deduction would apply to the figure quoted for any other denomination. Christian evangelization had often followed traditional village cleavages—a village probably inviting the catholic church because her neighbour and rival had embraced the protestant church. Only a few villagers might in the end turn outright christians, but by and large the entire village

8. East Central State *Policy on Public Education* official document No. 3 1971. Enugu, Government Printer, p. 2.
9. Editorial captioned "The State and the School" *African Impact* vol. II No. 25, March 20, 1972. Benin City, Ethiope Publishing Corporation. The discussion was on the East Central State policy on education.
10. See J. S. Coleman. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1958 p. 15 table I. The proportion is fairly maintained in the controversial 1963/64 census figures.
11. Catholic Church (Nigeria). *The Official Nigeria Catholic Directory*. 1966. Lagos, AUP, 1966, p. 116.
12. Catholic Church (Nigeria). *The Catholic Church in Nigeria, October 1960*. Lagos, Times Press 1960 p. 4.
13. The expression catholic and Protestant, wherever they occur mean Roman catholic and non-Roman Catholic Missions respectively. The latter include the Church of England (Church Missionary Society—C.M.S.), the Methodist, the Presbyterians, as leading groups. The non-Roman Catholics do not officially accept the appellation. "Protestant". See The Rt. Rev C.E.I. Cockin, Anglican Bishop of Owerri in *Eastern State*, October 19, 1960 p. 3.

would stand by the church which, through its subsequent development of western education, the much needed channel of entry into the modern world society came to endear itself to the people. On these grounds the region as a whole was usually as from the 1950's popularly referred to as a christian community, an assessment validated by the 1963/64 census which put the christian population of the region at 77.2% of the entire population.¹⁴ The overall catholic population was no doubt correspondingly high. In any case, whatever the catholic population in relation to their numerical strength in the other parts of the country, the catholic main base was unquestionably the Eastern Region, and among the Igbo. Consequently, the catholics tended to identify their welfare as a group with the welfare of the Igbo, an identification which could have political consequences as the civil war experience amply illustrated.

During the civil war, the catholic Pontiff was greatly distressed by the suffering in the then Biafra and said so in unmistakable words. He was in fact quoted as having used the expression "my people" to describe the Igbo in one of his public utterances. These utterances were widely interpreted as sympathy for the Biafran cause. Furthermore, the World Catholic Relief Organisation, Caritas, mounted an impressive relief effort to save the dying in Biafra. These efforts were equally given political interpretation. It was alleged that the relief materials were diverted to feed the fighting soldiers and therefore significantly contributed to the prolongation of the war. In any case, they fed the hungry and provided stamina as well as sustained morale, a fact which again affected the duration of the war. The Caritas was further openly accused of smuggling arms and ammunition into Biafra. It was thus obvious that the Federal Military Government was unhappy with the Catholic role during the war. As soon as hostilities ended all the expatriate catholic priests in the East Central State were rounded up and deported. This was widely interpreted as the beginning of the Federal Government sanctions against that church. When the state government edict on public education was issued, it was regarded as a follow-up on the deportation of priests and as issued at the instruction of the Federal Government, and that the intention was to attack the very foundation of the catholic church in Nigeria.¹⁵

The school was the greatest channel for recruitment and socialization by the catholic church and therefore was highly esteemed. The loss of the control of the schools, obviously, was bound to affect the welfare of that church. All the christian missions in Nigeria had used the school for evangelization. Thus commented Coleman: "the mission school was an instrument, a very powerful instrument, for the rapid christianization... of the youth of Nigerian."¹⁶ But the tactics and emphasis of the denominations on the use of the school for this purpose differed significantly from one denomination to the other. In general, the Protestant missions planned a few but the best of schools, whilst the catholics, under the initiative of the man who is now regarded as the founder of the catholic church in Eastern Nigeria, the Rev. Father (later, Bishop) Shanahan, in contrast, stressed first on numbers before quality of schools for both boys and girls.¹⁷ The strategy paid high dividends for the catholics and as Ayandele observed, by 1906 they had 2,057 Igbo pupils against 651 by the C.M.S. and by 1915 they had recorded 13,158 to the C.M.S. just over 6,000.¹⁸ The catholics never lost grip of this strategy

14. Population Census of Nigeria, 1963 Vol. II Table 5 Lagos, Federal Lagos, Federal Census Office.

15. These views and interpretations were widely circulated by word of mouth and through the press.

16. J. S. Coleman, *op. cit.* p. 113.

17. A recent appraisal of the denominational approach to evangelization through the school is contained in E. O. Enemo, *What are we Anglicans Doing?* Awka, 1950. See also the author's "Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria, 1945-1966: A study in Pressure Group Politics" University of Ibadan M.Sc thesis, 1972.

18. E. A. Ayandele. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914.* London, Longman, 1966 p. 320

and by 1950's catholic schools, both the primary and the secondary so dotted the entire region and were so strategically located that the region and the Igboland in particular appeared to be overwhelmingly catholic. It is not surprising that the protestant missions became alarmed and began to complain aloud about catholic threat.¹⁹ Leading protestants came to believe that the catholics were poised for the total 'conquest' of the region. In fact, quoting catholic leaders, they claimed that the catholics had evolved a master-plan over the ten year period (1956-1966) to "capture" the entire region.²⁰ The point being stressed is that the school is a critical possession of the catholics and they had consolidated their position through it; consequently they could be sensitive about any policy that touched on school administration. They fought against such a policy in the two preceding decades and were prepared to continue the fight.

It is no doubt from these considerations that the churches reacted to the edict. The Christian Council of Nigeria (representing the leading protestant churches) issued a mild statement entitled *The church in Education* in which they argued that "The church ought to be allowed to participate fully in the education of our children for she is the best qualified to give religious education." Interpreting the edict as a step towards the secularisation of education they declared: "We maintain that secularisation is not an answer to all our educational problems."²¹ In contrast to this relatively mild protest the catholics came out with what a section of the press interpreted as an incitement against the government. In a pastoral letter of booklet size, the catholic priests in the state, among other things, observed:

When we combined all this with an attempt to mix up children and teachers of various religious beliefs in a type of forced and unnatural percentage system then we have further evidence of denial of fundamental human rights given to man by God, the Creator. It is only dictators and totalitarian states which go such lengths in the denial of human freedom and dignity.²²

The degree of the reaction of the catholics was in proportion to their commitment to ownership of educational institutions. It is not surprising that the State School Board has not received the full co-operation of the voluntary agencies in the implementation of the decree. The fact of the military nature of the Government however acts as a deterrent to any other than passive protest. There is now an open threat that the edict would be revoked by a civilian government. This may well happen if the catholics are able to mobilize all their influence then, and depending on the balance of power between them and the protestants. Much also depends on the Federal government's stakes in educational matters, to mention but a few variables that might affect power balance in the next civilian administration. There is no certainty about these points; all that one can say now is that the churches, particularly the catholic church, are not happy with the edict.

The reception given to the edict seems to have missed certain fundamental issues, namely, the meaning of formal education in the developing countries and the historical background to the edict itself. Only from these two points can an objective assessment of the edict become possible.

19. See E. O. Enemo, *op. cit.*

20. The leading catholics the author interviewed in the course of field-work in 1965/66 denied knowledge of such a master plan, though they expressed satisfaction with the progress of the mission in its recruitment drive. There was probably no such plan. But it is possible that some of their leaders, reckoning on the success of the mission could be careless in their pronouncements. It is noteworthy that the catholic proposed about this time a plan for a catholic university in the East.

21. Christian Council of Nigeria, Eastern Committee *The Church in Education*. Enugu 1971 p. 4.

22. The Catholic Bishops of the East Central State of Nigeria: *Education 1971, Eastern Joint Pastoral Letter*. Onitsha, Onitsha, Tabansi Press. op. 12.

Education is universally accepted as "the key to modernization."²³ This is equally true in developing as in the developed countries. The developing countries believe that they can catch up with the developed countries if only the right kind of education is available. Economic development demands the availability of skilled manpower which is the product of education. Political development stresses on the orientation of the citizenry. It is believed that for the enhancement of the capacity of the political system which is the goal of political development, the citizen's orientation has to be positive towards the political system and the citizen would then be a full participant in the various political processes. The human resources available are then fully maximized. Formal education is the instrument for producing this result.²⁴ Thus "political leaders regard education as the basic component in nation-building and the foundation from which they hope the revolution of Africa will be launched." Equally for the citizens as an individual education is a critical issue. In the words of the same authors, "for millions of Africans education is the key that will open the door to a better life and the higher living standards they were promised as the reward of the struggle for national liberation."²⁵ For these reasons, developing countries often allocate a disproportionate percentage of their annual budgets to education. In such circumstances, the political decision-makers understandably feel very much concerned about the structure and content of formal education. They argue that in the final analysis the state is responsible for the welfare of the citizens and therefore should control education which plays such a vital role in the welfare of the citizens. This is the main rationale behind the edict. Thus the Administrator of the State, in an address to some church dignitaries declared:

The policies which we have pursued, social policies have emanated from conscious and deliberate thinking about our status as moral men in society. We have not done these in a hurry, and we have not done these against anyone. We have done them for the better and the improvement of our society as we find it.²⁶

The Federal Government has since issued a decree which enjoined the states to assume responsibility for education in their areas of jurisdiction, and thus once again underlined the above arguments.²⁷ It is noteworthy too that in many African countries—Tanzania, Guinea etc. education is entirely a state affair.

It is from this standpoint that a clearer picture of the edict emerges, for if there is any developing community where education commands a very high premium it is the former Eastern Region of Nigeria and among the Igbo. As one government report of Eastern Nigeria noted, "the one popular topic of conversation [in the Region] is education. From the clerk in his office desk to the peasant on his way to his farm the eternal subject of discussion is education."²⁸ An anthropologist summed up his views on the Igbo attitude to education thus:

Education was quickly seen as an avenue to white-collar jobs with government, posts in the native authority system and position in the British administration. . . . Villages compete to build the first or the best schools; village groups strive to push some of their 'sons' ahead in schooling and obtain scholarship in competition with other groups.²⁹

23. The statement is that of Fredrick Harbison and Charles A. Myers, *Education, Manpower and Economic Growth: Strategies of Human Resource Development* New York McGraw Hill, 1964, p. 191 quoted in J.S. Coleman (ed) *Education and Political Development*. Princeton University Press 1965 p. 3

24. These points are well argued in J. S. Coleman, *Education of Political Development*, *op. cit.*

25. L. Gray Gowan *et al* (ed.) *Education and Nation-Building in Africa*. N. Y. Praeger 1965. p. 3 and V. respectively.

26. *West Africa* No. 2837, Week-ending October 29, 1971 p. 1257.

27. *Daily Times*, Saturday, August 19, 1972 p. 2.

28. Eastern Nigeria. Report of the Conference on the Review of the *Educational System in Eastern Nigeria (commonly called Ikoku Report)*. Enugu, Government Printer 1964, p. 1.

29. S. Ottenberg. "Ibo Receptivity to change" in Bascom and Herskovits (ed.): *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*. Chicago, Phoenix Books. 1970 impression pp. 137-8.

It is this instrumental value of education that supported the consolidation of the church among the Igbo and ultimately affected church-state relations. Because of their earlier perception of the importance of education, the Igbo quickly welcomed the christian missions who brought the school along, who on the other hand used the schools to, consolidate their hold on the region. The colonial government in Nigeria, in general paid little attention to schools and by and large gave the missions a free hand to establish and run schools. Thus, "until 1898 all education was under the direct control of missionaries. As late as 1942 they controlled 99% of the schools, and more than 97% of the students in Nigeria were enrolled in mission schools."³⁰

This virtual monopoly of education by the Christian missions had a number of implications. In the first place, the missions provided the kind of education that best satisfied their main interest—which was recruitment into their fold. Thus much emphasis was placed on religious teaching and literary subjects; and correspondingly little attention was paid to technical and commercial subjects. Secondly, since the schools served the needs of individual missions first and foremost, they became the object of competition and therefore gave rise to acute rivalry between the denominations, which in turn led to much conflict within various institutions—local councils, families, civil service and the political parties. The performance of these institutions was indeed adversely affected in many ways.

Furthermore, competition for schools led to their proliferation. In a small community which could ill-afford to maintain one school two or more might exist under the sponsorship of various denominations. Villagers had to levy themselves to make up for the non-existent students in order to meet up the Assumed Local Contribution so that the school would not be closed down by the Ministry of Education. They there by imposed undue hardship on themselves. The state on its part had to provide grants to such schools part of which could be diverted by the proprietor to some other purposes. The overall cost was very high, much needed capital for industries was absorbed by education; without industries employment opportunities for the school leavers were wanting. The school leavers themselves were products of grammar schools and illequipped with the kind of training needed for the economic take-off of the country. In general then, the government and the nation at large had not obtained maximum value for the money invested in education.

Finally, each school proprietor determined the conditions of service of his workers, which could and often did lead to exploitation. It is significant that the Adefarasin Commission which reported on the conditions of service of teachers drew attention to this situation and recommended centralised state administration of schools as a way out.³¹

The weaknesses of the existing education system were clearly perceived by the nationalists and it was quite clear that they would not allow such a system to continue indefinitely. As early as 1954 the Premier of Eastern Region, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe had commented:

We are not happy at the way our education is administered. While we realize the great contributions made by those who have operated this important department of state in the past, yet we have decided to take positive measures towards working out new educational programme in the future. The idea of 'approving', 'recognising', 'assisting and 'aiding' certain schools to the exclusion of others must have been well-conceived but it has outlived its usefulness as a result of the tremendous strides in the last two decades. Consequently, we shall abolish all forms of discrimination, whether intentional or not and we shall establish a state system of certification for the elementary and secondary schools of the Region . . . We must reiterate that our education must emphasize the principle of *what is right* as distinct from *who is right* in the interplay of social forces.³²

30. J. S. Coleman. *Nigeria: Background op. cit.* p. 113.

31. Federal Ministry of Information: *Report of the National Joint Negotiating Council for Teachers 1964-65* (commonly known as Adefarasin Report). Also formed sessional paper No. 2 of 1965 in the Eastern House of Assembly.

Details of these consequences of missionary control of education are contained in the author's work, *Ikoku Report* and a number of other government reports.

32. From the Presidential Address by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe to the 6th Annual Convention of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) held at Dayspring Hotel, Enugu, Feb. 6, 1954 and reproduced his book: *Zik: Selection From speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe*. . . . C.U.P 1961 pp. 26-27.

Similar statements were made again and again throughout 1950's and 1960's thus emphasizing the government concern about the structure and content of formal education in the region. This was the beginning of the events which led to the current developments in church-state relations in the East Central State.

The first step towards the restructuring of the educational system of the region was taken in 1957 when the government introduced a free primary education scheme popularly known as the Universal Primary Education (UPE). All future primary schools were to be owned by local councils and the missionary schools were to cease to expand on their existing intakes. Future expansion of student population would take place through the council schools only. The Local Education Board, the State School Board and the Ministry of Education would take charge of all primary schools. The financial burden involved in the scheme was to be shared between the regional government and the local councils, in proportion of 55% to 45%.

The UPE was shortlived. In January 1958, that is, after only a year the scheme was scrapped. The immediate cause was financial—the government could not raise the expected revenue from the newly introduced Finance Law (1956). But the scheme never enjoyed the co-operation of the christian missions particularly of the catholics. There was widespread opposition to the programme; and thus ended woefully the first serious nationalist government venture at a full-scale state control of education in the region.

The catholics were bitterly opposed to the scheme. Since the cabinet at the time was protestant-dominated (with only one catholic member)³⁴ the catholics skilfully argued that the scheme was protestant-inspired and that the main purpose was to slow down if not to halt the pace of catholic expansion. An immediate attack was launched against the persons of the ministers, which drew out a counter attack from the protestants. Thenceforth each denomination appealed to religious sentiments at every political platform—the party, the local councils etc. Since the church and community boundaries were closely interwoven, this catholic/protestant confrontation and struggle for political influence and inter-village and personality rivalries became mutually reinforcing. Thenceforth, individuals in their political capacities tended to be split between loyalty to the party, government or whatever authority you have and to their denomination. This situation partly explains the inability of the government to take a firm decision on state control of education for about a decade.

The regional election of March 1957 was virtually fought over the educational policy of the government (the newly introduced UPE). The catholics urged their adherents to vote only for catholics pointing out that the UPE bill could not have passed the legislature if the Catholics had adequate representation there. The catholic weekly newspaper *The Leader* warned all catholics:

It is an incontestable fact that the main issue at stake in the election is that of education. The natural rights of catholics have been violated, their protestations ignored. They and their church have been the object of a lie-smear campaign. On March 15th the religious future of their children is in their own hands. After March the 15th it is in somebody else's.³⁵

And it urged them to "pray that there will be elected honest and upright men who will respect the law of God and the rights of the catholic church."³⁶

33. For details, see the author's thesis. "Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria 1945-1966 A Study in Pressure Group Politics" University of Ibadan, M.Sc thesis, 1972.

34. *Ibid.* Appendix IV.

35. *The Leader*, Owerri 1957 quoted in J. H. Price "Eastern Region of Nigeria, March 1957" in W. J. M. Mackenzie and K. Robinson (eds.): *Five Elections in Africa*. O.U.P. 1960 p. 135.

36. *Ibid.*

Subsequent regional and federal elections were similarly marked by this kind of religious competition. Both the catholics and the protestants each established a quasi-political body, the Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (E.N.C.C.) in 1956 and the Convention of Protestant Citizens (C.P.C.) in 1957, respectively, although the idea was not to contest against the dominant party, the NCNC, but to colonize it. Thus where each failed to win party nomination for its members, it would sponsor "Independent NCNC candidates" who would rejoin the party on getting into the Legislative House. The Nigerian political system which consolidated a party in a region discouraged outright opposition to the party which stood as the spokesman of the majority ethnic group in the region and in the centre region in the wider Nigerian political scene. That is, the solidarity of the party had to be maintained and all competition would best be carried out within the party itself. This explains the strategy of the christian denominations; and in the 1961 regional election as many as 20 Independents were successful.

In the light of this denominational competition the Ministry of Education necessarily became a very sensitive post. As a result of the catholic pressure the cabinet was reshuffled soon after it was formed at the end of 1957 election and a catholic was assigned the portfolio of Minister of Education. After 1961 it was restored to a protestant by the new premier, Dr M. I. Okpara.

Still anxious to find a solution to the region's educational problems, the government of Eastern Region set up two commissions in 1959 and 1962 under Professor K. O. Dike, the then Vice-Principal of the University College, Ibadan and Alvan Ikoku respectively to review the educational system of the region and advise as to the curriculum, management and financing of schools. In each case the catholic member of the commission refused to endorse any recommendation that urged government control of the educational institutions.³⁷ The 1959 report was submitted to the government in August of the same year but was not published until 1962 "because the government had little desire to alienate the catholics whose susceptibilities were offended by parts of the Report."³⁸ It is significant too that the Minister who received the report in 1959 was a catholic and the one who subsequently published it was a Presbyterian Elder.

In the legislative house catholic/protestant confrontation over educational matters became increasingly pronounced. In 1964 the government outlined a new education policy which embodied extensive modification of the existing system. It included, among other things, a provision for a common religious syllabus which the government described as "an objective syllabus aimed at giving a child in the elementary school proper groundings in the christian faith."³⁹ The catholics were predictably furious over the bill. About March 10, all the catholic members of the House of Assembly irrespective of party affiliations held a secret meeting under the chairmanship of Hon. J. M. Nwosu, MBE, Independent member for Anedo Atani, Onitsha and the then current chairman of the Eastern Nigerian Catholic Council and "took a decision to fight those issues which affect them and which they consider contrary to their faith."⁴⁰ On March 24 some catholic women demonstrated before the House of Assembly in protest against the education bill. On his part, the catholic Archbishop of Onitsha, His Grace, the Most Rev Charles Heerey wrote to the Minister of Education "on behalf of the Bishops of Eastern Nigeria as the authoritative religious teacher of the catholic church in the Region. . . to state categorically that we cannot accept a common syllabus."⁴¹

37. See Eastern Nigeria: *Report on the Review of Educational System in Eastern Nigeria* (commonly known as Dike Report). Enugu, Government Printer 1962. and *Ikoku Report op. cit.*

38. J. O'Connell: "The possibility of Pluralism: Church and State in West Africa" in J. H. Hallowell (ed), *Development. For What?* Durham, Duke University Press, 1964 p. 170.

38. Eastern Nigeria: *House of Assembly Debates*, 4th Session First Meeting 10th-26th March 1964 p. 155co/290.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 48 co/75.

41. *Ibid.* p. 155 co/289.

On March 26, the Education (Amendment) Bill embodying some of the proposals outlined was introduced in the legislature, but the opposition from all sides was so stiff that it had to be withdrawn.

All along, the catholics made extensive use of the press to attack the government education policy. Mention has been made of the press campaign during the 1957 election. Tracts were issued from time to time. The most important publication on that cause was put out in 1965 by the then catholic Education Secretary, the Rev Fr. F. A. Arinze (now the Archbishop of Onitsha) and the recognised catholic spokesman on education. The booklet entitled *Partnership in Education Between Church and State in Eastern Nigeria* was a well argued campaign against the policy of state control of education.⁴²

The period 1964/65 was however to bring the state-church confrontation over education to an important milestone. The immediate cause was the teachers' nationwide strike which started on October 1 1964 to back their demands for improved conditions of service. The National Joint Negotiating Council for Teachers, set up by the Federal government and headed by a Lagos-based High Court Judge, Justice J. A. Adefarasin recommended, among other things, that:

since the request for uniform conditions of service and the establishment of a United Teachers service featured prominently in the teachers demands, and since these cannot be realised under the present arrangements, the council recommends the establishment of Regional and/or Local School Boards to deal with appointments and promotions within the teaching service, discipline, collection and disbursement of funds and such other duties as the Minister of Education may from time to time direct.⁴³

The Adefarasin Report was accepted by the Eastern Government and a bill to implement its recommendation was introduced in the legislative house in 1965. Its passage was by no means easy. Hon. M. E. Ogon, speaking "for the one to which I belong, the Roman Catholic" wanted to know if by "public schools" mentioned in the bill the government meant to imply "nationalisation of schools."⁴⁴ The bill ultimately passed in spite of stiff opposition and was gazetted as the new Education (School Boards) Law 1965. The bill provided for Regional School Board and Provincial School Boards. The former could make recommendations to the Minister of Education with regard to promotion of teachers, discipline, structure, content and design of curriculum. . . . while the latter would be responsible for the appointment and termination of teachers in "the public schools in the province on the advice of the proprietor of the school," payment of salaries, maintenance of the buildings, recommendations to the Minister for opening, closing or merger of public schools. In addition every public school should have a local school committee.⁴⁵ That is to say, the state had eventually taken over the control of education in Eastern Nigeria. The intervention of the civil war soon after postponed the implementation of this law.

In this analysis of the background to the recent development in church-state relations we have mainly focused attention on catholic opposition to government policies on education. This is because it is that opposition that largely determined church-state

42. Published at Onitsha by Ude's Press, 1965. It drew from Tai Solarin, a renowned educationist a bitter attack on Catholic policy towards education.

43. *Adefarasin Report*: op. cit. Pa 36 pp. 17-18.

44. Eastern House of Assembly *Debates* 5th Session (1965-66) and meeting 23rd-30th November 1965, p. 156 co/299.

45. Eastern Nigeria: Education (School Boards) Law 1965. Extraordinary gazette No. 81 vol. 14.

relations in the region. The protestants were not fundamentally opposed to state assumption of responsibility over education. This stand is well articulated in Dike report, and we quote *in extenso* :

From the memoranda submitted to us and from the evidence that we have received, we are of the opinion that in principle the Protestant missions subscribed to the government's standpoint on Universal Primary Education... Some Protestants think that the time has arrived for the State to take over at least the primary sector of education. This view was strongly put to us by an Educational Secretary of one of the Protestant Missions, an expatriate with over thirty years experience of education in the country. The general policy of the Methodist is to disengage ultimately completely from primary education and to retain one or two good secondary schools while putting their main effort into training colleges. The Church of Scotland Mission policy is much the same, and there is no doubt that the Anglican position is very much nearer that of the other Protestants and they would no doubt be willing to work within a planned state system. The Education Secretary of an Anglican Diocese in a memorandum submitted to the Committee stated, 'It is my opinion that... economy dictates that the various schools should be amalgamated under the management or proprietorship of a neutral body like the Local Council or a Committee of it, and the staff should be drawn from all denominations represented in the village, since it is only by so doing that secret proselytization in the school can be stopped'.⁴⁶

In sum it is to be emphasized that the existing strained church-state relations in the East Central State are not a post-war development, but had their origins far into the past. The church, particularly the catholic church, had all along opposed any government attempt to assume control of school administration. In 1965 however, the government was able to pass a bill enabling it assume such a control, but was stopped from doing so by the civil war. The East Central State public education edict is, in substance, the Eastern Nigerian 1965 Education (School Boards) Law. Any assessment of the edict and the developments arising therefrom without the necessary historical background is bound to be misleading.

The motivating force behind the policy is obviously the decision-makers' belief in the relevance of education to political development. This belief is in no way confined to the East Central State as events in other African countries have shown. It would appear that in the end the church in Africa will necessarily concern itself with the spiritual mission that concerns it directly and leave to the state school administration, and possibly formal education in general.

46: Dike Report *op. cit.* p. 43.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD AMONG THE URHOBOS OF THE NIGER DELTA¹

By REV DR S. U. ERIVWO

INTRODUCTION

THE concept of God among the Urhobos bears kinship to the concepts of God among neighbouring ethnic groups: the Isoko, the Bini, the Ishan and others, all of whom speak the Edo group of languages.² There are nevertheless characteristics in the concepts of God which are distinctively Urhobo, and which therefore justify one speaking of the Urhobo concept of God.

Among the Urhobos as among other African peoples, the concept of God is discernible from names and attributes of God, stories and folklore, proverbs and prayers and from religious rites generally. For example the kind of offering made, and prayers addressed to God tell us much of how the people conceive Him. As J. S. Mbiti³ rightly reminded us, where these modes of conceiving God abound, we need not look for a dissertation from such a people on their concept of God. It would indeed be pointless to expect a people who did not know writing till very recently, and a vast majority of whom are still illiterate, to give us a systematic, well documented Western type of theology. But it would be erroneous to take absence of written theology for a lack of the concept of God. This had been the great error of many a Western investigator into African Traditional Religion. The Ashanti proverb, "No one shows a child the Supreme Being" which means that he is known instinctively by everyone, is true of the Urhobos, as indeed of all African peoples.

Names and Attributes of God

The most common name used to designate God in Urhobo is *Qghene*. If the origin and etymology of this word were known, it would throw a flood of light on the Urhobo concept of God. The word, *Qghene*, is evidently of Bini origin, Benin being the traditional home generally claimed by many of the Urhobo people. There is a street in Benin still called *Orhe-Qghene* today, while the Auchi people who, like the Urhobos, trace their origin to Benin designate God *Qghena*, an obvious variant of *Qghene*. The Uneme in Akoko Edo division also call God *Qghene*.

P. A. Talbot,⁴ thought that *Qghene* derived from Yoruba *Oni* of Ife who, according to him, had become identified by the Urhobos with the Supreme Being. Apart from Talbot, Bradbury also sees a connection between the Bini-Urhobo *Qghene* and the *Oni* of Ife. According to the latter writer, "D'Aveiro who visited Benin City in 1485 reported that the accession of a new *Qba* had to be approved by a king *Ogane* (presumably the *Oni* of Ife whom the Edo still call *Qghene*)"⁵.

1. This article is based on data which I collected in Urhoboland between 1965 and 1970, some of which material I have already used in my Thesis "Christianity in Urhoboland, 1901-1961" Ph.D. Ibadan, 1972. See in particular Chapter One of the work.
2. The Itsekiri who are also neighbours of the Urhobos are linguistically more related to the Yoruba than they are to any of the peoples mentioned above.
3. Mbiti, J. S., *African Religions and Philosophy* (Heinemann, 1969), p. 29.
4. Talbot, P. A. *Southern Nigeria Vol. II* (New impression Frank Cass, 1969), p. 36.
5. Bradbury R. E., *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo-speaking peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, (International African Institute, 1957) p. 20.

If, as Bradbury says, the Edo call the Oni of Ife Qghenę, identification of Qghenę in Urhobo with the Oni of Ife would still be misleading. The word Qghenę for the Urhobo names the Deity. If it is used in Benin to refer to the Oni⁶ this would be in consequence of the connection in the mind of the people between Oni and the Deity; which underlines the notion that kings were generally regarded as divine.

A. F. C. Ryder⁷ has also grappled with the problem of the origin of Qghenę. According to him, the Qba of Benin received symbols⁸ of authority from the spiritual head of the dynasty, known in Bini as Qghenę, or Great Lord. At the demise of any Qba, parts of his remains, we are told, were carried to Qghenę for ritual burial, a ritual construed by Ryder, as indicating and preserving the dynasty's relationship with the source of its mystical authority. Although Ryder says further that a new Qba ascending to the throne had to send valuable gifts to Qghenę, he could not say precisely what or who Qghenę was. He however questioned the view which identified Him with the Oni of Ife.

Ryder has rightly, perhaps inadvertently, noted that Qghenę is the Great Lord, the Spiritual Head, the mystical source of the authority of the Qba of Benin. If so, this would point to the Supreme Being, who is consulted, and to whom gift sacrifices are made for the welfare of a new Qba and of his dominion, on his accession to the throne.

All that we have said so far only emphasizes the mysterious nature of Qghenę in Benin. The riddle of the origin of the word itself still remains unsolved. It is not yet possible to break the word Qghenę down into further component parts. In other words, it cannot be regarded as a compound word in Urhobo. Hence no further meaning of the Reality designated by Qghenę can, in its Urhobo context, be derived from the word itself. Nevertheless when the people say *Qghenę 'ghenę emu*, the second word, *'ghenę*, is a verb formed from Qghenę, and by it the people suggest that Qghenę changes everything, that He changes fortunes to misfortunes, and that vicissitudes of life are in consequence of His actions.

Mystery thus shrouds the word as it does the reality. For instance when dealing with the elusive and nebulous phenomenon of destiny in Urhobo belief, Qghenę is portrayed as mysterious: one whose presence is baffling and paralysing. The Urhobo believe that Qghenę is at Odjuvwu.⁹ Very often Odjuvwu is regarded by them as the abode of Qghenę and the place where one's destiny is determined before one passes through *Urhoro* to *Akpọ*.¹⁰ Some personality-souls or spirits (*Erhi*) who are expected to declare their destiny before Qghenę at Odjuvwu, are said to be so scared by Qghenę's awesome presence there that they fear to declare boldly before Him *all* that they wish to be and do on earth. When such persons are incarnated, they either "go back" *i.e.* die shortly after, or live miserably here. Such persons are described as those who did not kneel down well, that is, those who were timid before Qghenę and consequently failed to say all that they would have liked to be and do on earth. Enshrined in this belief is the paralysing, mysterious and awe-inspiring nature of Qghenę.

6. The word Oni itself is said to be meaningless in Yoruba; and since Yoruba names like other African names are normally meaningful, it is not unlikely that Oni is an abbreviation of a much longer and ancient name part of which is preserved in the Bini-Urhobo, Qghenę—Discussion with two of my Yoruba colleagues, Dr B. Ayoade and Dr J. Osuntokun, 21 Nov. 1973.

7. Ryder, A. F. C. *Benin and the Europeans 1485-1897* (Longmans, 1969), pp. 7, 31, and p. 39.

8. They included a staff, a headpiece, and a cross.

9. The Bini equivalent is Ogiuwu, which in Bini, literally means "master of death". In so far as the Urhobo language is related to Bini, this meaning may also attach to the Urhobo Odjuvwu. For, though spelt differently, the Bini word for death, (*uwu*) is the same as the Urhobo word, (*uwu*), which also means death. Odjuvwu (master of death), is one before whom destiny is determined.

10. Akpọ=Urhobo word for world; *Urhoro* is the gateway to this world.

The Urhobo also use *Qghenę* to designate the sky, and consequently the horizon as the meeting point between *Qghenę* and the earth.¹¹ This notion has misled some investigators and writers into thinking that by *Qghenę* the Urhobo mean the sky and no more, or that they regard the horizon as the dwelling place of *Qghenę*.¹² It is as a result of this use of *Qghenę* to refer to the sky that when there is lightening the people say *Qghenę nyavwaro* (Lit. God winks eyes).¹³

The use of *Qghenę* to refer to the sky may have been suggested by the ubiquitous nature of the sky. If so, it emphasises the people's belief that God is omnipresent.

Another principal name for God in Urhobo is *Uku*. This name occurs especially in the liturgies, being frequently used by diviners while divination (*ephapbo*) is on.

Its esoteric character suggests that it is of ancient origin. While we may hesitate to find its origin from other ethnic groups, there is no doubt that it is genetically related to a similar word in Igbo. If some of the Bini, Igbo, Urhobo etc, are of a common origin, as is probable, similarity in language would inevitably occur. Every word common to them need not then be a borrowing by one ethnic group from another. *Uku* is evidently related to *Chukwu*, an Igbo principal name for God, which means a mighty *Chi*. All Igbo call anything big *uku*. It is also of significance that people answer the name *Uku* in Benin. One of the present Oba's praise names is *Uku Akpolokpolo*, a praise name which connotes royalty, majesty, and greatness. Thus, *Uku*, which is an ancient name for God amongst the Urhobo, also connotes God's almightiness and majesty. It may be more than a matter of coincidence that the main Zulu word for God is *Unkulunkulu*, which means "the Great great one".¹⁴ For the Edo group of languages within the larger Kwa family, is not completely unrelated to the Bantu family.

A third principal name for God in Urhobo is *Osonobruwhę*. This term is used in its various forms by all the Edo groups—Bini, Ishan, Akoko-Edo, Isoko and others. Its Bini equivalent is *Osanobwa*, which according to E.B. Idowu, means the Osa (deriving from Yoruba Orisa) who holds and so sustains the universe.¹⁵ But in my own interviews with Bini indigenes, there was no unanimity of opinion with regard to the meaning of the word. While some accepted the meaning given by Idowu, others said that the word meant Osa who creates and bestows blessings. If this is correct then the Bini *Osanobwa* is similar to its Urhobo equivalent in form as well as in meaning, as will be shown shortly.

Happily *Osonobruwhę* is a compound word, and therefore lends itself more easily to analysis than the two other names already considered. This notwithstanding, we still have to grapple with linguistic difficulties. The word may be broken down thus: *Oso-no-bru-whę*. If *Oso* is from the same radical as the Yoruba *Orisa*, then the word would mean in Urhobo God who blesses, (or as in Bini, creates blessing). But many Urhobo, either rightly or wrongly, now see *Oso* as connected with *Qse* (father) in which case it would mean the father who blesses.¹⁶ The enclitic *n'* could be a shortened form of *na* meaning *the*. Alternatively, *no* could be a derivation from *ro*, meaning *who* in which case the *r* has altered to *n*. If this is so *Osonobruwhę* could mean either the God, or God

11. Lit: where *Qghenę* touches the earth.

12. See Mbiti, J. S. *Concepts of God in Africa*, (S.P.C.K., 1970) p. 144.

13. Cf. Matthaean use of "kingdom of heaven" to mean "kingdom of God", and the Igbo use of *Igwe*, heaven, also to mean God.

14. See Mbiti, *African Religions* p. 34.

15. See Idowu, E. B. *African Traditional Religion: A definition*. (SCM 1973) p. 161

16. It may be worth investigating whether *Qse*, in fact, derived from *Oso*, and so ultimately from *Orisa*. A linguist has, however, suggested that it is more likely that *Oso* derived from *Qse* than that *Qse* derived from *Oso*; and that what is even more probable is that both *Qse* and *Oso* may have derived from a different and more ancient word, now extinct—Discussion, with Mr Robinson, of the Linguistics Department, University of Ibadan, Jos Campus, 15 March 1973.

(If Oso is from Orisa) or the Father or Father (if it is from Qsẹ) who blesses. But this is not the end of the linguistic problems which the word poses. There is that problem connected with *bru*, the verbal part of the word *Osonobruwhe*. *Bru* could be an abbreviated form of the imperative, *bruphiq* meaning bless, or add blessing to. *Bru*, taken by itself, means cut. There is another word *bruba*, a synonym for *bruphiq*. And *bruba* literally means cut (and) add to. *Osonobruwhe* written in full may thus be *Osonobruphiqwhe* or *Osonobrubauwhe*. But even then, the word *Uwhe* (literally, blessing) is not normally preceded in Urhobo by either *bruphiq* or *bruba*, but by *egharq* since to say *ebruphiq* (*ebruba*) *uwhe* *ke* *wẹ* would be a tautology.

While we cannot be too categorical and conclusive about the meaning we give to the term, there is little doubt that the word, *Osonobruwhe*, conveys the meaning of God or Father who blesses, (or cuts, i.e. creates, and adds blessings to). How is this related to *Bini Osanobwa*, if the first meaning, God who upholds and sustains the universe, be accepted? The notion of upholding and sustaining obviously suggests blessing. The two meanings can therefore be happily harmonised. This name, *Osonobruwhe*, thus draws attention to the loving character of God whose goodness is emphasised by the Urhobo in many other ways, especially in the names given by parents to their children. Thus we have *Qghenqkohwo*—God it is who gives; *Qghenqchuko*—God is helper; *Qghenqvwowodua*—It is God who makes one great.

Apart from the principal names of God, many attributes of God bring out the people's conception of Him very clearly. Only a few of these attributes can be examined here. The Urhobo call God *Igbomoto*, literally, child's suppressor. He is also called *Qrhovwara*, the fearful one. God's wrath and power are alluded to in these terms. Another attribute, *Qvwatanqvwahare*, The—generous-and-ungenerous-one, holds together in tension two apparently opposing aspects of God's nature. In this attribute God is construed as One who blesses whom He will, and denies His blessings to whom He will. Compare the Nupe saying, "Should you do anything that is beautiful, God (Soko) has caused it to be beautiful; should you do anything evil, God [Soko] has caused it to be evil".¹⁷ Or the words attributed to Mary in the Magnificat:

He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.¹⁸

By designating God *Qvwatanqvwahare*, the Urhobo give expression to their conception of God as one from whom blessings and woes flow, for it is He who created both weal and woe.¹⁹

God is known as the Creator, one of His attributes being *Omanq mohwo*, The-creator-who-created-(moulded)-a-person. As Creator, He is the owner of all that is. He is thus called *Qrovwakpo vw' Eriwvin*—the owner of the world and the under-world; or *Qrovwakpo vw' Odjuvwu*, the owner of the world and *Odjuvwu*.²⁰ Because He is the owner of all, He is also the controller of all; issues of life and death are decided by Him. This belief comes out in one of His attributes, *Qtanesiawqnotq esiawqnotq*—When He says remove feet from the ground, feet are removed from the ground. It is death that is euphemistically referred to here, for one whose feet are removed from the ground is

17. See Nadel S. F. *Nupe Religion*, (Routledge, 1954) p. 12.

18. Luke 1: 52f.

19. Compare Isaiah 45: 7.

20. Although *Odjuvwu* is generally now translated heaven, it may not have meant this originally. See p. 7 Footnote 9.

dead. Because God is all powerful, He is called *Ohwvotota otu nyo*—one man whom a multitude must hear when He speaks, referring here primarily to *Agbrara*, thunder, by which term He is also called.

All these attributes emphasise God's majesty and might, as they do His wrath and His creatorship. But as we have seen from the principal name, *Osonobruwhe*, and from names people answer, God is not only seen as almighty and wrathful, He is also good to His creatures whom He blesses and sustains. Indeed, there is an attribute which draws attention to His almightiness and goodness at once. He is called *Obedeotakpovworhurhu*—the plantain leaf large enough to shelter the entire world. This attribute calls to mind God's ubiquity as expressed in the sky, and His goodness in sheltering all His creatures. From these names and attributes it is evident that the Urhobo conception of God is rich and full, embracing God's majesty and might, His incomprehensibility and His generosity, His wrath and His creatorship.

Stories and Folklore

The people have sagas in which some aspects of their conception of God are enshrined. While the stories do not pretend to be historical accounts of what actually happened, they portray the traditional wisdom and lore of the people which reflect their deep-seated beliefs about God.

There is a story of the origin of death. According to it, *Oghene* did not make up His mind after creation, whether or not, men should die. The Toad appeared before Him and suggested that all God's creatures should die, and that he who died should go home, while the Dog held a contrary view, that men created by God should live for ever. They were both despatched by *Oghene* to the world to deliver their respective tidings with assurance that the first to arrive and get his opinion across to men would have his wish accepted and implemented. Both set out, but the Dog, as would be expected, soon gave his opponent a great gap. This encouraged him, when he saw men's faeces on the road side, to settle down to a luscious meal! Having fed fat, he decided to have a nap which turned out to be a deep and long slumber. He was still snoring when the Toad caught up with him, passed him, and got to the world. The Dog awoke and attempted in vain to regain lost ground. On arriving the Toad delivered his message saying, *Qrowhuruokpo*, he-who-died-should-go (home), by which name this creature is known in Urhobo.

Although this aetiological tale explains the meaning of Toad rather than the origin of death, it nonetheless indicates the people's belief that the world and all in it are God-created. With reference to the origin or "creation" of death, they would still in the final analysis attribute it to God, since they say what was not seen, preceived, or did not happen, was never created by God. In other words, had *Oghene* not willed it, men would not die.

By implication, any notion which would seek the source of any event, however calamitous, elsewhere apart from God is repudiated. For nothing happens without God's sanction.

In another story *Oghene* is portrayed as paying occasional visits to His world. A bottle of gin was said to have dropped from His hand on one occasion, and on another, a kolanut at about the same spot. Consequently He called at the town in whose neighbourhood He kept losing His articles, and discovered to His dismay that a particular man and his wife were always at loggerheads there. *Oghene* did not only caution them and reprimand the guilty party, but also decided to discontinue His occasional visits to the world.

This tale, apart from showing that God desired peace and justice for His creatures also expresses the people's conception of the Fall, which led to a withdrawal of God

from them. The next myth emphasises this even more. It is the story of a woman who was pounding her yam²¹ outside, at a time when *Oghene* or the sky, was very close to earth. This woman used either her pestle to hit the surface of the sky, or her dirty hands to soil the immaculate face of heaven. In annoyance, *Oghene* withdrew.

There is yet another tale which, without mentioning water or flood, appears to be related to the Biblical flood story. In this story it is said that the sky (or *Oghene*) fell²² and destroyed all the people on earth, with the exception of a man and a woman who ran into a pit. It was these two who later replenished the earth. These stories which abound in the people's folklore are now seldom heard as a result of the influence of Western culture, and of the Biblical parallel stories which have supplanted them. They, however, indicate what the people believe about God's immanence, His initial and direct involvement in His creation, and about His transcendence, His withdrawal, which is seen as a reaction against the sin of man. But although God has withdrawn, and so is far away He is still considered immanent and approachable, as is attested by proverbs and prayers of the people.

Proverbs, Prayers and Worship

In many Urhobo sayings God's continuing activity in creation and care for His creatures are clearly demonstrated. The Urhobo, as was indicated above, say that what was not perceived, or did not occur was never created by God. Furthermore they say to the bereaved "what God has done no counselling or consoling is needed". This saying implies that an action proceeding from God, no matter how painful should be borne patiently. While this may appear callous, it is a call upon the mourners to bear their loss stoically, for nothing happens which God has not decreed. Nevertheless the Urhobo also believed that witches and principalities interfere with peoples' destinies, and interrupt an otherwise happy one. But even witches could not succeed in their malpractices without God's consent, a notion which grazes the edge of Islamic doctrine of determinism.

God is thus in the final analysis held responsible for all that happens, because of the belief that He is omnipotent. But he is not, for this reason, construed as being tyrannically powerful. He is, as has been earlier shown in His name and attributes, good. Hence the people say that "only the cloth cut for one by *Oghene* suffices to clothe one." All the help that mortals can render is dross and nothing, compared with the unalloyed and unsurpassing help of God. Because only God's help is all-sufficient, prayers are addressed to Him soliciting His aid, particularly when all other helpers have failed.

With regard to the formal worship of God, there is an altar made of a pole twelve or more feet high, and terminating with a conical basket which rests on the forked end of the pole. Around the pole is a raised platform (the altar proper) on which offerings to *Osonobruwe* are regularly deposited, while a white fowl generally offered to *Osonobruwe* is tied on to the top of the pole. It is here that prayers are often offered to *Osonobruwe*.

21. *Fufu* or *egun*.

22. We are not told why or how.

During the elaborate and communal worship the officiating elder who would have placed the communal meal at the foot of the altar prays somewhat as follows:

Osonobruwhe, the generous and ungenerous one
 You created the earth and its fullness²³
 We are assembled here to worship you this day
 The man is great on whom you bestow greatness
 We pray for goodness and not for evil
 May your goodness extend to everyone
 Anyone unhappy with the goodness prayed for
 Who does not wish everyone well²⁴
 You alone Osonobruwhe know such a person
 Apportion to him what you consider apt for him
 Remove him from our midst
 Save (heal) all those whom you have created.

at which those present answer Amen.

The food is then offered to *Osonobruwhe*, and some part of the cooked meal is placed on the altar, while the rest is shared and consumed in communion.

The Urhobo like many other African peoples are thus not excluded from the worship of God, contrary to the opinion of E. G. Parrinder that the Ashanti and the Kikuyu of Kenya are unique in Africa in according elaborate worship to God, and having temples priests and altars for Him.²⁵ While there are no special priests set apart in Urhobo to minister in the courts of *Osonobruwhe*, the eldest person in the society whose word is normally law in other matters also acts as priest in the worship of *Osonobruwhe*.²⁶

Conclusion:

We have said enough to indicate the conception of God among the Urhobo. He is obviously real to them. It is significant, however, that they have no image of Him, although they speak and think of Him anthropomorphically, the only significant way men can meaningfully talk about, and think of God. They know that He is majestic, almighty and loving. But they also know that to His love belongs also His wrath—hence He is called *Qvwatanqvwahare*, the generous and ungenerous one. The altars erected for God, do not however bespeak His majesty; they can scarcely be described as “to the Glory of God.” Nevertheless, the altars show that God is real to the people, and that they approach Him in prayer through their offerings, and in worship. While it may be noted that they worship other divinities and ancestors—*edjo* and *esemo*—in addition to *Osonobruwhe*, they consider that these others function only as intermediaries, and that they are not meant to be regarded more than as means to an end.

23. Literally, the world and all that is in it.

24. Who does not wish that it be well with everyone.

25. See G. Parrinder *West Africa Religion*, (Epworth, 1961), p. 15

26. The worship described above is apart from other forms of worship which are perfunctory and more frequent, including prayers addressed to *Oghene* every morning, and in some cases at gatherings before gin is served

NIGERIA THROUGH MISSIONARY EYES*

B A. E. AFIGBO

THE Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914 is an important work in many respects and will for a long time to come excite interest amongst practitioners of the historian's craft. It is not only the third in the Ibadan History Series, but also completes the Ibadan trilogy on the missionaries in Nigeria. The work is not so much an account of missionary expansion as a remarkable attempt at a study in depth of the reaction of Nigerians to missionary influence. In this sense at least, and judged by tastes in African historiography at the time it was written, the book is catholic in orientation and aim.

But in the view of the present writer the book's main importance lies not so much in the restricted field of missionary history in Nigeria as in the wider area of Nigerian history where it has sought to make a substantial contribution to our understanding of the period covered. In the days of colonial rule Nigerian history from 1807 onwards was written in terms of a so-called British "civilising mission." With the publication in 1956 of Dr Dike's *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, this view of our history was dethroned in favour of the economic interpretation which places the emphasis on Britain's economic interest, the need to protect this interest which inevitably involved her in our politics and the reaction of our peoples to all these. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914* is, in a sense, an attempt to supersede this economic interpretation with one that presents missionary enterprise as the most important factor in Nigerian history during the period in question and even after. "Nigerian history in the period with which this book deals", argues the author in his preface, "is largely the history of the reaction of the Nigerian peoples to the three groups of intruders—missionaries administrators and traders. For the Nigerian peoples, in the localities where they operated, the first group were by far the most important." (p. xvii)

Committed to this point of view Dr Ayandele proceeded with admirable courage and consistency to explain every major change and episode in Nigeria in the period primarily in terms of missionary influence. The decline of the institution of slavery, the Bonny civil wars of 1869-1873, the fall of King Jaja of Opobo, the expeditions against the Ijebu (1892) and the Aro (1901-2), the relative peacefulness of British occupation of Yorubaland, the earliest stirring of Nigerian nationalism, and the general decline of indigenous authority—all these were attributed to missionary influence.

This would-be revolution in the interpretation of Nigerian history is, however, not indisputably established. The view that British intervention and rule in Nigeria, what is called the intervention of "the secular arm of Britain" (p. xvii), was brought about by

*A Review of *Missionary Impact On Modern Nigeria: A Social and Political Analysis* by E. A. Ayandele (Longmans 1966) pp. xx, 393, 42s.

This review was commissioned in 1966 by the Editors of the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. It was written in 1967 but could not be sent out before the final breakdown in relations between Lagos and Enugu. It is one of the few possessions of mine that survived the Nigerian civil war which took a heavy toll of matters and materials of the academic and cultural kind. At the end of the war I found the review in the rubbles of my residence at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Even if for this alone the document deserves immortality. Also I feel bound to register my response to this major contribution to our history especially having been specifically requested to review it. These reasons explain why I have decided to publish it even so late and I do so in the form it was written in 1967.

the necessity to achieve the missionary ambition is in fact not as revolutionary as it looks, it is to my mind a subtle revival of the "moral mission" explanation of British rule in Nigeria. In the second place the role assigned to the missionary factor in our history would seem in places to derive from an inadequate appreciation of the total social situation surrounding some of the major changes and episodes in question and partly from other causes. Two examples will be examined here. It is claimed that British occupation of Yorubaland was peaceful because the missionaries had prepared the way. This reviewer suggests that exhaustion from a century of civil war is a more convincing explanation. The Yoruba had welcomed the missionaries hoping that the latter would help them out of their predicament. But then the missionaries did not only lack the *ultima ratio* that would compel the combatants to sheath their swords, they had also taken sides, and thus "encouraged interstate antagonism" (p. 11). The advent of the administration which was strong enough to impose a peace and able to maintain a "neutral" stand was therefore welcome. Is it not significant that it was only the Ijebu who had largely kept out of these wars and therefore were not as exhausted as the other Yoruba states who had to be conquered by force? Also the Aro expedition is cited as another episode which could be explained in terms of missionary initiative. But the missionaries, especially Mary Slessor the foremost Presbyterian missionary of the day, were not quite in support of the expedition and on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities had to be virtually evacuated by force from the interior.

The tendency to over-estimate the role of the missionaries is however only part of a larger problem. Relying primarily on missionary documents it would appear that the author has not completely escaped being captivated by them. He has therefore accepted the missionaries' estimate of their place in Nigerian history during this period, their assessment of Jaja as first and foremost the pre-eminent "juju man" in the Niger Delta. Using the papers of Fombo of Bonny which could not be other than hostile to Jaja, the author believes that Jaja rose by "flattering" Consul Livingstone "profusely" (p. 75). Because "contemporary observers" "universally" said so, the author has believed that "the coastal tribes" were "inferior" "to the interior peoples" because of "their addiction to spirit" and their "pestilential environment" (p. 308). This tendency to what might be called "documentolatory", or making a fetish of documents, is further seen in the recurrence of such phrases as "this is clear from their journals and correspondence" (p. 57), "it is clear from the documents" (p. 65). One wonders how many solutions to historical problems are ever so clear from documents before these have been critically assessed and appraised in the light of other available evidence. It is a truism that what a historian gets from records depends largely on the questions he puts to them.

There are two other general criticisms one can make of the book. Though the impact of the missionaries on, and the reaction it evoked from, the people is given an extended treatment, one leaves the book with a feeling that something vital has been left out. Apart from the unconvincing, because unproven, assertion that missionary impact was more disturbing in Igbo, than in Yoruba, society, one looks in vain for an analysis in detail of the differing responses of Yoruba, Edo, Igbo, Ibibio and Tiv societies to missionary enterprise. Or were the reactions of these societies so similar in so many respects? If they were did the reaction not vary in form and intensity over the whole length of seventy years? The failure to deal with the latter aspect of the problem in particular, tended to rob the work of that narrative quality which is so fundamental to historical writing. In places one has the feeling that the story has been told elsewhere, perhaps in a different volume, and that in the present volume we are being given the comments.

One also has the feeling that many anthropological and sociological assumptions and analyses in the book are those of the missionaries which were invariably prescientific and incorrect. The author, for instance, subscribes to such ideas as that "of all the coastal tribes they knew, the Ijebu were the most intelligent, the most industrious and the shrewdest. . ." (p. 67) and that "the coastal tribes" of the Oil Rivers were "inferior"

"to the interior peoples" (p. 308). He talks of delta society being "class-ridden... (and one) where slaves and masters had their assigned place" (p. 101) and of Nigerian society being "controlled by *ironbound* code of duties, taboos and rights" (p. 330).

In addition to the above observations one has to point out a number of minor inaccuracies in interpretation and fact which require further attention. The Efik could not have been "remarkably united under Egbo" (p. 17) since with the exception of Duke and Creek Towns which had one Egbo lodge, every Efik village had its own Egbo society which was independent of that of the neighbouring village. The tendency of the Delta States to embrace christianity with eagerness is not explained by what is described at their "absolute ignorance of the implications of what missionary enterprise means politically." (p. 71). It should be pointed out that by the 1850s these city states had by and large lost their sovereignty and therefore the power to dictate and control change in their societies. This fact became glaring with the appointment of a Consul to protect British interests in the Bights of Benin and Biafra in 1849, a function which these states had hitherto fulfilled without foreign assistance. It was also further underlined by the emergence in 1854 of the Court of Equity as the authority second only to the Consul in all affairs in which the foreign merchants and the Delta people were involved. With the irresistibility of British sea power already demonstrated these states were no longer in a position to challenge either the missionary or the commercial or the administrative arm of Britain as openly as their neighbours to the interior were to do later. The author himself accepted the fact that these states hoped the missionaries, through education, would help them revive their declining economic fortunes. (p. 71). The author's idea that Jaja and the Long Juju Oracle were the only serious obstacles to the missionary penetration of the interior (p. 109), that the Long Juju was "the citadel of Ibo religion" (p. 37), that before 1914 no Governor in the south "established, in any formal manner any system of administration that may be strictly described as Indirect Rule" (p. 155), that before 1914 the Indirect Rule System in the south was "counterfeit" in form (p. 173), that "after the conquest of Iboland the administration had to recognise the importance of the *Nditchie*" (p. 275), will certainly be revised after a further acquaintance with the non-missionary sources of our history. And in any case *Nditchie* does not mean "those who look after things". In parts of Iboland the word means elders, in some the ancestors. The claim that "until the days of Lugard (from 1912 to 1919) the moral purpose of British administration in our period was purely negative" (p. 283) is neither substantiated nor provable. And what was the moral purpose of British rule anyway?

These observations notwithstanding it is indisputable that Dr E. A. Ayandele has written a useful volume with strong conviction and admirable commitment. The sections on James Johnson, Ethiopianism, the Cross and the Crescent in Northern Nigeria compel interest and attention. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria* is certainly a useful and illuminating addition to our growing *Nigeriana*.

REVIEW ARTICLE

TOWARDS DEFINITIVE IGBO DICTIONARIES — A
REVIEW OF DR. WILLIAMSON'S IGBO — ENGLISH
DICTIONARY.

By E. 'NQLUE EMENANJO

IN an address read at the Mid-Year Conference of The Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture which held at Aba on June 2, 1973, Mr F. C. Ogbalu, the Chairman of the Society observed: 'Much as I appreciate the contributions made by Dr Williamson of the Department of Linguistics, University of Ibadan, in her recent work, *Igbo-English Dictionary* in (the) Onitsha dialect, I doubt the wisdom of publishing dialect by dialect instead of publications geared to evolving a Modern Standard Igbo that would transcend dialect boundaries.'¹ With due respect to Mr Ogbalu's innumerable contributions to the cause of the Igbo language, I do not share his rather pessimistic sentiments. The point is that for a (very) long time to come and until (and even after) the eventual evolution of Standard Igbo² i.e. one which enjoys a pan-Igbo acceptance and patronage, all serious studies of Igbo would be dialect-centred. I am aware, of course, that since about 1939 when Ward³ introduced the term 'Central Igbo'⁴ into Igbo linguistics, there has been the tendency for writers and publishers of popular literature to patronize this so-called Central Igbo. Dr Williamson's *Igbo-English Dictionary* (hereafter called *The Dictionary*) is not popular literature. It is a serious undertaking. It is an academic exercise in the branch of linguistics known as lexicography. But it is not an academic exercise *per se*. For *The Dictionary* is something which has practical uses for native speakers as well as foreigners. If native speakers cast off their usual clannish prejudices and come to this *Dictionary* with an open mind they will certainly find not a few things that will reveal to them how little they know about their language, the (Onitsha) dialect notwithstanding. This review will look at *The Dictionary* from four perspectives:

- (1) The Introduction
- (2) The Igbo entries
- (3) The English glosses/definitions/translations
- (4) Problems and suggestions for future lexicographers.

1. **'The Introduction'**, For many, if not most people, a dictionary is a 'book dealing with the words of a language, so as to set forth their orthography, pronunciation, signification and use, their synonyms, derivation or history or at least some of these; the words are arranged in some stated order, now, usually alphabetical. . .'⁵ *The Dictionary*

1. 'Mid-Year Conference held at the Town Hall, Aba, Saturday 2nd June 1973. Address presented by the Chairman, Mr F. C. Ogbalu'.
2. This form of Igbo has been in evolution for some time now. In the 1971 Seminar on the Problems of the Igbo Language and Literature which held at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Achebe and Okonkwo (among others) drew attention to this 'modern' Igbo as Achebe called it. In fact, as early as 1905 it was noted that improved communications were breaking down the differences in Igbo dialects—Report of (the) Ibo Language Conference held at Asaba, 14 August 1905 in *Western Equatorial African Diocesan Magazine* (1906) p. 5.
3. Ida C. Ward, *Ibo dialects and the development of a common language*, Heffer Cambridge, 1941.
4. 'Central Igbo—An Objective Appraisal' is the title of an article/seminar paper the author presented at the 2nd Annual Conference for Igbo language teachers which held at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in August 1973.
5. In this paper tones will be fully marked following examples in *The Dictionary* i.e. High tones will be unmarked, low tones will be marked, and down step (mid) tones will be marked—.
6. *The Short Oxford English Dictionary on historical principles* 1936, prepared by Little, W. Fowler, H. W., and Coulson, J. Revised and edited by Otons, C. T. p. 505.

is this and more. For 'The Introduction' to *The Dictionary* pp. v-lxx, is itself a monumental contribution to the *terra incognita* that is Igbo linguistics. At least each of four of the nine sections of this 'Introduction' can be published in its own right as a positive and new insight into the various phenomena discussed. In fact, the first section has been re-written and expanded for use elsewhere.⁷ No serious student of Igbo, or African linguistics can afford to ignore the many incisive and revolutionary observations contained in the 'Introduction'. This is not saying, of course, that everything in the 'Introduction' is correct or indisputable. While it is true that it will take some time before definitive statements can be made about many things in Igbo studies in general and Igbo linguistics in particular, it seems to me that, at least, three of Williamson's observations in 'the Introduction' need to be modified if not corrected.

Discussing earlier lexicographical work on Igbo, Williamson observes: 'Igbo has been strangely neglected by lexicographers. Probably the main reasons for the neglect have been the considerable variation between the dialects of Igbo, noted from the beginning of Igbo studies and a lack of a single early authoritative figure to impose a standard written language, as Crowther did for Yoruba.' (p. v). There are other 'main' reasons for this sorry state of affairs. There is the fact that those who took the initial interest in Igbo, who were for the most part missionaries, did not do so from any serious consideration. As a result of this their interest in and knowledge of the language was not so profound. Even where there is evidence of serious interest, their knowledge of the language as well as their acquaintance with the science of linguistics and research procedures were limiting factors. Hair (1967) remarks that a 'comparative dictionary of Ibo dialects', initiated by Crowther in the 1870's had to be given up 'mainly because of lack of able researchers'.⁸ Secondly, the unchristian rivalry between the two giant and monopolistic christian missionary bodies in Igboland (the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans) was not in the interest of a healthy development of the language.⁹ The third main reason is that the Igbo, a people who are highly susceptible to new ideas and things foreign have never shown sufficient interest in their language among other aspects of their culture, to encourage others especially philanthropic/academic bodies/societies to help them with funds and expertise to develop their language further.¹⁰ Finally, when

7. Williamson presented a paper entitled 'Igbo Dictionaries' at the Seminar on the Problems of the Igbo Language and Literature, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nov. 1971.
8. Hair, P. E. H. *The Early study of Nigerian languages: Essays and bibliographies*. West African Language Monograph 7. C.U.P. 1967, p. 86.
9. See especially
 - (i) Ekechi, F. K. *Missionary Enterprise in Igboland*. Frank Cass, 1972.
 - (ii) *Short Life of Bishop Shanahan*. Holy Ghost Fathers, Onitsha Diocese, n.d. pp. 32-35.
 - (iii) Afigbo, A. E. 'The Place of the Igbo language in our schools: A Historical Explanation'—paper read at the 1st Annual Conference for Igbo language teachers, at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1972.
10. S. Ottenberg: 'Ibo Receptivity to Change' in W. R. Gascom and M. J. Herskovits (eds) *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1959 pp. 130-143.
The lack of interest bordering on contempt which the Igbo show towards 'their things' is a motif that runs through a number of papers presented at the following Seminars/Refresher courses.
 - (i) Seminar on the Problems of the Igbo language and literature, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nov. 1971 especially the papers presented by Dr A. E. Afigbo, and Messrs Ogbalu, F. C. and Okonkwo, M. N.
 - (ii) Seminar for Igbo language teachers held at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, August 1972 especially the papers presented by Dr A. E. Afigbo and Messrs Anyanwu, E. O., and Ogbalu, F. C.
 - (iii) Workshop on peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria, University of Nigeria Nsukka, December 1972, especially the paper presented by Dr A. E. Afigbo. In this 'deliberately provocative and biting paper I investigated the reason behind the failure of trained Igbo historians to reconstruct the history of our people as successfully as have other Nigerians, theirs'. The author's own words in 'Towards a History of the Igbo-speaking Peoples of Nigeria', Paper read at the 2nd Annual Seminar/Refresher Course for Igbo language teachers at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1973.

the Igbo began to take interest in their language the protracted and sterile pre-1961 Orthography Controversy was inimical to the development of the language.¹¹

The second thing which I would like to discuss about Williamson's 'Introduction' is her observation about Igbo suffixes. Igbo suffixes, especially their origin and classification, are likely to remain among the moot and problematic areas of Igbo grammar. As far as I am aware, however, Williamson's discussion of this subject is the most systematic and satisfactory that I am aware of in print¹² to date. Igwe (personal communication 1973) informs me that he is taking a new approach to suffixes in his doctoral dissertation for the School of Oriental and African Studies. Let us hope that his new approach will appear much sooner than later! In a paper on "Suffixes in Igbo", I show that I agree with Williamson that there are at least two major classes of suffixes in Igbo. (Their names we give them are immaterial: Williamson has Inflectional and Derivational where I have Inflectional and Meaning-Modifiers.) Not only do I differ with Williamson in the definition of these two classes of suffixes, I also differ with her in what suffixes I assign to which class. For Williamson, the Inflectional suffixes unlike the Derivational suffixes are those which cannot be used to form verbal nouns. This approach does not seem convincing—and comprehensive enough—for two reasons:

- (i) The verbal noun is only one of the many predictable verbal derivatives¹⁴ in the language (predictable *i.e.* that can be formed rule-wise). The other verbal derivatives are the Infinitive, the Participle, the Gerund and the Bound Cognate Noun among others. Thus reliance on the verbal noun alone to the exclusion of other verbal derivatives as well as other facts of grammatical behaviour will lead to under-analysis or misanalysis. The fact that a suffix cannot be found on the verbal noun is not enough reason why it should be classified as Inflectional. For example, some of the elements which Williamson classifies as Inflectional may not be found on the verbal noun but may be found on the Infinitive.

Examples:

-bu/-bu 'used to' indicates a past time previous to that indicates by -lu/-lu.

-nù/-nù 'ever, yet'

as in (1) Achọ m *igōbu* ya taàtà 'I wanted to buy it today'.

(2) *ī chonùgo igōnó* ya? 'Have you ever wanted to buy it?'

In (1) and (2) the suffixes are used in the Infinitive verbal derivative. The point I am stressing is that the fact that a suffix cannot be used in the verbal noun is not instrumental for classifying it. However, I do concede that occurrence on the verbal noun, as among other verbal derivatives may be useful for sub-classifying suffixes or checking on those suffixes that are not Inflectional.

11. Ogbalu, F. C. 'Igbo Spelling' Paper read at the 1st Annual Seminar for Igbo language teachers, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1972, to appear in *Igbo language and Culture*. O.U.P. 1974.
12. There are unsatisfactory treatments of suffixes in the 'traditional' grammars of, among others,
 - (i) Adams, R. F. G. *A Modern Ibo Grammar*, O.U.P. 1932.
 - (ii) Ogbalu, F. C. *A New Practical Igbo Grammar*, Nelson 1972.
 There are short but interesting discussions of the subject in, among others,
 - (i) Carrell, P. L. G. *A Transformational Grammar of Igbo*, West African Language Monograph 8. C.U.P. 1970.
 - (ii) Ward, I. C. *An Introduction to Ibo Grammar*. Heffer 1936.
 Before Williamson, the two studies below were those that held the day in terms of scholarship.
 - (i) Green, M. M. and Igwe, G. E. *A Descriptive Grammar of Igbo*, Academie Verlag and O.U.P. 1963, pp. 53-64.
 - (ii) Green, M. M. 'Suffixes in Igbo' in *African Language Studies* 5, 1964, pp. 92-114.
13. Emenanjo, E. N. 'Suffixes in Igbo' Paper read at the 3rd Annual Seminar, for Igbo language Teachers, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1974.
14. Emenanjo, E. N. 'The Igbo Verbal' Revised Version of paper read at the Seminar on the Problems of the Igbo Language and Literature, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nov. 1971.

(ii) To be able to classify Igbo suffixes more correctly it seems to me that the most useful thing is to look more closely at the grammatical facts of the language especially at the nominal and verbal systems. A close study of the verbal system in Igbo reveals that there are some suffixes which function with or without other elements especially auxiliaries and tonal morphemes to distinguish sentence-types or verbal constructions or verb forms in the language. It is suffixes like these that I classify as Inflectional. These are:

- (i) The harmonizing open vowel suffix which is used in certain verb forms (*e.g.* the Imperative and the Hortative) and realized as:
 - a when the verb stem ends in any of the vowels, i, a, o, u.
 - e when the verb stem ends in any of the vowels, i, e, o, u.
- (ii) The optional Perfective suffix -go
- (iii) The negative suffix used in Non-imperative verb forms -rọ/-rọ̀
- (iv) The negative imperative suffix -na/naà
- (v) The harmonizing optional Indicative suffix -li/-li; -lu/-lu used thus:
 - li when the verb stem ends in i
 - li when the verb stem ends in i
 - lu when the verb stem ends in o, u.
 - lu when the verb stem ends in a, e, u, o

Because of the syntactic function performed by the Inflectional suffixes etc. in marking distinctive verb forms, it stands to reason that Inflectional suffixes are mutually exclusive *i.e.* there can be only *one* Inflectional suffix in a given verb form. Thus any suffix that co-occurs with an Inflectional suffix among other elements marking the verb forms cannot be Inflectional. On this score, therefore, the following suffixes are not Inflectional.

- (i) -bu/-bu 'before, in the past', as in:
 - (3) Iwu à dibu (lu) àdibu 'This law has always existed.'
 - (4) Ọ nubugo ya tupu Chike... 'He had already married her before Chike!'
- (ii) -kà-ta 'still, continuously' as in:
 - (5) Ọ chọkàtá(lu) ọlu... 'He kept on looking for a job...'
 - (6) Ọ chọkatago ọlu... 'He has kept on looking for a job...'
- (iii) -kọ 'en route to' as in:
 - (7) Ọ chọkọ nnà ya. 'He is en route to finding his father.'
 - 7 (a) Ọ chọkọ ya achókó. 'He is on his way looking for him.'
 - (8) Ọ linugo ji? 'Has he ever eaten yam?'
 - (9) Ọ bianurọ ebe à 'He has never (not yet) come here.'

(3), (5) and (7) are the Indicative verb forms. The Indicative suffixes are optional in (3) and (5) and obligatorily deleted in (7). Note the LL(L) tone pattern on the verb in this verb form. This is the distinguishing tonal mark of verbs in this Indicative construction.

(4), (6) and (8) are the Perfective verb form. Note the Perfective suffix -go as well as the step tone on the high tone verbs in the affirmative sentences in (4) and (6). Note also the step tone on the direct objects in (4), (6) and (8). These are all features of the Perfective verb form.

The above examples (3)–(9) are conclusive in proving that the suffixes in question are not Inflectional since they can co-occur with other Inflectional suffixes, etc.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid. Also see 'Aspects of the Igbo verb (i)' Paper read at the 2nd Annual Seminar/Refresher Course for Igbo teachers, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1972, to appear in *Igbo Language and Culture*, O.U.P. 1974.

If these suffixes are not Inflectional, what are they? It is our view that any suffix that is not Inflectional is a Meaning-Modifier. It is, of course, true that the suffixes in the class of Meaning-Modifiers are much more in number than those of the Inflectional class. It is a feature of human languages that affixes Inflectional are usually fewer than the 'derivational' ones. Meaning-Modifiers may look a formidable if not amorphous class. But greater delicacy can be brought unto their sub-classification by whatever methods the analyst may choose. He may, for example, choose like Welmers (1970)¹⁷ to rely on order of co-occurrence on the verb stem. He may rely on occurrence on *all* the verbal derivatives and not just on the verbal noun or the Infinitive (which gave rise to the 'intermediate category' of suffixes christened *aspectual* as Williamson has done). It is significant to note that other than the Participle, no Inflectional suffix is found on any of the verbal derivatives. From the point of view of economy, it seems to me reasonable to set up two classes of suffixes and to later sub-classify these by whatever criteria we desire.

So much for the classification of Igbo suffixes. The next and last point which I like to take up in Williamson's treatment of suffixes is the fact that she does not bother to 'define' these interesting elements. More like other people who have discussed the subject but certainly unlike Green and Igwe (1964) who essay a definition Williamson takes the definition of these elements for granted. The result of this therefore is that there is some confusion as Williamson herself admits: 'It will be seen from some of the comments that in some cases there is great difficulty in determining whether a particular element is a verb or a suffix.' (p. iv) This confusion is partially resolved by 'corrections' here and there in the body of *The Dictionary*. We find that some of the confusion about what is or is not a suffix can be obviated if a structural definition is essayed for suffixes. We thus give the definition of a suffix as 'any bound but optional element which primarily occurs on the verb in the verbal slot of the testing game: † NP V NP †, where † — sentence boundary, V — verbal NP — Noun Phrase.

Examples:

	NP	Verbal	NP	
(10)	Ọ	jèrọ	afịa	'He is not gone to the market'
(11)	Ọnye kwa nụ	bụ	hke à	'Who really is this?'
(12)	Ọnye	bụkwànụ	hke à	'Who is this?'
(13)	Ọ	gòtālù	m fu	'He just bought for me.'
(14)	Ọ	gòtáfù	jī	'He just bought yams.'
(15)	Gịnị dụ	bụ	hke à	'What is this?'
(16)	Gịnị	bụ	hke à	'What is this?'
(17)	Ife ndị à gà sị	bụ	hke m	'All these things are mine.'
(18)	Ife ndị à	bụgàsi	hke m	'All these things are mine.'
(19)	Ọ	chà	ùchà	'It is thoroughly clean.'
(20)	Ọ	gà	àga	'It is gone further/past.'
(21)	Ọ	ghà	àgha	'It is completely changed/altered.'
(22)	Afe à	kà	àka	'This shirt is in shreds.'
(23)	Ọ	dùdùbe	iru yā	'He looked dull/gloomy.'
(24)	Ọ	fị	yà	'He twisted/braided it.'
(25)	Ọ	tọ	àtọ	'It permanently stuck to leaving a mess behind.'
(26)	Ụnọ	zè	èze	'The house caved in.'
(27)	Ọ	zọ	egō	'He forget the money.'
(28)	Ọ	zù	èzù	'It is enough/complete.'
(29)	Ọ	pụ	àpụ	'He is gone out.'

17. Welmers, W. E. 'The derivation of Igbo verb base' *Studies in African Linguistics* Vol. I, No. 1 1970, pp. 49-59.

The above framework makes it possible—and economical—for us to see two points clearly:

- (i) Certain elements which others but not Williamson treat as suffixes are 'particles' as Williamson correctly analyses. It is these particles in (11)-(18), *i.e.*

kwa	'also'	
nụ	'really'	polite interrogative marker
fu	'now'	
dụ		optional interrogative marker
ga		optional plural marker
sị		optional plural/distributive marker

which can appear other than in the verbal slot and 'with nominals nomino-verbals interrogatives and conjunctions...' as Green and Igwe (1964) observed elsewhere.
- (ii) Following from (i), suffixes primarily occur on verbals. Their occurrence on verbal derivatives etc. is a secondary occurrence.
- (iii) Lots of elements which Williamson, among others, erroneously treats as suffixes (19)-(29) are verbs because each of them can be used alone as the only element in the verbal slot.

As this juncture it may be necessary to make some observations on the difficulties which Williamson among others have in isolating verbs from suffixes. I think the Green and Igwe (1964) procedure is the sanest and safest method to follow. 'When therefore we find a compound element (*i.e.* suffix) in which the vowel of this element does not harmonize with the vowel of the verb it follow, we have to see whether, *on semantic grounds* it can be associated with any verb. If we can, we tentatively classify it as a verb, if not, as a suffix. With some suffixes, however, the vowel harmonizes with, or reduplicates the vowel of the verb stem it follows and here we seem to have a formal criterion by which it can be distinguished from a verb. When we find a harmonizing suffix which appears to be cognate with a verb we class it as a suffix nonetheless because of its behaviour' (1964: 53). Put simply any element which is cognate with a verb is a suffix as long as it does not have two harmonizing forms. Thus: -nye/-nya 'in, to, around' is a suffix even though it seems to be cognate with -nye 'give to'. I find the Green and Igwe discovery procedure very useful indeed for it helps to eliminate the confusion and overlapping which we find in Williamson's analysis. Sometimes when Williamson is in difficulty with assigning an element to the suffix class she refers to it as the 'specialized meaning' of the verb. I do not find this argument tenable. Meaning—literal or metaphorical—is meaning. Any one who has some competence in Igbo knows that when a verb combines with another verb stem or a suffix or when verbs and/or suffixes combine—idiomaticization always results. Idiomaticization is no more than metaphorical or 'specialized' meaning. For an idiom is a 'situationally bound expression which is unanalysable and which does not require analysis with reference to the grammatical and semantic structure of the language in which it occurs.'¹⁹ It is an 'expression which is traditional rather than ligical'.²⁰

Note the following entries by Williamson:

- "-gha-lī 'about; around (treated in body of dictionary as a specialized meaning of -gha 1. B change)
 -ga 1. B. 'beyond; further (treated in body of dictionary as a specialized meaning of -ga 1. pass; go)
 -ka 'apart, asunder (probably better regarded as a specialized meaning of -ka 3 'be torn'
 -pụ completely (perhaps to be regarded as a specialized meaning of -pụ 1. 'go out' "

18. Green, M. M. and Igwe, G. E. *A Descriptive Grammar of Igbo*. Academie Verlag and O.U.P. (1964)

19. John Laons: *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. C.U.P. 1969, p. 177.

20. J. M. Crimmon. *Writing with a Purpose*, New York, p. 137.

The above are all verbs as we have shown in (20)–(22) and (29)—their ‘specialized’ meaning notwithstanding. Not only are they cognate with verbs, they can each be used as the only element in the verbal.

One final point about Williamson’s treatment of suffixes is that she seems to hold the view that any element whose tone is not the same as that of the infinitive form of the verb is a suffix, no matter its meaning. If not I do not see the rationale for the entries below. The verbs and the so-called ‘suffixes’ are clearly cognate, the tonal difference notwithstanding.

-chi ‘in place of’	::	-chi ‘return to original position’
-fì ‘entangled’	::	-fì ‘twist, wring, braid’
tò 4 ‘leaving a mess behind’	::	-tò ‘stick to and remain with overtones of messing up
-zè 2 ‘melt’	::	-zè ‘cave in’
-zò ‘forget’	::	-zò ‘forget’

(Note :: = cognate with)

A consideration of the above reveals that the resemblance in meaning—metaphorical/specialized more than literal—so obvious between each ‘suffix’ and its verb, is so overwhelming that only a diehard (and a dry-as-dust) structuralist would be blind to this! It is necessary here to point out that the Infinitive is only one of the verbal derivatives in the language. Reliance on this alone to the exclusion of other facts in the language to say what element is or is not a suffix is fraught with danger and can lead to underanalysis/overlapping as we find in some of Williamson’s entries.

There are other things which can still be said about Williamson’s ‘Introduction’ But we shall leave this to other people or to another occasion.

We shall now leave the Introduction and go to *The Dictionary* itself. But before that we must repeat that despite the way it handles certain disputable phenomena e.g. suffixes, and verbal nouns, it has brought sense and delicacy into the discussion of these knotty topics. This is why the ‘Introduction’ is likely to outlive *The Dictionary* itself. For even after people would have ceased to consult *the Dictionary* for its Igbo entries or its English definitions/translations/glosses, native and foreign students and scholars will continue to refer to the ‘Introduction’ for its wealth of incisive analyses and diachronic speculations no matter how ‘insufficiently’ their editor thinks they are. As long as Igbo linguistics lasts, the ‘Introduction’ will remain an achievement even though a beginning, an authority as well as a stimulus.

2. The Igbo Entries. One of the positive achievements of *The Dictionary* is the way Igbo words and phrases are entered. To a very great extent, Williamson obeys the basic facts of Igbo morphology in her word division. One just needs to read a bit of the available materials in Igbo literature—Ogbalu’s, Nzeako’s, etc. to realize the confusion, muddle and disheartening inconsistency that exists not only within a writer’s works (or in one work) but also between authors. For example, the words which respectively gloss in English as ‘truth’ and ‘night marauder’ and ‘gorilla’ are variously written thus:

eziokwū / ezi-okwu / ezi okwū
 àbàṅ̀dìegwù / àbàṅ̀dì-egwù / àbàṅ̀ dì egwù
 ọ̀zòdìm̀gba / ọ̀zòdì-m̀gba / ọ̀zò dì m̀gba

Williamson follows the principles of structural linguistics carefully and does not allow these English glosses or translations to confuse her as have done many native speakers who are linguistically naive. She thus writes the words with their component parts thus:

ezi okwū
 àbàṅ̀ dì egwù
 ọ̀zò dì m̀gba

Native writers of Igbo would make their spellings more consistent and their work

better for examiners and publishers if they consistently consult Williamson's dictionary whenever they are confronted with the co-called 'compound' nouns in Igbo! Every budding Igbo writer—and teacher—should therefore have a copy of *The Dictionary* if only for this reason.

There are, of course, a number of places where Williamson falters in her word division and seems to have allowed the English glosses to have the upper hand. Examples:

òpùnù isi àzụ	* òpùnlsi àzụ 'posterior frontanella' (p. 60)
arō nō-abja	* arō naabia 'next year' (p. 67)
e mesia	* emesia 'afterwards' (p. 111)
ike/kwe)	* ikekwe)
ike/kwo)	* ikekwo) 'perhaps' (p. 177)
	(* 'and not')

As far as verbs are concerned these are cited in the infinitive forms, as Green and Igwe (1963) did. As we have pointed out elsewhere there are at least four verbal derivatives possible for each typical Igbo verb: infinitive, gerund, participle and bound cognate noun. None of these is good for citation purposes because in all of them certain classes of verbs change the tones of their components. It is one account of this among others, that we suggest the basic form as the best form for citation purposes. Verbal derivatives and verb forms get their grammatical tones rulewise from the 'basic' form. The basic form is indicated with a hyphen and there is no question of confusing this with a suffix. Where the suffix is not marked, (suff) meaning will show which is a verb and which is a suffix. It is germane to point out that Williamson (1971)²¹ agrees with us that despite one limitation, the basic form seems (one of) the best for citation purposes—and would recommend it to further lexicographers) if certain suggestions she puts forward are incorporated. Once the basic form is used, there will be no need for indicating the tone class of verbs especially LL(H) verbs which become SL(L) in the Infinitive—one obvious weakness in using the Infinitive as a citation form. Secondly the use of the Infinitive obscures the tonal fact of used nouns with LH as (direct) objects. These nouns will become HH after verbs with a high tone in the last element e.g.

-gba m̄gba 'wrestle' → igbā m̄gba 'to wrestle'

Without the basic form we won't be able to distinguish HH nouns following High tone verbs from LH nouns following High tone verbs:

-gba m̄gba 'wrestle' → igbā m̄gba 'to wrestle'
 -gba ọtọ 'be naked' → igbā ọtọ 'be naked'
 (→ = becomes)

Finally, as far as the citation of words and phrases are concerned, we think that the use of the 'assimilated' forms instead of the full forms obscures certain basic facts which are known only to people who understand how vowel assimilation²² operates in the language:

(a)	(b)
Ñke à —	Nkaà
Nwaòye —	Nwoòye
(a) — full form; (b) — assimilated form.	

On the whole, there is quite a lot of entries in this *Dictionary*. In terms of the number of entries it is head and shoulders about the Welmers and Welmers Dictionary (1968)²³ which because it was intended for, and primarily used by English learners of Igbo 'who have acquired at least a minimum of competence in speaking Igbo' is understandably to P. 101 limited in the number of entries it contains. Again, in *The Dictionary* verbs are very extensively and copiously illustrated.

21. Williamson: 'Igbo Dictionaries'...

22. E. N. Emenanjo: 'Vowel Assimilation in Igbo' *Research Notes*, Vol. 5&6, 1972.

23. M. M. Green reviews the Welmers and Welmers' Dictionary in *Journal of African Languages* Vol. 8, pp. 48-50.

However, one class of items which is sparingly entered is Ideophonic nouns. A count of the number entered puts them below one score: *dùù, jùù, pọtọtọt* etc.; but these run into thousands in the language. Two reasons seem to account for the paucity in the entry of ideophones. Firstly, the sources—Pearman's collections—where these are not likely to be included. Secondly, only native speakers with some training can run these ideophones to earth. Only trained native speakers can ferret out these problematic nouns, with their elusive tones and their elusive meanings. Is it *not* surprising that Williamson treats some of these as colloquial or slang items. *E.g.* *sam* (slang) beauty 'beauty; attractiveness, fitness; eligibility'. Ideophones are not slang if by slang is meant 'words and phrases generally considered in some or all of their senses to be outside the standard or acceptable language Concise Oxford English Dictionary). If there are slang in Igbo it may be with items like *òpì àchàlà* or *àwàlawàlà* used to describe any fast-moving, elegant and portable car especially Peugeot 404. Igbo ideophones are an integral part of the nominal system of the language as Green and Igwe (1964: 29) hold and as we argue elsewhere.²⁴

From the point of view of the Igbo entries Williamson's *Dictionary* is an indispensable document for those interested in spelling Igbo words correctly—not minding its many apparently typographical mistakes in terms of tone marks and word division. One of the remarkable things about the Igbo entries is the numerous archaisms that are entered: *naānọ* 'four'. I am sure that many 'modern' Igbo would be startled at the existence of these archaisms.

By the way Williamson has gone about her Igbo entries, it can be seen that it may be true that as far as the spelling of Igbo vowels and some consonants are concerned, the Official Orthography has something concrete to offer by way of guiding principles. But that is about all that the shim document that passes for the Official Igbo orthography has to its credit. Word division, tone marks, the spelling of the syllabic nasal, the spelling of 'compound' phrasal nouns etc. etc. remain unsolved. It is, therefore, not surprising that members of a panel which discussed a paper on 'Igbo Spelling'²⁵ as late as 1972, at a Seminar on Igbo language, did not agree on a number of the issues. This reveals that there are lots of things that the Official Orthography has not handled. Of course serious students of Igbo linguistics already know about the many imperfections in the Official Orthography. Many people who criticize the 'spelling' of Green and Igwe do so from a cross ignorance of the things (especially phonological facts) which Green and Igwe are trying to represent faithfully. One just has to try to transcribe a passage from any of the dialects other than Onitsha to see that Green and Igwe have no alternative than to modify the orthography to suit their purposes. The present Official Orthography is an imperfect document no matter how strongly many people feel. However, until there is a review of this Official Orthography people who are interested in correct word division and correct tonal notation are advised to take a cue from Williamson's *Dictionary*.

3. **The English Glosses/Definitions/Translations.** By far this is the least satisfactory aspect of *The Dictionary*. This is not unexpected because Williamson does not claim to be an expert on Igbo anthropology and history. Before we come to consider the debit side, we must admit that there are some graphic explanations of some items which sophisticated native speakers cannot better either in the economy of language or in picturesqueness. See the entry

-bọ ntọqọ 'pull down the lower eyelids and widen the eyes as a form of mockery, to imply 'I told you so! or 'Just what I expected!'... (p. 69).

Few native speakers can better this gloss/explanation of an action they perform so often!

E. Nọlue Emenanjo: "Igbo Nominals", *Ikenga* Vol. 2, No. 1, 1973.

F. C. Ogbalu: "Igbo Spelling" Paper read at the 1st National Seminar for Igbo language teachers of the University of Nigeria, Usukka, August 1972, to be in *Igbo Language and Culture*, O.U.P. 1975 [forth coming]

Also on the credit side one must mention the noteworthy effort put in by Williamson to explain most items. The only weakness about such glosses is that usually one essential fact is not mentioned. Consider:

- ñkawkū 'long-snouted musk-rat' (p. 311)
 ñkenū 'small bird' (p. 312)

There are two essential facts of the nkakwū-rat. It is long-snouted. It also has an obnoxious smell peculiar to it. The significant thing about nkenu apart from the size is the sporadic nodding for which it is known. *The Dictionary* is full of many such half-correct explanations/definitions/glosses.

Another feature on the credit side of *The Dictionary* is that some attempt is made at indicating the etymology of certain words. The only thing is that this procedure is neither carried to its logical conclusion nor consistently done. It would have added to the credibility of *The Dictionary* to indicate that

- (a) kwalikwatà (p. 241); òsikapa (p. 385) etc. are of Hausa origin
 (b) dọtì (p. 98), motò (p. 291) etc. are from English
 (c) ñnyànga (p. 191); òga (p. 402) etc. are of Yoruba origin.

The procedure of comparing items to Yoruba (and other Nigerian languages where applicable) seems quite welcome and very useful to Igbo people who are bilingual in Yoruba and Igbo. I think it would have been quite logical to compare the Igbo ñchòlò-kòtò to the Yoruba ayò?

The process of giving the zoological and botanical names of Igbo fauna and flora where these are distinguishable, is itself very welcome. I am sure that many Igbo zoologists and botanists would be excited by this—and learn their Igbo zoology and botany from a foreigner!

Finally, the use of simple line sketches adds to the picturesqueness of certain descriptions and illustrations.

So far as good. On the debit side we have already shown that a good number of the glosses/illustrations are half-correct. This is not due so much to the fact that Williamson is an outsider to Igbo culture, as that the 'short essays which appear from time to time on aspects of Igbo culture' were written by the Madunagu brothers especially Mr C. N. Madunagu—whose knowledge of their culture seems to be as slim (if not as contemptuous!) as that of most Igbo intellectuals about their culture. Where such Igbo do not rely on native intuition, they rely heavily on the half-true and distorted explanations/definitions as are contained in notoriously outdated works or analyses of people like Basden²⁶, Talbot²⁷, Meek²⁸, Leonard²⁹, Jordan³⁰, etc. For example, ngò (p. 306) is glossed as 'bride-price; money paid for wife'. Nothing can be wider off the mark if one is conversant with Igbo culture. Two things are distinctive about ngò:

- (i) It is a bridal deposit not bride-price. The amount agreed on is never paid in full.
 (ii) The deposit is refundable by the woman or her family anytime there is a divorce or re-marriage

No where are these half-correct glosses more glaring than in the treatment of aspects of Igbo religion. In most of these the glosses/explanations are clearly wrong and false. If the Madunagu brothers had ever carefully read Forde and Jones (1967), or even

26. G. T. Basden: *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*. 1921. *Niger Ibos* London 1938

27. P. A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* London 1926

28. C. K. Meek, *A Sudanese Kingdom* 1931. *Law and Authority in a Nigerian tribe* Oxford 1937.

29. A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its tribes* London 1906

30. (a) G. I. Jones, *Ecology and Social Structure among the North-Eastern Ibo*. *Africa* 33 (1961) pp. 117-134.

(b) G. I. Jones, and H. Mulhall: An examination of the physical type of certain peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 79 (1949) pp. 11-18.

Thomas (1914)³¹ they couldn't have made the mistake of over-using the word 'god' for almost every metaphysical concept they come across:

Examples.

Èdò 'a god' p. 104

Ekè 'God' p. 108

Udo 'a god' p. 512.

If these are gods, what sorts of gods are they? It would have made the entries more realistic to define their provinces as has been incorrectly done for:

Ekwù 'goddess of kitchen, worshipped by headwoman of household' (p. 110)

Ekweñsu 'The god of misfortune or trouble equated with the devil' (p. 110)

Agwù 'a god of (madness)... (p. 15)

Chi 'a god, a guardian deity' (p. 77)

Ikenḡà 'household god of a man' (p. 177)

Òfọ 'god of justice' (p. 40)

The list could be increased *ad nauseam*. The point, however, is that all of these are not gods. If there were gods then the Igbo must be, like the ancient Romans, a polytheistic people. Results of modern researches by modern native anthropologists³² and well-read clergymen³³ have begun to reveal that the Igbo are a monotheistic people and that these things erroneously referred to as gods or goddesses are not these in the traditional understanding of these terms. They are rather 'being forces' as Onwuejeogwu³³ calls them. Thus:

Òfọ is not a god of justice but a symbol of righteousness, justice etc.

Ikenḡà is not a household god but a symbol of success and the cult of the right hand.

Chi is not a personal god but a personal guardian force, as well as the procreative force in the individual.

Agwù is not the god of madness but that ambivalent force which animates Afa divination. The point is that diviners in the cult of *Agwù* can invoke it to help them in their prognostication.

Again on account of poor acquaintance with Igbo anthropological linguistics certain phrases are treated as proverbs when they are not.

Nke à bù ùke (p. 512) may be an idiom. It is not a proverb. While all Igbo proverbs are idioms, not all Igbo idioms are proverbs.

Still talking about the cultural inadequacies of the entries/definitions reminds one of the very serious and possibly unforgivable omission of the word *Nri/Nshì* in *The Dictionary*. The omission is unforgivable because least as early as 1900 Basden had correctly observed this: 'The existing maps were useless as none contained reliable data, the names inserted being based on reports and conjectures. Some names were curious e.g. 'Akpan' and 'Nri'. The latter certainly is a name well known over a considerable portion of Ibo country. It is the name of a small town which is the headquarters of a priestly cult whose special functions are connected with the coronation of kings, hence 'Nri' men (priests) being travellers were met with frequently. When asked whence they came the answer was a wave of the head towards the east and thus the name was given in mistake to the

31. (a) D. Forde & G. I. Jones, *The Ibo and Ibibio Speaking Peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria* London 1956.

(b) N. W. Thomas, *Anthropological report on the Ibo-speaking Peoples of Nigeria* Part 1 London 1914.

32. M. A. Onwuejeogwe: 'The Dawn of Igbo Civilization in the Igbo Culture Area' *Odinani* Vol. 1. No. 1 March, 1972.

33. Arinze, F.: *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*, University of Ibadan Press, 1971.

A number of clergymen-lecturers (professors) at the Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu, with whom I discussed this matter hold that the Igbo are a monothestic people who recognize only one Omnipotent God, Chukwu, or Chineke. All other things erroneously called gods by non-natives are not gods but metaphysical 'forces' or spirits'.

whole of the country east of Onitsha.' If only the Madunagu brothers had read Basden (1921) as well as Basden (1938)! It is surprising that Nri slipped Pearman—a missionary like Basden—and the Madunagus even though as Basden correctly recorded, the influence of the Nri—on the non-Nri were 'well known over a considerable portion of Ibo land on both sides of the Niger'. Jeffreys as early as 1934 had done a doctoral thesis on 'The Divine (Umundri) Kings of Iboland' and published an article entitled 'The Divine Umundri Kings'³⁴ With Shaw's monumental *Igbo Ukwu*³⁵ and Onwuejeogwu's³⁶ findings on the culture that produced the fantastic bronze objects at Igbo Ukwu, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Nri were a powerful group in a good part of Igboland. It will therefore not be too much to observe that any dictionary of Igbo which does not enter Nri amongst its lexical items is something that is fairly near to *Hamlet* without the Prince!

Discussing history/anthropology brings me to one of the abysmal weaknesses of the historical entries.

Examples:

- (i) Dei is entered as a King who reigned at Onitsha in the 19th Century.
- (ii) Odozi Obodo is a notorious King of Abakaliki hanged in 1958. . .

Just as Dei was not a King, but one of the founding fathers of one of the nine quarters in Onitsha, so too Odozi Obodo was never a King of Abakaliki but one of the Chiefs of Abakaliki who managed through a mischievous head-hunting secret cult to manoeuvre himself into a strong intimidating position in Abakaliki, until he was hunted down and hanged in 1958. Words like 'king', 'ruler', 'nobility' are terms which must be sparingly used in a discussion of the political culture of a highly republican and classless people like the Igbo. The weaknesses in the anthropological as well as historical explanations in *The Dictionary* show that a Dictionary is more than a linguistic exercise. As we shall show later, the many-sidedness of lexicography demands that the lexicographer must have a thorough and encyclopaedic knowledge of the people whose language he is handling.

4. **Problems and suggestions for future Lexicographers.** Both by what it has done and the way it has done these as well as by what it has not done, *The Dictionary* has raised a number of interesting issues which should be of great interest to future lexicographers. These issues include:

- (i) entry forms for lexical items
- (ii) entry forms for verbs
- (iii) entry forms for verbal complexes
- (iv) entry forms for ideophones
- (v) the quality of the future lexicographer
- (vi) the definitive dictionary

The future lexicographer has to choose between two forms for entry into the dictionary: the full form and the 'assimilated' form. In *The Dictionary* there is some inconsistency in the forms entered, as both forms are indiscriminately and unapologetically used. I think that in the future, words/phrases/clauses are better cited in the 'full' forms. These full forms give us the underlying forms on which the vowel assimilation and tone rules apply. As such they are the forms that are of paramount relevance to learners/ users of the language, be they foreigners or native speakers.

34. Jeffreys, M.D.W. *The Divine (Umundri) Kings of Iboland*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis London University Library 1931. 'The Divine Umundri Kings'. *Africa* III, pp. 346-354.

35. Shaw: *Igbo Ukwu: An account of the archaeological discoveries in Eastern Nigeria* Vol. I and II. Faber and Faber 1970.

36. Onwuejeogwu, M. A. Ibid.

With regard to the form of the verb that should be used for citation purposes, we have already shown that Williamson herself accepts that the Infinitive form has limitations as a citation form. After a thorough discussion of the forms that have actually been used or recommended by other writers/ lexicographers, Williamson seems to agree with us that if 'readers can make the necessary adjustments' she 'would strongly recommend this (the basic form) as the citation form in future dictionaries'. The reason is that the basic form 'provides all the necessary information for the tone rules to apply', even if 'readers might find this too abstract a representation'.³⁷

Among the problems³⁸ which the Igbo lexicographer must battle with is the question of 'verbal complexes'. As I have argued in 'Igbo nominals' (1972)³⁹, and in 'Aspects of the Igbo verb' (1973)⁴⁰, every Igbo verb is 'always used with a noun which always complements it'. The combination of a verb + noun is what I call a verbal complex. A verbal complex is therefore 'any combination of a verb and a noun which are so mutually obligatory and inseparable that they always function as one semantic unit'. The verbal complex which is a case of idiomaticization is the essential feature of the Igbo verbal system. Three different ways have been employed to enter the crucial fact of the verbal complex in dictionaries/word lists. Williamson cites such 'with a + following... to indicate that they cannot be used alone and then added the full phrase below, thus

-bù +
-bù ibù 'be stout'

Igwe and Green (1967) cite the same verb essentially the same way except that they do not use the + convention whereas Welmers and Welmers (1968) cite the whole phrase as one entry. I will recommend the Welmers and Welmers method because this seems to me to capture and to present the basic fact of this verbal complex phenomenon more than the other two systems. The two elements of the verbal complex form one semantic unit and must therefore be entered as one entry.

Talking about the verbal complex suggests that a thorough grammatical analysis especially of the verbal system must precede any serious lexicographic work. Among the things which a grammatical analysis will reveal are the parts of speech in the language. Thus words entered will have their relevant parts of speech indicated. This is sparingly done in Williamson's *Dictionary*. Again one of the things that the analyst should find out and indicate is the nature of the bound cognate noun. Which verbs have these? What is their semantic function with or without the complement? What are the restrictions on the occurrence of complements with bound cognate nouns? How best are these facts to be entered in a dictionary. Examples:

-lụ ọlụ 'work'
-lụ ọlụ... àlụ 'really work'?
-zụ afịa 'trade'
-zụ afịa... àzụ 'really trade'?

We have already indicated elsewhere in this review that ideophones are not copiously entered in *The Dictionary*. A comprehensive Igbo dictionary must include as many of these items as possible. But there is some problem with the entry of ideophones. A look at the entries in one set of ideophones by Williamson reveals this:

gologoló wateriness (of soup, broth etc.)
cf. ghologholo p. 127.
ghòlòghòlò watery, light (of soup, broth etc.)
cf. gòlògòlò. p. 159.

37. Williamson, K.: "Igbo Dictionaries"...

38. Williamson discusses these fairly exhaustively in 'Igbo Dictionaries'...

39. Emenanjo "Igbo Nominals"...

40. Emenanjo, "Aspects of the Igbo verb (i)"... Emenanjo 'Some preliminary notes on Igbo Ideophones' Ikenga (to appear.)

Williamson herself notices that there is something in common between these two ideophones. Now, the point is that one of the things I have observed about ideophones is that unlike other nouns ideophones have a morphotonemic and semantic behaviour *sui generis*. A given ideophone can have all high tones or all low tones, or a mixture of high and low tones as well have dotted or undotted vowels among other tonal and segmental features. The significant thing about these is that each combination has a semantic nuance peculiar to it. Thus we have:

- pùtùpùtù indicative of dull bubbling sound
- pùtùpùtù indicative of uneven dull bubbling sound
- pùtùpùtù indicative of fast bubbling sound
- pùtùpùtù indicative of heavy bubbling sound
- putuputu indicative of heavy but fast bubbling sound.

Now, in terms of economy of presentation it seems to me that future lexicographers have to work out and enter only

- (i) the basic meaning of the ideophone
- (ii) the basic tone of the ideophone

and not all the semantic nuances which the purposeful combinations of tonal and segmental features can bring about. When the basic tones, shapes and meanings of the ideophone have been determined, then a number of definitive examples can be given to illustrate the different possibilities permissible with the shape, tone and meaning of the ideophone. The task of dealing with the ideophones is really titanic, but it is not one that can't be done.

The last point about the future lexicographer concerns the type of man best suited to be such a lexicographer. According to Williamson the person who 'will produce definitive dictionaries' (of Igbo) will be 'young linguists who are themselves speakers of Igbo' since it is only they who can have the 'ideal combination (of) the 'insight of the native speaker combined with the ability to analyse and explain linguistic structure'. There is no disputing the fact that the future lexicographer has to be a linguist. The two most satisfactory dictionaries available, the Welmers and Welmers' and Williamson's have been done by linguists. I am also informed that two SOAS linguists, Carnochan and Igwe are working on another dictionary. Now whether the linguist need be 'young' is what I do not know. I doubt very much whether the future lexicographer needs be a native speaker. I think that what is important is that the future lexicographer must be a linguist who not only has a native speaker's competence of the language but also is aware of the wealth of material that is now available in recent unpublished theses, long essays, monographs, articles etc. in all aspects of Igbo studies, especially, in America⁴¹, Europe and Africa. A thorough knowledge of these will obviate the thousand loopholes in the glosses/definitions/explanations and terminologies used by Williamson and her assistants. The future lexicographer must be a modern linguist who is not

41. Among recent unpublished theses by native speakers in America are the following:
- (i) Dr Austin Ahanotu: *The Economics and Politics of Religion: A Study of the Development of the Igbo spirit of Enterprise*.
 - (ii) Dr Nwachukwu Ogedengbe: *'The rise of Aboh Kingdoms'*.
 - (iii) Dr E. N. Njoka: *'A Study of Igbo political institutions'*.
 - (iv) Dr E. O. Odita: *'Igbo Masking Tradition: Its types, functions and interpretations'*. A forthcoming title from America is Dr David Carrell's *Perspectives on Igbo Culture*, a rather ambitious compendium of twenty-four chapters which aims to touch on nearly all conceivable aspects of Igbo culture, and whose aim according to its author is 'to depict the Ibo of South-eastern Nigeria and their way of life as it has been recorded from 17th to the 20th century'. A 1972 America-based journal has a whole volume dedicated to Igbo Culture, in *The Conch* Vol. III, No. 2, 1972. Most of the articles in this volume are contributed by Igbo scholars. In Nigeria, lots of works but with a Christian (Catholic) bias are available in the Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu.
- In June 1973, Rev. L. J. U. Ejiofor successfully defended a Master's thesis on Igbo Democracy at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

only abreast with the latest research in all aspects of Igbo studies; such a linguist must have a native speaker's competence in speaking, reading, writing and, of course, interpreting Igbo.

Conclusion

When all is said and done, it must be said that with its innumerable weaknesses (something usual with pioneering works) Dr Williamson's *Dictionary* is an important document not only in Igbo linguistics but also in the development of the Igbo language. As late as August 1972, as already mentioned above Ogbalu observed that 'there is no one dictionary with sufficient authority to which students of the language can turn to for correct information when in need.' I think that despite its shortcomings, *The Dictionary* will remain for some time to come the dictionary to which students of the language can turn to for (some) correct information—the dialect notwithstanding. From the point of view of dialect used it must be said that *The Dictionary* is an important contribution to Igbo dialectology. Far from being a liability the fact that *The Dictionary* is a dialect dictionary is an asset even if the 'generalized' nature of the Onitsha used does not allow one to pin it down in terms of exact geographical location. Amongst other things, this Dictionary will be of immense help to people interested dialectologically speaking in

- (i) sound (or phoneme) correspondences
- (ii) semantic correspondences and shifts —
- (iii) localisms—in words and meaning
- (iv) tonal correspondence or lack of correspondence.

Apart from the interest to dialectologists, *The Dictionary* does draw attention to three things which people often overlook or underplay in their crass ignorance of the riches and possibilities of the Igbo language.

- (i) A look at most of the lexical entries and a comparison of these with those of Igbo dialects with which I am familiar, even those with distinctive aspiration and nasalization, reveals that all Igbo dialects share a lot of lexical items. It is this that, despite the segmentary nature of Igbo political culture, makes intra-dialect communication possible. I have noticed that when the Igbo shed off their clannishness and ethnocentricity the Òhùhù man with his heavy nasalization and aspiration can converse with the Anìọcha man without much difficulty.
- (ii) The second thing about *The Dictionary* is that it includes lots of lexical items for concepts which lots of 'modern' Igbo people are unaware of. There is the word for a thing like 'flag, banner'—òkòlòtò. Another feature of lexical items entered is that they show us that the Igbo are capable of making minute and distinctive differentiations between things that are 'generic'. Thus we have:
 esu 'generic' millipede : òkpùnà 'large millipede'
 òsa 'generic' squirrel : uzè 'large squirrel'

This delicacy is beyond most 'modern' Igbo people.

The third feature of the entries in *this Dictionary* is the way it shows the cross-dialectal borrowing that is taking place. Words like Ñdeèwo; (from Owerri, Aba, Umuahia areas), Ñdeème (from Enugu areas), Igòsì (from riverian areas especially Aboh) and di ànyị (from Mid-Western Igbo areas especially Anìọcha) are entered in *The Dictionary* as if they are indigenous to the Onitsha area. This is as it should be for improved communications have broken down the barriers between Igbo dialects to the extent that it is difficult and unnecessary these days to insist on a pure dialect XYZ or 'pure Central'. As I have pointed out elsewhere,³² the essential feature of the Standard Igbo that is now evolving is its eclecticism. Dr Williamson's *Dictionary* confirms this.

As late as August 1972 (when *The Dictionary* was printing) Ogbalu had correctly observed that 'there is no one (Igbo) dictionary with sufficient authority to which students

of the language can turn to for correct information when in need'. Now that *The Dictionary* has seen the light of day one can say that the dialect and the other weaknesses and limitations notwithstanding *The Dictionary* is to date the only reasonably authoritative dictionary available in Igbo. And it will remain so for some time to come. Not only is *The Dictionary* more comprehensive than its only rival the Welmers and Welmers dictionary, it is published locally by the indigenous Ethiope Publishing Corporation and selling at ₦2.50 as against the Welmers and Welmers one which was published privately by the Welmers in far-away Los Angeles for internal circulation, though copies are now available at only the University of Ibadan Bookshop at ₦7.

Let us hope that the complement to this dictionary the English-Onitsha Igbo dictionary 'which is now completely compiled' will see an editor much sooner than later so that *The Dictionary* will be 'more useful for schools, colleges and all who are interested in the Igbo language and Igbo culture'.

