

Research article

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONALISM AND COLONIALISM IN NIGERIA 1935 - 1955

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Abstract

Against the background that the British were often portrayed as being reticent, unwilling to mix and show, passion, two schools of thought have emerged. The first is the Dependence school of thought. It interprets de colonization as a calculated scheme by the colonial office to rid itself of the cost and stigma of direct colonialism. Meanwhile, scholars of the second tradition, the liberal nationalist tradition conjecture that the indigenous nationalist politicians were at the centre of transfer of power in Nigeria from a reluctant metropolitan power. As the period from 1935 - 55 proceeded, the relationship between nationalism and colonialism came to be regulated more and more by the mechanism of constitutional change. The paper examines the regimes of Sir Bernard Bourdillon, Sir Arthur Richards, John Macpherson and Sir James Roberston. The role of some actors in the colonial office in London in initiating reforms such as Creech Jones, and Cohen Caine are also highlighted. The aim of the paper is modest, as it attempts to offer an unsentimental interpretation of Britain's retreat from Nigeria. **Copyright © WJHCL, all rights reserved.**

Keywords:

Introduction

Until the period of Macpherson, some residents and districts officers were cooped up in their isolation and hilly stations. They depended almost entirely on their interpreters and also on the information by some anthropologists for what they called intelligence reports. Incidentally some of these reports were contradictory

and therefore not very authentic. But the colonial office depended on these field reports to enhance the colonial office forward thinking on the transfer of power.

European administrators, whatever their theories of rule and personal predilection, could not avoid using what appeared to be traditional African institutions if they were to be successful in bolstering up their rule and to give effects to their demands. The principle of indirect rule certainly seemed to preserve something of indigenous political and social organizations.

The visit of the Prince of Wales in 1925 during the days of Clifford was the occasion for a remarkable demonstration of the loyalty by the chiefs and people of Nigeria. At Lagos where the prince was unable to land from the sea, on his first arrival on account of the presence of a plague, the inhabitants lined the shore for miles, many 'standing waist - deep in the water to greet the king's son. At Kano, a Durbar was held which was attended by practically all the chiefs of the Northern provinces with their followers. Many of the tribes which met on this occasion being traditional enemies sunk their differences and United in a common allegiance. At Ibadan, the prince was met by all the leading Yoruba chiefs and all along his route chiefs and people met to do him honour. Consequently, records show that the British did not feel the necessity to associate any Nigerian other than a handful of traditional rulers. These traditional rulers were told their place; and were expected like "good boys" to do so as they were told.

One negative effect of the system of indirect rule during the days of Lord Lugard and Hugh Clifford (1914 - 1925) on the transfer of power was that the system only promoted greater loyalty to the tribe than to the nation. Indirect rule therefore helped to sow and nurture the seed of tribal dissension mistrust and strife in Nigeria. That these 'seeds' bore bitter fruits in the period immediately before and after independence is a point on which there is little room for controversy.

It is against this background that the British officials and Nationalist politicians frequently collided head-on; particularly on the position of the traditional rulers. Thus, many chiefs saw in the need to protect their position by using the new colonial rulers and in the access to Western resources such as trade and education. They also saw a tolerable return for what often at first seemed a substantial loss of independence. Thus, the British saw the chiefs as essential to an ordered society and the Nationalist Politicians and other elite as parvenus i.e. persons who had suddenly reached higher economic or social status from a low status. It would be for many years before they would accept the "extremist Nationalists, the power seekers" as their proper successor. But the first democratic election held in Nigeria 1951/52 seemed fully to vindicate all nationalist politicians that they were "self-interest Politicians" (Richards to SOS 13(10/1945).

Thus, what hindered the smooth transfer of power and therefore delayed the transition was the British reluctance to identify the new strata of educated elite to which could be handed over. The political climate and other economic forces that necessitated the implicit acceptance for an evolutionary and orderly transfer of power to the Nationalist leadership; was the idea of an empire or colony as a training academy for self- government. In carrying out plan for economic development of Nigeria, the colonial administration had lived up to the economic and social advance which formed the basis for political self-rule in 1957-59. But economic depression also had a decisive impact on the development of colonial rule. The under war years saw periodic depressions, prolonged and frustrating slumps in the economic activities of the industrialized world which was associated

especially in 1930s and early 1940s with falling war material prices. More so, as the income structure and cost of living demonstrated the poverty of the people whose principal source of income was simple commodity products. Indeed records show that by 1945, the average earning family on income was finding it difficult to meet its subsistence needs (cost of living reports 1938 - 1948).

The situation was becoming difficult and complex for the colonial administration, which was ill-prepared for confrontation with workers. This led to a situation in which the colonial administration was being stretched thin by the working class discontent; arising from the wartime economic difficulties. The war year also witnessed rapid urbanization and growth of 'wage - earners to about 300,000 by 1946, Cohen (1981:-159).

The colonial Governors before 1935 when Sir Bernard Bourdillon had not taken over identified nationalism with trouble - making as a result of the prevailing circumstances. For instance, according to Pearce, Lugard viewed Africans as attractive children and did not think that educated youths would be suited to post of high administrative responsibility, Pearce (1982:46)

He saw the elite as a small minority that has nothing in common with the mass of the population and often had interest opposed to theirs, Coleman (1965: 151) Meanwhile, Sir Hugh Clifford, though calling for "Meticulous Courtesy" in European dealings with educated Africans, went further to argue that the national congress of British West Africa was a selected and self-appointed congregation of educated gentlemen, Coleman, 1965: 152.

Governor Donald Cameron also believed it was not Britain's job to westernize Africa. He kept a close and hostile scrutiny of Herbert Macauley and his National Democratic Party, Galley (1974:74). It was only from 1935 - 1943 when Cameroon was succeeded by Sir Bernard Bourdillon that a new chapter began in the relationship between British Authority and African Nationalism. Under the Bourdillon regime, educated Africans "were to receive more liberal treatments than ever before. It was patently obvious that the next Governor of Nigeria after Bourdillon Sir Arthur Richards would have a very difficult task as there was no continuity in the policies of the former. For one thing, he was very critical of Bourdillon's handling of labour relations as he disliked his predecessor's policy towards the educated elite, and it was during his .Governorship that a head-on confrontation was to occur (CO 583/275/30624).

Discontinuity was again to the fore when Sir John Macpherson became Governor in 1948.

The period of unrest - 1943 - 48

The Second World War, and the fervent of ideas that accompanied it provided Azikiwe with the ideological climate he needed. Passages from *Mein Kampf*, (a memoir Hitler wrote 'while in prison for five years). It was a plan to tyrannize Germany and to capture the world. The dominant philosophy of the book was a perception of the world in social Darwinist terms. It was widely distributed to illustrate the evils of Hitler's racialism by the colonial administration. Bourdillon also sensitized the Nigerian public by explaining the issues of the war in regular radio broadcasts, which according to West Africa 21 Dec. 1940 "were models of easily comprehensible statements of facts accompanied by useful and candid comment. Through the Governor, the people of Nigeria had been given the political education for decolonization. Accordingly, Azikiwe argued that;

A war against Nazi imperialism in which the Africans were co-operating so loyally

should also see the end of British imperialism and subsequent freedom for Africa,
(West Africa 21/12/1940)

Azikiwe also complained about the slow rate of the Africanization policy and altogether, adopted a more critical line than ever before in his publications against colonial rule. When lady Bourdillon asked why he 'wrote such "Scurrilous things about Government House" Azikiwe smiled and replied "Politics Ma".

Nevertheless, Azikiwe visited Governor Bourdillon several times as a prominent member of "NYM delegations and Bourdillon noticed no seditious tendencies as he remarked;

Azikiwe believes that it is his duty to explore and publish African grievances. He is exceedingly careless about verifying his facts and has been faced with more than one libel action. But although he is injudicious, and his language is not always marked by that restraint which one might desire. I do not believe that he is a deliberate mischief maker; (Co 583/234/303. Bourdillon SOS 7/11/1938).

The Governor recognized Zik's talents. Bourdillon's liberal treatment of Azikiwe and of other nationalists generally should be seen against a background of increased British harshness in many other parts of Africa during World War II, while many of his colleagues in Nigeria, particularly in the north, had no sympathy for the educated elite.

Bourdillon showed a ready sympathy for Nigerian nationalism. He was a good mixer to the extent that in 1937 he and his wife became patrons "Baba and Iyo Egbe of the West African students' union in London. At the first meeting of the West African Governors Conference in August 1939, only Bourdillon developed a good relationship before World War II with Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Sir Bourdillon Governor from 1935 – 1943 was an advocate of vigorous development policy, for which Nigeria unity provided the appropriate administrative framework. He and his wife (lady Bourdillon) also exhibited qualities of human understanding and sympathy. He had spent most of his career in India, Iraq and Ceylon, and had great experience of educated Nationalists. He was a perfect contrast to Cameroon and Arthur Richards as he was able to maintain a sense of perspective and detachment. Bourdillon was very receptive and had a gift of listening to people and would take them seriously, Wright, (1941:53). These human qualities not only revived the morale of the British officers but also affected the policy towards the African population in the steps towards the transfer of power. (Nivens 1995 Memoirs).

In 1936 Bourdillon had a tour of the Northern provinces and urged his European colleagues or officers to try to establish 'more friendly and natural personal relations with native officials. The golden rule for getting the best out of any chief, he averred "is to get his confidence, an object almost impossible if the relations between the parties remain entirely formal and official" (CO 583/213/20252). The leading nationalist-body of the time was the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which in 1938 had a membership of more than 10,000 and twenty provincial branches in all parts of the country. Coleman (1965:225).

On 5 May, 1938, Bourdillon, invited the Central Executive committee of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) for drinks at Government House where he said;

It was inevitable and indeed beneficial that the government should occasionally hold divergent views. They would often in my opinion want to go too fast should often (in their opinion) be guilty of an excessive use of the brakes. There would be times when I should look upon them as an internal naissance and they would regard me as a reactionary bureaucrat. All that mattered not at all, provided we did not continue to believe that both of us were seeking the welfare of the people of Nigeria. CO 583/234/30336. Bourdillon to secretary of state 7/ 11/1938}.

The period of Bourdillon coincided with the time that the trade union was introduced into the country (1938) and it organized the different ethnic groups of Nigeria to learn to work together and speak in one voice in opposition to colonial rule.

Instead of picking quarrels with the labour union and members of NYM, he was particularly impressed by the leadership given to the movement by a local medical practitioner, Dr. Abayomi whom he believed had the more radical and irresponsible members well under control. The members of the NYM also reciprocate the kind gesture on the part of Governor Bourdillon and when he was proceeding on leave in 1938, 400 members of the movement held a touch light procession to Government House in his honour to bid him farewell. (CO 083/234/30336).

However, the most troublesome incident of Bourdillon's governorship took place in September 1941. It followed a period of unrest in Lagos railway workshops. On 29 September, 1941, the workers found themselves locked out and organized a march to Government House. Violence was feared, but Sir, Bernard Bourdillon acted quickly, by addressing the men. Instead of being very stern and hard on them, he explained that the lockout was a mistake and he pleaded for pardon. He subsequently declared a -holiday with pay and double pay for those railway men elsewhere who had gone to work, and with the support of elected members of the legislative council, persuaded the men to go back to work the following day. Next morning, Bourdillon toured the workshops, addressed the men again, and found that all was well (CO 583/257/30046/23. 17/12/1941).

On further, investigation of the causes of the unrest, it was observed that the main cause was that the general manager, McEven, had lost the confidence of his men, while the chief Engineer, Wilson, though full of efficiency, was a rigid disciplinarian, lacking a sense of humour; and human feeling essential in dealing with African labour. Both were soon replaced. (Bourdillon to S of S 30/9/1941)

Some European officials were critical of the Governor's actions as if he compromised his official position and failed to deal with labour issues accordingly. But he also acted decisively when another lockout occurred in January 1943. It "vas found that the president of the railway union, M.A. C. Imoud u, had deliberately had the gates locked to stir up trouble. He was detained under defene regulations (CO 554/132/33729 S of S to H.V. Tewson, 21/7/1943).

For health reason Bourdillon had to retire from Nigeria mid-way through 1943. He had several regrets. For instance, he was dismayed that the local press was habitually publishing 'misleading statements' and deliberately encouraging discontent against colonial government and ill-will between various sections of the community. (CO 554/129/33669 Text of Broadcast, 20/ 11/ 1941)

Problem of regime change; the Richards Era

It was patently obvious that the next Governor of Nigeria after Bourdillon would have a very difficult task. There was inflation. The price index having risen to a peak of 187.54 in October 1943. (CO 963/188 Lagos market scheme). There was also economic discontent, an increasing powerful trade union movement, and a virulent press that "was even criticizing one of the most popular Governors (Bourdillon) Nigeria had known. There was also the problems involved in the ending of the war coupled with the reintegration into civilian life of returning ex-servicemen.

Apart from that, the withdrawal of the Axis' forces from Africa in 1943 during World War II was followed by a widespread feeling among the people of Eastern provinces in particular and Nigeria in general that the war was over. Indeed the behaviour of the soldiers of the Eastern provinces on leave showed complaints of their stubbornness and high handedness.

Besides that, as far back as 1936, rumblings of incipient Nationalist feelings had begun to, be heard when Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe published anti-colonial articles deemed by the colonial government to be seditious in the African-Morning Post. He also drafted the position paper which the editors presented to the colonial office. It was entitled "The Atlantic charter and the British West Africa: The paper boldly demanded for a time table for the transfer of power to the Nationalist Politicians. (Headlines 10/11/1983).

The paper stirred up sentiment against the colonial administration. According to Richards Sklar;

The right of self-determination as proclaimed in the Atlantic charter was interpreted by the Nationalists of British West Africa as a promise of self-determination. (Headlines 1983: 10)

Incidentally, the new Governor, Sir Arthur Richards was an old sinister, as well as an abrasive man. He antagonized where his predecessor Bourdillon had conciliated. He was authoritarian where Bourdillon had been democratic.

According to Pearce,

Richards was a complex character. Facially scarred as a result of childhood accident, it seems that he seldom revealed his true personality. Pearce, (1983:294).

Hugh Foot was of the opinion that he 'was delighted in pretending to be a cynical reactionary while Richards himself wrote privately that he was in the habit of "laughing perversely at all things 'and all men including myself'. Foot, (1964:39).

Richards came to Nigeria from Jamaica, where he had failed to achieve any rapport with the nationalists over there. He also dismayed his colonial secretary, Charles Woolley, by reversing previous policy and paying no heed to the requirements of continuity, Alex, (1952: 512).

When Richards came to Nigeria he had not changed. He disliked many aspects of Bourdillon's policies including the constitutional plans. For instance, the views which Bourdillon had canvassed were laid aside with the minute RIP. In deed, the reforms of the secretariat was undertaken on lines opposed to the. Previous Governor's Recommendations (Co 583 /275 /306242 / 11/ 1944).

Unconcerned with personal popularity, Sir Arthur combated the Nationalist movement led by Dr. Azikiwe and was determined to diminish its influence, a thing Bourdillon, his predecessor did not do. In deed, something of personal vendetta developed between Richards and Azikiwe. Both of them personified the struggle between colonialism and nationalism. On the one hand, there was at this period a reasonably efficient system of administration headed by chiefs whose loyalty to the British was unquestioned. On the other, the educated elite in Lagos was causing trouble with its vituperative press and extremists, radicals and ex-servicemen on leave at Owerri Province. They were all like Azikiwe calling for complete self-government within fifteen years.

Arthur Richards therefore adopted a system of divide and rule method. His formula for maintaining British control was to cement the alliance with the chiefs and to diminish the political significance of small educated minority. His method was constitutional reforms. Richards was not impressed with the ability of the Africans to manage their own affairs. He therefore sent a negative report to Creasy at the colonial office in July 1944 with the following:

“Neither in my time nor yours will they produce more than a handful of first class men, anxious to learn” (Richards to Creasy July 1944).

The idea of the colony as a training academy for self government and subsequent independence had a very long lineage in British political thought. The idea that "successful pupils" after their graduation would remain with the commonwealth was high in the expectation of Britain. During the 19th Century, Great Britain established a system in which she saw herself as a temporary "foster parent" holding the members of the common wealth in trust for a self governing. It was the proud boast of the Englishmen that the sun never set on British Empire. By 1914, this statement was true. The truth of this statement was that when it was night in the British colonies on one side of the world, the sun was shining on others during the day. The sense of "trusteeship" was far more positive and developed in India than in other British colonies. Indeed, it was in connection with India that the idea of British civilizing mission which Arthur Richards epitomized. In Nigeria, the imperial mandate of trusteeship, a variant of the "Whiteman's burden" was strengthened by visions of grandeur portrayed by Rudyard Kipling.

The concept of trusteeship therefore, presupposed that British aim was to develop the colony to a stage where they could fend for themselves. The assumption was that if they started to govern themselves before they were fully prepared for it, they would govern themselves badly. It was the same concept that informed the colonial development of 1946 -1956 and the welfare Acts of 1929, 1940 and 1945. The central emphasis of welfare Acts was that it was the duty of colonial government before it thought of giving self-government to any colony to work to establish the structure of good governance. This meant educational facilities, welfare, medical and administrative services. The concept of trusteeship was that Britain could not withdraw just because of the pressure of militant Nationalism or that it suited her to pull out of her colonies before she had concluded her "philanthropic mission". Trusteeship, it was contended would be a sham. Bernard Porter (1971:47).

Giving the foregoing, Arthur Richards, on his own designed a scheme which aimed to reduce the Political role played by educated elite to a level more in keeping with the principle of trusteeship. For instance, he wished to preserve the official majority and to abolish direct election to the legislative council completely, thus, two Lagos members would be nominated by the municipal council, 'while there would be no seat for Calabar.

Arthur Richards therefore presented the nationalists as going too far in advance of the bulk of the people "they claim to be representing".

These ideas came as quite a shock in London, and the secretary of state, Oliver Stanley had to insist that an official majority be allowed and direct election for Lagos and Calabar be retained.

On 24 March 1946 by the national council of Nigeria and the Cameroon's (NCNC) in the Glove Memorial hall in Lagos, with Herbert Macaulay and Azikiwe, the president and secretary of the council, were among the 150 who attended. The party condemned the Richards constitutional proposals. The meeting also approved the sending of telegraph to the secretary of state, Oliver Stanley urging him to defer approval of the 1947 constitution popularly called the Richards Constitution, which they said the people 'were not consulted.

Paradoxically, despite the condemnation of the Richards constitution, it helped to foster the unity of Nigeria, inspite of its authors intentions; the constitution formed an integral part of rapid British withdrawal. The 1948 decision to scrap that constitution was made by Governor Macpherson without any compulsion from the NCNC.

In 1944, the students of Kings College Lagos were on strike. What Richards did was to conscript the leaders into the army. This was seen by the Nationalist Politicians as high handedness on his part. In 22 June 1945, the general strike began in Nigeria, temporarily paralyzing the economic life of the country. Richards had no option but threatened no work no pay. But events did not justify Richard's industrial stand. He had thought a 20 percent 'COLA' would solve the problem but the commission of Enquiry, led by Tudor Davies recommended an increase of 50 percent. Richards was disappointed. Richards believed that Azikiwe provoked the strike and he banned two of his papers, "the West African Pilot" and the "Daily Comet" of 8 July, 1945 for printing misleading information.

A week later, Azikiwe alleged that he discovered a Government plot to assassinate him arid' went into hiding in Onitsha. The charges were not taken seriously in the colonial office, and Richards himself pointed out that the language used in the messages (e.g. targeters for assassins) was not that of English and that the wireless operators who was said to have intercepted telegraphically at the office of "The pilot" in February 1946 had been in prison for falsifying accounts and stealing (Richards to SOS 15/2/1946).

Another factor that caused disturbances in the country particularly in the eastern provinces was the introduction of conditional sales. Customers and middlemen were compelled by the commercial firms to accept unpopular lines of goods as a condition for the supply of the fast moving articles as a result of the exigencies of the war. It would be recalled that in 1943, the colonial administration under Richards had instituted a system of price control by regulation No.2 of 1943 section 13. The people called for a review of the cost of living allowance coupled with frequent gyrations of the exchange value of the manila which became in the 1940s a major source of discontent that caused agitation and social uprisings that featured during the period, Naanen (1983).

The problem of Richards did not diminish. In September 1945 a mass meeting of all Nigeria workers passed a resolution of no confidence on the Government and Pressed for the recall of Richards and other officers to London. Given the foregoing, the situation in Nigeria during the regime of Arthur Richards was contrary to Remi Anitowoses thesis that;

“Nigeria's struggle for independence was that of relative gentleness and that the

colonial policy "was consistently moving towards self-rule; Anifowose, 1982:42).

In August 1946, Richards sent a thirteen-page memorandum on the NCNC to Britain for the benefit of the colonial office and the press. He informed the colonial office that the leaders of the NCNC wished to sacrifice the mass of the Nigerian population for their own political and financial benefits and that their weapons against a gullible public were a combination of "lies and half-truths". He alleged that the NCNC lacked mass support and its attacks on the chiefs were very bitter precisely because the National Association of Students (NAS) had the favour of the people and responsibly respected their views.

That the call for election by ballot was a nonsense in a country where only five out of every hundred ... were literate, where in large areas the natives ... go unclothed, where cannibalism is still practiced, where secret societies based on juju can still indulge in mass murder, where the vast population are illiterate.

By 1946 the NCNC went on a grand tour of the country to raise money. They published a long list of the places they proposed to visit. They spent £300 of the £13,000 they had on the purchase of a Lorry to take them on tour of the whole Nigeria. The aim was to abrogate the Richards Constitution. It was during this tour that Herbert Maccauley died as a result of a fall in Kano.

Later part of the year (1946), Richards himself toured every province in Nigeria but two; and was able to measure the effect of the NCNC nationwide activities. Richards noted the bulk of the country was completely unaffected by the influence of the NCNC. While in the Northern provinces, the chiefs and the people repudiated Azikiwe completely and utterly; (Richard to Gater 17/10/1946)

By 1947, the NCNC delegation finally went to London. It was led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Other prominent persons on the delegation included Kola Balogun, Alfred C. Nwapa, Okoi Arikop, Eni Njoku, A.K. Blanson, Mallam Zana, B. Dipe Charina, Magrig, O.A. William, Mrs. F. Ransome Kuti, S.A. George, M.C.K. Ajulu Unukwu, A. Oimage, Paul M. and O.N. Ojoguri. The delegation suggested political and economic reforms, constitutional amendments, the enactment of new legislation, the broadening of the suffrage and the establishment of new programmes. The appraisal of the situation by Arthur Richards influenced the secretary of state, Creech Jones and when he met the NCNC delegation in London, he told Azikiwe to return home and give the Richards constitution a try.

Azikiwe could not have realized the profound difference in outlook between the Governor and the colonial office, but it did exist and it was this that produced the retirement of Richards in 1947.

John Macpherson Era 1948 - 1951

As already stated lack of continuity in the policy of Nigeria government towards nationalism had been demonstrated when Arthur Richards succeeded Bernard Bourdillon in 1943. And discontinuity was again to the fore when Sir John Macpherson became Governor in 1948. His appointment was an unusual and a daring one. Sir John Macpherson had served in Malaya from 1921 to 1937 and after two years in Nigeria, moved to Palestine as chief secretary until 1943. Then he had been Head of British colonies supply mission in Washington and in 1945 - 1948) comptroller for development and welfare in the West Indies, Hargreaves, (1979: 19).

Although he arrived in Nigeria in April 1948 with no previous experience as a colonial Governor, he

however depended on the advice of colleagues particularly that of the chief secretary, Hugh Foot. He was also significantly briefed by the colonial office; apart from the wealth of experience he gained from the Conference of African Governors of November 1947. From that conference he was given a mandate to ease the tension with the nationalists, though not to embark on immediate constitutional change. CO 583/287/30453/1.

In 1948, the Zikist movement was becoming increasingly violent and it threatened to disrupt Nigerian life. In the same year, the radical Nigeria National Federation of Labour (NFL) as they were known by them, was formed by Nduka Eze and the National Church of Nigeria.

After an initial month's tour of the country, Macpherson wrote to Cohen that he found much to be pleased about in the growing understanding and appreciation of the true purpose of the new constitution. He felt that the Nationalists were behaving with a degree of moderation, as Azikiwe approached him politely and informed him that he has decided not to embarrass him despite pressure from his hot-headed supporters. As a follow-up of his co-operation and understanding, Azikiwe then lifted his boycott of the legislative council. He and the other two Lagos elected members Adedoyin and Nimbe took their seat at the Kaduna budget session in March 1948.

As far as Azikiwe was concerned, his willingness to preach violence was due, it was argued; to the succession of blows his pride had earlier received. For instance, his rebuff by Creech Jones, his failure to secure a seat at the African conference, the growth of opposition to him among politically minded Nigerians. All these reverses had worked upon his unstable mind and forced him to indulge in his initial display of restless oratory in order to re-instate himself in own esteem. Hugh Foot feared that Azikiwe no doubt, was coming increasingly under communist influence, and he had heard that the NCNC leader was to be attending communist rallies in Europe at the end of 1949. Azikiwe "was indeed being wooed by the communists. They arranged for him to speak at various venues in London and to visit Moscow and Prague.

Consequently, on 17 August, 1948, Sir John Macpherson announced that the constitution was to be replaced. He justified his surprising statement with the assertion that progress had been so rapid under the Richards constitution as to warrant further advances.

Besides, it was to pre-empt agitation for what he considered "irresponsible and undesirable reforms" that the Governor decided to scrap the Richards constitution and institute lengthy discussions in preparation for a new one.

According to him;

I do not accept such a course will kill extremists but it would, I believe, convince more responsible opinion in all parts of the country that the Government is anxious to encourage constitutional advance in the people's wish as fast as can be reasonably-be expected. Macpherson, (1948:3)

Death of the Enugu Miners

On 18 November 1949, twenty-one miners were shot dead at the Enugu colliery and the Zikist movement telegraphed to Azikiwe urging him to support a campaign of violence revenge against the Whites in Nigeria. Azikiwe shut himself away for a day, and when he came to a decision, it was to repudiate violence. Instead of visiting Moscow and Prague as stated above, he went to see Cohen and Creech Jones of the colonial office in London.

Consequently, Creech Jones inaugurated a colonial office committee on welfare, social and economic development and education. Nnamdi Azikiwe returned to Nigeria, determined to get his way by peaceful means, and on 4, July, 1950, (the National Day of Mourning for those killed at Enugu), he issued a statement of moderation in the following;

It is not whether Nigeria is right or Britain is right. It is what is right for Nigeria. In these days of struggle for National Survival let us not' be bitter, let us bear no malice. God knows we hate none on account of race or colour, but we love our country, and we want our country to be free, and we shall be free. (Annal Report July, 1950)

From that time, people began to understand that the leader of the Nationalist Politicians was strongly attached to two different and incompatible ideologies and life-style.

On 29th March 1955, Lennox Boyd, the colonial secretary offered Sir Jones Robertson the appointment of Governor General of Nigeria. He replaced Sir John Macpherson who retired in that year. He had been a District commissioner in the Sudan. This perhaps made him acceptable to the member of the Nigerian administrative service than one that has been brought in from politics or some occupation unconnected with colonial administration. The event of the year was the introduction of the revised constitution on 1st October 1954. This involved the separation of Southern Cameroon from the Eastern Region and an increase in regional autonomy among others (Annual Report 1954 - 55).

In October 1955, Sir James Roberston left Nigeria for London to talk about the Queen's projected visit to Nigeria. He equally seized the opportunity offered by the visit to discuss Nigeria problems about self-government to the secretary of state. The secondary phase of the country's constitutional evolution began with the granting of independence in 1960. The British had virtually asked the nationalists to choose between immediate independence and delayed independence which. "would accompany the creation of more regions in accordance with the demands of the minority ethnic groups. The nationalists opted for immediate independence.

During January and February 1956, Nigeria was visited by her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh. At Lagos, the Queen received a loyal address from Federal parliament and visits were paid to the three Regional capitals, Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu as well as to some other important towns such as Port Harcourt, Owerri and Calabar.

Everywhere, the Queen and the Prince received a tremendous welcome. In a speech at Guildhall on February 22, 1956, when the Queen was entertained by Lord major and the corporation of the city of London,

Her majesty said:

"We have seen a great of Nigeria " the future is full of promise its people, the memory of whose warm - hearted "welcome will always be with us. (Annual Report 1956).

Again, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal visited Nigeria in 1957 and conveyed messages from the Queen to

the legislatures of Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria on the attainment of self-government. Then the Royal Highness, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester attended the celebration in 1959 of self-government by the Northern Region.

In May and June of 1957, a constitutional conference was held at Lancaster House in London which was attended by representatives of all the political parties in Nigeria and by the representatives of the United Kingdom Government. This conference resulted in further constitutional advance for Nigeria.

The move towards independence now became more rapid as the constitutional conference was resumed in 1958 to discuss the reports of the special commissions particularly the Henry Willink commission on the fears of the minorities. In that year, the control of the military forces of Nigeria passed to the Federal Government and the Nigeria Navy was created.

Early in 1960, the Federal House of Representatives Passed a motion requesting Her Majesty Government to grant independence to Nigeria as from October, 1 1960. An Independence Act has passed by both Houses of the United Kingdom Parliament in July 1960, and receiving the Royal Assent on July 29th 1960. On September, 12th the Queen approved the Nigerian (Constitution) order in council 1960, which has" laid before the United Kingdom Parliament four days later and was to come into operation on October 1, 1960. By this order, the Independent Federation of Nigeria was set up, to consist of Northern, Western, Eastern and Federal Territory of Lagos. Burns, (1972)

Conclusion

Despite the efforts of the metropolitan power to initiate some reforms and constitutional changes; the period 1943 _ 56 witnessed widespread hostile reactions against the colonial administration by the Zikist movement, some nationalist politicians and ex-servicemen. This unrest had been on the heel of agitational politics of decolonization. These were mostly of a destructive nature as they were aimed at hindering the process of colonial government and usurping authority unconstitutionally. This can be called the period of unrest. We affirm Basil Davidson's view that the recurring tendency to colonial crisis and instability were largely a result of high rate of political mobilization. The leader of the Nationalist Politicians was strongly attached to two different and incompatible ideologies and life-style. That explains why the radicals felt the leadership of independent movement betrayed them.

Concessions at the centre became a means where goodwill and collaboration were to be preserved so long as the reasonable representation of the Nationalist were promptly attended to, so long the very satisfactory relations between colonialism and the nationalist Politicians were to co-operate.

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