

AHMED DRAIA UNIVERSITY OF ADRAR  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS AND LANGUAGE



## British Colonial Rule in Nigeria (1900-1960)

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master's  
Degree in Literature and Civilization**

**Presented by:**

Abdallah Bassidi

**Supervised by:**

Ms. Nadia Mansouri

### **Board of Examiners**

Prof. Aziz Mostefaoui

President and Examiner

Ms. Nadia Mansouri

Supervisor and Rapporteur

Dr. Mohammed Yaichi

Examiner

**Academic Year: 2021 – 2022**

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and  
Scientific Research  
University Ahmed Draia of Adrar  
The central library



وزارة التعليم العالي و  
البحث العلمي  
جامعة أحمد دراية - أدرار  
المكتبة المركزية  
مصلحة البحث البيئيوغرافي

## شهادة الترخيص بالإيداع

انا الأستاذ(ة): نادية منصوري

المشرف مذكرة الماستر الموسومة بـ: British Colonial Rule in Algeria (1900 - 60)

من إنجاز الطالب(ة): باسم عبد الله

و الطالب(ة):

كلية: العلوم والآداب واللغات

القسم: اللغات

التخصص: لغويات ودراسات

تاريخ تقييم / مناقشة: 2022/05/23

أشهد ان الطلبة قد قاموا بالتعديلات والتصحيحات المطلوبة من طرف لجنة التقييم / المناقشة، وان المطابقة بين  
النسخة الورقية والإلكترونية استوفت جميع شروطها.  
وإمكانهم إيداع النسخ الورقية (02) والإلكترونية (PDF).

- امضاء المشرف:

ادرار في: 05/06/2022

مساعداً لرئيس القسم:

كروثيو أميمت  
رئيس قسم الإنجليزية  
بمدرسة كلية الآداب والعلوم



# **Dedication**

*To my family.*

## **Acknowledgments**

This research could not have been done without the guidance and support of Ms. Nadia Mansouri. I wish to express my deepest gratitude for her assistance and patience.

Equal thanks are directed to the members of the jury for the insightful comments they would provide on this paper.

I would also like to thank the professors and workers of the department of English for their hard work and efforts to enrich our faculty.

## **Abstract**

The Partition of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was concluded by the establishment of British colonial rule in West Africa. Nigeria was one of the British colonies where Britain started with the annexation of Lagos and later established the Northern Protectorate followed by the Southern Protectorate. In order to avoid any contact with Africans, the colonial government adopted the indirect rule system. After that, Britain amalgamated the two protectorates to form the present-day Nigeria. However, the emergence of Nigerian nationalism urged the colonial government to make administrative and constitutional changes which led to the division of the country into three regions. Thus, Nigeria could not achieve independence until 1960. The aim of this research is to attempt to evaluate the colonial rule in Nigeria through the political changes brought by the British colonial authorities regarding the administrative and constitutional issues. It also evaluates the Nigerian nationalist movement's reactions to the colonial regime. The research focuses on the period between 1900 and 1960 which represents an interesting period in Nigeria's history as a link between the pre-colonial system and the new federal government. The period sheds light on the British colonial policies after 1900, as well as, the Nigerian nationalism and the political struggle after the Second World War. The colonial rule ended after a long political conflict between the colonial government and the leaders of the political parties in Nigeria who eventually succeeded to lead their country to full independence.

## **Keywords:**

Nigeria, British colonization, 1914 Amalgamation, Indirect Rule, Nationalism, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Constitutional Conference.

## **Résumé**

La partition de l'Afrique après la conférence de Berlin de 1884-85 conclue par l'établissement de la domination coloniale britannique en Nigeria. La Grande-Bretagne a commencé avec l'annexion de Lagos et en suite établi le protectorat du nord suivi du protectorat du sud. Afin d'éviter tout contact avec les Africains, le gouvernement colonial a adopté le système de gouvernement indirect. Après cela, elle a fusionné les deux protectorats pour former l'actuel Nigeria. Cependant l'émergence du nationalisme nigérian a poussé le gouvernement colonial à opérer une série de changements administratifs et constitutionnels qui ont conduit à la division du pays en trois régions. Ainsi, le Nigeria n'a pu accéder à l'indépendance jusqu'à 1960. Le but de cette recherche est d'évaluer la domination coloniale au Nigeria à travers les changements politiques apportés par la colonisation britannique compte tenu des réformes administratives et constitutionnelles. Elle évalue également les réactions du mouvement nationaliste nigérian face au régime colonial. La recherche se concentre sur la période entre 1900 et 1960 qui représentent une période intéressante dans l'histoire du Nigeria en tant que lien entre le système précolonial et le nouveau gouvernement fédéral. La période met en lumière les politiques après 1900, ainsi que le nationalisme nigérian et le lutte politique après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. La domination coloniale a pris fin après un long conflit politique entre le gouvernement colonial et les dirigeants des partis politiques qui avaient réussi à obtenir leur pleine indépendance.

### **Mots clés:**

Nigeria, colonisation britannique, fusion de 1914, gouvernement indirect, nationalism, Nnamdi Azikiwe, conférence constitutionnelle.

## ملخص

اختتم تقسيم إفريقيا بعد مؤتمر برلين في 1984-1985 بتأسيس الحكم الإستعماري البريطاني في غرب أفريقيا. كانت نيجيريا إحدى المستعمرات حيث بدأت بريطانيا بضم لاغوس ثم أنشأت فيما بعد المحمية الشمالية تليها المحمية الجنوبية. ومن أجل تجنب أي اتصال مع الأفارقة، تبنت الحكومة الإستعمارية نظام الحكم غير المباشر. بعد ذلك قامت بريطانيا بدمج المستعمرتين لتشكيل نيجيريا الحالية. ورغم أن ظهور القومية النيجيرية حث الحكومة الإستعمارية على إجراء مجموعة من التغييرات الإدارية والدستورية والتي أدت إلى تقسيم البلاد إلى ثلاث أقاليم، إلا أن نيجيريا لم تتمكن من تحقيق الإستقلال إلى غاية سنة 1960. يهدف البحث إلى تقييم الحكم الإستعماري في نيجيريا من خلال التغييرات السياسية التي أحدثها الإستعمار البريطاني مع اعتبار الإصلاحات الإدارية والدستورية. كما يهدف إلى تقييم ردود فعل الحركة القومية النيجيرية على نظام الإستعمار. الفترة التي يركز عليها البحث ما بين 1900 و 1960 تمثل أهمية كبيرة في تاريخ نيجيريا كهمزة وصل بين نظام ما قبل الإستعمار والحكومة الفدرالية الجديدة. كما إنها تسلط الضوء على السياسات الإستعمارية البريطانية بعد 1900، والقومية النيجيرية بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية. انتهى الحكم الإستعماري بعد صراع سياسي طويل بين الحكومة البريطانية وقادة الأحزاب السياسية الذين نجحوا في تحقيق الإستقلال الكامل لنيجيريا.

## الكلمات المفتاحية:

نيجيريا، الإستعمار البريطاني، إندماج 1914، الحكم غير المباشر، القومية، نامدي أزيكيوي، المؤتمر الدستوري.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>List of Acronyms</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>List of Maps and Figures</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>General Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Historical Background to Nigeria (1851-1900)</b>	
Introduction.....	4
1-An Introduction to Nigeria.....	4
1.1-Geography.....	4
1.2-Resources.....	5
1.3-Population.....	6
2-Pre-Colonial Political Organization in Nigeria.....	6
2.1-The Ruler in Pre-Colonial Political Organization.....	8
2.2-The Advisory Council in Pre-Colonial Political Organization.....	8
3-The Establishment of a British Colony in Nigeria.....	9
3.1-Lagos.....	9
3.2-The Niger Delta.....	10
3.3-Proclamation of the Northern Protectorate.....	11
Conclusion.....	12
<b>Chapter Two: Administrative and Political Changes After 1900</b>	
Introduction.....	14
1-Administrative Changes from 1900 to 1914.....	14
1.1-The Creation of Southern Nigerian.....	14
1.2-The Amalgamation of 1914.....	15



1.3-The Creation of Nigerian Council.....	16
2-Indirect Rule System.....	17
2.1-Indirect Rule System in Northern Nigeria.....	18
2.2- Indirect Rule System in Western Nigeria.....	19
2.3- Indirect Rule System in Eastern Nigeria.....	19
3-Constitutional Changes till 1951.....	21
3.1-The Clifford Constitution (1922).....	21
3.2-The Richards Constitution (1946).....	22
3.3-The Mcpherson Constitution of 1951.....	23
Conclusion.....	24
 <b>Chapter Three: Political Struggle after World War II</b>	
Introduction.....	26
1-Emergence of Nigerian Nationalism.....	26
1.1-Political Parties.....	27
1.2-Azikiwe’s Return to Nigeria.....	29
2-Nationalist Struggle to Achieve Independence.....	30
2.1-British Attitude toward Nationalism.....	30
2.2-Negotiations and Declaring the Independence.....	33
Conclusion.....	35
<b>General Conclusion.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## **List of Acronyms**

AG: Action Group

NCN: National Council of Nigeria

NCNC: National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons

NCNC: National Council of Nigerian Citizens

NEC: National Emergency Committee

NIP: National Independence Party

NNDP: Nigerian National Democratic Party

NPC: Northern People's Congress

NUS: Nigerian Union of Students

NYM: Nigerian Youth Movement

RNC: Royal Niger Company

## **List of Maps and Figures**

Map 1: Nigeria's Boundaries and Main Ethnic Groups.	05
Map 2: The Three Federal Regions Created by British Colonial Authorities.	33
Figure 1: Administration Organization 1920-1951.	20

### **General Introduction**

By the end of the nineteenth century, Africa witnessed various colonial tensions and conflicts between the Western European countries which led to the partition of this continent through the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Some parts of Africa became under British control including Nigeria, as the largest and richest colony in West Africa, where Britain followed an expansionist colonial policy which led to the emergence of nationalism that called for independence through the political struggle.

Britain established her colonial rule after the annexation of Lagos in 1861 which was the first step toward the effective occupation of the Oil Rivers and the proclamation of Northern Nigeria. By 1900, the large extent of British territories urged Britain to make new plans. Therefore, the colonial rule in Nigeria witnessed a set of administrative and political changes, such as the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 under one single unit. In addition to the Indirect Rule policy, the colonial government made successive constitutional reforms after 1920. Actually, some changes that took place in the colonial policies reflected the British attitude toward the nationalist movement and the British desire to limit its activities.

Even though nationalism emerged during the inter-war period, it became a political factor which led to the creation of the major political parties in Nigeria. It also took new phase after the return of Nnamdi Azikiwe to Nigeria. However, the constitutional changes generated the regionalization of the nationalist movement, especially by encouraging the ethnic nationalism through the rise of regional parties.

This research focuses on a significant period which holds a historical importance in Nigeria. It starts from the first establishment of the British colonization in Nigeria until

1960 when the new federation became independent. The research follows a descriptive and analytical approach to examine the British colonial rule in Nigeria and evaluate the constitutional and administrative changes regarding the political situation in Nigeria. The research also aims to answer three main questions. First, how far had the colonial rule succeeded in achieving its goals? How did the Nigerians face the British colonization regarding the political situation in Nigeria? What were the struggling political bodies that led the country to the independence?

To answer the three previous questions, this work used several sources (English and Arabic) in order to ensure the authenticity and objectivity of the research data. This research consists of three chapters. The first chapter provides a historical background to the pre-colonial era. It also describes the pre-colonial political organizations in Nigeria until the creation of the Northern Protectorate.

The second chapter evaluates and analyzes the administrative and political changes after 1900 under the British colonial rule. Furthermore, it examines the indirect rule system and the constitutional changes in Nigeria from the amalgamation of 1914 until the Mcpherson Constitution of 1951.

Finally, the third chapter deals with the political struggle after the Second World War. It explains mainly the nationalist movement and its struggle to achieve independence in addition to the British attitude towards Nigerian Nationalism. Moreover, it sheds light on the major political parties during the successive constitutional reforms and conferences before independence.

# Chapter One

Historical Background

to Nigeria:

1851-1900

## Introduction

Nigeria is a rich country with broad assortment of natural resources due to its diverse geography. Thus, the country witnessed great European scramble, concluded by the British colonization in which Britain faced some difficulties to establish her colonial rule because of the traditional structure of Nigerian societies and the political system of the main ethnic groups. However, the British focus was the annexation of Lagos and later taking control of Oil Rivers and Delta Niger.

### 1. An Introduction to Nigeria

Interest in colonizing areas cannot be dissociated from the availability of resources and access thereto, and the geographical characteristics. Therefore, it is useful to identify the location of the country under study, Nigeria<sup>1</sup>, and its attractive resources.

#### 1.1. Geography

Nigeria is the largest country in West Africa extending over 923,768 square Km, roughly the size of Algeria. The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, to the west by Benin, to the north by Niger and to the east by Cameroon (See Map 1). It stretches about 700 miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north, covering an area between 2 and 15 E longitudes, and between 4 and 14 N latitudes.

---

<sup>1</sup> The name was given in 1899 by the colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain.

Map 01: Nigeria's Boundaries and Main Ethnic Groups.



**Source:** Falola, Toyin, and Ann. Genova, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*, The Scarecrow Press: UK, 2009, 17.

## 1.2. Resources

Nigeria possesses a broad assortment of natural resources and over forty types of mineral wealth including coal, iron, tin, dolomite, copper, zinc, silver and small amount of gold and diamonds have been found in several places in Northern Nigeria (like Edo, Kaduna, Ebonyi, Oyo, Katsina state, Maru, Anka, Gurmana and Osun state).



Until recent years, agriculture had been the major part of most Nigerians' economic activities and way of life. For example, Nigeria produces food crops (yams, cassava, bananas, rice, millet, cocoa and palm oil) and non-food products (cotton, rubber and timber). These products are both for domestic consumption and for export.

Another important natural resource of Nigeria is its abundant labor force. It is the most populous nation in Africa with a population of over 16 million in 1900.

### **1.3. Population**

On the western coast of Africa, Nigeria has a diverse geography. However, Nigeria's most diverse feature is its people. It includes over 250 different ethno-linguistic groups. In 1900, Northern Nigeria population was 8.5 million while Southern Nigeria had 7.5 million inhabitants.

The majority of population consists of three main groups; the Hausa in the north which forms 21 percent of the population. Then, the Yoruba inhabit the southwestern region and form 20 percent of the population. Finally, the Igbo in the southeastern form only 17 percent of the population. In addition, other ethnic groups exist, such as Fulani, Ijaw, Konuri and the Ibibio. Therefore, more than 250 different indigenous languages are spoken in Nigeria.

## **2. Pre-Colonial Political Organization in Nigeria**

Before the arrival of the British in the late nineteenth century, the pre-colonial epoch was a static era in which the political system existed in various forms. There were different types of state and societies. Broadly, these political systems fell into two categories. The first is the centralized state system (the Yoruba Kingdom and the Sokoto Empire) and the second is referred to as the stateless society (no centralization such as the Ibo). In general, the history of Nigeria's pre-colonial area was turbulent, with periods when

empires took control over large areas, and other periods when the states were more fragmented.

The Ibo had an estimated population of five million people at the time of their contact with Europeans after the 1830s (Onyeozili and Obi 30). They had a fragmented political system in which there was no centralization of power and authority. The term “acephalous” used to describe the organization of the Ibo political system in which citizens generally played a major role in decision-making.

The Yoruba Kingdoms were headed by “the Oba” who had a special name known as the “Alaafin”. After the Oba’s death, his son was not allowed to succeed him. The Yoruba political system was republican. In the traditional Yoruba society, the governmental system was based on a loose monarchical structure and highly democratic.

The Hausa states were not unified. However, they practiced a centralized system since the Fulani jihad of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mayowa 20). The Hausa-Fulani traditional or pre-colonial system was known as a centralized government. The Caliphate was divided into emirates headed by an Emir. The latter was assisted in the administration by a number of advisers. The northern society was a complex one (Johnston 166).

Despite the fact that the different ethnic groups had various political institutions, it was popular for each town or collection of towns to have a recognized ruler who could be subordinate to the ruler of a larger polity. The analysis of the pre-colonial organization takes in consideration two essential elements; the ruler and the advisory council in each one of the three socio-political organizations which shed the light on the structure of their council and how laws were made in pre-colonial era.

## **2.1. The Ruler in Pre-Colonial Political Organization**

The ruler in traditional system had different rules which existed in each one of the three socio-political groups namely the Yoruba, the Hausa-Fulani and the Ibo. First, the ruler of Yoruba was called Oba whose office was hereditary in the same family but not always from father to son. The succeeding king was selected among several candidates according to his capacity, eligibility and popularity (Rahmani 23). The Oba was the final court with a role to deal with serious offences that attracted capital punishment such as, murder, burglary, land case, witchcraft, profaning the deities and homicide (Mai-Lafia 23).

Second, the ruler of the Hausa-Fulani was acknowledged as Caliph. He had the divine right to rule and the responsibility of making laws in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic laws. He performed legislative and executive functions as being the sole political leader and the final judge. The Caliph was chosen by the state council (Rahmani 23).

Thirdly, the Ibo ruler or chief was simply a ritual functionary. He was vested with only moral authority rather than political leadership because legislative work was done by different traditional institutions (village assembly and council of elders). The chief was chosen on the basis of his wisdom, age and experience (Rahmani 24).

## **2.2. The Advisory Council in Pre-Colonial Political Organization**

The Oyo Mesi in Yoruba is the advisory council of the Oba. It comprised seven members (kingmakers) headed by the Bashorun (prime minister). The Oyo Mesi is a privy council in Yoruba traditional state made up of the most powerful noblemen in imperial Oyo. The Oyo Mesi was stronger than Alaafin and could also overrule any decision made by Alaafin which was not acceptable to it. If Alaafin disagreed with Oyo Mesi, the only option opened to him was to commit suicide (Mai-Lafia 23). There were certain checks

and balances to the power (Rahmani 25). The executive council members also formed the legislature. Laws were made by the Oba and his council of advisers (Mai-Lafia 23).

The Hausa-Fulani had the Magalisar Sarki to assist the caliph in managing the empire. A number of wazirs, kind of prime minister and officials should be capable to undertake their responsibilities (Rahmani 25). Appointment to the council was elective. All the executive and legislative functions were performed by the caliph who was assisted in the administration of emirates by a number of advisers (Sarkin Fada, Waziri, Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji...).

By contrast, the Ibo village had no council to assist the chief since laws were made by the villagers themselves. The affairs of the village, as it is mentioned before, were the reserve of various competences. The legislative and executive work was done by the council of elders and the village assembly (Mai-Lafia 24).

### **3. The Establishment of a British Colony in Nigeria**

This traditional pattern of ruling was to be affected by the intrusion and direct involvement of Europeans from the bombardment of 1851 in Lagos, the Niger Delta conflicts and Northern areas proclamation in which British Government took the first move towards establishing the colonial rule.

#### **3.1. Lagos**

The bombardment of Lagos by John Bee Croft in 1851 was the clear indication of the British interest in Nigeria (Ezeogidi 5). On the one hand, the British Government tried to end the slave trade and introduce a legitimate trade in Africa. On the other hand, British intruders had also to find and secure a stable market and interest for their fellow citizens.

In 1861, after a formal treaty had been signed with Consul John Beecroft, the annexation of Lagos was justified as an aim to develop trade and protect the natives from the slave traders. The annexation was pre-planned as an inevitable consequence of the bombardment. In 1862, Lagos was created as a Colony or Settlement (Burns 131). Thus, the proclamation of Lagos was the first step toward the British official intervention to extend their rule. This step led Britain to penetrate easily into Yoruba land after a series of inter-tribal wars.

By 1897, the British Government increased her control of forests in Lagos. The Colonial Administration had a valid point weighing the arguments for legislative control of the forests. On the one hand, the lack of control might be resulted in the draining of the merchantable timber trees and wild rubber plants that were the basic export commodities from which some revenue had been derived. On the other hand, the local communities were opposed to the legislative control. They feared of using the legislative measures by Colonial Administration to control the forests exploitation to serve the colonial interests and European commercial firms more than the African forest owners themselves (Egboh 90).

### **3.2. The Niger Delta**

The competition between Europeans led Britain to discover new plans and routes that increased traders' activities through the Niger Delta. The control of this river was necessary for Britain, for the growth of legal trade, the fight against the slave trade and the conclusion of treaties with local chiefs to impose their protection on the areas of the Niger Basin under the guise of eliminating the merchants (الجمل و إبراهيم عبدالرزاق 30).

The first major clash between Britain and an African state under her protection occurred in the Oil Rivers Protectorate. In 1891, the extent to which Britain had been

involved in the administration of the Protectorate by her representative on the spot was recognized in the up-grading of his title from Consul to Commissioner and Consul-General. Claude Maxwell Macdonald<sup>2</sup> was appointed first Commissioner of the Protectorate, which was re-named the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893. True to the character of his earlier report, he pursued a policy of peaceful penetration, and only in 1894, when his deputy Ralph Moor was in command, did Britain resume an aggressive policy towards one of the chiefs under her protection (Crowder 121). Considering the previous attitudes and actions, the British government was planning to take a step towards the political control of the Niger delta and its hinterland through the device of the protectorate (Flint 528).

### **3.3. Proclamation of the Northern Protectorate**

The occupation of Northern Nigeria was considerably less complex than that of the South. For Goldie<sup>3</sup>, there were three factors that made it imperative to occupy the Emirates lying to the North. First, there was the danger of the French gaining a foothold on the navigable stretch of the Niger. Secondly, Nupe and Ilorin (two Emirates on his Northern frontier) were becoming increasingly hostile to his commercial ambitions. Thirdly, Ilorin proved to be a continual nuisance to the Lagos administration's newly won peace in Yorubaland (Rahmani 41). After conquering the two Emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate (Nupe and Ilorin), the eventual occupation of the rest of Northern Nigeria had become easy

---

<sup>2</sup> Colonal Claude Maxwell Macdonald (1852-1915) was a British soldier and diplomat, best known for his services in China and Japan.

<sup>3</sup> George Dashwood Taubman Goldie (1846-1925) was a British colonial administrator and organizer who created the Royal Niger Company.

to be undertaken by the Royal Niger Company (RNC)<sup>4</sup>. This led to Britain accepting direct responsibility for “effective occupation” (Rahmani 41).

With the dissolution of the administrative authority of the RNC in 1899 and its assumption by the British Colonial Office on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1900, Frederick Lugard bravely declared to the British population of Lokoja; “We are charged to hold in peace and good order this vast territory, no mean Part of that Empire. Whatever may betide elsewhere, we have a charge to fulfill” (Crowder 132).

After assuming direct control of the Royal Niger Company’s territories, the British government renamed the northern areas as the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Frederick Lugard was appointed as the High Commissioner of the newly created protectorate and read the proclamation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1900.

## **Conclusion**

The creation of Lagos Colony in 1862 was the first step towards the effective occupation of the Oil Rivers. Although Britain took control of Lagos, following the proclamation of Northern Nigeria, it was imperative to the British Government to establish a good colonial rule to deal with the pre-colonial political organizations which existed in the three socio-political groups at that time. However, that colonial rule could not be achieved without making some administrative changes and taking political decisions in order to complete the consolidation and the expansion of British authority over the territory later known as Nigeria

---

<sup>4</sup> It was formed in 1879 as the United African Company and renamed to Royal Niger Company in 1886. See Baker. Geoffrey L *Trade Winds on the Niger: Saga of the Royal Niger Company*.

# Chapter Two

Administrative and  
Political Changes after  
1900



**Introduction**

By 1900, the colonial rule in Nigeria knew distinguished changes, both administrative and political. The former began since the creation of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900 followed by the amalgamation of 1914, which led to the creation of the Nigerian Council in addition to the indirect rule policy. However, the latter focused on the constitutional changes, especially after the 1920s.

**1. Administrative Changes from 1900 to 1914**

The British administrative changes in Nigeria started with the unification of Lagos with the southern territories which led to the creation of southern Nigeria. The unification of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by Frederick Lugard<sup>5</sup>, the father of indirect rule, resulted in the foundation of the Nigerian Council of 1914. All these unifications led British officials to govern through their administrative system.

**1.1. The Creation of Southern Nigeria**

The Southern protectorate had been governed by a high commissioner since its establishment. In 1900, Rulph Moor was the first high commissioner when the protectorate was transferred from the foreign office to the colonial office. It had neither a Legislative nor an Executive Council. In 1903, Sir William Egerton was named the governor of Lagos colony which included much of the Yorubaland.

The Colonial Office decided to merge the Lagos colony with the protectorate of southern Nigeria in which Egerton was appointed high commissioner in 1904. He served in both positions until 1906 when the two territories were officially united to form the new

---

<sup>5</sup> Frederick John Dealtry Lugard (1858-1945) : born in Madras in India. He was educated at Rossall School and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. See Jan. Palmwoski, *Dictionary of Twentieth Century World History*, Oxford University Press, 1997, P 374.

colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. At that time, Egerton was appointed Governor to hold the position until 1912.

In the new colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria, the old Lagos became the western “province”. However, the former southern Nigeria protectorate was divided into two provinces; a central province whose capital was Warri and an Eastern province whose capital was Calabar.

## **1.2. Amalgamation of 1914**

In 1906, Lugard was convinced to unify the two separate British protectorates in Nigeria under one single administration. The British government knew that if the amalgamation were to happen, the income of northern Nigeria would increase the economic prosperity of the southern Nigeria. At the same time, it would also enable the development of the railway system which was used in all countries. So, the administration expenses could be reduced by standardizing the services of the two protectorates. In his book, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, Lugard said: “but the amalgamation of Nigeria, though supported by the Governors of the coastal administrations, was not decided upon till 1912, when Mr. Harcourt charged me with the task” (100).

The amalgamation of 1914 was to happen only because of Lugard’s genius. In 1911, John Anderson of the colonial office wrote Lugard, “We are anxious to amalgamate the Nigerian Administration. We are agreed that you are the man if only you will take it for sufficient time ...to give it a good start” (Riddick 14). Lugard accepted Anderson’s invitation and returned to Nigeria. While preparing for the consolidation, Lugard spent 1912 and 1913 as governor of the two protectorates.

Sir Frederick Lugard was planning to establish the same method of colonial rule in the two protectorates and install a public works program which could help to bind the colony together. Ultimately, Lugard hoped to tie the colony together in a single administrative entity. However, the coming of the First World War altered many of Lugard's objectives (Riddick 19).

### **1.3. The Creation of the Nigerian Council**

After the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorates, Sir Frederick Lugard put the two protectorates under lieutenant governors and appointed an administrator for the Lagos colony. He also created the Nigerian Council of 1914 (later the legislative council) which contained 36 members, officials and non-officials, in order to advise the governor on legislature. Since the council was the first body that brought Nigerians from different parts together, its creation was a milestone in the constitutional development in Nigeria.

The council included 23 officials all were European members and 13 non-official members. Among the non-officials were 7 European members and 6 Nigerians. However, the 23 officials were also members of the executive council, residents and political secretaries of the southern and northern provinces. The 7 non-official Europeans were the representatives of banking, mining, businesses and shipping. The 6 Nigerian members in the council were the Alaafin of Oyo as representative of the west, two emirs from the north including the Sultan of Sokoto, one from Lagos, one from Calabar and one from Benin (Crowder 204).

Having no executive authority and force of law, the council was simply an advisory body. The presence of the Nigerians at the council's conferences was poor. The council did

not evoke the interest of the non-official members in which most of them kept away from the meetings. For example; the representatives of the north, the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Kano never attended a single meeting and later the council became non-functional. Indeed, the council was one of Lugard's ideas which seemed appropriate on paper but, in reality, served no other purpose than window-dressing (Cookey 541).

## **2. Indirect Rule System**

From 1900 to 1906, the most significant change in the history of Nigeria was Lugard's introduction of indirect rule as a means of colonial administration. Indirect rule is a form of government in which the British colonial master ruled by using people's traditional political institutions (chiefs) to manage the protectorate under the supervision and control of British government officials. An international seminar on colonial government organized by the Institute of African Studies separated two of these: 'Indirect Rule' (with capitals), which it equated with the system obtained in the emirates, and 'indirect rule' (without capitals), which it equated with the system existing in Southern Nigeria before Lugard's amalgamation in 1914 (Afigbo 6).

The policy of government was that the indigenous rulers or chiefs should govern their people as dependent authorities. As Lugard conceived it, "Indirect rule was a system of administration, which not only relied on the indigenous authorities for local government, but was constantly goading them to improvement" (Crowder 217). While indigenous rulers were controlled by the British government in policy and matters of importance, their people were controlled in accordance with that policy by themselves.

For the purpose of local government, the use of indigenous political institutions was contingent on certain modifications on them. These modifications fell into two categories:

first, modifications of aspects of traditional government that were repugnant to European ideas of what constituted good government; for example, the abolition of human sacrifice or the abandonment of some methods of treating criminals. The second category referred to the modifications that were designed to ensure the achievement of the purposes of British colonial rule, such as the introduction of taxes (Mai-Lafia 34).

Indirect rule system had different features. First of all, the traditional political system was respected by the British. So, the traditional rulers and chiefs were used in governing people and they were given exalted position in the administration. The customs and traditions played a significant role in the administration (Mai-Lafia 32). Second, officers were appointed where there were no traditional chiefs or rulers. Thus, the system did not disrupt the existing traditional system of administration and political order. Third, the native courts, police and prisons were utilized (Maduabum 81).

Besides its success in other countries, the Indirect Rule system was adopted for several reasons, such as the lack of British personnel, the lack of fund and the cheapness of the system forced Lugard to adopt it in Nigeria. In addition, the involvement of traditional rulers reduced the language difficulties in large areas that had poor transport and communication system. Moreover, Lugard introduced indirect rule system in order to satisfy their economic needs (Mai-Lafia 33).

### **2.1. Indirect Rule System in Northern Nigeria**

The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was divided into provinces under British officials called “residents”. Provinces were also divided into districts placed under district commissioners. The residents and the district commissioners had the authority to use

native treasuries, retain the traditional executive officials and enforce through them the laws of the high commissioner of the protectorate.

The system worked out well because of the traditional chiefs' cooperation (Osuntokun 6). Since the system did not disrupt the existing tradition and culture, they had no problem to deal with the British officials. It was successful also due to the centralized administration, the pre-colonial political structure and the existence of taxation system. So, the system of indirect rule caused them no embarrassment. Though fully elaborated in northern Nigeria, the indirect rule system was extended to the South (Hallouch 259).

## **2.2. Indirect Rule System in Western Nigeria**

Unlike the North, there was no absolute centralized authority in Yoruba land. The Oba was responsible only for his senior chiefs in the administration of the kingdom. The position of Oba, as spiritual head, did not allow him to appear publicly. This position always made it difficult for the Oba to act successfully in the British administration.

The system was a partial failure in Western Nigeria because of the limited powers of Obas and the lack of highly centralized administration in the traditional political system of the Yoruba (Osuntokun 119). In addition, the absence of organized system of taxation contributed to the failure of indirect rule in the western part in which the educated elite criticized and rejected the system mainly because they were not allowed to take part in the administration (Maduabum 86).

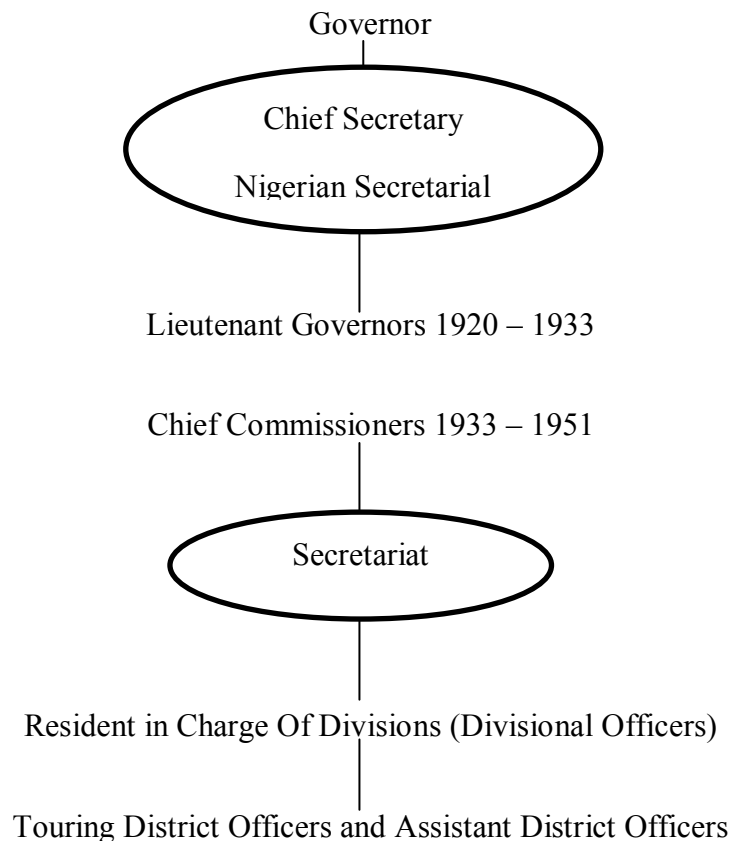
## **2.3. Indirect Rule in Eastern Nigeria**

Unlike the West, the system of indirect rule failed completely in Eastern Nigeria because the Igbo had no centralized administration in the traditional system. Another major

reason of indirect rule failure was the opposition of educated elites. The introduction of tax system and indirect rule found no real people of local influence and authority, such as; the emirs in Northern part and the Oba in Western part.

In his way to solve the problem of single ruler, Frederick Lugard appointed the traditional rulers who were called “Warrant Chiefs”. In practice, indirect rule alienated traditional authorities from their subject populations through their association with the colonial regime. Furthermore, traditional rulers found that they maintained their power at the orders of the colonial officers and later found themselves ousted and replaced by more malleable chiefs (Falola and Matthew 110).

Figure 1: Administration Organization 1920-1951.



**Source:** Isaac Utuk, Efiog. *Britain’s Colonial Administrations and Developments 1861-1960*. 1975. Portland State University, 19.

### 3. Constitutional Changes till 1951

The focus of the British colonial rule was not only on the administrative side, but also took a set of constitutional reforms in order to decrease the nationalist movement activities. This chapter sheds light on three constitutions starting with the constitution of Clifford in 1922.

#### 3.1. The Clifford Constitution (1922)

The Clifford Constitution was adopted in 1922. It took the name of the then governor of Nigeria, Hugh Clifford, who came after Lugard. The Constitution abolished Lugard's Nigerian Council to introduce a new legislative council, executive council and elective principle. In the new legislative council, Northern Nigeria was not represented. However, by means of proclamations, the power to legislate for the North was retained by the governor general (Gboyega 51).

The legislative council consisted of 46 members. Including the governor, 27 of the British members were officials. The other 19 members were non-officials in which 15 of them, who represented commercial and mining interests, were selected by the governor and only 10 of them were Nigerians. The rest 4 non-official (colonists) members were elected; 3 represented Lagos and 1 represented Calabar (Osuntokun 308).

The constitution also established an executive council which consisted of 10 ex-official members who were principal officials of the government. It was just an advisory body to the governor who were vested with wide power. However, the Nigerians were excluded from the executive council (Gboyega 50).



The main feature of the constitution was the introduction of elective principle. In 1923, the creation of the first party in Nigeria was as a result of introducing the elective principle. In addition, the legislative council introduced voting as a means of taking decisions which led later to the growth of political parties.

### **3.2. The Richards Constitution (1946)**

The constitution was named according to Arthur Frederick Richards who was the governor of Nigeria from 1943 to 1948 (Rahmani 83). It replaced the Clifford Constitution of 1922 that was highly criticized for bringing sectionalism into the Nigerian government. These criticisms, in fact, led the colonial government to introduce the new constitution of Richards in 1946.

In 1943, the governor of Nigeria at that time, Sir Bernard Bourdillon left the office. Since 1939, when the Northern and Southern protectorates became provinces and the latter was divided into Eastern and Western, the Nigerian nationalists asked him to give them a new befitting constitution. However, Bourdillon issued a memorandum on the Nigerian political development which made useful proposals to introduce another constitution. These proposals were the basis of Richards' constitution (Mai-Lafia 44).

In March 1946, the governor Richards presented the draft constitution to the legislative council of Nigeria to become the new one which came to force in January 1947. However, the main aim of the Richards constitution was to promote national unity, secure greater participation for Nigerians in the administration of their affairs and to create political and constitutional links between the legislative council and the native authorities (Mai-Lafia 44).

For the first time in the history of the country, the constitution allowed the majority unofficial members in the Nigerian legislative council (Mai-Lafia 44). It was made up of 44 members in which only 16 members were officials and 28 were unofficial members. However, the main feature of the constitution was the establishment of a single legislative council for the whole country (Rahmani 86). The constitution also introduced regional council, house of assembly and the house of chiefs for the north (Mai-Lafia 44).

### **3.3. Mcpherson Constitution of 1951**

As it was seen as mere imposition without any prior consultation, the constitution of Richards was widely rejected by the nationalists. It was intended to last for nine years but it was replaced by the constitution of 1951 which was named after its author, John Mcpherson, who became the governor of Nigeria after Richards (Mai-Lafia 45). In order not to repeat the mistakes that led to the criticism of Richards' constitution, Governor Mcpherson put his proposals for the public opinion and widespread consultation from 1948 to 1951. The drafting of the constitution was expressed at districts, provincial and regional levels (Mai-Lafia 45).

Unlike the constitution of Richards, the Mcpherson Constitution created a central executive council. Furthermore, the constitution introduced a new central law-making body named the House of Representatives in which each region was represented. For instance; 68 seats for the North while the East and the West had 34 seats for each (Mai-Lafia 46). Moreover, it appointed the natives as ministers and the central legislature was renamed the House of Representatives. Because both the legislative and the executive council included more natives than the previous one, the constitution received a wide acceptance. However, the constitution encouraged ethnic nationalism which led to the emergence of political parties along tribal lines (Mai-Lafia 47).

**Conclusion**

The large extent of British territories urged the colonial authorities to make new plans and create different political and administrative policies. The unification of Nigeria led to the development of colonial administration starting with indirect rule through traditional authorities. These administrative changes resulted from the introduction of new constitutions and other political developments at the level of the colonial government. So, the political struggle took new phase resulted in the emergence of new bodies and national activists.

# Chapter Three

Political Struggle

after

World War II

## Introduction

After the Second World War, the nationalist movement brought about the emergence of several political parties which contributed tremendously to the achievement of Nigeria's independence. The growth of Nigerian nationalism led the colonial government to move differently by presenting successive constitutional reforms and holding several conferences in order to keep pace with it and contain it.

### 1. Emergence of Nigerian Nationalism

During the Interwar Period, nationalism became a political factor in Nigeria. It derived both from a broad pan-Africanism and an older political particularism. At first, the emergence of a new class of Africans who began to think of themselves as Nigerians rather than Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba, promoted largely the tribal consciousness and the spirit of nationalism in general (Crowder 209). Prominent nationalists and politicians, such as Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Balewa, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello and others, played a major role for understanding the contribution to decolonization and nationalism especially by the late 1930s (Falola and Aderinto 50).

In the 1920s, Nigerians began to raise the political consciousness and form a variety of associations and organizations that brought lawyers and educated elites together, for instance; the Nigerian Youth Movement,<sup>6</sup> the Nigerian Union of Teachers and Nigerian Union of Students. There was an effort to bring different Yoruba sub-groups into a modern pan-Yoruba awareness to build a Nigerian nationalism (Richard 43). The nationalist energy

---

<sup>6</sup> The NYM was an influential organization established in 1934 by Samuel Akinsanya and Ernest Ikoli. See Toyin Falola, Ann. Genova, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*, p 261.

generated by Herbert Macaulay<sup>7</sup>, for the 1923 election, was not rescued until a new educated generation took over control of the nationalist movement (Crowder 217).

By 1930, the sense of nationalism in Nigeria saw powerful stirrings. The first prominence of the two men Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo, who were inspired by Herbert Macaulay, played leading roles in the history of Nigeria over the next thirty years (Richard 43). In addition, anti-colonial activities of Nigerian students abroad also highlighted the tension between Nigerians and the British in the legislative chambers and even during constitutional conferences (Falola and Saheed 50). In the interwar period, one of the most important determinants character in the Nigerian nationalist movement was the lack of dialogue between the colonial administration and the growing educated elites (Crowder 219).

### 1.1. Political Parties

Political nationalism was certainly the most studied form of nationalism in Nigeria. In their book *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History*, Falola. T and S. Aderinto said: “Historians have documented how educated elites formed political parties, voluntary organizations, pressure groups, and other types of association aimed at terminating colonial rule” (50). The three major parties were given an opportunity to gain power to put one group firmly in control in each region. It undoubtedly helped to keep the parties together after 1951 (Kilson 226).

The first political party of its kind to be established in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Democratic Party. It was founded in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay in Lagos. At that

---

<sup>7</sup> Macaulay Herbert Helas (1884-1946) : born in Lagos. He was one of the first Nigerians to receive a scholarship in Great Britain. He was the founder of Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923. Macaulay ran a newspaper called the *Lagos Daily News* which was written in English. He is affectionately referred to as the “father of Nigerian nationalism”.

time, the NNDP was the most powerful political party in Nigeria which won, in 1923, 1928 and 1933, all the three Lagos seats in the legislative council. Moreover, it led to the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon in 1944 (Falola and Ann 257).

Secondly, to bring the different political and tribal bodies under a common organization, the Nigerian Union of Students convened a mass meeting in June 1944. The NUS called, in August 1944, the patriotic organization to attend the inauguration of the National Council of Nigeria (NCN). By January 1945, the NCN comprised 87 unions including three Cameroonians. Thus, its name was changed to the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (Rahmani 76). At the first meeting, Macaulay was elected as its president and Azikiwe as its general secretary. The NCNC dominated the House of Assembly of the Eastern Region in 1951. It was one of the most important political parties in Nigeria because of the majority of its supporters. As a result of southern Cameroon splitting from Nigeria in 1959, its name was changed to the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (Falola and Ann 240).

Thirdly, a political party formed in March 1950 by Obafemi Awolowo was called the Action Group (AG). Its name took the idea that the AG was about action not only words. The party emerged out of a Yoruba cultural organization. The Action Group promoted the idea of “democratic socialism”. It put Awolowo as the region’s premier in 1952. It also dominated the political scene in the Western Region. However, in the southwestern Nigeria the opposition to the Action Group came widely from the NCNC which gained the majority of supporters. In the elections of the House of Representatives, the AG party was defeated by the NCNC (Falola and Ann 10).

Lastly, several federal and regional ministers who had been ejected from the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) formed the National Independence Party<sup>8</sup> in 1953 (NIP). The NIP joined the United National Party to oppose the NCNC and thereby supporting the Action Group. By contrast, the National Youth Movement, the Nigerian National Democratic Party and the Nigerian Union of Students tried to create a joint council<sup>9</sup> since the early 1940s (Coleman 260).

## 1.2. Azikiwe's Return to Nigeria

Nnamdi Azikiwe was one of Nigeria's most prominent Igbo political figures and nationalists who were merely inspired by Herbert Macaulay. He was born in Zungeru, Northern Nigeria, in 1904 and died in 1996. In addition to other qualifications, Azikiwe got a certificate in journalism and MA in political science. As a nationalist thinker and leader, his career began in 1925 when he left Nigeria to carry on his post-graduate studies in the United States (Falola and Ann 48).

In 1937, the return of Azikiwe to Nigeria was actually considered as the eclipse of a period of a distinguished nationalist zeal (Rahmani 73). Thus, the new nationalist phase was exemplified by the rise of his activities. After his return, Azikiwe started his newspaper *West Africa Pilot* as the voice of nationalist movement which called for educational and political reform, as well as, the end of colonial rule. He also participated in the Lagos Youth Movement. Moreover, he set up the NCNC in 1944 which was one of the major political parties in Nigeria.

---

<sup>8</sup> In 1954, the name of the party was changed to the United Nigeria Independent Party. The NIP failed to gain much support because it did not join other groups in the demand of "self-government" in 1956.

<sup>9</sup> Such as the National Emergency Committee (NEC) which was created in 1949 by members of the NCNC and the NYM.



As a political agitator and businessman, Azikiwe revealed subtle genius by using the tabloid newspaper as a rocket launcher against the colonial regime (كفي زاربو 859). His first political activity was to submit a memorandum to the British government after the issuance of the Atlantic Declaration in 1941. He demanded to apply article 03 of the declaration which stated: “respect people’s right to choose the system of government under which they live and reset sovereignty and independence” (حميدي 264). Thus, Azikiwe demanded to apply this article and determining Nigeria’s future or a transitional period of 10 years to bring Nigeria to independence and membership in the Commonwealth (حميدي 264). Azikiwe carried on his activities through the NCNC which became the mouthpiece of the Nigerian nationalism.

## **2. Nationalist Struggle to Achieve Independence**

Although nationalism emerged in the early 1920s, Nigerians could not achieve their independence until 1960 because of the colonial government policy which increased the ethnicity among National activists and leaders through several political and constitutional changes. However, after the return of Azikiwe, especially by the end of the Second World War, Nigeria’s nationalism took a new phase which led the British government to take a new attitude toward nationalists.

### **2.1. British Attitude toward Nationalism**

By the 1940s, the Nationalist Movement became well organized more than it was before. This development of nationalism resulted with the emergence of new political parties whose demand was self-government. Therefore, British government changed her policy through taking a set of legislative proceedings and constitutions in order to create

squabbles and dissidence among nationalists because of constitutional privileges and administrative positions (أدبواهن 176).

By the end of World War II, Britain observed the National Movement's activity. So, the colonial government rushed to keep pace with it and contain it before its demands increased. Therefore, Britain made some concessions to satisfy nationalists and convince people that their demands were taken into consideration, by submitting a set of constitutions and holding legislative elections (جاسم 175).

In addition to his constitution of 1946, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, Richard established a development committee in each one of Nigeria's provinces. Furthermore, a special department was created called the Development Department which was responsible for conveying instructions from central government to chief commissioners and provincial committees. It also provided them with assistance and information (Bekeh 8).

The leaders of Nigeria, both British and Nigerian, set up several constitutional committees and conferences as a part of drafting, implementing and revising each new constitution. In order to harmonize views of Nigerian political elites and colonial administrators, two constitutional conferences were held: 1953 in London and 1954 in Lagos in which the Lyttleton Constitution was worked through and the Secretary of State for the colonies Oliver Lyttleton played a crucial arbitrating role (Rahmani 188).

In 1954, when the Lyttleton Constitution came into force, Nigeria became a federation of three regions (see map 2). Each region had an autonomous legislative and executive house; there was no more central one. However, there was no provision for office of the Prime Minister and second legislative chamber at the center. Central ministers owed allegiance to region. In addition, Mcpherson was appointed as Governor General of

the federation of Nigeria. In the Northern, Eastern and Western Regions three governors were appointed with their Premiers; Nnamdi Azikiwe, Awolowo Obafemi and the Sardouna of Sokoto (Crowder 237). On their part, the nationalists were aware that the constitution of 1954 was like those before. It was obviously product of British officials' perception of the national movement's issues. Actually, the nationalist told Mcpherson that it was the last one they would accept from British hands (Lawal 55).

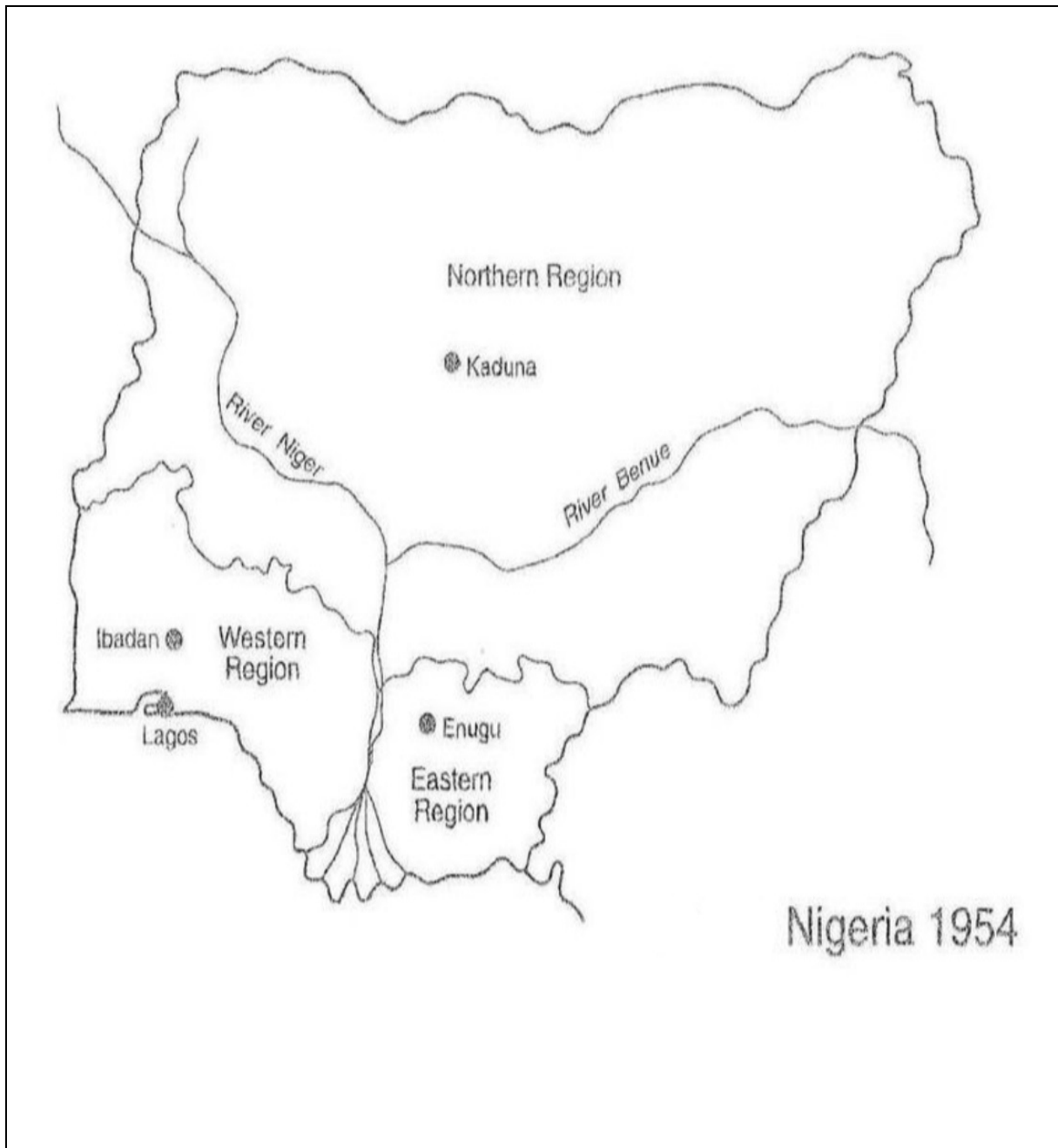
The most critical issue in the Lyttleton Constitution was the move towards regional autonomy, above all, with the regionalism of the civil services (Rahmani 202). In fact, members of the central legislature became 184 and the executive became only 13 members (Coleman 372). The constitution created a federal capital under federal government and also came up with a Review Conference to be held before August 1956. The new Council of Ministers consisted of 03 ex-officio members and 10 African ministers including 04 ministers without portfolio (Crowder 238). So, the success of the Council imposed cooperation between the Ministers. Therefore, the NCNC and the NPC<sup>10</sup> formed a coalition government to run the federation's affairs (Rahmani 202).

In 1954, James Robertson was appointed as Governor General. He was described as the most suitable man to lead Nigeria toward self-government, especially, when he said: "it will be my duty not so much to decide policy directly myself, or through my officials, as to look to my Nigerian Ministers, themselves responsible to a freely elected legislature, to formulate and decide major policy" (Coleman 374). However, Nigeria's first Federal Prime Minister was Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, one of the Northern leaders, who took his position in 1957 (فبيج 399).

---

<sup>10</sup> The Northern People's Congress: one of Nigeria's most influential political parties formed from a conference in Kano in 1949. See Toyin. Falola, Ann. Genova, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*. UK: the scarecrow press, 2009, p 266.

Map 2: The Three Federal Regions Created by British Colonial Rule



**Source:** “An Historical Map of Nigeria Showing Three Federal Regions Created by British Colonial Rule (1954)”, *Pinterest*, 2014, [www.pinterest.com/pin/295196950548347282/](http://www.pinterest.com/pin/295196950548347282/).

## 2.2. Negotiation and Declaring Independence

The constitutional reviews were the basis of regional division in Nigeria which led the political parties increasingly to compete to gain more supporters and thereby the demand of independence. The Eastern and Western Regions became formally self-governing in 1957 under the parliamentary system. However, the Northern Region did not get its self-government until 1959. After the Crisis Bank in the east, Nnamdi Azikiwe was obliged to dissolve the legislature and call for new elections in order not to resign, and thereby reaffirm his strength (Crowder 239).

The Eastern Regional Government, headed by Nnamdi Azikiwe and other members of the educated elites, was concerned about the crisis of chieftaincy which was existed in Igboland. Thus, it appointed G.I. Jones as the chairman of commission of inquiry to advise the regional government on the status of chiefs in the region in order to maintain the same pace with the Northern and Western Regions which had established their Regional House of Chief in 1957 (Oriji 181).

In 1958, a constitutional conference was held in London with the attendance of the federal government representatives, the delegates of the three regions and the UK representatives (Rahmani 224). The first issue pressed in the conference was the demand of independence for Nigeria. In addition, a joint memorandum was presented by the three regional Premiers asking the colonial government to grant the independence in 1959. But the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Lyttelton, refused to set a date in advance because the colonial government had already faced up the problem of minorities when the Eastern and Western Region got their self-government in 1957 (Rahmani 218).

The Lagos Constitutional Conference of 1958 was the last one held before the attainment of independence. At that time, the three major political parties were controlled by the three major ethnic groups; the Hausa-fulani dominated the NPC, the Igbo dominated the NCNC and the AG was controlled by the Yuroba. In 1959, the federal elections for the new House of Representatives were held in December. The party winner was the NPC with 143 seats (Crowder 245).

Finally, the issue of Nigeria's independence was revisited by the Secretary of State for the Colonies Mr. Lain Macleod who informed the conference that the British government had agreed to grant independence to Nigeria on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 (Falola and Ann 170).

### **Conclusion**

Although Nigerian nationalism grew up by the rise of consciousness, the educated elites who participated in the political sphere played a major role in that process, especially by the 1940s. In response to the development of the Nigerian nationalist movement and its demands for independence, the British government held various conferences and also legislated sequential constitutions which moved Nigeria toward self-government on representative and increasingly federal basis.

## General Conclusion

---

### **General Conclusion**

This work includes a historical era of one of West Africa's countries, Nigeria, which had been under British control for decades. To ensure the continuance of her control, Britain followed several policies which led to the regional partition of Nigeria. Yet, the nationalist movement developed after the Second World War, especially after the return of the educated elites and emergence of political leaders whose struggle achieved Nigeria's independence.

To complete the consolidation and the expansion of British control over the different regions of Nigeria, the colonial government made some political and administrative changes, thereby dealing with the political organization of the main socio-political groups at that time. As a first governor-general of the protectorate of Nigeria, Frederick Lugard amalgamated the two protectorates (Northern and Southern) under a single administration in 1914.

Through its experience in the colonial policies, the British government applied a policy called indirect rule system in addition to the creation of legislative and executive councils. Yet, the limited representation of Nigerians in the legislative and executive councils which ignored the elites led to the rise of consciousness and the emergence of nationalism.

The Nigerians chose the political struggle as a way to achieve independence. After the First World War, the nationalist movement was not organized. There was no coordination between the political bodies because of the lack of cooperation among nationalists who came from different regions and ethnic groups. However, after the Second World War, the nationalist movement became well organized and more effective with the

## General Conclusion

---

emergence of several political parties under the leadership of prominent national personalities, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe.

British colonization in Nigeria lasted for a long time. However, after the Second World War, the Nigerians chose the peaceful political struggle. They found it the fittest way to end the colonial rule and gain their independence. Thus, the three political parties namely the NPC under Alhaji Ahmadu Bello leadership, the AG under Obafemi leadership and the NCNC under the leadership of Azikiwe became more organized. Even though the Nigerian Nationalists achieved their independence, British colonization had created some kind of ethnic rivalry and opposition between the political parties because of regional division.



## Works Cited

- أدبواهن، ألبير. تاريخ إفريقيا العام. مجلد 7. باريس: اليونسكو، 1990.
- الجمال، شوقي وإبراهيم عبد الرزاق، عبد الله. دراسات في تاريخ غرب إفريقيا حديث و معاصر. القاهرة: مكتبة الاسكندرية، 1998.
- جاسم، طاهر. إفريقيا ما وراء الصحراء من الإستعمار إلى الإستقلال: دراسة تاريخية. القاهرة: المكتب المصري، 2002.
- حميدي، عباس جعفر. تاريخ إفريقيا حديث و معاصر. طبعة 1. عمان: دار الفكر، 2002.
- فيج، جي دي. تاريخ غرب إفريقيا. ترجمة: يوسف نصر. طبعة 1. القاهرة: دار المعارف، 1982.
- كي زاربو، جوزيف. تاريخ إفريقيا السوداء. جزء 2. ترجمة: يوسف شلب الشام. سوريا: وزارة الثقافة، 1994.
- Afigbo, A E. *The Warrant Chiefs Indirect Rule in Southern Nigeria 1891-1929*. Longman, 1972. Print.
- Bekeh, Utietiang, "Historicizing Development: Nigeria's 1945 Colonial Plan". *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 8, no. 9, 2015. Print
- Burns, Alan Burns. *History of Nigeria*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1948. Print.
- Coleman, James.S. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. University of California Press, 1971. Print.
- Cookey, S.J.S. "Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria: An Evolution". *Journal of African Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 317, 1980, pp. 531-547. Print.
- Crowder, Michael. *The Story of Nigeria*. London, 1978. Print.

- Egboh, E.O. “British Colonial Administration and the Legal Control of the Forests of Lagos Colony and Protectorate 1897-1902: An Example of Economic Control under Colonial Rigime”. *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol 9, no 3, 1978, pp. 70-90. Print.
- Ezeogidi, Cynado. *British Conquest, Colonization and Administration in Nigeria*, 2020 Anambra State University. Available at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3563173> Accessed 04 Apr 2022. 3:54.
- Falola, Toyin, and Ann Genova. *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*. The Scarecrow press, 2009. Print.
- Falola, Toyin, and Matthew M. Heaton. *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. Print
- Falola, Toyin, and Saheed Adertinto. *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History*. Boydell & Brewer, 2010. Print.
- Flint, J. E. “Eastern Nigeria under the British Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906: Theory and Practice in a Colonial Protectorate” *The Journal of African History*, vol. 7, 1966, pp. 527-528. Print.
- Gboyega, Ajibade. *The Voyage of Government: A Manual on the Constitutions of Nigeria*. Ajomoro Publication, 1990. Print.
- Geoffrey, L Baker. *Trade Winds on the Niger: the Saga of the Royal Niger Company 1830-1971*, Radcliffe Press, 1996. Print.
- Isaac Utuk, Efiog. *Britain’s Colonial Administrations and Developments 1861-1960*. 1975. Portland State University, Master thesis. Print.

- Johnston, H.A.S. *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*. Oxford University Press, 1967. Print.
- Kilson, M. *Colonial Africa*. Vintage books, 1970. Print.
- Lawal, Olakunle A. "From Colonial Reforms to Decolonization: Britain and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1947-1960". *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 19, 2010, pp. 39-62. Print.
- Lugard, Sir F.D. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. William Blackwood and Sons Edinburgh Press, 1922. Print.
- Maduabum, Chuks P. *The Mechanics of Public Administration in Nigeria*. Concept Publication, 2008. Print.
- Mai-Lafia, Mary D. *Nigerian Government and Politics*. University of Jos. Print.
- Mayowa, Abayomi-Alli. "Pre-Colonial Nigeria and the European's Fallacy". *American Research Institute for Policy Development*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2014, pp. 17-27. Print.
- Onyeozili, Emmanuel.C, and Obi N.I. Ebbe. "Social Control In Precolonial Igboland of Nigeria". *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, vol. 6, 2012, pp. 29-43. Print.
- Osuntokun, Akinjide. *Nigeria in the First World War*. Longman, 1979. Print.
- Oriji, John N. *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age: A History of the Igbo People*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- Palmwoski, Jan. *Dictionary of Twentieth Century World History*. Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

Rahmani, Mokhtaria. *Constitutional Development in Nigeria 1945-1960*. 2015. Djilali  
Liabes University, PhD dissertation. Print.

Reddick , John F. *Sir Frederick Lugard, World War I and the Amalgamation of Nigeria  
1914-1919*. Western Michigan University, 1966. Print.

Richard, Bourne. *Nigeria: A New History of a Turbulent Century*. Zed Books, 2015. Print.