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A HISTORY OF THE EASTERN NIGER DELTA 1885-1960

Challenges and Responses of a Society
In Transition

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CERTIFICATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS -

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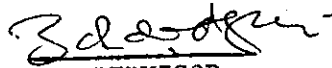
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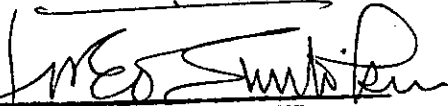
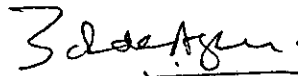


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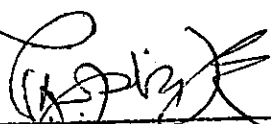
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ABSTRACT

The major factor in the history of the Eastern Niger Delta is not just the increase of the trans-Atlantic trade from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and the momentum it gathered, but colonialism which that trade eventually ushered in with revolutionary changes in the twentieth century. Although the formal colonial period itself was short, yet its consequences were profound and decisive, resulting as they did in the overthrow of indigenous rule. An outstanding implication of the loss of political and military power by the Delta rulers was the way it altered previous historical relationships both with Europeans, and African neighbours in the delta hinterland. That is what has been stressed in the main body of this work.

Although there was economic interdependence between coastal communities and their hinterland neighbours, (and this was a crucial factor in the events of the period) the superior position of the delta middlemen before the colonial era was never in doubt. The nineteenth century saw the coastal communities at the height of their economic primacy but the colonial conquest with the cooperation of European merchants and Christian Missionaries dealt fatal blows on their political and economic power. Colonialism ushered in new power and economic relationships between the Ijo communities and the British and between them and their hinterland neighbours. The Ijo lost their political power to the British and their economic pre-eminence to their hinterland neighbours. While colonialism is generally regarded as exploitative of the

economic resources of the colonised, this did not happen in the case of the Eastern Niger Delta communities. Rather it was a case of neglect due to the non-availability of the resources demanded by the colonial power. The colonial period was therefore marked by a gross neglect of the Eastern Niger Delta Communities in matters of socio-economic development. Colonialism however, tended to unify the people politically, and the effect of the challenges posed by the colonial situation reduced inter-community clashes and paved the way to a common platform for political action in the late 1940s for a demand for a Rivers State among others. Indeed, like an army with no line of retreat or hope of escape, the people of the Eastern Niger Delta stoutly fought the many odds of their changing economic and political environment, developments which established the conditions for the ultimate creation of states in Nigeria in the first decade of the post-colonial era. But these events should not only be seen as part of the general link in the endless chain of history, they also make it copiously manifest that the historical past of the Eastern Niger Delta had been a record of continuous dialogue between economic and political forces.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Although the penchant for magnifying problems is usually characteristic of enthusiasm in a given subject, the full-time worker in Lagos can, however, appreciate the difficulties encountered in his search for daily bread, much more so, when he has to combine such with explorations in the field of academics. Besides, for a part-time post-graduate endeavour of this dimension, there must certainly be qualms on how to muster the will to accomplish. It was in such milieu that I ventured into the present intellectual preoccupation. And without the assistance and encouragement I received from many quarters, I should really have been in a quandary. I therefore express my sincere gratitude to Dr. B. A. Agiri, Associate Professor of History, University of Lagos, who supervised the project and provided the academic guidance. I am also grateful to Professor A. Adefuye, former Head of Department of History, University of Lagos, and to his successor in office, Prof. Jide Osuntokun for their critical comments and useful suggestions towards the improvement of the work.

I gained from the various discussions I had with Chief Harold Dappa Biriye of Bonny, Chief Sample G. Nonju of Okrika, and I.D.J. Nyengiwari of Radio Rivers, Port Harcourt. The oral traditions and other aspects of the political culture they mentioned were both stimulating and challenging, providing as they did, searchlights for more investigations in the archives.

I must not forget to express gratitude to the staff of the National Archives Enugu, particularly, Miss E.U. Onwubuya,

S.A. Nwabara, Iheakaram A. Isaac and Miss Philomena Okafor, all of whom helped in the search there; and to my nephew Kingdom S. Abam, and Mr Appollos Obianime who collected for me from the United Kingdom Public Record Offices Chancery Lane London and Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey respectively, copies of foreign office (F.O.) and Colonial Office (C.O.) correspondences. The secondary sources I have had cause to use cannot, however, be individually acknowledged, but I wish to express gratitude to them all.

My thanks also go to Mr Pius Ogidekpe and my nephew Isaac K.O.S. Abam who typed the manuscripts at their private time. Like all human endeavour, perfection is an ideal. But all, both scholars and others, have given a helping hand towards improving the imperfections in my work. However, any responsibility for apparent failings of whatever description and magnitude, is entirely mine.

Finally, I have to thank my friends, particularly, Mr T.K. Tobin who made mobility easy for me during my field work. I sincerely thank my children, especially, Mina and Tekena, for their forbearance since the time I devoted for this work was naturally meant to oversee their home-work and preparatory lessons. I am also thankful to my wife, Kaine, for her constant encouragement in moment of pressure. To all friends and relations who have shown understanding I really owe a debt of gratitude.

PREFACE

The contemporary conditions of the Eastern Niger Delta stand in contrast with the socio-economic development of other parts of Southern Nigeria. A diagnosis of such disparity appears to compel thorough historical investigation. Although it may be argued that some academicians and administrators have in the past produced important works of scholarship on the area, yet wisdom is not like wine which must be aged if it has to be better. The continuous unravelling of the dim past from different perspectives has enabled existing works to be revised or new volumes to come to print. Besides, the previous works were either anthropological, political or socio-economic. None narrowed its focus on the area from the perspective of the developmental disadvantage which has historical roots. In addition, areas such as Okrika and Andoni were largely ignored while much has been done on Bonny, Kalabari, Opobo and Nembe-Brass in previous works and hence helped to create historical gaps.

Apart from thematic difference, therefore, the imbalances in spatial and temporal coverage by earlier writers needed to be redressed. It is for the bridging of such gaps that this work becomes pertinent. And considerable effort has been made both to highlight events in an area such as Okrika and to give full focus on economic and socio-political developments which have produced forces in an inextricable web to determine and shape the destiny of the people of the Eastern Delta in general. But the main emphasis has been on the challenges posed and the responses they produced, in particular, the change in political power which appeared to have influenced

change in economic power also.

Extensive use has been made of materials from official records at the United Kingdom Public Record Offices, and the National Archives Ibadan (NAI) and Enugu (NAE) as appropriately set out in the bibliography. Reports of Commissions of Inquiries and other committees at the National Archives Enugu Branch, are in the CER series while Miscellaneous Publications (Federal) and (Eastern Nigeria) are in the MISF and MEN series respectively. Others are Miscellaneous Annual Reports in the MAR series; Records of the Provincial Office, Port Harcourt in the OW and E series, and Consular Papers in the CSO, CALPROF and RIVPROF series of files.

Reference too to secondary sources (as acknowledged) has been made. But I have supplemented all these by interviewing people some of whom not only experienced events at the time but also took active part in them. Information obtained through this was was often beyond the coverage of the documented materials. Oral information from any given source was cross-checked from other sources. What one appears to discover through this study is the fact that history seems to display a process of social development but does not do so without occasional retrogressions. The colonial phase of the history of the Eastern Niger Delta, by and large, depicted such phenomenon.

Indeed, the various facts gathered from the different sources have been structured or fitted into a deliberate pattern of rational explanation and interpretation. In the attempt to weave patterns in the process of historical change

in the Eastern Delta and to make such process of change intelligible, the internal structure of the main body of this work has been devised according to themes rather than in time phase. The first chapter is introductory while the second is a brief historical outline from the pre-colonial period up to 1885. It gives background information on the activities of the people and the nature of the socio-political organizations which were a fusion of legislative, executive and judicial functions characteristic of many a traditional society.

The third chapter discusses the factors responsible for the overthrow of indigenous rule and the consequent dawn of colonial rule. But chapter four goes into details of the economic activities and their effects on the people. The issues examined include the events before the colonial onslaught about the middle of the nineteenth century when the delta middlemen had political and economic advantage over their hinterland neighbours, and how they effectively engaged their foreign competitors in the ruthless commercial war that developed, often beating them to it. It also discusses how the people controlled the trade without producing the commodities of trade before the colonial era. This position however changed during the colonial period (and a little after), within which time the major export commodity (petroleum) was produced in the area but they were no longer in a position of economic control, having lost political (military) power. And here lies the paradox of the history of this area around which this study revolves.

Chapter five is mainly on the cultural and organic conditions including the social changes and the extent of such changes. It explains the belief system and religious practices to the extent of their link with the administration of justice. It demonstrates the introduction of the British legal system and its role in the dismantling of traditional rule and the maintenance of colonial rule. It also considers the marriage system and the family and how these were tied up with the War-Canoe House System in its economic and military roles.

Chapter six focuses on the forms and nature of political activities in their evolutionary or transitional sequence, growing as it were, out of the traditional and historical experiences at the time. It directs attention to the link between the political and economic forces and how the control or loss of the former affected the latter. It points out that for the people of the Eastern Niger Delta, control of political/military power placed them at a position of economic dictators before the colonial era vis-a-vis their hinterland neighbours. The loss of such political control during the colonial era (and a little after) by the same token, put them in a disadvantaged position as compared with their neighbours. And this compelled their agitation for a separate state.

Chapter seven is the conclusion which analyses the various factors of the colonial system: how it unified the people of the Eastern Niger Delta who, before that era, were in rival city-states; and how colonialism introduced ethnicism into

the Nigerian political culture through the colonial urban setting. As it were, the colonial factor introduced a sense of oneness at one level while at another level it gave rise to tribalism which was divisive. This sounds rather contradictory, but it is not. Above all, however, is the question of the lack of balance whether economic or political, among the various groups and the resultant search for self-identity of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta as a minority group, a search which not only led to the creation of states in Nigeria in the ultimate but also helped to illuminate the nature of difficulties confronting economic development and socio-political evolution in the developing countries of Africa. The effort here endeavours to put history beyond the realm of mere chronicle of events in order to stress the inevitability of interpretation but with an aura of objectivity and a scrupulous concern for accuracy. To fully understand a people the tools of social explanation should also involve the use of empathy and understanding that certain actions are often beyond the laws of rationality.

It has been shown here that challenges at every stage produced some form of response. The existence of Garrick Braid's movement represented a disturbing response to the challenge of colonial authorities. The Osuala riot in Okrika in 1939 was a tough response to the challenge posed by migrants to disturb the cherished traditional practices of the people. The translations of the Bible, hymn books and primers relate positively and creatively to the new educational trend but

served at the same time as a response to the challenge of the introduction of the Igbo Bible and hymns for use in these parts. And more importantly, the agitation and search for a separate state was a response to the discriminatory attitude to the economic, social and political rights of the minorities by the majority group at the helm of affairs in the Eastern Region at the time.

To the extent that some light has been shed on these past trends for an understanding of the present and therefore serve as warning in the determination of future political options and critical economic choices confronting policy makers and others, this work would have served its purpose. For indeed, I believe as Professor E.H. Carr did, that "to enable man to understand the society of the past, and increase his mastery of the society of the present, is the dual function of history".

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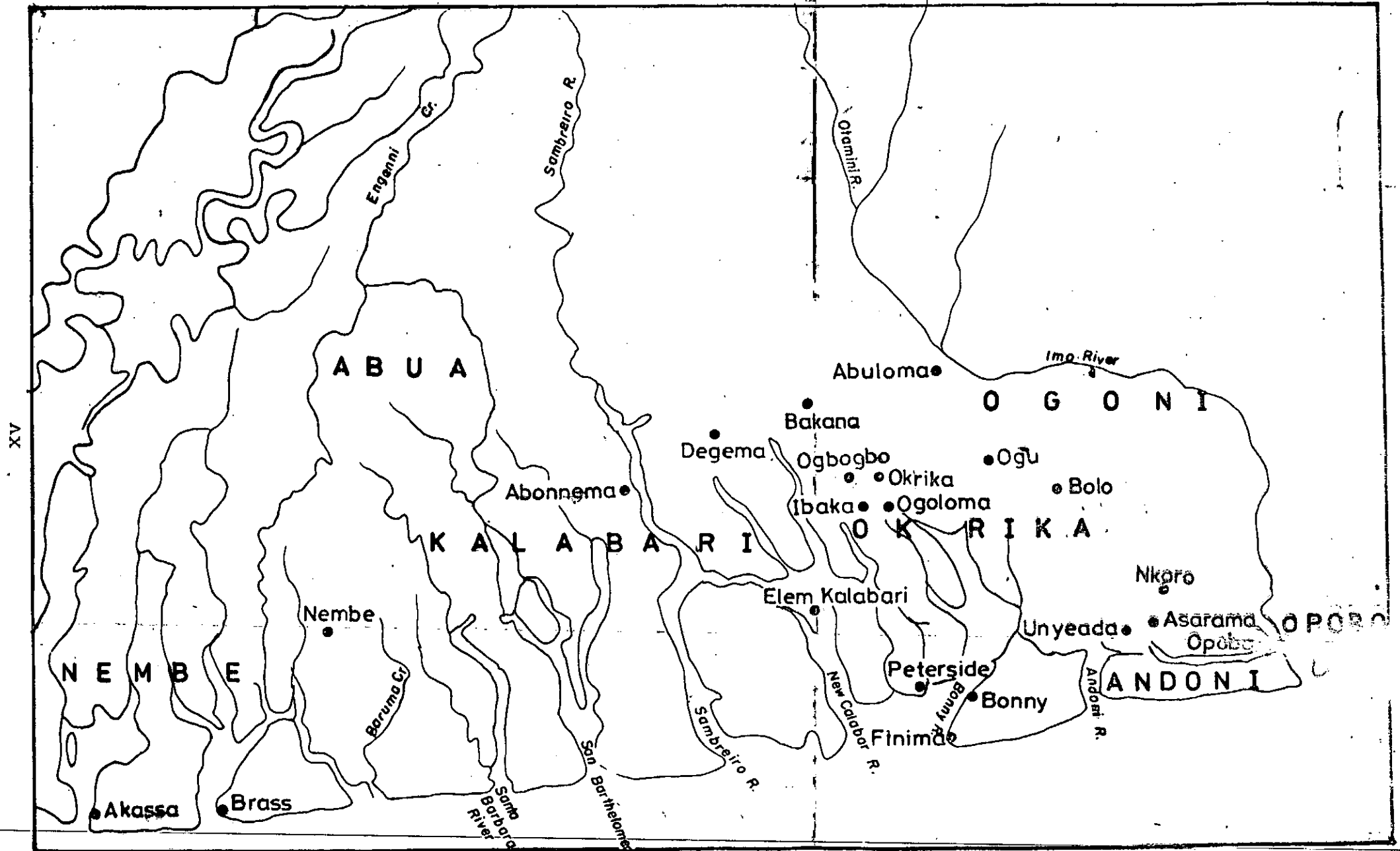
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GLOSSARY

Abo Oboko.....	White Cock
Amanyano.....	King
Igwa.....	Low bride price form marriage (Marriage with flexible divorce process)
Injiri.....	Real India cloth popularly known as 'george'.
Perigo.....	Eulogy of late War Veterans at Okrika.
Tanda.....	Special throne used at burial rites by Okrika people.
Ya	High bride price form of marriage (permanent marriage).



Eastern Niger Delta About 1885



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study on the Eastern Niger Delta applies mainly to the Ijo City-States of Nembe, Kalabari, Okrika and Bonny which have "similarity of political, economic and social institutions".¹ It also applies to both Nkoro and Opobo on the delta periphery, the eastern limit of Ijo expansion in the delta. Besides, it must include the Andoni (Obolo) too who share common historical and environmental experience with these Ijo city-states.²

In each of these states, the structure of the government centred around the Amanyabo (King).³ This, in particular, related to defence and external matters affecting each city-state.⁴ The Amanyabo Institution and other socio-political organisations such as the War Canoe House system and the Chieftaincy Institution evolved in the process of adaptation to environment resulting from internal and external forces, especially, war. So enduring and vital a function was war that it led from the early period, to the creation both of a powerful set of values and powerful communities with such special set of socio-political and semi-military institutions.

Most of the city-states consisted of various towns and villages. Apart from the overall ruler of the city-state who resided in the capital city, there were other Amanyabo⁵ (Kings) in the other towns and they enjoyed local autonomy in internal matters.⁶ This was especially the case among the Okrika, Nembe and Kalabari. Besides, each town consisted of various War Canoe Houses and each War Canoe House was headed by a leader known as chief. These War Canoe Houses evolved through the impact of wars and their demands.

The War Canoe House system gave each Delta city-state a para-military structure, and dividing the populace in each of the city-states into War Canoe Houses became a sort of social stratification. It was due to such feature that K.O. Dike described the Delta States as being "semi-military".⁷ The fateful attraction of war had not only necessitated in each of the states the mobilisation of energies and the focussing of action into a single purpose but had also brought about the solidarity that was found in every War Canoe House and the political cohesion in the respective communities.

Indeed, some scholars have often misrepresented the War Canoe House system by equating it to a political party.⁸ While a War Canoe House could be described as a political unit, it is not a political party as understood in the modern sense. As a permanent feature in the Delta Communities, "the House system emerged as a military unit under the spur of existing danger, of danger and hardship previously faced, and of the exhilaration that came from achieving objectives in concert".⁹ Describing it as a political party in the modern sense with all the obvious connotation, is to rob it of its military origin and activities. Other scholars however, have argued, and this is more valid, that it originated as a corporate kin group and later developed into a trading and fighting organisation.¹⁰

Basically, the War Canoe House was overtly a kinship group which dealt with most of life's eventualities, especially, war and defence. It also handled economic, cultural and religious matters. "It is one of the most penetrating and enduring legacies bequeathed to the present generation by their

forebears".¹¹ Its nucleus could, no doubt, be traced to the localised lineage, but covertly, it grew to be a motley group which assimilated both fresh migrants and slaves alike. Having evolved as a military craft, it simultaneously became the pivot of economic, political and social cohesion in this sub-region.

War canoes usually fitted with cannons, were manned by musketeer paddlers accompanied drummers by who sang heroic songs to them. The commands of the captain and helmsman who of course, was the chief of the House, were usually conveyed to the musketeers through the medium of the drums. At the outbreak of war every chiefs was expected to fit out a war canoe. And if the canoe was capsized or lost in battle, the chief had to replace it immediately or he lost his chieftaincy. The chiefs not only led their units at war but also provided both fighting equipment to supplement the House's stock, and food for the fighting men while their trade became paralysed during wars. In view of this, rather than choosing the valient, fighting units veered towards electing wealthy persons as their leaders. Wealth thus progressively became the more important determinant than valour, in the selection of House-heads or chiefs.

From time therefore, the office of House-head was not necessarily hereditary but went to any able, successful and wealthy member of a House who won a majority of votes during the House election. "Ability put a man in a strong position, ability and acceptable family connections made him almost unassailable".¹² In this way, the authority to govern as a chief (House Head) in a War Canoe House was not by force, nor

was it by inheritance. Achievement rather than ascription became the deciding factor. Once a member of a House was appointed as its head (Chief), he used his seemingly absolute power with discretion and restraint in order not to detract from its solidarity.

Throughout the Eastern Niger Delta, chiefs wielded tremendous influence in the social, cultural and political affairs of the people, and exercised authority over a number of things in their respective Houses. In their various communities, they formed the ruling Councils having legislative, executive and judicial matters, with the Amanyanabo as the head.¹³

In practice, however, the Amanyanabo had no special powers over the War Canoe Houses of his chiefs. He could of course, intervene to resolve conflicts between one House and another. Judicially too, there was no traditional method of direct appeal from the court of the House-Head to that of the Amanyanabo. But the traditional court presided over by the Amanyanabo was, for all purposes, superior to those of individual House-Heads of chiefs.

Within the War Canoe Houses in the Delta communities, hierarchies or classes existed. In Okrika, the class system is known as mumbu.¹⁴ The class determinants varied from one House to another but without regard to whether a member was a free born or an ex-slave. All the Eastern Delta communities evolved the tradition of assimilating ex-slaves within the War Canoe Houses, and such ex-slaves once assimilated occasionally rose to prominence and became House-heads within their respective War Canoe House units. The assimilation process enabled the

ex-slaves undergo traditional purification and psychological regeneration following the general abhorrence ^{of} ~~of~~ the use of the slave-tag on an assimilated ex-slave.

There were rituals in the process of purification and subsequent adoption of an ex-slave which always began with the symbolic act of ablution in the form of clean-shaving of the ex-slave's head by the putative mother to whom he would be assigned by his master (putative father), or by an Egbele-Eremenibo (matriarch) invited to do so. The entire process also included libation and the libator (who would be bare-footed and without any head-gear) would hold in his right hand a small cup into which liquor had to be poured. He would then raise the cup towards "the East if the gathering is in the open, to the shrine if it is in a house, but to the door in the absence of a shrine".¹⁵ The pouring of the wine was also systematic. It would be poured first on the table and then on the ground, and then again towards the shrine. All these would usually be accompanied with incantations. Subsequent pouring of the libation wine would be outside the house but with the left hand. And this was usually the last process. This time, the incantations would be directed at the Ikpein-duen (evil spirits) in order to appease them.

The libator would then mark the ex-slave with OWA (traditional sign) with wet earth scrubbed with the first finger from the spot on which the final drop of the libation liquor was poured. The places marked were the forehead, at the back, palm and feet. This marking symbolised a union with the family's ancestors and an act of admission into the family.

And with it the rebirth exercise of the ex-slave became consummated. He would then be given a new name. Thereafter, the stigma of his slave origin notwithstanding, the ex-slave would start to enjoy the same intimate relationship with his putative parents as an actual child of the house-hold. He would also have all the rights and privileges as well as undertake obligations as any other member of the War Canoe House in the same mumbu class with him. He would participate too in all other activities within the competence of his mates not only in the War Canoe House but also throughout the city-state.

Nonetheless, thorough assimilation was achieved when the ex-slave joined any masquerade cult of Ekine, Sekeni or Sekiapu (dancers); then he would have to master the local language, the drum codes, the beliefs, folkways and other mores of the community. This was especially true of the Okrika, Kalabari and Nembe. The strict adherence to such principles was typified in the following masquerade song:

'Owu ti bo bari minabo nemi ke
Omoya be ori oge sin-sa bere;

Owu ti bo bari ikiabo nemi ke
Omo ya be ori oge sin-sa bere'.

This is being interpreted as follows:

'A masquerader knows no brother,
Masquerade Omoya's drawn sword could therefore
be dangerous

A masquerader knows no friend
Masquerade Omaya's drawn sword could be sign
of trouble'.

Such strictness of the masquerade cult emanated from the fact that these Ekine or Sekeni cults though charged with other

sensitive responsibilities within the city-states, were essentially dancing groups concerned with water spirits. There was thus the religious element in their affairs. Therefore "they have to keep on the right side of these spirits during performances, and these spirits, as well as the gods and ancestors, may be expected to shower blessings on the community if the Sekiapu plays please them".¹⁶

In such circumstances, it was believed that default of the religious mode would evoke the wrath of the deities. Masqueraders were therefore expected to master the mores including the drum codes to the extent that if a place name was drummed, the masquerade was to point in the direction of the place or would identify from the crowd of spectators, an indigene of the place so drummed by the drummer.¹⁷ The cult member or masquerader who failed to master the mores, especially the local language, would be regarded as an impostor. And if no ransom was quickly paid on his behalf, he would have to suffer capital punishment.¹⁸

X In view of their strict adherence to principles, the Sekeni group in Okrika were particularly feared as depicted in the saying: 'Sekeni bo wari papa so ke' meaning, 'the Sekeni never left empty handed from any house to which they had gone on visitation'. Such visitation was always in respect of default of the mores. Apart from the Okrika, Kalabari and Nembe, the Nkoro people also observed such strictness probably because of their Okrika origin in their history of migration.¹⁹ But in Bonny and Opobo where strict adherence appeared relaxed for the acculturation of ex-slaves, the necessity to master the

local language was not felt, and this was largely responsible for the infiltration and subsequent dominance of the Igbo language in those areas.

It may be necessary to point out that the Mumbu class system is not a caste system and therefore not assigned at birth. It is an ordinary ranking as to agreed determinants and no one can claim a particular class on account of birth. In other words, no person is born into a particular class and no person can use his wealth to purchase a class of his choice. Like the age-group, it merely ensures group solidarity and action. In the ultimate, however, decision taking in the War Canoe House is democratic and without class discrimination.²⁰

Predominantly, the people of the Eastern Niger Delta were fishermen because of their nearness to the sea. Fish was therefore their major source of protein and they used various means in catching the different types of fish. Certain species of fish such as the gastropods were caught by digging, gathering or collecting. Examples of this type are the various winkles locally called Isam, nangulo or mgboro, and Olosani, and the sea snail or whelk also locally called Oloko. Shell fishes too such as the Oyster, the bivalves and cockle are caught by this method.

For fishes such as mudskipper, tilapia, shanny and bass, local gadgets known as ikata, bala and vukuma were used. For crustaceans and shrimp, another local gadget known as ongoro was often used. There was the use of the net in various forms to catch fishes such as sardine, mullet and so on. Thread made from aerial roots and cane-sticks was used to prepare the nets before cotton and later nylon threads were brought in.²¹ Women

usually used lamps fuelled with palm oil in their fishing ventures. At night, the bright light was used to daze the mudskipper and so catch it with comparative ease.

Another economic activity of the people was trading. The delta city states traded both amongst themselves and with their neighbours in the hinterland. Pereira referred to the trade in yams, cows, goats and sheep in large quantities and in big dugout canoes.²² Some of the long existing markets included the Mboli fair,²³ Iwofe (Ewaffa)²⁴ and Orbiatubu.²⁵ Apart from dried fish, salt and local gin were traded also. Salt was manufactured by evaporating salt water, while local gin was brewed by distilling palm wine. Pottery-making was also an important local industry.²⁶ Some of these economic activities later underwent immense changes with European contact and especially during colonial rule.

Another important phenomenon of the Eastern Niger Delta societies was the practice of religious and semi-religious rites. Every War Canoe House had a Duen-Wari (Shrine) which represented the abode of the supernatural world and all the spirits of the ancestors. There was the strong belief in a fraternity between the dead, the living and the unborn, and periodic libation was used to effectuate this bond of brotherhood.²⁷ It was in fact customary for the Amanyanabo to make periodic libations.²⁸

There was also the belief that certain persons were possessed by the spirits of mermans and mermaids otherwise known as 'mermmmy water' (Mengibe-Owu or Owu-amapu) symbolically represented by an image which was half human to the waist and

half fish to the tail. Persons so possessed (Oru-koro apu) were believed to have powers to cure the sick, make people wealthy and enable women achieve fertility. Well known among such water spirits were the Adum symbolically represented by the images or motifs of a python regarded as the head or father of the merfolk.²⁹ Other water spirits commonly worshipped were the Ngeri-Angala, Okpoka after whom Okpoka Turu (Okpoka creek) near Okrika was named, Kikiya and Ogwein.³⁰ Another spirit, the Oku or Imgbila deke was specially feared as it was said to be in the habit of flogging people who strayed to any of the mangrove forests near its abode. The merman watching over a small creek known as Opondoba-Okolo, was believed to have been responsible for the drowning of many people who tried to jump across the creek because of its small width.³¹

The mermaids and mermans were believed too to visit their human spouses on special days of the week. Those possessed (the spouses) therefore kept themselves 'holy' on such days. They libated and slept alone in special rooms because they were forbidden by the water spirits from having intimate relationship with their human spouses on such days.³² Fridays were usually set to worship the water spirits and the worship was usually done through the beating of drums, singing and dancing, and the making of propitiatory sacrifices using eggs, live white cock, cola (idapo) and locally brewed gin which would be placed on a small altar inside a shrine (usually a small hut) built at the foreshore of a mangrove forest or along a creek supposedly owned by the particular merfolk.³³ Tied to a stave beside the shrine would be the live white cock and white cloth as if to declare a truce

in case of newly possessed persons who had been greatly disturbed by the spirit. While the ceremony went on, the newly possessed usually sang in full submission to the merman as follows:

'Iya dabo Owu-ya bo

Iya dabo Owu-ya;

Iya dabo Owu-ya bo

Iya dabo Owu-ya;

Ami bara mi chu oku-ma

Achu-bia Ama jike;

Ami bara mi seki okuma

Aseki bia Ama jike;

Aya dabo Owu-ya bo'.

which is translated as follows:

'My father of the merfolk come

My father of the merfolk;

My father of the merfolk come

My father of the merfolk;

If I continue to sing in this vein

My songs would rock the town;

If I continue to dance in this wise

My dances would rock the town;

My father of the merfolk please come'.

Such praise songs were sang with a view to propitiate the water spirit and therefore avert the dangers of the continuous mental torture of the possessed. Ibiere in Okrika was a

well-known priestess that claimed to have possessed the gift of prophecy and curative powers brought to her by her merman. Agala was another Okrika priestess reputed to have been clairvoyant through the influence of her merman. Gege-Ba Agbani the Bakana pythoness³⁴ was also well-known for her powers to make women fertile.

Furthermore, there were various deities worshipped by the people of the Eastern Niger Delta. The Nembe worshipped Ogidiga as their national deity. The Kalabari worshipped Owame Akaso and Ogbolodo while Bonny worshipped Ikuba and Simingi among others.³⁵ The Okrika worshipped Fenibeso and lesser gods such as Nonju and Ogbolodumo. It was believed that the welfare of the community depended on the pleasure of the deities. The priests who served them therefore played special roles in the affairs of the city-states. Periodic sacrifices were made to appease these deities and so avert possible danger. During such religious ceremonies, drums would be beaten. For example, in the beating of the Nonju drum called Abama "all other gods are called to witness the right of this god in eating what is offered to it, and that it does not deprive others of their right".³⁶ Through the medium of the Abama drum it was usually indicated that the Nonju deity always appropriated what rightly belonged to it and cheated no other deity by so doing and would therefore not permit of any cheating by others.

The institution of marriage was also important in the city-states of the Eastern Niger Delta and there existed mainly two distinct types of marriage known as Ya (Eya) and Igwa (Egwa).³⁷ These two marriage forms also produced two parallel descent

systems. The mode of marriage a man adopted not only determined the lineage of his offsprings either patrilineally or matrilineally, but also the mode of inheritance. With the Igwa system, the husband acquired only conjugal rights over the bride.³⁸ He could co-habit with her, but all offsprings of the marriage would belong to the wife's family. With the Ya system (the high bride price system), however, all offsprings belonged to the husband's family and the wife herself remained the property of the husband's family. The circumstances that brought about such dual or parallel system and the changes that subsequently occurred will be fully discussed in chapter five. Suffice it, therefore, to mention at this stage that the marriage tradition permitted of the practice of polygamy. The Ya system also allowed levirate whereby a man married his late brother's widow.³⁹

Indeed, the cultural heritage of the people of Eastern Niger Delta encompassed their beliefs, skills, customs and traditions. It also included their group loyalties and ways of perceiving the world. The educational system of the people was not like the formal schooling of the modern age. Each family was responsible for the training of its youths but the purpose was to prepare the youths in the direction of their cultural life, and ~~anything~~ which did not minister to such objective was considered as being superfluous. Such characteristics of the Eastern Delta Society affected the political economy of the area. Since economic and political progress is usually related to, and integrated in the web of social and

institutional infrastructure of communities in general, this introduction is therefore of great relevance. Besides, it explains the pre-colonial society. Without such initial explanation it will not be easy to comprehend the social changes brought about as a result of the colonial intervention which will be discussed in later chapters.

FOOTNOTES

1. Alagoa, E.J. 'The Niger Delta States and their Neighbours, to 1800' in Ajayi, J.F. Ade and Crowder, M.(eds) History of West Africa Vol. I 2nd Ed. London. 1976. p. 331.
2. Ejituwu, N.C. 'The Obolo (Andoni) of the Eastern Niger Delta' (Ph.D. Thesis) Lagos, 1977 p. 307.
3. NAI. CSO 26/29004 DEGDIST 7/5/6 Porter's Intelligence Report on Okrika Clan. 1933 Para. 5. p. 1.
4. NAE CER/39 Para. 51. p. 17.
5. Note that Amanyanapu (Kings) is the plural form of Amanyanabo (King).
6. NAE CER/39 Report of the Ukelonu Commission of Inquiry into the Nembe Chieftaincy Dispute. Official Document No. 24 of 1960. Para. 51 p. 17. For a construction of the political and social institutions of the Kalabari, see R. Horton, "From Fishing Village to City-State: A Social History of New Calabar" in M. Douglas and P.M. Kaberry (eds) Man in Africa, New York, 1971, pp.38-60.
7. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885 Oxford 1956. p. 35.
8. Tamuno-Koko, F.C. 'The development of political institutions in the Eastern Niger Delta: A reappraisal of the House System' in Journal of the Niger Delta Studies 1978-81 Vol.1 No. 3 p. 48.
9. Abam, A.S. 'A Political History of Okrika from the 18th Century to 1960' (M.A. Dissertation) Lagos 1985. p. 32.
10. NAE CER/30 Report of the Position, Status and Influence of Chiefs and Natural Rulers in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. Enugu. 1957. p. 36.
11. Abam, A.S. 'A Political History of Okrika ...' (M.A. Dissertation) Lagos, 1985. p. 33.
12. Hopkins, A.G. An Economic History of West Africa. New York. 1973. p. 146.
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14. Abam, A.S. 'A Political History of Okrika...' (M.A. Dissertation) Lagos, 1985. p. 37.
15. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People. Port Harcourt. 1982. p. 159.

16. Alagoa, E.J. 'Delta Masquerades' in Nigeria Magazine No. 93. June, 1967. p. 155.
17. Opuogulaya, E.D.W. The Cultural Heritage of the Wakirike (The Okrika People). p. 42.
18. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja of the Niger Delta. p. 14.
19. Alagoa, E.J. A History of the Niger Delta. Ibadan, 1972. p. 166.
20. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
Chief Jamabo Owu also interviewed on 9th June, 1986.
21. Dede Igbiri interviewed on 18th January 1984. Samuel Amaps (late) also interviewed on 19th January, 1984.
22. Hodgkin, Thomas. Nigerian Perspective: An History Anthology. 2nd Edition. London. 1975. p. 123.
(An excerpt from Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis by Duarte Pacheco Pereira).
23. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja of the Niger Delta. New York. 1974. p. 19.
24. F.O. 403/18 Inclosure 2 in No. 2. Perpetual Treaty of Peace between Will Braid the Head of Barboy House and the King of New Calabar (Kalabari) 1879. See Article V.
25. NAE CALPROF 5/7/5 Perpetual Treaty of Peace concluded under British Mediation between Okrika and New Calabar (Kalabari) 1871. see. para. 6.
26. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta. London. 1932. p. 276.
27. Dede Igbiri interviewed on 18th January, 1984.
Chief Ngeri Rowlands interviewed also on 7th June, 1986.
28. Tienabeso, W.E. Some Events in the Life of Kariboye Abbi, Amachree IV, Amanyanabo of Kalabari 1863-1900. Port Harcourt. ND. p. 16.
29. Horton, R. Kalabari Sculpture. Apapa. 1965. p. 35.
30. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People. p. 156.
31. According to Okrika Mythology, the merman that owned the small creek called 'Opondaba Okolo' always felt angry whenever human-beings jumped across it with scorn for its small width. There was therefore an occasion when this merman challenged someone who wanted to jump across. 'Ma Fuku boro diki' meaning: 'You dare to jump across', the angry merman warned sternly. Surprisingly, the man dared. But as he jumped, he dropped right inside the creek and got drowned rather mysteriously. The merman's warning therefore serves as a lesson for people not to treat anything small with contempt.

32. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta. London. 1932. p. 39.
33. Horton, R. Kalabari Sculpture. p. 35.
34. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta. p. 41.
35. Cooke, S.J.S. King Jaja of the Niger Delta. p. 17.
36. Opuogulaya, E.D.W. The Cultural Heritage of the Wakirike (The Okrika People). Port Harcourt 1975. p. 71.
37. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta. p. 189.
38. Jones, G.I. The Trading States of the Oil Rivers London. 1963. p. 51.
39. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO COLONIAL RULE 1830-1885

The Eastern Niger Delta as earlier explained, consisted of Bonny, Okrika, Elem Kalabari and Nembe city-states which were situated on rivers that flow from the River Niger.¹ Most discussions on it, however, often include Opobo situated at the mouth of the Imo River, together with Andoni and Nkoro both of which are on the delta periphery.² Each of these city-states consisted of a capital city from which the name of the city-state derived, and a cluster of other towns and adjoining villages.³ The trading region in the hinterland which each of them controlled was part of the city-state by extension.⁴ Despite the fact that the relationship was neutral of any political control it certainly ensured exclusive external trading rights.

In order, therefore, to adequately appreciate the history of the Eastern Niger Delta under colonial rule, it may be necessary to take a cursory look at these city-states before the colonial conquest. It is not only necessary to discern the pattern of change but also examine the factors that brought about such change, given the fact that their subjugation by the British was predated by about three hundred years of commercial intercourse with Europeans.

Before the arrival of Europeans at the West Coast of Africa in the fifteenth century, the people had already established their own forms of government. The states of Bonny, Elem Kalabari, Nembe and Okrika were existing along with others in the West African region. This means in effect that they had on their own evolved their kind of civilisation. But changes

occurred due to the economic impact of the overseas trade. Such changes were not only economic but also political, social and cultural, and demonstrated the dynamic nature of these states like others elsewhere the world over.

However, unlike the Benin, Oyo, Abomey, Ashanti and Akan which were empires, the States of the Eastern Niger Delta were small city-states, their topography having become a major limiting factor to an expansion in size. Each of them, nonetheless, demonstrated the illimitability of its sovereign authority, and had its apparatus of government which enabled it not only to maintain law and order, but also to administer justice by their standards, whether articulate or inarticulate.⁵

Whenever the occasion arose too, each of them exercising its sovereignty, declared war and made peace according to its own circumstances at any given time as in the case of Okrika and Elem Kalabari.⁶ The War-Canoe House system of rule which these city-states evolved, was a defence strategy in each state, and was used to enhance the organisation of commerce during the period of the trans-Atlantic trade and after. It was also a mechanism for smooth administration within each state to the extent that the chiefs who were next to the Amanyabo (King), were the heads of the War-Canoe Houses, and formed the ruling council of which the Amanyabo was the head. Their exceptional position put them above the level of the ordinary citizenry.

In dominating the society, the chiefs became a source of initiative in different directions, depending however on the personality and drive of the particular Amanyabo. Thus, while

King Opubo's "audacious acts set the tone of politics" in his days in Bonny,⁷ King William Dappa Pepple had problem with his chiefs and they accused him of taking the comey alone.⁸ But there were some fundamental laws of conduct and traditional governance which no Delta ruler could defy with impunity. Therefore, rather than being autocratic in their rule, they were, generally speaking, conciliar in approach to a degree of emphasis almost comparable to a modern democratic process.⁹ This was in spite of the semi-military component underpinning the structure of the delta city-states.

Indeed, the existence of the city-states represented the success of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta in developing outstanding, viable and enduring socio-political institutions. Each of the delta city-states proved itself as a considerably self-sufficient corporate entity which had an inherent capacity to bind its citizens under the organic law of its own being.¹⁰ Contrary therefore to what some writers refer to as "romanticising a grandiose African past",¹¹ this is in consonance with the assertion of other writers that the past of Africa contains some elements of successful development.¹²

In their earlier struggles over fishing grounds and later competition for the control of markets, war always ensued and was fought with startling ferocity. In such circumstance, they made (and changed) alliances,¹³ and in that way, maintained some kind of balance of power. Invariably therefore, they became evenly matched, and none was able to annex the rest to form a bigger empire. This was the situation in which the King of

Bonny which appeared to be dominant, confessed to Lord Stanley the Colonial Secretary that none of the city-states of Bonny, Okrika, Elem Kalabari and Nembe was tributary of the other.¹⁴ Each of them was sovereign in its own right.

Besides, the geographical position of these city-states secured them from external aggression from the hinterland. Early development of the overseas trade enhanced their power and importance,¹⁵ having been supplied with enormous quantities of arms and ammunition by European slavers for the procurement of slaves. Their military superiority over their immediate neighbours in the hinterland was never in doubt also. Through this military might these small city-states of the Eastern Niger Delta held sway over the more populous inhabitants of the hinterland and played 'the role of economic dictators'.¹⁶

In order to sustain their power, the ruling classes in these states refused to sell their own manpower.¹⁷ "Heads of houses and noblemen measured their prestige not only on profits of trade but in number of 'boys' in their control."¹⁸ Besides, they retained many slaves for domestic purposes (as canoe boys in the trading canoes, and as citizen-soldiers within the war canoes). They were quite conscious not to undermine their own socio-economic, political and military base. From a political perspective, therefore, the growth of these city-states of the Eastern Niger Delta was significant. Such a development may not be easily comprehended without a much fuller knowledge of the political status of other areas in Africa and an appreciation of the complexities of the development of man and society in general.

Since the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the Eastern Niger Delta States became involved in the overseas commerce¹⁹ in which was established a multilateral trading relationship with Europe (and later the Americas). It was not, of course, their own enterprise that prompted such contact. But it was with their co-operation that it was maintained for a long time. The establishment of the contact was pioneered by the Portuguese explorers, joined by other European sailors. All of them were prompted by a variety of motives. The desire for trade was the more powerful motive but scientific curiosity and missionary zeal were others.

The reality of the Portuguese effort having greatly attracted the attention of 'hardy spirits' in Europe and animated their hopes and aspirations, Spain also took the plunge. Paradoxically, however, England which later became the greatest colonial master did not display with vigour at that time any significant maritime interest, being encumbered by the century old war with France, and what A.N. Cook described as "the turmoil and confusion arising from the war of the Roses".²⁰ Initially, the English were indifferent about challenging the power of Spain. They also hesitated to encroach on the Portuguese activities in Africa at the time. Their effort, as far as imperial designs were concerned, was, therefore, spasmodic. Nonetheless, the British entered the West Africa trading scene in the second half of the sixteenth century when they were neither haunted by the fear of Spanish power²¹ nor by the awe of Portuguese influence.²²

The success of British maritime enterprises to West Africa during the second half of the sixteenth century received

the greatest boost in 1588 with their defeat of the Spanish Armada. From that time, they began to participate in the West African slave trade and eventually became the leading nation in that nefarious business of human traffic. Trade remained the primary factor of British relations with West Africa for many centuries; settlements that were established were merely a by-product of that trade.²³ Indeed, the English had no fortified trading posts until 1618 when one was set up at St. James Island on the Gambia River.

It is indeed an irony as J.E. Flint aptly pointed out, that this period of intense slave trade which wrought much havoc in West Africa, was in fact the era "in which direct European cultural or political influence was almost negligible".²⁴ What transformed the character of British activities on the West Coast of Africa was in fact its abolition. The victory of the anti-slave trade movement as reflected in the celebrated judgement in Britain in 1772 by the Lord Chief Justice, Mansfield, in the case of the run-away black slave, James Sormerset, was a major factor. By the judgement slavery became illegal in England. Every slave who set his feet there, automatically became free.

Thus, hundreds of slaves suddenly found themselves liberated. But the massive liberation had its by-product in the form of a social cost in that most of the liberated ex-slaves became destitute as a result of unemployment. It was to overcome the plight of these liberated slaves that philanthropists undertook the practical measure of founding a settlement in West Africa. And in 1787 Freetown was founded.

The mere act of liberation of slaves in England did not ipso facto put an end to the slave trade. The humanitarians, in particular, realised this and therefore worked out what they considered to be the best plan for striking at the roots of the slave trade and its evils. This plan was the exploration of the West African hinterland for the spread of christianity, social progress and trade in other commodities (excluding slaves) that would be beneficial to both Europeans and Africans alike. Besides, as Olaniyan puts it, "there were other exciting prospects which fed the imagination of the Europeans. Africa contained, as Europeans believed, immense deposits of minerals that could turn a lucky pauper into an instant millionaire".²⁵

In pursuance of these objectives, the humanitarians, and others who for scientific reasons showed some interest, formed the African Association in 1788. It was their determination to explore the geography and ascertain the resources of the African Continent. The Niger appeared to have attracted their attention, and many expeditions were sent, starting with that of Mungo Park in 1795. The second expedition of Mungo Park in 1805 was, however, sponsored by the British Government itself.

Other subsequent voyages that may be mentioned here were those of Richard Lander with his brother John, and Macgregor Laird. Yet despite all their efforts and trading ventures, the British did not, before 1800, build forts on what came to be known as the Nigerian Coast. For one reason or the other many indigenous rulers at the time refused the erection of forts by Europeans on their shores. But whether or not forts were erected what was of definite significance was the fact that the Europeans exercised

no political power whatsoever in this area at that time. Their behaviour was regulated by Treaties. In Bonny for instance, no supercargo could receive on board a vessel for refuge a Bonny citizen without the consent of the chief.²⁶ Cook's assertion that "Europeans had knocked about the Niger Delta for some three centuries, but they had exerted relatively little influence upon native institutions"²⁷ poignantly described the situation as it really was.

In effect, up to 1800 Europeans had merely expanded their trade on the Nigerian coast. They had not started to seize territories there with the purpose of controlling them and people of the area. The overseas commerce that thrived for centuries continued to be conducted under the aegis of the indigenous authorities who not only acted as middlemen often entrusted with goods, but also maintained law and order, and ensured the security of the Europeans (traders and explorers alike) within their domains. They ensured too that agreed trade standards prevailed and that commercial obligations were faithfully discharged.

There was no doubt whatsoever that the European traders (and explorers too), needed the goodwill of the local rulers to enable them conduct their business without any problems. Evidently, it was for these reasons and in recognition of the sovereignty of the local potentates that the foreign traders paid duties popularly known in the Niger Delta area as 'Comey'. They were not all forced to do so; in some cases they willingly offered to pay it.²⁸ One of the alleged complaints made by

the Bonny chiefs against King William Pepple was that he did not share the 'Comey' with them.²⁹ In Nembe - Brass the Treaty stipulated payment of the Comey to both the Ogbolomabiri and Bassambiri rulers.³⁰

By the nineteenth century, however, the 'even tenor' in the relationships between the European traders and their local trading partners received a shattering blow. What gave rise to the uneven relationship that developed was the decision by Britain to put an end to the overseas slave trade. By 1772 when Mansfield pronounced his judgement the Industrial Revolution had started in England. It produced a new technology that eventually made slave labour obsolete. The evolution of an entirely new type of capitalism produced a complex nature of factors, economic motives and methods, and circumstances leading eventually to the demise of the slave trade. Otherwise, Lord Mansfield's decision itself in 1772 did not affect the slave trade. It did however "encourage humanitarians to continue their struggle against slavery".³¹

The battle to abolish the nefarious trade was carried through with a Parliamentary Act in 1807. In 1833, slavery too was abolished. If however the abolition was to be effective it would have to be scrupulously enforced. It was that attempt to enforce it that produced a different situation in these parts from what was experienced in the centuries past.

The abolition of the slave trade had wide implications. Although it was the British Parliament that passed the Abolition Acts, yet the trade they were supposed to stop was extra-territorial. The enforcement of the Acts was therefore bound to

affect the sovereign rights of others. It thus became apparent that the Abolition Act was one thing, but quite another thing to enforce it outside the United Kingdom. What Britain did to obviate possible conflict with other European powers was to apply its diplomatic machinery to persuade them to also outlaw the trade. It then proceeded to institute an anti-slave trade naval squadron which was based in Freetown, to patrol the West African Coast in order to physically suppress it. Thereby, it took over Freetown from the bankrupt Sierra Leone Company in 1808, and made it a British Colony. In this way, propaganda gave way to action, and the Niger Delta which was very busy in slave traffic, came to be the focal point of a different type of action.

Thenceforth, there was constant harrassment of slavers by the Squadron. In addition, the sources of supply were blockaded and the barracoons built for slaves on the shore, burnt. Such actions though aimed at reducing the volume of the slave traffic also produced a different effect in the sense that it succeeded in impairing the existing relationship between the Europeans and the African rulers. Quite rightly, the local rulers considered the British naval operations within their areas of jurisdiction as an infringement of their sovereign authority. These rulers especially King Opubo of Bonny and later Jaja of Opobo took steps which they considered to be appropriate, to defend their rights.³² It is indeed a paradox that such use of force by foreigners in Africa was suggested by an African living in England. That was in 1787 when a Fante "Cugoano called on the

British Government to send out a fleet to suppress the slave trade".³³

Naturally, however, the new attitude of the Europeans baffled the African rulers who had been accustomed to having their sovereignty completely respected by European traders and explorers in the past. Until that time, Europeans and Africans transacted business as equals. The Europeans engaged in the slave trade over the centuries as buyers and Africans engaged in it as the vendors. As C. Fyfe asserted, "the slave trade made buyers and sellers moral equals".³⁴ But as K.O. Dike wrote, "Africans were more concerned with the business of finding a means of livelihood than with moral judgements on the commodity - men or oil - which they battered for European manufactures".³⁵ Equally, Europeans initially considered only the economic aspects of the trade, moral considerations came quite later. There was therefore no question of the superiority of the one over the other, or vice versa. As far as the slave trade was concerned, the Europeans were buyers and the Africans were vendors.

All through their commercial intercourse, "mutual interdependence and respect were thus a feature of Afro-European relations in this period".³⁶ The change of attitude and the entire question of the abolition of slave trade, therefore, appeared to the coastal people as strange elements in their relationship with the Europeans and they reacted accordingly, leaving no stone unturned in trying to defend their commercial and political interests. They also felt that the attempt to stop the slave trade would not only affect their economic power but would also seriously undermine their political power.

In international relations, states had always been the best judges of their respective interests. It is in this light that the stand of the Delta rulers as regards the enforcement of the abolition of slave trade in West Africa by the British should be considered. Theirs was quite a strategically worthy stand. Britain, too, prior to 1808 took a similar stand. The vested interests there had opposed the abolition to the extent that even Lord Dartmouth, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared in 1775, that Britain could not discourage slave trade because it was at that time beneficial to her as a nation.³⁷ The African rulers too would be justified by the same token, in trying to defend their economic and political interests which were being undermined by the British. It will be necessary to point out that in spite of the superiority of the British naval power, the African rulers did not relent in their efforts to resist interference of any sort. K.O. Dike cited the case of Captain W.F.W. Owen who in 1824 anchored at the Bonny shore without permission, and the reaction of King Opubo.³⁸ In 1866 too, the Okrika people drove out of their city-state, Consul Livingstone and his entourage when they landed there without the authority of the Amanyabo of Okrika King Fibika (Ado V).³⁹

Of striking consequence in the chain of events at the time was the British acquisition from Spain in 1827, of the right to use Fernando Po for operation of its naval squadron. The British officials had as part of their duty to exterminate slave trade, the diplomatic measure of negotiating with local

rulers at various times. For example they did so with Bonny in 1839⁴⁰ and Nembe-Brass in 1879.⁴¹ Yet there were infringements. "Such city-states as did support the British Navy against the dealers in men signed the Treaties because it paid to do so. Principalities like Bonny, on the other hand, where the slave trade was vital to their economy, resisted the abolition movement. The Delta states were as divided among themselves as were the nations of Europe".⁴² In 1836, some Spanish ships which had anchored at Bonny for slaves, were seized by the naval squadron. The Bonny Regent Madu, therefore, ordered the arrest of Lieutenant Tyron the Commander of HMS Trinculo who was directly involved, and others. When an amicable settlement could not secure their release, more gun boats of the British Squadron arrived at Bonny which forced Madu (Anna Pepple) to effect the release of those arrested - an action which, quite visibly, was against his personal conviction. "The mood of the regent..." wrote K.O. Dike, "was such that any mention of the abolition of slave trade would have met with uncompromising opposition".⁴³

In the face of such resistance, Britain had not by the 1850^s established effective occupation on what we now know as the Nigerian coast except in Lagos. The role of its naval squadron was mainly preventive, and directed at the extermination of the slave trade and the enthronelement of the trade in palm oil, kernels and other goods. The actual result however, proved rather paradoxical for the annual export of slaves was more at this time when nearly all European powers had outlawed it than

in the eighteenth century when it was legal. There was no doubt that the African factor in the trade was largely responsible for this. Although a few African rulers had on their own somehow tried to suppress the slave trade in their domain, for example Agaja Trudo of Dahomey,⁴⁴ and in Benin where the export of male slaves was prohibited in greater part of the eighteenth century,⁴⁵ yet generally speaking, many African rulers who were greatly involved in the trade had not outlawed it. In spite of the fact that some of them had signed Treaties to stop the slave trade, they did so because of coercion. Thus, such Treaties were taken for what they were worth on paper, and were soon violated.

Furthermore, the city-states which were situated away from the coast and so were inaccessible to the British warships, remained virtually unaffected by these Treaties. Thus, when the volume of trade reduced at the Bonny sector on account of naval blockade, a slave boom occurred at the Brass zone where there was a complex network of creeks through which slave ships could slip away unnoticed by the naval squadron. Bonny had to divert for sale, its supply of slaves to Brass its traditional ally.⁴⁶ Besides, there was still at this time good market for slaves in Cuba and Brazil. It was when slaves could no longer be sold in the plantation economies of those countries that the trade also petered in the 1860's in West Africa.

However, the argument in humanitarian circles was not that the effort of the naval squadron was completely abortive. Whatever the case was, it rescued very large numbers of slaves

between 1829 and 1849. But the doubt that was expressed was whether the policy of merely policing the high seas with a view to capturing slave ships would perform the magic of exterminating the trade.

Judging against the background of the increase in export of slaves in the nineteenth century, the apprehensions of the humanitarians appeared to be genuine. The incessant mobility of the British naval squadron had affected its effectiveness on the high seas. Its warships on the West Coast were few and had to be on the move very frequently from one delta port to the other, hardly remaining in any one port for a long time.⁴⁷ Thus, even though the naval squadron set free many slaves on their way to the Americas and the Caribbean between 1825 and 1865, slave boats escaping capture, succeeded in carrying even more slaves. In other words, the naval action was not fool-proof.

Nonetheless, the concern for more effective measures eventually led to remarkable policy adjustments epitomised in the appointment in 1849 of John Beecroft as Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Fernando Po. He was to take care of British commercial interest in the Bights of Benin and Biafra having "recognized that their stakes in the area were high" by this time.⁴⁸ With instructions to visit coastal rulers and to conclude slave-trade Treaties with them, he helped to enhance British colonial enterprise. When King Kosoko of Lagos (considered to be major obstacle to the suppression of slave trade) failed to conclude a slave treaty, his town was stormed by a naval force in 1851 after Beecroft had received Missionary reports and appeals for intervention there.

As the King fled, he was deposed by the Consul and replaced on the throne with his uncle, Akitoye. In 1861, Lagos was annexed as a British Colony not only because Dosumu who succeeded Akitoye failed to dance to the tune of the British Colonial authorities, but also because the Foreign Office itself had felt that without a permanent occupation, complete suppression of the slave trade in these parts would hardly be realized. In this way, and for the first time, British authority came to be established on what we can now describe as Nigerian soil.

The experience of King Kosoko of Lagos was in fact a warning to other rulers in the West African region of the things to come. Sooner or later its ripples were spread like those of a pebble thrown into a pool of water. This policy of interference was extended to the states of the Niger Delta after February 1853 when the Consular jurisdiction of Beecroft was restricted by Palmerston to the Niger Delta and separate Consulate was established in Lagos.

Here the King of Bonny, William Dappa Pepple, expressed a desire to cancel the slave trade Treaty he signed with Britain in 1848 because of failure of the British to honour it by paying him the subsidy to which he was entitled under the Treaty. The Consul's reaction was by way of a political intervention. The King was deported by Beecroft first to Fernando Po, and then to Ascension Island, and then again to London, in 1854 following his deposition by the Bonny chiefs as a result of internal squabbles.⁴⁹ Although there was no material evidence with which to accuse King Pepple of continuing the slave trade, Consul Beecroft in his reports, painted a false picture of the situation

in Bonny to the Foreign Office in spite of the fact that since 1850 the rapid growth of the 'legitimate' trade there had virtually rendered the slave traffic obsolete. In fact, Consul Lyslager also wrote that William Pepple wanted guns and gunpowder as presents in discharge of the 1848 Treaty, and so suggested that Pepple should not return to Bonny.⁵⁰

Indeed, it was rather unfortunate that King Pepple had allowed Bonny's internal squabbles to play into the hands of the Consular Authorities who eventually deported him. It was similar internal wranglings that the Consular officials manipulated to bring Akitoye back to the throne in Lagos in place of Kosoko. But as K.O. Dike vividly asserted "those (local rulers) who stood for the old abstentionist policy and resisted encroachment, whether they dealt in slaves or not, were to him (Beecroft) enemies of 'progress' and 'civilization', and were singled out for attack".⁵¹

The intensification of naval action coupled with diplomacy, made the visits of the slave dealers dwindle. Besides, the trade was no longer a profitable venture because the cost of slaves soared at the time. A number of plantations in the Americas had encouraged their slaves to breed, and therefore became less dependent on slave import. With such combination of factors - naval, diplomatic, legal, extra-legal and economic, together with the rise of industrial capitalism, slave trafficking gradually declined.

With the retreat of slave traffickers in the rivers of the Niger Delta and the consequent invasion of these rivers by merchants ready to engage in 'legitimate commerce', the nefarious

trade in slaves came to an end. There was then a rise in the supply of the new commodities in demand. In other words, when there were no more buyers of slaves, the sellers had to change to the alternatives in demand. Supply, as it were, was in response to demand. As long as the slave market in Cuba and Brazil remained good, so long also did the slaves continue to be shipped over the ocean in great numbers. Thus, it was only when there were no more markets for slaves that that trade petered.

'Legitimate trade' was however not completely new. Trade in other commodities was one of the motivating factors behind European exploration of West Africa in the fifteenth century. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was a later development that tended to overshadow other aspects of commerce. With its abolition therefore, the earlier trade was merely revived, particularly, in the region of the Niger Delta from where there was a rapid rise in the export of palm oil which was urgently needed in Europe both for the purpose of lubricating machinery and the manufacture of soap.

The importance of the Niger Delta lay partly in the fact that there was abundance of palm trees in its hinterland. But it was chiefly remarkable for the exceptional facilities for the transportation of bulky goods and for penetrating the interior, having got a wonderful system of natural canalization by means of large and navigable streams. Generally too, "the attraction of West Africa as a potential market for British manufactures was undoubtedly great, and it was this consideration

which led much more important and powerful groups than West African markets to look with favour on political expansion in this (and other) regions".⁵²

Apart from the strains of the change-over from slave trade to 'legitimate trade' the Eastern Delta Houses were already postured for the organisation of the new trade. The House system ensured the labour requirement not only for the manning of the trade canoes for the actual collection of the oil but also of the war canoe convey to protect the trade on the rivers.

On their part, the European traders did not withdraw from the West Coast of Africa, having already invested heavy capital in ship, castles and hulks. It obviously appeared that there was little or no difference between the European 'rascals' involved in the rough and tough days of the slave trade and the palm oil 'ruffians' whose conduct was frequently outrageous and only occasionally tempered by the capacity of the local merchants to retaliate. And indeed, some Africans had enough military power to humble recalcitrant European merchants. Thus, while the commodity of trade (or trade article) had actually changed "neither men, methods, nor morality had changed very much".⁵³ Afro-European conflict therefore became a feature of the new trade.

Before the arrival of the naval squadron and the subsequent appointment of Consular Officers, trade was politically neutral. The Europeans depended so much on their African colleagues, and rarely ventured far from the coast to procure slaves directly

by themselves. "In some regions", wrote Bill Freund, "they established forts for which they paid a rent to the local authorities who saw them as guarantees for the steadfastness of the trade than as threat to local sovereignty".⁵⁴ A.N. Cook also wrote on how "the coastal chiefs had proved valuable agents of European commercial interests from the sixteenth century on."⁵⁵ During the hectic days of the slave trade European traders depended on them not only to secure captives from the interior, but also to hold them in barracoons along the coast before selling them to slave traders. Besides, as the slave trade was replaced by the 'legitimate' commerce, these coastal chiefs once again established themselves as middlemen between European traders and the producers of palm oil and other tropical products in the interior. European traders gave them various commodities in trust in return for which they supplied an agreed quantity of oil. It was perhaps only King Amakiri of Kalabari who resisted the temptation of taking goods on trust and also restrained his people from taking goods on trust.⁵⁶

However, in-built to the trust system were elements of conflict because it was highly susceptible to manipulation the details of which will be discussed in the next chapter. But another source of conflict which can be discussed here is the influx of Europeans as a result of the advent of the steamship in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some of these Europeans were small traders and others were missionaries. Both groups had to set up more European bases on the shore, a development that threatened the position of local rulers since

such presence of an expatriate community had in it serious political implications. Apart from trying to defy the authority of local rulers they got involved in the internal political conflicts too, often siding one party or the other, and by either confirming the power of existing rulers or building up the claims of rivals. They also got involved in inter-community conflicts and invited their governments to intervene.⁵⁷

The trade depression of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was another source of conflict because it had serious effect on the way the 'legitimate commerce' was conducted. The decline in the barter terms of trade affected both Europeans and Africans. The effort to make more profit came therefore, to depend on the balance of commercial power as "each party sought to control the local markets and to dictate terms to the other".⁵⁸ In addition to this, there were disputes over functions and areas of influence. The Europeans made effort to oust the Delta middlemen and to get to the sources of supply in order to make more profit. The Delta middlemen, of course, resisted.

On the other hand too, the Delta middlemen made attempt to by-pass the super-cargoes and sell oil direct to Europe in order to make more profit. The European merchants also, resisted. In this way, the normal non-violent commercial relations started to break down, giving way to rivalry and conflict. Consequently, the European merchants had to press for more active policy by their governments, pleading "that the Consul should have power granted to him to use", and to interfere by force.⁵⁹

Apart from such efforts which aimed at ending what the European merchants considered to be 'an unproductive' middlemen system, there was pressure to also abolish the payment of 'comey' (otherwise called customs duty or toll) levied by the Delta rulers who, on their part, felt that the call for such concessions was an attempt to undermine their sovereignty. The appointment of Consuls and their activities appeared to have satisfied the yearnings of the European merchants. This appeared to have facilitated intervention in the invasion internal affairs of the coastal states. Super-cargoes often invited these Consuls to intervene in the so-called interest of commerce⁶⁰ which, of course, was their own interest. The indigenous rulers could not, of course, do otherwise but to try to fight back in various ways. Ironically, the commercial attractiveness of the area increased the dangers of interference.⁶¹

In Bonny, for instance, King Opubo always insisted on respect for the sovereignty and independence of his city-state. The Captain Owen affair of 1824 earlier mentioned, was a case in point. When he died, his son Dappa who later took the Christian name William, was still a minor, and his trusted ex-slave Madu who at the time was head of the Annie Pepple War-Canoe House, became regent during Dappa's minority. In that capacity Madu followed the footsteps of his late master Opubo by struggling to preserve the independence of Bonny. The Lieutenant Tyron affair of 1836 also mentioned earlier, was another case in point.

However, the predominance of Madu in Bonny dwarfed, as it were, the image of William Dappa Pepple when he came of age and started performing his functions as Amanyababo of Bonny. In consequence, the internal political situation went adrift as there ensued a struggle for power and pre-eminence between the

Pepple group of Houses on one side and the Annie (or Anna) Pepple on the other. The Amanymanabo's cryptic attempt at such a time to go to war with the Kalabari did not help the situation either, but merely facilitated his deposition and deportation.⁶²

The removal of William Dappa Pepple in Bonny created a political void. Imposed on the puppets who replaced him was the Court of Equity established in 1854 which was chairmanned by the Consul instead of the Amanymanabo. Besides, there was a larger number representing the super-cargoes than the indigenous merchants. It was a surreptitious way in which sovereign authority was being transferred to the Court, and the Amanymanabo himself as well as his chiefs, was subject to any fines that might be imposed by it for various actions arising from their trading relations with the super-cargoes. The return of William Dappa Pepple to the Bonny throne after seven years of forced exile made no difference whatsoever, having by then become a broken man without economic or political power with which to restore peace and tranquility to his city-state. According to Alagoa and Fombo, King Dappa Pepple's first handicap as a ruler "was his comparative poverty".⁶³ Having become too impotent to maintain a balance between the contending factions, he could no longer ensure stability in Bonny and had to rely so much on consular support.

Thus, by the time King William Dappa Pepple died in 1866 and was succeeded by his son Prince George, all the power of Bonny Kingship had been eroded through the encroachment of the leading House heads of two major groups which were diametrically

opposed to each other. Cash (or wealth) and ambition ruled and Bonny drifted rapidly towards anarchy. The leaders in the increasing disorder gathered hardened soldiers to their respective sides. Each party spared no effort to lay in store a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

Eventually therefore, a civil war engulfed Bonny on 13th September, 1869. It was a conflict in which personal hatred reached its maximum between the warring factions, the Manilla Pepple and the Annie Pepple. The leading figures in the entire episode were two ex-slaves one of whom was Oko-Jumbo the Chief Adviser of the new King (George) and head of the Manilla Pepple House while the other was Jaja, head of the Annie Pepple House. The consequence of the artillery duel in Bonny was the secession of Jaja from Bonny and the founding in 1870 of the independent city-state of Opobo where he became King and was recognised by the British Consul in 1872. Jaja in 1870 had refused to sign a Peace Treaty as a result of which Consul Livingstone stopped trade in the area.⁶⁴

Indeed, it was quite evident that without an external influence, Jaja would have been unable to found an independent city-state, judging from the circumstances of his defeat, his stock of arms and ammunition having been considerably depleted. His enemies had hoped to attack him at Minima to which he and many members of his faction initially escaped, but he applied for British protection from the impending invasion of the Manilla Pepple. Some of his supporters paid the supreme penalty, and some too were, according to Jaja, sold to Okrika men fishing at the Bonny bar (Okoloba toru) and later retrieved by Jaja.⁶⁵

"The fact that the great Jaja needed British recognition underscored the depth of the influence Britain was wielding in Delta politics, an influence which had been increasing considerably since the slave trade treaties".⁶⁶ Perhaps one should also mention it only to demonstrate the nature of the African problem, the fact that even at the Western Niger Delta, the powerful Nana Olomu's appointment as governor of the Benin River on 12th July, 1884 was supervised by Consul Hewett. Indeed, these acts demonstrated the weakness of the city-states during the period.

The split in Bonny greatly weakened that city-state, and the monarchy became a shadow of its former self. The formal signing of a Treaty of Friendship with E.H. Hewett on 22nd August, 1884 brought Bonny under the protection of Britain, an earlier Treaty of peace having been concluded with Naval Captain Arthur T. Brooke of Her Majesty's ship 'Opal' on 24th July, 1884.⁶⁷

Bonny's western neighbour, the city-state of Elem Kalabari had a full load of troubles both external and internal. By the agreement of 25th December, 1854 which was witnessed by Consul John Beecroft and other officials she had ended her dispute with Egenny.⁶⁸ By the treaty of 28th October, 1871 she had also ended the war with Okrika.⁶⁹ Internally, however, rivalry between the Odum (Barboy) group of Houses which derived from Kamalu an earlier Kalabari King, and the Ombo group which supported the Amachree dynasty,⁷⁰ crystallized into outright armed conflicts. King Abbe (Amakiri IV) strove unsuccessfully

to maintain a balance between Will Braid (Igbani) of the Odum or Barboy group of Houses, and George Amakiri (Idilolomari) of the Ombo (Amakiri) group who had great influence on the Amanyanabo. There was no formal declaration of war in accordance with tradition. However, faced with a formidable coalition of George Amakiri, John Bull and Horsefall Manuel against him, Will Braid decided to remove all his supporters to a fortified site at Iwofe (Ewofa),⁷¹ and enlisted the support of Okrika and Bonny.

Eventually, his forces led by Iyalla and supported by his allies under the command of Chief Iyanaboitamuno George of Okrika, met those of the Kalabari contingent led by Chief Horsefall (Omekwe) at Aluu.⁷² After a formidable engagement, the Kalabari contingent had to retreat. But in doing so constructed "fortified position opposite Ewofa to contain Will Braid's forts".⁷³ It was only a peace treaty under the mediation of Acting Consul Easton on board H.M.S. Dido on 19th November, 1879, that restored peace amongst the Kalabari.⁷⁴ When Will Braid still appeared not to budge in spite of the Peace Treaty Consul Edward Hyde Hewett tried to enforce it by issuing a decretal order on him in 1882 to move from Iwofe. By 1884 he and his people moved to Bakana, resisting efforts to get him closer to other Kalabari villages. The place appeared to be nearer and more accessible to his Okrika allies than the other Kalabari towns.⁷⁵

Apart from the direction and end of the Kalabari internal conflict, it was in many respects similar to that of Bonny. It exposed the weakness of the monarchy at the time to deal with

the leading chiefs, and it was also a struggle for political dominance between two groups of Houses of the ruling dynasties (contemporary and past). Will Braid's attempt to found an independent city-state like that of Jaja failed because of lack of support by the European trading agents and the British Consul. Like all violent revolutions it left its imprint in the way it led to the establishment of new dynasties namely, Will Braid in Bakana and Bob Manuel in Abonnema, while leaving the representative of the ancient Amachree (Amakiri) dynasty to remain at Buguma, according to Sogules, "as titular sovereign of a confederation of largely three autonomous kingdoms".⁷⁶ But while each ruler of Kalabari town still remains known as Amadabo, Chief A.B. Batubo pointed out that the "traditional head of Kalabari is known as Amanyanabo".⁷⁷

The conflict story was also in the city-state of Nembe. But Nembe's problem was on a different scale. Having experienced a protracted civil war in the eighteenth century arising from a succession dispute at the death of King Basuo, Mingi seized the throne from his cousin Ogbodo who had to move across the river with his supporters to set up a parallel monarchy at Bassambiri. This resulted in the split of Nembe into two communities. Therefore, "the central political problem in Nembe" as E.J. Alagoa has already pointed out, "has been to maintain such balance in the internal affairs that the two sections can combine effectively in external action".⁷⁸ Some of the Treaties signed carried the signatures of the Kings of both Ogbolomabiri and Bassambiri the two sections of Nembe.⁷⁹

In any case, the other towns within the Nembe sub ethnic group such as Twon-Brass, Okpoama, Odioama, Egwema, Beletiana

and so on, all had their local autonomous Amanyapanu (Kings) not sub-servient to each other or any other.⁸⁰ None received orders from any one else and none was accountable to any other, not even to the Amanyapano of Nembe. "But in matters touching the overall interests of Nembe such as war and foreign affairs, the Amanyapano of Nembe was acknowledged as paramount ruler of Nembe".⁸¹

Nembe's geographical position made it difficult for European traders or the British Consul to exploit the internal situation. Taking advantage of her inaccessibility of the vessels of the British naval squadron, she continued the slave trade until the middle of the nineteenth century.⁸² However, Nembe experienced a wave of European expeditions to explore the River Niger and a Nembe Prince, Amain Kulo (who became Amanyapano of Nembe known as King Boy) in 1830 rescued the Lander Brothers (Richard and John) when they were captured by Aboh warriors, by paying a ransom to Obi Ossai the King of Aboh.⁸³

In the Okrika city-state, the situation was slightly different. Geography appeared to have favoured that city-state for it made defence and autonomy militarily practicable for long. Like Nembe, it was not easily accessible. And like Nembe also, Okrika was spared much of the troubles arising from Afro-European relations. It conducted its trade with Europeans indirectly through Bonny and later (but briefly) through Opobo.⁸⁴ In matters of internal conflict it provided a contrast to the other city-states for it had no such conflicts at the time to be exploited by any one. There was a better understanding among the people in internal political matters and by King Fibika's order, smaller

quarters merged to form bigger ones as for example in Awolome Biri.⁸⁵

In a sub-region over-whelmingly characterized by dissension and uncertainty, the Ado dynasty which was ruling in Okrika though in firm control of foreign affairs involving matters related to war and peace in the city-state, was careful not to disturb the internal constitutional arrangements which had always ensured considerable autonomy to the various towns in matters local to those towns. Major problems were discussed at the central Council of Chiefs to which the rulers of these towns namely, Ogoloma, Ogu, Bolo, Abuloma, Isaka, Ogbogbo and so on, including all the War-Canoe House Heads, attended under the chairmanship of the Amanyabo of Okrika himself.⁸⁶ It was rather a conciliar system than an autocratic rule by an Amanyabo.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, and for the first time the Amanyabo (Fibika, Ado V) appointed a Chief, Jama, as his principal chief in Kirike town (Okrika)⁸⁷ and he became the spokesman in major issues affecting the city-state.⁸⁸ The circumstance of this appointment did not lend itself to political rivalries. And in this way, the possibility or probability of an insurrection was avoided. Indeed, there was necessity to avoid insurrection because its course could hardly be predictable. If allowed to explode, its extent could hardly be controlled too. The appointment of a Prime Minister by the Amanyabo of Okrika therefore, helped to bring about the internal cohesion Okrika experienced at the time. Besides, the appointment was politically significant in the sense that it was a constitutional innovation. The other city-states where no provision was made for such a

constitutional change, revolution or insurgence came to be a logical necessity while Okrika enjoyed considerable internal peace.

Okrika's problem however, was external and was mainly with the Kalabari. Although its commercial intercourse with the Andoni appeared to have been smothered by the 1846 Peace Treaty between Andoni and Bonny the real position was not so. The relationship between Okrika and Andoni went on as before 1846. In fact, after 1870, King Jaja of Opobo himself raised issues on the Andoni relationship with Bonny which resulted from the 1846 Treaty.⁸⁹ Okrika, however, normalised relations with Bonny. But its protracted wars with the Kalabari over fishing grounds and the control of markets, often disturbed the commerce of the region and the European merchants who were alarmed, had to invite the Consul to intervene.⁹⁰ The Kalabari appeared to have used European traders to influence the Consuls against Okrika, and the British government itself took a deliberate stand against Okrika in favour of the Kalabari.⁹¹ One could perhaps suggest that these frequent external problems might have helped to unite the Okrika people in those hectic days and so ensured its considerable stability and corporate existence.

In 1866 for instance, Consul Livingstone and some members of the Court of Equity visited Okrika to discuss with King Fibika (Ado V) the reigning Amanyano of Okrika, on how to bring about peace. There was no prior information to the Amanyano about the visit and no permission was obtained from him to enter the city-state. As a result, the party led by the Consul was mobbed

and repulsed. It was only when Calendusi, Banigo and other Bonny chiefs who went with them had secured the Okrika King's consent that they were finally permitted to enter the city-state.⁹² Even then, the Amanymanabo had taken additional precaution by going to consult the Okrika deity at its shrine to find out if the visit of the Consul portended danger.⁹³

One could of course mention that in Africa generally, the influence of deities pervaded the life of the community. The Delta rulers too found the Arochukwu oracle a convenient buttress to community discipline because fear of the oracle made thousands of slaves and others that were likely to give trouble remain in subjection.⁹⁴ In settling inter community disputes, too, resort to the Arochukwu Oracle had often been made.⁹⁵ In Benin also Oba Ovonramwan consulted the oracle on the visit of the whitemen. In 1890, the Ife oracle predicted that a great calamity might befall his kingdom.⁹⁶ The Oba was then advised by his priests to make human sacrifice in order to avert that danger. In 1897, when Ovonramwan consulted the oracle over the visit of Consul General J.R. Philips, the indications were still bad. Philips was accordingly ambushed and killed. That was the extent to which rulers and people took traditional religion seriously. Thus, the Amanymanabo of Okrika in obedience to the prediction of the Fenibeso priests, agreed to British mediation, discussed peace and eventually concluded the Treaty of peace with King Amachree of Kalabari.⁹⁷

Some of Okrika's problems with the Consuls were due to reports forwarded by the missionaries to the consulate.⁹⁸ Since 1878, Chief Atorudibo a trader who often visited Bonny, started

christian worship in Okrika with his household at first, and later when others became converted, a church was built in Chief Ogan's compound. Although Chief Atorudibo was seriously punished for introducing an alien religion in Okrika, the Okrika ruling class had come to believe that through the missionaries, commerce would increase in Okrika and thereby enhance economic welfare. Accordingly, a delegation headed by Chief Inyanaboitamuno George was sent to Bonny in 1880 to invite Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther.⁹⁹

After some exploratory missionary visits by Archdeacon D.C. Crowther and others, an agreement was in 1881 concluded between King Ibanichuka with some of his chiefs representing Okrika, and Bishop S.A. Crowther, to formalise the establishment of the mission church.¹⁰⁰ The Okrika mission was facilitated by the declining success of the Kalabari mission. King Amakiri IV and the priests of Ogbolodo frustrated the CMS Mission so much that in 1884/1885, the missionaries transferred the mission from Elem Kalabari to Okrika.¹⁰¹ The Kalabari mission was initially established in 1874/75 and the missionaries were given a ten-year trial period. The Rev. W.E. Carew who was the minister in charge of the mission in Kalabari was transferred to Okrika in 1884.¹⁰² The collapse of the Kalabari mission was, indeed, a prelude to the segmentation of Elem Kalabari in 1885. With the coming of the missionaries and their agents, there were increased reports to the British consulate condemning the performance of traditional rites and Okrika's retaliatory attacks on neighbouring towns. Such reports brought about constant friction between the consular officials and the Okrika people.

What we have seen so far of the Eastern Niger Delta states before 1885 portrayed involvement in what appeared to be endless intrigues and conflicts. There were both intra-state and inter-state rivalries which sapped their energies, and security therefore failed to be collective at the time, a situation which the British consuls exploited to advantage. The parties involved in the conflicts often sought the cooperation of the consuls against their opponents in order to achieve their ends. The Europeans too in most of their campaigns, worked in conjunction with African allies supplying rival African chiefs with guns.¹⁰³ In such circumstance of divisive competitiveness which created political instability, it was impossible for the Africans to co-operate among themselves to organise a common front against the interference and prevent the colonial designs of the consuls.

Secondly, self reliance on the part of the respective city-states proved inadequate. They failed to remind themselves that strength, like gun-powder needed to be concentrated if it had to be effective. Since they overlooked the old adage that 'unity is strength', the Eastern Niger Delta City-States remained divided, and exhibited what Prof. Afigbo called "political myopia which made it impossible for them to take a united stand against the colonial invaders".¹⁰⁴ If traditional rivals like Okrika and Kalabari or enemies such as Andoni, Bonny and Opobo could not help each other, traditional allies such as Bonny and Okrika or traditional friends such as Okrika and Nembe or Andoni and Kalabari¹⁰⁵ ought to have proffered help to each other. But they failed to do so. They had no political vision so to do. King

Koko, for instance, during his attack on Akassa in 1895 "sent appeals for support and solidarity to the Kalabari and Bonny. But the letters arrived after the attack..."¹⁰⁶ Thus he fought alone. His allies and friends did not help during the attack nor did they go to his aid when the forces of the colonial authority converged on him as a reprisal.

Acquiescence on the part of African leaders was also responsible for the collapse of traditional rule. When one African state learnt that another powerful African state had been defeated, that African state refused to put up any more resistance. Because Bonny had been humbled; that Jaja had been exiled; that Nembe had been subdued, Okrika felt it had little or no chance of victory and so did not put up actual armed resistance in 1896 when their Amanyabo, Ibanichuka was deported.¹⁰⁷ Even in far away Asante, Prempeh the Asantehene did not resist the British expedition, but 'submitted completely' and was deported in that same year. It was only when the British demanded the golden stool that war broke out and the Asante were defeated.¹⁰⁸

What one could also notice as a general feature was the structure of the city-states. The war-canoe House system made them semi-military, placing each of the House heads in command of their war-canoes.¹⁰⁹ While the Amanyabo had power to declare war (and make peace), and could give order as to the numerical strength of a war canoe as did King Fibika in Okrika,¹¹⁰ he depended much on the co-operation of the chiefs who had immediate control of their war-canoe Houses. Apart from the war-canoes of the royal family, the Amanyabo of the

city-state had no standing regular army or navy such as that placed at the disposal of the consuls. In short, the political condition of the city-states of the Eastern Delta in general during this period as compared to the colonising power was one of collective weakness. This affected the degree of resistance they put up to the determined effort of the Consuls to undermine their sovereignty.

The social structure of the city-states in a way also contributed to the collapse of the city-states. Although the structure permitted mobility between the different strata of the society, the case of Jaja being a striking example,¹¹¹ the movement could be very slow. This created a dichotomy.

Besides, the predominance of fishing as an occupation would suggest that it might have played a considerable if not predominant role in production. But it did not. Even though no indices have been worked out, generally the mode of living of the average local fisherman using traditional fishing methods was the same in the coastal parts of Nigeria. Thus, the standard of living of the fisherman in the Niger Delta could be comparable to those of Ilaje and Apese fishing villages in the Lagos area who lived "generally in great poverty and at times in the off fishing season many (were) near, if not actually, on the starvation line".¹¹² Although a few of the Delta fishermen were not poor because they engaged in some kind of capitalist mode of fishing and occasionally alternated trading with fishing, the average fisherman languished in squalor while the average trader was ostensibly affluent by local standards. Thus, the development of commerce has as one of its results a growing gulf between the

traders and the fishermen, setting in motion forces which were simply accentuated by the colonial factor. There were therefore the pervasive and mutually reinforcing imbalances which existed in the patterns of social interaction. Some of the fishermen who had their personal fishing gadgets and dug-out canoes became 'pullaboys' in the large trade canoes of the merchants.¹¹³ There was as it were, the polarisation of Delta society into a sort of bourgeoisie class with a high standard of living and what appeared to be a proletariat of pullaboys and fishermen. Social grievances could not therefore be ruled out, even if nothing was done as was the case in Old Calabar where the Order of Blood Men organised to protect their own welfare.¹¹⁴

In such a situation in which new forces clashed with the old, some of the down-trodden fishermen or 'pullaboys' saw the possibility of upliftment in their standards through a revolutionary change. There has therefore been some doubt¹¹⁵ over their full commitment to defend the status quo. Having nothing to loose, they might in fact have seen a likely change in their fortunes for good in the changing environment. Thus, one other possible reason for the collapse of the city-state was the lack of combined mobilization which, under normal circumstances would have introduced the idea of common cause in the individual's consciousness.¹¹⁶ But in circumstances where polarisation and social grievances existed, that cohesiveness that resulted from the semi-military nature of the city-states of the Eastern Niger Delta, revealed signs of cleavage.

A crucial element of the new social order that emerged during this period was the missionary presence which was making an inroad in the second half of the nineteenth century. It became a cultural revolution which helped to erode the authority of the Delta rulers and resulted in the disintegration of traditional culture and the collapse of religious belief system, laying bare new types of social conflicts and polarization which the traditional rulership in many areas could neither contain nor resolve. Such conflicts occurred in many places between christians and traditionalists. In Andoni, major villages split into "old" and "new", the new ones often being abodes of the traditionalists who felt they must worship Yok-Obolo and observe all the laws of their traditional religion. In Nembe, King Ockia of Ogbolomabiri and King Ebifa of Basambiri had to agree not to molest christian converts on condition that such converts abstained from interfering in the worship of traditional deities also.¹¹⁷ In Okrika the Consul, Macdonald, threatened to destroy the city if they attacked christian converts.¹¹⁸ Although it would be a serious mistake to think of a uniform political doctrine and ideology in the Eastern Delta at this time yet there were many currents and counter-currents of socio-political nature within its ample stream.

The collusion between the missionaries, the consular officers and the commercial firms during this period of conflict will again be demonstrated in the next chapter. But one more point in this aspect requires notice and that is the fact that the war techniques available to the colonialists generally placed the defence of the city-states at a disadvantage.

The use of the machine-guns rendered African resistance (which was technologically inferior) almost ineffective. The ultimate explanation for the ineffectiveness of African resistance to colonial conquest, therefore, lay both in the superiority of European arms, army, officers and strategy.

Indeed, the material strength of the invaders was definitely the decisive factor and did sway the balance in their favour in the long run. King Jaja of Opobo was carried away in the gunboat 'GOSHAWK'. King Ibanichuka of Okrika was exiled in the gunboat 'Ivy'. Even the Treaties with the city-states were concluded in one gunboat or the other. When the Okrika chiefs refused to go into a gunboat during a peace treaty negotiation, Consul Charles Livingstone persuaded them, stating that the Man-of-War (or gunboat) was his house.¹¹⁹ Thus, the entire process of overthrow (and political transition) involved the use of force or the threat of it¹²⁰ as will be discussed in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Alagoa, E.J. A History of the Niger Delta, Ibadan, 1972 p.123.
2. Ejituwu, N.C. 'The Obolo (Andoni) of the Eastern Niger Delta' (Ph.D. Thesis) Lagos, 1977 p. 307 According to Ejituwu, the Obolo shared common historical and environmental experience with the people of the area.
3. Isichei, E. History of West Africa Since 1880, London, 1977, p.116.
4. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885, Oxford, 1956 p. 31.
5. Dappa-Biriye, H.J.R. (Chief) of Bonny interviewed in Port-Harcourt 10th June, 1986. As a matter of fact, G.C. Pedro of Bakana in Kalabari expressed similar view when interviewed on 15th June, 1986.
6. NAI CALPROF 4/3. Letter from King George Pepple of Bonny to Lord Stanley dated 30th November, 1867.
7. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics... p. 69.
8. F.O. 84/950. Petition by Bonny Chiefs to Consul John Beecroft.
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108. Isichel, E. History of West Africa Since 1800, p. 67.
109. Chief Ngeri Rowland who was interviewed at Okrika on 7th June, 1986 asserted that Chiefs at that time, occasionally behaved as over-mighty subjects similar to the Barons of 15th Century England.

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111. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 36.
112. NAE. MISF. 39. Report of Fisheries Investigation 1942-48.
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114. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 156.
115. Chief Ngeri Rowlands interviewed at Okrika on 7/6/86 expressed some doubt on the full commitment of certain people. According to him, it was not even the down-trodden but some leading figures who were getting inclined to christianity and who therefore thought that King Ibanichuka was being exiled for fetish practices and would, of course, be returned later as Moor actually promised. There were others too who did not see the episode from the point of view of an overthrow of the traditional regime. In Bonny, for instance, when William Pepple was exiled in 1856, Kingship or traditional rule was not destroyed (although the people appointed were in fact puppets). There were of course, some ambitious people with political and commercial interest who saw the British invasion as the stepping stone for the realisation of their own objectives. (Professor Obaro Ikime actually explained this last aspect in the conclusion of his book The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest, vide pp. 211 and 212.
116. Ibid. Chief Ngeri Rowlands felt convinced that the mobilization in Okrika was not impressive when the Amanyanabo, Ibanichuka, was forcefully carried into exile in 1896.
117. NAE CALPROF 5/7/3. Agreement with Ag. Consul David Hopkins dated 21st November, 1871.
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CHAPTER THREE

THE BRITISH CONQUEST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF COLONIAL RULE 1885-1914

When Europeans started visiting West Africa late in the fifteenth century, they engaged in regular trading with coastal people. By that historical incident, the coastal area became a centre of trade, and from that time on, as K.O. Dike pointed out "the coastland became the frontier of opportunity".¹ Yet it was one thing to have an opportunity and quite another to utilise, or even misuse and consequently lose that opportunity. For the people of the Eastern Niger Delta, the possibility of misuse was great. After all the Europeans did not come to buy fish and salt which were the main trade goods produced by them. *

In chapter two, there was discussion on the socio-political organisation into War-Canoe Houses which the Delta people had evolved for purposes of defence but which proved useful in another direction at this point. It had to be transformed to suit trading ventures; and this was a crucial factor for participating in the slave trade because of acquire and convey slaves from the populous hinterland required substantial resources and the ability to man and defend the canoes used in conveying the slaves. These slaves were either bought from slave markets which developed or through raids.

Generally, however the people of the Eastern delta were middlemen in the trade and they tried to ensure that they maintained this position. They succeeded not only in excluding the people of the hinterland from bringing slaves direct to the

coast, but also prevented the European slavers from having direct contact with the sources of supply in the hinterland. By effectively making good use of their advantageous position, the delta people did not permit the opportunity of European contact to pass by.

Since the trade in slaves required enormous resources in men and material, the delta middlemen were not foolish to sell all their slaves. Apart from the fact that slavery had become essential to the organisation of production, they retained some of the slaves and absorbed them into the war-canoe Houses as full-fledged members after processes of traditional purification in order to use them as soldiers and sustainers of the socio-political system. "A valued slave was often given a free-born female to marry and thus acquired a vital stake in the city-state".²

Besides, a rise to the top within the war-canoe House was by dint of hardwork and possession of wealth. Every member (free born or slave) of a war-canoe House had equal opportunity to be its head. Jaja who became Amanyabo (King) of Opobo started as a slave boy in Bonny and worked himself up to the headship of the Annie Pepple House. In fact, in Okrika, after the process of purification and absorption of a slave had been complete, it would be taboo to allude to his slavery antecedents in any way whatsoever. That was the socio-political system of the delta states which enabled them to achieve economic success whether or not they were surrounded by harsh conditions and unfavourable environment.

With the abolition, however, there was the problem of developing an alternative on the part of the slave dealers. Even for the people of the Eastern Niger Delta the situation proved especially difficult. To leave a lucrative trade they had been used to for so long was rather unthinkable. Thus, by 1807 when the slave trade was abolished, rather than diminish, an increase was recorded. Their whole prosperity had for centuries depended on this trade and as P.D. Curtin observed, abolition "brought a painful commercial readjustment", for them.³

However, it has often been said that the best way in which old habits may be removed is to form new ones. Rather than continue the demand for slaves, the European traders found an alternative in palm oil and palm kernels. Unfortunately for the people of the Eastern Delta, the trade items in demand were not produced in their area, and they were not items that could be got through violence or coercion as in the case of slaves. Elizabeth Isichei wrote rather sarcastically that the delta "rulers' military resources were an advantage in rounding up slaves, but no one could round up palm trees" through military action.⁴ Therefore, it appeared as if a collapse of their economic power had become imminent. In such a critical situation in which they faced the problems of change, they certainly groped for purpose and direction. Yet some chiefs of the area proved their resourcefulness. "Prompted by information about the demand for cocoa in Europe, it was said to have been introduced into eastern Nigeria from Fernando Po, either in 1874 by a Chief Squiss Benego (Banigo) who established a plantation near Bonny

or in 1880 by Chief David Henshaw at Calabar".⁵ Chiefs Abam (Dikisikiboka), Fiberesima and others had cassava farms on the Okrika mainland during this period also.⁶

Obviously therefore, the people of the Eastern Niger Delta were not crushed by the knotty problems of economic adjustment. Apart from trying their hands at little agriculture where possible, they were quick also in continuing to use the trading empires they had formed over the years in the hinterland. These empires served as spheres of influence extending along navigable rivers. Brass, for example, had its customers up to Aboh at the delta confluence while Okrika's influence was over "the Mboli (Eleme) Fair to which also both the Aro and Ogoni resorted".⁷ Their ownership of the Deobo (Diobo) markets was also later confirmed by the 1871 Peace Treaty with the Kalabari.⁸

To avoid unnecessary clashes amongst them some of the delta city-states occasionally entered into mutual arrangements over spheres of influence as was the case between Okrika and Bonny. "An age-long covenant which forbade the Okrika trader to settle on the coast also made it illegal for a Bonny trader to enter the interior".⁹ In this way, Okrika became the traditional suppliers of food crops from the hinterland to Bonny¹⁰ while they traded with Europeans through Bonny until the late nineteenth century.¹¹ The involvement of Okrika in the trans-Atlantic trade was therefore indirect through Bonny until about 1882 when the two states had misunderstanding over trust of about one thousand puncheons of oil which Bonny traders had given to their Okrika customers but which the Okrika failed to pay back.¹² At this time therefore, Okrika's oil had to be resold through Opobo.

As a process of trade in the Niger Delta the trust created problems both between Africans and Africans and between Africans and Europeans. It evolved as a system of credit in the trade relations arising from goodwill and mutual confidence by which a trader handed European goods to his customers, and for which payment would be made later in terms of agreed quantity of produce or oil. In view of such mutual confidence, advanced payments of 'comies' were occasionally requested.¹³ But as Prof. Obaro Ikime pointed out, it placed the European trader at some advantage over his delta counterpart. "Since he was the source of capital, he could, by manipulating his capital, get a number of delta traders so indebted to him that they could trade with no one else".¹⁴

In that way the European traders got their African customers committed to them. Such African traders were therefore no longer free to transact business with others who offered better prices because that would mean a breach of the trust. This was one reason why conflicts occurred now and again since there were breaches of the trust in the face of better prices being offered by other traders and accepted by the African traders already having trusts from old customers.

Although it brought some mutual benefit to both parties, the trust appeared to be of more advantage to the giver rather than the receiver in the sense that he could get more customers whereas the receiver was committed only to the person from whom he had received trusts. It was thus a type of surreptitious loan or what K.O. Dike called "a peculiar form of credit",¹⁵ and until it had liquidated, the debtor ran the risk of

forfeiting his right to make new customers. To that extent, it had in it elements of monopoly. The Okrika-Bonny problem of the unpaid credit of one thousand puncheons of oil mentioned above was an indication that the trust system operated not just between European traders and their African customers but also between Africans and Africans.

Out of this trust system of trade in the Niger delta was the rather peculiar process of its enforcement by the respective traders concerned. While the old super-cargoes used the device of trust to commit delta traders and thereby keep their competitors out, the African traders tried to have the gains of two worlds by receiving double trusts, that is, receiving both from their old customers and the new persons competing with their old customers. To counter this development and enforce the original trust, the Europeans resorted to forcible seizure of oil from their erring African customers who breached the trust. Such forcible seizure of oil due to a breach of trust came to be usually known as 'chopping oil'.

In many instances, Africans resisted attempts to 'chop' their oil and this invariably resulted in violence.¹⁶ Quite often the oil seizure was indiscriminate. There were mistakes of identity and also of the exact amount or quantity involved in the trusts. Africans too used the retaliatory options open to them and applied them with equal venom. The conflicts were therefore bitter and prolonged particularly between Africans and Europeans. It is to be noted that the credit system was not new but was merely a carry-over from the old trade to the new commerce.

Also, the credit in the earlier days was almost invariably made available to the heads of well-established delta canoe-Houses or others they stood for as guarantors.¹⁷ For, as Ikime observed, "the slave trade was in many ways the trade of the ruling classes",¹⁸ though the increasing contact with Europeans during the period of the 'legitimate trade' began to make some impression on others, and small scale traders too began "to play an important part in the overseas exchange economy for the first time".¹⁹ In Okrika for example, it was at this time that some people from the fishing section of the community joined others from amongst the establishment trading war-canoe Houses in the new commerce.²⁰

However, the existing traditional war-canoe House was not affected by the structural changes occasioned by the change-over from slave trade to that of palm oil and palm kernels. Large wholesalers were still necessary even though the 'legitimate commerce' offered considerable scope for a new generation of small scale producers (and traders alike) because the new trade had fewer barriers of capital and skill than what was required for the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In this way, the existing wholesalers came to face more competition than was the case in the past. The competition among the European firms themselves had also become more aggressive.

However, the British Authorities had found if necessary to establish a separate consulate at Lagos in 1853 and Consul Beecroft's jurisdiction was thenceforth limited to the Niger Delta, the Cross River Region and the Cameroon coast. He was to protect British commerce and to ensure the suppression of the

slave trade in these areas. Outside them and these issues, he had little or "no legal authority for whatever administrative or judicial powers he exercised".²¹ Therefore, such administrative and judicial powers exercised by the Consul before 1872 when an Order in Council was used to regularise his actions were according to C.O. Okonkwo "outside the pale of law".²²

The British naval squadron stationed in the region was the main source of power on which the Consul depended for his actions, and often made shows of this power by sailing up and down the rivers in a man-of-war. He and other consuls after him often sent for the gunboats,²³ and with their aid, were able to deal with the indigenous rulers who defied their authority when they (the Consuls) tended to behave as Governors. For instance a request made to King Pepple by Consul Livingstone stated as follows: "I require the presence of your son, George, Banigo and Calenduse on board HMS 'Oberon' tomorrow morning at 6 O'Clock sharp, and can admit of no excuse whatever".²⁴ It sounded more as an order or command than a mere request.

In the course of time, too, there was intervention in African internal affairs. One reason that was responsible for it was that the fear of the man-of-war made the local chiefs take some of their disputes before the Consuls for settlement,²⁵ and this helped to increase their intervention in African internal affairs as earlier mentioned. The other reason was the deliberate act of the Consuls themselves to put to an end civil disturbance in the African communities which endangered trade, and to restore order during inter-state conflicts with a view to bringing about a resumption of the trade. They often acted as mediators and as witnesses to agreements.²⁶

By implication, therefore, so long as any government of an African community was stable, the Consuls did not often intervene in the affairs of such government. But wherever the communities engaged themselves in duel, there was frequent intervention by the Consuls and the excuse for the intervention was the restoration of order, a condition which European merchants considered vital for commerce. They often threatened the local rulers with the use of gunboats. For example Livingstone wrote to King Pepple stating: "You may expect a man-of-war's boat to be sent for yourself if the chiefs above-named failed to appear..."²⁷ The chiefs were those earlier mentioned above.

Hewett too threatened the use of force on a number of occasions. When he was unable to get the Okrika out of the Orbietubu Markets over which there were conflicting claims by the Kalabari, he asserted, "I have thought over the question of how to get the Okrikas out of the markets in question, and have always arrived at the conclusion that force was the only means".²⁸ Again, during Jaja's troubles with the Qua Eboe, Hewett sent a warning to him as follows: "I give you serious warning, that should you fail to comply... it will be at your risk and peril".²⁹ In such threats the interventionist tendencies of the Consuls remained concealed.

As the British trade increased so also were the areas of conflict between European traders and their African customers and this consequently gave rise to the frequency in consular intervention. Thus, nearly all the Consuls from Beecroft to Hewett came to be looked upon as governors of the area rather than as Consuls overseeing British commercial interests.

This was the period of the informal British empire.³⁰

However, the rivalry that featured in the trade and politics of the era was not just between Europeans and Africans. There was competition among the Europeans themselves particularly where the African community was stable and either its supply of palm oil was far less than the market demand or that the price fixed by middlemen was acceptable to some European agents to the chagrin of others. The firm of Mr George Watts was desirous of extending its trade to the Qua Eboe area but King Jaja did not favour this. He supported the firm of Miller Brothers of Glasgow, one of the firms which supported him during the civil war in Bonny.³¹ That was a typical example of European rivalry amongst themselves.

The competition amongst European firms helped to reduce their profits. Sir George Taubman Goldie who had an interest in one of the British firms felt that they were too weak to withstand such competition. He was convinced that for the firms to make reasonable profit and build a thriving trade, amalgamation would be the sane thing for them to do, particularly, in the face of French and German competition. In 1874 therefore, he succeeded in organising the United African Company which was later renamed the National African Company.³² With the amalgamation and effective management, costs were reduced with consequential increase in profit.

In the lower Niger by this time, the French encroached on what used to be the preserves of the English, and had formed some commercial companies. But as a result of competition and price cuts, the French companies too merged with Goldie's

enterprise in 1884.³³ Thus, the British appeared to be dominant in this area. Even in the coastal area, the British traders felt the same need to forestall French and German commercial agents who were making serious claims. Accordingly, Consul Hewett made determined efforts to thwart their activities as part of the struggle amongst the European powers for the control of African territories.

Apart from the competition among themselves, the Europeans also faced the problems posed by indigenous rulers. The frequent disturbances between the warring African communities on the rivers endangered trade as earlier observed, and put in jeopardy the liberal loans made by the European merchants to rival chieftains. To save the situation, they entangled themselves in local quarrels. Furthermore, the German flag had been raised in Togoland and in the Cameroons. The French influence was also permeating the region of the Senegal valley and in Porto Novo from which vantage point it was spreading inland. These moves by the French, as J.D. Hargreaves pointed out, "did much to determine the tempo and climate of the European Conquest".³⁴

Paris, indeed, tended to have produced at this time a more assertive defence of French interests and claims in West Africa than was done in London in respect of British interests. It was thus being increasingly realised that colonies were becoming status symbols among European nations, and their possession had started to constitute the badge of great powers. Thus, economic motives at this juncture, appeared to have been thrust into the background and the quest for prestige came to be pushed to the forefront. For the European therefore, continued

inertia might prove a danger to prestige. In this way as Lugard himself stated, European nations "entered for the competition with avidity".³⁵

Apprehension of the danger of French and German competition, of course, made Consul Edward Hyde Hewett, the British merchants and the missionaries to write home so much on the need for action.³⁶ Subjected to such considerable and increasing pressure, the British Government no more prevaricated on the issue of colonisation. Thus, by the time it decided to make a more positive move, the partition of West Africa was well under way, and Hewett who was to be placed on a fitting salary was to negotiate treaties with local rulers in the Oil Rivers.³⁷ Between July and December, 1884 he had signed treaties with New Calabar, Bonny and Opobo.³⁸ The treaty of protection that was signed with King Ibanichuka of Okrika was in 1888, about four years before the renaming of the Oil Rivers Protectorate. The position had become quite clear that European powers were resting their claims in Africa on what they regarded as effective occupation often backed by force.

Generally too, this bitter struggle between the European nations occasionally reached a dramatic climax. Their respective lateral moves along the coast occasionally caused serious disputes as they met at the frontiers. In the case of England and France in particular, the settlement of differences once and for all, was obviously becoming a matter of time. But Bismarck who for some remote diplomatic reasons was anxious to avoid an international conflict over the issue of colonies in Africa, decided to arrange in 1884/85 the Berlin Conference of fifteen European

nations which laid down the principle of formal notification of claims to African territories by the respective powers.

Immediately after the Berlin Conference, Britain and Germany held discussions with a view to defining the boundaries between the 'Oil Rivers' and the German Cameroons. This resulted in the 1885 treaty and a commercial agreement. The gazette declaration on 5th June, 1885 in London, of the Protectorate of the Niger Districts followed that treaty. In conformity with the principle enunciated at the Berlin Conference the declaration was appropriately notified to the other powers. The new protectorate was called the Oil Rivers Protectorate because of the palm oil exported from it at that time.³⁹ It was renamed the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893 when more areas were added.

Although such gentleman's agreements were made from time to time, there was rivalry between these European powers. It was an indication that the scramble for and colonisation of Africa were not a co-ordinated affair. There was in fact an intensification of the rivalry between the British and the French in their scramble for African territory. This was characterised by both the adoption of more aggressive methods in the relationship between their respective firms and the 'growing friction over areas of customs jurisdiction and levels of tariff', contrary to the principles of free trade.⁴⁰

Judging from the perspective of its initial equivocation⁴¹ on the issue of colonisation the British government appeared to have acquiesced in colonial temptations because of the pressures mounted from all identified channels of communication which existed between the men on the spot in Africa and those who took

decisions at the metropolis. But it has become increasingly difficult to evaluate to what extent politicians were susceptible to pressures from pro-imperialist interest groups representing the non-officials. At a point, the National African Company was "very willing nominally to undertake the expenses of the Vice-Consulate on the Niger, provided that their Manager, Mr Mckenzie, were appointed".⁴² The lobby group in Lancashire at the time also showed serious sensitivity of threats to its overseas markets for cotton goods.⁴³

In any case, this is not a sufficient explanation as to why the British Government decided to join in the scramble for, colonies at the time it did. There can of course be no single reason too as to why the European powers scrambled for colonies in the second half of the nineteenth century. Equally, there can be no common explanation to fit all of the colonial endeavours of the European powers. Yet one can safely conclude that Europeans were impelled by the hope that the colonies would provide supplies of raw materials for their industries and that the colonies would serve as secure markets for the export of their finished products, since European nations especially Germany and France had imposed tariffs to protect their home markets against foreign manufactured goods.

Evidently, when their finished products no longer had sufficient markets there in Europe, unemployment resulted and social instability threatened. It is only reasonable to emphasize therefore, that it was the desire to sell the surplus goods from the European industries and the expectation of raw materials at cheap prices that caused the European scramble

for West African territories. The political forces unleashed in Europe were merely reflection of the economic forces in the struggle for colonies. In short, "whatever political, religious, or more idealistic excuses might be made, the real impulse was always one of capitalist greed for cheap raw materials, advantageous markets, good investments and fresh fields of exploitation".⁴⁴

By declaring in 1885 the Oil Rivers Protectorate, Britain appeared to be poised for the introduction of a more effective consular administration towards the realization of its objective. That same year it appointed Mr Harry H. Johnston, an energetic man having a strong personality, as vice-consul. It was he who acted as Consul in 1887 and 1888 when Consul E.H. Hewett was on leave. He had hardly settled down in the Protectorate before he got entangled in a dispute with King Jaja of Opobo who was one of the very powerful indigenous monarchs in the area.

Right from the moment the 1884 Treaty was being negotiated, King Jaja wanted an explanation of the word 'Protection' for which he was told that it would not involve the taking-over of his territory. He also refused to allow in the treaty a free-trade clause. Besides, he was neither willing to be governed by the prices determined by the white traders, nor did he give them access to the hinterland market as in the case of George Watts and Mc-Eachen firms. As King Jaja asserted in one of his letters "If Mr. George Watts, 'has right' to trade in Qua Eboe, others have the same right, and would shortly follow his example, which would in the end lead to the greater portion of the trade of my country passing into other hands. This I cannot submit to,..."⁴⁵

Above all, King Jaja was himself a shrewd trader. He refused to reduce his own prices which he had fixed and such action angered the white traders. For that reason, they combined against him by forming the Amalgamated Association although the firm of Miller Brothers, as earlier indicated, did not join the Association and was prepared to co-operate with him.

Acting Consul Harry Johnston who appeared to have lacked tact and wise judgement was determined to force matters to an issue in his support of the Amalgamated Association, going so far as to accept the hospitality of one of the firms involved in the dispute with King Jaja by setting up his headquarters at its factory. He undertook an extensive tour of the interior and came to the conclusion that unless King Jaja was removed from the Opobo River, any talk about the extension of trade would be a day dream. According to him "this country will never be opened to the full tide of commerce and civilisation till Jaja had been removed from his position as King".⁴⁶ Later, he recommended the removal of Jaja and placing him at Cape Coast in the Gold Coast (Ghana).⁴⁷ Strong in such belief, Johnston contrived an unwholesome device to deport King Jaja in 1887.

Having invited Jaja to a conference in which certain charges made against him were to be discussed, and having pledged a safe-conduct to him, Acting Consul Johnston dishonourably broke his pledge. He forcefully took Jaja away in a gunboat on exile. Of course, Jaja had the means to defend himself even if he might fail in the end. But he did not resist. He could not afford to see Opobo which he had established in so challenging circumstances, destroyed.⁴⁸ Rather than do so, he

was prepared to sacrifice himself. That he considered to be the wise path of honour to be followed in such a tempting situation.

From then onward the people of the Oil Rivers generally became suspicious of the actions of the British Government if there was any good faith on its part. It surprised no one that about 1894 when Nana was invited for discussion by Sir Ralph Moor, he declined by making reference to the case of Jaja. In the charged atmosphere Nana was said to have stated, "I fear you go catch me all same Jaja".⁴⁹ This and the ill-will it produced should partly explain the Ebrohimi and the Benin episodes of British conquest of Nigeria.

Yet, in spite of all his high handedness, Acting Consul Johnston was not indicated by the Foreign Office, except warning him to work within the limits of his judicial powers as Consul as defined by the Order-in-Council of 1885. In June 1889, after about three years service on the coast, he returned to London, his activities being apparently condoned by the British Government. Consul Hewett himself retired on 1st January, 1891. George Annessley who temporarily succeeded him and Johnston as Consul to take charge of the Oil Rivers, appeared too to have represented all that was evil and cruel about British Imperialism.⁵⁰

If Africans already regarded the regime of Johnston to be disastrous, that of Annesley was definitely outrageous. The Police Force of forty which he organised ran into disrepute and was given the despicable title of 'the forty thieves'. This illustrates "the considerable hostility with which the local inhabitants regarded the new consular police force".⁵¹

Macdonald disbanded them and punished the guilty ones amongst them. Annesley's dastardly and savage attack on Akwete in the hinterland of Opobo apart, many reports against him poured into the Foreign Office from British traders at Opobo. Although the new Consul-General, Claude Macdonald, after investigation imposed on the Akwete people a little fine of ten puncheons of oil for destroying a British trading station, the fine was to be used as compensation not for the British traders but for the Akwete people whose houses had been damaged or destroyed.

Macdonald condemned in unambiguous terms the consular dishonesty and the spurious collusion of European firms with George Annesley in perpetrating crimes against Africans that contributed in no small measure to the conflicts between Europeans and Africans in the commercial transactions within the Oil Rivers. With Vice-Consul Harry Johnston and Vice-Consul George Annesley, the Oil Rivers seemed to have had more than a fair share of rescals as administrators; men who sent false reports to the Foreign Office. In the case of the reports against King Jaja of Opobo, with regard to the Qua Eboe, commander Hammick confirmed in his report that he believed the matter "was entirely a native, and not a trade, affair", and that "the number of prisoners taken appeared to have been much exaggerated".⁵² The situation in the Oil Rivers got to a point in which the Foreign Office no longer paid attention to consular reports.

However, if any Consul laid the foundation of the final collapse of sovereignty of the city-states of the Eastern Niger Delta, it was Edward Hyde Hewett without whose tact and assiduity the entire Oil Rivers could have obviously fallen into German

hands. It was he who on 19th December, 1884 signed the Treaty of Protection with King Jaja and the chiefs of Opobo.⁵³ It was he also who signed the Treaties of Protection with Elem Kalabari and Bonny.⁵⁴ With the creation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885, Hewett was also determined to extend its boundaries to the hinterland. His choice of Okrika as the springboard for such endeavour arose from the fact that it was 'a collecting centre for the palm produce from the hinterland'.⁵⁵ He had rightly thought that if he must achieve his objectives and also safeguard the trade of Bonny then he would naturally need the friendship of the Amanyabo of Okrika, and in fact, offer British Protection to Okrika. In pursuance of these objectives, therefore, Hewett had to visit Okrika. And of course, his mission proved to be both political and economic.

Coincidentally, King Ibanichuka the Amanyabo of Okrika was himself desirous of bringing about the economic prosperity of his people, and made an open declaration of this to Bishop Crowther on 21st September, 1887.⁵⁶ The visit of the Consul was therefore most welcome to the old monarch though, understandably his intentions were at variance with those of the Consul.

In spite of the Amanyabo's genuine desire for the boosting of economic activities in his city-state, discussions with Hewett appeared to be inconclusive given the pervading suspicious atmosphere consequent upon King Jaja's deportation in 1887. This was an obvious indication that African potentates had grown to doubt the possibility of good faith on the part of the British Consuls. Yet, when Hewett proceeded on leave within this period Acting Consul Harry Johnston executed the 1888 treaty of

protection with King Ibanichuka and the chiefs of Okrika barely eight months after the deportation of King Jaja of Opobo.⁵⁷

Knowing the unorthodox manner in which Johnston performed his duties, it would not be surprising if the Amanyabo's consent was unethically received. The fact that King Ibanichuka broke the terms of the treaty barely three months after it had been executed, reinforced the point, irrespective of the fact that Johnston fined him £500 in 1889 for the breach.⁵⁸ This was another high-handed action on the part of Johnston because there was no penalty clause in the treaty for a breach.

Major Claude Macdonald was appointed in April 1891 as Consul-General and Commissioner for the Oil Rivers Protectorate in succession to Hewett. He refrained from undue interference in local government and allowed the traditional rulers to continue to administer the affairs of their people, including law and justice, as before. But unlike the previous eras when there was one Consul and only one assistant, Macdonald had Vice-Consuls. One was Kenneth Campbell, and another was H.L. Gallway who in 1892 was dissuaded by the Amanyabo of Okrika from penetrating the hinterland⁵⁹ for both political and economic reasons.

The zealous guard over their sovereignty in spite of the treaty obligations caused serious clashes between local rulers and Consul. In July and August, 1891 after his appointment as Consul-General and Commissioner for the Oil Rivers, Macdonald visited Bonny, Kalabari, Okrika, Opobo, Brass within the Eastern Niger Delta region ~~and~~ also other places outside it.⁶⁰ On the surface, it was a familiarisation tour but its aim was obviously to discuss with the respective rulers in order to

secure their support for the imposition of import duties on some goods to defray the cost of administering the Protectorate. While he got the consent of the chiefs of Bonny, Elem Kalabari and Opobo, at Okrika, he got a rude shock in the way he was badly received.⁶¹ The inhabitants hooted and drove him out of their city-state.

Indeed, the attitude of the Amanyānabo of Okrika was understandably defiant. He had his own interpretation of the treaty of 1888 and had produced a powerful argument in an encounter with Consul Hewett, Macdonald's predecessor.⁶² The Consul at that time knew that the Okrika King's contention was technically right, yet imposed a fine of 100 puncheons of oil, which the King refused to pay.⁶³

The King's refusal could be examined on three main grounds. First by his interpretation of the treaty, there was no breach. Secondly, even if there was breach, there was no penalty clause in the treaty. Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly was the fact that the Amanyānabo appeared to be asserting his political sovereignty; and he had the backing of his people some of whom were arch-traditionalists who wondered why Okrika should, in the first instance, become 'protected' by aliens against imaginary enemies. The fine imposed by the Consul was however paid at a later date.⁶⁴ But apart from Okrika, the chiefs of Nembe-Brass also refused to give their consent when the Consul-General visited them on 15th August, 1891. There, resentment and bitterness towards the policies and operations of the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.) were fast building up. The Consul-General had to give a written undertaking, to get their markets back from the R.N.C. before they apologised and gave their consent to the payment of

customs duties.⁶⁵

Unfortunately however, Consul Macdonald appeared powerless to intervene. The Royal Niger Company (formerly known as the National African Company) was on 10th July, 1886 given a charter by the British Government to control the area known as the Niger Territories. By this charter the R.N.C. also claimed trade monopoly and started to bar both the Nembe traders and all other foreign firms from the hinterland markets. Yet the Company's charter expressly forbade monopoly of the navigation and of trade on the Niger since monopoly was not in accordance with the policy of freedom of commerce stipulated by the Berlin Act. According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the loose wording of the charter enabled the R.N.C. to keep within its letter though it was at the same time contravening its spirit.⁶⁶ This position of the R.N.C. at the time portended danger. As a government and at the same time a trading co-operative, its activities became ruthlessly oppressive to both indigenes and other European firms that were out of the merger.⁶⁷ Thus, aggrieved parties had no other higher authority around to appeal to, and Consul Macdonald himself had his limitations.

By implication therefore, the Nembe-Brass traders lost their usual trade profits and the levies known as 'Comey'. The trade monopoly of the R.N.C. had turned out to be their economic strangulation. The traumatic situation produced in them an instinctive desire to survive. The circumstance had brought about desperation and compelled armed attack as an option and perhaps the only way out in such a time of economic difficulties.

It was indeed a decisive moment. Having grown so restive for so long it was no longer surprising that in January, 1895 the famous Akassa raid resulted in the form of a bloody revenge on the R.N.C. and the destruction of its trading station there. In violent revulsion, Amanyambo Koko resolved to prosecute the war against the R.N.C. and fought, apparently, without the slightest reluctance. It was necessary for him to do so, and as the saying goes, 'necessity knows no law'.

As the protector of the economic interests of his people, King Koko was compelled to fight in the peculiar situation in which his city-state was in the Niger Coast Protectorate while his traditional hinterland markets lay in the area of jurisdiction of the R.N.C. In any case, having attacked the Royal Niger Company it became pertinent that he would not escape punishment by the Niger Coast Protectorate which claimed direct authority over him and his people. They were two British authorities, and it was impossible to cut the nose without spiting the face. The strong argument about necessity or expediency made by the Nembe people was not acceptable to the colonial authorities.

In a counter-attack on Nembe by the combined forces of the Niger Coast Protectorate and the R.N.C., Koko escaped into exile after a stiff resistance, to a remote village called Etiema,⁶⁸ and his city-state finally capitulated. Macdonald put a price of £200 for any one who would capture him alive. When by a proclamation in April 1896, Consul Ralph Moor proceeded to set up a Native Council, there was no new Amanyambo in Nembe after Koko's death in 1898 to head the Council until when King Oguara was installed in Bassambiri in 1924 and King Ockiya at Ogbolomabiri in 1926.⁶⁹

By 1st January, 1896 Sir Claude Macdonald had left the Oil Rivers Protectorate, having been appointed Minister to China. Through his recommendation, Sir Ralph Moor who was his deputy, succeeded him. Moor then took it as his responsibility to carry out the policy of extending British rule to the hinterland. But Macdonald's choice of Moor as his successor was as J.C. Anene asserted, "politically unfortunate"⁷⁰ because Moor appeared to be temperamentally unsuitable for such high administrative office. Indeed, he precipitated within the Niger Coast Protectorate 'a plethora of punitive expeditions'.⁷¹ His strong belief in the efficacy of punitive expeditions was reinforced by the fact that up to 1896, little or no progress had been made as regards the extension of the boundaries of the British Protectorate to the hinterland.

Moor's lack of patience aggravated by his eagerness for quick results led to his large scale military operations both within and outside the Eastern Niger Delta. For this, he was vehemently indicted by the European merchants, particularly, John Holt who, among the Liverpool merchants with significant interest in West Africa, became the strongest critic of the punitive expeditions. It might not be by sheer coincidence that the British Government decided to send to this area officers like Harry Johnston, George Annesley, and Ralph Moor, all of who proved to be "rabid apostles of imperialism".⁷²

Having assumed office, Moor endeavoured to continue his predecessor's device of using political agents for his administration, and policy which was initiated in 1893. For Okrika, the attempt had proved futile, and an earlier attempt to appoint one there failed because the Okrika people drove the man out of their

The boycott was repeated in May the same year when the Consular authorities summoned another meeting. Such continued non-acceptance of the authority of the Protectorate's Administration was too much for Moor to swallow. He was completely fed up with Okrika and his frustration became manifested in his report to the Foreign Office in which he stated that "Okrika was occasionally visited but no advance could be made, and although they promised all required of them such promises were never fulfilled".⁷⁶

Thus, it was quite evident that nothing but deportation of Amanyanabo would calm Moor's angry and vindictive passion. As should be expected, he launched a punitive expedition in a gunboat (Ivy) with a force comprising Captain Gallway, Mr Harcourt the District Commissioner, and one hundred and five officers and men. It was indeed similar to the Opobo expedition of 1887 in which HMS gunboat (Goshawk) took away King Jaja, the only difference being that the (Gowshawk) had only seventy marines while the 'Ivy' carried one hundred and five troops to Okrika. The Okrika people too mobilised at once by floating a flotilla of about thirty war-canoes each carrying about fifty able-bodied men.⁷⁷ Ralph Moor himself put the figure at over 1,400 men in large canoes.⁷⁸

When the Consul finally landed in Okrika, two options were open to the people. One was to defend their sovereignty by way of an armed resistance. The other was cautious diplomacy to make good of a bad situation. Therefore, in spite of the war canoes that had been floated in readiness, the final order to engage in an armed resistance was never given. With extreme caution and circumspection the Amanyanabo himself who was to

city-state and threw into the river the materials intended to be used to erect a government house there.⁷³ From that moment, the impatient Ralph Moor with his 'damnable prejudices' began to nurse a grievance against Okrika with a view to punishing them for their 'recalcitrance'. Accordingly, he played for time. And indeed, the opportunity was not long in coming.

Early in 1896, he received reports of human sacrifice in Okrika, and immediately recalled the persistent disregard of the consular presence by Okrika, which was only a few nautical miles away from Bonny the seat of the Vice-Consul. For instance, a fine of £500 had been imposed on Okrika for carrying out a raid on a neighbouring village in 1889. Secondly, the Okrika people hooted off (and stoned with mud) Major-General Hammill the Vice-Consul when he visited that place in 1891. Thirdly, there was the turbulent reception given to Macdonald in 1892, and their refusal to pay customs duty at the time. And lastly, violent resistance occurred between 1893 and 1895.⁷⁴

These were sufficient reasons for Moor to descend heavily on Okrika since fines earlier imposed appeared not to have had any salutary effect on the people. It was therefore no wonder that he issued the following threat: "I should return and destroy their town and scatter them as they still persisted in their evil customs... declined to assent to the freedom of the markets and persistently blocked the roads to the interior".⁷⁵

As a first step in the pursuit of his foul design, Sir Ralph Moor summoned a meeting to be held at Okrika in January 1896. On their part, the Okrika people themselves appeared to have been prepared to a showdown, and so, boycotted the meeting.

give the order failed to do so. He foresaw danger, real and proximate, having consulted regularly with the priests of the traditional deities. The chief priest at the Fenibeso shrine after casting the usual lots and in spite of the regular sacrifices made to the deities, did not recommend such course of action. The signs were not in favour.

It may be necessary to mention at this point too that in 1904 the Andoni found themselves in a similar situation when a British punitive expedition under Commissioner A.A. Whitehouse arrived.⁷⁹ They had planned to blow up any vessel the British might go in with. But at the appropriate time they could no longer do as planned for fear of greater consequences of such action.

Indeed, it is in this light that one could explain the complete absence of the usual Okrika impetuosity and audacity to initiate attack at the time of King Ibanichuka's exile. Even Ralph Moor had recognised the Okrikans as "strong" people,⁸⁰ and was, therefore, happy that they did not eventually resort to the use of force to defend their sovereignty. As he wrote in his report "it is in my view most satisfactory to have brought a numerous people like them under the sway of government without having had to resort to force".⁸¹ They were the same Okrika people in respect of whom Consul Hewett had previously stated that in dealing with them he had "always arrived at the conclusion that force was the only means"⁸² because they had always liked to resort to that too.

However, common sense dictated that if they (Okrikans) had to choose a course of action rationally, then the general

political climate had to be properly examined and understood. As an operation of the nature and magnitude that would be unleashed against a superior, it was adjudged hazardous by experienced opinion within the townsfolk. The thought of effects of possible failure seemed to have prevented an attack that might be perilous. They considered the situation in Bonny which was a powerful ally, but which had been humbled by the British. They also recalled how the shrewd Jaja of Opobo⁸³ could not in 1887 withstand the British onslaught. When Acting Consul Harry Johnston invited him on a gunboat, he asked for a white hostage but was later satisfied with a written pledge of a safe conduct. Yet he was whisked away without any consequences. In the case of Governor Nana in the Western Delta, there was an armed conflict with the British in 1894. Yet, in spite of all his heroic effort, in spite of the massive and heavily manned stockades that protected Ebrohimie, Nana surrendered, ~~was~~ tried and deported.

The last (though not the least) was the subjugation of the Nembe-Brass in 1895. In a daring move, King Koko and the Nembe people had ~~attacked~~ the R.N.C. at Akassa. It was their only hope for economic survival. But the end result after the reprisal by the Protectorate forces, was a humiliation for Nembe. King Koko escaped and was dethroned. He died in his hideout.

With all these, it certainly ~~downed~~ on the Okrika people that an armed resistance would be futile. Therefore, they resorted to a protracted bargain in which the Consul promised not to take the Amanyabo farther than Degema.⁸⁴ Moor also pledged to return him after some time. In course of the

negotiation, the guns of HMS Ivy were already swung in the direction of Okrika, ready to make good the earlier threat by Consul-General Moor. Eventually, the Okrika people acquiesced and King Ibanichuka was deported on 4th June, 1896 though not without an attempt by the people to hoodwink the Consul by presenting other persons instead of the Amanyanabo.⁸⁵

King Ibanichuka never returned to his throne alive. Mystery surrounded his end. The British Authorities too who carried him into compulsory exile in Degema⁸⁶ failed to explain his whereabouts. The entire episode appeared to have been bungled. There was no evidence of any trial of King Ibanichuka to demonstrate a semblance of justice. And that vividly showed how the British had no definite standards in dealing with indigenous rulers during the early stages of consular jurisdiction. Even if it was a mock trial, King Jaja was tried in Accra at Christianborg Castle in November, 1887; Nana was in 1894 also tried in Lagos where he gave up himself, while Oba Ovonramwan was tried at Benin in September 1897. At least, the formal trials, no matter how woolly, salved the conscience of the imperialist that justice was seen to have been done. As regards King Ibanichuka, it became more convenient for them to maintain sealed lips.

One should really ~~exp~~ress surprise as Omoniyi Adewoye did "that there was a trial at all" in each of the other three rulers in the Niger Delta mentioned above as there could be no question by any one even if there was no trial.⁸⁷ Okrika people who suspected homicide⁸⁸ merely threatened violence, and refused

to appoint another Amanyabo until sixty-three years later when Zedekiah Fibika was installed as Ado VII in 1959.⁸⁹

Events seemed to prove that there was a determined effort to eliminate the last vestige of traditional authority. Even in Kalabari where there was no armed conflict with the British⁹⁰ there was no indication that any crowned successor existed for about a decade after Sir Ralph Moor had sacked King Abbi (Amakiri IV) from the Native Council in 1897.⁹¹ In keeping with the tradition, the Amanyabo of Kalabari was dominant in the Council and the other chiefs naturally continued to acknowledge his traditional leadership. They often waited to see what action he intended to take rather than immediately tow the colonial government's line. Moor would not have that and had to remove King Amakiri. Thereafter, he appointed into the Council new members including Manuel, Briggs, Braid and standfast who were willing to give assistance to his administration.⁹²

There was no mistaken impression at that point in time that the Consular administration had, as T.N. Tamuno asserted, "intended to stifle existing power and wreck the foundations of the various communities".⁹³ By 1900 the Eastern Niger Delta had largely been subjugated and Moor the moving spirit behind such subjugation in this region retired in October, 1903. It was his successor, Walter Egerton who had to do the job of expansion and consolidation of the area under British control.

Although some of the Eastern Niger Delta states became part of the British colonial empire by a London Gazette publication on 5th June, 1885 and Sir Claude Macdonald was appointed in 1891 to establish a regular administration in the Oil Rivers,

actual imposition of British rule could not in reality be said to have been properly effected until the overthrow of the local rulers in the respective city-states towards the close of the century. Nembe fell in 1895 and Okrika in 1896. Of course, Opobo had fallen since 1887 and Bonny even earlier.

The indigenous rulers had tried to match their strength against the British invader and found that the latter was very powerful. It was however not an easy ride for the British who knew that the Africans had not been won entirely by diplomacy unbacked by naked power. The initial claims of a colonial empire on the basis of treaties of protection stand contradicted by facts of the deportation episodes, which make it evident that colonial rule in the ultimate derived from military conquest and depended for its sustenance on military might.

The revocation of the Charter of the Royal Niger Company on 28th December, 1899 led to major administrative changes in 1900. The Niger Coast Protectorate under Consul-General Moor and the Niger Territories under the Royal Niger Company were merged to form the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. From then the official title of Ralph Moor on whom the administration of the Protectorate was squarely placed, changed from Consul-General to that of High Commissioner, and he was given powers to legislate by proclamations. The twin problems he faced were those of shortage of European staff and the inadequacy of communication and means of transportation. There was therefore the decision to govern the people of the Protectorate through their local rulers.

Indeed, this was the stage of actually establishing colonial rule since it involved the bringing of that rule home to the people and their rulers. But it resulted in turbulence because the administration "paid inadequate attention to the value of social anthropology in governing people whose ways they scarcely understood".⁹⁴ However, in the coastal areas of the Niger Delta it was not difficult to identify the leading chiefs of the various communities and to appoint them members of the Native Councils and Court.⁹⁵ All the same, there were problems here and there on account of the deportations of the indigenous rulers. In Okrika, as earlier indicated, there was threat of violence on the chiefs and the consular officers.⁹⁶ To the people, a government without the Amanyabo was untraditional and therefore unacceptable. Chiefs who accepted to serve under such a system were considered to have betrayed the trust and confidence reposed on them.

The situation was the same elsewhere in the Eastern Niger Delta. Thus, all sort of opposition subtle, open and revivalist, surfaced. A vivid example was the revivalists movement of Garrick Braid of Bakana (1913-1918) which was 'understandably anti-government',⁹⁷ and was spreading its influence even outside the confines of the Eastern Niger Delta.⁹⁸ By 1917 The Andoni area got a taste of this prophetic movement otherwise known as the Christ Army Church.⁹⁹ On 4th May, 1918 Chiefs Daniel Kalio, Ikiriko Daka, Wakama Oriobo, Joseph Igwe and others all of Okrika petitioned the colonial authorities on what they claimed were the excesses of what they referred to as "this spurious movement".¹⁰⁰ Of course, Garrick Braid himself had on 7th January 1916 addressed a rally and "proclaimed that the time

had come for Africans to assume responsibility for themselves".¹⁰¹ People interpreted this as a call for self-determination and so to eliminate aliens. Garrick Braid was accordingly arrested the same year by the colonial authorities, charged to court and sentenced for incitement.¹⁰² There was no doubt whatsoever that the existence of the Garrick Braid's movement represented a disturbing response to the challenge of the colonial system.¹⁰³

In Opobo, after the deportation of King Jaja by Consul Johnston there was established a governing council comprising equal representation of Europeans and Opobo chiefs, and an English trader was made the chairman.¹⁰⁴ The council performed both legislative and judicial functions. But Macdonald later replaced it with the system of Consular Court and Minor Court respectively which were presided over by Consular Officers and local chiefs who were in turn supervised by British officials. By 1900 when the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was proclaimed Ralph Moor reorganised the councils. Chief Cookey Gam who was appointed President of the Council in Opobo, held that position until his death on 20th March, 1921. He was in fact the 'unofficial' regent of Opobo. There, the deportation of Jaja had kept the people embittered, and "the dominant issue" according to S.J.S. Cookey, "which confronted the people was whether Opobo should forcibly resist the treachery of the British, foil their encroachment on the trade of the Imo River, and avenge the treatment meted out to Jaja".¹⁰⁵

Obviously enough, the action of the Opobo people in this direction was to such a frustrating extent that Consul Hewett had in 1889 imposed a fine of three hundred puncheons of oil and

demanded a sum of one thousand pounds as security for their good behaviour for three years. A naval blockade of Opobo was also effected until these conditions were met.

In Okrika too the people were angry and dismayed over the deportation of King Ibanichuka. This resulted in so much threat of violence that a meeting between consular officials and the chiefs scheduled to take place at Okrika town had to shift venue to Kalio-Ama.¹⁰⁶ With the Amanyabo away, arrangements were made for the future government of the Okrika people by forming a Native Council of Chiefs to provide an "effectual method of settling disputes and form a responsible body of men answerable to the government for the good behaviour of the people."¹⁰⁷ The chiefs selected were given warrants of membership of the Council.

In spite of this, Ralph Moor was still suspicious of the Okrika people because his determination to open the roads into the hinterland had not been effected. For one reason or the other the Okrika chiefs still pleaded with him for time. He in fact had to conclude another treaty with them in 1896.¹⁰⁸ But this was similar in all respects to that of 1888. Consul Macdonald before him had felt in 1892 that the chiefs were willing to be friends but for the people who were dominated by the priests.¹⁰⁹ The Consuls knew so well the nature of the Okrika people. Ralph Moor accordingly cautioned himself to apply 'tact and management' in dealing with the Okrikans.¹¹⁰

Ralph Moor could also have noticed that the grip of the chiefs on their 'boys' was becoming increasingly tenuous. He therefore played for time, for, according to him, "as usual

with lawless people like the Okrikans the first and chief difficulty will be to settle the internal dissensions".¹¹¹

The dissension was definitely between the chiefs who cooperated with the British officials and the generality of the people who passively resisted.

Among the chiefs of Okrika at the time only Chief Daniel Oju Kalio who had some education at the Bonny Day School was literate enough to communicate clearly with the British officials. Added to this were his personality, diligence, ability and forthrightness. As such he easily distinguished himself before the British officials for ascendancy as the regent in Okrika in the absence of an Amanyabo. In that position he cooperated with the colonial officers, having realised that the times were changing. Everywhere in the Niger Delta chiefs willing to assist the new administration were appointed into these Councils, and Native Courts established by various proclamations.¹¹²

The chiefs who served on these councils were each provided with a Warrant ^{of} Membership.¹¹³ The Warrant was a certificate of authority and the chiefs that had it became known to as Warrant Chiefs. But Warrant or no Warrant, the people still remained resentful for a long time, refusing to cooperate with the chiefs. The imposition of Native House Rule through the Native House Rule Proclamation of 1901¹¹⁴ was therefore an attempt to strengthen ~~the~~ the position of these chiefs and to preserve their communities which had become so agitated that they had become fertile grounds for a revivalist movement like that of Garrick Braid earlier mentioned.

Yet "neither before nor after its amendment in 1912, did or could, the Native House Rule law strengthen the authority of the chiefs - cum - House heads" which had already started to "show signs of weakness even before its promulgation".¹¹⁵ In the slackening grip over their boys the Bonny chiefs had appealed to the authorities to compel payment of tax by the boys to them.¹¹⁶ Besides, in order to preserve their waning influence, the chiefs of Bonny, Opobo, Kalabari, Nembe-Brass, and Okrika petitioned Egerton the High Commissioner on 4th April, 1911 against the repeal of the Native House Rule Proclamation.¹¹⁷

Indeed, the Warrant Chiefs themselves were quite conscious of the fact that their people were not solidly behind them. The psychological effect of this was apparent. Furthermore, available evidence did not indicate the existence of the mutual confidence expected between them and the European officials who supervised, advised and guided them in their positions as political agents or as members of the Native Councils. In fact, the superior position of the Resident or Colonial Administrative staff in relation to orders which were issued by the local chiefs in the Native Authorities or Councils was definite.¹¹⁸

By implication therefore, the chiefs appeared to be neither here nor there. Caught in the midst of old and new forces of change, the body of laws which they as members of the Native Courts or Councils administered became an unusual mix. It may be difficult to blame them since the new forces were evidently dominant, and it became pertinent that in their attempt to make the best of a bad situation and to cooperate with the forces of the new order, they "tended to ape the judicial procedure of the Supreme Court".¹¹⁹ Paradoxically, they succeeded in

administering a corpus of law that was neither British nor native.

The European officials themselves had tried on their part to ensure that laws applicable were not repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience. They used the repugnancy rule as a convenient tool for the refashioning of the customary laws.¹²⁰ Characterised by their discretionary treatment of individual cases in accordance with notions of natural justice and principles of equity, these officials made very great use of repugnancy to modify the customary laws.

If the ideology of the Colonial Administration was the so called Indirect Rule or ~~Native~~ Administration which was supposed to allow the African to develop along his own line, then the way it came to be practised in these parts reflected it as a facade. The Warrant Chiefs who were to serve as its vehicle became semi-autocratic in the way they behaved, helped by the court clerks, whereas the basis of traditional rule was democratic.¹²¹ Rather than bring about the old traditional patterns, they fashioned and riveted upon the people the dreadful fetters of Native Administration.

The existence of chieftaincy institutions in the Eastern Niger Delta had made people think that it would serve as a smooth vehicle for the Indirect Rule System. In reality it was not. The deportations (and depositions) of the Amanyapanu (Kings) and the punitive expeditions had left their scars in the way they "aggravated the problem of securing and maintaining public confidence and loyalty" during this period.¹²² There was a general feeling of lassitude because of sentiments of reverence for their deported rulers, and the people of the Eastern Niger Delta became angry, vindictive and unquiet. In such a situation,

the system in which the chief was the go-between for both the ruler and the ruled was fraught with danger. A chief that proved loyal to the colonial government ran the risk of becoming unpopular with his people and all that that involved. It was in this context that T.N. Tamuno asserted that "the public confidence and loyalty which the government very much valued under a scheme of indirect administration at times turned out to be a mirage".¹²³

The areas that were united to form Southern Nigeria in 1900 were the Niger Coast (previously Oil Rivers) Protectorate, and part of the Niger Territories South of Idah. Sir Ralph Moor the Consul-General and Commissioner of the Niger Coast Protectorate became the High Commissioner for Southern Nigeria. For the administration of the enlarged Protectorate, four divisions were created namely the Eastern, Cross River, Central and Western Divisions each headed by a Divisional Commissioner assisted by Travelling Commissioner, District Commissioners, and Assistant District Commissioners. Gallwey was placed in charge of the Eastern Division. Each Division was also divided into Native Court areas, as it were, in continuation of the practice in the Niger Coast Protectorate.

While Brass and Akassa were in the Central Division the rest of the Eastern Niger Delta were in the Eastern Division with Calabar as the Headquarters. It was Moor's belief that the Native Council system was a means of providing political education in self-government for the indigenous rulers. Since 1st April, 1899, the administration of the Protectorate had been transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, and the title of the officer administering the government had

changed from Consul-General to High Commissioner as earlier indicated.

In October 1903 Sir Ralph Moor retired on grounds of ill-health. His retirement in Southern Nigeria and the departure of Governor Macgregor of the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos at about the same time, helped in the amalgamation process of the two administrations. The first was the appointment of Walter Egerton who on 2nd April 1904 succeeded Moor as High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and also succeeded Macgregor on 26th September 1904 as Governor of Lagos. These were before that time two separate political entities.

By 1906 the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria got amalgamated with the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos to become the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.¹²⁴ Besides, the revenue of Lagos Colony and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria would be united and paid to a common treasury. The primary aim of government was to use the better financial position of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to cover the costs of administration and development in the Colony and Protectorate which was financially weak. Secondly such action would remove the expense of duplicating the administrative machinery. However, this amalgamation once again necessitated restructuring into three administrative provinces namely, the Eastern Province with headquarters at Calabar, consisting of the areas now constituting the present Rivers, Cross-River and some part of the Igbo-land not included in the Central Province; the Central Province with headquarters at Warri, and the Western Province with headquarters at Lagos. Egerton as Governor of the Colony

and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, relied so much on decentralised control over administrative details to the extent that the District Commissioners wielded much influence.

With the amalgamation, the Lagos Legislative Council already in existence was empowered to legislate for the amalgamated Protectorate.¹²⁵ No indigenous member was appointed or selected to represent what was, before the 1906 amalgamation, known as Southern Nigeria. By implication, no one also represented the Eastern Niger Delta. J.C. Anene had made the observation that there was, in fact, no evidence if the people of that area ever protested against such non-representation in the Council.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, there were petitions and representations made to the British Government from other quarters including C.A. Sapara-Williams who was then an unofficial member of the Lagos Legislative Council.¹²⁷

Although Governor Egerton shared the view of the petitioners about the desirability of increasing membership of the Legislative Council to give some representation to the areas not being represented, yet no appointment or selection was made for some time. In fact, between 1906 and 1913, there was no consideration of African representatives of the Eastern Provinces (and even the Central) on the Council.

Just as Moor had refused during his administration to establish that type of representative institution in the area, Egerton, too, did not appoint any African of this area. Thus, the people of the Eastern Provinces in general and those of the Eastern Niger Delta in particular, were not given opportunity to air their views and to ventilate individual and other grievances. But as T.N. Tamuno remarked, "the Legislative

Council as then constituted had very limited value for the African Community in Lagos, let alone the millions of other Nigerians in the Protectorate who were not represented there".¹²⁸ As regards the membership of the Executive Council, it was Egerton's view (and it was upheld by the British Government) that conditions in West Africa made it undesirable to appoint an unofficial member.¹²⁹

It may be necessary at this point to recall that prior to the 1906 amalgamation, the executive and legislative functions in the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were entrusted to the High Commissioner at the central level while Native Courts and Native Councils were established at the local level. With the 1906 amalgamation, however, the functions of the Executive and Legislative Councils at Lagos were extended to the entire Protectorate of Southern Nigeria while the Native Courts and Councils still continued to function at the local level. In other words the amalgamation took away from the High Commissioner of the former Protectorate of Southern Nigeria his sole legislative functions. And between 1906 and 1912, other forces of change were let loose in a greater measure than before.

The system of Native Courts and Councils in the Eastern Niger Delta was mainly based on the War-Canoe House tradition which had been reinforced by the House Rule Ordinance of Southern Nigeria. Under that Ordinance a member of a House who refused to submit to the authority of his chief or House Head would pay a fine, and the chief's oath to that effect was sufficient to secure conviction.¹³⁰ Under the Ordinance also, any vagrant who was not attached to a House was liable not only

to arrest without warrant but also imprisonment for a year. Excepting minor occasional changes that occurred the basic structure of the local government in these parts remained the same from 1891 to 1912 about which time Egerton left Southern Nigeria to become the Governor of British Guiana. It was a period of actual imposition of British rule.

In any case, by 1914 the question of subjugation with particular reference to the Eastern Niger Delta, had become a fait accompli. The House Rule Proclamation which aimed at strengthening the position of the Warrant Chiefs who aided the colonial administration was at this time also repealed and that had sealed the fate of the Warrant Chief System. Having however been backed by force, the administration got the obedience of the people but hardly their allegiance.¹³¹ What happened to economic activities for which the imperialist moves were made, will be discussed in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 20.
2. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja..., p. 14.
3. Curtin, P.D. 'The Atlantic Slave Trade 1600-1800' in Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M. (eds) History of West Africa Vol. 1. p. 328.
4. Isichei, E. History of West Africa Since 1800, London, 1977, p. 151.
5. Onimode, B. Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria London, 1983. p.43.
6. Crowther, D.C. The Establishment of the Niger Delta Pastorate Church. Liverpool 1907 p. 112.
7. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja ..., p. 19.
8. NAE CALPROF 5/7/4. Perpetual Treaty of Peace 1871.
9. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 45.
10. F.O. 84/1277. No. 28. Consul Livingstone to Lord Stanley dated 24th December, 1867.
11. F.O. 403/18. Inclosure 1 in No. 61 Commander Craigie to Rear Admiral Salmon 25th August, 1884.
12. Ibid.
13. F.O. 84/1265. Letter from King Pepple to Consul Charles Livingstone dated 26th August, 1866.
14. Ikime, O. The Fall of Nigeria..., p. 16.
15. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 102.
16. Ibid. p. 110.
17. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 103.
18. Ikime, O. The Fall of Nigeria..., p.17.
19. Hopkins, A.G. An Economic History of West Africa pp. 125 and 126.
20. The Trading Community in Okrika has been known as Tuboniju while the Fishing Section is called Koniju. See A.S. Abam, "A Political History of Okrika from about the Eighteenth Century to 1960" M.A. Dissertation, University of Lagos, 1985.
21. Okonkwo, C.O. (ed) Introduction to Nigerian Law, London, 1980, p. 60.

22. Ibid. p. 62.
23. F.O. 84/1265. Letter from Consul Livingstone to the Earl of Clarendon dated 2nd August, 1866.
24. F.O. 84/1265. Inclosure No. 7. Letter from Consul Charles Livingstone to King Pepple dated 21st August, 1866.
25. F.O. 84/1277 No. 28. Consul Charles Livingstone to Lord Stanley dated 24th December, 1867.
26. F.O. 84/950. Undertaking by King and Chiefs of Kalabari to settle their dispute with Egenay, dated 25th January, 1854.
27. F.O. 84/1265 Inclosure No. 9. Letter from Consul Livingstone to King Pepple dated 22nd August, 1866.
28. F.O. 403/31 No. 17. Remarks by Consul Edward Hyde Hewett dated 29th January, 1884.
29. F.O. 403/18 Inclosure 2 in No. 3. E.H. Hewett to King Jaja dated 24th May, 1881.
30. Although there was no formal declaration of protection over the Niger Delta, in actual fact, the area had already become an integral part of the British empire.
31. F.O. 403/18 No. 6. Letter from John to Earl Granville dated 28th October, 1881.
32. Cook, A.N. British Enterprise in Nigeria, p. 83.
33. Ibid.
34. Hargreaves, J.D. 'The European partition of West Africa' in Ajayi, J.F.A. & Crowder, M. (eds) History of West Africa Vol. 2. p. 403.
35. Lugard, F.D. The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa Fifth edition London 1965 (with a new introduction by Margery Perham). p. 15.
36. F.O. 403/18. No. 9. Consul Hewett to Earl Granville dated 14th January, 1882.
37. F.O. 403/31 No. 43. Memorandum by Mr Anderson and Mr Lister.
38. See appendices 1-3 (See also NAE CALPROF 5/7/5).
39. Alagoa, E.J. 'Koko: Amanyabo of Nembe' in Tarikh Vol. 1 No. 4. p. 67 (a journal published by the Historical Society of Nigeria).

40. Hopkins, A.G. An Economic History of West Africa, p.160.
41. There appeared to have been some equivocation on the issue of colonisation by the British Government. King Acqua and other princes from Acqua town in the Cameroons wrote to the British monarch inviting her to extend British laws to them and that they (the Cameroonians) would submit to the authority of the British Consul. (F.O. 403/18 No. 1. Letter dated August 7, 1879). There was no evidence of positive reaction by the British on the issue at the time. Again, both King Bell and King Acqua wrote to Mr Gladstone the British Prime Minister at the time inviting the British government to colonise their country. As they stated "we want our country to be governed by British Government". (FO 403/18 No. 7. Letter dated November 6, 1881). There was also no evidence of positive reaction by the British Government. In 1882, Consul Hewett was still pleading with Earl Granville that "on finding England deaf to their entreaties, they (King Bell and King Acqua) may seek the protection of the French, who, if once established in Cameroons, would in all likelihood extend their commerce in both directions along the coast, and to the Southward acquiring the territory". (FO 403/18. Letter from Consul Hewett to Earl Granville dated January 14, 1882).
42. F.O. 403/31 No. 43. Memoranda by Mr Anderson and Mr Lister dated 27th February, 1884.
43. Munro, J. Forbes. Britain in Tropical Africa 1880-1960: Economic Relationships and Impact, London 1984. p.16.
44. Thompson, D. Europe Since Napoleon, Second Edition London, 1962 p. 455.
45. F.O. 403/18 No. 3. King Jaja to Earl Granville dated 28th July, 1881.
46. NAI CALPROF 2/2. Acting Consul Johnston to Lord Stanley dated 12th August, 1887.
47. NAI CALPROF 2/2. Acting Consul Johnston to Lord Stanley dated 11th September, 1887.
48. Jaja, E.A. 'King Jaja of Opobo' in Tamuno, T.N. and Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State, op. cit. p. 56.
49. Geary, W.M.N. Nigeria Under British Rule, London, 1965 p. 295 appendix I. The author had written it as an article captioned 'Jaja, An African Merchant Prince' in the West Africa' periodical.
50. Asiegbu, J.U.J. 'Some notes on Afro-European Relations and British Consular Roles in the Niger Delta in the 19th Century' in Journal of Niger Delta Studies, Vol. 1 No. 2. 1977. pp. 106 & 107.

51. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeria in Transition, 1885-1906, Cambridge, 1966 p.106.
52. F.O. 403/18 Inclosure 1 in No. 8. From Commander Robert W. Hammick to Commodore Sir F. Richards dated 21st November, 1881.
53. NAE CALPROF 5/7/5 Treaty dated 1st July 1884 (see appendix 3).
54. See Appendices 1 and 2, pp.
55. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeriaⁱⁿ Transition, 1885-1906, p. 98.
56. Tamuno, T.N. 'Chief Daniel Oju Kalio of Okrika' in Tamuno, T.N. & Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State p. 150.
57. F.O. 403/233 Treaty dated 17th May, 1888, (see appendix 4).
58. NAE. C.S.O. 3/3/3. Ralph Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
59. Ikime, O. The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest London, 1977, p. 44.
60. Geary, W.M.N. Nigeria Under British Rule, pp. 102-104.
61. Geary, W.M.N. Nigeria under British Rule, p. 103.
62. F.O. 84/1881, No. 25, Hewett to F.O. dated 20th June, 1888.
63. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeria in Transition... p. 99.
64. Ibid.
65. Geary, W.M.N. Nigeria Under British Rule, p. 103.
66. Cumpston, I.M. (ed) The Growth of British Commonwealth 1880-1932, London, 1973. p. 120 (an excerpt of the memorandum of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the R.N.C. dated 21st February, 1898).
67. Obi, F.N. The British Occupation of Niger Territories (1830-1914) London, 1979 p. 75.
68. Alagoa, E.J. 'Koko: Amanyano of Nembe' in Tarikh Vol. 1 No. 4. p. 73.
69. Tamuno, T.N. The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase, 1898-1914, London, 1972, p. 23.
70. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeria in Transition... p.179.
71. Asiegbu, J.U.J. 'Some Notes on Afro-European Relations and British Consular Roles in the Niger Delta in the 19th Century' in Journal of Niger Delta Studies Vol. 1. No. 2. 1977. p. 112.

72. Ibid. p. 111.
73. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Consul Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
74. Ikime, O. The Fall of Nigeria... p. 50.
75. N.A.E. C.S.O. 3/3/3. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
76. Ibid.
77. Gambo, M.W. (Whose mother came from the Jama family which traditionally produced the Prime Ministers of Okrika) interviewed on 9th November, 1986. (There was an earlier footnote on Chief Ngeri Rowland's conviction that the mobilization was not full, see p. 44 above).
78. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
79. Whitehouse, A.A. "An African fetish" Journal of African Society, (London, 1905) pp. 410-416.
80. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June 1896. Also see NAE. C.S.O. 3/3/3. Letter by Moor to F.O. dated 24th June 1896.
81. Ibid.
82. F.O. 403/31 No. 17. Remarks by Hewett on the letters of Messrs Holt and Cotterell, dated 29th January, 1884.
83. Jaja In his dealings with colonial officers applied tact and diplomacy. Thus, some actually recommended cultivating his friendship rather than fighting him. Rear-Admiral Salmon, for instance, wrote "I think our interest will be better served by keeping on friendly terms with him (Jaja), while holding him to his Treaty Obligations, than by burning his town". (see F.O. 403/31 Inclosure 1 No. 73. Letter from Rear Admiral Salmon to Secretary to the Admiralty dated 6th March, 1884).
84. F.O. 2/101. No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
85. Tamuno, T.N. 'Chief Daniel Oju Kalio of Okrika' in Tamuno, T.N. and Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerian of the Rivers State, op. cit. p. 151.
86. F.O. 2/101. No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
87. Adewoye, O. The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria 1854-1954 London, 1977, p. 85.
88. See Tamuno, T.N. The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase 1898-1914, London, 1972 p.24 footnotes.

89. Tamuno, T.N. 'Chief Daniel Oju Kalio of Okrika' in Tamuno, T.N. & Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State, op. cit. p. 152.
90. Tienabeso, W.E. Some Events in the Life of Kariboye Abbi, Amachree IV. Amanyanabo of Kalabari 1863-1900 Port-Harcourt. 1984. p.13.
91. Tamuno, T.N. The Evolution of the Nigerian State...., p.23.
92. NAI CALPROF 8/2 Report on New Calabar dated 31st March, 1897.
93. Tamuno, T.N. The Evolution of the Nigerian State...., p.57.
94. Tamuno, T.N. 'Native House Rule of Southern Nigeria' in Nigeria Magazine No. 93 June, 1967 p. 163.
95. Afigbo, A.E. 'Indirect Rule in Southern Nigeria: The Era of Warrant Chiefs 1891-1929', in Tarikh Vol. 4 No. 4. p. 17.
96. NAI CALPROF 6/1. Harcourt to Ag. Consul dated 9th December, 1896.
97. Afigbo, A.E. 'The Eastern Provinces Under Colonial Rule' in Ikime, O. (ed) Groundwork of Nigerian History Ibadan, 1980, p. 426.
98. NAE. OW. 637/21. ~~RIV~~PROF 8/9/539. Christ Army Mission Stations.
99. NAE. C. 278/1918. CALPROF 5/8/229. Opobo Division Annual Report 1917.
100. NAE. OW. 313/18. RIVPROF 8/6/303. Christ Army Church Okrika: requests for extermination of.
101. Tasie, G.O.M. 'The Prophet Garrick Sokari Braid of Bakana' in Tamuno, T.N. and Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State op. cit. p. 142.
102. N.A.E. DEGDIST 7/1/34.
103. Generally, the Colonial Authorities tended to have regarded prophetic movements as a threat to their political control and therefore handled them with utter ruthlessness. There were others too who suffered the same fate or worse than that of Garrick Braid. There was Nwana Lesa who was hanged in Rhodesia in 1926. There was also Simon Kimbangu the Congolese prophet who was tried by a Belgian Military Court and sentenced to death. Having had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment, he served twenty-nine years in prison before he died in an Elisabethville goal in 1950. (Hodgkin, Thomas, Nationalism in Colonial Africa. London 1965 p.111). Yet such harsh punishments failed to prevent the emergence of further prophetic movements which, indeed, championed the cause (and served as channels) of social discontent in different parts of Africa. Such prophetic movements were therefore nationalist in scope.

104. Cookey, S. 'Chief Cookey Gam: The Statesman of Opobo' in Tamuno, T.N. and Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State op. cit. p. 101.
105. Cookey, S.J.S. 'Chief Cookey Gam: The Statesman of Opobo' in Tamuno T.N. and Alagoa E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State, p. 101.
106. CALPROF 6/1 Vol. III. Letter from Mr Harcourt Assistant Consul to Acting Consul dated 9th September, 1896.
107. F.O. 2/101. No. 51. Ralph Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
108. F.O. 2/168. Treaty with Okrika Chiefs dated 4th June 1896.
109. F.O. 84/2194. Memorandum by Consul Macdonald on King Ibanichuka of Okrika in 1892.
110. F.O. 2/101. No. 51. Ralph Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
111. Ibid.
112. NAE. CER/10. Appendix to the Report of the Native Courts Commissions of Inquiry 1949-52 p. 65.
113. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
114. See appendix 6 for a Text of the Proclamation.
115. Tamuno, T.N. 'British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century' in Ikime, O. (ed) Groundwork of Nigerian History, p. 337.
116. NAE. RIVPROF 3/3/115. Letter written by Charles Halliday (Vice-President of Bonny Native Council) to the Assistant Commissioner of Bonny dated November, 1909.
117. Tamuno, T.N. 'British Colonial Administration in Nigeria....' p. 334.
118. NAE. MISF. 41. The Powers and Duties of Native Authorities (section 24).
119. Adewoye, O. The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria 1854-1954 London, 1977. p. 203.
120. NAE. MISF. 41. Powers and Duties of Native Authorities (Section 23 Sub-section j).
121. By tradition all chiefs or Heads of war-canoe Houses usually attended the meeting of the ruling Council. With Indirect Administration, only those of them given the Warrant attended the meetings.
122. Tamuno, T.N. 'British Colonial Administration in Nigeria....' p. 400.

123. Ibid.
124. NAE. C.S.O. 5/3/1.
125. C.O. 591/2. Southern Nigeria Gazette (Extra-ordinary 1st May, 1906.
126. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeria in Transition..., p. 279.
127. C.O. 147/178 Sapara-Williams to Antrobus dated 10th October, 1905.
128. Tamuno, T.N. Evolution of the Nigerian State..., pp. 146 and 147.
129. C.O. 520/36. Letter written by Egerton to Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 11th August, 1906.
130. See Appendix 6.
131. This was particularly true at the beginning of colonial rule. Even towards the end, Nationalist activities tried to resuscitate and sustain the same feelings that colonial rule was alien.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COLONIAL ECONOMY IN THE EASTERN
NIGER DELTA

Although physical environment has generally never been immutable, yet geographical conditions were responsible for some of the economic activities of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta.¹ An historical event such as the coming of the Europeans played some vital part but the people themselves were an essential and dynamic element affecting their environment (or geography) no less than their history. Their courage did not waiver in spite of hard and inhospitable conditions that existed in this region. They were quite resolute and determined to surmount the environmental obstacles that stood in their way to successful economic endeavour. It thus became an "intriguing paradox that this area, notorious among nineteenth century travellers for its unhealthiness with soil poor... had become by 1830 the greatest single trading area in West Africa".²

Situated mainly within the region of the tidal salt water, the Eastern Niger Delta has thick mangrove forest as its characteristic vegetation. "The terrain is low and muddy and at very high tides only a small portion is dry".³ As the salt-water swamp could grow nothing but mangrove (*Rizophora racemosa*)⁴ it was therefore not supportive of agriculture as a venture and was described as a "dismal region".⁵ Even the salinity of the soil in some portions of the dry land often reached ominous levels.⁶ Thus, the people of this region did not grow enough food for themselves. Terrain being a major determinant of human activities the people had good reason to be pre-occupied

by the sea. By virtue of their nearness to the sea, they naturally became fishermen predominantly. And indeed, they produced fish over and above their daily needs. They also manufactured salt from sea water, over and above their normal requirement. Since the hinterland where food items were produced, lacked salt and protein, it was they who supplied both to their interior neighbours.

The situation at the time was such that neither the people of the Eastern Delta themselves nor those of the hinterland were entirely self-sufficient in their economy. "This", in Obaro Ikime's view "was the basis of the internal trade".⁷ Exchange, as it were, arose naturally between the respective communities as a result of their complementary needs, and important ties too were established between the coastal people and their hinterland neighbours since the riverain specializations were complementary to the agricultural endeavours of the farming populations inland. The commercial relationship between the coastal people and their hinterland neighbours has already been mentioned in chapter one.⁸

The overall pattern of the trade can be explained. The various items of exchange were moved about the region through different markets, local and long distance, and the bulk of the protein exported from the eastern delta was in the form of smoked fish. The existence of markets demonstrated the fact that the pre-colonial economy of the area was not subsistence. These markets had been evolved for long and exchange had also been widespread. There is every reason to believe that the markets operated according to some discrete principles of

exchange. In spite of the unavailability of quantitative data, there was no doubt that many households produced commodities beyond subsistence level and exchanged the surplus in a manner consistent with the laws of supply and demand.

One could perhaps argue that subsistence, in the true sense of the word, had been the exception rather than the rule in the region. If however, the market forces at that time failed to make great impact on the economy, the factors responsible for such failure could be traced to lack of technology and capital rather than due to anti-capitalist values. The exchange endeavour described above was rational enough even if the degree of its operation might have had limits when compared with what obtained in the more advanced economies.

Since the sixteenth century, there had been another dimension to the delta trade in the sense that the Eastern Niger Delta States also became involved in the Overseas Commerce. They actively engaged not only in the slave trade but also in the Palm Oil and Kernel trade that replaced it after its abolition. Suffice it to mention that the Delta States made success of the overseas commerce on which they built up their prestige and power. Indeed, the commerce in palm oil and kernel opened wider opportunity for a new breed of small scale traders in the region.

However, with the success of the new tradersⁱⁿ some of the delta city-states social change appeared to have been speeded up. The quantitative advance in the economic sphere brought with it the conditions for certain qualitative socio-political changes. In Bonny and Kalabari, there were serious

civil wars. But by far the most serious destabilising factor was the trade depression especially of the 1880s. While trade remained prosperous the bad tendencies that brought conflict were often held in check. Towards the close of the century however, there was a radical change in the situation. The adverse movements in the terms of trade brought about serious effects. The normal non-violent commercial relationships started to break down. Rivalries between African producers and also among the European traders themselves were intensified by the depression. There was therefore a fierce struggle as each party sought to control the local market and also to dictate terms to the other.

On the African side, the depression had been heralded by struggles as for example, between Okrika and Kalabari,⁹ and also between Bonny and Opobo, for the control of markets.¹⁰ The Okrika-Kalabari dispute ended with the conclusion of the perpetual Treaty of Peace in 1871 while that of Bonny and Opobo was finally resolved by the 1873 Peace Treaty.

As between Africans and Europeans there was serious quarrel over the attempt to make more profit at the expense of the other. Some Europeans, in order to make more profit, tried to bypass the African middlemen to get to the sources of the palm oil and palm kernels in the hinterland while the Africans tried too to bypass the European middlemen to sell their oil direct to Europe. This was the main reason for the conflict between King Jaja of Opobo and some of the European firms such as George Watt and McEachen¹¹ for which he was eventually deported by acting Consul Harry Johnston in 1887.

King Jaja had foreseen such problems. He, therefore, refused the free trade clause in the treaty of 1884.¹² He complained of the actions of some of the British merchants attempting to trade in his oil markets. The British Foreign Office merely asked E. Hyde Hewett to enquire into it and to take necessary steps to settle the matter as he deemed fit.¹³ Yet, in spite of all Jaja's carefulness, and all the assurances made by the British representatives, Opobo fell before superior arms in the attempt of the people to re-assert their rights. Acting Consul Johnston wrote to persuade Lord Stanley that the option open to peace and commerce in the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers would be the banishment of Jaja.¹⁴ A letter had earlier been despatched discrediting Jaja's deputation to England to explain his side of the story.¹⁵ In the end Johnston did precisely what he wanted as already explained in detail above.¹⁶

Another source of conflict between Africans and Europeans was the demarcation both of functions and places of trade. This was the main dispute between the people of Nembe-Brass and the Royal Niger Company. As earlier stated,¹⁷ Brass had traditional trading relationship with Aboh and markets between the Brass River and Onitsha. By 1886 a Royal Charter gave the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.) exclusive trading rights and authority both to raise its fighting force and to make laws over its area of influence. The R.N.C. made stringent trade regulations requiring other traders to pay various sums of money for licence and different forms of taxes including duties on imported goods, particularly spirits, and on export, mainly, produce.

These regulations not only placed the R.N.C. in an unusual monopoly position but also had a stiffling effect on the economic activities of the Nembe-Brass people for which they made series of complaints to the British authorities. These complaints were however, to no avail. The Brass men were complaining bitterly about the company just in the same way as the Protectorate administration had complained about Nana in the Western Niger Delta. To survive economically they had to take to smuggling for which their canoes, foodstuffs and produce were seized when caught by the R.N.C. gunboats on patrol. So many were fired at and killed. It was against such rather desperate and compelling circumstance that the Brass men decided on their course of action. They felt that it was better to die fighting than through starvation caused by the R.N.C. King Koko, therefore, availed himself of the murky atmosphere of the early hours of the morning of Tuesday 29th January, 1895 to hurl the whole mass of the Brass war-canoes (twenty five of them each manned by sixty fighting men) upon the depot of the R.N.C. at Akassa. In this way, the people took full vengeance for the economic rape on them. And as far as they were concerned, it was a war of survival.

The reprisal was of course not long in coming. The Protectorate's government undertook a punitive expedition and several hundreds of Brass men lost their lives in defence of their city-state. Theirs became an action in futility for they were finally crushed by superior arms. In this way, Nembe-Brass as a city-state lost its independence. Sir John Kirk's inquiry that was set up to look into the grievances of

the people appeared to be a face saving device. There was no direct benefit for the Brass people. It merely blamed the British government for the charter it gave the R.N.C. which brought about that company's oppressive activities. To borrow Obaro Ikime's expression, "in an age of the scramble and partition, the much vaunted British sense of justice had to be jettisoned in the interest of empire building".¹⁸

Indeed, the Nembe-Brass people had foreseen the situation. They had realised the growing power of the British and, therefore had limited the treaty of Protection they signed with Hewett in 1884 to only six months duration. In 1885 too when it was renewed, the duration was again six months. The point has been made that "after 1st August 1885, the British did not really have any legal authority for declaring Brass a a Protectorate".¹⁹ In spite of all care to keep a free hand, Brass have her political power finally seized from her.

Okrika was the next area in the Eastern Niger Delta to have serious conflict with the colonial authorities. By 1896 Consul-General Ralph Moor in his report to the Foreign Office confessed that he did not like the state of affairs there. According to him, the Okrika people refused, among other things, "to assent to the freedom of the markets and persistently blocked the roads to the interior".²⁰ He, therefore, told the Foreign Office that such a state of affairs should not be allowed to continue especially in an area only twenty miles away from Bonny which was the seat of the Vice-Consul.²¹

By 1896 Consul-General Moor realised, too, that little or no progress had been made towards extending the British protectorate. He had asked the Okrika people to open the

markets for free trade and the roads to the interior but they had tactfully asked for time to consider its implications. At the expiration of the period the Consul gave them, King Ibanichuka again asked to be given more time. In the end, the Okrika people remained stuck to their guns by refusing free trade and not opening the roads to the interior. The result was a punitive expedition in which King Ibanichuka the Amanyanabo of Okrika was deported, an event which Ralph Moor stated was 'the happy termination' of the difficulties he encountered in the attempt to secure free trade and open the roads to the interior.²²

As usual, in spite of the fact that the Okrika people were re-asserting their rights, superior arms once again won the day for the British. The refusal to allow free trade by Okrika was a clear indication that Harry Johnston used unwholesome methods to conclude the 1888 treaty of Protection, clause eight of which allowed free trade within the entire Okrika territory. The Okrika people had given their own interpretation of the treaty which in J.C. Anene's view was technically right.²³ But Consul Moor had of course made up his mind. He had formed the opinion that the Okrika King "was the principal obstructionist to the requirements of Government".²⁴ Yet after Moor had forcefully taken away King Ibanichuka into exile, the chiefs that cooperated with him still asked for time before opening the markets for free trade.²⁵ This was to enable them resolve the political problems involved in the opening of free trade. Paradoxically, therefore, it was King Ibanichuka's zealous guard of his people's economic interests that precipitated the collapse of the political sovereignty of Okrika. In

sticking to his guns over the question of allowing free trade, King Ibanichuka knew what was involved. Nonetheless, as Amanyabo it was his duty to protect the interests of his people even unto death. As fate would have it, too, having been exiled, he never went back to his people alive.

With the deportation of King Ibanichuka of Okrika, arrangements were made for the future government of Okrika as earlier mentioned. Chief Daniel Oju Kalio became the regent in the absence of the Amanyabo, and as the Paramount (and warrant) chief, he became the Political Agent of the colonial government.²⁶ In that position he cooperated with the colonial administration and this facilitated the movement into the interior by the British. The roads that chief Wagu of Umukoroshe (near Port Harcourt) closed were by then all opened.²⁷

It then became the desire of the colonial administration to have an effective control of the hinterland. The idea of constructing a railway was considered not only for purposes of transportation of goods but also as a means of communication. It would indeed open the interior to foreign traders and enable hinterland producers easy access to coastal markets. Moreover, it was the desire of the Colonial Administration to knit together the North and the South in order to enhance its political control. In addition, high returns were anticipated from the mines and the new trading outlets.

Amidst such policy considerations, there was report that coal had been discovered in 1908 at Ebugu Ngwo in the neighbourhood of Udi. That led to a serious effort on the part of the colonial administration to site a new southern

port and a railway terminal which would facilitate the transportation of the coal. And on 5th December, 1912 Colonial Officials visited Okrika where a provisional site for a new port was selected.²⁸ The water at Isaka in Okrika was considered to be deep and therefore good for such a project.²⁹ In the entire exercise of survey and search for a good site, Chief Daniel Kalio rendered tremendous help. The canoe used for the probe by Lugard, Mr Eaglesome and other staff was fitted by him.³⁰

After all the probe, an area of high cliff was chosen. Necessary detailed arrangements and negotiations with the chiefs of Okrika and Diobu followed; and eventually, the 1913 Hargrove Agreement for the acquisition of Port Harcourt was concluded with both of them. Thenceforth, Port Harcourt became the centre of economic and political activities instead of the traditional centres of economic activities in the Eastern Delta during the days of the city-states. Between 1916 and 1920 therefore, the important merchants operating at Bonny transferred their activities to Port Harcourt.³¹ Even government departments including the Marine, the Customs, and similar agencies also took their exit one by one from Bonny.

However, the new city of Port Harcourt had to grow at the cost of bitter tension between the local people and the immigrants who came to settle there. While the local people were displaced as some of their fishing villages and farmlands were taken over, the immigrant Igbo who escaped from population pressures in their own localities found relief in various undertakings in the new city. Such a situation was unlike

what happened elsewhere in Nigeria. In the Western Region cities like Ibadan and Lagos, the indigenous people and the immigrants lived side by side. In the Northern Region at that time, immigrants lived in the Sabongaris. But in the Eastern Region, the situation appeared to be inconsistent. While at Enugu, Aba and other Igbo speaking areas, both the immigrants and local people lived side by side, in Port Harcourt the indigenous people were gradually displaced.³² The situation carried with it obvious seeds of discord and ~~fancour~~ *francour*. As Okwudiba Nnoli explained, in such a circumstance in which the migrants outnumbered the indigenes, the host community would naturally fear domination which would result into hostility and 'ingroup-outgroup' exclusiveness would eventually emerge.³³

Port Harcourt itself grew to be a cosmopolitan city having been open to the penetration of non-Delta and non-Diobu people. The impact of the railway was tremendous not just economically but also socially. Its transportation services offered opportunities for employment to many people, especially as artisans. Road transport also improved. In this way there was the economic and political penetration of non-Delta people.

From the historical past, membership of the typical delta communities was exclusive to those claiming descent from ancestors of such communities. And rights to land could not be claimed by immigrants from outside their communities. In that way, each delta territory remained physically intact in terms of allegiance with respect to that territory and it gave that allegiance continuity through time. But mechanisms

existed whereby immigrants progressively became assimilated to full membership of the group and they in turn became unequivocally committed to their host group. The case of Port Harcourt defied this age-old practice to the chagrin of the indigenous people. The non-Delta people, particularly the Igbo did not develop a "'Port Harcourt identity', their loyalties being to Owerri, Onitsha, ~~Awka~~ Awka and so on".³⁴ There was in fact the African Progress Union in Port Harcourt which came into being on the 8th of March, 1925. According to Capt. D.P.J. O'Connor, the District Officer, in his handing over notes, "the Union claimed to be representative of the Africans in Port Harcourt - but it (was) in fact very much the reverse..."³⁵ By 1943, the Strangers' Union, the succeeding organisation to the African Progress Union, had become an important factor taken into consideration on policy matters.³⁶ Indeed, an ~~unequal~~ unequal economic situation had begun to develop as a result of massive Igbo migrations into the area which appeared later to have been aided by political forces. This was demonstrated from 1949 when the Port Harcourt Town Council was inaugurated and the status of the town raised from second to first class. The Council which managed the affairs of the town at the time was dominated by the Igbo migrant group. The Caretaker Council that followed in 1954 was also so dominated. Of the five-man member^{ship} of the Council, only Mr. G.B. Somiari was not Igbo.³⁷

From 1950, representatives for Port Harcourt in the former Eastern House of Assembly (when Nigeria operated a federal constitution based on three regions, North, East and

West) were all Igbo³⁸ because, as stated already, they formed the majority population in the town. They all belonged to the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), the political party in power in the Eastern Region at that time. Majority of the indigenes of the Eastern Niger Delta were then members of smaller or other parties opposed to the NCNC. During the 1959 elections, the indigenes of the Eastern Niger Delta demonstrated openly their opposition to the political and economic domination by the Igbo. They had formed the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) which allied with the Northern People Congress (NPC) and won the seat for the Federal House of Representatives for Brass Division.

Yet, the Igbo domination of both political and economic life of Port Harcourt through their numbers and their ownership of property came to be a fait accompli. According to Z.C. Obi, Chairman of the Ibo State Union in 1958, eighty percent of the population of Port Harcourt was Igbo while C.C. Mojekwu, another prominent Igbo asserted that ninety-two per cent of the buildings in the town belonged to the Igbo.³⁹

In the pattern of national politics after 1950 ethnic majorities rather than being liberal, showed evident obsession to dominate and also championed ethnic minorities as a means of generating and increasing their national following. The Action Group (AG) supported the Calabar-Ogoja Rivers (COR) Movement, the NCNC the creation of the Midwest State (later name changed to Bendel) and the NPC a Rivers State. Thus, there was an added stimulus to the already generated profound sense of alienation among the ethnic minorities. In the

particular case of the Eastern Niger Delta Communities, "the political, economic and social development in Port Harcourt... left a trail of bitterness before, during and after the (Nigerian) civil war".⁴⁰

It has to be explained that the overwhelming control of the Port Harcourt region by the Igbo immigrants was due to the absence of a strong traditional authority in the area. Upon the establishment of Port Harcourt, the British did not recognise the authority of the indigenes of the area to rule. Rather, the town was designated a second class township because it had European residents. British laws and administrative practice were introduced and executed. Free opportunities to participate in economic activities and acquire new political statuses were given to every immigrant. Thus while the delta people watched with apprehension, it was with relish that the Ibo State Union celebrated Port Harcourt's attainment of municipal status.⁴¹

This process was checked or aborted in places where strong traditional authorities existed. Just as the Igbo settled in Port Harcourt from the 1910s, they also moved into Okrika. Here, as in Port Harcourt, they gradually achieved success in their many economic ventures. They then advanced new claims to socio-economic and political rights which the Okrika people considered detrimental to their own age old interests. The result was the Osuala riot of 1939 in which all the Igbo were expelled from Okrika.⁴²

It could, of course, be conceded to the Ibos that they were generally enterprising. But they often exhibited a social behaviour reminiscent of a rather aggressive economic pursuits.

In describing their behavioural pattern therefore, Okwudibia Nnoli wrote that "the struggle for wealth was (their) central dominant feature of social life. It was characterised by fierce individualistic struggle. The gaining of friends was not as important as the acquisition of material resources.⁴³ Against the background of the divisive socio-economic competition in the colonial urban setting the so-called enterprise or economic aggressiveness of the Igbo led to friction not only in Okrika in the Niger Delta in 1939 but also in Jos in the middle belt in 1932 and 1945.⁴⁴ Even in 1948 Igbo-Yoruba relations degenerated to a situation of near-violence in Lagos in the Western part of the country.⁴⁵ It will not therefore be appropriate to suggest that in the Eastern Niger Delta the migrant Ibos merely took advantage because of inertia on the part of the indigenous delta people of their failure to avail themselves of the economic opportunities that existed within their own area.

However, the roots of poverty and economic stagnation of the Eastern Niger Delta are not to be traced only to the political and economic deprivation of the Ijo inhabitants of Port Harcourt; they took shape and form from the economic policies of the colonial government from the 1900s. Up to 1910 the people of the Eastern Niger Delta "devoted their energies to trade with most successful results".⁴⁶ In 1916 both indigenous traders and foreign trading agents had enough casks of oil and bags of kernels, the only problems at the time being inadequate facilities to ship them overseas.⁴⁷ The trade at this time largely remained one of middlemen in both oil and kernels.⁴⁸ Till 1917, there was sufficient palm oil and palm kernel trade

that carried traders from Kalabari, Okrika, Bonny and Opobo to Okpala and other areas in the delta hinterland through the Imo River. By this time, the allocation of plots in Port Harcourt had begun, giving impetus, as it were, to continuous migration of non-delta peoples into Port Harcourt. The local market in Port Harcourt was well patronised, the stalls being let at a rental of between ten and eleven pounds per month.⁴⁹

Markets elsewhere in the Eastern Delta also had plenty of food-stuffs though the reduced rate of exchange of the manilla then made the purchase of food rather expensive, particularly, in Opobo Division.⁵⁰ But there was still good market for palm oil and kernels here, and the price of oil by 1917 was thirteen pounds per puncheon.⁵¹

By 1919, trade in the Eastern Delta still proved good and this extended to a greater part of 1920. In Opobo, for instance, the price of palm oil at this time was forty-eight pounds per puncheon at the early part of the year and later dropped to thirty-eight pounds per puncheon in April. But by October in 1920 the price fell again to fifteen pounds with a further drop to ten pounds per puncheon by the end of the year. For palm kernel, however, the price was initially thirty pounds per ton, and by October 1920 it dropped to twenty pounds per ton. Such fall in prices actually made many native traders to abandon the trade. Even some European trading firms did so too. Messrs Lever Brothers, in fact, dismantled their Oil Mill because it no longer proved successful.⁵² What showed evidence of prospect at the time was the trade in liquor. In 1920, many commercial agents including the African and Eastern Trade Corp. Ltd, the

African Traders Co. Ltd, the African Merchants Ltd, Miller Brothers Ltd, the Niger Company Ltd, and the Company of African Merchants Ltd, held liquor licences and operated in various areas of the Eastern Delta especially, Bonny,⁵³ Kalabari,⁵⁴ Akassa and Brass.⁵⁵

In 1921, the palm oil and palm kernel trade showed some signs of improvement but the delta middlemen seriously complained of adulteration of the produce.⁵⁶ It was, therefore, not surprising that a shift towards trade in general merchandise became apparent. Evidence of such shift made itself manifest in that during this period stalls in Port Harcourt were being extended.⁵⁷ Messrs Miller Brothers and G.B. Olivant and Co. were among other foreign firms operating then in Port Harcourt. A German trader by name wilhem Kunze was also engaged in the wholesale trade.⁵⁸

Outside of Port Harcourt, too, there was prosperous business activity so much so that by 1928 the African Traders Company Ltd. renewed with the Okrika Chiefs, its lease of land in Okrika.⁵⁹ The earlier lease was in 1908.⁶⁰ There was a similar lease of land at Okrika by the Miller Brothers Ltd. in 1911.⁶¹ In all such leases made under the Native Lands acquisition order, the District Commissioner had to decide whether the grantor was entitled to the interest granted and that he had power by native custom to dispose of land.⁶²

By 1926 the Colonial Government in the Eastern Provinces embarked on an agricultural policy which was aimed at the encouragement of the production of cocoa and palm produce.⁶³ Although such a policy was to make little impact on the

majority of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta in the salt water swamp region, for the people of Okrika it was slightly different. Having got parcels of land on the mainland, they tried to engage in agriculture and, by so doing, had occasional clashes with their mainland neighbours, leading to many litigations, for example, Chief Wakama of Okrika versus Chiefs of Dere Beninbo and others of Ogoni⁶⁴ and Chief Opio Gobo of Abuloma in Okrika versus Chief Ichegbo of Alekohia. While recognising some of the problems that might have confronted Colonial Administrative Officers in adjudicating local land matters the officers appeared to have been particularly hostile to Okrika in the two cases mentioned here.

Presumably, past knowledge of Okrika people might have obliged them to take such stand. With respect to the Abuloma case, the District Officer for Degema went to the extent of stating in his memorandum to the Resident, Owerri Province on 5th February, 1928, that in his opinion "the Abulomas (were) being urged on by the Okrika chiefs notably Chief Sampson Adoki".⁶⁵ With respect to the case of Chief Wakama versus the Ogoni chiefs, the Divisional Officer for Opobo held a meeting with both parties with a view to signing an agreement in favour of the Ogoni. When Chief Wakama refused to sign, the Colonial Officers demonstrated their hostile attitude in their use of intemperate verbiage while describing the behaviour of the Okrika Chiefs. There was, therefore, nothing much the Okrika Chiefs could do to foil such efforts on the part of colonial administrators to overawe them. And it is against such background that one could perhaps explain the dramatic change on the part of

Chief Wakama in signing the agreement of 21st August, 1922 in respect of a farmland off Wakama village, which appeared to have been stage-managed by the Colonial Officers.⁶⁶ It was not that Chief Wakama and Chief Daniel Kalio were "stubborn" as Mr R.B. Brooks the Resident for Calabar Province described them.⁶⁷ But leaders like them really looked ahead of others to the dangers of the future with even much greater anxiety than to those of the present. The important point in all these cases is that Okrika people lost an early opportunity to participate in the economic development of their area by engaging in cocoa and palm produce production.

Yet the people were undaunted. They continued to make efforts to put their mainland under more farm utilisation devoted to food crop production. But in the process, they clashed with the neighbouring Eleme clan in 1946. It became a matter of serious litigation ending in a Supreme Court judgement that gave the people of Okrika a land strip measuring 27 miles in length and a width of 1000 feet from the high water mark on the mainland.⁶⁸ The area of land so obtained has not satisfied the demand of the Okrika for more agricultural land in their immediate hinterland.

On the other hand, the British administration actively encouraged the Andoni, Ogoni and Opobo in the production of cash crops. Yet, it was only a partially successful policy. The Andoni would not change easily from fishing occupation because unlike their Ogoni and Ibibio neighbours, they lacked the skill in palm tree climbing or palm oil extraction. Like other delta communities, however, some Andoni chiefs such as

John Ikuru, Eroforokuma Arong, Claude Ejituwu engaged in distributive trade and in this way linked Andoni with Port Harcourt. They had fleets of canoes bringing palm oil from Ndoki and Ibibio areas to sell to European firms in the delta area. The people of Opobo were similarly engaged in the palm produce trade, exploiting the position of their town as a second class township to attract European firms and some measure of social development including road construction, the provision of health and banking facilities even before the 1930s.⁶⁹

Thus, it is significant that the colonial economic policy was geared to the production of cash crops and efforts were made by the British to divert the people's attention from fishing, their main occupation. In fact, fishing failed to attract any official encouragement because it did not fit into the demands of the colonial economy. It was officially neglected.

Yet it remains till today the backbone of the domestic economy of the people. Roughly up to eighty per cent of each community in the Eastern Niger Delta depended (and still depends) upon fishing for their livelihood. Fishing activities occurred in two major locations, the creeks and rivers of the delta and the open sea. Each location demanded its own fishing techniques. Local gadgets, traps, cast nets and the screen off system were employed mainly in the creeks and rivers while the dragnet was used both in the major creeks and open sea. Fishing nets and a line of hooks supplemented with the use of the javelin, the harpoon or spear with rope were also used in the open sea.⁷⁰

The type of fishing gear used was also related to the size of the fishes caught. The traps and gadgets were used for mudskippers, tilapia and other small fishes while the cast net was used for sardine, mackerel, salmon, herring, mullet and others. The use of cotton and later nylon thread nets during the colonial period improved the efficiency of this technique. As nets with finer meshes were used, there was over cropping of the fishes in the creeks and rivers leading to poorer fishing harvests. The screen off system involved the use of nets placed in columns across shallow fishing grounds and fish trying to escape got caught in the meshes. This method was favoured by the older men who could not face the rigours involved in casting a net or stand the strain of pulling a dragnet. The types of fish usually caught by this method included the cutlass fish, the saw fish and the shark.

The drag net, line of hooks, javelin, harpoon or spear were used to catch the bigger and more dangerous fishes in the open sea. They included huge sharks, baracuda, catfish, dolphin, and tarpon. The hazardous open sea fishing was carried out mainly by the youngmen.

Fishing was not the sole preserve of men. Women also participated in it. Their activities were restricted to the streams, rivers and shallow creeks where they used thrush net. The use of poisonous herbs in rivulets was usually abhorred but some people adopted it secretly.

Fishing also took place in home and distant fishing grounds. The home fishing grounds often provided the catch for immediate domestic consumption while the distant fishing

grounds provided the catch for commercial purposes. The curing sites where the catch were smoked and prepared for sale in the local markets were usually located close to the distant fishing grounds.

The Eastern Ijo fishermen were, therefore, by their vocation, migratory. The Andoni fished in the numerous rivers and creeks around them and often extended their activities to the major creeks around Bonny, Kalabari and Okrika. They also practised deep sea fishing in the Atlantic. Similarly, the Okrika were also active not only in their home grounds but also in Bonny, Andoni and Kalabari creeks up to and including the Efik fishing grounds. The people of Bonny not only claimed the creeks around their town as their home grounds, they also extended their fishing activities into Kalabari creeks while retaining a strong tradition of open sea fishing in the Atlantic. The Nembe people, however, by their geographical position were restricted in their fishing activities to the Kalabari creeks and other neighbouring branches of the Niger Delta.⁷¹

The competition for fishing grounds in the creeks and rivers of the Eastern Niger Delta among the various Ijo Communities therein has a long history dating back to the pre-colonial period. Each community claimed well-defined areas of the creeks and rivers as their exclusive fishing grounds, curing sites and markets. Disagreements over boundaries often led to violent open clashes and even war.⁷² And the colonial government inherited this legacy and for a long time saw it only in terms of inter-community clashes

rather than as a struggle for the control of an economic resource that was becoming more scarce each succeeding decade of the colonial period.

The most serious of these incidents occurred between Kalabari and Okrika. A protracted clash between the two communities broke out between 1912 and 1915 on fishing rights and settlements on the banks of the New Calabar River. Many Kalabari lost their lives. The Okrika people were considered by the colonial authorities as the aggressors and the Commissioner Owerri Province regarded their action as "a deliberately organised defiance of the law by a whole community".⁷³ Accordingly, he recommended the imposition of a heavy penalty upon them. In his letter to the Commissioner, Owerri Province, on 24th December, 1914, P. Amaury Talbot the District Officer (D.O.), Degema, stated that the Okrikans admitted landing and erecting houses on the banks of the New Calabar River.⁷⁴ Indeed, the situation here appeared to have provided a contrast to what obtained in the Yoruba fishing areas of Western Nigeria where all the fishermen got on well in spite of difference in 'racial customs'. For instance, each Ilaje fisherman paid the local Yoruba Chief in the Apese area of Lagos some money for the right to squat and build a house in course of his fishing expeditions.⁷⁵

The misunderstanding over the payment of rent on the banks of the New Calabar River brought recurrent quarrels. However, peace was eventually restored on 9th March, 1915 when Mr Talbot held a meeting with chiefs from both communities. The D.O. was impressed that "at the end of the meeting,

Chief Daniel Kalio shook hands with some of the principal New Calabar chiefs - an action unprecedented for several years and one which would have been thought incredible a month or two ago".⁷⁶ But civil action by the Kalabari against Okrika in 1928 over fishing rights in the creeks⁷⁷ showed that the matter was not quite ended. There was, in fact, a corresponding action by Okrika against Kalabari for a claim of declaration of title to some of the affected creeks,⁷⁸ and an Okrika man named Injem was found dead while fishing near the Kalabari area.⁷⁹ The Okrika people suspected the Kalabari and took serious reprisals. Therefore, the situation degenerated. In an attempt to resolve the matter, a mass meeting of both Okrika and Kalabari people was summoned.⁸⁰ Despite the efforts of Mr H.N. Harcourt and Mr W.F.H. Newington from Degema District Office, and the late Hon. Bowari Brown of Bonny former member of the Legislative Council, at the meeting, later events showed that the deliberations were not fruitful and the troubles continued unabated.

In March 1948, a fairly large Okrika fishing settlement at Pinarokiri in Kula zone of the Kalabari area was burnt by the Kalabari. The Kalabari trade with the hinterland had by that time seriously declined and they had resorted to collection of land rents on fishing settlements within their area. The Okrika had refused to pay on the ground that it was synonymous with the payment of a tribute to an overlord and backed this up with a resolution at a mass meeting on 18th June 1948. This led again to further open clashes.⁸¹

The intensity and regularity of clashes between Okrika and Kalabari were such that the Government of Eastern Nigeria set up the Robinson Commission of Inquiry on 10th November, 1949 to determine among others, the nature and extent of the rights of fishing possessed respectively by the Okrikans, the Kalabaris or any other person or tribe in the Degema and Ogoni Divisions of the Rivers Province. In one of its conclusions, the Commission stated that "fishing everywhere is free to all comers in the tidal waters".⁸² The report however pointed out that the problem faced by the fishermen of the area was how to mobilise the asset in the interest of all. It then recommended that fishing should be properly organised to enable everyone to derive some benefit.⁸³

This recommendation came right on the heels of an earlier promise in 1946 by Governor Arthur Richards that the colonial government would give all possible help to improve the fishing industry.⁸⁴ Indeed some efforts were undertaken to fulfil this promise but not in the Eastern Niger Delta. They were restricted largely to some of the fishing communities in and around Lagos.⁸⁵ And when the Eastern Nigerian Government acted finally in 1963, it sited the fishing industry at Umana, in Aba and not in the delta or riverain area.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the struggle for fishing rights in the creeks between the Okrika and Kalabari had burnt itself out. The last and final flicker occurred in 1950. On the nights of 4th and 5th August, Okrika fishermen at the Chokorocho fishing grounds were attacked by the Kalabari and many people were killed. The Gunning Commission set up on 29th January

1951 under the Collective Punishment Ordinance recommended that a fine of twenty thousand pounds be paid by the Kalabari as compensation to the Okrika.⁸⁷ The Government accepted the recommendation, and the fine was paid.

The decline in the fishing industry could be traced to the 1920s. The description of the Andoni fishing activities generally applied to other Ijo fishermen. "The fishing crew consisted of a canoe master with a set of pullah boys and a fireman. They often remained at the fishing hamlets i.e. the curing sites for a few weeks at the end of which the proceeds were shared". Generally, the average Andoni was "an unsophisticated fisherman... content with the bare necessities of life".⁸⁸

The decline in the quantity of catch gradually compelled even the capitalists among the fishermen to sell their fishing gears and resort to transporting trade goods and passengers from Port Harcourt to the riverain areas and back.⁸⁹ Those who did not possess the means of production sold their labour either to the fewer existing capitalist fishermen or in the growing labour market in construction industry in Port Harcourt in the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, quarrying for sand and gravels in the river basins and mangrove forests around Port Harcourt was eagerly prosecuted by the Ogoni, Okrika and other Ijo groups. They as diggers and carriers failed to obtain adequate compensation for their labour. The real beneficiaries were the contractors and the big businessmen who supplied the sand and gravel finally to the construction sites in Port Harcourt.⁹⁰

The plight of the fishing industry was made worse by the arrival of the Hausa cattle traders.⁹¹ The first Hausa settlers arrived in 1894 in Elele in Port Harcourt as elephant hunters. They later extended their activities to Calabar and the Cameroons. The next stage of Hausa influx into Eastern Nigeria was in the early part of 1900 when they came as soldiers in the British army especially during and after the Aro Expedition and the eventual conquest of the various Igbo polities. Thereafter, many arrived through Katsina-Ala, Ogoja, Abakaliki from where they dispersed to many parts of Eastern Nigeria.⁹²

Prominent among these Hausa traders were cattle traders. The rapid increase in population of Port Harcourt during the 1920s following the arrival of Hausa labour and other immigrants must have led to increased demand for beef within the township.⁹³ This was probably true of such other growing townships such as Enugu, Aba, Owerri, Umuahia which by the 1920s had begun to have sizeable Hausa communities. By the 1930s many of the Sarki of these communities depended in part on the tax they obtained on heads of cattle passing through their localities.⁹⁴

The main point is that beef began to supply an alternative source of protein to fish which formerly came from the Eastern Niger delta areas. Indeed, ⁱⁿ the competition except in the riverain areas themselves, it appeared that fish was fighting a losing battle. The decline in catch due to ecological reasons must have contrasted with an ever increasing number of cattle that probably came in annually into Eastern Nigeria from the 1920s. Although accurate figures of cattle slaughtered in

Port Harcourt every year from the 1920s to the 1940s are not available, it is safe to postulate that the number increased thus reducing from the competitiveness of fish in the local market. And this continued to affect adversely the economic fortunes of the local fishing industry and the plight of the majority of the peoples of Eastern Niger Delta.

In 1937, Shell D'Arcy (later known as Shell BP) began explorations and in 1956 its first successful oil well was sunk at Oloibiri.⁹⁵ By 1958, the first shipments of Nigeria's crude left Port Harcourt and in a few years became the country's most important export. According to G.K. Helleiner, "No longer can Nigeria be considered a purely peasant-based economy. The overall development pattern of the previous 60 years had been radically altered by the insertion of a wealthy mineral enclave into its midst".⁹⁶

The exploitation of oil has raised two important problems for the people. First is that of ecological pollution. It has proved to be more of an ecological disaster than a benefit for them.⁹⁷ The creeks and the sea which produced and ensured the fertility of fish have been polluted and the people have received no compensation. Indeed, it is important to note that even as far back as 1906 when the Petroleum Mining Ordinance was being drafted, there was no mention of compensating the people of the neighbourhood in case of ecological pollution during mining. The Ordinance merely specified penalties for breach.⁹⁸ In addition to the pollution of the sea was the flaring of gas as a result of which fish became scarce and thousands of local fishermen lost their livelihood. Nothing was done to improve their lot.

However, it was only about a quarter of a century after the first oil shipment from Port-Harcourt that the Federal Government of Nigeria made an enactment (the Allocation of Revenue Act 1981) providing a small percentage of Federation Account to offset the effects of ecological hazards. This was amended in 1984 by Decree No. 36 which provided 1% of the Federation Account for the amelioration of ecological problems and 1.5% of the revenue accruing to the Federation derived from minerals, for the development of mineral producing areas.⁹⁹

It is at this point that reference to Ex-President Shehu Shagari is inevitable. With a sense of satisfaction during his presentation of the 1982 Budget to the National Assembly he stated: "By embodying the principle of Derivation and direct compensation to the mineral producing localities for environmental disfigurations and massive inconveniences, we have proved to the world that we in Nigeria can truly be our brothers' keepers".¹⁰⁰ He then added, "for me personally, it will be a fulfilment of a long standing humane objective, and for all Nigerians, it will certainly be a victory for fair play and social justice".¹⁰¹ This alone demonstrated the injustice suffered by the people of the area for so long.

Secondly, it was the hope of the people that revenue accruing from the oil would be used to develop their area. During the colonial period, the argument for their economic neglect seemed to have been the absence of exploitable resource(s) for development. It was for this reason that even though the region was richly endowed with resources for

salt making, the colonial government refused to activate the industry even during the period of the Second World War when there was salt scarcity in the country.¹⁰² From 1958, that argument was no longer tenable. Yet Nigerian politics before 1967 was dominated by the ethnic majorities. In Eastern Nigeria, economic and political polarisation between the dominant group and the other ethnic minorities came also to mean that productive activity and income also had to concentrate in the dominant area. Consequently, the ethnic dominant area became economically dynamic while the minority area was merely peripheral and essentially underdeveloped. The ethnic minorities tended to unite, as it were, "by feelings of hostility to the Ibo-speaking majority".¹⁰³ The prevailing socio-economic and political forces at work led to the demand by the people for the creation of states. And indeed, no visible evidence of development occurred in the Eastern Niger Delta until the creation of the Rivers State in 1967 and its full actualisation in 1970.

FOOTNOTES

1. Udo, R.K. 'Environment and People of Nigeria: A geographical introduction to the History of Nigeria' in Ikime, O. (ed) Groundwork of Nigerian History, pp. 7 and 8.
2. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 19.
3. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja... p. 11.
4. Hutchinson, T.J. Impressions of West Africa, p. 111.
5. Cook, A.N. British Enterprise in Nigeria, p. 9.
6. Ngeri, Rowlands (Chief) Interviewed in Okrika on 7th June, 1986.
7. Ikime, O. The Fall of Nigeria..., p. 131.
8. See chapter 1 p. 1.
9. F.O. 403/31 No. 17. Remarks by Hewett dated 29th January, 1884.
10. F.O. 403/31 Inclosure 2 in No. 73. Consul Livingstone to the King of Bonny dated 15th July, 1873.
11. F.O. 403/18 No. 8. King Jaja to Earl Granville dated 28th July, 1881.
12. See Article VI of treaty in Appendix 3.
13. CALPROF 2/1/42. Letter from Foreign Office to Consul Hewett dated 9th January, 1885.
14. NAI CALPROF 2/2 Letter from Ag. Consul Johnston to Lord Stanley dated 11th September, 1887.
15. NAI CALPROF 2/2 Letter from Johnston to Lord Stanley dated 1st August, 1887.
16. See Chapter 2,
17. See Chapter 2,
18. Ikime, O. 'British Conquest and Nigerian reaction', paper presented at the workshop on the Teaching of Nigerian History from a national perspective, organised by the Historical Society of Nigeria at the University of Lagos Lagos, from 2-8 February, 1986.
19. Ikime, O. The Fall of Nigeria..., p. 136.
20. F.O. 2/101 No. 5. Consul Ralph Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.

21. Ibid.
22. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
23. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeria in Transition... p. 99.
24. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. 24th June, 1896.
25. Ibid.
26. A.S. Abam, "Political History of Okrika..." op. cit.
27. Ofonagoro, W.I. Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria: 1881-1929. New York, 1979, p. 161.
28. C.O. 583/5 Report on acquisition of new port forwarded by Governor Lugard to the Right Honourable Lewis Harcourt. Letter dated 25th September, 1913.
29. C.O. 583/10 Letter from Lugard to Lewis Harcourt dated 27th August, 1913.
30. C.O. 583/4 Letter from Lugard to Lewis Harcourt dated 18th August, 1913.
31. Anyanwu, C.N. 'The Growth of Port Harcourt, 1912-1960 in Ogionwo (ed) The City of Port Harcourt, Ibadan, 1979 p. 22.
32. Chief Ngeri Rowlands of Okrika interviewed on 7th June 1986.
33. Nnoli, O. Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, Enugu, 1980, p. 39.
34. Tamuno, T.N. "Patriotism and Statism in the Rivers State Nigeria", African Affairs, vol. 71, No. 284, July 1972, p. 276.
35. NAE. OW. 282/1925 RIVPROF 8/13/189
36. NAE. OW. 329/29 RIVPROF 8/17/268
37. NAE. CER/28 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the working of Port Harcourt Town Council, 1955.
38. They were G.C. Nonyelu, V.K. Onyeri, J.O. Umolu and A.C. Nwapa. Mr Nwapa was in fact a Councillor in Port Harcourt but resigned when he won the elections and was appointed a Minister in the Central Government in Lagos. NAE CER/28 op. cit., para. 13.
39. NAI CE/W3C. Minorities Commission, Minutes of Evidence Port Harcourt 18th, 20th and 21st January, 1958.
40. Tamuno, T.N. "Patriotism and Statism in the Rivers State, Nigeria" op. cit.
41. Nwabara, S.N. Iboland: A Century of Contact with Britain 1860-1960 London 1977 pp. 231-232.

42. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People, Port Harcourt, 1982, p.100. Also A.S. Abam "A Political History of Okrika from the 18th Century to 1960", op. cit.
43. Nnoli, O. Ethnic Politics in Nigeria. Enugu, 1978 p.135.
44. Ibid. p. 235.
45. Ibid. p. 229.
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47. NAE. C. 805/16, CALPROF 5/6/339. Native Traders at Opobo Shipping facilities.
48. NAE. C. 679/16. CALPROF 5/6/291. Opobo Division. Report for June, Quarter, 1916.
49. NAE. OW. 346/17. RIVPROF 8/5/453. Half Yearly Administrative and Political Reports on Owerri... Degema etc. Jan. to June, 1977.
50. NAE. C. 278/1918. CALPROF 5/8/229. Opobo Division Annual Report 1917.
51. Ibid.
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53. NAE. "D" C/644/1919 CALPROF 5/9/555
54. NAE. "E" C/644/1919 CALPROF 5/9/559
55. NAE. "H" C/644/1919 CALPROF 5/9/558
56. NAE. C. '663/21. CALPROF 5/11/574 Minutes of meeting on 24th February, 1921.
57. NAE. OW. 282/1925. RIVPROF 8/13/189. Port Harcourt - Handing over Notes. Capt. D.P.J. O'Connor to Mr J.M. Pollen.
58. Ibid.
59. NAE. OW. 419/1928. RIVPROF 8/16/335. African Traders Company Ltd. Lease of land at Okrika.
60. NAE. E. 3282/8 RIVPROF 3/2/51
61. NAE. E. 1834/10 RIVPROF 3/4/56
62. NAE. E. 1831/10 RIVPROF 3/4/56
63. NAE. OW. 89/26. RIVPROF 8/14/78. Governors visit to Owerri Province and Port Harcourt 1926-27.

64. NAE. C. 224/20 CALPROF 5/10/531
65. NAE. OW. 297/1925 RIVPROF 8/13/203.
66. NAE. C. 724/20 CALPROF 5/10/531.
67. Ibid.
68. Suit No. FSC 123/1957 Chief Samuel Ngoke and Ors Vs Chief S.I. Adoki and Ors and Chief Sampson Adoki and Ors. Vs Chief Michael Igwe and Ors.
69. NAE C. 696/1927 CALPROF 5/17/573. Opobo Native Administration Councils, formation of NAE C. 45/28 CALPROF 5/18/38 Annual Report on Opobo Division 1927. Richards, P.E.M. Ogoni Intelligence Report, 1933.
70. This paragraph and the next four are derived from my M.A. dissertation. See A.S. Abam, "A Political History of Okrika from the 17th Century to 1960", pp. 43-47.
71. Jeffreys, M.D.W. "Notes on Andoni Fishing" The Nigerian Field, Vol. 31, 3, 1966 pp. 133-135; A.S. Abam, "A Political History of Okrika..." p. 47. Interview, Chief H.J.R. Dappa, Biriye of Bonny, 10th June 1986.
72. For details of some of these incidents, see A.S. Abam, "A Political History of Okrika...", pp. 68-89.
73. NAE. OW. 821/14. RIVPROF 8/2/586 Okrika - New Calabar Dispute 1914.
74. Ibid.
75. NAE. MISF. 39 Report of Fisheries Investigations 1942-48. Legislative Council Sessional Paper No. 23 of 1948, p. 10.
76. NAE. OW. 821/14 RIVPROF 8/2/586. Okrika - New Calabar Dispute 1914.
77. NAE. OW. 193/1928 RIVPROF 8/16/171 Chief Dick Harry Braid representing New Calabar Versus Chief Daniel Kalio representing Okrika.
78. NAE. OW. 540/1928. RIVPROF 8/16/397 Chief Adoke of Okrika vs Chief Harry Braid of New Calabar.
79. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
80. NAE CER/15 Report of the Robinson Commission into the Okrika - Kalabari Dispute. p. 17. para. 48.
81. NAE CER/15 Report of the Robinson Commission... p. 18 para 51.

82. Ibid.
83. Ibid. p. 35. para. 162.
84. NAE. OW. 441/1921 Vol. VI. RIVPROF 8/17/340. His Excellency the Governor: Visit to Owerri Province May, 1946.
85. NAE MISF 39 Report of Fisheries Investigations 1942-48, op. cit.
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87. Report of the Gunning Commission of Inquiry, Nigeria Gazette No. 19 Vol. 38 of 12th April, 1951, p. 324 para 30.
88. NAE C. 429/21 CALPROF 5/11/359 Annual Report Opobo District, 1920.
89. For example, this was what happened to the Andoni from 1929 onwards. See NAE C. 696/1927 CALPROF 5/17/573. Opobo Native Administrative Councils - Formation of.
90. Interview Chief S.G. Nonju, Okrika 7th June 1986.
91. The term Hausa was a collective word for various ethnic groups from Northern Nigeria namely the Tiv, Beriberi, Nupe, Fulani. It even included the Yoruba muslims.
92. C.M. Sorgwe, "The Hausa People in Elele Rivers State 1890-1970" Paper presented at the 31st Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ife, May 18-24, 1986; CALPROF 5/7/166 Hausa Settlement at Calabar and also E.B. Ikpe, "Hausa Diaspora in Eastern Nigeria 1894-1966" Unpublished paper.
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100. Approved Revenue, Recurrent and Capital Estimates of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1982 pp. XVI and XVII.
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102. For details, see CP 2626/1 CALPROF 10/1/19 Local Salt Industry 1939-1942.
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CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL MOBILITY AND CULTURE CHANGE

Colonialism in the Eastern Niger Delta was characterised not only by the imposition of alien rule and institutions, but also by Western acculturation or socialization. In all of these factors, the indigenous culture appeared to have been very much influenced by the foreign culture that was introduced. The disruption of the existing social systems was due to the basic element of paternalism¹ that could be identified in the execution of British colonial policy (or philosophy) in these as in other parts of Africa. In the system of administration, for instance, the traditions of the people formed the basis of the new regime. This, of course meant the simultaneous existence or admixture of foreign and indigenous cultures, on the assumption that the foreign would eventually displace the indigenous system.

The first noticeable impact was that in the course of their trade interactions with the Europeans, the delta people came to acquire all sorts of European names² (nick-names or proper names). Even indigenous names were given corrupted English versions. Examples of such names are Bamson (Abam), Yellow (Iyala), Cookey (Kuki), Pepple (Perekule), and Braid (Mbire). There were people too who answered the names of the commercial firms that traded with them, as for example Horsefall, Steward and Tobin (corrupted as Toby). In some cases, as Anene pointed out, ridiculous names were adopted.³ Among the names that still exist are colours of the rainbow in their proper form such as Brown, Yellow, Green and White

or as adjectives such as Black-Duke and Blue-Jack. That showed the extent to which acculturation took place. This was particularly compounded by the insistence of the European Christian Missionaries on western ways of life in different aspects including music, dancing, system of marriage and names. Christian converts or children taken to mission schools for admission were persuaded to answer English names and this compounded the array of names earlier mentioned. At school and during Baptism people were called names such as Christ, Jesus and God and even all the days of the week from Sunday down to Saturday. "The feeling then was that one had to identify with the European culture and names in order to be modern and accorded some social rank".⁴ It was a means of achieving social mobility.

On conversion too, a man had to be asked to marry one wife only and to regard himself and his wife as having formed a family. This issue of marrying one wife and the entire idea of marriage deserve separate consideration here. By the local tradition, marriage was never regarded as a contract uniting only the married couples, that is the man and the woman. It was essentially a means of adopting the woman into the family to which the man belonged, and this, with all its traditional implications of social life and religious rites.⁵ While the Christian church was ready to receive the co-wives of a polygamist for each of them technically speaking, had only one husband, their husband would not be received, being a polygamist.⁶ But the separation of the wives from the

religion of the husband was contrary to local tradition. The family was, by tradition, closely knit. But with Christianity, that firm grip became loose. Many traditionalists became hostile to Christianity for they saw in it a violent break with the historical continuity of their cherished tradition which was likely to produce disastrous results.

For moral reasons tradition was favourably disposed to polygamy and frowned at prostitution. Accordingly stiff penalties for even the violation of pre-marriage chastity were imposed. For that reason among others, polygamy came to be preferred to prostitution. Polygamy itself was permitted for economic, strategic, and even the social reason of status symbol. The jealousy and hostility that occasionally existed among the co-wives of a man notwithstanding, it was a way of enhancing the position of the War- Canoe House unit in its economic and other pursuits in the face of extreme rivalry from other Canoe Houses during the period of the trans-Atlantic trade and the control of markets.⁷

In earlier days in some parts of the Eastern Niger Delta, especially Okrika, Kalabari and Nembe, there existed mainly two types of marriages. One which is the Ya type of marriage was contracted mainly by spouses from within the same War Canoe House. "It was well nigh impracticable for a man from one such House to marry a girl from another House under this system".⁸ But this later changed and marriage came to be both exogamous and endogamous in the sense that one could marry from outside his descent group (War Canoe House) or within the same descent group. The other type of marriage is known as Igwa. While

tradition permitted the remarriage of Ya widows but only through the Igwa System, an Igwa widow could be remarried through either another Igwa System or even by a Ya marriage.⁹

There is need to explain further here these two methods of marriage. The Ya type of marriage was one which did not permit of divorce, or made the divorce process rather cumbersome. A woman who was married under the Ya rite automatically became a lifelong member of the family of the husband. Later separation or even death of the husband did not change the position. If on separation or when the husband died the wife married another man, all children born through the new marriage would also be considered as belonging to the Ya husband's family. There is, therefore, the customary practice of awarding the guardianship of any child born outside such a marriage to the family to which his mother was married by Ya rather than to the mother's family by birth or any other.¹⁰ This rule or practice has been left undisturbed in the case of Oruboroma Charlie Amarchree versus Inko Taria (Alias Goodhead) in 1923 in which there was an application for an order for a writ of habeas corpus in respect of a female child by name Olu born by a woman named Sodokwa who was previously married under the Ya system. The court declined to disturb the existing arrangement in accordance with the tradition.¹¹

The other type of marriage known as Igwa was flexible in its processes and permitted easy divorce.¹² It also allowed descent and inheritance on matrilineal basis in which a man's heir-at-law had to be his brother's (or sister's son) instead of his own son. By this marriage the father's family could not have any claim on the children even if they lived within that

household.¹³ Even the father would have to concede his offspring to the wife's lineage. Thus, women married under Igwa rites worked harder than their Ya counterparts in the interest of the welfare of the children because of the lukewarm attitude often shown by their husbands who suffered under the psychological impact of such marriage.

It may be extremely difficult to understand the basis of such a system which appears now to run counter to the modern practice in which a son would be entitled to the property of his father who died without making a will. But it served its purpose at the time in the sense that it made men work harder in order to be economically viable. Economic viability enabled men marry in the Ya tradition and retain their children. With the modern methods of socialisation and legitimacy of children, Ya traditional marriage no longer constitutes an incentive for young men to work harder.

Viewed against the background of modern society, the Igwa marriage contains seeds of disunity and tends to reduce the offspring to the position of illegitimacy. Therefore its persistence in the modern period becomes questionable because a society that places responsibility on parents for the upbringing of their offsprings, should also give rights to these parents over the offsprings since rights and responsibilities go together. However, in the traditional system, the Ya form of marriage provided an attractive and more honourable alternative which ensured pacific order in society through its peculiar family discipline which imposed high obligations on individuals. By making marriage cheaper and removing the distinctions in the socialisation and legitimization of children, and by introducing

easy divorce procedure, the modern system appears to have propped many social ills. It is, of course, debatable to suggest as some anthropologists have done that "in non-western societies where bride-prices are relatively high marriages tend to be stable, but when bride-prices are lower, divorce is common".¹⁴ The point to be stressed here is that a child's lineage was determined in the traditional system by the nature of the marriage of the parents, divorce or no divorce. This ensured family discipline. The modern system appears to have destroyed that aspect with adverse social consequences.

It will be observed that the rights of a father/husband under the modern system tally with those of the traditional Ya marriage in the Eastern Niger Delta to the extent that it based descent and inheritance patrilineally and enabled a son to be entitled to his father's property. However, such rights appeared to have been purchased under the traditional system since the Ya type of marriage was generally associated with big bride price not within the reach of the poor in the society. If the man and the woman were from different War-Canoe Houses, the bride price was in fact bigger.¹⁵ Since Ya marriage served as a token of economic standing or status symbol, young men who desired it aspired higher and reached greater economic heights. In this way it helped to promote hard work within the community in that it served as an incentive for labour on the part of men who might not have easily responded to non-material incentives.

While the historian is not concerned with sociological details of certain phenomena, such details often furnish prime illustrations of a general historical interest. For instance,

the traditional distinctions in the forms of marriage were predicated by economic motives for the retention of offsprings (particularly males) who, as earlier stated, would serve as citizen-soldiers in the War-Canoe House and enhance the strength of the warc canoe in its economic rivalry with others. In Nembe Brass for example, "because size, importance, and strength of the House had to be kept up, its women were not to marry into another House; its men were encouraged to marry by big dowry by marrying outside the clan".¹⁶

Some social anthropologists tend to suggest that the nature of the delta society in lacking some of the economic and political advantage open to other societies may be responsible for the existence of the matrilineal lineage system (and therefore the Igwa marriage).¹⁷ Thus, in Okrika the Ya type of marriage was often contracted endogamously in which the bride price might not be high. If exogamous, it would be high or on the basis of exchange of spouses between two War-Canoe Houses, or the third offspring was returned to the woman's family in replacement for her. Of course, "if a girl was pawned to a man from another House, and the parents of the girl were unable to redeem her till she came of age, then the girl (would be) married into the family to which she was pawned".¹⁸

Since the beginning of the colonial period the christian religion sought to replace the traditional mode of marriage with its own. In addition, there was introduced the form of marriage under the ordinance. Therefore, there came to exist in the Eastern Niger Delta different types of marriages. The new ones have come to stay and the old ones have resisted change. It

now depended on the option or economic standing of the contracting parties, particularly the man. The present situation is rather an unusual mix of traditional, christian and statutory modes disturbingly unregulated or streamlined. Marriage under the christian mode and that under the ordinance are deemed to be on the same status as the Ya or big bride-price mode of marriage although some traditionalists who are ignorant of the legal and statutory aspects still express sentiments as if these modes are inferior to the traditional Ya marriage.¹⁹ To them, marriage in the christian and statutory modes bears little resemblance to its traditional historic signification. This shows therefore that the colonial repudiation of aspects of traditional marriage through the provision of a statutory base and a christian mode, produced culture shock. When such traditional activities are robbed of their symbolic meaning, there appears a loss of motivation which in turn results in the disorganization of the society.

In the main, however, the traditional marriage system has not completely changed even though the socio-economic factors that gave vent to War-Canoe House rivalry of the pre-modern society have changed. In spite of the additional clerical and secular modes, even now "each lineage is organised on the basis of a dual system of marriage, whereby a high-bride wealth union (Ya) ties its offspring to the father's group, and a low-bride wealth union ties them to the mother's group".²⁰ In such circumstance, a man could trace his descent from the founder of his lineage "through a line of mixed male and female links - a line whose exact composition depends on the marriage history of his fore-bears".²¹

Quite often, in tracing the lineage back to the remote and revered ancestor, not all the intervening generations are recalled with accuracy. Because of the history and tradition in which membership of a War-Canoe House is depicted at times in myth and fiduciary relationships, kinship is often symbolic rather than actual. G.I. Jones has therefore felt that it was "wiser to refer to the corporate kin groups of the delta as houses rather than lineages"²² on the grounds that their composition is much more heterogenous and relationships often fictive. A slave boy who became assimilated through the putative mother or father could rise to the position of Chief (House head) and also trace his lineage through such putative parent. It was in this connection that Oko Epelle a contemporary of Jaja of Opobo, referred to his master as his father. In his statement which Elizabeth Isichei quoted in her book, he asserted: "when I first came to this country from the interior as a slave boy to Bonny, Jaja alias Annie Pepple together with myself were little boys. My master or Father was a real free born in this country".²³

In the traditional Eastern Delta society people often claimed descent from a particular lineage for purposes of legitimacy and inheritance. Since the mode of marriage is so much linked up with it, there has been in the area a clash between tradition and the modern system. But it has to be mentioned that tradition appears to retain its strong hold on the greater segment of life despite the rise of competing systems of marriage. It is in the light of this that Chief Awoala of Okrika made the important suggestion that "Igwa

should as much as possible be discouraged because the attendant incidents cannot be easily justified in modern living. Any child by Igwa does not belong customarily to the father, and the Igwa wife is denied of real security, with very limited claim of the husband on her. The reaction of such children and wives against the custom cannot be over-emphasised nowadays".²⁴ Indeed, since the historical setting in which Igwa marriage thrived, has disappeared, it is now like an old wine in new wine skin.

When the War-Canoe House was also a trading corporation, the Igwa marriage thrived and the offsprings were the responsibility of the wife's family. Circumstances have now changed and Igwa fathers are expected these days to be responsible for children but without laying legitimate claim over these children. Such is indeed not only a contradiction but tends to establish a barrier between a father and his offsprings with profound consequence on the psychology of family members particularly, and the ethos of the community in general. To that extent, Igwa has become a tradition that has obviously failed to stand the test of modern times.

It was usual for fathers to rely on their children (and extended family) to cushion them against life's misfortunes in later years, children being the major source of support in old age in the absence of social security. Such reliance was remote in Igwa tradition and hence fathers under the Igwa marriage neglected their children and abdicated responsibility for their upbringing. The problem was not merely social, it was intrinsically and inherently economic. In the changing socio-economic

environment however, fathers tend to take better care of their children notwithstanding the mode of marriage because neglect had often caused damage to the progress of many children. Such children themselves now remain with their fathers in spite of the mode of marriage. And the native courts have ruled that they were entitled to inherit the properties of their fathers.

Indeed, the case of Mr J. Opi has become an outstanding example. He was a literate son of his father and was out of Okrika at the time of his father's death. On coming back, his father's relations, in accordance with the customary laws of inheritance, refused him access to his father's property, he being an off-spring of an Igwa marriage. In reaction, Mr Opi took the matter before the Chiefs for arbitration. No less a person than the late Chief Sampson Igobo Adoki himself who gave evidence as a witness of the defendants, was in support of the customary law.

However, Mr Opi was able to prove that his father during his life time had revolted against the tradition by training him (Opi) at school. It was usual for fathers not to train their children by Igwa wives since such children customarily belonged to their mothers' families. Besides, Mr Opi too has always identified himself with his father's family rather than going to the mother's family as tradition required. Considering the fact that both father and son sufficiently demonstrated acts of fidelity to each other, it was construed that both had no wish to alienate each other. Accordingly, the chiefs who were arbitrating, gave unanimous judgement in favour of the plaintiff

that he was entitled to inherit his father's property.²⁵ "Thus, children born under the Igwa system can now inherit their fathers' properties in as much as they do not desert their fathers' for their mothers' families".²⁶ Chief Awoala too made the observation that "the rule is not as stringent these days as it was before regarding Igwa sons..."²⁷

This native court ruling has contributed more significantly to social mobility among the people of Okrika, at least, than even the introduction of the christian and secular modes of marriage. The fact, however, that native court ruling is often localised to the particular community makes its applicability to all parts of the Eastern Niger Delta tenuous and perhaps impossible. That is why the Igwa form of marriage still persists in some other parts of the Eastern Niger Delta.

In fact, in an age when some nations are proclaiming that all children, whether or not they are born out of wedlock, have the same rights,²⁸ it will be sheer insensitivity to stick to an outmoded customary practice which has no other justification in the modern times; ~~than~~ reverence for the practices of ancestors. The culture change in this direction has become quite visible. The perpetuation of the Igwa tradition is now increasingly being regarded as a blot on human conscience. Accordingly, it is being modified or in fact discouraged as Chief Awoala suggested.²⁹

As the custodians and interpreters of local traditions with capacity for critical judgement, the chiefs are constantly being reminded not to cling conservatively "to some customs which are retrogressive in modern-day society. Instead, they

should midwife their various communities weaning and purging their people of those cultural traits that run counter to the demands of civilised living".³⁰ The progressive trend under customary law in the country in general in this regard may at this point be noteworthy. "A child, for instance", writes C.O. Okonkwo "may be regarded as legitimate even though the parents are not married".³¹ These days, legitimization of an otherwise illegitimate child could be by acts of acknowledgement.³²

Therefore, the talks of abolishing Igwa tradition are no longer to be regarded as mere dreams of fancy. The irreducible facts of the daily experiences of modern life are surely, though slowly, showing how what previously appeared to be flights of fancy would possibly be brought down to earth. It is only hoped that having identified the malady through modern influence, the remedy should not be left only to aggrieved individuals who have suffered its moral and psychological trauma. It should also be intensified by the chiefs and well-meaning individuals.

The culture conflict to which the people of the Eastern Niger Delta have now been exposed, resulted from the process of western education which came to create a distance between the African and his traditions and systems of reference. Generally, the intervention of the colonial powers has had many ramifications and its effects have been various. So also were its directions. Hitherto, education of children in dancing, singing, religion, art, fishing and so on, was the responsibility of the family. The establishment of schools by the missionary

somehow transferred the educative function from parents or families to the missions or colonial government. The disintegration of this age-old basis of the family created alarm in no small measure and many families initially desisted from sending their beloved ones to formal schools. Consul Ralph Moor himself had to take two boys from Okrika in 1896 to place them at school in Calabar.³³

The irony however was that earlier, the Niger Delta was not in fact considered by Europeans for their so-called 'civilising' mission. Their interest was in the Niger and its hinterland, and not the delta. As Prof. G.O.N. Tasie observed, "when christian missionary activity resumed in the } Niger Delta in the mid-nineteenth century, it was by accident the product of the political, social and economic circumstances which existed"³⁴ there at the time. The Amanyabo of Bonny, King William Dappa Pepple who went to England as an exile on account of political turmoil in his city-state, had on coming back to his throne applied for missionary teachers to come and enlighten his people and to teach the young ones the English language.

King William Pepple recruited a Chaplain, school master, school mistress, doctor, nurse, carpenter and gardener purely for the purposes of development.³⁵ He was no doubt politically motivated in that he wished through that medium "to repair his personal prestige with his disenchanted subjects whose loyalty and love he had lost".³⁶ Besides, he also wanted to reactivate the economic activities then on the decline, since trade and the Bible went together closely followed by the flag. But it appeared that the Amanyabo did not consult the Bonny Chiefs

and people. Even if they would agree to the improvement in secular education through clerical agencies, it would in fact not not be easy to replace the traditional religion there in Bonny.

Similarly, in Okrika the formal establishment of the Christian Mission was through local initiative. Since 1878, Chief Atorudibo an established trader, had started Christian worship in Okrika with his household.³⁷ Subsequently, the Amayanabo and chiefs invited Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther to establish the Christian Mission³⁸ because they had thought that through it commerce would also be enhanced. Since the early missionaries to West Africa had the dual purpose of promoting 'legitimate trade' and to convert people to their religion, the Okrika people's request coincided with one of the missionary objectives.

Besides, the Amayanabo of Okrika King Ibanichuka (Ado VI) had on 27th August, 1884 told Consul Hewett who went there to see him, that he (King Ibanichuka) would wish the missionaries to teach the people of Okrika.³⁹ Yet, unlike King Dappa Pepple of Bonny who had been converted while on exile in England and baptized there with the name William on 1st August, 1856, King Ibanichuka of Okrika, in spite of the 1881 Missionary agreement he and his chiefs concluded with Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther to establish a mission church, did not change his traditional religion. Even when invited to the church by the missionaries, he politely declined by stating that he would do so in future when matters had taken proper shape.⁴⁰ But his attitude was mere traditional piety reflecting itself through sincere courtesies and diplomatic answers.

The establishment of churches in different parts of the Eastern Niger Delta and the opening of schools went pari passu in consummation of the whole system of acculturation of Africans. One of the earliest known schools in the area was the Ogugumanga school⁴¹ established about 1890 (and renamed Bonny government school in 1905) as a joint venture between the government, commercial firms and the chiefs of Bonny, Opobo, Kalabari and Okrika.⁴² The commercial firms, particularly, Messrs Miller Brothers and the African Association supported it generously. This, should not be surprising. As Immanuel Wallerstein observed, "just as maintaining order was in the self interest of the colonial power so too was the extension of modern educational facilities to Africa; it was not a gratuitous gift of benevolent Europe. A modern economy, however limited in scope, needs men to run it... It needs not any men but trained men. The colonial government needed such men; so did the private companies; so did the missions, the schools and the hospitals".⁴³

Other schools opened by the government included the one at Opobo on 4th July, 1905 and another at Akassa on 1st September, 1905.⁴⁴ Apart from these schools, children from the area were occasionally taken to other areas by Consuls for the purpose of educating them.⁴⁵ Some of the wealthy rulers in fact sent few of their children abroad for formal education. Missionary schools appeared to have been opened even much earlier than those of the government.⁴⁶ Prof. J.F.A. Ajayi has explained how "sometimes the sabbath schools opened before the Vernacular Literature was ready".⁴⁷

Through the process of education the personality and culture of the people were penetrated. Having educated the African, he became a useful tool for the dissemination of colonial policies and principles. Because the colonisers had not enough manpower to administer in schools, offices, courts, commercial houses and public works, the establishment of schools was politically and economically expedient. In order to increase the semi-skilled labour force and to create cultural and political atmosphere favourable to the maintenance of the colonial system it became inevitable for the colonisers to train Africans. In this case, it is important to note the role of people of the Eastern Niger Delta in the evolution of the Indirect Rule system in Eastern Nigeria where they served as clerks and interpreters up to the 1920s.

In the matter of post-primary education, however, the colonial administration showed little interest in the Eastern Niger Delta. It was not until 1940 that the Okrika Grammar School was established⁴⁸ by the C.M.S. mission and it became the first college ever to be opened in the area. In other words, of the 75 years of colonialism there was no secondary school in the area until 20 years before the demise of the colonial regime. That was precisely half a century after the establishment of the first Primary School, Ogugumanga, earlier mentioned.

The education itself was designed to inculcate basic literacy in aspects of Western Culture. The area of penetration was religion. It is stating the obvious to mention the close relation between religion and society. There is hardly any religion which is not based in some degree upon the social needs

and aspiration of the particular community. On the surface, one might think of religion as being concerned with the supernatural. Of course, it usually is; but it also predicates other aspects of social and political life, being an aspect of the cultural superstructure of society.

The people of the Niger Delta worshipped different types of deities. The Okrikans for instance have a hierarchy of deities and totem starting from Fenibeso as the war deity⁴⁹ to Amakiri as the Earth goddess. There are also the Ogonyo, Ogbolodumo, Agbaba (Snake) totem, and the Okombulo (corrupted from Akanbulo i.e. Mangrove Crab) totem. The Kalabari have Akaso, Adum, Angulama Nomu Oru and others. Each city state in the Niger Delta has its peculiar deities.⁵⁰ There was no common religion for the people of the entire Eastern Niger Delta. Within each city-state however, religious beliefs were associated with moral discipline which provided concepts for social justice. There were dogmas that were beyond the test of rationality but which were held by the adherents to be supreme.

The traditional religious beliefs or what may be regarded as fetish taboos, often took the place of moral laws that served as restraints to curb the excesses of the unruly and the deviant. They were intricately bound up with attitudes and behaviour towards social transgressions and they therefore acted as strong deterrent to crime and immorality. The Amakiri (Land or Earth goddess) forbids the violation of premarital chastity of young maidens. Such young girls can be free to act only after the performance of the Iria ceremony.⁵¹ It was believed that

Amakiri would kill all offsprings of any defaulter unless appeased through prescribed methods. Similarly, infidelity on the part of married women who engaged in extra-marital activities was also a taboo. And unless the Amakiri deity was publicly appeased through confessions by mentioning the names of the defaulter's lovers, such defaulter would die with pregnancy at the time of delivery.

Some women, rather than suffer the shame of infidelity when it was discovered, committed suicide. P.A. Talbot cited the case of the wife of Thomas Don Pedro by name Kalie, who was seduced by one Ogoru in Kalabari.⁵² He also cited the case of Dibieriari Amakiri (wife of late John Amakiri) in Kalabari Native Court on 18th March, 1914 in which she (Dibieriari) narrated how she had confessed and her husband was begged to revoke the traditional deity he had invoked by pouring gin (or rum) on the ground when he heard of her alleged adultery. Thereafter she was stated to have safely given birth to a child.⁵³

It was also taboo to steal another person's property, especially, that which was placed in the care of Ogo lodumo or Ogonyo. The sign or symbol of the Ogo lodumo was a twisted or knotty stem of mangrove tree whereas Ogonyo was V-shaped stem of a mangrove tree. When such a piece of twisted or V-shaped stem was placed on any article even in a public place or forest, the fear of the spirit that was believed to dwell in the fetish would deter the passer-by from stealing that article or material. The fear arose from the belief that traditional deities adjudged no mercy to anyone that scorned them. As F.D. Walker pointed out: "destroy the fear of that spirit and you remove the moral

restraint that it exercises".⁵⁴ The moral restraint on the part of individuals generally in Africa due to the fear of fetish was such that if one inadvertently abandoned one's article in any place and returned after a few days to that spot, one would more than likely, recover the property intact.

Indeed if the traditional barometer which monitored public probity as well as probity in private life was fetish, that was because fetishness provided the moral and ethical fibres with which the votaries of indigenous religion resisted evil. And as Prof. O.K. Ogan pointed out, "a creed, a religion, a way of life that seeks to involve a people effectively must speak to them in the language and even the idiom that they understand".⁵⁵ Therefore, if fear of the fetish was the behavioural pattern in the Eastern Niger Delta, the aim was definitely to establish a modicum of conduct not merely for the regulation of that society but also to ensure its continuity. Religion as an important aspect of their culture served, using Dr. Ekpo Eyo's words, as the "medium through which all purposes are articulated".⁵⁶

Western education through the establishment of christian churches, health, sanitation services and the promotion of formal education in schools changed some aspects of the life of the people. However, the strong rural element in the delta society strengthened the forces of conservatism and made it difficult for christianity to penetrate, coming hard as it did on the heels of colonialism. Religion and politics in these areas were one and indivisible system. Thus, despite the economic and political changes, the "centuries-old beliefs held their own against new ideas".⁵⁷ In effect colonialism

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at that point in time, was more evident on the material aspects of delta life than on the ideological plane. Yet traditional rites and customs lost most of their living content. Contact with colonialism has done so much to deprive them of their original functions. As such contact grew closer, so the traditional communities increasingly underwent processes of greater alienation in the sense that it became more and more uncertain of the conduct they should adopt - whether traditional or the alien.

Critically examined however, the chief difference between traditional religious beliefs in the Niger Delta and christianity, was not so much the question of aims since in a way, both tried to make society moral, but on the question of means. In spite of the initial difficulties encountered, the spread of christianity and western education in general, later transformed the Eastern Niger Delta society in many ways. Operating on the principle of one foundation with Jesus Christ as its head, the church became the first associational group in the area to be independent of the various ascriptive communities, both ethnic and territorial. Whether in Bonny, Okrika, Kalabari or Nembe, in organising christian activities the whole body of christians, lay as well as clerical, consolidated themselves in one christian church to which they all belonged.

The Diocese of the Niger became the Semi-independent Delta Pastorate mission under the episcopacy of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. Bishop Johnson too was in later years, in episcopal charge. Apart from the christian religious group forming an association wider in geographical spread than any ever known before that time, was the fact that the colonial era also changed

the situation by transforming the Eastern Niger Delta Communities into one political society which people knew as a protectorate. Yet people failed to identify themselves in terms of residence; and relationship never became territorial. Rather it remained mainly by descent.

Nonetheless, the establishment of Port Harcourt as a new town and the fact that it had many new modern facilities made some people leave their traditional homes eventually to live in that urban centre. Chiefs in fact sent people to go and work in Port Court as labourers.⁵⁸ By doing so, they acquired new skills and mixed with others with different social background, and this to some extent, made a few of them think of their problems on social or professional lines rather than tribal or ethnic lines. Although many labourers found it difficult and could not pay for accommodation,⁵⁹ some of them even felt too shy or proud to go back to their traditional ways of life in the villages. The cosmopolitan nature of Port Harcourt helped to loosen the traditional grips on individuals.

Secondly, christian missionaries set the local dialects on paper by preparing primers and translating portions of the Bible, hymn books and prayer books.⁶⁰ Although these translations related positively and creatively to the new educational trend, they nonetheless served as a response to the challenge of the introduction of the Igbo bible and hymn book initially used in these parts. Even as far back as 1875 some vocal Bonny chiefs protested against the teaching of christianity in Igbo tongue.⁶¹ With such books people were taught how to read and

write. In this way they learnt to keep records and documents. The availability of documents thenceforth helped to stabilise social and contractual relations. Availability of documents in general has made it unnecessary for the communities in this area to depend on the fallible memories of the parties to a given dispute.

By the combined influence of western ideas and christianity the existing social systems of the delta city-states were penetrated. Generally, the indigenous cultural practices were disturbed by the full sweep and complexity of the transitional changes. But it has to be conceded to the christian missionaries that the changes that occurred due to their activities were salutary.

One of the most startling events at the time was the abolition of some of the important aspects of culture. In 1867, for instance, the destruction of the Bonny national totem of Ikuba which was the monitor lizard, prepared the way for the removal of the famous Ikuba Shrine otherwise regarded as the Bonny national temple in 1888.⁶² There was also the demolition in 1896 of the famous Fenibeso Shrine that towered above all other buildings in Okrika.⁶³ In Nembe where a treaty with the British Consul in 1856 prohibited the killing of the sacred snakes they worshipped, christianity penetrated and King Ockia himself was on 30th November 1879 baptized, and he surrendered his idols.⁶⁴

Such events before this time were, to say the least, very unthinkable, having regard to the depth with which traditionalists took their religion. In Okrika Consul Macdonald had had occasion

to threaten the traditionalists if they attacked the christian converts there. It should not appear paradoxical that the people who invited the missionaries to establish in their home-land were the same people who proved very difficult in their acceptance of the christian religious tenets. It confirms the fact that some of them like the Okrika, invited the missionaries for economic rather than religious purposes.⁶⁵ Yet, it must be admitted that christianity too finally became an ethical point of reference in these parts.

Another aspect of the socio-cultural life of the Eastern Delta that experienced certain changes was the administration of justice. Before colonialism there was no clear distinction between criminal and civil offences excepting that civil litigations were undertaken between individuals. For some criminal offences in which individuals suffered either harm or personal hardship directly from the offence, personal prosecution also took place. But offences of a general nature were visited upon by the Sekeni society, a masked dancers group or spirit cult that dealt with criminal offenders and thereby ensured obedience to and conformity with the community's customs.

In the Delta tradition many offences were punishable on moral grounds. They were regarded as acts mala in se; but there were some too that were mala prohibita.⁶⁶ The main operative force in the traditional system was public condemnation (Ama ton-tonye)⁶⁷ supplemented with some specific legal rules. For instance, failure on the part of an adult to do what the society generally expected him to have done under

normal circumstances usually attracted punishment.⁶⁸ The penalty was on moral grounds and the ratio decidendi⁶⁹ to prevent a bad thing from happening. Tradition imposed a lot of moral responsibility on reasonable adults to avoid the profane and do what the society expected of them. A person who knew how to swim but failed to save a drowning man was usually condemned by the society for such action even where he had neither the mens rea nor the actus reus which were necessary to be proved in the modern Western Courts.⁷⁰

In the traditional Delta society, insult or abusive words constituted offence, in particular, if a junior insulted a senior. In such a case the ratio decidendi for the judgement would be that it is taboo to reverse the natural order. Thus, only practice considered unnatural was often visited upon with penalties. To them natural laws locally called 'so oloko' are important for they are jura immutabilia.⁷¹ To that extent, abusive language or aspersion directed at late ancestors was also frowned at particularly among the Kalabari and Okrika.⁷² In all these, the punishment was not usually very specific. It all depended on the corpus delicti⁷³ and the discretion of the judges.

In traditional Delta society, chiefs and ordinary citizens were not equal before the customary rules. Apart from the fact to which I.A. Akinjogbin drew attention that "respect for age was a basic consideration in personal relations" in most of Africa,⁷⁴ what a chief did and would not be punished for might be a serious offence if it were done by an ordinary citizen. To that extent there is the accepted norm among the Okrika

that 'Alabo ba pumbu furufuruke', literally meaning that 'the chief does no wrong'. The practice was such that the same respect was in fact extended to the friends and close associates of the chiefs as in the statement 'Alabo na nwengi bo alabo-e' meaning that 'the companion of a chief is a chief'.⁷⁵ Whenever ordinary citizens in the company of chiefs committed minor offences, they were usually diplomatically immuned from prosecution by virtue of their association with the chiefs and could not therefore be punished for the offence so committed.⁷⁶ Thus, from the traditional standpoint of criminal responsibility, all men were not equal before certain customary regulations.

It cannot however be denied that based on public morality, the customary practices kept the society together, and the society used those practices to preserve morality in the same way that it used it to preserve anything else that was essential to its existence. The traditional courts were the Custos Morium⁷⁷ of the people and it was they that superintended such offences that tended to be contrary to public morality. But unlike modern law tradition hardly relates to changing standards.

This situation has, gradually changed. Under the modern system of administration of justice everyone is equal before the law, including the chiefs and their associates. Besides, what is criminal is not necessarily what the public condemns on moral grounds but what the law prohibits with penal consequences. As Justice Fakayode explained, "In some cases what is immoral is also criminal but that is not to say that

morality and criminality are co-extensive".⁷⁸ In other words, the courts may not be bound by any opinion they form of the morality of an act but could see what it is that the law is aimed at punishing. Essentially, therefore, the criminal quality of an act (or omission) under the modern system of justice cannot be discerned by intuition; nor can it be discovered by reference to any standard but one that is whether the act is prohibited with penal consequences. To that extent, what may be an important feature of criminal law appears to be that nothing is a crime unless it is plainly forbidden by law. And therefore what is (generally speaking) not forbidden, is, in other words, permitted.⁷⁹

Before the colonial impact however, the customary practices that ruled were not quite precise but individuals learnt through socialization the things which they were allowed to do and those which were taboo. Being the shrine that was made of men of different generations, traditional law was dependent on the memory of chiefs and elders who were especially skilled in the traditions.⁸⁰ Perhaps one needs to mention that while the modern system in which act and intention have to be proved to secure conviction,⁸¹ under the traditional system in the Eastern Niger Delta, either the act or the intention or both could be sufficient to prove an accused guilty and so liable to punishment.⁸² In other words, their procedure is based on common sense rather than technicalities and special rules of evidence as in English or modern courts.⁸³

Since discretion otherwise described above as common sense was so much a feature of the traditional mode of dispensa-

tion of justice, the temptation to feel that it had elements of arbitrariness might be great. This was particularly so in view of the dictum of the 19th century jurist Prof. A.V. Dicey, about the rule of law which should be devoid of discretionary power (or arbitrariness), and the decisions should in a strict sense, be made in accordance with known principles of law. According to him "wherever there is discretion there is room for arbitrariness".⁸⁴ Dr Aguolu has however advanced an interesting argument concerning the close relationship between law and discretion (or common sense). "The written law" he explained, "cannot take account of all possible events which are likely to occur. Likewise, the law cannot be drafted in such a way, or with such an ingenuity that no lacuna can exist. Power to supply some ingredients so as to achieve the objective for which the law is made exists, it is this power that is called discretionary power".⁸⁵ In which case, both traditional and modern systems have elements of commonsense or discretion in order to obtain the ultimate objective which is the dispensation of justice, the difference being a matter of degree.

Thus, it may not be right to refer to the traditional system as being arbitrary, the more so because the elementary or basic needs of individual liberty were usually met under it.⁸⁶ Therefore, since individual liberty is the rock on which the principle of the Rule of Law is usually based, then the unmistakable point to be stressed is the fact that the traditional system also had liberal overtones. As earlier mentioned the city-states of the Eastern Niger Delta were no

dictatorship. Perhaps one should point out too that even in Britain where the constitution is largely unwritten, conventions based on common-sense and experience have been regarded as the flesh that clothes the dry bones of the law. Indeed, "the life of the law of the constitution has been not logic but experience. Sometimes it is not even experience nor yet expediency, but just history".⁸⁷ Thus the importance of Prof. Dicey's dictum should lie in its stance as a warning against arbitrary use of power rather than a rigid authority or constitutional (and legal) point of reference.

Another aspect of the administration of justice in this area that can be examined is the question of criminal responsibility. In the traditional system, criminal responsibility was some times not too clear. When a man committed any serious offence, his father, mother, brother or any other relation was usually held responsible if he was not found.⁸⁸ The entire family was vicariously liable, having been taken as a unit, in such cases as murder and stealing of cannon that were considered to be serious offences⁸⁹ and other crimes of violence. To some extent therefore, the family had judicial identity in customary practice. With colonialism and the introduction of the modern system of justice, the legal position of the individual came to be stressed in a way that diminished the role of the family as regards the legal responsibility of adults.

There were changes too in the judicial processes. Traditionally, those who sat in judgement could apply personal knowledge in arriving at decisions since the system was based on moral grounds and directed at conciliation.⁹⁰ With

colonialism, that procedure changed. The only facts that were to be taken into account in arriving at a decision would be those to be adduced in evidence.⁹¹ Secondly, litigants were not usually sworn at the beginning of the trial under the traditional system. It was only when the truth could not be ascertained and at the end of the trial after all evidences had been heard that Oath would be administered on the accused as a proof of his innocence. Witnesses were not usually given Oath. The Oath was in the name of any known deity with punitive powers. The Oath once taken was expected to influence the judgement because innocence was presumed to have been established unless the person died within a year of swearing.⁹²

With colonialism, the traditional system of swearing during adjudication changed. Unlike what obtained in the traditional system, Oath was given at the beginning (that is, before evidence)⁹³ not only to the accused or defendant but also to the plaintiff and all witnesses. "All oral evidence given in any proceeding" wrote T.A. Aguda "must be given on Oath or affirmation administered in accordance with the provisions of the Oaths Act".⁹⁴ But swearing in the traditional set-up was a final determinant of the nature of the judgement.⁹⁵ Its origin was the difficulty in resolving issues when there was conflicting evidence and so resort to supernatural means was considered to be the only solution. In 1938, this was stopped in the regular native courts.⁹⁶ In the courts, cases were to be decided on the basis of evidence. Contrary also to the traditional system in which ignorance of the law could be a mitigating factor, in the modern system it is indeed not an excuse.

One more point needs be mentioned and that is that under the traditional system particularly the Okrika, the summons fee paid by the plaintiff was usually returned to him if the defendant or accused was found guilty.⁹⁷ In addition, the guilty person would be penalised. Under the modern system, the courts do not refund summons fees. At best, costs are assessed and payment of damages ordered on the wrong doer.

Part of the traditional judicial process was trial of accused persons by ordeal. This was regarded as an incorruptible but implacable justice that knew no pity. It was mainly applied in cases in which guilt was ordinarily difficult to establish particularly, witchcraft.⁹⁸ It was essentially a system in which the aid of the traditional deities was always sought. An accused was usually obliged to swim across a river which could be crocodile infested. But he must first be dressed in a special way. He had to tie a fathom of injiri cloth (real India cloth popularly known as 'george') to his loin and would hold in his right hand an Abo Oboko (white cock).⁹⁹ The ordeal started after the pouring of libating ^{wine} with incantations being recited, calling on the deities particularly Abaji (the god of the sea) to intervene in the matter by means of their supernatural power, by a sign which would make manifest the guilt or innocence of the accused person.

If the accused swam across the river safely and with the white cock still alive, he would have vindicated his innocence. But if in the process he got drawned or he was killed by crocodile, then his guilt would have been established. If the

accused swam across the river but with the white cock dead, he would still be considered guilty and would then be stoned to death.¹⁰⁰ It was learnt that not many people survived the ordeal.¹⁰¹ Omoniyi Adewoye also mentioned that "as a means of arriving at the truth in judicial hearings, they (ordeals) sometimes took a heavy toll".¹⁰² That mode of trial was however changed having been regarded as uncivilised by the British Government.

All in all, there were changes too in the legal institutions - the traditional courts which served as the centre of gravity of the indigenous legal system. First, the British consuls appointed to protect British trade and guard British citizens and interests, constituted themselves into courts with jurisdiction over disputes involving British subjects. Then, the super-cargoes themselves established arbitral tribunals otherwise known as Courts of Equity which attempted to resolve trade disputes. There was finally the steady introduction of the British system of courts through various reorganisations.¹⁰³

The indigenous type of justice operated as a restraint upon individual excesses. The moral notions of the people of the Eastern Delta were a product of the tradition. What was usually considered was not merely what was moral but also what was socially expedient. However, if the type of justice differed from the modern form in substance and procedure, it must at least be admitted that it passed as a conventional practice which produced more happiness than individuals would have got without it. It was, nonetheless, a convention made

in mutual intercourse which provided against the infliction or suffering of harm, and which was adopted as a working process that respected the rights of people for the sake of obtaining forbearance from them. Thus, it both facilitated intercourse between individuals and ensured peace and order within the society at large. To the traditionalists, the colonial situation appeared to have brought about certain interpersonal relations that gave vent to an abnormally high crime rate in society in general.

Apparently, the primary objective of the traditional system of administration of justice was the welfare of the community and was therefore holistic in its methods to the extent of embracing religious ideals. Thus, the question which becomes pertinent based on modern notions of jurisprudence is whether what the indigenous rulers administered was law or customary practices that were merely governed and sanctioned on moral grounds. It is generally believed, however, that the basis of law is the same in all societies whether in traditional Africa or the Western World. When men act justly towards one another and thus experience both the doing and the suffering, it is more profitable that they should mutually agree neither to inflict injustice nor to suffer it. If a particular system appeared harsh, that would probably be because of prevailing conditions peculiar to it. Once the traditional institutions which made the system function effectively were reduced to ineffectiveness by the colonial situation, the traditions of the people came into serious danger of sinking into oblivion.

It is necessary to point out that the traditional legal system stressed stability rather than change, and therefore acted as a device for strengthening existing authorities and suppressing change. But the colonial legal system emphasised change in both substantive law, procedure and jurisprudence, applying discretion on grounds of natural justice and morality to build a new system. The courts, by changing the basis of traditional adjudication also served as instruments for the dismantling of traditional rule.

There are some other aspects of social life that must be mentioned. There are the traditional sports such as wrestling, swimming and running;¹⁰⁴ traditional dancing; the playing of various masquerades such as the Odum,¹⁰⁵ the Angalaya or Peri-Angala.¹⁰⁶ People were influenced by these traditional activities, and they placed high values on leisure, contentment and participation in festivals and ceremonies depending on the economic viability of the individuals concerned. A poor family that had a girl who might perform the Iria ceremony,¹⁰⁷ strove in its economic pursuits to enable their daughter's performance of the ceremony. Also, a family that would perform the tanda or peri-go burial rites of a heroic parent or war veteran, struggled in its economic endeavours, to enable them perform such rites. Thus, tradition and the shame of non-compliance, induced families to work harder.

Besides, women who participated in cultural dances and activities usually spent lots of money on such activities. To be able to do so, no economic venture that produced reward, was considered too lowly. To that extent therefore, tradition

and culture not only provided incentives for hard work but also encouraged the dignity of labour. With colonialism and its new urban setting, some of these traditions were weakened. Change easily became noticeable. Social life itself appeared to move towards individualisation rather than promoting the traditional economic support family members gave each other. It was the initial attempt to do so outside the traditional environment that brought about ethnicism or tribalism in the Nigerian body politic as mentioned earlier.

Since culture is the context within which people lived their daily lives, it is usually linked to organizations because relations between people and groups are guided by cultural rules. Thus, a change in a society's culture such as its mode of marriage, its religious belief system, its method of adjudication, and its patterns of social activities in general, may have far-reaching effects on its social organization. To the extent that culture governed the people's perception and style of living as well as their values which they expressed in norms, or the specific customary guides to their conduct, the introduction of christianity and western education together with the importation of the colonial legal system, resulted in a culture shock. Renate Zahar described such introduction or importation as "a concomitant of oppression".¹⁰⁸ But it has to be acknowledged that the intelligentsia who became deeply involved in latter national politics were a product of the new system brought about by these factors. Obviously, there are many aspects in which these social and cultural changes have come to mean progress.

Colonialism, christianity and education, therefore, contributed in many ways to social mobility and change in the Eastern Niger Delta community. They gradually dismantled the web of traditional mores and bond, and released the people to face new challenges created by the new socio-economic forces. It was undoubtedly a slow process that cannot be adequately quantified although there were sufficient important landmarks that attest to its development as discussed in this chapter. But it was the political aspect of the activities of the people that was first affected by the shock waves that produced the transitional changes. In view of its pattern and nature this is separately examined in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hetherington, P. British Paternalism and Africa 1920-1940 London, 1978 p. 61.
2. Please see the names of signatories to some of the Treaties of Protection in appendices 4, 2 and 3.
3. Anene, J.C. Southern Nigeria in Transition... p. 24.
4. Iwe, S.S. Christianity, Culture and Colonialism in Africa, Port Harcourt, not dated, p. 202.
5. Nonju, S.G. interviewed on 7th June, 1986. Chief Nonju aged about 75, in his days as a boy lived with the late Bishop Dimeari when he was the Paster in charge of Okrika parish. In the Parsonage he learnt the christian mode of life.
6. Walker, F.D. The Romance of the Black River: The Story of the C.M.S. Nigeria Mission London, 1938 p. 232.
7. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
8. Opuogulaya, E.D.W. The Cultural Heritage of the Wakirike (The Okrika People), Port Harcourt, 1975 p. 9.
9. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
10. Adewoye, O. The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria..., p.269.
11. Nigeria Law Report vol. 4. pp. 101 and 102. A selection from cases decided in the Full Court and Divisional Courts of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria 1922-1923.
12. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta, London, 1932 p.194
13. Ibid. p. 190.
14. Oke, E.A. An Introduction to Social Anthropology London 1984. p. 106.
15. Ibid. p. 192.
16. Alagoa, E.J. The Small Brave City-State, p. 24.
17. Jones, G.I. Trading States of the Oil Rivers, London 1963, p. 54.
18. Opuogulaya, E.D.W. The Cultural Heritage... p. 10.
19. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People p. 1.
20. Horton, R. Kalabari Sculpture, Port Harcourt 1982. p. 1.

21. Ibid.
22. Jones, G.I. Trading States..., p. 54.
23. Isichei, E. A History of Nigeria. p. 251. Note that Isichei curled the statement from F.O. 84/1343).
24. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People, p. 5.
25. The Ya/Igwa parallel system of marriage may appear to be peculiar to the Eastern Niger Delta in the way it determines the mode of inheritance. But inheritance either patrilineally or matrilineally is not unique to this area. In Ghana the Ashanti are matrilineal while the Tallensi are patrilineal (Ayisi, E.O. An Introduction to the study of African Culture. London 1979. 2nd Edition pp. 32 & 33). Another variant can be found among the Yako in Nigeria. In their case, "the principles which govern descent allow for the recognition of inheritance operating in both lines" (Ibid. p.34).
26. Opuogulaya, E.D.W. The Cultural Heritage..., p. 25.
27. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People, p. 11.
28. Goode, W.J. The Family. New Jersey, 1982 p. 33.
29. Awoala, E.B.A.P. Culture of a People p. 5.
30. Nigerian Tide, Monday 7th April, 1986. p. 3.
31. Okonkwo, C.O. Introduction to Nigerian Law, London, 1980, p. 300. According to Prof. Okonwo "the courts have always preferred the claim of the natural father of a child over its custody to that of any other person claiming through any local custom by which the child is regarded as belonging to him". There is therefore an improvement on the position earlier referred to with regard to the case of Oruboroma Charlie Amachree versus Inko-Taria, 1923 and a confirmation of the position of the Opi case in 1956.
32. Ibid. pp. 297 and 298.
33. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
34. Tasie G.O.M. The Church in the Niger Delta in Kalu O. Christianity in West Africa: The Nigerian Story p. 323.
35. Crowther, D.C. The Establishment of the Niger Delta Pastorate Church. p.3.
36. Tasie, G.O.M. 'The Church in the Niger Delta' in Kalu O. 'Christianity in West Africa: The Nigerian Story' p.324.
37. Crowther, D.C. The Establishment of the Niger Delta Pastorate Church, pp. 103 and 104.

38. C.A. 3/04 Church Missionary Archives. Report on the Lower Niger Archdeaconry by Dandeson C. Crowther in January, 1880.
39. F.O. 403/32 Inclosure in No. 82. Letter from Commander Craigie to Rear-Admiral Salmon dated 6th September, 1884.
40. C.A. 3/04 Church Missionary Archives Reports on the Lower Niger Archdeaconry by Dandeson C. Crowther in January, 1880.
41. Ofonagoro, W.I. Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria 1881-1929, New York, 1979, p.218.
42. Nduka, O. 'Educational Development in Port-Harcourt: Retrospect and Prospect' in Ogionwo, W. (ed) The City of Port-Harcourt: A Symposium of its Growth and Development p. 37.
43. Wallerstein, I. Africa: The Politics of Independence, New York, 1961, pp. 36 and 37.
44. Nwabara, S.N. Iboland: A Century of Contact with Britain 1860-1960 London 1977, p.
45. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. dated 24th June, 1896.
46. C.M.S. Excerpts CA 3/04.
47. Ajayi, J.F.A. Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite, p. 132.
48. Fiberesima, J.A. Calling Okrika, Port Harcourt 1966 p. 3.
49. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta p. 80.
50. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja..., p. 17.
51. Oke, E.A. An Introduction to Social Anthropology, London, 1984, pp. 104-106.
52. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta pp. 202 and 203.
53. Ibid. pp. 201 and 202.
54. Walker, F.D. The Romance of the Black River..., p. 189.
55. Ogan, O.K. 'Public Servant and Public Probity' in Report of the Seminar on Nigeria in Transition held in Kaduna between 11th and 13th September, 1979 p. 41.
56. Eyo, O. 'Nigeria's Traditional Ideals: Culture as an Instrument of National Unity' in Report of the Seminar on Nigeria in Transition p. 21.
57. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics... p. 154.

58. NAE. C/767/15. CALPROF 5/558. Opobo District Handing-over Notes 1925.
59. NAE. OW. 282/1925 RIVPROF 8/13/189. Port Harcourt - Handing-over Notes.
60. In Okrika there were the 'Teke na Nime na' - a translation of hymns and prayers; and the Okrika Primer translated by W.W. Peters.
61. Tasie, G.O.M. 'Igbo Bible NSO and the Evolution of the "Union-Igbo" 1905-1913' in Journal of Niger Delta Studies Vol. 1, No. 2, 1979. p. 69. (Tasie cited the 1875 Annual report of Bishop Crowther on the Niger Mission).
62. Alagoa, E.J. and Fombo, A. 'A Chronicle of Grand Bonny' p. 36.
63. F.O. 2/101 No. 51. Moor to F.O. 24th June, 1896.
64. Walker, F.D. The Romance of the Black River... p. 125.
65. Amanyenabo of Okrika (King Ibanichuka) who invited them with his chiefs was himself not a christian covert. His reasons for inviting them were therefore not religious.
66. 'Mala in se' are acts which are wrong in themselves such as murder. 'Mala prohibita' are acts which are prohibited by traditional law' such as disposal of refuse in an unauthorised spot.
67. 'Ama ton-tonye' means 'what the public taboos', in which case there might be no formal rule of law passed against it.
68. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed in Okrika on 7th June, 1986. Also see Okonkwo, C.O. Criminal Law in Nigeria, London 1980 p. 4.
69. 'Ratio decidendi' means 'the reason (or ground) of a judicial decision'.
70. Mens rea "means evil mind and actus means" bad act.
71. 'Jura immutabilia' is a latin phrase meaning 'unchangeable laws'.
72. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta pp. 260 and 261.
73. 'Corpus delicti' is a latin phrase meaning 'the facts which constitute an offence'.
74. Akinjogbin, I.A. "The Expansion of Oyo and the rise of Dahomey, 1600-1800" in Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M. (eds) 'History of West Africa' Vol. 1, 2nd edition, p. 374.
75. There is also an Hausa saying "Abokin Sarkin, Sarkin ne" meaning "The friend of the ruler is a ruler" vide Freund B. 'The making of contemporary Africa' p. 37.

76. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
77. 'Custos Morium' is a latin phrase meaning 'Keepers or custodians of morality'.
78. Fakayode, E.O. (Justice) The Nigerian Criminal Code Companion. Benin 1977, p.1.
79. There may be some exceptions to the dictum. But they are rare and narrow. If such are admitted, that will be done with the greatest reluctance, and perhaps, on very strong reasons.
80. Okonkwo, C.O. Introduction to Nigerian Law, London, 1980, p. 47.
81. It is a principle of modern law that 'actus non facit reum nisi mens sit a rea' meaning, 'an act does not itself constitute guilt unless the mind is guilty,' vide Fakoyade, E.O. (Justice) op. cit. p. 11.
82. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
83. Okonkwo, C.O. Introduction to Nigerian Law pp. 16 and 17.
84. Dicey, A.V. An Introduction to the Study of the law of the Constitution London, 19th Edition, 1959 p. 188.
85. Aguolu, S.I.O. The Prerogative Writs and Orders Under Nigerian Law and Constitution. Enugu p. 100.
86. Chief Nonju, S.G. Interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
87. Jennings, (Sir) Ivor. The Queen's Government. London, 1954, p. 149.
88. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
89. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 199.
90. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
91. Fakayode, E.O. (Justice). The Nigerian Criminal Code Companion. Benin 1977, p. 208.
92. Samuel Amaps (late) interviewed on 19th January, 1984. (Dede Igbiri, High Priest of Fenibeso deity, also interviewed on 18th January, 1984). It is the feeling in some quarters that it was not innocence that was really established but that it gave room for what would appear to be a suspended sentence. The sentence was not usually declared in such cases.
93. Aguda, T.A. The Law of Evidence in Nigeria, London 1974. pp. 310 and 311.

94. Aguda, T.A. . Principles of Practice and Procedure in Civil Actions in the High Courts of Nigeria, p. 190.
95. NAE. OW. 74/1921 RIVPROF 8/14/81. Chief Erema versus Chief Ogudire and Or. all of Okrika 1926.
96. NAE. CER/129. Report of the Native Courts (Eastern Region) Commission of Enquiry 1950.
97. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
98. Ibid.
99. Talbot, P.A. Tribes of the Niger Delta p. 299.
100. Ibid. p. 109.
101. Chief S.G. Nonju interviewed on 7th June, 1986.
102. Adewoye, O. The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria, London 1977, p.10.
103. Ewelukwe, D.I.O. (Justice) . 'Administration of Justice' in Okonkwo, C.O. (ed) Introduction to Nigerian Law, p.59.
104. Opuogulaya, E.D.K. The Cultural Heritage... p. 29. The type of running is known as 'Owu-mangi' that is, chase and catch.
105. Tamuno, T.N. 'The Odum festival' in Nigeria Magazine No. 97 of June/August, 1968, pp. 68-76.
106. Alagoa, E.J. 'Delta Masquerades' in Nigeria Magazine No. 33 of June 1967 pp. 145-155.
107. Iyalla, B.S. 'Womanhood in the Kalabari' in Nigeria Magazine No. 98 of Sept./Nov. 1968 pp. 216-224.
108. Zahar, R. Colonialism and Alienation (translated by W.F. Fenser) Benin City, 1974 p. 35.

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ALIENATION

The final subjugation of Nigeria gave much impetus to the disruption of traditional structures, causing the indigenous system to devetail into the colonial system. The process of political disruption and consequent alienation at this time started with structural changes.

In 1914 the two Nigerias were amalgamated and Frederick Lugard became the Governor General. The system of administration established for the amalgamated Nigeria appeared to be federal in character. There were two Lieutenant Governors each at Kaduna and Lagos for the Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria respectively. There was in addition an Administrator in charge of the Colony of Lagos. The Governor himself had his headquarters at Lagos. Under each of the Lieutenant Governors were provincial commissioners or residents heading the provinces. The provinces too were divided into Divisions under District Officers.

Some of the changes Lugard introduced were the abolition of the practice whereby European political officers presided over native courts, and the introduction of the idea of sole Native Authorities through the creation of Paramount chiefs and permanent presidents of Native Councils. The next change and his rejection of the Legislative Council for various reasons not excluding the heterogeneity of the Nigerian society.

Lugard became the chief promoter of what came to be known as Indirect Rule, a system of government in which the local chiefs governed their people, not as independent but as dependent rulers. This policy was typical of British pragmatism in that

it was developed in relation to specific problems.¹ Such a system of dependence of British officials on traditional political institutions for the maintenance of law and order to a degree consonant with imperial rule and to an extent not repugnant to the rules of natural justice was therefore empiricist or based on precedent.

With the amalgamation, the Legislative Council no longer legislated for Southern Nigeria. Its functions were limited to Lagos. Besides, another Council known as 'The Nigerian Council' was established in 1914 as a national legislature. It was purely an advisory and deliberative body consisting of both official and unofficial members. It had no executive, or financial powers. Among the unofficial members of that Council were six Africans representing African interests both in the Coastal area and the hinterland. These were the Emirs of Sokoto and Kano, the Alafin of Oyo, Chief Dore Numa who was considered at the time to be the most prominent chief in what used to be the Central Province of the former Southern Nigeria; Richard Henshaw also regarded at the time as the most enlightened of the chiefs in the Eastern part of the Southern Provinces, and C.A. Sapara Williams. The traditional rulers among the representatives were mostly ignorant of the English language and this imposed great limitation on them to function in any meaningful manner, and they were often absent from meetings.

One feature of the amalgamation was the lack of an effective legislature. Considering the African unofficial representation as explained above the Nigerian Council

appeared to be a completely irrelevant body. Consequently, when Sir Hugh Clifford succeeded Lugard in 1919, he was not satisfied with the system and so made known to the British Government its inadequacies. His regime was therefore marked by series of reforms which were both administrative and political. The abolition of the Nigerian Council in 1923 was one of such reforms.

After the British Government had approved his proposals for political reform in January 1922, Sir Hugh Clifford established a new Central Legislature in 1923 with a new Constitution and jurisdiction limited to Southern Nigeria only. The legislature was partly elective because Clifford preferred to see local popular 'demagogues' taking seats in the Council and be held to account for their words and actions rather than being left alone to wrought havoc and mischief among people he considered to be inflammable. This stimulated political activities particularly, in Lagos, and the formation of political parties as, for example, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). Whether such organisations served as the effective vehicles for the expression of political grievances and national aspirations at that time is open to debate. Albeit the Eastern Niger Delta (Rivers) area did not appear then to have been so much affected by the impact made by such organisations.

There were three elected members for Lagos and one other elected member for Calabar. Apart from the official members who were in the majority, there were fifteen nominated unofficial members seven of whom were to represent commercial

interests and eight to represent African interests. The Chamber of Commerce in Port Harcourt was one of the commercial interests that was represented while Degema, Bonny and Opobo Districts were together also represented by one of the eight nominated unofficial members. Thus from 1923 Rivers Division was represented in the Legislative Council. It was Mark Pepple Jaja an Opobo chief educated in Britain who was nominated as an unofficial member representing it in the Legislative Council in 1923. In 1928, Mark Pepple Jaja was appointed District Head of Opobo Division because of his good education and loyalty to the British. It was not a surprise that he remained a member of Legislative Council for two five year terms 1923 to 1933. His contributions to the Council's deliberations were in-effective and hardly contributed to the political, economic or social development of the Eastern Niger Delta.² The Legislative Council, therefore, was a distant political institution to the people of the Eastern Niger Delta and it was to remain so until 1944. This contributed to the political alienation of the people from the Government.

In 1933, Mark Pepple was succeeded by S.B. Rhodes who was a Yoruba man and not a Rivers man. Rhodes, a Barrister-at-law lived at the time at Aba. He was well-known and respected throughout the Rivers area and so was nominated to represent the Rivers people. His appointment in that capacity was perhaps indicative of the fact that a suitable candidate of the Eastern Niger Districts was not handy at the time. Nonetheless, some scholars felt that this portrayed an inconsistency on the part of the Administration because Rhodes could not in

reality be said to represent the Rivers people.³

However, the integrity of S.B. Rhodes was not in question. He was quite vocal too. In a Legislative Council speech he once pointed out to Government that "it appeared a bit ridiculous that the population of the Gold Coast (Ghana) which is below four million, have several unofficial members in their Legislative Council, while in Nigeria the population of the Ibos which is just a little below four million have one man representing the whole of the Ibo speaking people".⁴ This speech was not in respect of the people whose interest he was supposed to represent but of the Igbo people amongst whom he was living at the time of his appointment. The obvious question therefore was whether or not he was in a position to have adequately represented a people whose problems he would hardly understand and among whom he was not living at the time.⁵ One would perhaps have expected him also to make for the Rivers people a case similar to what he made for the Igbo, especially that of being represented by a Rivers man or someone resident amongst them. All the same, there was no indication that the Rivers people made any protest about it.

Indeed, the people of the Eastern Niger Delta (or Rivers Division) were sensitive to political and administrative developments of the period. As mentioned earlier the people did not completely accept even the Native Authority system and they demonstrated this many times in their protests against the system. In 1911 for instance, some of the Bonny educated elements who went by the name 'Commons of Bonny' sent a petition to the Commissioner of the Eastern Province

requesting for Bonny District an organised National Assembly or Council of Chiefs and elected Councillors to replace the Native Council which they felt was not properly formed.⁶

Also, on 4th April, 1911 the Chiefs of Bonny, Opobo, New Calabar (Kalabari), Brass and Okrika petitioned Egerton against the repeal of Native House Rule Ordinance. Such petitions were indicative of a striking awareness on the part of the communities of this area for the need to act in concert in matters concerning their common interests.

Another demonstration of political awareness was in 1913, when chiefs of the Eastern Niger Delta in conjunction with those of Calabar sent a petition to the Secretary of State for Colonies, the Right Honourable Lewis Harcourt (with copy to the Provincial Commissioner, Eastern Province) on the subject of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under a new ordinance at the time.⁷ The petition drew attention to certain objectionable aspects of the existing system. The fact that Governor Lugard in his comment while forwarding it, felt that it was 'written in ignorance' of the proposed legislation and of the court system it was intended to establish,⁸ was beside the issue.

Among the Rivers Chiefs who signed or thumb-impressed the petition mentioned above were Daniel Kalio, Ikiriko Daka, Wakama, Stephen Ogan, Eyina George, David Olunwa, Abibo Oba, Edward Kiri, Joseph T. Koko, Adinewibibo and Obianime from Okrika, and Simeon Manilla Pepple, Alex Hart, Squiss Banigo, Jacob Allison, F.A. Dublin Green, William Fine Country, Ezekiel Hart, Cyrus F.M. Jumbo and John Jack Brown from Bonny. Such expression of grievances both political and otherwise, were signs of socio-political awareness at the time. The

non-appearance of names of chiefs from other areas of the Eastern Niger Delta may or may not necessarily imply that they did not share the views expressed in the petition. In 1918, for example, Chief Cookey Gam, Dappu Fubara, Harry Toby, Aaron Jaja and others of Opobo alone, sent a letter to the colonial authorities asking for the restoration of the system under the Supreme Court Ordinance in which appeal could be made from Native and District Courts.⁹

It is significant that many of the chiefs who signed some of the protests were not the true traditional heads of the people. This is because as mentioned earlier, some of the traditional rulers (Kings) had been deported and "this dramatically changed the basis of traditional order in government and politics" as in Okrika.¹⁰ The newly appointed heads by the British were more or less regents. Chief Cookey Gam, for example, was according to S.J.S. Cookey an 'unofficial regent of the city-state' of Opobo.¹¹

In 1931 Sir Donald Cameron succeeded Graeme Thompson as Governor of Nigeria.¹² It therefore became his responsibility to effect the re-organisation of the Native Administration in the East. Time and effort were put in to collect information about the people they had been trying to govern. By the end of 1934 so many reports on local groups had been submitted. In the light of these and subsequent reports, Native Authorities were accordingly reorganised. With respect to the Rivers Districts, there were the Intelligence Reports by M.D.W. Jeffreys on Andoni Tribe of the Opobo District in 1930; by H. Webber on the Bonny Tribe in 1931; by E.N. Dickinson

on the Nembe clan in 1932; by J.C. Porter on Okrika in 1933; and by A.F.F.P. Newn on the Akassa Clan in Degema Division in 1935.

By 1938 most of the Native Authorities, had been reorganised. The local chiefs still played a prominent role. It was at this time that the Igbo migrants in Okrika also wanted to instal a chief who was to represent their interests in the Council of Chiefs.¹³ This was contrary to Okrika tradition since only the Amanyabo of Okrika, the Amadapu and the heads of the War-Canoe Houses were entitled to be members of that Council.¹⁴ When, despite all warning, the Igbo migrants wanted to instal Osuala who was not a member of any War-Canoe House in Okrika, it led to a serious riot on 1st January, 1939 as earlier mentioned.¹⁵

Many of the Native Authorities having representatives in the Legislature were, during this period allowed to nominate their respective representatives. That perhaps explains why S.B. Rhodes was succeeded by E.T. Dimieari a minister of religion and a Rivers man from Bonny when his (Rhodes's) term ended in 1944 in the Legislative Council as the representative of the Rivers Division. Native Authorities were then part of the electoral chain, and this was taken into consideration in 1948 when the existing Local Government system in the Eastern Region was being reviewed.¹⁶

The political consciousness of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta within the Nigerian structure became more visible since 1930 when there was a Rivers Chiefs' Conference. Thereafter, the Ijo Rivers People League was

inaugurated in 1942¹⁷ with the object of excising the Rivers territory from the Owerri Province. It was a successful political move as in consequence the Rivers Province was created in 1947, made up of Degema, Brass, Port Harcourt, Ogoni and Ahaoda Divisions except Opobo Division which was part of Calabar Province until 1953. In that year the population of the new Province was 747,398.¹⁸ It was a prelude to the creation of the Rivers State in 1967.

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 provided for a central legislature called House of Representatives, and it was a single chamber. An important feature of the 1951 Constitution was the recognition given to the informal division of the country into three groups of provinces in 1939, and there were slight changes in the fiscal realm based on general principles of federal finance.¹⁹ Each group of provinces now called a region became a political entity having a House of Assembly with legislative powers and an Executive. It also had a Lieutenant-Governor rather than a Chief Commissioner. However, while both the Northern and Western Regional Houses were bicameral, that of the East was a single legislature, an action which some scholars felt was 'in deference to Igbo republican tradition'.²⁰

In doing so, the framers of the Constitution failed to recognise the minority groups in the Eastern Region who had well established chieftancy tradition. The interests of these groups, particularly the people of the Eastern Niger Delta some of whose traditional rulers were deported by the British, had not been taken into consideration. G.O. Olusanya's general

statement that "there was only a House of Assembly in the Eastern Region as the Chieftancy institution was not as well-developed as in the other two Regions",²¹ could therefore be construed to refer to the dominant Igbo group in the region. The point that the people of the Eastern Niger Delta had an entirely different culture and different ways of life as stressed during the Henry Willink's Commission can therefore be better appreciated in this light.

In any case, the Macpherson constitution had not granted self-autonomy, but it provided for the first time a federal system within which each Region was to appropriate its revenue for specific purposes. But the Lieutenant-Governors retained their reserved powers given under the Richard's constitution and were still subordinate to the Governor. So, the country continued to operate a quasi-unitary system. Besides, the Executive was not responsible to the legislature. And since there was the absence of self-autonomy, the British authorities remained, as Garvin Williams observed, "the arbiter in the constitutional conflict and electoral competition"²² not only between political parties, but also between major ethnic groups.

The Eastern Niger Delta constituencies were by this time represented in the various Houses by Rivers people. For example, Mr E.S. Bens represented the Brass Division at this time in the House of Representatives. By 1957, E.P. Okoya and N.L.P. Apreala were representing Brass Division while Mr Kalada Kiri of Okrika and Mr S.J. Amakiri of Kalabari represented Degema Constituency all in the Eastern House of Assembly.²³ All these representatives were N.C.N.C. members. Whereas, the competition between

the parties and also between the major ethnic groups was becoming severe at this time, the majority of the people in the Eastern Niger Delta at that time favoured and followed the N.C.N.C. This did not imply that the spirit of statism was dead. Rather, the creation of a Rivers Province in 1947 at least for sometime soothed the demand for the creation of a new state.

Certain defects in the 1951 Constitution were criticised by Nigerian nationalists. Besides, the period witnessed some crises. One was an impasse in the East Regional House of Assembly²⁴ leading to its dissolution on 6th May, 1953 by the Lieutenant-Governor. In a new election that was held Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe then the leader of the N.C.N.C. was elected into the House. Another crisis was the Kano riot that resulted from the Action Group (AG) delegation that went there. These events seemed to have laid bare some obvious defects in the Macpherson Constitution.

Invariably therefore, the British Government came to realize that a federal system based on regional autonomy might be more relevant to the Nigerian situation in which a major ethnic group existed with minority groups in each of the regions. Accordingly, Mr Oliver Lyttleton then the Colonial Secretary, summoned representatives of each of the regions to a Constitutional Conference in London from 30th July to August, 1953 to discuss a redrafting of the Nigerian Constitution. They met and deliberated, among others, on the defects of the 1951 constitution, and the question of self-government.

The outcome of the conference was a new constitution with a provision for a federal system of government with a Governor-General instead of a Governor at the federal level while at the regional level the Lieutenant-Governors became Governors. The spheres of authority for both Federal and Regional governments were clearly spelt out. Because a number of issues such as the status of Lagos, and Revenue allocation were not duly settled at the 1953 constitutional conference another constitutional conference had to be summoned in Lagos on 9th January, 1954. Resulting from these conferences a new constitution known as the Lyttleton constitution came into operation on 1st October, 1954.

In the opinion of G.O. Olusanya "the 1954 constitution was very significant in that it provided the basis of the constitution of independent Nigeria".²⁵ Besides it solved to a great extent through the establishment of a federal form of government, the political conflicts which afflicted the three major ethnic groups during the period. But it failed to find solution to the fears of domination and oppression by the larger group in each of the regions, which the ethnic minorities strongly expressed.

The ethnic minorities did not fail to send participants to the London Constitutional Conference in 1953. For instance, the Chiefs and Natural Rulers Assembly of the Rivers area on 26th and 27th July 1953 authorised Chief Davies Manuel of Abonnema in Kalabari, to attend the London Constitutional Conference that year. Chief Harold Dappa Biriye (then known as Mr Wilcox) from Bonny in the Eastern Niger Delta, together

with Chief Essien of Uyo also attended the London Conference even if they did so as non-party delegates.²⁶

Between 1953 and 1957, the people of the Eastern Niger Delta had become more conscious of the political realities of their plight under the NCNC government of Eastern Nigeria. And so, the agitation for the creation of their own state gathered greater momentum. The problems of the minorities had, indeed, reached such dimensions that they could no longer be ignored at the 1957 Nigerian Constitutional Conference. Accordingly, an agreement was reached by the Nigerian delegates to the Conference to appoint a Minorities Commission to ascertain facts of the fears of the minorities and propose means of allaying them.

Following this decision, Sir Henry Willinks Commission was appointed and it submitted its report in August, 1958. The people of the Eastern Niger Delta made representations to the Commission in two camps. There were those who struggled for a separate Rivers state. They had Mr Dingle Foot, a Queen's Counsel (Q.C.), as their leading Counsel supported by Mr W.D. Dappa and Mr B. Apiafi. Some others favoured the Calabar - Ogoja - Rivers (COR) state movement under the auspices of the Action Group. They had Mr C.N. Shaw-Cross, (Q.C.) as their leading Counsel supported by Mr Graham Douglas and Mr W.O. Briggs. Mr H.J.R. Biriye was the principal witness for the Rivers State movement.

During the sittings of the Commission in Port-Harcourt, representatives from various Eastern Niger Delta Communities gave evidence in support of the creation of a separate Rivers

State. A witness from Okrika Mr Kalada Kiri stressed before the Commission that as separate communities the people of the area had treaty relationship with the British.²⁷ According to him, he represented one of the Kingdoms which entered into a treaty with Britain²⁸ and that the people of that Kingdom (Okrika) placed great importance on the treaty and would therefore want a separate state with their kith and kin within an independent Nigeria. The main grievance of the people, he insisted, was that apart from the fact that no person from the area had a ministerial appointment, the government of the Eastern Region did not appreciate the need for developing the area. Even at the national level "Ibo predominance in white - collar and professional occupations soon provoked hostility among the other main ethnic groups; the Yoruba and the Hausa-Fulani".²⁹

In its report, however, the Henry Willink's Commission felt that the subdivision of the country into small units might create more problems than it would solve. But among others, it recommended not just the creation of special areas where peculiar problems existed but that both the Federal and Regional Governments should equally share the financial and other responsibilities of such areas.³⁰ It further recommended the setting up of Boards to initiate supplementary development programmes in these areas, and then specifically declared the Niger Delta Area as a special area.³¹ Accordingly, this was included in the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1960.³²

The essence of the recommendations requires some comment. The Willink's Commission appeared to have confirmed the

superiority of the majority ethnic group over the minority in Eastern Region, especially in the circumstance in which the majority retained socio-political advantages to the neglect of the minorities. Thus, the Willinks Commission of Enquiry disregarded the reality of the situation and failed to make adequate recommendations that would have resolved the problem. To the Rivers people, the Willink's solution looked like a token solution to a massive injustice. They regarded these recommendations as a palliative rather than a real cure of the existing social malaise.³³ While the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the NCNC accepted the report because it favoured their stand on the issue, Action Group (AG) and various minority movements rejected it.³⁴ Thus, the matter could not finally be put to rest.

Indeed, the British Government appeared to recognise the enormity of the problem. Therefore, during the Nigerian Constitutional Conference which met in London from 29th September to 27th October, 1958 the Secretary of State for the Colonies proposed to insert (and there was inserted) in the Constitution a provision for the future creation of states but under specific conditions which made the procedure rather complex.³⁵ A separate Rivers State would have almost been impossible under such cumbrous procedure. The military intervention, however, set aside many provisions in the Constitution and the creation of states including a Rivers State was achieved in 1967 during Yakubu Gowon's regime.

The agitation for a separate Rivers State did not prevent internal wranglings within the communities of the

Eastern Niger Delta to settle outstanding cases of chieftaincy disputes. It will be recalled that in the Eastern Region there was no House of Chiefs until 1956.³⁶ Thus, when an ordinance was passed in 1959³⁷ to provide for the classification of chiefs in the region it created problems among some of them. There were chieftaincy disputes in Nembe, Okrika and Kalabari. Under an instrument dated 16th April, 1959 Nwabuo Uwechia was appointed as Sole Commissioner to examine and report with recommendations on the various claims made in Kalabari to the Amanyanabo throne there. The claims were made by Chief J.T. Princewill Amachree and his rival C.C. Amachree. The Commission recommended that government should recognise Chief J.T. Princewill Amachree as Amanyanabo.³⁸

In 1959 too, there was another Commission of Enquiry by Uwechia into the Okrika Chieftaincy dispute between the Ado family on the one hand and the Oputibeya family on the other over rival claims to the Amanyanabo throne there. The report of the commission was not published by the government. Rather, there was a government announcement on 10th March, 1960 that in the interest of peace and unity in the area, there should be a rotation of the Amanyanabo throne between the two parties to the dispute. The Government however gave the first chance to the Ado House to produce the Amanyanabo. The Ado House rejected the principle of rotation on the grounds that it was untraditional, but it went ahead to perform the installation of Chief Zedekiah Fibika as the Amanyanabo of Okrika with the regnant name (Ado VII) in succession to King Ibanichuka (Ado VI) who was

deported in 1896. Government later revoked its policy to rotate the Amanyabo throne and accepted the recommendation that the Ado House "be recognised as the Amanyabo House of Okrika and be the House from among whose members the Amanyabo of Okrika should be chosen".³⁹

Under an instrument dated 5th September, 1959, the government of Eastern Region of Nigeria appointed O. Ukelonu as a Sole Commissioner to conduct an inquiry into, and examine the claims of the contestants to the title of Amanyabo of Nembe. The two parties to the dispute were Francis Joseph Alagoa (Mingi X), Amanyabo of Ogbolomabiri, and Ben Wari, Amanyabo of Bassambiri. The commission recommended that His Highness Mingi X the Amanyabo of Ogbolomabiri be recognised by Government as the Amanyabo of Nembe with the Status of First-Class Chief in the Eastern Region.⁴⁰

The resolution of the chieftaincy disputes restored legitimacy in the traditional hierarchy within the communities but it failed to usher in inter-communal or intra-communal peace, a phenomenon that was the bane of the internal politics within the Eastern Niger Delta. The disputes which often ended in serious civil disturbances created an unhealthy rivalry and divisions which prevented the people from seeing that positively they have many things in common that unite them as citizens of a state.

This situation certainly delayed the positive organisation of a mass movement for the creation of a state. The activities of some of the traditional and modern elites based upon the

policy of divide and rule also contributed to the slow progress of the state movement. Once the Rivers State Movement was formed, the case of the people as an ethnic minority was established in 1960. It needed time only to come to fruition in 1967.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hodgkin, T. Nationalism in Colonial Africa, London, 1956. p. 40.
2. Special Supplement to Nig. Gaz. No. 7 Vol. 17 of 30th January, 1930. p. 6. Minutes of meeting of the Legislative Council of 30th January, 1930.
3. Okafor, S.O. Indirect Rule: The Development of Central Legislature in Nigeria, Surrey, 1981, p. 185.
4. Nigeria Legislative Council Debates, 23 March 1942. p. 102.
5. Note that L.R. Potts Johnson who represented Port Harcourt in 1947 in the Eastern House of Assembly was like Rhodes, not a Rivers man but unlike Rhodes, resident in Port Harcourt.
6. Riv Prof. 1/25. Petition dated 17th November, 1911.
7. C.O. 520/128. Petition dated 25th October, 1913.
8. C.O. 520/128. Letter to the Secretary of State from Colonies dated 24th December, 1913.
9. NAE. C. Conf. 32/17. CALPROF 4/6/9. Provincial Native Courts Ordinance. Petition for the repeal of 1917/18.
10. Tamuno, T.N. 'Chief Daniel Kalio of Okrika' in Tamuno, T.N. and Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State p. 151.
11. Cookey, S.J.S. 'Chief Cookey Gam of Opobo in Tamuno, T.N. and Alagoa, E.J. (eds) Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State p. 101.
12. Nig. Extraordinary Gaz. No. 32 Vol. 18 of 17th June, 1931. pp. 1 and 2.
13. Appollos Obianime a retired civil servant interviewed in Okrika on 28th July, 1984.
14. Cookey, S.J.S. King Jaja... p. 16.
15. See Chapter III supra.
16. NAE. CER/94. Report of a Select Committee to review the existing system of Local Government in the Eastern Region. 1948. p. 10.
17. Nigerian Tide, Tuesday 27th May, 1986 p. 8.

18. Population Census of the Eastern Region of Nigeria 1953. p. 23. (It was 413, 665 in 1931).
19. Nig. Extraordinary Gaz. No. 65 Vol. 38 of 7th December, 1951. pp. 1126-1143. Despatch from Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies dated 15th October, 1951.
20. Adamolekun, L. and Osuntokun, J. Government and Politics for West African Students. Ibadan, 1977. p.102.
21. Olusanya, G.O. 'Constitutional Development in Nigeria 1861-1960' in Ikime, O. (ed) Groundwork of Nigeria History p. 533.
22. Williams, State and Society in Nigeria p. 74.
23. Eastern Nigeria Extra-Ordinary gazette No. 20. Vol. 6 of 29th March, 1957.
24. NAE. CER/31. Commission of Inquiry into the African Continental Bank. Statement by the Hon. Premier in the House of Assembly, 1956.
25. Olusanya, G.O. 'Constitutional Development in Nigeria 1861-1960' in Ikime, O. (ed) Groundwork of Nigerian History, p. 539.
26. NAI. CE/W3C. Vol. 7. Sir Henry Willink's Minorities Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Eastern Region and Southern Cameroons, Port Harcourt session January, 1958.
27. NAI CE/W3C Vol. 7. Sir Henry Willinks **Minorities** Commission sitting at Port Harcourt, on 21st January, 1958 p. 2.
28. F.O. 403/233. The 1888 Treaty between Okrika and Britain.
29. Randall V. & Theobald, R. Political Change and Underdevelopment: A Critical Introduction to Third World Politics p. 47.
30. NAE. CER/38 Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them. July, 1958. p. 103 Chap. 15. Section 2.
31. Ibid. p. 104 section 3.
32. Supplement to Nig. Extra-Ordinary Gaz. No. 62 Vol. 47 of 30th September, 1960. p. B226 Para. 14.
33. Appollos Obianime interviewed in Okrika on 28th July, 1984.
34. Nnoli, O. Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, p. 174.

35. The Constitution of the Federation of Nigeria 1960 cap. 1. Section 4. (vide also supplement to Nig. Extraordinary Gaz. No. 62. Vol. 47 of 30th September, 1960. p. B234. Para. 15).
36. Jones, G.I. 'Chieftaincy in the Former Eastern Region of Nigeria' in Growther, M. and Ikime, O. (ed). West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence. Ife. 1970. p. 322.
37. Ibid.
38. NAE. CER/36. Report of the Uwechia Commission of Inquiry into the Kalabari Chieftaincy Dispute 1959 p. 9 Para. 23.
39. NAE. CER/44. Summary of the Report and Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Outbreaks of Violence at Okrika. Official Document No. 23 of 1963.
40. NAE. CER/39. Report of the Ukelonu Commission of Inquiry into the Nembe Chieftaincy Dispute. Official Document No. 24 of 1960. p. 35. Para. 101 (3).

CHAPTER SEVEN

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

"On principle, the welfare of the people within the country counts the same... there must not be any beggar-your-neighbour policies"

- Wolfgang F. Stolper¹

After 1960, the post colonial policy of Eastern Nigeria towards the Eastern Niger Delta people continued to emphasise the disparity in economic development which was a colonial legacy. Thus, the Delta people saw that the achievement of independence for Nigeria might be a question of replacing white colonialism with black imperialism. Events did not prove them wrong because in the ensuing new situation was created a systematic imbalance which tended to perpetuate both materially and psychologically, relationships of dominance and dependence. The colonialism of the past gave way to a new system in which ethnic minorities were almost condemned to a precarious and captive existence. Quite visible, too, were the signs of anger and frustration in the minorities in the Eastern Delta and feeling of alienation which began expressing itself in resentment and hostility against those they perceived as usurpers in their own area. Their call for a separate state was therefore a search for legitimacy and self-identity.

In order to appreciate the demand for a separate state it must be understood that majority of the people of the area were fishermen who still clung to fishing. Some of them owned their own means of production such as local fishing gadgets, dug-out canoes and paddles. There were others who for survival

and reproduction had no alternative but sell their labour by pairing with those who owned the means of production. They could hardly make good catches because of pollution caused by the oil explorations. Their situation worsened as the exploration for petroleum continued especially after 1960.

Besides, hardly any fishing grounds remained that were not visited by large and modern fishing fleets with superior techniques and materials for netting and tracing fish. The experience by the coastal people in the Niger Delta, is not an isolated one. Even in the Pacific Islands, "the oceanic resources are being exploited at an accelerating rate by foreign enterprise threatening to deprive islanders of large sources of supply and potential wealth that have been theirs for centuries".² Indeed, the entire fishing industry having been modernized in the advanced world, it was by this time being supported by massive research programmes. Competition between the advanced nations had increased the world catch, and therefore, the oceans and seas once thought to be inexhaustible of the grazers and predators therein, were losing the quantum of the fish population.³ In such circumstance, the local fishermen still struggling with traditional methods could hardly eke a living from their agelong preoccupation. Neither could they afford the bigger and sophisticated vessels and equipment in use by their more advanced competitors. Thus, the symphony of their woes arising from the effect of oil pollution together with the avalanche of ecological problems came to be compounded by the serious competition in fishing by the advanced nations. Although the lack of economic development in colonial Africa

was general, the fact, however, is that it was worse in some areas including the Eastern Niger Delta. The transport sector was no doubt after 1960 one of the areas in which the Eastern Delta continued to be most seriously neglected. The only means of travel available to the people was the dug-out canoe that had been in use over the centuries. For reasons of costs, many rivers or creeks were neglected and could not be used because of their hydraulic and hydrological problems. They needed to be properly dredged and the submerged trees removed. Private investment was not eager to undertake it as a venture and government too failed to do something even as a social service. And the general climate of opinion was that the Eastern Niger Delta had been abandoned to its fate by the Eastern Nigerian Government.⁴

Furthermore, even water supply for drinking had its constraints. Apart from the general feature of the wells being shallow, unlined and uncovered,⁵ well water in the Eastern Niger Delta had the problems of high iron content and saline water intrusion. A recent geological investigation followed up by geophysical survey at Abam-Ama on the mainland of Okrika proved the possibility to pick salt-water interface even up to a depth of one hundred to one hundred and forty feet.⁶ Such geophysical and hydrochemical investigations required reasonable capital which was not considered by the Eastern Nigerian government between 1960 and 1966.

In addition, the provision of medical facilities hardly went beyond the proposals in the Ten-Year Development Plan 1945-1955. In 1946 for instance, Port Harcourt with a grade A

hospital having 130 beds, Degema and Opobo with grade C hospitals having 42 and 28 beds respectively, were included in the proposed plan while the neighbouring hinterland had several larger hospital centres proposed at Owerri, Enugu, Aba, Umuahia, Okigwi, Onitsha, Nsukka, Afikpo and others.⁷ Many of these hospitals in these hinterland areas were constructed before 1960 while the rest were completed by 1966 to the neglect of those in the Eastern Niger Delta.

Lack of basic infrastructure worsened the bad economic situation which was already compounded by the marshy ecology of the area. Flood and erosion were natural disasters that plagued the life of the communities. There needed to be flood and erosion control measures, reclamation, canalization and other water ways improvement activities. These gigantic ecological problems at that time appeared to defy solution and the people felt that they could not stake their future with those who failed to understand their predicament.

The channel of demand for a new state remained essentially through two organisations, the Rivers State Movement and the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State Movement. Since 1953, state creation had become a national issue with the Action Group (AG) supporting the two organisations while the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) the ruling political party in Eastern Nigeria was until 1964 vehemently opposed to the demand for the creation of state in the Eastern Region. The stalemated national elections of 1964 witnessed a change in the attitude of the NCNC because the supporters of the Rivers State Movement emerged victorious in the elections.

Meanwhile, new trends had begun to manifest themselves in the struggle for the creation of the state. The erstwhile leadership had drawn upon traditional values of the chiefly class which emphasised a peaceful and constitutional approach. A new leadership drawn from among the younger men like Isaac Adaka Boro began to think differently. While a detailed investigation of the new leadership is now under way, the justification for their action was to redress the "total democratic imbalance and contradictions" in Nigeria's political set up as at independence and to correct the economic under-development in the Eastern Niger Delta in particular.⁸

Drawing perhaps from the experience of the open public protest and disturbances in the Western Region of Nigeria that followed the 1965 elections in that area, the new leadership planned for an armed conflict which erupted early in 1966. The creation of the Rivers State in May 1967 finally fulfilled the hopes of the people and contributed significantly to the successful prosecution of the Nigerian civil war in favour of the Federal Military Government in the area. Both the young and old saw the civil war as a war for the creation of their state.

From the above it is indeed a difficult task to offer any systematic exposition of challenges and responses of transitional societies without recognizing many exceptions. Although transformation is usually involved, one could also see the process in terms of conflicting interests between different social classes, whether economic, religious or political. Viewed however against the background of the

Western European model of transformation in which power passed from feudal landlords to the industrial capitalists, the experience in the Eastern Niger Delta was quite different. Any model which reflects class conflict will therefore not be so relevant to the situation there.

The transitional experience in the Eastern Niger Delta since 1885 took as part of its point of departure, the fact that it was externally induced. Thus, whereas transitional changes are basically thought to be progressive and therefore desirable, such thinking with respect to the colonial situation in the Eastern Niger Delta could be faulted. This is because the traditional rulers removed by the colonial authorities either through deportation or deposition, were in power by all the criteria of traditional legitimacy. Some of these rulers of the calibre of King Ibanichuka of Okrika and King Jaja of Opobo introduced good policies and ideas outside regular conventional practices in their city-states. The transition from traditional to colonial rule involving the change of such acceptable rulers against the wishes of their people could not be said to be progressive and desirable. This is not to deny that the colonial era did come with some modernising features or introduce a number of changes in other salutary forms. In other words, transition may or may not be progressive or even desirable but it usually involves change and factors responsible for or influencing the change.

While explaining the process of the transitional changes in the Eastern Niger Delta it was stated that during the four centuries preceding the imposition of formal British control,

African chiefs in the Niger Delta area ruled their people effectively and prevented the intrusion of the white man. Physical and climatic barriers might undoubtedly have helped in preventing European intrusion. But these impediments no longer prevented such intrusion once the Europeans had overcome the opposition of the coastal chieftains. One could therefore emphasize that it was the opposition of African rulers which compelled the European traders to recognize the sovereignty of African states, and it remained effective so long as the Africans had the equipment, the means, and the numbers to maintain their independence. One of the factors which however contributed to the collapse of the coastal states was internal dissension - conflict between principal African chieftaincies within the city-states.

By 1500 there had grown in the area an active commerce⁹ and the delta society continued to experience changes and adapted their organisation to the demands of trade.¹⁰ Stagnation was therefore out of the question and the people had on their own evolved their forms of political and military institutions. Their commercial intercourse with Europe had produced some social and economic effects. As K.O. Dike pointed out "As to be expected the Delta states were far better armed; being the capitalists of the Atlantic trade they were greatly sought after as financiers by the hinterland traders".¹¹

Thus, although the general character of the political horizon could be said to have changed by the declaration of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885 - and change is the major theme of this study - the change as far as the communities of

the Eastern Niger Delta were concerned, was not a kind of secularised salvation when squaring the achievements during the colonial era with what obtained in the pre-colonial period under the indigenous system. Therefore, any historical analysis of the colonial conquest should not be merely in terms of the change in state power but of specific issues not excluding the relative economic strength of the communities affected by it.

Besides, once the secular conquest had been achieved and made secure, the colonisers turned to the social, psychological and mental aspects. There were noticeable changes in many directions. As P.D. Curtin observed, "these changes rested, in turn, on the triumph of industrial technology which made it virtually impossible for any non-Western society to resist Westernization".¹² But the quality of the industrial change within the Eastern Niger Delta at the time could only be imagined in the light of the fact that colonialism favoured exploitation rather than the economic development of Africa in general. Africa essentially remained in the mercantile era while European Industrial Revolution continued with greater momentum. Africa merely produced raw materials for European industries. Areas which for geographical reasons produced no raw materials were left to languish as far as the provision of infra-structure or even social amenities was concerned. And since the ecology of the Eastern Niger Delta did not favour the production of the agricultural raw materials required for exports, it was left to its fate without any economic development.

Indeed the change that followed the 1885 declaration rather appeared to be one-way, that is from indigenous rule to colonial hegemony and all that that involved but never in some other vital direction as industrialisation or the modernisation of either the fishing industry which was the main preoccupation of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta, or any other industry whatsoever. To this extent therefore, an all embracing transition became a far cry when examined from a perspective in which one could perceive the interdependence of the political, economic and cognitive changes that epitomize transition.

The change that followed the 1885 declaration definitely raised considerable problems some of which were social and psychological in their ramifications. For instance, one could raise the issue of self-identity. The people saw their image as a free people dented by the colonial bondage. Besides, colonial rule as Dr N.S.S. Iwe put it "operated against the background of the cultural superiority complex and positions which the European nationals assumed".¹³ The argument about wounded pride and all its various connotations cannot therefore be underrated. Thus, even the conceptual and moral problems which the Eastern Niger Delta faced as a society in transition were mainly, though not wholly, dependent on the direction of the change because it was forced and in the interest of the colonising power, rather than being self-induced and in the interest of the people.

Indeed, the general consequences of the change were, among others, those of bewilderment and far-reaching dis-

orientation leading to irrational assimilation and an uncritical adulation of European culture. In the religious sphere for instance, the church became the first associational group in the Eastern Niger Delta that was independent of the traditional ascriptive community either ethnic or territorial. Whether in Bonny, Okrika, Kalabari or Nembe, it was one christian church to which the members belonged. Although there was some measure of religious toleration between traditional religion and christianity, nonetheless, christianity tended to change the system of reference of its adherents. It is therefore difficult, or perhaps really impossible, to fully comprehend a transition of this kind with its full impact on the people without understanding the psychological, social and even the physical or ecological issues involved. It was not just the denigration of indigenous political authority nor the desecration of traditional religious rites but also the debilitation of the relative economic strength of the coastal people vis-a-vis their hinterland neighbours all of which affected the people's mode of living. This, in fact, is the aspect of the history which has not been fully articulated but which this work has been set to discuss.

For a realistic solution of the socio-economic problems of this country to emerge, there is need to have such historical appraisal or diagnosis of the nature of the problems and to identify their genesis since human problems are often rooted in their experiences whether past or recent or even present. The colonial factor is of course a major experience

as far as the Eastern Niger Delta is concerned and it may be appropriate for any historical analysis aimed at correctly describing the causal antecedents of such phenomenon to use explanations that invoke the logic of the particular situation. For effective explanation too the analyst may need to put himself in the shoes of those whose behaviour he wishes to understand and to interpret. Simply put, he has to reexperience the situation to be explained if he actually wishes to re-enact it very well in thought.

To my mind, such empathetic recapturing of past situations will enable scholars to explain situations as they appeared or meant to those involved in them. Unless such method is adopted, the observations about the transitional challenges and the responses to such challenges with respect to the Eastern Niger Delta, are bound to be partial, and to that extent, their fairness could be questionable. For instance, an Okrika fisherman who freely shares the big fish he has caught to the community to partake, and sells, as tradition demands, only the small fishes (which might not fetch enough money) might not be easily understood if we try to picture his activities against the background of rational economic behaviour. Certain actions occur within the compass of religious or traditional beliefs, humility and zest.

It is therefore not always that the laws of rationality of behaviour have to be used to explain every situation because there may be other influencing factors. It is the failure to understand either the beliefs or the situation or related phenomena of a society that often leads to wrong historical

verdicts. The stress in this work as mentioned earlier is on the transitional changes in the colonial era and the related phenomena in their endless historical chain. K.O. Dike's work, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, might be in recognition of this but it only covers the period 1830 to 1885. Yet, even the colonial period itself which lasted from 1885 to 1960 had its strands and ramifications extending to the post-colonial era. That is why it ^{be} comes difficult to regard the colonial era merely as an episode in the long history of the Eastern Niger Delta or even of Nigeria in general, but as part of the historical continuum.

In view of the difference in the pre-colonial experiences of both the people of the Eastern Niger Delta and their hinterland neighbours, there was also some difference in the nature of the colonial impact on them. The coastal people had contact with Europeans for ~~about~~ three hundred years as trading partners, friends and as equals. The change in this position of equality or even superiority to that of an inferior position gave some mental torture and subsequent frustrations to the Ijo community. A situation in which existing partnership of equals was turned inside out to that of a governor and the governed demoralised them.

On the other hand, the people of the hinterland of the Eastern Niger Delta had no similar partnership relationship with the Europeans. Their period of contact was very short indeed and it was mainly a question of expedition, resistance and conquest. There was no sufficient time gap for equal social relationships of the type experienced by the coastal

groups to build up. The impact of the colonisation was therefore not as devastating on the socio-economic relationships as was the case in the coastal area. The people of the hinterland were primary suppliers and remained in that position, change or no change. But the coastal people were middlemen, and with the change, that position was completely eliminated. Their swampy region was not supportive of any agricultural growth. The fish and salt they produced were not what the Europeans wanted.

In such circumstance in which they saw the decisiveness of the colonial transition as peremptory and the corresponding economic situation as dysfunctional,¹⁴ the people of the Eastern Niger Delta developed a real sense of loss. The new challenges they faced sprang mainly from the loss of political power as the ultimate determinant of economic and developmental activities. It was with political power supported by military power that they dictated terms and made European traders pay 'comey'. With the loss of these powers, there was a change of the relationship that existed for centuries and the effects became mentally devastating.

It has been sufficiently demonstrated in this analysis that both during the pre-colonial era and the colonial period economic and political activities remained interlaced and not independent of each other. The history of the Eastern Niger Delta may not be peculiar to the demonstration of this mutual dependence of the economic and political forces. We cannot therefore ignore the fundamental fact which has become historically evident that they are related factors in modern

political culture. It is in this light that the agitation for a separate state by the people of the Eastern Niger Delta could be understood during the Minorities Commission.

It can also be recalled that in the colonial era, European investors and financiers rather than encourage industrial development, were concerned with exploitation of mineral and food resources, and with the support of government, made investment in infrastructure such as railways and rolling-stock. In order that colonies would not compete with industries in metropolitan Europe, industrialisation was not generally encouraged in the colonies. Since the major sustaining economic institutions at that time were those related to the agriculture sector, the principal export commodities favoured in all the regions were agricultural crops. It was cocoa in the Western region, groundnut, cotton and others in the North while that of the Eastern region was mainly palm produce. For instance, when Regional Development Boards were set up, it was intended that these should "dispose of funds made available by the Palm Produce Marketing Board for the development of palm produce industry and for the benefit and prosperity of the producers and the areas of production".¹⁵ The enormous fluvial complex of the Niger Delta has much of swamp soil than solid ground. Only mangroves (*rhizophora racemosa*) grow in the swamps which are not supportive of the palm trees. The area was consequently neglected.

Constitutional development at the time when Britain granted a measure of responsible government to Nigerians, made little or no changes in the position of things. From 1954, for

instance, the Nigerian Constitution became decisively federalist with its emphasis on regionalism. In each of the regions the dominant political party derived its popular support mainly from a dominant nationality group which tended to consolidate its ethnic interest. Ethnic groups in Nigeria at the time therefore displayed varying degrees of solidarity. The Ibo State Union, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Jam'iyyar mutanen Arewa (Northern Nigeria Congress) were examples of cultural unions from which regional political parties in power drew their strength. No region in Nigeria consisted of only a single ethnic group. There was in every region at least the cultural majority group with one or more ethnic minorities. Thus, before the 1954 Constitutional changes some nationalist leaders envisaged the creation of states based on linguistic and cultural affinity.

Although minority¹⁶ groups (racial or ethnic) have existed all over the world for many centuries, the colonial situation helped to fuel its negative impact in the various regions of Africa. In claiming spheres of influence, colonialists adjusted ethnic boundaries. Protectorates were carved in such a way that societies were established in which dominance of one group by the other came to be the basis of social order. The conditions that helped to aggravate the minority question were therefore basically two: first, the bringing into contact of people with different background, and, secondly, the domination of one group by the other.

Generally in Nigeria, the stunting of the majority groups' ethical instincts has been evident in their uncaring

attitude towards the ethnic minorities. Added to this was the problem of tribalism. All these made themselves manifest in the patterns of civil service or political appointments at the federal level. Inevitably, any society which abdicates its responsibilities for social stability and cohesion not only undermines its capacity to deal with the present but also sows seeds of future turmoil and subsequent disintegration. It was in recognition of these twin problems and a determination of the correction of the damage of the past that the 1979 Nigerian Constitution provided that "the composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity".¹⁷

A faithful adherence to such ideal would have given birth to a new set of values and loyalties which would eventually permit the construction of new socio-political bridges both within and between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. But the obsessive pre-occupation with the present due to some other motives, appears to entail grave disregard for the lessons of the past and a refusal to accept any sense of obligation towards posterity. From this analysis one could detect that what is necessary is a conscious reappraisal of our collective ideals rather than leave vital issues to be resolved by a fortuitous concatenation of social forces which in direction and dimension we may find difficult to control.

In view of the selfish tendencies of the dominant socio-political groups in the regions, ethnic minorities

demanding separation as a safeguard of their own interest. In the Eastern region the government established development Corporations which undertook agricultural and industrial projects, and sited these projects within the dominant cultural area. Perhaps the ecology of the Niger Delta was responsible for the non-siting of industries there. But the people of the area felt neglected and made no secret of it because there was virtually nothing by way of economic development with which to identify government in the area. Such a feeling of neglect rather than innate "feelings of hostility to the Ibo - speaking majority"¹⁸ made the people of the Eastern Niger Delta (and of Calabar-Ogoja) seek separate states.

The formation of the Rivers Chiefs and People's Conference was to pursue this separation. It was also their response to the other challenges of the moment (organisational and otherwise), and the Niger Delta Congress headed by Chief Harold Dappa Biriye became a political outgrowth of the Conference. For indeed, the desire for self identity became not only significant but also a powerful passionate motive. The formation of the political party served as a mechanism to pacify and direct the passion of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta in a constructive manner. It also helped to avoid too bitter a feeling of uneasiness that could set it in the course of political violence. As it is in many societies, much desire for self identity could "be diverted, directed, or cajoled, but there is no way to diminish or eradicate its overwhelming power".¹⁹

The geographical or physical condition of the Niger Delta since the early days of colonialism really cried for

help. The colonial administration was not interested in economic development of the colony. Where it constructed roads or railway lines it was either to enhance the administration or for the purpose of transporting export commodities. Since there was no such export commodity from the Eastern Niger Delta, it was neglected. In spite of the ten-year colonial welfare plan (1946-55), the one visible project was perhaps the experimental boat-yard at Egwanga-Opobo established in 1950.²⁰ But the fishing activities of the people of this zone were not taken into account in that plan. Neglect therefore appeared to be a colonial legacy for the people of this area.

The people of the then Rivers province in asking for separation tried to ally themselves with those of Calabar and Ogoja; and in December, 1953 there was the demand for a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) state. Most Rivers people felt that they would be a minority again in such a grouping since they were numerically inferior to the others. What appeared to be popular among them was therefore the demand for a separate Rivers State that would consist of the Rivers province in the Eastern Region and those of their Ijo kith and kin in the adjoining Delta Province of the Western Region.

Each of the regional minorities asking for separate state had a different type of opportunities and hardship with also a different set of competitors from the rest. Each also drew its own support from dominant political parties outside its region. Thus, while the NCNC opposed the creation of COR State in the Eastern region the A.G. supported it. Through the medium of such support for the cause of ethnic minorities

some of the regional political parties became national in character. This is a historic contribution of the ethnic - sectional opposition within each region in Nigeria. But critics denounced it as being divisive. However, the creation of states had vindicated the stand of the agitators and their supporters. And as T.N. Tamuno observed, contrary to the expectation of those who opposed the creation of states "Nigeria after independence and till the 1960's was not a united country nor were ethnic tensions less intense than was expected in 1958".²¹ One might perhaps add too that the nation facing its own moral conscience had prolonged ethnic upheavals and eventually convulsed into a civil war.

Arising from the 1954 Constitutional Conference, the Sir Henry Willink Commission was set up to ascertain the fears of ethnic minorities in Nigeria and to propose means of allaying them. If in view of the fact that certain problems are universal and so, adjure interaction and inter-relationships in order to promote progress, the Rivers people would like to associate with their neighbours but with their fate solidly in their own hands. If because certain social problems know no ^{be} boundaries and must therefore tackled on regional basis in order that the long term objectives of ensuring permanent solutions are to be realized, the Rivers people would like to associate with their neighbours but also on equal terms. And if regional cooperation was necessary to help mobilise more capital for development and to operate certain projects on a scale which would make them economic and viable, and also to improve efficiency in the use of human and natural resources,

the Rivers men would like to do so but not in a way that would place them at a disadvantage whether political or economic.²²

As it has been rightly observed, "a federation consists of a group of governments which have to work together; but they have not only got to work together, they must also (over a considerable part of the field) be able to work separately. It is important that they would have the liberty to work separately where they need to do so; and some degree of financial liberty is necessary for the purpose. Without such liberty they cannot be expected to cooperate smoothly, in the way fraternity requires".²³

Although initially the Rivers people were unsuccessful in their bid to get a state carved out for them, yet it became quite clear at independence that the dynamic laws expected to govern the distribution of social products under the regional set-up presented a picture very different from the harmony and justice assumed by those who drafted the independence constitution. As a developing economy with people of diverse cultural and linguistic background Nigeria developed certain awful traits, and the crucial factor among the dynamic forces came to be glaringly devoid of ethical attributes with regard to inter-group relationship.

In the Eastern Niger Delta discontent turned into open rebellion as evidenced by the Isaac Boro uprising. However it was the eventual creation of states a decade after the 1957 Constitutional Conference that came to ameliorate this invidious factor because it had the effect of breaking the

political monopoly of the majority groups and gave the minority groups too the chance of controlling the forces of development that affected their general welfare. The creation of states should therefore be regarded as the embodiment of history (and not of sentiment) for it represents the high water mark of past events and experiences. .

If colonialism as a feature of imperialism was, by and large, monopoly capitalism in the interest of metropolitan Europe to the disadvantage of African colonies, regionalism with ethnic majorities and minorities as practised in Nigeria through the Richard's constitution of 1946 down to the time of Nigeria's independence in 1960, tended to portray developmental differentials that favoured the majority groups, to the disadvantage of the minorities. But in the ultimate it was the creation of states in the way it ensured spread of political power that brought about balancing effects in economic development and modernisation in Nigeria. Once the salient features of the political dynamics were appreciated and their contextual socio-economic formations were understood, the forces of even-development were in this way liberated.

So far, history does not appear to have proved the Rivers people wrong for the changes that have occurred since 1970. Such changes, whether political or social or even economic, seem to make themselves manifest everywhere in that geographical area to a degree consistent with available resources. Baring the constraints of modern technology in black Africa in general which make the African grope for purpose and direction, the rate of change in the Rivers State

just as in many other areas in Nigeria, has shown remarkable improvement. This, however, is not to say that there does not exist a serious gap between resources and the administrative and political capacity to execute. It must also be admitted that the country in general and the Rivers state in particular, have been unable to muster the resources needed to carry a sustained development to its logical conclusion.

Yet, the ecological feature of the Rivers area has clearly left no one in doubt that it is not easy to achieve abundance at the expense of natural environment. The recommendation and acceptance by government of the Willink's Commission that both the Federal and Regional Governments should contribute to the development of the Niger Delta area only showed the extent and intensity of the ecological problem there.

In course of our analysis, we found it necessary to point out the outbursts of recrimination and rage by the ethnic minorities during the period. We explained that the social and political movements that were formed by them were committed to changing the patterns of relationship in order to bring about new concepts of equity and of self identity in the country. The establishment of Port Harcourt as an urban centre helped to bring out cohesive tendencies on the part of people of the Eastern Delta whose city-states before the colonial era were occasionally involved in disastrous wars. No doubt, their agitation for a separate state has helped to illuminate the nature of difficulties confronting economic development and socio-political evolution in the developing countries of Africa.

Having got their state eventually, the Rivers people appear to understand that it requires to be supported if not by others, by themselves in an ethnically divided country like Nigeria. What is however of historical significance about them is the fact that colonialism had helped to bring out in them a considerable degree of unity of purpose while at the same time it has constituted the cradle of contemporary ethnicity in the country at large.

Our study has also contrasted, to some extent, two social orders, one traditional and the other colonial; and two sets of forces, one tending to reinforce itself, and the other trying both to undermine it and to establish a new order. One however finds it difficult to formulate a strategy for social change which could validate the point that the transition so far attained through colonialism and the demise of the old order could have been otherwise achieved through revolution and ideological forces consciously and endogenously steered along definite proposed paths.

Given the social conditions in the various city-states at the time and the mood of revolt on the part of the wealthy class, especially the ex-slaves among whom were Jaja, Oko-Jumbo and others of their stamp, such possibility existed. But in an ultimate trial of strength with the traditional forces in authority, any revolutionary movement would have been unable to secure a wide and sustained support needed to carry a struggle of that dimension to its logical conclusion. A revolution in Nembe - Brass in the 18th Century merely brought

about a dual monarchy. Jaja's effort in Bonny in 1869/70 only resulted in a secession. Will-Braid's attempt in Kalabari failed; and Okujagu's hopes in Okrika were nipped in the bud.²⁴

Evidently, the relationship between existing traditional institutions and emergent political forces is an issue which always confronts a society in the stage of transition. It is not quite clear how these historical issues would have been resolved eventually without the colonial factor. All we have on record is that the disintegrative tendencies and the forces they produced hastened the demise of the old order as the colonial forces took advantage of them. In other words, left to themselves, the foregoing developments would hardly have constituted a situation capable of changing or even of posing a serious threat to the traditional positions of the indigenous rulers. Such developments have however become politically significant to the extent that they provided new situations capable of manipulation by the colonialists.

Finally, the experience of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta really appears to be a historical paradox. From the late 15th Century up to the middle of the 19th Century, it was they who controlled the commerce of the area. Yet none of the trade articles (slave or palm produce) was produced in their area. By the time petroleum was discovered in their area (and it became the dominant export) they had lost political and economic control. They had become a minority whether in terms of numbers or within the social context of the colonial era. It became an irony that the discovery of petroleum which

was expected to perform the magic of transforming the country's economy, appeared at the time to pollute the creeks and rivers on which the Eastern Delta fishermen depended for their livelihood. Even so, history's role in this regard has not changed for every period of history has both its victories and casualties.

It is against this background that one must see the economic and political fortunes of the people of the Eastern Niger Delta throughout the changing circumstances. Before the colonial era, they had "overwhelming military superiority" over their neighbours in the hinterland and "played the role of economic dictators" to them.²⁵ During the colonial era, everything appeared to be in a reverse order. Thus, one may perhaps ask if nature has this peculiar way of balancing her equations to enable people resolve how to heal the wounds of the past so that the act of healing may be the prelude to a lasting social, economic and political stability? Or is it that Professor Butterfield was right when he asserted that "there is something in the nature of historical events which twists the course of history in a direction that no man ever intended"?²⁶

Whatever may be the case and no matter how pleasant or unpleasant the experiences have been, ideals of justice, harmony and equality of all people in the country demand that we learn from this story a better way to live together and provide the basis for a response to the challenges of the times in order to enhance the chances of our survival

as a nation. We can also learn from this story a way of balancing our various cultural values against our overall socio-political requirements in order to be able to contribute to the growth of the Nigerian society in all its richness and apparent complexity.

FOOTNOTES

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4. Interview: Chief (Dr) Harold Dappa Biriye, 10th June 1986.
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10. Curtin, P. Feierman, S. Thompson, L. and Vansina, J. African History, Longman, 1982. p. 245.
11. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 42.
12. Curton, P.D. 'Cross-Cultural Trade in World History' Cambridge, 1984. p. 251.
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16. Minority in this context is in terms of number or quantity. Sociologists however think that in some areas, particularly in South Africa, Minority refers to a social fact that regard it as a condition of subordination, not quantity or number.
17. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 Cap. 2. Section 14 (3).
18. Sklar, R.L. Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation. New York. 1963 p. 137.
19. Goldwin, Robert, A. "John Locke" in Strauss, Leo and Cropsey, Joseph (eds) History of Political Philosophy. 2nd Edition. Chicago 1973 p. 484.
20. Onimode, B. Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria, London, 1983, p. 79.
21. Tamuno, T.N. 'Patriotism and Statism in the River State, Nigeria; Reprinted from African Affairs, the quarterly journal of the Royal African Society Vol. 71. No. 284, July, 1972. p. 268.
22. The African Continental Bank is an establishment in which Rivers, Imo and Anambra States have joint interests, apparently with no one placed at a disadvantage.
23. NAE. CER/66. Report of the Commission on Revenue Allocation. Lagos. 1951. p. 45.
24. F.O. 84/2194. No. 47. Ralph Moor to the Secretary of State, dated 19th December, 1892.
25. Dike, K.O. Trade and Politics..., p. 107.
26. Butterfield, H. The Englishman and His History (1944) p. 103 (quoted in Carr, E.H. What is History 1961 p. 51).

APPENDIX I

Treaty Between Great Britain and New Calabar, 4th July, 1884

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India etc., and the Kings and Chiefs of New Calabar, being desirous of maintaining and strengthening relations of peace and friendship which have for so long existed between them; Her Britannic Majesty has named and appointed E.H. Hewett, Esq., her Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, to conclude a treaty for this purpose.

The said E.H. Hewett, Esq., and the said Kings and Chiefs of New Calabar have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:

ART. I. Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland etc., in compliance with the request of the Kings, Chiefs, and people of New Calabar, hereby undertakes to extend to them, and to the territory under their authority and jurisdiction, her gracious favour and protection.

II. The Kings and Chiefs of New Calabar agree and promise to refrain from entering into any correspondence, Agreement, or Treaty with any foreign nation or power, except with the knowledge and sanction of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

III. It is agreed that full and exclusive jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over British subjects and their property in the territory of New Calabar is reserved to Her Britannic Majesty, to be exercised by such Consular or other officers as Her Majesty shall appoint for that purpose.

The same jurisdiction is likewise reserved to Her Majesty in the said territory of New Calabar over foreign subjects enjoying British protection who shall be deemed to be included in the expression 'British subject' throughout this Treaty.

IV. All disputes between the Kings and Chiefs of New Calabar or between them and British or foreign traders, or between the aforesaid Kings and Chiefs and neighbouring tribes, which cannot be settled amicably between the two parties, shall be submitted to the British Consular or other officers appointed by Her Britannic Majesty to exercise jurisdiction in New Calabar territories for arbitration and decision, or for arrangement.

V. The Kings and Chiefs of New Calabar hereby engage to assist the British Consular ^{or} other officers in the execution of such duties as may be assigned to them; and, further, to act upon their advice in matters relating to the administration of justice, the development of the resources of the country, the interests of commerce, or in any other matter in relation to peace, order, and good government, and the general progress of civilization.

VI. The subjects and citizens of all countries may freely carry on trade in every part of the territories of the Kings and Chiefs parties thereto, and may have houses and factories therein when, in the estimation of the British Consular or other officers, the state of the country of the Kings and Chiefs will admit of the trade being so extended.

VII. All ministers of the Christian religion shall be permitted to reside and exercise their calling within the territories of the aforesaid Kings and Chiefs who hereby guarantee to them full protection.

All forms of religious worship and religious ordinances may be exercised within the territories of the aforesaid Kings and Chiefs, and no hindrances shall be offered thereto.

VIII. If any vessel shall be wrecked within the New Calabar territories, the Kings and Chiefs will give them all the assistance in their power, will secure them from plunder, and also recover and deliver to the owners or agents all the property which can be saved.

If there are no such owners or agents on the spot, then the said property shall be delivered to the British Consular or other officers.

The Kings and Chiefs further engage to do all in their power to protect the persons and property of the officers, crew, and others on board such wrecked vessels.

All claims for salvage dues in such cases shall, if disputed, be referred to the British Consular or other officer for arbitration and decision.

IX. This Treaty shall come into operation, so far as may be practicable, from the date of its signature.

Done in duplicate on board Her Majesty's ship Flirt anchored in New Calabar River, this fourth day of July 1884.

Their

EDWARD HYDE HEWETT	X	KING AMACHRU
	X	GEORGE AMACHRU

Marks

Witness to signatures of King Amachru and George Amachru (signature illegible) Chairman of Court of Equity, New Calabar.

Their	X	WILL BRAID
	X	JOHN BULL
	X	HORSFALL MANUEL
	X	BOB MANUEL
Marks	X	YOUNG BRIGGS.

Witness to the above signatures from Will Braid to Young Briggs (signature illegible) Chairman of Court of Equity.

Knight's Beach, New Calabar River, August
16th 1884.

APPENDIX 2Treaty between Great Britain and Bonny, 22 August 1884

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, etc., and the Chiefs of Bonny, being desirous of maintaining and strengthening the relations of peace and friendship which have for so long existed between them;

Her Britannic Majesty has named and appointed E.H. Hewett, Esq., her Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, to conclude a Treaty for this purpose.

The said E.H. Hewett, Esq., and the said Chiefs of Bonny have agreed upon and conclude the following Articles:

ARTICLE I

Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, etc., in compliance with the request of the Kings, Chiefs, and people of Bonny, hereby undertakes to extend to them, and to the territory under their authority and jurisdiction, her gracious favour and protection.

ARTICLE II

The Kings and Chiefs of Bonny agree and promise to refrain from entering into any correspondence, Agreement, or Treaty with any foreign nation or Power, except with the knowledge and sanction of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE III

It is agreed that full and exclusive jurisdiction, civil and criminal over British subjects and their property

in the territory of Bonny is reserved to Her Britannic Majesty, to be exercised by such Consular or other officers as Her Majesty shall appoint for that purpose.

The same jurisdiction is likewise reserved to Her Majesty in the said territory of Bonny over foreign subjects enjoying British protection, who shall be deemed to be included in the expression "British subject" throughout this Treaty.

ARTICLE IV

All disputes between the Kings and Chiefs of Bonny, or between them and British or foreign traders, or between the aforesaid Kings and Chiefs and neighbouring tribes, which cannot be settled amicably between the two parties, shall be submitted to the British Consular or other officers appointed by Her Britannic Majesty to exercise jurisdiction in Bonny territories for arbitration and decision, or for arrangement.

ARTICLE V

The Kings and Chiefs of Bonny hereby engage to assist the British Consular or other officers in the execution of such duties as may be assigned to them; and, further, to act upon their advice in matters relating to the administration of justice, the development of the resources of the country, the interests of commerce, or in government, and the general progress of civilization.

ARTICLE VI

The subjects and citizens of all countries may freely carry on trade in every part of the territories of the Chiefs

parties hereto, and may have houses and factories therein, when, in the estimation of the Consular or other officer, the state of the Bonny country will admit of the trade being so extended; but at the markets now belonging to or which may hereafter be opened by Bonny, the sole and exclusive right to trade in palm-oil with the natives shall belong to the Bonny people, who in that one article only shall continue to be the middlemen between the natives and the foreign traders.

ARTICLE VII

All ministers of the Christian religion shall be permitted to reside and exercise their calling within the territories of the aforesaid Kings and Chiefs, who hereby guarantee to them full protection.

All forms of religious worship and religious ordinances may be exercised within the territories of the aforesaid Kings and Chiefs, and no hindrance shall be offered thereto.

ARTICLE VIII

If any vessels should be wrecked within the Bonny territories, the Kings and Chiefs will give them all the assistance in their power, will secure them from plunder, and also recover and deliver to the owners or agents all the property which can be saved.

If there are no such owners or agents on the spot, then the said property shall be delivered to the British Consular or other officer.

The Kings and Chiefs further engage to do all in their power to protect the persons and property of the officers, crew, and others on board such wrecked vessels.

All claims for salvage dues in such cases shall, if disputed, be referred to the British Consular or other officer for arbitration and decision.

ARTICLE IX

This treaty shall come into operation, so far as may be practicable, from the date of its signature. Done in duplicate, at Bonny, this 22nd day of August 1884,

Their	EDWARD HYDE HEWETT
X	WARRIBO MANILLA PEPPL
X	OKO JUMBO
X	ADDA ALLISON (per son, P. ALLISON)
	SAML. HART
X	SQUEEZE BANIGO
X	DUBLIN GREEN
X	CHARLES W. HOLLIDAY
X	JACK WILSON PEPPL
X	WILCOX
X	LONG JOHN (per OKO J.)
marks	WILLIAM BROWN (per G.P.)
	GEORGE PEPPL

Witness to all mark signatures, from W.M. Pepple to W. Brown, inclusive:

A.A. WHITEHOUSE, Chairman of Court of Equity

SOURCE: Hertslet, Vol. XVII, p. 141.

APPENDIX 3

Treaty between Great Britain and Opobo, 19 December, 1884

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India etc., and the Kings and Chiefs of Opobo, being desirous of maintaining and strengthening the relations of peace and friendship which have for so long existed between them;

Her Britannic Majesty has named and appointed E.H. Hewett, Esq., her Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, to conclude a Treaty for this purpose.

The said E.H. Hewett, Esq., and the said Kings and Chiefs of Opobo have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles:

Article I

Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland etc., in compliance with the request of the Kings, Chiefs, and people of Opobo, hereby undertakes to extend to them, and to the territory under their authority and jurisdiction, her gracious favour and protection.

Article II

The Kings and Chiefs of Opobo agree and promise to refrain from entering into any correspondence, Agreement, or Treaty with any foreign nation or power except with the knowledge and sanction of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

Article III

It is agreed that full and exclusive jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over British subjects and their property in the territory of Opobo is reserved for Her Britannic Majesty, to be exercised by such Consular or other officers as Her Majesty shall appoint for that purpose.

The same jurisdiction is likewise reserved to Her Majesty in the said territory of Opobo over foreign subjects enjoying British protection, who shall be deemed to be included in the expression 'British subjects' throughout the Treaty.

Article IV

All disputes between the King and Chiefs of Opobo, or between them and British or foreign traders, or between the aforesaid King and Chiefs and neighbouring tribes, which cannot be settled amicably between the two parties, shall be submitted to the British Consular or other officers appointed by Her Britannic Majesty to exercise jurisdiction in Opobo territories for arbitration and decision, or for arrangement.

Article V

The King and Chiefs of Opobo hereby engage to assist the British Consular or other officers in the execution of such duties as may be assigned to them, and further to act upon their advice in matters relating to the administration of Justice, the development of resources of the country, the interests of commerce, or in any matter in relation

to peace, order, and Government and the general progress of civilisation.

Article VI

(Free Trade article - not accepted by Ja Ja.)

Article VII

All White Ministers of the Christian Religion shall be permitted to exercise their calling within the territories of the aforesaid King and Chiefs, who hereby guarantee to them full protection.

Article VIII

If any vessel should be wrecked within the Opobo territories, the King and Chiefs will give them all the assistance in their power, will secure them from plunder, and also recover and deliver to the Owners or Agents all the Property which can be saved. If there are no such owners or agents on the spot, then the said property shall be delivered to the British Consular or other officer.

The King and Chiefs further engage to do all in their power to protect the persons and property of the officers, crew and others on board such wrecked vessels. All claims for salvage due in such cases shall, if disputed, be referred to the British Consular or other Officer for arbitration and decision.



Article IX

This Treaty shall come into operation so far as practicable from the date of its signature.

Done in duplicate at Opobo, this nineteenth day of December in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four.

(Signed) EDWARD HYDE HEWETT

JA JA

COOKEY GAM

PRINCE SATURDAY JA JA

FINEBOURNE his X mark

JOHN AFIRCA X

HOW STRONGFACE X

OGOLO X

WILLIAM OBANNEY X

BLACK FOUBRAH X

SHOOD PETERSIDE X

SAM ANNIE PEPPLE X

THOMAS JA JA X

SAM OKO EPELLA X

DUKE OF NORFOLK X

WILLIAM TOBY X

JUNGI X

WARISOE X

SAMUEL GEORGE TOBY X

Witness to the above marks

(Signed) HAROLD E. WHITE,

H.M. Vice-Consul

R.D. BOLER,

Chairman of the Court of Equity

APPENDIX 4

The Treaty between Great Britain and Okrika, 17th May, 1888

Her Majesty the queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Empress of India & Co. and the King and Chiefs of the District of Okrika being desirous of maintaining and strengthening the relations of peace and friendship which have for so long existed between them.

Her Britannic Majesty has named and appointed H.H. Johnston Esq., her Acting Consul for the Bight of Benin and Biafra to conclude the following articles.

- I. Her Britannic Majesty the queen of Great Britain and Ireland etc., in compliance with the request of the King and Chiefs and peoples of Okrika hereby undertakes to extend to them and to the Territory under their authority and jurisdiction her Gracious favour and Protection.
- II. The King and Chiefs of Okrika agree and promise to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement or Treaty with any foreign nation or power except with the knowledge and sanction of her Britannic Majesty's Government.
- III. It is agreed that full and exclusive jurisdiction civil and criminal over British subjects and their property in the Territory of Okrika is reserved to her Britannic Majesty to be exercised by such Consular or other officers as her Majesty shall appoint for that purpose. The same jurisdiction is likewise reserved to Her Majesty in the said territory of Okrika over foreign subjects enjoying British

protection who shall be deemed to be included in the expression British subjects throughout this Treaty.

IV. All disputes between the King and Chiefs of Okrika or between them and British or foreign traders or between the aforesaid King and neighbouring Tribes which cannot be settled amicably between the two parties shall be submitted to the British Consular or other officers appointed by Her Britannic Majesty to exercise jurisdiction in the Right of Biafra Territories for arbitration and decision or for arrangements.

V. The King and Chiefs of Okrika hereby engage to assist the British Consular or other officers in the execution of such duties as may be assigned to them and further to act upon their advice in matters relating to the Administration of Justice, the development of the resources of the country, the interest of commerce, or in any other matter in relation to peace, order and good government and the general progress of civilization.

VI. The subjects and citizens of all countries may freely carry on trade in every part of the territory of the King and Chief parties hereto and may have houses and factories therein.

VII. All Ministers of the Christian Religion shall be permitted to reside and exercise their calling within the territories of the aforesaid King and Chiefs who hereby guarantee to them full protection.

All forms of religions wor~~sh~~ip and religious ordinances may be exercised within the territories of the aforesaid king and chiefs and no hindrance shall be offered thereto.

VIII. If any vessel shall be wrecked within the Okrika Territories the king and chiefs will give them all the assistance in their power, will secure them from plunder and also recover and deliver to the owners or agents on the spot all the property which can be saved.

If there are no such owners or agents on the spot then the said properties shall be delivered to the British Consular or other officers.

The King and Chiefs further engage to do all in their power to protect the persons and the properties of the officers, crew and others on board such wrecked vessels.

All claims for salvage due in such cases shall if disputed be referred to the British Consular or other officers for Arbitration and decision.

IX. This Treaty shall come into operation so far as may be practicable from the date of its signature.

X. The Territory of Okrika is recognised by Her Britanic Majesty as extending along the North or left Bank of the Bonny River from Gholo Creek to the Manamatoro Creek and inland as far as the southern boundaries of the Ogoni country.

Signed at Okrika on the 17th Day of May, 1888.

Their X marks IBANITZUKA King of Okrika

"	"	"	IYANIBO TAMUNO (George of Okrika)
"	"	"	SARRIBO
"	"	"	NABUOSO
"	"	"	ORUBO
"	"	"	OBELLIBINKA
"	"	"	OBOARIKA
"	"	"	NNAHI
"	"	"	ORUAMA
"	"	"	IBARISOKO
"	"	"	FEVEREGIMA
"	"	"	ABARU
"	"	"	ATON AZIFE

Signed H.H. JOHNSON ACT CONSUL

WITNESSES TO)	GILBERT E. HARRISON L.T. COMDR.
SIGNATURE)	H. CHARLES DE CARDI MEMBER OF CO.
		BONNY WALTER E. CAREW.

APPENDIX 5

The Port Harcourt Agreement, 18th May, 1913

Agreement made the eighteenth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirteen between the Chiefs and Headmen set out in the schedule of this agreement (and all others set out therein) for and on behalf of themselves and their people, and Alexander George Boyle, Companion of the Most distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Deputy Governor of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria for and on behalf of His Majesty the King.

The District of Degama in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria is part of His Majesty's Dominions. Certain land is required therein for the services of the Colony and Protectorate as follows: All that piece or parcel of land bounded on the South by the waterway known as the Primrose Creek or Bonny River for a distance of three and a half miles more or less, on the West for a distance of five and half miles more or less again by the waterway known as the Primrose Creek or Bonny River, thence in a northerly direction for a distance of one mile eight hundred yards more or less by the west bank of the Creek known as the Ilechi Creek following the bends of the said Creek, to a boundary Post marked "A" at Ilechi Waterside, thence for a distance of one mile one thousand and seventy three yards due north to a boundary post marked "B" on the north

by a straight line measuring approximately five miles more or less from the boundary post marked "B" in a direction due east to a boundary post marked "C" on the Creek known as the Woji Creek, on the east by the said Woji Creek for a distance approximately of one and a half miles more or less, thence by the waterway known as the Okrika Creek for a distance of six and half miles more or less to the Southern boundary referred to above, containing in all an area of twenty five square miles more or less, and which is more or less accurately set out and described on the plan attached to this Agreement and coloured pink. And as there are many native occupiers on the land so required and as it is just and expedient that all such native occupiers should be paid compensation for their right title and interest upon the land so required.

We the Chiefs and Headmen and others in the Schedule attached to this Agreement do agree that in consideration of the payment of the sum of money set out against our several names in the Schedule on behalf of ourselves and our people to grant and sell unto the said Alexander George Boyle, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, ^{Governor} Deputy of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, all the right title and interest to which we and our people are entitled by native law and custom in the said land, and we agree further that should any person or persons dispute our sole right to the disposal of all interests in the said land any claims they may make shall be met and settled by us, who by the acceptance of the

payments of the monies set out in the Schedule attached hereto do hereby declare ourselves to be at the date of this agreement the sole possessors of all interests in the said land which may hereafter be made in respect of it.

(DIOBU) Chief Wobo His X Mark

" Ejebuwan His X Mark

" Aluku His X Mark

" Wokekoro His X Mark

" Atakos His X Mark

Headmen Ajoko Amadi His X Mark

" Chimua His X Mark

(Sgd) REGINALD HARGROVE

District Commissioner

Witness, Before us,

Chief Marian Braid of Bakana His X Mark

" Lulu Will Braid of Bakana His X Mark

Witnesses, Before us,

Chief Bagshaw Yellow His X Mark

" Wm. Davis Braid

(Sgd) D.A. Ogundire

" Atete

" Omokoroshi

and I certify that the above Agreement was correctly read over and interpreted by me to Chiefs Wobo, Ejebuwan, Aluku,

Wokekero, Atakos, and Headmen Ajoko Amadi, and Chimua, all of Diobu, who appeared to clearly understand the same and made their marks thereto in my presence, and in the presence of Chiefs Marian Braid, Lulu Will Braid and Bagshaw Yellow, whose marks I hereby witness, and Chiefs William Davis Braid Paul Ojudire, Assistant Native Court Clerk, Omokoroshi and Reginald Hargrove, District Commissioner.

Sgd. G. A. Yellow
District Interpreter, Degema

(OMO EME)

Chief Chima of Omo Eme His X Mark

" Otu Nya of Omo Eme His X Mark

" Amadi of Omo Eme His X Mark

" Amadi Baluku of Omo Eme His X Mark

" Woke of Omo Eme His X Mark

Witnesses Before us,

(Sgd) R.H.W. Hughes Commander "Ivy"

" Reginald Hargrove D.C.

And I certify that the above Agreement was correctly read over and interpreted by me to Chiefs Chima, Otu Nya, Amadi, Amadi Baluku and Woke, all of Omo Eme, who appeared to

clearly understand the same and made their marks thereto in my presence and in the presence of Commander R.H.W. Hughes of the Government Yacht "Ivy" and Reginald Hargrove, District Commissioner.

Sgd. G. A. Yellow
District Interpreter, Degema

(OMO AMASSI)

Chief Adele of Omo Amassi His x Mark

" Walu Amadukwe of Omo Amassi His x Mark

(OMOSIAKPAN)

Chief Ejerimele of Omobiakpan His x Mark

" Onyengorun of Omobiakpan His x Mark

" Ojoko of Omobiakpan His x Mark

(OGUNIBA)

Chief Ngawa of Oguniba His x Mark

" Amadi of Oguniba His x Mark

" Dike of Oguniba His x Mark

Witnesses, Before us,

(Sgd) David Tyson Ch: Engr. "Ivy" Sgd. Reginald Hargrove. District Commissioner. And I certify that the above Agreement was correctly read over and interpreted by me to Chiefs Adele and Walu Amadukwe, of Omo Amassi, Chiefs Ejerimele, Onyensorun, and Ojoko of Omobiakpan,

and Chiefs Ngawa, Amadi, and Dike of Oguniba; who appeared to clearly understand the same and made their marks thereto in my presence and in the presence of David Tyson, Chief Engineer of the Government Yacht "Ivy" and Reginald Hargrove, District Commissioner.

Sgd. G. A. Yellow
District Interpreter, Degema

(OKRIKA LANDS AND VILLAGES)

(sgd) Chief Daniel Kalio

- " David Aluwa Koko His x Mark
- " Okorio Okojiagu His x Mark
- " Fyenemika His x Mark
- " Anaiejubodiema His x Mark
- " Okuru His x Mark
- " Okpo His x Mark
- " Orieki His x Mark
- " Kurosiediema His x Mark
- " Idango His x Mark
- " Souarnumin His x Mark
- " Amengo His x Mark
- " Biotari His x Mark
- " Toipirima His x Mark
- " Iyoyo His x Mark
- " Igbisikalma His x Mark
- " Fimia His x Mark

Chief Eresofiari His x Mark

Witnesses - Before us,

Sgd. Reginald Hargrove
District Commissioner.

Sgd. E.S. Ogang C.N.C.

Okrika.

And I certify that the above Agreement was correctly read over and interpreted by me to Chiefs David Aluwa Koko, Okorio Okojiagu, Eyenmeika, Amiejubodiema, Okura, Okpo, Orieki, Kurosiediema, Idango, Sowarimin, Amengo, Biotari, Toipirima, Iyoyo, Igbisikalma, Femia, and Eresofiari, who appeared to clearly understand the same and made their marks thereto in my presence and in the presence of Reginald Hargrove, District Commissioner and Ephraim Stephen Ogang, Clerk to the Okrika Native Council.

Sgd. G. A. Yellow,
District Interpreter, Degema

Signed by the above named

Alexander George Boyle,

in the presence of

Sgd. Alexander George
Boyle

Sgd. D. C. Cameron

Prin: Asst: Secy:

SCHEDULE REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING AGREEMENT

We, Chiefs and Headmen of the Towns and Communities set forth in the Schedule below, hereby acknowledge the receipt on behalf of ourselves and our people of the sums of money set forth against our several names and communities, in full discharge of all our claims under the foregoing Agreement:

Town or Community	Amount	Signature of Chiefs
Diobu	Two thousand pounds (£2,000)	Chief Wobo His x Mark
		" Ejebuwan His x Mark
		" Obonda Aluku His x Mark
		" Wokekero His x Mark
		" Atakos His x Mark
	See Supplementary Agreement, dated 2nd May, 1928, and registered as No. 35 at page 230 in Volume 99 in the Lagos Registry.	Headman Ajoko Amadi His x Mark
		Headman Chimua His x Mark
	(sgd.) ? ? ?	Before us, Sgd.
	15.6.33.	G.A. Yellow D.I.
		Sgd. R.S. Ogang
		C.N.C. Okrika
		Witness to the above marks.
Omo Amassi	One hundred pounds (£100)	Chief Adele His x Mark
		" Walu Amadukwe His x Mark
		Before us sgd. David Tyson
		Ch. Engr. "Ivy"
		Sgd. G.A. Yellow, D.I.
		Witness to the above Marks

Town of Community	Amount	Signature of Chiefs
Omohiakpan	One hundred pounds (£100)	Chief Ejerimele, His x Mark " Onyengorum, His x Mark " Ojoko His x Mark Before us sgd. David Tyson Ch: Engr. "Ivy" sgd. G.A. Yellow, D.I. Witness to the above Marks.
Oguniba	Three hundred pounds (£300)	Chief Ngawa, His x Mark " Amadi, His x Mark " Diko, His x Mark sgd. David Tyson Ch: Engr. "Ivy" Sgd. G.A. Yellow. D.I. Witness to the above Marks.
Okrika Lands	Three thousand pounds (£3,000)	Sgd. Chief Daniel Kalio
Villages Including:		Chief David Aluwa Koko His x Mark
Biekiri,		Chief Okorio Okojiagu His x Mark
Abokiri		Chief Fyenemika, His x Mark
Balemaka		Chief Amiejubodiema, His x Mark
Abokiri		Chief Okuru, His x Mark
Akaikoroma		Chief Okpo, His x Mark
Azuable		Chief Orieki, His x mark

Abuloma	Chief Kurosiediema His x Mark
Toipirima	Chief Indango, His x Mark
Fiyenemika	Chief Sowarnumin His x Mark
Iyoyo	Chief Amengo His x Mark
Atubokiki	Chief Biokori, His x Mark
Igbisikilama	Chief Toipirima, His x Mark
Idango	Chief Iyoyo, His x Mark
Fimie,	Chief Igbisikilama, His x Mark
Amiejobodiema	Chief Eimie, His x Mark
Gbelabo	Chief Ereseari, His x Mark
Okuru Town	Sgd. E.S. Ogang,
Amadi Town	" C.N.C. Okrika
Amago	
Okojiagu	
Kurosiediema	Sgd. G.A. Yellow, D.I.
Eresofiari	Witness to the above marks
Misiba	
Duointa	
Banisuka	

Total - £5,650

Signed by the above named)	
Alexander George, Boyle,)	Sgd. Alexander George
in the presence of)	Boyle
Sgd. D.C. Cameron)	

OATH OF PROOF

I, Gabriel Yellow of Degema make oath and say that on the 2nd day of May, 1913, I saw Daniel Kalio duly execute the instrument now produced to me and marked 'A' and that the said Daniel Kalio can read and write and that I saw the persons whose names are specified below duly execute the said instrument now produced to me and marked "A" on the dates specified below and that the said persons cannot read and write and the said instrument was read over and interpreted to them by me at the time of execution and that they appeared to understand its provisions.

Chief Wobo of Diobu	18 April 1913
" Ejebuwan of Diobu	-do-
" Wokekero of Diobu	-do-
" Aluku of Diobu	-do-
" Atakos of Diobu	-do-
Headman Ajeko Amadi of Diobu	-do-
" Chinua of Diobu	-do-
Chief Chima of Omo Eme	26 April 1913
" Otu Inya of Omo Eme	-do-
" Amadi of Omo Eme	-do-
" Amadi Baluku of Omo Eme	-do-
" Woke of Omo Eme	-do-
" Adole of Omo Amassi	1 May, 1913
" Walu Amadukwe of Amassi	-do-

Chief Ejerimele of Omobiakpan	1 May, 1913
" Onyengorum of Omobiakpan	-do-
" Ojoko of Omobiakpan	-do-
" Ngawa of Ogunibia	-do-
" Amadi of Ogunibia	-do-
" Dike of Ogunibia	-do-
" David Aluwa Koko of Okrika	2 May, 1913
" Okorio Okijiagu of Okrika	-do-
" Fyenemika of Okrika	-do-
" Amiejubodiema of Okrika	-do-
" Okuru of Okrika	-do-
" Okpo of Okrika	-do-
" Orieki of Okrika	-do-
" Kurosiediema of Okrika	-do-
" Idango of Okrika	-do-

Sgd. Gabriel Yellow
Sworn at Degema this 31st day of
July, 1913

Before me,

Sgd. J.H.M. Whitehead
District Commissioner

CERTIFICATE OF PROOF

This instrument was proved before me by the oath of the within named Gabriel Yellow to have been duly executed by the within named persons on the following dates:

Chief Daniel Kalio	2 May, 1913
" Wobo of Diobu	18 April, 1913
" Ejebuwan of Diobu	-do-
" Aluku of Diobu	-do-
" Wokekero of Diobu	-do-
" Alakos of Diobu	-do-
Headman Ajoko Amadi of Diobu	-do-
" Chimua of Diobu	-do-
Chief Chima of Omo Eme	26 April, 1913
" Otu Inya of Omo Eme	-do-
" Amadi of Omo Eme	-do-
" Amadi Baluku of Omo Eme	-do-
" Woke of Omo Eme	-do-
" Adele of Omo Amassi	1 May, 1913
" Wale Amadukwe of Omo Amassi	-do-
" Ejerimele of Omobiakpan	-do-
" Oyeagorum of Omobiakpan	-do-
" Ojoko of Omobiakpan	-do-
" Ngawa of Ogunibia	-do-
" Amadi of Ogunibia	-do-
" Dike of Ogunibia	-do-

Chief David Aluwa Koko of Okrika

2 May, 1913

" Okorio Okijiagu of Okrika	-do-
" Fyemeika of Okrika	-do-
" Amiejubodiema of Okrika	-do-
" Okuru of Okrika	-do-
" Okpo of Okrika	-do-
" Orieki of Okrika	-do-
" Kurosiediema of Okrika	-do-
" Idango of Okrika	-do-
" Sowarunin of Okrika	-do-
" Amengo of Okrika	-do-
" Biotari of Okrika	-do-
" Toipirima of Okrika	-do-
" Iyoyo of Okrika	-do-
" Egbisikalma of Okrika	-do-
" Femia of Okrika	-do-
" Eresofiari of Okrika	-do-

Given under my hand and official seal.

Sgd. J.H.M. Whitehead, D.C.
July 31, 1913.

I, Ernest Gardiner Smith Principal Registrar of Deeds
for the Eastern Province of the Protectorate of Southern
Nigeria under and by virtue of the powers vested in me by
the "Lands Registration Ordinance" do hereby extend the

Chief David Aluwa Koko of Okrika 2 May, 1913

" Okorio Okijiagu of Okrika	-do-
" Fyemeika of Okrika	-do-
" Amiejubodiema of Okrika	-do-
" Okuru of Okrika	-do-
" Okpo of Okrika	-do-
" Orieki of Okrika	-do-
" Kurosiediema of Okrika	-do-
" Idango of Okrika	-do-
" Sowarunin of Okrika	-do-
" Amengo of Okrika	-do-
" Biotari of Okrika	-do-
" Toipirima of Okrika	-do-
" Iyoyo of Okrika	-do-
" Egbisikalma of Okrika	-do-
" Femia of Okrika	-do-
" Eresofiari of Okrika	-do-

Given under my hand and official seal.

Sgd. J.H.M. Whitehead, D.C.
July 31, 1913.

I, Ernest Gardiner Smith Principal Registrar of Deeds
for the Eastern Province of the Protectorate of Southern
Nigeria under and by virtue of the powers vested in me by
the "Lands Registration Ordinance" do hereby extend the

time for the registration of this instrument under the
Land Registration Ordinance No. 15 of 1907 until this date.

Given under my hand this 14th day of August, 1913.

Sgd. E.S. Smith
Principal Registrar of Deeds E.P.

This instrument was delivered to me for registration by
the Principal Registrar of Deeds Calabar at 8.58 O'Clock
in the forenoon this 14th Day of August, 1913.

Sgd. Moses Forster Aileru
Registrar of Deeds E.P.

This instrument is registered as No. 16 of 1913 and is
engrossed on pages 201 to 211 Register of Deeds Volume 7.

Sgd. Moses Forster Aileru
Registrar of Deeds E.P.

Fees Remitted
M.P.E/829/8
Intld. ???
11/9/13

Editor's Note:

This agreement can be seen in the Lands Registry,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

THE PENNY STAMP AGREEMENT (1927)

"At a meeting held at the Residency, Port Harcourt,
on October 29, 1927, Chief Wobo and the Chiefs and

Headmen of Diobu were informed that they may farm the land acquired by Government outside the Township area until such time as the Government require to use the land, and that they will receive twelve months notice of the intension of Government to use the land in the vicinity of the Diobu compound and that compensation will be paid for all houses which it found necessary to demolish".

Sgd. O.W. FIRTH
Acting Resident, Owerri Province

PENNY STAMP

(oc. C.S.O. 26/1, File No. 03269/VD.3, p. 417)

THE SUPPLEMENT AGREEMENT (1928)

Registered No. 35/Vol.99/p.230

"Agreement made the second day of May in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty eight.

"Between Chiefs Wobo, Ejobunwan, Abonda Aliku, Wokekoro, Atokas and Headmen Ajoku and Chinwa, for and on behalf of themselves, the Chiefs and Headmen (which expression shall include the said Chiefs, Headmen and people and their successors in office and their heirs, executors and administrators) and Sir Graeme Thomson, Governor of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

"Whereas the Chiefs and Headmen and the Governor desire to vary the terms of the Principal Agreement

(i.e. No. 16 of 1913) in the manner hereinafter appearing;

"Now, therefore, it is hereby agreed as follows:

"The purchase money to be paid to those Chiefs and Headmen shall be an immediate payment of the sum of £7,500 and thereafter a sum of £500 per annum, and continuing for all time hereafter, instead of the purchase money fixed by the original Agreement, No. 16 of 1913.

"Lastly, subject only to the variations herein contained the Principal Agreement (No. 16 of 1913) shall remain in full force and effect, and shall be read and be enforceable as if the terms of this present were inserted therein by way, of addition or substitution as the case may be".
(c.f. C.S.O. 26/1, File No. 03269/Vol. 3, p. 463, and Phlands 8/1/180, File No. 7922 pp. 126-7.

APPENDIX 6

HOUSE RULE PROCLAMATION

Proclamation No. 26 - 1901

(Enacted 21st November, 1901)

WHEREAS it is expedient for the preservation of peace and good order in the Protectorate to make provision for the maintenance of the authority vested in Heads of Houses by Native law and custom:

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED AS follows:

Short title.

1. This Proclamation may be cited as "The Native House Rule Proclamation, 1901".

Definitions.

2. In this proclamation, unless the context otherwise requires, "House" means a group of persons subject by Native law and customs to the control, authority, and rule of a chief, known as a Head of a House. "Member of a House" means and includes any person who by birth or in any other manner is or becomes subject to the control, authority, and rule of a Head of a House. "Native Law and Customs" includes any Native Law and Custom existing in the Protectorate relating to Houses, not repugnant to natural justice, nor incompatible either

directly or by necessary implication with any Proclamation in force at the commencement of this Proclamation, or which may thereafter come into operation, and any regulations relating to Houses passed under the provisions of "The Native Courts Proclamation, 1901," by a Native Council with the consent of the High Commissioner.

"Court" means a District Court or Native Court. "Commissioner" means a District Commissioner holding a judicial warrant.

All members of Houses to be subject to native law and custom. Proceedings to be commenced before a commissioner.

3. Every member of a House shall from and after the commencement of this Proclamation be subject to Native Law and Custom.

4. All proceedings under this Proclamation shall be commenced before a Commissioner, who shall have full jurisdiction to determine summarily all such proceedings. Every such Commissioner may at any stage of any proceedings direct the same to be transferred to and determined by any Native Court in his district, unless one of the parties to such proceedings is a European.

Offences by
members of Houses
against law
relating to
Houses. Penalty.

5. Every member of a House who
refuses or neglects to submit himself
to the control, authority, and rule
of the Head of his Houses in accordance
with Native law and custom shall be
liable on conviction to a fine not
exceeding £50, or to imprisonment with
or without hard labour for any term
not exceeding one year, or to both.

Warrant for arrest
of member of House
committing an
offence.

6. Where a member of a House is charged
upon oath of the Head of the House or
his representative with an offence under
the last preceding section, the
Commissioner before whom the charge is
made may issue a warrant directing the
person named therein to arrest and
bring before him such member of the
House to be dealt with for the
offence with which he is charged.

Offence by head of
House against law
relating to Houses.

7. Every Head of House who neglects
or refuses to perform, or acts in
contravention of, the obligations
imposed upon him by the Native law
and customs towards any member or members
of his house shall be liable on conviction
to fine not exceeding £50, or to imprison-
ment with or without hard labour for any
term not exceeding one year, or to both.

Penalty.

Wandering members
of Houses and
destitute persons.

8. Any person wandering abroad or having no apparent means of subsistence may be arrested by any officer of any Court within the district in which such person is found, without a warrant, and brought before the Commissioner of such district, and questioned as to his means of subsistence and to which House he belongs.

If it appears that he belongs to a House, notice shall be given to the Head of such House who may thereupon commence such proceedings as he think fit under this Proclamation, or under Native law and custom.

If the person arrested refuses when questioned to answer to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, and it does not appear that he belongs to a House, or if the Head of the House to whom any notice of the arrest has been given as aforesaid does not commence proceedings within seven days after the receipt of such notice, such person, unless he proves that he has sufficient means of subsistence, or that his want of such

means is not the result of his own fault, shall be liable to imprisonment with hard labour for any term not exceeding one year.

Power of Court
to order --

9. In any proceedings under this Proclamation the Court, whether it impose a fine or term of imprisonment or not, may order:

Payment of
compensation;

(i) That the defendant pay to the complainant such sum as the Court may think fit as compensation for any loss or injury sustained.

Discharge from
obligations;

(ii) That upon payment of such sum or fulfilment of such conditions as the Court may direct, or unconditionally, the complainant or defendant be discharged from further performance of all or part of the obligations imposed upon him by Native law and custom relating to houses; or

Fulfilment of
terms of settle-
ment.

(iii) That the terms of any arrangement agreed to by the parties for the settlement of any question with respect to their obligations under Native law and custom relating to houses be carried into effect.

Any person who shall commit a breach of any order under this section shall be liable to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding six months.

Penalty for resisting arrest.

10. Every person who resists or obstructs the lawful apprehension of himself for any offence under this Proclamation, or escapes or attempts to escape from any custody in which he is lawfully detained, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £50, or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding one year, or to both.

Offences by employers in respect of members of Houses.

11. Any European or Native (1) who knowing a Native to be a member of a House employs such Native without the express or implied consent of the Head of the Houses, or (2) who not knowing that a Native is a member of a House, does not use every endeavour to ascertain whether such Native is or is not a member of a House before employing such Native, or (3) who not knowing, notwithstanding that he has used every endeavour, that a Native is a member of a House employs such Native, and subsequently discovering



Penalty.

Payment of
expenses and
compensation
for arrest.

Imprisonment
in default of
payment.

that he is a member of a House fails to give notice of the fact to the Head of the House to which such Native belongs, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £50, or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding one year, or to both.

12. (1) The Court may order any person convicted of an offence under this Proclamation to pay all or any part of the costs and expenses of the proceedings against him; and (2) where it appears to the Court that any proceedings are malicious, vexatious, or frivolous, the Court may order the complainant to pay all or any part of the costs and expenses of the accused, and where the accused has been arrested on a charge on the oath of the complainant may order the complainant to pay in addition to any such costs and expenses, or any of them, such sum not exceeding £25, as it may think fit, as compensation.

13. The Court may at any time direct that payment of the costs and expenses and compensation, or any of them, ordered to be paid under the provisions of the

last preceding section, shall be made on or before a specified date, and may also order that if default is made in such payment the person so directed to pay shall be imprisoned with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding three months, unless payment of such costs, expenses, and compensation or any of them ordered to be paid, be sooner made.

Imprisonment
not to
extinguish
liability.

14. No imprisonment under the provisions of this Proclamation shall operate as a satisfaction or extinguishment of any liability to pay any sum ordered by the Court to be paid as costs, expenses or compensation, under the provisions of this Proclamation.

Commencement
of Proclamation.

15. This Proclamation shall commence and come into operation on the first day of January, in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and two.

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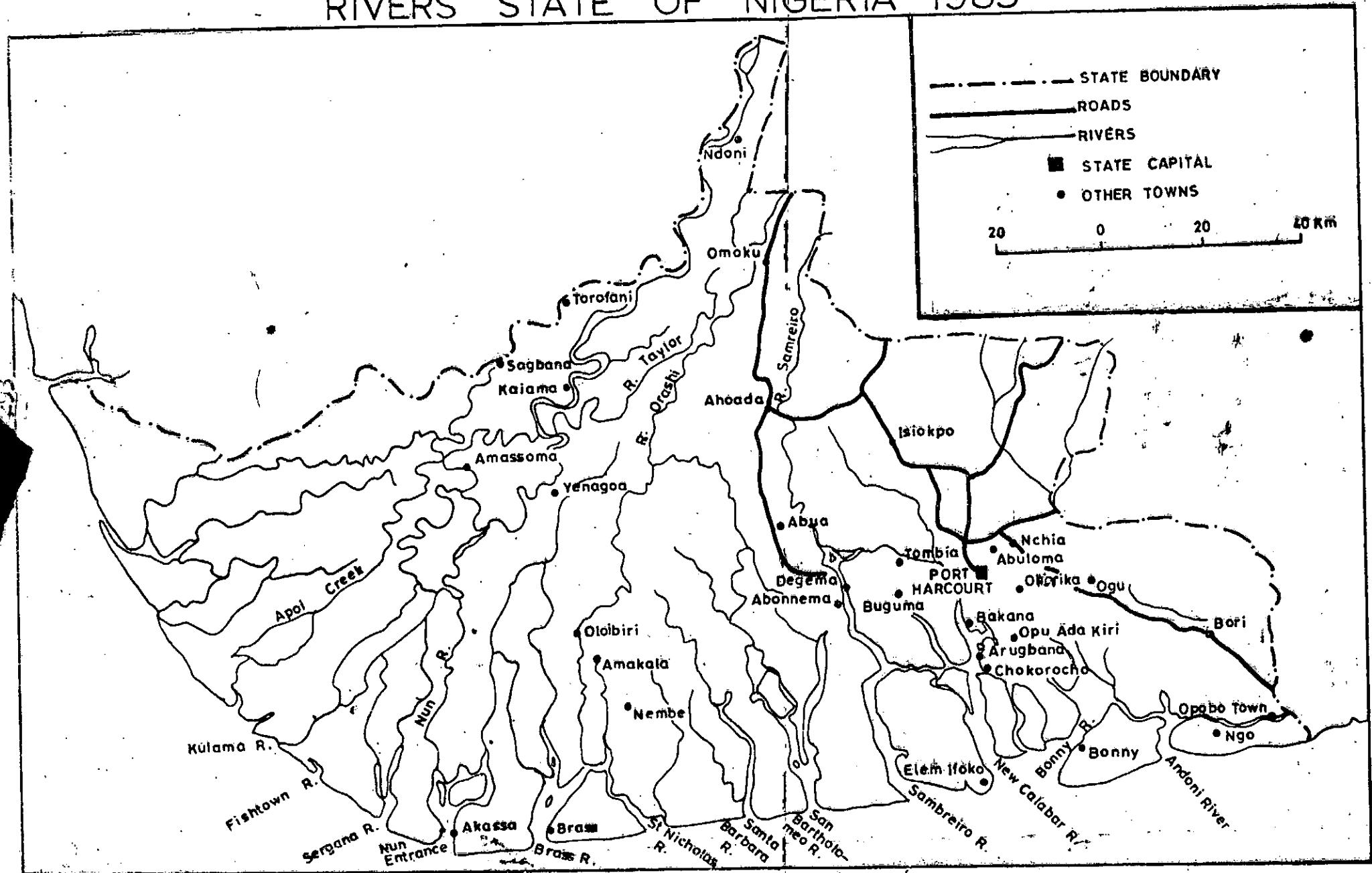
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