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**BRITISH ANTICOMMUNIST POLICY**  
**AND THE TRANSFER OF POWER IN NIGERIA**

**FROM THE LATE 1930s TO 1960**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

The subject of the thesis is the attempt to control communist influence by the British within the wider history of decolonization and the transfer of power in West Africa. It concerns the evolution and implementation of anti-communist policies in the colonies with special reference to Nigeria. It analyses British policy in Nigeria within the context of the Cold War and the efforts of the Western powers to secure the good-will of Nigerian leaders after independence. It suggests that the success of the various anti-communist measures marked the beginning of the special relationship between Britain and the emergent Nigerian elite which took the country into independence in 1960. The study reviews the role of the Nigerian Left in the light of new evidence and concludes that communism was of considerable significance during the terminal colonial history of Nigeria. It shows that decolonisation and the transfer of power consisted of more than constitution-making, economic and development planning, the Nigerianisation of the civil service and the institutionalisation of a parliamentary system and federalism. The study is an analysis of the transition from colonialism to independence which emphasises the involvement of the out-going colonial power in the development of Nigerian domestic politics in the 1950s.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

- AA - African Affairs.
- AG - Action Group.
- AMCONGEN - American Consul General.
- AMCONSUL - American Consulate.
- ANTUF - All-Nigerian Trade Union Federation.
- BC - British Council.
- BDEEP - British Documents on the End of Empire.
- CO - Colonial Office.
- COMCOL - Commissioner of the Colony.
- CPGB - Communist Party of Great Britain.
- CRO - Commonwealth Relations Office.
- CSO - Chief Secretary's Office.
- DEFE - Defence Department.
- DOS - Department of State.
- FGY - Federation of German Youth.
- GF - General File.
- HTL - Harry Truman Library.
- ICFTU - International Confederation of Trade Unions.
- ICS - Institute of Commonwealth Studies.
- IJAHS - International Journal of African Historical Studies.
- ILO - International Labour Organisation.
- IUS - International Union of Students.



- JAH - Journal of African History.
- JHSN - Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria.
- JMAS - Journal of Modern African Studies.
- MP - member of parliament.
- Mss - manuscript.
- MRM - Moral Re-armament Movement.
- NA - Native Authority.
- NAE - National Archives Enugu.
- NAI - National Archives Ibadan.
- NARA - National Archives and Record Administration.
- NCNC - National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon  
(later became National Council of Nigerian Citizens).
- NCTUN - National Council of Trade Unions, Nigeria.
- NEPU - Northern Element Peoples Union.
- NJESS - [The] Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social  
Studies.
- NLC - Nigeria Labour Congress.
- NMLHA - National Museum of Labour History Archive.
- NNSP - Nigerian National Socialist Party.
- NPC - Northern Peoples Congress.
- NPV - Nigerian Peoples Voice.
- NSUDIV - Nsukka Division.
- NUS - Nigerian Union of Students.
- NWU - National Women's Union.
- NYC - Nigerian Youth Congress.
- NYM - Nigerian Youth Movement.

OAG - Officer Administering the Government.  
OEA - Overseas Employers' Association.  
PCI - Peoples Committee for Independence.  
PSF - President's Secretary File.  
PREM - Prime Minister's Papers.  
PRD - Public Relations Department.  
PRO - Public Record Office.  
RIIA - Royal Institute of International Affairs.  
RHL - Rhodes House Library.  
SOAS - School of Oriental and African Studies.  
S of S - Secretary of State.  
TUC - Trade Union Congress.  
UK - United Kingdom.  
UMBA - United Middle Belt Alliance.  
UPC - Union des Populations du Camerounais.  
UWPP - United Working Peoples Party.  
USA - United States of America.  
USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.  
WASN - West African National Secretariat.  
WASU - West African Students Union.  
WIDF - Women's International Democratic Federation.  
WFDY - World Federation of Democratic Youth.  
WFTU - World Federation of Trade Unions.  
WO - War Office.  
WP - Working Party.  
WPCIPC - Working Party for the Colonial Information

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CHAPTER ONEGENERAL INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with analyses of transfer of power in Nigeria within the context of anti-communism. Hitherto the transfer of power has been examined within the framework of constitution-making, nationalist politics, development and economic planning. As the literature review will show there are many autobiographies and biographies of most nationalists and labour leaders in Nigeria. Yet communist penetration and anti-communism as aspects of transfer of power in Nigeria, remain to be fully discussed.

This study is therefore not about constitution-making, the colonial economy and development. Neither is it about nationalist politics in the way it has been presented before. But it is about nationalist and labour movements as they relate to communist infiltration of the colonies after World War II. Nationalism, constitution-making and the colonial economy are discussed only in relation to communism and anti-communism.

Suffice it to say that this study is about attempts to develop a Marxist-Leninist movement in Nigeria during the 1940s and 1950s, and the colonial governments' (both Central and Regional) attitudes towards it. The Colonial State did not allow what it referred to as the long term furthering of Cominform through its satellites such as the CPGB, in her most populated colony and protectorates of Nigeria. I should mention, however, that my analyses are restricted mainly to Nigeria excluding the mandated territory of Cameroon (except where some references are important to events in Nigeria).<sup>1</sup>

(1.1) DISORDER AND THE IDEA OF CONTROL AND PERSUASION:

Colonial territories were not insulated from world politics before and after World War II. Events in the colonies were directly and indirectly influenced by the external politics of Cold War. By 1948 communist uprisings had emerged in Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines, Burma and Indo-China. In West Africa, the Accra riots of February 1948 and the Zikists' "A Call for Revolution" in October 1948, jolted officials from their slumber.<sup>2</sup>

While India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon were granted independence in succession, multi-racial Malaya's independence was delayed partly because of the activities

of the Malayan Communist Party. By 1953 British forces, assisted by troops from other Commonwealth countries, had suppressed the Malayan Communist Party insurgency.<sup>3</sup> In Egypt, however, the British and the French lost their investment in the Suez Canal due to its nationalisation in 1956 by Nasser.<sup>4</sup> Although Nasser was mostly seen as a nationalist (he was never a card carrying member of the Communist Party, neither did he profess communism), his acceptance of aid from the Soviet Union and the leadership of the Muslim world was however viewed with some anxiety by officials. Both British and American officials were concerned about his actions in World politics, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>5</sup>

That aside, some of the colonies were characterised by what Frank Furedi called 'disorder and the communist threat'.<sup>6</sup> From Malaya, Cyprus, British Guiana, the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Kenya, States of Emergency were declared to curtail disorder. While the British were willing to carry out reforms within the colonies, they were at the same time unwilling to lose control.<sup>7</sup> However, control was not usually characterised by the use of force. There was also the use of persuasion which largely explains cooperation between British officials and leading nationalists and unionists in Nigeria during the period.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, Porter and Stockwell are right when they state that "Imperial control has always depended on a measure of co-operation or collaboration between colonial rulers and influential local interest groups".<sup>9</sup> Britain was not willing to ignore African agitators, nor was she prepared to drive them into the open arms of world-wide Bolshevism.<sup>10</sup> And as Sir Bryan Sherwood Smith notes:

... it was not communism as a doctrine that we feared. The danger lay in the covert fostering by organised communism of any individual or group seeking to overthrow established authority for political ends.<sup>11</sup>

(1.2) THE CONTEXT:

This study is sited within the context of the Cold War, nationalism and disorder and the politics of decolonisation in Nigeria between the 1945 and 1960. The Cold War between the East and the West affected the colonies as they were under the control of the Western Allies. The Eastern bloc was always at the forefront of anticolonial campaigns in the United Nations.

Thomas Hodgkin narrated African party ideologies during the colonial period. He argued that African party ideologies seem to be roughly grouped around two poles -



'radical' and 'conservative'. As he put it: "Ideologies of the former type emphasize the need for a rapid transfer of political power from the colonizers to the colonized". He maintained that, "ideologies of the 'conservative' type while in general assuming the inevitability of a transfer of power, argue that it should be orderly and gradual; and that, after independence, ties with the former colonial state should, as far as possible, be retained".<sup>12</sup>

Nationalism, for its part, became militant partly because of support from the Communist International (from September 1947 Cominform) and its satellites in Europe. Records, however, show that attempts at forming a centralised Marxist-Leninist movement in Nigeria in the 1940s and 1950s was not only episodic, but unorganised.<sup>13</sup> Differences in tactics and personality clashes paved the way for un-coordinated and pseudo-Marxist organisations mostly in the southern part of the country.<sup>14</sup>

While some believed that a mass and nation-wide political party such as the NCNC could serve their purpose (Eze's group), others were of the opinion that a Marxist party should be formed so that the bourgeoisie would not hijack the revolution (Ikoku's group). The latter were of the view that a Marxist party would

metamorphose into a Communist Party of Nigeria in the near future. These differences partly explain the absence of a nation-wide Marxist movement and the failure of Communism in post-World War II Nigeria. What emerged was a cluster of pseudo-Marxist groups with different tactics towards achieving their aim i.e. a Socialist state that would metamorphose into a communist state in Nigeria. Their common ground was reliance upon directives and support from the CPGB and WFTU; although as the evidence show, such directives were not strictly followed.<sup>15</sup>

This leads to the often asked question concerning the meaning of Communism to Nigerians during the period. While one cannot deny the fact that nationalists were adequately informed about the ideology of Communism, they (like their British compatriots for instance)<sup>16</sup> not only understood the strains in adapting it to their situation, but created a distinctive meaning and application of the ideology. They understood the role of the working class and the peasants; the inevitability of the class struggle; the need for a momentary cooperation with the bourgeoisie; the aim of the Socialist state as a transition to a Communist state; and of course, the need for tactical adaptation of the process in relation to their colonial situation. In fact, Lenin once noted that "all nations will arrive at socialism... but not the same

way".<sup>17</sup>

Agunbiade-Bamishe is quite representative of their view. According to him: "I am a Communist on the conviction that a political ideology which is based on the philosophy of Marx-Lenin-Stalinism is the only political ideology that can best serve the interests of the Nigerian people".<sup>18</sup> One can say that Communism made in-roads among these Nigerians because it addressed the plight of the working class and the peasantry under colonialism. Samuel Ikoku in one of his editorials in the Nigerian Socialist Review (successor to Labour Champion, of which he was a co-editor) exemplified the thinking and goal of the more radical Nigerian Marxists during the '50s. As he notes:

We must start a Party... the party of the Working class in alliance with the poor peasantry. It must be guided by the tested theory of the struggles of the working classes the world over - the theory of Marxism-Leninism. It must adopt the road of open and determined revolutionary struggle against imperialism and against all forces of exploitation and oppression.<sup>19</sup>

To most 'men-on-the-spot' such Marxist ideas could not be treated lightly. Thus, anxiety about communism was invariably tied with decolonisation and the transfer of power. As one might have expected, Britain as a leading

Western power took measures aimed at preventing Communists from becoming involved in the decolonisation process.

The idea was to create colonies supportive of the Western bloc in the struggle with the Soviet Union and its allies. It was generally believed that unless Western European nations, and the United States, secured the goodwill of the colonies at independence, they might become aligned with the USSR. As Walker put it: "The enemy is the communist system itself - implacable, insatiable, unceasing in its drive for world domination".<sup>20</sup>

Anti-communism was thus conceptualized both as an hostility toward Soviet (its satellites inclusive) influence and leftist notions of political development in Nigeria as elsewhere in the British colonies. Herein lies the basis of anti-communist measures as an aspect of transfers of power in British colonies after 1945.

British anti-communism, therefore, was an attempt to maintain vital interests in various parts of the World, which the government believed were threatened by the Cold War tactics of the Soviet Union and her satellites. It also aimed at satisfying its Western Allies,

particularly, the United States. Hence, reasonable provision for the security of the United Kingdom and her allies was partly based on the success of anti-communist measures within her large colonial empire during the post-1945 era.

(1.3) LITERATURE REVIEW:

While there are many studies of nationalism and decolonisation in Nigeria, not much has been written about official and un-official attitudes towards marxist labour and nationalist leaders in the post-1945 era. Communism and anti-communism have been given only slight attention by scholars of the transfer of power in Nigeria. In this category are the works of Olusanya, Coleman and Sklar.<sup>21</sup>

Ahmadu Bello, Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro and Sir Bryan Sherwood Smith mention it in passing in their autobiographies.<sup>22</sup> Amechi, Davies, Foot, Mbadiwe, Nzimiro and Osita did not give in depth accounts of the role of Communist International in their memoirs, but emphasised the evolution and ideals of Zikism.<sup>23</sup> Azikiwe on the other hand gave a general description of communism and the state. He emphasised the role of the few notable communists in post-independence Nigeria. His conclusion

however is that 'communism is suitable for adaptation but not for adoption in Nigeria'.<sup>24</sup> Lawal on the other hand identify the significance of anti-communism in British devolution policies, but was unable to unearth official and unofficial documents beyond 1951.<sup>25</sup>

In contemporary world politics, Communism has evoked an enormous outpouring of literature, both academic and propagandist. These studies could be classified under: country studies, comparative studies, and a critique of the ideology and practices of Communism as a revolutionary movement, especially in the Western World. I must add that most books about comparative Communism are ordinarily collections of articles dealing with the various Communist States.<sup>26</sup>

Albright, Coker, Dunbabin, Klinghoffer, Mckay and Schatten on the other hand are not particularly interested in Nigeria, but in the communist threat in Africa and Asia generally. They are also concerned with how such were contained by the colonial powers and their Western Allies before power was transferred to the colonies.<sup>27</sup>

Russian interest in enjoying some sympathy among black Africans before World War II is analyzed by Wilson.

He argued that: "Russian involvement had begun in Africa long before the Second World War and had strong historical roots". In this pioneering study, he maintained that: "Having failed to establish colonies of her own, Russia adopted a policy of preventive imperialism, attempting to deny other powers what she herself could not have".<sup>28</sup>

Abdul Raheem and Olukoshi, Falola and Adebayo, Eze, Okoye, and Uyilawa also present a narrative of the Left-wing and socialist struggle in Nigeria.<sup>29</sup> Falola in another study, however, gave an in-depth account of colonial development planning and decolonization in Nigeria. His account remains a vital source towards understanding anti-socialist measures in colonial developmental plans.<sup>30</sup>

The extent to which ideology influenced nationalist and labour leaders has been the subject of some studies in recent time. An account of the significant role of the Zikist Movement in the nationalist struggle in Nigeria is the work of Iweriebor. He concludes that: "under Eze and Okoye, the movement's political orientation and discourse had acquired a definite socialist inflection".<sup>31</sup>

Alade, Ikoku, Madunagu, Osoba, Waterman and

Zachernuk discuss the communist threat in their studies but do not highlight official anti-communist measures.<sup>32</sup> Narasingha on the other hand compared the role of the Left during the colonial and post-colonial period and concludes that "socialism holds an uncertain prospect for the future of Nigeria".<sup>33</sup> Frank in "Ideological Competition in Nigeria: Urban Populism versus Elite Nationalism", analyses the nature of ideology in Nigeria and relates ideological competition to conflict between Federal and local interests.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, none of these scholarly works benefits from materials at the CPGB and TUC archives in Manchester and Warwick respectively.

Arikpo traces the history of Nigeria from the first contact with the Europeans. He emphasises Nigeria's constitutional evolution from 1914 to 1963, the emergence of nationalism and the problem of Federalism. Crowder in his The Story of Nigeria, was interested in a general history of the country. He emphasised the impact of western values, the emergence of indigenous elites and internal political conflict.<sup>35</sup>

Awa in his Federal Government in Nigeria, narrates the political history of the country by examining various constitutions and the workings of the government. In



another study, he focuses on the place of ideology in Nigerian politics. Three strands of ideology were identified: nationalism, capitalism and socialism. On nationalism, Awa concludes that "although the nationalist movement increased the momentum of the agitation for independence, it did not evolve any ideas that could help develop consensus in the country".

"Most leaders in Nigeria", according to Awa, "favoured capitalism to socialism". To him, "socialism has not made a great impact on the society in practical terms because, there are many strands to the ideology. Its votaries have tended to dissipate energy fighting one another and not the primary adversary, namely, poverty, and those who perpetuate it". Another reason he gave is that "principal spokesmen for socialism at one time or the other abandoned the cause and either went over to the capitalist camp or remained neutral in the ideological debate".<sup>36</sup>

Aluko, Kirk-Greene and Phillips in their separate studies have given insights into the evolution and development of the foreign service and foreign policy in Nigeria. Aluko and Kirk-Greene agreed that the evolution of foreign service should be dated back to 1950 when the process of Africanisation was in full gear. Both,

however, failed to identify ideological undertones in the evolution and development of the Nigerian foreign service during the period. The emergence of a non-neutralist foreign policy on the eve of independence is narrated by Phillips. He discussed the place of ideology and the East-West politics as a campaign issue during the 1959 general elections. The implications of an anti-communist foreign policy on domestic politics after independence is also analyzed.<sup>37</sup>

Apthorpe, Bhambri, Dudley, Omer-Cooper and Post are concerned about the progress and prospects of marxism in Nigeria. In July 1964 a symposium was held at Ibadan where scholars discussed marxian ideas and social progress in Nigeria. Some of the papers presented were later published in The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies. Apthorpe focused on marxism and law in Nigeria. He concluded that the Marxian ideas do not fit into Nigerian law, nor is it wholly applicable. Bhambri in "Marxist Economic Doctrines and their Relevance to Problems of Economic Development of Nigeria", maintained that Nigeria could not afford to be aligned with the Eastern bloc. As he put it, "dependency on the communist countries is likely to expose the Nigerian economy to more dangerous forms of instability".<sup>38</sup>

Dudley in "Marxism and Political Change in Nigeria", concluded that marxism only succeeded, so far as the marxists were willing to cooperate with the bourgeoisie. "That is why", according to him, "independent Nigeria emerged with a ruling governing class recruited mainly from the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie". Omer-Cooper in his "Nigeria, Marxism and Social Progress", concluded that, "if taken ... as a scheme to be applied dogmatically to circumstances so different from those which inspired its authors - it could only lead to illusion and conceal the real problems of social progress in Nigeria".<sup>39</sup>

The use of the media, particularly the BBC, in propaganda is best analyzed by John Mackenzie and Charles Armour in their separate studies. Mackenzie in "'In Touch with the Infinite': The BBC and the Empire, 1923 - 1953", highlights history of the BBC stations, and concludes that "at the very least they contributed to a political climate in which the British public would not tolerate any party which was anti-monarchical or which seemed to attack Britain's complacent sense of superiority".

Charles Armour is interested in the development of broadcasting and information in British colonial Africa. In his article, "The BBC and the Development of

Broadcasting in British Colonial Africa 1946-1956", he analyzed post-war interest in broadcasting in the context of the Cold War and African nationalism. He concludes that the development of broadcasting in post-war British Africa generally, and in Nigeria in particular, was a matter of urgency to make colonial government policies more readily available to the public in order to stem radical and communist propaganda. Educating colonial peoples, it seems, was seen in the Colonial Office as one of many safety valves against unrest in the colonies. This function, according to Armour, was performed by the BBC in cooperation with the Public Relation Offices in the colonies.<sup>40</sup>

Ajala, Esedebe, Langley, Legum and Padmore were interested in general Pan-African use of some of the ideals of communism as the basis of nationalist struggle in Africa.<sup>41</sup> Rupert Emerson's Africa and United States Policy (1967) remains a useful antidote to the views of those who claim that decolonisation was largely forced on the colonial powers by the Americans, but his argument that Washington was not interested in the communist threat as it related to Africa is incorrect.<sup>42</sup>

Ananaba, Akpala, Cohen, Cowan, Otobo, Egboh, Tokunboh and Yesufu have given leads in their studies

about Nigerian trade union movements. Ananaba in The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria (1969) gave a lucid account of labour politics in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Also in The Trade Union Movement in Africa (1979), he provides insights into the evolution of labour movements in Africa generally. Akpala emphasises the evolution of trade union movements in Nigeria and attempts after 1945, to institute educational programmes for unionists afterwards. Cohen in his Labour and Politics in Nigeria (1981), discussed the history of labour movements in Nigeria emphasizing the role of international labour politics in the split of union leaders.

Cowan traces the history of trade union worldwide, highlighting its role in nationalism. Egboh's studies are mainly about the origin of trade unionism and its problems and prospects during the colonial period. Otobo in his various studies on labour relations and trade unions in Nigeria provides us with information in this regard. In Foreign Interest and Labour Unions in Nigeria (1986) and State and Industrial Relations in Nigeria (1988), he gave a clear account of the origin and growth of the labour movement in Nigeria with only passing reference to the Communist International's support for labour movements. He, like previous authorities, did not

adequately address the communist threat as it related to decolonisation, nor did he discuss various anti-communist measures taken by British officials and leading nationalists in Nigeria as part of an effort to establish pro-Western labour organisations in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Tokunboh's Labour Movements in Nigeria: Past and Present (1985), also provides a lucid account of the emergence and development of trade unions in Nigeria. To Yesufu, modern industrial relations in Nigeria cannot be divorced from trade union agitations since the colonial period.<sup>43</sup>

Marjorie Nicholson's study of the Trade Union Congress (British) and Keith Laybourn's A History of British Trade Unionism, are in depth accounts of the development and growth of the trade union movement in modern Britain. While Laybourn traces the history of trade unions from 1770 to the present, Nicholson emphasised TUC internal and external dynamics and its influence and support in colonial labour relations. Its relationship with other world labour organisations are also detailed. As it relates to the colonies, Nicholson analyzed the cordiality between the Colonial Office and the TUC in relation to the activities of the Colonial Advisory Committee set up in 1937. Her emphasis is, however, about India and the West Indies with cursory

mention of other colonies.<sup>44</sup>

Some scholars and government functionaries have carried out researches about Communist infiltration of the trade union movements in the colonies generally. Although some of them might have been influenced by their ideological orientation, they nonetheless provide useful accounts about the role of Communism, Socialism and the Cominform in metropolitan and colonial trade unionism. In this category are the works of: Friedland, Gonidec, Laybourn, Lichtblau, Nelkin, Roberts, Zakharia and Magigwana.<sup>45</sup>

Killingray in his article "The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa" (1986), discusses the promulgation of law and the maintenance of order in British Africa between 1885 and 1960. Although not necessarily concerning himself with the problem of communism and anti-communism, he nonetheless provides a lead in our understanding of the institutionalisation of coercive institutions, such as the Police, Special Branch and the Army in British efforts at organising firm colonial security against emergencies and disorders.<sup>46</sup>

Killingray and Anderson in "An Orderly Retreat?" conclude that "the colonial police were ... a ubiquitous

presence in the story of decolonisation". They assert that "when the legitimacy of colonial rule was barely questioned, policing was modest: as legitimacy was increasingly challenged and political instability grew, so the operational role and intensity of policing was extended".<sup>47</sup>

The local context is analyzed by Tamuno, Rotimi and Ahire in their separate studies of the Nigerian police. Tamuno in The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861 - 1965, gives a full treatment of the origins, development and roles of the Nigerian police. His focus is on the important issue of law and order, crime control and the general constitutional role of the police. His account of the Native Administration police is complemented by Rotimi in his study. Rotimi emphasises the role of the Native Administrations in maintaining law and order. Ahire on the other hand, uses political economy as a tool in analysing British imperialism and policing in colonial Nigeria. He concludes that "in colonial Nigeria, militaristic policing was the commonest form of police intervention". This is because the state needed to maintain some level of acceptance in order to minimize resistance from the colonized.<sup>48</sup>

Richard Rathbone in his "Political Intelligence and



Policing in Ghana in the late 1940s and 1950s" (1992), concludes that "anti-communism is a factor of considerable significance in the late colonial history".<sup>49</sup> This is elucidated in the two volumes he edited in the British Documents on the end of empire. Here, he discussed Colonial Office's high policies with emphasis on Ghana. For the first time we now know that the success of anti-communism was important in the granting of independence to the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957.<sup>50</sup>

Hakim Adi and Stephen Howe have individually analyzed the role of the British Left in colonial politics. Adi in "West Africans and the Communist Party in the 1950s", highlights the relationship between Nigerian students in Britain during the 1950s and the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain. This is further expanded in his doctoral thesis "West African Students and West African Nationalism in Britain, 1900-1960". Stephen Howe in his Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918 - 1964 (1993), analyzed the role of the Left with emphasis on the Communist Party of Great Britain, the Labour Governments, and the Movement for Colonial Freedom, within the context of colonial politics.<sup>51</sup>

Ronald Hyam's documentation of the Labour Governments and the end of the British empire is another useful lead. He suggests that between August 1945 (after VJ-Day) and September 1951 (before handing over to the Conservative Party) the issue of containing communism was paramount in Labour's international relations policy. The Labour governments' high policies are discussed in detail. Despite some Left-wingers in the Labour Party, the government was not tolerant of the Marxist-Leninist ideals in its policy formulation. In fact, Hyam has documented and shown that the foundation of an anti-communist policy in British strategy was the product of the two post-World War II Labour Governments.<sup>52</sup>

David Goldsworthy in his volumes on the Conservative Governments notes that "Africa South of the Sahara was far from un-important" in Cold War politics. He notes that the Conservative Governments like their Labour predecessors, were concerned about the growing influence of Nasser's Egypt, and with it, Soviet influence in spreading communism in Africa.<sup>53</sup> He also notes that the United States of America was concerned about the menace which led to its floating of a "committee of American, British, French, and perhaps Belgian officials to consider how best to combat Soviet subversion in Africa".<sup>54</sup>

Both Stephen Ashton and Sarah Stockwell are concerned with colonial policies and practice in the colonies generally.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, British strategy as a background to Cold War politics is narrated by John Kent. To him, the whole idea was to ensure continuous British interests in Europe and in her colonies generally.<sup>56</sup>

A review of relevant literature could not be complete without Trevor Clark's monumental narrative of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and Epelle's synthesis of Balewa's speeches. Balewa was one of the leading nationalists of the period and of course the person upon whom the governance of Nigeria was entrusted on October 1st 1960. Clark narrates his role first as the Leader of Government Business, and later Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria. In relation to this study, Clark and Epelle have separately discussed the role of Balewa in nationalist politics as well as his role in the decolonization era.<sup>57</sup> Like Nkrumah in the Gold Coast and Tunku Abdul Rahman in Malaya, Balewa was an anti-communist and was prepared to collaborate with British administrators on this matter.

(1.4) IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The significance of this study is four-fold. Firstly, it attempts to remove anti-communism from the footnotes of Nigerian political history. It has been wrongly assumed by some scholars that communism was of no significance in Nigeria during the devolution years, and as such anti-communism deserves little attention.<sup>58</sup>

Hitherto, decolonisation in Nigeria has been discussed within the context of constitutionalism, socio-economic policies, administrative change and the Africanisation of the civil service and the armed forces, and the incorporation of the emergent nation into the Commonwealth.<sup>59</sup> This study complements these perspectives, but suggests that other aspects like anti-communism needs to be explained in order to improve our general understanding of British transfers of power.

Secondly, a study of anti-communism in Nigeria between the 1940s and late 1950s sites Nigerian politics within recent world history. These events occurred at the height of the Cold War when the world was divided between the Eastern and Western blocs. There was a general belief amongst policy makers that,

the survival of the West, depended in part, on the degree of the success of its anti-communist measures in the colonies, particularly by the colonial powers.<sup>60</sup>

Hence, a study of anti-communism contributes to a general understanding of radical nationalism, the communist threat and the end of the British Empire. Some scholars would argue that communism did not lead to the end of Empire. However, the thesis suggests that its threat was a considerable concern within the Colonial, Foreign, and Commonwealth Relations Offices. Records from the Communist Party of Great Britain and the British Trade Union Congress respectively, have pointed to the fact that Nigerians were interested in Marxist-Leninist ideology. There were also attempts by some Nigerians to evolve a Communist Party during the 1950s as part of their critique of British colonial rule and the need for freedom. And, as Hyam rightly notes: "the danger of communism was thought to lie not in its political theory, nor even in its anti-capitalism, but in its critique of colonialism".<sup>61</sup>

The third element of this study therefore is its explanation about anti-communist measures during the period. Government as it should be expected was not all alone in the game. It was supported by "The Third

Force" in its anti-communist crusades in the colonies. Such "Third Force" or agents of anti-communism includes: the British TUC, Moral Re-armament Movement, International Confederation of Trade Unions, the British Council, the United States Information Service etc. These organisations worked closely with the Public Relations Department and the Chief Secretary's Office in Lagos, in order to execute the many measures against Communists and their sympathizers. Lastly, the study discusses the success of anti-communism as one of the official steps before power was transferred to the nationalists.<sup>62</sup>

(1.5) SOURCES AND APPROACH:

While the approach is basically historical, the study is largely based on official documents, newspaper reports and some private papers obtained from archives and libraries in England, the United States of America and Nigeria. Events and issues are analyzed in sequence and in line with available data. Issues and events are related to other colonies as my sources permit.

I must admit that there are methodological difficulties in writing this thesis. First is the

yardstick in measuring distinction between radical nationalism and communist inspired nationalism. While agreeing that the two are separable and distinct, one should note that official position is that radicalism was inspired by ideology of the left.

Also, while it is difficult to ascertain the credibility of some sources, one has relied upon the fact that there are certainly some truth in official reports. Of particular interest is the subjective reference to some nationalists i.e. H.O. Davies, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti etc as communists. Their memoirs show that although they were at one point (in the case of Davies) close to the Communist Party of Great Britain and other satellites (in the case of Funmilayo), they only perceived Communism as a means to an end (only in the case of Funmilayo). In fact, Funmilayo maintained that she was never a member of any Communist Party. I must say that within the colonial context however, one only needs to show sympathy for the other bloc (East) in the ideological division to be labelled a communist or fellow-traveller.

While records point to the fact that, personalities such as, Agunbiade-Bamishe, Dodiye, Eze, Bassey, Folarin (before 1953), Ikoru, Idise Dafe,

Ugokwe etc were communists, it is difficult to ascertain the magnitude of their relationship with Soviet communism, although their links with the CPGB and other satellites in Eastern Europe, is undeniable. Some were socialists (not Fabian type) and interested in the adaptation of communism during the period i.e. Aniedobe, Agwuna, Ikoku, Okoye and Uche Omo etc, while some professed to be Titoist i.e. Ayo Ogunsheye, Akpata and Obahiagbon.

If newspaper reports are not subjective, and can be regarded as important sources, then they seem to have provided solution to some of the problems in this study. The reconstruction of the Zikists' ideological orientation, activities of the Special Branch and the police for instance, relied upon newspapers, a few available memoirs and some intelligence reports. Papers from the CPGB and TUC have given credence to newspaper reports and some official intelligence reports, concerning the presence of some Nigerian Communists and their orientation towards the CPGB "British Road to Socialism". The CPGB files also confirmed colonial and nationalist governments anxiety about the activities of these men who tried to form a nation-wide Marxist-Leninist movement in the 1950s.



Anti-communism however remained an important policy pursued to satisfy Britain's allies in the Western bloc, to deny the colonies to the East, to ensure the security of Britain and her allies against the East in the event of a war, and to consolidate the rule and dominance of her collaborators against the communists and their sympathizers before independence. British officials, and their Western allies, were concerned about "national liberation movements considered as furthering the long-term aims of Communism".<sup>63</sup> This is the basis of anti-communism as an aspect of the transfer of power in Nigeria as elsewhere in British colonies during the post-war era.

In the Public Record Office, London, the files of the Cabinet and its committees, Colonial and Foreign Offices remained the main source of information. These are complemented by records from the US National Archives and Record Administration, Maryland. In Nigeria, the regional archives in Ibadan and Enugu provided information concerning British administrators and their Nigerian counterparts during the period. Here, chief secretary's file, divisional records, intelligence reports by field officers are scrutinized along with those from the Public Record Office, London. Various government reports and annual reports of some

departments (Labour, Information and Research, and the Police) have been quite useful.

I should note that materials from the Moral Re-armament Archives, Cheshire and Victoria; British Trade Union Congress Collections, University of North London; British TUC Registry Files at the Modern Record Centre, the University of Warwick; as well as the Communist Party of Great Britain Papers at the National Museum of Labour History Archive Centre, Manchester, have assisted in filling-in many gaps in official materials. These sources have also given insight into emergent 'Left-Wing' organisations in the 1950s, most of which existed in secrecy because of government measures.

Also, government publications such as Notices, Gazettes, Council of Ministers' Minutes and Parliamentary Debates also provided useful information. Lastly, a few private papers (Solanke and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti), oral interviews, newspaper reports and the memoirs of most nationalists have been useful in this endeavour. These are scrutinized along with the archival records and published works.

One should mention the many Government

publications in the UK. Perhaps the most significant of all was His (later Her) Majesty's Stationery Office Publications titled: Colonial Annual Reports. The series on Nigeria titled, Nigeria: Colonial Annual Reports, covered the 1920s to 1960. This study benefitted from the series covering the 1930s to 1960.

(1.6) OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS:

This study is organised into eight chapters. Chapter one is a general introduction with an emphasis on the inadequacies of existing literature about the politics of decolonisation, as well as the importance of a study of anti-communism. Chapter two is a review of Communism as an ideology and the role of the Soviet Union and her satellites in its expansion. It reviews the various Communist Congresses since 1919 as it relates to "Negro" and colonial questions. The efforts of the Communist Party of Great Britain among West African colonial students in England is also analyzed. It also identified reasons for the attractiveness and unattractiveness of the ideology to Africans.

In chapter three, I focus on British colonial policies, Cold War politics and the Western allies. Here, a review of "British High Policies" and attempts

at reform in the colonies are analyzed. The Cold War and the attitudes of Britain's allies, notably the United States and France, are reviewed. Chapters four and five are about "communism within", emphasizing the role of marxists and their sympathizers in nationalist movements and labour unionism. It is an account of attempts to form a Marxist Party in Nigeria during the late 1940s and 1950s, as well as a critique of the role of identifiable individuals. Official CPGB perception of their activities is also detailed.

Chapter six, on the other hand, is about the evolution, politics and implementation of anti-communist measures from the 1940s to 1960. Both official and un-official measures are discussed in order to show the level of collaboration between the State and business community. Some comparativist analyses are drawn from the metropole and other colonies i.e. the Gold Coast, in analysing measures against Communism during the 1940s and the late 1950s. In chapter seven, I reflect on attempts at a sustainable anti-communism by both British officials and emergent Nigerian leaders on the eve of the transfer of power. Plausible local reasons for the success of anti-communism is explored in chapter eight.

In summary, this study is about the history of anti-communism in Nigeria during the colonial period. An understanding of this aspect of decolonisation will illuminate our reflections on how and why, the aspirations of Marxists (or their sympathizers) remained elusive in Nigeria since independence in 1960.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE :

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1948-1953 (London, 1995); The height of the Malayan insurgence was the assassination of the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney in October 1951. See also, Furedi, F. Colonial Wars and the Politics of Third World Nationalism (London, 1994); pp.145.

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10. Roberts, A.D. (ed) The Colonial Moment in Africa: Essays on the Movement of Minds and Materials 1900-1940 (Cambridge, 1990); pp.75; Goldsworthy, D. "Keeping Change Within Bounds... op.cit;

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13. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Draft discussion on nature and personnel of the leadership of the Nigerian Trade Union and National Movement for discussion by International



Department, November 1951, NMLHA, Manchester.

14. Ibid. Eze (Lagos) to Dafe (London), December 5th 1951; November 14th 1951, NMLHA op.cit;

15. CP/CENT/INT/50/03: Nigeria 1953, Margot (London) to Raji (Lagos), April 18th 1953; CP/CENT/INT/20/02: Nigeria 1952-1953, Margot (London) to Barbara (London) n.d. probably 1950; CP/CENT/INT/20/01: The Nigerian Commission 1950-1953, Eze (Lagos) to Margot (London), January 6th 1953, NMLHA op.cit;

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21. See, Coleman, J.S. Nigeria:Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, 1958); Olusanya, G.O. The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria,1939-1953 (London, 1973); Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties:Power in an Emergent African Nation (Princeton, 1963). Despite Sklar's analyses of party ideologies, he like Coleman did not relate them to anti-communist policy and decolonisation; pp.265-276. Hargreaves remains an exception. In his study of Sierra Leone, he discussed how Edgar Parry, Commissioner of Labour in Sierra Leone, 'discovered' Siaka Stevens as a man "capable not only of guiding the embryonic trade union movement along sound constitutional lines, but of leading a wider social democratic movement as against communist influenced labour leaders in Sierra Leone". See his, "Assumptions, Expectations and Plans: Approaches to Decolonisation in Sierra Leone" in Morris-Jones, W.H. and Fisher, G. (eds) Decolonisation and After:The British and French Experience (London, 1980); pp.73-103.

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Empire: The Conservative Government and the end of Empire, Part 1, (London, 1994); pp.xxxvi; xxxvii; and xxxix.

54. Ibid.

55. Ashton, S.R. and Stockwell, S.E. (eds) British Documents on the End of Empire: Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice, 1925-1945, Parts I and II (London, 1996).

56. Kent, J. British Imperial Strategy and the Origin of the Cold War, 1944-1949 (London, 1993).

57. Clark, T. A Right Honourable Gentleman - Abubakar from the Black Rock (London, 1991); Epelle, S. (ed) Nigeria Speaks: Speeches of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Ikeja, 1964); pp.9-10.

58. Olusanya, G. The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria... op.cit; pp.36-37. He however agreed that "both the Communist world and the West began to woo the Africans, and this made the colonial powers ever more willing to concede something to the African aspiration for freedom, to avoid pushing the Africans into the Communist camp", pp.161; Aluko, O. "The Politics of

decolonisation in West Africa, 1945-1960" in Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M. (eds) History of West Africa. vol:II, (2nd edition, London, 1987).

59. For example, Nicholson, I.F. The Administration of Nigeria: Methods and Myths, 1900-1960 (London, 1969); Tamuno, T.N. The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase, 1898-1914 (London, 1972); White, J.J. Central Administration in Nigeria, 1914-1951 (London, 1981).

60. Porter and Stockwell has identified three strands of explanation in British decolonization. These are: 'Liberal Commonwealth' - Britain decided that she would no longer retain her formal empire; 'Nationalist View' - Britain was forced out of individual colonies by the pressure of local events; 'External Forces' - Britain was edged towards a renunciation of empire by international pressures. See Porter, A.N. and Stockwell, A.J. British Imperial Policy ... vol.1, ... op.cit; pp.3-6.

61. Hyam, R. British Documents...Labour Part 1...op.cit; pp.liii.

62. The idea of incorporation into the Commonwealth is examined by Ronald Hyam Part 1, op.cit; pp.xxx; and David

Goldsworthy, Part 1, op.cit; pp.xlix. For instance, at independence, the success of anti-communist measures apart from other agreements and institutional structures, were important in the sponsorship of Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth of Nations.

63. CO537/5263: A Survey of Communism in Africa - British West Africa, 1950; pp.54.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND TO ANTI-COMMUNISM: COMMUNISM,

### SOVIET UNION AND THE SATELLITES.

#### (2.1) INTRODUCTION:

Communism as an ideology is well analyzed by many scholars and deserves little elaboration here. The term, Communism, can be broadly defined as a theory or system of social organization based on the holding of property in common. In its modern form, it denotes the revolutionary movement aimed at abolishing capitalism, and ultimately establishing a society in which all goods will be socially owned and all economic activities socially planned and controlled. The dictum in a Communist State is: "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his need".

It has, however, grown beyond the ideas of Marx and Engels over the years to incorporate ideas of some of their notable followers. While many scholars have adequately addressed the divisions amongst its adherents, I should note that they includes Marxist-Leninist,

Stalinist, Trotskist, Fabian-Socialist, Titoist, Maoist etc viewpoints.<sup>1</sup>

Under the conditions of 19th century industrialism in Europe, Marx and Engels synthesized previous writings of Hegel (historic evolution and dialectical process); Ricardo (labour theory of value); Blanqui (workers revolutionary theory) etc, to form a general theory of historical evolution and the development of capitalism. In The Communist Manifesto (1848) they maintained that, the objective of Communism is "the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions".<sup>2</sup> The basis of this hypothesis is Marx's economic determinism and historical materialism which makes room for class consciousness and the inevitability of the class struggle in society. As Palme Dutt put it: "In the completed communist society, with the final abolition of class distinctions, the State as an instrument of coercion for the suppression of a subject class and the forcible overcoming of social contradictions disappears". He concluded that the "principle of fully completed communist society is from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs".<sup>3</sup>

Communism is, however, distinguished from socialism by its revolutionary means. Socialism aims at changes



through constitutional and democratic methods; the nationalization of essential means of production and organized distribution on the basis of a just reward to each person for the amount and quality of his or her work.

The withering away of the state is, perhaps, one of the central difficulties in grasping the ideology of Communism, as indeed its distinction from socialism. Cyril Black has noted that the "withering away of the state has been the subject of a good deal of irony and wit on the part of critics of Communism, especially in the light of developments in the U.S.S.R"<sup>4</sup> with much of the criticism been misplaced. "Marxists" according to him, "use the term "State" in a very special sense". "By "State" they mean not the entire administrative apparatus, but the State as an instrument of the oppression of one class by another".<sup>5</sup>

Nove identified general feature of communism. To him, "the declared objective of the Soviet leadership is to build communism". He concludes that "full-fledged socialism, or communism, would be a state of affairs in which scarcity would have been overcome, and production would be for use and not for exchange, socially planned for the benefit of the educated and participating working

classes".<sup>6</sup>

Communism could be conceived therefore as a socio-political ideology which seeks the establishment of a "stateless" society where governmental institutions are non-existence (because they are no longer a superstructure) and where all the resources of the society are commonly owned and equally shared. It is however recognised that full-fledged Communism would only be achieved after Socialism. This is the transitory stage to Communism i.e. the means to an end. The distinction between the two is that Socialism does not encourage violent overthrow of the existing order. The socialists however emphasised the dominance of the working class and the centrality of government structures. They also believed in the 'Socialist vision'- that is the termination of private ownership of the means of production and exchange for general collectivisation.<sup>7</sup>

I should note that the ideology of Communism since Marx, has undergone different modifications (although communists are united in common detestation of the "infidel" bourgeoisie). It is not my objective to study these modifications. This has been adequately covered by existing studies about Communism and world politics. A fairly representative view is that of Andrew Janos. Janos identifies four distinctions in explaining modifications

of Communist ideology: "(1) Marxism; (2) Orthodox Marxism; (3) Revisionist Marxism; and (4) Marxism-Leninism".<sup>8</sup> The first is meant to refer to the doctrine that emerged from the collaboration of Marx and Engels; the second to the interpretation of the doctrine by some of Marx's younger contemporaries like Kautsky and Plekhanov; the third to the revision of Marxism by Bernstein and the European socialists; the last to the revision of Marxism by Lenin and his followers.<sup>9</sup> In brief, he summed up the ideology of Communism as "Marxism-Leninism, a particular form of Marxism".<sup>10</sup>

There is no doubt that the most notable modification to the ideas of Engels and Marx is contained in numerous works of Lenin, the Soviet leader after the October Revolution in 1917.<sup>11</sup> It was at the Second Congress of the Communist International in the summer of 1920 that "the colonial question" was first mentioned.<sup>12</sup> The participants discussed in principle the possibility of a link between Africa and the Communist International, within the framework of world-revolutionary ideas and Moscow's aims. However, knowledge about black Africa was inadequate (although this was surmounted years later) to put into immediate effect, Lenin's "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions".

Interest about African affairs was stated during

subsequent Congresses.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Lenin's "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" written in 1920, remained a useful guide. The tactics recommended by Lenin, and indeed, the Comintern, was "tactical co-operation with the national revolutionary movements".<sup>14</sup> At the Third Congress in 1921, communists were enjoined to "dedicate themselves to the active support of colonial emancipation".<sup>15</sup>

Wilson however noted that: "the real beginning of an active Comintern policy towards the 'Negro' question can be traced to the fourth Comintern Congress, held in Moscow in November and December 1922".<sup>16</sup> He concluded that: "not only did the fourth Comintern Congress launch the first concrete program directed toward the 'Negro' race, but in effect it initiated active Comintern interest in the politics of sub-Saharan Africa".<sup>17</sup>

I should add that, sub-Saharan Africa did not only enter into the purview of Comintern and the Communist International because of the 'Negro' question, but because it fits into communist ideas of "colonial exploitation".<sup>18</sup> Colonial exploitation became a theme in Communism because of Western European powers insatiable quest for natural resources and markets for their capitalist products. To the Communists, this is the

genesis of European imperialism in Asia and Africa, and the institutionalisation of colonialism.

The central theme during the Stalin era (1924-1953) was that: "the national bourgeoisie of the colonial and semi-colonial countries... can never lead the national-revolutionary movement to victory".<sup>19</sup> The Fifth Congress resolution (1924) that victory could only be achieved under the leadership of the workers and peasants was modified during the Sixth Congress in 1928 to include the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>20</sup>

Having realised the important position of the nationalist bourgeoisie, which even became more pronounced after World War II, the Comintern declared that: "... As far as the national bourgeoisie is concerned, the achievement of national independence is its ultimate aim, and it consists in the establishment of their undivided rule in a sovereign state".<sup>21</sup> The idea was to make the working class realise the stage as "a necessary pre-condition for social transformations and for the subsequent development of the national and colonial revolution into a socialist revolution".<sup>22</sup>

It was also at the Fifth Congress that the important role of European Communist parties was emphasised in the

"battle" for the hearts of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa. While emphasising that much still has to be done, the Congress noted the role of the French Communist Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain.<sup>23</sup> The CPGB like its French counterpart, declared its commitment to assisting colonial peoples in British Africa in their goal towards self-government. I shall return to this shortly.

It was Khrushchev who pushed further Soviet communism in Africa. He was, however, different from Stalin in his approach and method. Schatten has stated that: "the admission of Khrushchev that there was 'an extensive zone of peace' in Asia and Africa, marks the re-opening of a protracted inter-Marxist discussion on the necessity, usefulness, and objectives of a communist policy of alliance with the national forces of the colonial and former colonial countries - on both an international and local level".<sup>24</sup>

Marxist theoretical studies and analyses were boosted by Soviet government support towards achieving this goal. Scholars such as Olderogee, Gafur and Potekhin carried out studies where they "attempted to fit Africa into the overall theoretical pattern of non-communist Asian countries...".<sup>25</sup> Klinghoffer has maintained that

"Soviet writers have shed many of their previous misconceptions about Africa... The preoccupation with rigid class differentiations has given way to the recognition of new, flexible, more realistic, and almost trans-class categories such as 'revolutionary democrats' and progressive intelligentsia".<sup>26</sup>

Specialists deliberations about the national bourgeoisie led to Moscow conferences between 1957 and 1960. The result of one of these meetings was that: "the national bourgeoisie was rehabilitated and declared worthy of being an ally of the communists".<sup>27</sup> Simply put, the idea that only the proletariat can secure complete independence and build socialism was replaced by a new analysis which recognises the significance of the national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie in Nigeria during the period under study did not, however, find Communism attractive enough.<sup>28</sup>

## (2.2) A REVIEW OF SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICA AND THE PROSPECTS OF COMMUNISM:

Gorman and Morison have concluded that, Soviet interest in Africa was to prospect for the emergence of socialist states, which would establish Communism, at a

later stage.<sup>29</sup> To Aidan Crawley, Soviet interest in African colonies after World War II was based on three propositions. As he put it:

First, it accepted what was called African nationalism, the emergence of states freed from Western colonialism, as a stage in the development of Africa towards communism; second, the Russian campaign of penetration was to split the trade union movement in every African country where they could do so; third, the Russian campaign involved the attraction of students to Iron Curtain countries, and to Moscow in particular.<sup>30</sup>

Nogee and Donaldson identified 1947 as the turning point in the Soviet Union's African policy. They note that "only in 1947, with the Cold War clearly under way, did the Soviets direct their attention to what Zhadnov proclaimed as 'the crisis of the colonial system'".<sup>31</sup> Soviet strategy toward Africa during the period under study incorporated the Bolshevik distinction between what was referred to as 'maximum and minimum objectives'.

To Alexander Dallin, "the maximum objective-control of the African continent, with its manpower and resources - is axiomatic to faith in the world-wide triumph of communism and yet vague enough to prevent specific elaboration".<sup>32</sup> This goal was postponed indefinitely because it was impracticable within the colonial



context.<sup>33</sup> The minimum objective was based on the belief that at independence, African states would pursue a "positive neutrality" in the Cold War and cultivate increasingly close economic, political and cultural ties with the Soviet bloc.

The Soviet Union thus pursued the minimum objective throughout the later colonial era. Some of the methods devised were covert support of nationalist and labour movements in the colonies, as well as the sponsoring of colonial issues in the United Nations' meetings. The Soviet Union regarded trade unions as useful links with the masses because it was presumed that they formed an important arena for recruiting potential communists in the colonies. Soviet policy was aimed at "winning the uncommitted elements in the African labour movements through funds and sponsorship of their programmes".<sup>34</sup>

Colonial students were also targeted. McKay notes that: "At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928 it was affirmed that an important if not predominant part of the party ranks in the first stage of the movement is recruited from the petty bourgeoisie, very frequently students". He further notes that "the communist controlled World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) in Budapest and the International

Union of Students (IUS) in Prague were significant channels of communist propaganda aimed at youth and students".<sup>35</sup> In 1947 the IUS in collaboration with the WFDY and WFTU instituted a bi-annual World Festival of Youth in Prague for colonial students. It also organised visits, scholarships and medical treatment for colonial students. By late 1947 it had established a monthly bulletin and a bureau of colonial students against colonialism in Prague.<sup>36</sup>

### (2.3) THE SATELLITE - CPGB CONNECTION:

The CPGB was the main communist satellite in the UK which engaged in ideological education and the distribution of pamphlets and newsletters to colonial students and the public. Three stages were taken in recruiting colonial people in the UK (i.e. students and other immigrants). Firstly, there was an intensification of educational ideological schools, like the one at Karl Marx House.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, there was the encouragement and support of the Co-ordinating Council for Colonial Students Affairs; and thirdly, they exploited 'bread-and-butter' issues such as the inadequacy of hostel accommodation.

In fact, a number of party members and sympathizers

were prepared to take in black lodgers (students and seamen) and to allow their premises to be used for classes in Marxist theory. The Party's aim was to ensure that black students looking for accommodation were directed to such addresses in the hope that its social welfare approach would prepare the way for propaganda.<sup>38</sup>

Padmore, however, warned that "it would be unwise ... to exaggerate the influence of Communism even among these young colonial students. It is just a part of youthful intellectual curiosity ... The British Communist Party will be sadly disappointed if it is relying upon these opportunistic intellectuals to lead the proletarian revolution in Africa!".<sup>39</sup>

We may then ask what was attractive about Communism to African labour and nationalist leaders, students and youth? Basically, the answer is simple. Communism was one of the ideologies which addressed the nature of imperialism and colonialism and how it could be defeated in the colonies. To communists, capitalism is the highest stage of imperialism.<sup>40</sup> It was based on Marxist-Leninist explanations of imperialism and economic underdevelopment. Communism posits that, for the colonial people to be freed from colonialism, the proletariat would have to revolt (although this was later modified

particularly among Western European Socialists). Communists often cited the example of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and other revolutions in Eastern Europe and Asia, to insist upon the applicability of the ideology to African colonies.

No less important was the non-capitalist pattern of Soviet development since 1917. The relative success of Soviet development was appealing to some nationalist and labour leaders and students. They believed that if the Soviets could attain industrialisation under Lenin and his successors, colonial peoples could also apply communist models in their efforts at economic and political independence.<sup>41</sup> Erlich and Sonne are apt in their description of the situation. To them:

... Marxist-Leninist appeal ... carried real strength not because Soviet leaders un-yieldingly stuck to the initial premises of the doctrine, but because they made massive departures from it and took advantage of compensating errors in the early predictions.<sup>42</sup>

But there were as many factors that made communism unattractive to many Africans in the same period. The differences between the Soviet or European situation and that of Africa are some of these factors. As will be highlighted in the case of Nigeria, leading nationalist leaders, such as, Azikiwe, Awolowo, Balewa, Bello, and,

some labour leaders, were apprehensive about the communist techniques and especially about revolution. They were not prepared to lose control of their parties to marxist leaders and thus served as counter-weights against such groups. Many of them did not cherish the doctrine of the inevitability of the class struggle which would make way for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In fact, many former Nigerian members of the Communist Party of Great Britain on returning home became unsympathetic to communist ideas.<sup>43</sup> Adi has mentioned that, the banning of the "Nigerian Branch", unguided statements about Nigerian affairs and the arrogance of the CPGB leaders were instrumental to the unattractiveness of communism in the 1950s; indeed, most were "proletarian in London and bourgeois in Lagos".<sup>44</sup> There is need for a background and some elaboration here.

One of the ways through which the CPGB aimed at achieving its goals among colonial peoples in the UK and within the colonies generally was via its committee system. For instance, the International Department also had an international committee, under which there were different sub-committees. These included: India, Far East, Burma and Malaya, Africa (West and East) and the West Indies sub-committees.<sup>45</sup> These committees liaised

with various district committees all over the United Kingdom.

Perhaps impetus to the intensification of CPGB activities in the colonial field was as a result of the conference on "The Crisis of British Imperialism" held in London on October 2nd and 3rd 1948. After denouncing British imperialism as practised by the Labour government and arguing that there were signs of the decline of imperialism all over the world, Palme Dutt, outlined the task before the CPGB thus:

Our Party occupies a special position among the Communist Parties of the World in that it operates in the centre of the largest world colonial empire. Hence we have a special responsibility to unite the struggle of the British people and the Colonial peoples. At the present time this takes on exceptional importance.<sup>46</sup>

Henceforth political campaigning and propaganda was to focus upon the colonial question; reviving the labour movement; practical solidarity with colonial liberation movements and world-wide Communism. The CPGB's aim in Nigeria, as indeed in other colonies was:

(1) "To bring out the extent of British imperialist exploitation of Nigeria and methods adopted to retard economic development and the creation of a balanced economy;

(2) Support the Nigerian struggle for self-government;

(3) Assisting in the unity of Nigerian working class under a Marxist Party; and,

(4) Expend our propaganda on Nigeria and to explain in simple terms the issues which affects the common interests of both the Nigerian and British peoples".<sup>47</sup>

Efforts towards forming a 'Marxist Party' in Nigeria was emphasised by CPGB leaders. This was based on the premise that Nigeria was not only the largest British colony, but was "one of those (together with the Gold Coast) where the British imperialists have been able to win over a substantial element of the rising national bourgeoisie and feudal elements into partnership with British imperialism".<sup>48</sup> The point was that: "The unity of the Nigerian working class can only be achieved and the working class educated to play its part in the national struggle when the Marxists in Nigeria come together in a united Marxist party".<sup>49</sup>

The CPGB leaders did not hide their vision for a Marxist Party in Nigeria as an important part of the struggle. In summing up, they reiterated that:

The case for a Marxist Party is  
that the working class cannot play  
its full part in the national

struggle, cannot establish an alliance with the peasantry, unless it is united and organised as a class and made conscious of its mission in the wider movement. To bring the working class to that level of unity and consciousness and to lead it forward is only possible when there is an influential Marxist Party.<sup>50</sup>

These pronouncements and other activities might have accounted for the influx of Nigerians, and other West African membership of the CPGB in the late 1940s and early 1950. Of all these new recruits, Nigerians were said to be largest in number.<sup>51</sup> They were dubbed the "Robeson Branch".<sup>52</sup> The London district of the CPGB, was however, not in agreement of "a special Nigerian Branch", as it was not in line with the Party's rules. Instead Nigerian affairs were to be treated alongside other West African by the West African sub-committee created in 1951.<sup>53</sup>

The June 1952 political document entitled "For a Lasting Peace and Peoples Democracy", and Palme Dutt's article; "People of Nigeria Rise in Struggle for Freedom", 1953, did much damage to an already sore situation. Both write-ups were critical of factions among the various Nigerian political parties, the marxists, and the general lack of coherence among Nigerian members of the CPGB.<sup>54</sup>



As a result of the unsuccessful attempts in April 1953 to revive the "Nigerian Branch" and unite divergent opinions about Nigeria, the CPGB commissioned "The Nigeria Commission" in May to look into the whole matter and propose solutions. Although there was no West African on this Commission, its report in 1954 led to official recognition of the "Nigerian Branch".<sup>55</sup> The new branch was to get "the utmost political and practical support from London District and the International Department".<sup>56</sup>

The gesture was, however, too late as leading Nigerian members resigned en mass before the report was published. The main reason for this, was the rejection of Nigerian members adaptation of marxism to their situation. Barbara Ruhemen, Idris Cox and Palme Dutt's criticism of their ways of handling the situation in Nigeria, and the denunciation of the Action Group, for instance, did not go down well with Agunbiade-Bamishie and company.<sup>57</sup>

Another factor responsible for the unattractiveness of Communism was the contradiction between it and pan-Africanism. This had long been the subject of widespread debate. Robert July summarized the situation thus:

While many Africans subscribed to

socialist principles regarding public control of the means of production and distribution, they also suspected international communism of utilizing misery, poverty, ignorance, and want in Africa on behalf of Soviet foreign policy objectives. African Marxists therefore, were often ambivalent, poised between their socialist beliefs and their desire for domestic economic and political advances.<sup>58</sup>

The expulsion of George Padmore as a member of the Comintern/Communist International in 1934 is another factor. His writings and conclusion about communism were influential for many would-be African communists in the late 1930s and afterwards. Padmore's thesis, based upon personal experience, was that "those who hoped for future reform had best forget the blandishments of self-serving communists and place their faith in pan-African solidarity".<sup>59</sup> The level of Padmore's influence is, however, suspect. While he distrusted Stalinist communism, he nonetheless, remained a defender of the Soviet Union. As one of his critics noted: "... he was never one to supply the anti-communist with ammunition". He also believed in the Leninist dictum that: "Imperialism divides; Socialism unites".<sup>60</sup>

Other factors are: the unhealthy rivalry between Khrushchev and Mao upon the death of Stalin in 1953; the failure of the communists to convert many black

Americans; and the inconsistency in Soviet Union policy during the period. Arnold Hughes summarized the event thus: "... the gyrations and inconsistencies in Soviet policies towards the independence struggle in Africa and elsewhere accounted for the absence of significant proletarian or peasant organization ...". As he rightly concludes: "Such hesitation and manipulation only helped to explain the ambivalence of most Africans towards communism".<sup>61</sup>

The relative attractiveness of communism was of concern to Britain, as there were some marxists in the colonies. The British, for their part, took measures to safeguard their interests in the colonies. Such measures, as will be discussed later, were aimed at guiding nationalism and labour movements in Africa in order to avoid another Burma.<sup>62</sup> As Hyam notes "the long term aim was preparation for self-government... The slogan was to secure more Ceylons and fewer Burmas".<sup>63</sup>

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO:

1. Apart from the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin, extant studies about Communism are many. One can only list a selection of the many scholarly studies in this regard: Hobson, J.A. Imperialism - A Study (London, 1902) remains a classical study about developments in Europe i.e. industrialisation, imperialism, capitalism and the emergence of socialism (or, full-fledged communism); Almond, G.A. et. al (ed) The Appeals of Communism (Second Printing, Princeton, 1956); Gretton, G. (ed) Communism and Colonialism - Essays by Walter Kolarz (London, 1964); Stankiewicz, W.J. (ed) Political Thought Since World War II (London, 1964); Lowenthal, R. World Communism - The Disintegration of a Secular Faith (New York/London, 1966); Tucker, R.C. The Marxian Revolutionary Idea (London, 1970); Fernbach, D. (ed) Karl Marx - The First International and After: Political Writings Volume 3 (London, 1974); Kaplan, M.A. (ed) The Many Faces of Communism (New York/London, 1978); Wesson, R. Communism and Communist System (New Jersey, 1978); Lane, D. Leninism: A Sociological Interpretation (Cambridge, 1981); Molyneux, J. Leon Trotsky's Theory of Revolution (Brighton, 1981); Ali, T. (ed) The Stalinist Legacy - Its Impact on Twentieth Century World Politics

(Colorado, 1984); Lapides, K. (ed) Marx and Engels on the Trade Unions (New York, 1987); Westoby, A. The Evolution of Communism (Oxford, 1989); Harding, N. Leninism (Durham, 1996).

2. Marx, K. Communist Manifesto (Revised Edition, London, 1988).

3. CP/IND/DUTT/09/10: Palme Dutt, Communism - What the Movement Means To-Day 1939, National Museum of Labour History Archive, Manchester.

4. Black, C.E. "Revolution, Modernization, and Communism", in Black, C.E. and Thornton, T.P. (ed) Communism and Revolution - The Strategic Uses of Political Violence (Princeton, 1964), pp.18.

5. Ibid.

6. Nove, A. The Soviet Economic System (2nd Impression, London, 1978); pp.17-19.

7. Patsouraus, L. and Thomas, J.R. Varieties and Problems of Twentieth-Century Socialism (Chicago, 1981), pp.xiii-xvi.

8. Janos, A.C. "The Communist Theory of the State and Revolution", in Black, C.E. and Thornton, T.P. op.cit; pp.27-42.

9. Ibid. pp.27 note 1.

10. Ibid.

11. See, Drachkovitch, M.M. Lenin and the Comintern, Volume 1 (Stanford, 1972); Lane, D. Leninism: A Sociological Interpretation... op.cit;

12. Wilson, E.T. Russia and Black Africa... op.cit; pp.122.

13. Ibid. pp.121-142.

14. Ibid. p.98; Schatten, F. Communism in Africa (London, 1966); pp.73.

15. Wilson, op.cit; pp.136.

16. Ibid. pp.127.

17. Ibid. Details about resolutions at the first four

Congresses are contained in Adler, A. (ed) Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International (London, 1980).

18. Wilson, op.cit; pp.136.

19. Schatten, op.cit; pp.73.

20. Adler, A. (ed) Theses, Resolutions... op.cit; Also, Schatten, op.cit; pp.75.

21. Schatten, op.cit; pp.77.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid. pp.114.

24. Ibid. pp.76.

25. Ibid. pp.101-102; Wilson, op.cit; pp.99-102; Adie, W.A.C. "The Communist Powers in Africa", Conflict Studies, No.10, December - January 1970/71; Gretton, G. (ed) Communism and Colonialism... op.cit; pp.114-124.

26. Klinghoffer, A.J. "The Soviet view of African Socialism", African Affairs, vol.67, no.268, July 1968;

pp.197-208.

27. Schatten, op.cit; pp.77. Also, Stevens, C. The Soviet Union and Black African (London, 1976).

28. Klinghoffer, A.J. "The Soviet view..." op.cit; pp.207.

29. Gorman, R. "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa", African Affairs, vol.83, no.331, April 1984; Morison, D. "The Africa of Moscow and Peking - A Review Article", African Affairs, vol.66, no.265, October 1967.

30. Crawley, A. "Communism and African Independence", African Affairs, vol:64, no.255, April 1965; pp.91-102.

31. Noguee, J.L. and Donaldson, R.H. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II (New York, 1988); pp.86 and 149; Andrei Zhadnov was Stalin's lieutenant at the formation of the Communist International Bureau (Cominform) in Poland in September 1947.

32. Dallin, A. "The Soviet Union: Political Activity", in Brzezinski, Z. (ed) Africa and the Communist World (Stanford and London, 1964); pp.12.



33. Ibid. pp.13.

34. McKay, V. Africa in World Politics (New York, 1964); pp.204f.

35. Ibid. pp.218.

36. Adi, H. "West Africans and the Communist Party..." op.cit; pp.3.

37. CP/CENT/INT/50/03: Points on Education for Nigerian Branch, 1953, NMLHA op.cit;

38. CO537/5263: A Survey of Communism in Africa - British West Africa Summary, 1950; CO537/6549: The Review of the Activities of the British Communist Party in Connection with the colonial affairs, October 1948 -April 1949; Howe, S. Anticolonialism in British Politics... op.cit; chapter three, pp.82f.

39. Padmore, G. Pan-Africanism or Communism?... op.cit; pp.330; Hooker, J.R. Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path From Communism to Pan-Africanism (London, 1967).

40. Erlich, A. and Sonne, C.R. "The Soviet Union:

Economic Activity", in Brzezinski, op.cit; pp.49; Hobson, A. Imperialism: A Study (London, 1902).

41. Okoye, M. The Beard of Prometheus (Bristol, 1965). Okoye was one of the leading youth during the colonial era who strongly believed in marxism. His thoughts and ideas are detailed by Oyeweso, G.S. "The Political Thought of Mokwugo Okoye Since 1950s", Ph.D History Thesis, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, December 1995.

42. Erlich and Sonne, op.cit; pp.50.

43. CP/CENT/INT/55/03: Confidential Report on Visit to Nigeria by Idise Dafe, n.d. NMLH, op.cit;

44. Adi, H. "West Africans Students and West African Nationalism..." op.cit;

45. C0537/6549: The Review of the Activities of the British Communist Party... op.cit; Howe, S. Anticolonialism... op.cit;

46. Ibid. I refer to both sources in note 45 above.

47. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Nigeria Report, January 1956,

NMLHA op.cit; pp.15.

48. Ibid.

49. CP/CENT/INT/48/01: What Next in Nigeria? 1954, NMLHA op.cit; pp.17.

50. Ibid.

51. CP/CENT/INT/50/03: Nigerian Matter 1953, NMLHA op.cit; Adi, H. "West Africans and the Communist Party in the 1950s" op.cit; pp.1.

52. Ibid.

53. CP/CENT/INT/50/05: Nigeria 1952-1953, NMLHA op.cit;

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. CP/CENT/INT/24/03: Nigeria 1949-1950, NMLHA op.cit;

58. July, R. An African Voice: The Role of the Humanities in African Independence (Durham, 1987); pp.40.

59. Padmore, G. Pan-Africanism or Communism?... op.cit; CP/CENT/INT/50/03: Confidential Report on Visit to Nigeria by Idise Dafe... op.cit; Adi, H. "West Africans and the Communist Party... op.cit; pp.10-12.

60. Hooker, J.R. Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path From Communism... op.cit; pp.73.

61. Hughes, A. "The Appeal of Marxism to Africans", in Hughes, A. (ed) Marxism's Retreat From Africa (London, 1992); pp.5.

62. Burma became independent in 1948 and left the Commonwealth of Nations. As will be explained later in this study, the hallmark of British decolonisation and the transfer of power was to ensure continuous relationships between the newly independent states and the former colonial power. Burma's withdrawal from the Commonwealth was therefore an antithesis of British transfer of power.

63. Hyam, R. (ed) British Documents on the end of Empire: The Labour Government... Part 1... op.cit; p.xxxi.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### BRITISH COLONIAL POLICIES, COLD WAR

#### POLITICS AND THE WESTERN ALLIES

##### (3.1) BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE PLANS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL HIGH POLICIES FROM THE LATE 1930s TO 1950s :

There are many studies about British colonial administration prior to 1930s. The 1930s was significant in view of general recognition of the need for colonial reforms in order to stem disorder in the colonies. This was partly as a result of economic hardship that had been apparent earlier in the inter-war years.

More important was the need to prevent nationalist and labour leaders from seeking support from the Communist International (Cominform from september 1947) as an end towards political and economic independence. Some colonial officials were also concerned about the defects in Native Administration. For instance, Crocker noted as earlier as 1936 that, there was an urgent need for administrative reform in Nigeria where he had served as a junior administrative officer.<sup>1</sup> Professor Coupland

in a memorandum to the CO in September 1939 also noted the need for reforms in West Africa, particularly in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, so as to prepare them for self-government after the war.<sup>2</sup>

Morgan has described the 1930s as an important phase in the history of British colonial development. It was the era of disturbances and intellectual ferment in the colonies. It was also the period, unlike the preceding years, when more questions were raised about the colonies.<sup>3</sup> As Morgan put it:

From a state of being unheard of at the beginning of the 1935, the Colonial Question became, in the first six months of 1936, one of the chief topics of public discussion. Between 11 July 1936 and 10 February 1938 nineteen papers were circulated and discussed by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy on, or concerning, the Question out of a total circulation of forty-five papers. Twelve of the nineteen were circulated and discussed in the year 1937. The House of Commons debated the matter on eleven occasions in 1937 and six in 1938.<sup>4</sup>

The 1930s also marked the genesis of "changes in the Colonial Service; growth of Unofficial Representation; and the Reorganisation of the Colonial Office". "Colonial policy also became an important part of British foreign policy" and experience in the 1920s was put to test.<sup>5</sup>

The most influential personality in colonial reforms

was however Lord Hailey, a former Governor-General of Punjab (1924-1928), the United Provinces (1928-1930), and director African Research Survey (1935-1938). In a confidential report of 1940-1942, Hailey drew attention of colonial officials and the government to a number of points requiring attention and to at least one point upon which it was desirable to have a policy statement.<sup>6</sup> He noted that it is not in line with British tradition to explore far-reaching constitutional issues until the force of circumstances makes it essential to do so.

To him, 'there is one reason at least why some further consideration should be given to the question whether a responsible government based on representative institutions is to be held to be the most suitable constitution for the African colonies'. He warned that, 'it is increasingly clear that Africans must before long be given a material addition to their very limited representation in the legislative councils'.<sup>7</sup>

Some of Hailey's general conclusions, quoted by O.G.R. Williams in his memorandum in July 1943, need to be quoted in full. As he wrote:

... Measures for improving the physical and social condition of the people must now have a claim on our attention which should take precedence over other considerations. It is no disparagement of

those whose chief interest lies in furthering political advance to say that the satisfaction of the ambition of what is still a small minority of Africans can be no substitute for the expenditure of the protracted effort and considerable financial sacrifice which may be needed to meet the more elemental need of the great majority of the people. But the two conceptions are fortunately not mutually exclusive; the situation only demands that we should not allow our pursuit of political ideas to detract from the attention which must be given to the pre-eminent needs of social advance. In the political sphere, the most important of our immediate problems is to interest Africans in measures designed to further social and economic development, and to secure their full cooperation in them. The solution suggested in this Memorandum is, on the one side, a resolute development of local institutions combined with progressive admissions of Africans to all branches of government services, and on the other hand, a policy of caution in political matters which, while leaving an opening for advanced opinion to play its part, would keep the substance of power in the hands of the official government, until experience has shown us under what constitutional forms the dependencies can move most securely towards the final stages of responsible government.<sup>8</sup>

Hailey's conclusion influenced many colonial officials and Cabinet members both under Labour and the Conservative governments, though with some reservations. Amongst them was Sir Alan Burns who became the Governor of the Gold Coast in late 1941. Before his departure, Burns minute to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the CO, about his plans for the



advancement of the Gold Coast. His proposals included reforms of the Executive and Legislative Councils, Africanisation of the civil service and the improvement of race relations.

To some officials, such as Bourdillon of Nigeria, Burns' ideas were too far-reaching.<sup>9</sup> To Burns nationalists were better pre-empted by reform rather than fought. Rathbone identified three stages in Burns' ideas. "First, he wished to gain time to build up native authorities as more effective instruments for both local administration and for promoting local economic and social development"; "Secondly, he wanted to use participation in native administration and municipal councils as the means by which Gold Coasters would gain experience in responsible self-government upon which further political advance would be built"; and, "lastly, African rulers and those connected with native authorities, already thoroughly associated with colonial government were seen by Burns as a continuing counterbalance to nationalist politicians".<sup>10</sup>

On September 30th 1941, CO officials met the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Moyne, to discuss Burns' initiatives.<sup>11</sup> Discussions and further correspondence between CO officials and Burns seemed to

have been instrumental in O.G.R. Williams memorandum of 1943.<sup>12</sup> In February 1943, Williams as the head of West Africa Department issued a memorandum on future policy in West Africa. In the memo, Williams warned that His Majesty's Government should not delay too long over reforms in the colonies.

He noted that action was required along three main lines: (1) "The provision of greatly increased educational facilities. This is fundamental to all the rest"; (2) "Greatly increased employment of Africans in the public administration and municipal government. This is clearly dependent upon the extent to which the increased educational facilities can produce men and women of the right type and with the right training"; and, (3) "A progressive education of the African in the handling of public affairs, whether in municipal councils or in legislative councils. This is the most difficult problem of all...".<sup>13</sup> He also suggested an overhaul of the economic sector so as to better the lot of the colonial peoples.<sup>14</sup>

Needless to say that with few modification, Williams' memorandum was judged "excellent" by senior bureaucrats and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>15</sup> Williams also wrote another memo on

"Constitutional Development in West Africa" on July 29th 1943 as part of forward looking initiatives in political advancement of West African colonies during the war.<sup>16</sup>

It has to be noted that constitutional reform in West Africa during the war was not a priority. Rather, it was treated as part of post-war reconstruction. British policy during the war was more concerned with keeping the Empire intact against external influence.

The end of World War II, however, marked a watershed in colonial policy.<sup>17</sup> British bureaucrats and politicians became apprehensive of the Soviet Union activities in the colonies generally. There was also the unprecedented development of international interest in, and criticism of, colonial powers, apart from the Cold War tactics of the Eastern and Western blocs.<sup>18</sup> In 1948 British colonial policy was officially defined thus:

...It is to guide the Colonial Territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensure to the people concerned both a fair standard of living and freedom from oppression from any quarter.<sup>19</sup>

Administering officers were however, advised not to confront genuine nationalist aspirations. Inasmuch as there was the willingness to carry out reforms in the colonies, it was also recognised that African colonies

must not be rushed into 'premature' independence. It was also noted that political advancement for colonies should proceed in a smooth, gradual and orderly way, with a strong economic structure to sustain them in a post-independence era. The policy was basically to encourage 'genuine' nationalists capable of resisting communism, as well as the improvement of standards of living and the development of the community generally.<sup>20</sup>

As it related to Africa, G.B. Cartland, a seconded colonial service officer, observed that Lord Hailey's remarkable survey of 1938-1939 needed to be dusted off and adapted in the reform of native administrations.<sup>21</sup> A.B. Cohen, an Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, took a further initiative by asking for opinions from other officials.<sup>22</sup> He recognised the need for "redefining the policy of native administration; making proper use of administrative staff".<sup>23</sup> In May 1946, Cohen and Cartland were directed by Sir George Gater, Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, to undertake preliminary enquiries in East Africa. This was followed by in-puts from other parts of the Empire particularly West Africa.

What resulted was a three stage programme of consultation and meetings. First was the organisation of

summer schools where officials discussed problems of local government in Africa, at Queens' College, Cambridge in August 1947. Second, in November 1947, a conference of African Governors was called. And third, a larger gathering of African official and unofficial members of the Legislative Councils met in September 1948. At these meetings there was a general stocktaking of British rule in Africa. The conclusion was that Indirect Rule was obsolete, and that there was an urgent need for an "efficient democratic and local government" which would prepare Africans for the art of governance.

While this was seen as part of the devolution process, an immediate effort was geared towards redirecting the energy of the urban politicians to grassroots politics. As Hyam notes, "the local government strategy was designed to bring in the masses to redress the balance of the professional politicians, who were reckoned to be bent only on removing the colonial power for their own benefit".<sup>24</sup>

By mid-1948, the CO also began to collate intelligence reports in order to alert the colonial peoples to the dangers of communism. Bevin, Creech Jones, Griffiths and senior officials in the CO and FO agreed that communism was a destructive evil that must be nipped

in the bud. Bevin, the Labour Government's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had noted as early as October 1946 that it "was clear now that Russia sought by every means to bring about the dissolution of the British Empire".<sup>25</sup> To Creech Jones, Labour's Secretary of State for the Colonies (1946), the sole aim of communism was "to destroy social democracy altogether by repression".<sup>26</sup> He, however, implored men-on-the-spot to distinguish legitimate nationalist aspirations from the communist bogey.

Equally important in Labour Government's high policy initiatives was the need to improve social well-being of the colonial peoples. Hyam has rightly noted that '... the Labour government's African policy rested upon a dual foundation of local government and community development'.<sup>27</sup> The Labour government policy, and that of their successor Conservative Government, emphasised mutual aid, voluntary service, trade unions, co-operative movements, community development and education. Trade unions and other self-helped groups were to be supported so as not to lose them to the communists.

The Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945 emphasised the co-ordination and integration of colonial research as part of the decolonization

processes.<sup>28</sup> Areas covered included, colonial products research, fisheries, agriculture, medicine, social sciences, economics, land tenure, insecticides and trypanosomiasis. The research on trypanosomiasis was particularly encouraged in order to boost the production of African crops. The survival of the cattle against tsetse-fly infection would invariably improved production of cash and food crops. A West African Institute for Trypanosomiasis was established in Northern Nigeria in late 1950. A similar centre was contemplated in East Africa. The Medical Research Council was also encouraged and financed in order to improve the health services in West and East Africa.

Earlier, between 1943 and 1944, Creech Jones as the Vice-Chairman of the Elliot Commission which looked into higher education in West Africa, had stressed that there could be no effective progress towards self-government without educational and economic development. He stated that 'there must be simultaneous progress at all levels of education'.<sup>29</sup> In 1945 a committee was set up under the chairmanship of W.E.F. Ward, the CO's Deputy Educational Adviser, to enquire into the problem of colonial education with a view to making it a tool of social values and democratic practice. Its report was however tenuous and was criticised by influential governors such

as Sir Phillip Mitchell of Kenya.<sup>30</sup> Between 1945 and 1951, universities were set up in five colonial territories - Malaya, East Africa, the West Indies, the Gold Coast and Nigeria as part of efforts at improving the educational provisions for colonial peoples.

Labour's socio-community development policy in the colonies also emphasised participation of the colonial peoples in the various programmes, which has official support. "The technique", writes Hyam, "was to select a project with a carefully chosen local objective, set up a provincial team to get it going, and then hand over to African leaders who would carry on the process of self-betterment".<sup>31</sup> Funds were provided from the CDW for further studies and research on community development in Africa to the Colonial Department of the University of London's Institute of Education.

An anti-socialist policy was also paramount in Britain's planning and development programmes during the latter part of the decolonization era. This is what Schatz referred to as "Nurture-Capitalism".<sup>32</sup> It involved collaboration between the corporatist State and private entrepreneurs in the development of the economy. In fact, the idea of economic planning had earlier been criticized



in 1920s and 1930s as a "communist device intended to destroy private enterprise and establish political dictatorship".<sup>33</sup> However, Keynesian economics, the Labour Government's welfarist programme and the Cold War were the dominant reasons for an anti-socialist approach to development and planning during the decolonisation period. Falola concludes that:

The idea that there must be a plan to guide economic behaviour and governmental activities stimulated an enduring policy of planning in the last years of colonial rule.<sup>34</sup>

He contends further that, "the theory was to implement planning strategies in the context of a free market regulated primarily by the interests of the state". To him, "the colonial state rejected socialist planning, with its centralized and mandatory guidelines".<sup>35</sup>

Hyam identified two reasons for post-war economic policy: first was the "prevailing world economic situation", and second, the need for the Western powers "to strengthen their defensive war potentials" by encouraging "colonies to contribute strategic war materials". He concludes that: "these factors seemed increasingly to point to the need for more conscious and centralised planning of colonial production and trade, and proper integration of colonial planning with domestic

planning, hitherto neglected". The ultimate goal was "to promote the economic well-being of the people, with due regard to the interest of the Commonwealth, other colonial territories, and world economic developments, and to bring them to the point where they are able to economically sustain the financial burdens of self-government and to stand on their own in the world economy".<sup>36</sup>

Post-1945 high policies were not solely the idea of the men of the CO. The Foreign Office also made meaningful contributions both under Labour and Conservative Governments. Concerning the communist menace, FO observations ranged over the use of religion, defence and intelligence reports, and how to finance the various anti-communist measures envisaged. As early as January 1948, the FO had recommended that the best way to deal with the communist menace was through counter-propaganda. The use of the "Third Force" was regarded as the most plausible counter against communism. This involved finance and moral support of government and non-government agencies such as the Central Office of Information, Public Relations Offices, the British TUC, British Council and the Oxford Group Moral Re-armament Movement.<sup>37</sup>

A sequel to this was the Cabinet's approval of an anti-communist publicity committee in early 1948 with a view to taking the offensive against communism and the effective use of the "Third Force".<sup>38</sup> The guiding principle under the Labour Government was "...to reveal ourselves to colonial peoples as the staunch friend and not the treacherous enemy of their political dreams...".<sup>39</sup> One way of realising this, was official diffusion and de-politicisation of racial issues in the colonies. It was perceived that anti-colonial sentiments could thrive on bad race relations. In West Africa, there were attempts among colonial officials to minimize the significance of race relations in explaining most conflicts. The consensus was that; "... race relations offer perhaps one of the easiest points of entry for communist penetration".<sup>40</sup>

In fact, as far back as May 10th 1948, J.L. Keith had reiterated that: "the existence of colour prejudice in the UK greatly increases anti-British feeling amongst colonial students and enhances the attraction of Communism as a political creed which repudiates the colour bar".<sup>41</sup> Another official noted that: "it is the introduction of the racial issue... which... capture the minds and imagination of these students, which are so dangerous".<sup>42</sup> To Keith, "African governments' needs to

reform so as to diffuse political agitation among colonial students in order not to drive them further into the arms of Communists and other propagandists".<sup>43</sup>

H.T. Bourdillon (an Assistant Secretary in the CO, 1947-1959) noted that "...if we can lead them forward in the ripeness of our own experience and moreover convince them that we are doing so, we need have no doubt of the victory over communism in the colonies".<sup>44</sup> As he noted further, "We can look forward, I believe, to a Commonwealth, impartial in matters of race, creed and colour, in which the evolving independence of the members may be accompanied by an increasing and not diminishing solidarity of the whole".<sup>45</sup>

Between 1951 and 1964, Conservative Governments took further initiatives in British global and colonial policies. Perhaps the most important high policy during this period was that on rearmament and defence. On October 26th 1951, Winston Churchill became the Prime Minister and shortly afterwards asked his Minister for Defence, Earl Alexander, to investigate Britain's military commitments within the context of the envisaged "Hot War".<sup>46</sup>

Primarily, the effort was to improve upon Labour's

re-armament policy. In consultation with the Chiefs of Staff, a Defence Policy and Global Strategy Paper outlining what was thought 'as reasonable preparations for hot war' was issued in 1952. This high policy paper can be summarized thus:

In the Cold War, Europe had to be given top priority, with the Far East next and after that the Middle East. In a hot war Europe should remain a top priority above the Far-East owing to the importance of communications through the Middle East, its oil and the necessity to prevent communism from spreading throughout Africa.<sup>47</sup>

Early in January 1952, Sir Charles Jeffries, Deputy Under-Secretary of State (1947-1956) wrote that, much had to be done on local government in Africa than hitherto had been achieved. He noted that, "two elements in British system - Parliament and Local Authorities- are complementary. But what we have done in the colonies is to develop one element in the absence of the other".<sup>48</sup> To him, and some other officials, while much was achieved in terms of the Westminster Parliamentary model, the local authority system needed an overhaul to make it complementary to the Westminster model.

In a minute to Sir Charles Jeffries' note, R.S. Hudson (Head of the African Studies Branch in the

CO,1949-1961) and T.B. Williamson (Assistant Secretary in the CO,1948-1961) noted that, 'one of the ways out was to follow the Gold Coast model by establishing a local government training school for persons of the public service, both central and local'.<sup>49</sup> Since the situation differed from one colony to another, Administering Officers were directed to either follow the Gold Coast model or to initiate their own policy towards meeting manpower problem in local government.

Another issue was the position of the colonial police and the power of colonial governors. At the 1951 conference of commissioners of colonial police, the danger of the police force being an instrument of political parties was highlighted. Also, questions about the loyalty of the police were discussed given the unfolding political and constitutional changes. Since the police had been modelled upon the British system, Sir Charles Jeffries advised in April 1952 that '...the police should be especially mentioned in constitutional instruments'.<sup>50</sup>

The Cabinet response to Jeffries' minute was the setting up of a Working Party to look into the matter closely. The Working-Party members were officially appointed in June 1952 with Sir Charles Jeffries as the

chairman, W.A. Muller (Inspector General of colonial police, 1951-1957), J.N.A. Armitage-Smith (Principal, CO, 1948-1956) and I.B. Watt as secretary.<sup>51</sup> The framework of the Working-Party was to make recommendations on how colonial police could be insulated from party politics, politicians and the government i.e. central and local.<sup>52</sup>

In its report on April 22nd 1953, the Working-Party agreed that "on balance, it is desirable to make constitutional provisions for the safeguard of the police in the colonies". It recommended that "provision be included in constitutions, as opportunity arises, constituting a Police Council for the territory to be appointed by the Governor acting in his discretion after consultation with the Chief Justice...".<sup>53</sup> The question of the 'operational control' of the police was not, however, within the framework of the Working-Party.

Subsequent to the report of another conference of commissioners of colonial police forces at the Police College at Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire on 13th July 1954, an official of the CO noted that it is time the CO reconvened the Working-Party "to do the whole exercise in one and to invite a Home Office representative along".<sup>54</sup> During an inter-departmental meeting with the Home Office representative on November 5th 1954, it was

noted that colonial police commissioners should enjoy the same autonomy in administrative matters as the Chief Constables of Counties, and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in the United Kingdom.<sup>55</sup> Based on this, Sir Charles Jeffries stated that the CO would spell out in detail the "positive functions and powers of the police, to prevent it from being mis-used by a member of the government of the day in any colonial territory...".<sup>56</sup>

The Conservative Government was also concerned with the survival of the Commonwealth. In this they did not differ from their Labour predecessor. Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the Colonies (October 1951-July 1954) in a minute to the Prime Minister, Churchill (October 1951-April 1955), noted that the government should continue with Oliver Stanley's (the War time coalition Government's S of S, 1942-1945) policy on the incorporation of colonies into the Commonwealth.<sup>57</sup> Oliver Stanley had earlier stated in the House of Commons in 1943 that, "We are pledged to guide colonial people along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire".<sup>58</sup>

In keeping with this policy, Lyttleton observed two fundamental points. First, he noted that "we all aim at



helping the colonial territories to attain self-government within the British Commonwealth". "To that end", he continued, "we are seeking as rapidly as possible to build up in each territory the institutions which its circumstances require". Second, Lyttleton noted that, "we are all determined to pursue the economic and social development of the colonial territories so that it keeps pace with their political advancement".<sup>59</sup>

The caveat, however, was that another Burma should be avoided at all cost. Lord Swinton, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in a memorandum in April 1953, observed that modification should be made in the election of ex-colonies to membership of the Commonwealth to avert another Burma situation. Swinton maintained that "there must be an assurance that the UK will be prepared, when the necessary conditions are fulfilled, to grant a territory independence".<sup>60</sup> This was based on hope and goodwill - "a hope that, when this takes place, the territory concerned will wish to remain in the Commonwealth and will be accepted as fellow-member by the existing members".<sup>61</sup>

In fact, Swinton's committee appointed by the Cabinet to look into the idea of a two-tier membership in the Commonwealth, recommended that it would be inimical

to the survival of the Commonwealth if a two-tier membership was adopted. The idea, it was concluded, might divide the body as ex-colonies would see themselves as being inferior in the set-up.<sup>62</sup> Sir Norman Brook's draft report on the future of the Commonwealth in 1954 also echoed the same prejudice against a two-tier system.<sup>63</sup> On December 7th 1954 the Cabinet unanimously upheld the conclusion of Swinton's committee and Norman Brook's draft as the best framework for a future Commonwealth, united and strong against external threats such as the communists.

There was also the issue of a governor's reserved powers. In April 1956, Lord Salisbury, the Lord President of the Council (1952-1957) suggested that, "colonial governors should have reserve powers to enable them to take limited action to preserve order without going to the length of declaring a State of Emergence".<sup>64</sup> On July 23rd 1956, the Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee met under the chairmanship of Lennox-Boyd, the Secretary of State for Colonies, to discuss Salisbury's view. As Lennox-Boyd put it, "colonial governors had been empowered as far back as 1950 to deal with any subversive activities".<sup>65</sup>

However, there was a problem. While colonial

governors had power to deport undesirable aliens, the same could not apply to citizens of the colony concerned. Lord Kilmuir, the Lord Chancellor, was of the view that, "It might...be worth reviewing the present state of colonial governors' powers to deal with subversion so that Ministers could...consider whether powers should not now explicitly be sought to deport persons belonging to territories".<sup>66</sup>

He suggested the use of the advisory machinery, which had been effective during World War II under Defence Regulation 18B, as a safety valve against mis-use of power by the colonial governors. The deportation of persons belonging to a territory would then be carried out after consultation with the advisory body, although the final decision rested with the colonial governor concerned.<sup>67</sup>

After much deliberation, the committee came up with some conclusions which the Cabinet endorsed as part of the recipe for preserving order and control in the colonies. They concluded that; (1)"Such machinery (advisory body) might be mainly valuable for its effect on public opinion locally. Governors themselves were unlikely to feel the need for moral support";

(2)"If such advisory bodies were to serve purpose, their existence would have to be known and all cases for deportation would have to be referred to them, even though some of these would be politically embarrassing.

It would however, be necessary to allow Governors in urgent cases to report the facts to the advisory body after action had already been taken to deport a particular undesirable";

(3)"No reports of such advisory bodies would be published. On the other hand, it might be difficult to prevent disclosure on some occasions of the advice tendered to colonial Governors. In such circumstances it would be for the Governor's prestige if he should appear to have been over-ruled by the advisory body";

(4)"It would therefore be necessary to make it clear that such bodies were not courts of appeal, but had a purely advisory function;

(5)"There might be one such body for each sizeable colonial territory, composed of one judge, one expatriate civil servant and one representative of the non-official classes in the territory. On the other hand, since the number of cases was not likely to be at all large, it might be possible to consider a central body with a distinguished membership".<sup>68</sup>

In brief, there was a general agreement that powers of colonial governors should be redefined in the light of colonial situations in order to promote a smooth devolution process. Through this initiative, governors and their officials were able to deal with known and unknown extremists (communist or non-communist) in the colonies. It seems to me that the success of many high policies in the colonies was partly due to the Cabinet's redefinition of colonial governors' powers.

### (3.2) A BRIEF ON COLD WAR POLITICS:

The Cold War began in Europe and moved to East and

South-east Asia and Latin America. This is a well explored area. My concern is to briefly highlight events as they relate to this study. To Walker, "the Cold War was not a struggle for supremacy of arms alone. It was also a struggle for supremacy between two conflicting ideologies: freedom under God versus ruthless, godless tyranny".<sup>69</sup> Eric Hobsbawn notes on the other hand that: "the Cold War was based on a Western belief... that the Age of Catastrophe was by no means at an end; that the future of world capitalism and liberal society was far from assured".<sup>70</sup> Obviously, global political system after World War II was of great importance in colonial policy formulation.

From Potsdam to Yalta, there was no doubting the fact that the former Allies were on the brink of breaking up. Dunbabin has stressed the German question as the turning point in Cold War history. In brief, at Potsdam it was agreed that Germany would be treated "as a single economic unit, and all German administrative bodies were accordingly to be created".<sup>71</sup> What emerged however was a Germany divided between the Eastern and the Western blocs.

In 1947, Britain and France signed a fifty-year treaty of alliance, known as the Treaty of Dunkirk. In 1948, following the communist take-over of

Czechoslovakia, Britain, France, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg signed the Treaty of Brussels, setting up the Western European Union. By this union they agreed to co-ordinate their forces against the danger of 'an armed attack in Europe'.<sup>72</sup> Soon after, representatives of Western Europe met those of Canada and the USA in Washington D.C. They were later joined by representatives of Italy, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Portugal.

In April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed. The signatories agreed that 'an armed attack against one or more of them shall be considered an attack against them all'.<sup>73</sup> During the same year, the International Confederation of Trade Unions broke away from the World Federation of Trade Unions, thus beginning the East-West struggle for labour unions world-wide.

In 1950 NATO members strengthened their cooperation by establishing a unified military command and a single military commander-in-chief. Realising the importance of German manpower, West Germany was admitted as a member of NATO in May 1955. Also in May 1955, a few days after West Germany's admission to NATO, the USSR under Khrushchev, entered into a defence pact (the WARSAW PACT) with its satellites.<sup>74</sup>

Part of the politics of the Cold War was the initiation of the Marshall Plan by the United States of America to aid the reconstruction of war-ravaged Europe.<sup>75</sup> The United States of America, under Harry S. Truman, also entered into an agreement with Australia and New Zealand in 1951 called the ANZUS Pact.<sup>76</sup> In 1954 Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Britain, France and the USA joined to form the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). By 1955 an agreement was reached with Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and Greece called the Baghdad Pact which set up the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO).<sup>77</sup>

The relevance of the above to this study is to highlight Britain's position after 1945 and how it went about preserving its political eminence afterwards. Britain not only emerged from the war as an economically weakened nation, it also faced two major crises in 1947 and 1949. These were the convertibility and devaluation crises respectively. Perhaps one could argue that Britain's membership of international organisations during the period also accounted for its economic crises. This is because, she was not only a major partner in the various alliances but was also a strong financial supporter. A scholar has rightly stated that "In the total structure of British overseas interests, the

strength of the United Kingdom economy was a vital element... sufficient gold and dollar reserves, and a strong pound were essential".<sup>78</sup>

The convertibility crisis of 1947 led to the devaluation of the pound which reduced, momentarily, the dollar deficit.<sup>79</sup> Also the outbreak of the Korean war on June 25th 1950 halted British benefits from the devaluation exercise as there was re-grouping of interests. More efforts were geared towards rearmament. Rearmament estimates were said to have "increased from the 1949/1950 level of £740 million to £950 million - in July 1950, to £1,130 million in August 1950, and to a staggering £1,555 million in January 1951".<sup>80</sup>

Britain however, encouraged cash/food crop productions in the colonies in order to meet its agricultural needs. Apart from the various socio-political administrative plans during the same period, Britain also initiated Development Plans in its West African possessions. Such plans, it has been argued, were not solely for the benefits of the colonies but for the satisfaction of the colonial power.<sup>81</sup>

### (3.3) THE WESTERN ALLIES: FRANCO-AMERICAN ATTITUDES:



It is not my intention to write a history of Franco-American attitudes towards Communism. Issues and events involved are so complex that one cannot adequately analyse them here. Rather, this section is a summary of the role of the French and the United States, as Western Allies, in Britain's anti-communist strategies. I emphasises general policy guidance of the two Allies as it relates to the question of Communist menace. This is to buttress the view that "one of the policies supported by the Colonial Office was the encouragement of a closer relation with the United States and perhaps with France".<sup>82</sup>

In fact, David Goldsworthy in his volumes in the British Documents on the end of empire series, where he discusses the role of the Conservative governments in combatting world-wide communism also supported this view.<sup>83</sup> I should add that such efforts between 1951 and 1960 were attempts towards improving upon Ernest Bevin's idea of a "Third World Power".<sup>84</sup> The idea of a "Third World Power" was consummated in 1949 when Bevin was the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The whole idea was aimed at consolidating the gains of the Western world in the colonies against International Communism under Soviet Union.<sup>85</sup>

Despite differences of emphasis, Franco-American views about anti-communist strategies recognised and accepted the reality of the Soviet Union's interests and financial as well as moral support of radical groups.<sup>86</sup> While France was concerned more with diagnosing the situation in West and North Africa, Madagascar and South-east Asia, British officials were sceptical about the secrecy of Anglo-French talks on communism as the French Communist Party remained a strong political force in government (1946-1947) and outside the government.

As a Foreign Office report highlighted, "Anglo-French talks on communism were a poor security risk as agreement reached might become known to the French Communist Party" in the long run<sup>87</sup> (although the French Communist Party had ceased since 1947 to be part of the government, this did not avert fear among some senior British officials).

Despite such scepticism, officials of the Foreign Office and the *Quai d'Orsay* met to discuss international aspects of the situation. To the French, the colonies had to be economically self-sufficient before independence so as to shield them from Soviet economic aid.<sup>88</sup> There were meetings, talks and exchanges of correspondence between British and French officials about policies in their West

African colonies throughout the period.<sup>89</sup> One should note that discussions, however, transcend communism and anti-communism. Issues such as the Ewe unification,<sup>90</sup> technical, economic cooperation and development of the colonial resources, intelligence etc were also encouraged.

As far back as 1945, Anglo-French technical co-operation had developed. Conferences covering the West African region, or the whole of Africa south of the Sahara had been held on many technical subjects.<sup>91</sup> Officials noted that: "Useful contacts have been established and valuable practical recommendations have emerged".<sup>92</sup>

In 1948 closer co-operation in the economic sphere was agreed upon. More important was the agreement in June 1948 between Britain and France about exchange of information and the development of closer contacts both in Europe and West Africa. Part of the agreement was that:

... information should be exchanged  
 between the two Governments, and ~~between~~  
 the local administrations,  
 over a wide range of constitutional,  
 local government and other political  
 questions; that Studies Branches should  
 be maintained in the two Colonial  
 Ministries; that contacts should be ~~developed at~~  
 all levels between the ~~territories in West Africa;~~

and that for this purpose not exchange of visits but exchanges of postings should take place.<sup>93</sup>

At another meeting in May 1949, Britain proposed an Anglo-French Secretariat to be based at Accra to "promote co-operation and exchange of information".<sup>94</sup> One can say that Anglo-French relations were largely cordial in West Africa. There was frequent exchange visits between Governors and senior officials "and some very valuable discussions on matters of common interest".<sup>95</sup>

By August 1950 senior officials met regularly, and some District officers were said to have met on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps the greatest efforts as it relates to Anglo-French exchange of information was Harry Cooper's (Head, Public Relations Department, Nigeria) visit to Dakar in 1950. The outcome was a comprehensive programme of co-operation between the various information units in French and British colonies. The governments also exchanged official bulletins and other publications as it relates to administration of their colonies and the trend of political agitations.<sup>96</sup>

The evolution of a special relationship between the United States and Britain is adequately studied.<sup>97</sup> William Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson have analyzed

that whether directly or indirectly, the "American scare" during World War II was accountable for British reforms in the colonies. Roosevelt's criticisms of British colonial policies was assuaged by Britain's plan to carry out reforms in the colonies after the war. Studies about issues and events during this period and after are many.<sup>98</sup> This section only emphasis United States' interest in moulding a pro-Western nationalism and labour unionism in West Africa; and, a review of US intelligence reports about potentialities, both material and manpower, of British West African colonies, in the event of a war with the Eastern bloc. As Hobsbawn succinctly notes: "...anti-communism was genuinely and viscerally popular in a country built on individualism and private enterprise where the nation itself was defined in exclusively ideological terms ('Americanism') which could be virtually defined as the polar opposite of Communism".<sup>99</sup>

The Truman era was remarkable. Between 1947 and 1952, many security and intelligence reports were written about the subject of communism and the break-up of the colonial empires. In June 1949, Louis Johnson, the Secretary of Defence submitted a memorandum to the National Security Council where he argued that a "major objective of United States policy is to contain Communism

in order to reduce its threat to US security".<sup>100</sup> In colonial territories, the US was concerned about the implications of 'premature' independence to her security, and the West generally. These explain various intelligence reports about nationalism, economic and strategic potentials of the colonies; the capabilities of the Soviet Union and her changing tactics towards the colonies, conducted during the period.<sup>101</sup>

By 1951, Bourgerie, the director of the newly created African Affairs department, with the support of George McGhee, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, asked Childs, the US consular officer in Nigeria, to document economic, strategic and geological potentials of Nigeria. Simply put, the State Department was interested in Nigeria's mineral resources, industrial capacity, agricultural development and transport facilities, as part of war preparation with the East.<sup>102</sup>

Moreover, basic reporting on individual products was encouraged, as well as a series of reports showing the best estimates of Nigeria's resources with the consular general's description of specific difficulties and problems prevalent against expanding such mineral, agricultural and industrial production.<sup>103</sup> The consulate was also requested to appraise socio-political situation

within the context of improving conditions of the colonial peoples so as not to drive them into the hands of Communists. US policy towards Nigeria during the period was "to secure the maximum use of its resources and keep the territory firmly within the political orbit of the Free World".<sup>104</sup> This should not be surprising because the US was a leading Western Ally.

The consular general responded that, social problems were not particularly serious, but recommended constant watchfulness on, "the rabid nationalists, some of whom are likely to be pawn for the Communist International".<sup>105</sup>

Perhaps, the most significant intelligence report during the Truman years, was the "Report on the Strategic Ports of West Africa". This was an attempt by the US National Security Resources Board to "evaluate and observe firsthand, political, economic and particularly port security situations and problems as they might affect the national security interests of the United States in the event of mobilization for total war, whether in the immediate future or over the longer term". The report recommended that, West Africa must be preserved by Britain as her colonial master, as an integral part of the Free World.<sup>106</sup>

The year 1953 marked a turning point in the history of US policy towards communism. First, the Eisenhower administration was able to solve the "communist plague" within the State Department.<sup>107</sup> Secondly, it pursued an international anti-communist policy as part of efforts towards containing Soviet penetration of the "Third World" in particular.

Despite US support of liberal nationalist aspirations, it nonetheless, agreed with British administrations in the colonies on preventing communism from gaining ground.<sup>108</sup> The US policy on African nationalism was aimed at ensuring the emergence of a pro-Western labour and nationalist groups, while its anti-communist policy was to diagnose and prescribe solutions to the communist menace world-wide.<sup>109</sup>

Five policy guidelines had become identifiable in US anti-communism during the late 1950s. These were:

(a) "Cooperate locally with security organisations to combat Communist subversive activities to the extent that this can be done without assisting in the repression of responsible non-Communist nationalist movements";

(b) "Seek to prevent or at least curtail formal representation of Sino-Soviet bloc countries in Africa";

(c) "Seek to provide constructive alternatives to



Soviet blandishments but avoid trying to compete with every Soviet offer";

(d) "Give general support to non-Communist nationalists, and reform movements, balancing the nature and degree of such support, however, with consideration of (our) NATO allies"; and,

(e) "In areas where trade unionism develops, guide it towards Western models by working with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, by direct advice and assistance, and by an exchange of persons program".<sup>110</sup>

The extent to which Britain benefitted from this policy, and US execution of the policy, will become clear when I discuss anti-communist policies in Nigeria in chapter six.

As earlier as 1951, Anglo-American officials at the United Nations had agreed that nothing should be done at the UN to delay the achievement of self-government by colonies. It was also agreed that efforts should be made towards preventing the colonies from being drawn to the communist bloc and that they should be drawn into the economy of the Free World.<sup>111</sup> The United States also supported the principle of self-government within the context of the British Commonwealth as part of the

safety-valve against communism. Hence, it supported British decolonization processes in the colonies.

The United States also "encouraged policies and actions of metropolitan powers which lead the dependant peoples toward responsible self-government or independence".<sup>112</sup> Its policy also involved: "avoid US identification with those policies of the metropolitan powers which are stagnant or repressive and, to the extent practicable, seek effective means of influencing the metropolitan powers to abandon or modify such policies".<sup>113</sup> It also made available the services of the United States Information Service and the Voice of America in the colonies, in order to "emphasize... the colonial policies of the Soviet Union and particularly the fact that the Soviet colonial empire has continued to expand throughout the period when Western colonialism has been contracting".<sup>114</sup>

By April 1959, high level tripartite talks between France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America began in Washington D.C. to discuss further ways of containing communism world-wide. The background to this was the intensification of Soviet activities through the Afro-Asian Solidarity conference in Cairo, and the Soviet presence at the pan-African Congress meeting in

Accra in 1958. Also important was the Soviet Union's economic aid to independent African countries such as Guinea, Ethiopia, Egypt, Liberia and Ghana.<sup>115</sup>

It should not be surprising therefore that, the Ambassadors of France, the UK and the USA during the Washington talks concluded that self-government and economic independence loomed large in pan-African conferences. To them, the Free World had no option other than to support and accommodate African aspirations in this wise in order to ensure a continuing fruitful association between Africa and the Western bloc.<sup>116</sup> Britain and her Western Allies could not afford to lose the "Battle of the Atlantic, because Europe will be endangered, the West's communication to the Far East will be cut and a tremendous source of raw materials will be lost".<sup>117</sup>

As the wind of change began to blow across Africa, the West became more apprehensive of a post-colonial Africa aligning with the Eastern bloc.<sup>118</sup> Sir Michael Denny, one of the British representatives at the Washington talks, was right when he stated that: "U.K. strategic interest in Africa derives from the need to deny the continent to the Russians and keep it, in so far as possible, aligned with the West".<sup>119</sup>

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8. Quoted from Rathbone, R. British Documents on the end of Empire: Ghana, Part 1, 1945-1951 (London, 1992); pp.xxxvii. The same document is cited by Porter and

Stockwell in British Imperial Policy...vol.I, op.cit; pp.169. Furthermore, Williams noted that Hailey was of the view that "when considering what to do in West Africa, no regard need be had to possible reactions in East Africa". See Porter and Stockwell, op.cit. pp.171.

9. Rathbone, R. Ghana, Part I, op.cit; pp.xxxvi; Ashton and stockwell (eds) Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice, Part I...op.cit; pp.xlix-liv.

10. Rathbone op.cit; pp.xxxvi - xxxvii; Also, his footnotes 19 and 20.

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27. Hyam, R. British Documents... Labour... Part 1,  
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28. Falola, T. Development Planning and Decolonization  
... op.cit; pp.23-45; A general survey of colonial  
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op.cit; pp.lxiii.

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38. CO866/49: Reflection on Colonial Office organisation -note by H.T. Bourdillon for CO organisation committee, May 10, 1948, PRO, London.

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44. Ibid.
45. Owendale, R. British Defence Policy Since 1945 (Manchester, 1994); pp.97. Perhaps Churchill was keeping his earlier promise made in 1938. Kent has noted that, in a conversation with Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London in 1938, Churchill stated that, "... twenty years ago I strove with all the energy in my power against communism because at that time I considered communism, with its idea of World Revolution, the greatest danger to the British Empire. Now communism does not present such a danger to the Empire ... Therefore, at the present time I strive against Hitler with all the energy in my power. If the danger for the British Empire from the side of fascism were to disappear and the danger from the side of

communism were to rise again, I - I say this absolutely frankly -would begin to strive against you again ...". See Kent, J. British Imperial Strategy ... op.cit; pp.212.

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Empire, Parts, 1, II; and III (London, 1994).

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CHAPTER FOURTHE COLONIAL STATE AND THE THREAT OF COMMUNISM(4.1) INTRODUCTION:

I do not deny for one moment the great inspiration I derived from the communist philosophy which has become the most vital development in the political history of our generation.  
(Mokwugo Okoye, 1980; p.165).

This chapter highlights how the few communists, as well as their sympathizers, attempted to dominate nationalist and labour movements in Nigeria during the 1940s and early 1950s. But first it is useful to outline general patterns of communist infiltration into the colonies, so as to ascertain its magnitude during the devolution years in Nigeria.

There are four stages of communist tactics in the colonies. First, the propaganda stage when communist literature pours into the country; second, the infiltration into labour organisations; third, the

infiltration into the armed forces; and fourth, the "peace offensive" -- violent overthrow of government.<sup>1</sup> One can imagine that with few communists and sympathizers in Nigeria, it seems hard to see this strict form of penetration being followed. Nevertheless, this chapter analyze the role of communism in militant nationalism as a prelude to emergent marxian groups in the 1950s, which is the subject of the next chapter. Suffice it to say that Nigerian Marxists believed that Communism is a better ideology to colonialism or capitalism. That seems to me, to be the basis upon which they based their anti-colonial struggle.

Although inadequate, but quite informative, British officials by 1950 had documented "A Survey of Communism in Africa". While outlining the direction of Communism in Africa generally, the "Survey" maintained that it had followed the pattern of infiltration into the nationalist and labour movements via Soviet satellites in Europe. British officials were concerned about the activities of "national liberation movements" such as the "Rassemblement Democratique Africain" (RDA) in North and West Africa, particularly in the French sector.

They were also concerned about activities of the Communist Party of South Africa and its potentials as a

front in sub-Saharan Africa; the potentiality of Communists using bad race relation to garner supporters in Kenya and the Rhodesias; the growing influence of Communists in Algeria (until 1955 when it was outlawed); Soviet and Chinese aid to neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia; and the influence of the French Confederation General du Travail in North Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Of more significance perhaps, was the activities of the Communists in neighbouring West Africa. It was in French-speaking West Africa that the French Communist Party made greater impact immediately after the war. Their efforts bear fruits upon the formation of Group d'Etudes Communistes in 1943 in Abidjan, Bamako, Bobo-Dioulasso, Conakry and Dakar. These are Marxist groups, which organised classes where ideological education and training were conducted for members. It was this group of Africans that formed the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA) in 1946 (by 1955 the organisation had become liberal and many radical allied movements such as the U.P.C. were expelled). Under Felix Houphouet-Boigny (who later renegaded) and Gabriel d'Arbroussier, the RDA aligned with the French Communist Party in Paris (although this was broken in 1950).<sup>3</sup> And in French Cameroun, the French were faced with militant activities of the communist influenced, Union des Populations du

Cameroun (UPC).<sup>4</sup>

Above all, it seems to me that, officials were concerned about CPGB's commitment towards influencing the formation of a nation-wide Marxist party in British colonies, the possibility of Kremlin exploitation of local discontents, and the long term aim of the Cominform in gaining some influence.<sup>5</sup>

United States' intelligence officials in Lagos identified four principal phases of communist penetration in Nigeria. These were:

- (1) "Recruitment of party members from Nigerian students in the UK, with their indoctrination and subsequent training conducted by the British Communist Party or at an Iron Curtain universities, chiefly the University of Prague";
- (2) "Infiltration and control of the rudimentary Nigerian labor movements, with special emphasis upon the central labor federation, The All-Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF). Communist efforts within ANTUF have been concentrated on effecting WFTU affiliation and excluding ICFTU and British trade union influence";
- (3) "Direct propaganda, chiefly printed material, either distributed by direct mail or through a small chain of bookshops in the principal southern Nigerian cities";



and,

(4) "Efforts to place expatriate party members in influential official positions in the Nigerian civil service, or on the staff of the University College, Ibadan, and in the quasi-official department of Extra-Mural Studies".<sup>6</sup>

This view is also supported by records from the Communist Party of Great Britain and the British Trade Union Congress respectively. These and official records in Britain, Nigeria and the United States show that, whatever progress made by Marxists, was thwarted, partly through British measures which are discussed in chapter six.

#### (4.2) NIGERIA FLIRTS WITH COMMUNISM:

Studies about nationalism and decolonisation in Nigeria have played down the seriousness with which British and American officials viewed growing communist tendencies on the part of a few eloquent nationalists, as well as neglecting anti-communism as a theme in transfer of power.<sup>7</sup> Activities of communists such as I.T.A. Wallace Johnson and George Padmore, and pan-Africanists such as Du Bois, Marcus Garvey and Ladipo Solanke, and anti-colonialists such as Gandhi and Nehru in India, in

the late 1920s through to 1940s formed important impressions on young Nigerians.<sup>8</sup> Britain and her Western Allies were also worried about the activities of organisations such as the Communist Party of Great Britain; the International Union of Students, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Women International Democratic Federation, and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

Despite formation of various political associations in Nigeria in the 1920s and 1930s, marxist nationalists and labour unionists did not emerge until the end of World War II. This was partly because younger elements were looking up to Azikiwe, for instance, to give leadership in the struggle against British rule. As events later showed, neither Azikiwe, nor any of the older generation, was prepared for a communist pattern of decolonization.

Young nationalists and labour unionists were not satisfied with the level of progress made by associations such as the National Congress of British West Africa (1920); Nigeria National Democratic Party (1922); the West African Students Union (1925); and the Nigerian Youth Movement (1934). They were also dissatisfied with British handling of the Italo-Ethiopian crisis (1935);

West Indian colonial problems (1935-1938); and the "deep problems of increasing unemployment in urban areas, poverty, social disruptions caused by colonial changes and increasing urbanization, ethnic rivalries, and inadequate schools, as well as the fact that development was in general too slow to meet the aspirations of a population that was becoming better informed".<sup>9</sup> They seemed to have had no option than to pursue a militant way of seeking independence from the British. Such militancy was influenced, partly by, readings from marxist literature and contacts with Communist International.

A few Nigerian youths were also sympathetic about the plight of the Soviets, particularly after the German invasion. Coleman noted that: "earlier in about 1943, Nigerian youths formed the Red Army Club in solidarity with Soviet Russia after the German attack".<sup>10</sup> During the same month "they sent a cable to leaders of Soviet Russia espousing the willingness to establish relations with the youths of Soviet Russia".<sup>11</sup>

According to Awa, the pioneer leader of marxian socialism in Nigeria was Nnamdi Azikiwe. In 1943, Azikiwe spelt out his theoretical ideas in two booklets: Economic Reconstruction of Nigeria; Political Blue-Print of

Nigeria. He asserted that "marxian philosophy with its dynamic analysis should become the basis of a new economic system in the country". He recommended the reorganisation of the economic and political systems to usher in socialism, with the proviso that such reorganisation should be done through the democratic process.<sup>12</sup>

As events showed, Azikiwe abandoned socialism for free trade, constitutionalism and moral re-armament. One can speculate three reasons for his change of heart. The assassination story of 1945, his joining the Moral Re-armament Group in 1949<sup>13</sup>, and the reality of the colonial situation. He nonetheless provided the lead in ideological orientation in nationalist politics. This shall become clear as I analyze events during the period.

Azikiwe stated that the aftermath of the General Strike of 1945 was "the emergence of ideological movements whose objectives included not only political freedom, but also social equality and economic security".<sup>14</sup> Nigerian youth provided the leadership in "practical" ideological movements. The youth were tired of "long articles, plenty of talks and no work" that had become the feature of elite nationalism up to 1945.<sup>15</sup> In fact, with the collapse of the *Nigerian Youth Movement* and the formation of the *National Council for Nigeria and*

*the Cameroons* (later, National Council of Nigerian Citizens) in August 1944, some Nigerian youths felt that there was need to start a socialist movement.<sup>16</sup>

Earlier in 1945, Amanke Okafor formed a marxist group called "Talakawa Party". It did not however exist as a political party but as a think-tank group. Its aim was to rally the working class together in order to "achieve a free independent and a socialist Nigeria". This group however did not seem to have made any impact because its founder/leader soon left Nigeria for further studies in the United Kingdom. He however joined the Communist Party of Great Britain while in England and featured in its activities before his return to Nigeria in early 1950s.<sup>17</sup>

On July 8th, 1945, the *Nigerian National Socialist Party* was born under the leadership of Fola Arogundade. Other members were: A. Chukwura, Babatunde Shotade, G. Menkiti, Mudashiru Dawodu, Shola Morris, S. Okeke, Alli Zazau and Alabi McIver.<sup>18</sup> Its secretariat was located at 9 Ondo Street, Ebute-Metta East, Lagos. This embryonic organisation did not enjoy the support of older nationalists because of its communist orientation.<sup>19</sup> Members regarded capitalism as the cause of Nigerian misery. According to them, "it had encouraged the

enactment of inhuman legislations to foster the degeneration of mankind".<sup>20</sup>

Despite anti-capitalist rhetoric, the leader of the *NNSP* lamented after its collapse that: "its adherents were a very meek and weak lot of young people... We want to practise socialism but we are an ignorant mass of citizens comforted by the maxim that none can learn to swim until one is in the water".<sup>21</sup> The organisation was a non-starter and its immediate collapse was not surprising. Its leader's remark is but a reflection on why many would-be leftist organisations during the colonial era did not last long.

Between 1946, when the *Zikist Movement* was formed, and 1948 when it assumed a militant posture towards the British administration in Nigeria, the stage seemed set for Nigerian marxists and their sympathizers in the struggle against British colonialism. On February 16th 1946 young radical Nigerians within the *NCNC* formed a movement which derived its inspiration from one of the leading nationalists of the period, Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Its founding members were Kola Balogun (first President), C.K. Ajuluchukwu (the first secretary-general), Abiodun Aloba and Nduka Eze. Other members included Raji Abdallah (second President), Osita Agwuna,

K.O. Mbadiwe, Ogedengbe Macaulay, Nzimiro, Mokwugo Okoye and Ralph Aniedobe.<sup>22</sup> It should be stressed here that contrary to official perception that the Zikist Movement was full of "irresponsible young men"<sup>23</sup>, the formation of the Movement was due to their growing impatience with what they considered to be the slow pace of Nigeria's political advancement during the period.<sup>24</sup>

By October 1948, Osita Agwuna had made his "A Call For Revolution", where he called for a peace offensive against the British administration in Nigeria. In February 1949, Ogedengbe Macaulay talked of "dragging of the government down, and seizing power by force".<sup>25</sup> During the same month, Raji Abdallah implored his northern brethren to join in the violent struggle.<sup>26</sup> He also called for "positive action to end British rule", (this phrase was later used by the *CPP* of the Gold Coast).<sup>27</sup> Although government clamped down on them by arresting and charging ten of them with sedition in 1949,<sup>28</sup> this did not deter other members from inciting other uprisings in other parts of the country.

On February 16th 1950, a Zikist sabotage plan was uncovered by the police Special Branch after a search at Ikenna Nzimiro's house in Lagos. Documents found included "plans to destroy oil storage centres and essential

government houses".<sup>29</sup> During the prosecution, Nzimiro confirmed receiving the messages in his mail box on February 7th 1950 and was awaiting further instructions before the police search. He was found guilty of sedition and sentenced to nine months in prison.<sup>30</sup>

The height of Zikist activities was an abortive attempt on the life of Hugh Foot, the Chief Secretary, in February 1950.<sup>31</sup> On February 18th 1950, *Reuter* reported that a young Ibo man named Heelas Chukwuma Ugokwe of the Posts and Telegraph Department tried to kill Hugh Foot with a knife when he was entering the Secretariat building in Lagos. Ugokwe was charged with attempted murder on February 20th 1950. In his report to the Secretary of State, Governor Macpherson noted that the attempted murder was arranged by the Zikist Movement.<sup>32</sup> Ugokwe was sentenced to life imprisonment by Mr. Justice Rhodes at the Lagos Magistrate Court on March 13th 1950.<sup>33</sup>

Ugokwe, a World War II veteran, had joined the Zikist Movement at its inception in 1946. It was reported that he was specifically recruited as an "assassin" at the Zikist Movement convention at Kaduna in December 1949 along with eleven other youths to carry out a nationwide plot in an effort to forcibly seize power from the



government.<sup>34</sup> It was further claimed that instructions on this assignment was given by Mokwugo Okoye.<sup>35</sup>

Initially, Ugokwe's job was to assassinate Macpherson, but having waited for nine days, decided to assassinate Hugh Foot, the Chief Secretary. Ugokwe's action was applauded by fellow Zikists and their sympathizers. An appeal was made to the West African Court of Appeal which reduced the life sentence to twelve years imprisonment.<sup>36</sup>

The significance of this incident was the tightening of security within official circles and the eventual banning of the Movement under the "Unlawful Societies Act, April 1950". According to Government Notices No.21, Volume 37 of April 13th, 1950, "conclusive evidence has been obtained from many parts of the country that the Zikist Movement is an organisation which aims to stir up hatred and malice and to pursue seditious aims by lawlessness and violence".<sup>37</sup> The government also confiscated "all banners, insignia arms, papers, books, documents and any similar property" of the organisation.<sup>38</sup>

Although the Zikist Movement was banned in April 1950, this did not lead to its collapse. There was re-

grouping of interests and tactics, as well as, continued importation of communist literature into the country through the CPGB in London. First, a change in tactics involved the elimination of the older generation as part of their struggle. This was largely because of the attitude of Azikiwe and others who, rather than support the Zikists' course, ditched them. It also involved abandoning reformism and military action for an organisational putsch.

By organisational putsch, the Zikists "aimed to manoeuvre their opponents (Nigerians and British) in debates, elections and practical work". As Okoye puts it: "The point here is to beat the opponent at his own game by demonstrating a superior intellect, energy and patriotism, thus throwing doubt in the enemy's mind as to the value of his ideals or lack of them while at the same time showing that the methods and aims of the revolutionary group are preferable to any other". He concludes that, "organisational putschism is to be distinguished from sheer reformism or fabianism which is essentially a doctrine of middle class complacency and only thrives where national prosperity is high and there are no sharp distinctions between classes".<sup>39</sup>

Second, there was increased volume of communist

literature brought into the country which was distributed among the Zikists and other communist or socialist followers. A British official noted that:

In November 1950, out of a total of 70 sacks of second class mail, six were taken at random and examined. And in each sack examined there were 1,000 communist pamphlets under twelve titles and it was estimated that 50,000 pamphlets must have entered Nigeria by one mail boat alone.<sup>40</sup>

In the latter half of 1952 and the beginning of 1953, the volume perceptibility increased and at the same time there was a change in emphasis. Earlier types of propaganda were Marxist books, propaganda advertising the Russian way of life and Stalin's virtues. This changed and was outnumbered by Cold War propaganda, anti-colonial propaganda and newspapers and periodicals. There was an increased number of pamphlets sent to private addresses despite the fact that the people could not pay for them.<sup>41</sup>

A discussion of the aims and activities of the Zikist Movement suggests that anti-communism was as important after 1950 as it was before 1950, more so when there was an increased volume of communist literature in the country, and membership of the organisation was coloured by marxian teachings.<sup>42</sup>

While the motto was "secrecy and ruthless execution of our plans"<sup>43</sup>, the aims of the Zikist Movement at its formation in 1946 were rather confusing as they vacillated between pro and anti-British statements. Its main motto was towards African irredentism, an idea coined from Azikiwe's *Renascent Africa* (1937). The Movement had nine goals which were spelt out thus:

(i) "To study painstakingly and objectively, practice conscientiously, seriously and constitutionally the creed of "Zikism" as set out by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in his *Renascent Africa* and allied teachings and as propounded in its philosophical form by Nwafor Orizu";

(ii) "To faithfully follow the leadership of Dr. Azikiwe";

(iii) "To courageously and intelligently preach Zikism, making it understandable to the mass of the indigenous elements of the country with the purpose of aiding the evolution of a united nation out of the varied tribes of Nigeria and the British Cameroons";

(iv) "To faithfully dedicate our lives to the task of African Redemption by concretely demonstrating and defending even at the risk of paying the supreme sacrifice, the Zikist way of life";

(v) "To use every available means of submitting constitutionally the opinions, feelings, sentiments and customs of the people of the country to the British Government of Nigeria";

(vi) "To take interest in all activities, events, happenings and practices that affects the destiny of this country";

(vii) "To cooperate with other organisations in the country whose aims and aspirations do not clash with those of this movement";

(viii) "To cooperate with the Zikist Movement the world over";

(ix) "To raise funds from Zikists and the general public in furtherance of these objects".<sup>44</sup>

In fact, British and American officials were apprehensive of the Zikists' sponsored editorial on September 3rd 1946 of Nigerian Spokesman which castigated the Police Force, the Army, and lawyers. This was based on the idea that in a colonial situation, "a lawyer becomes a societal flower and even an anachronism in the United Nigeria Republic since his profession is based on laws enacted by the former (colonial) rulers". The editorial continued that "the Army and the Police Force would have to be disbanded and reformed because they are co-operative part of what socialists recognise as the state machine".<sup>45</sup>

Apart from sponsored editorials in Nigerian Spokesman, Daily Comet and the West African Pilot (before 1949), the Zikists aired their thoughts in "Zimo Newsletter", the official publication of the organisation. Topics covered included, "What is the Zikist Movement?", "Workers of Nigeria revolt", and reproduction of Marxist-Leninist thoughts and philosophy. The Zikists openly declared their commitments to socialism and accepted the Marxist thesis that economic factors conditioned the moral, legal and political aspects in the development of any given society.<sup>46</sup>

This explains why members of the Zikist Movement

were variously described as; "Communist propagandist", and a "band of youths who advocated the violent overthrow of the British administration". Some of them (i.e. Abdallah and Oged Macaulay) were described as making "a violently anti-Government speeches in public", despite being civil servants. Osita Agwuna, the writer of "A Call for Revolution", was referred to as a man "inclined increasingly towards violence... probably because he aspires to make a martyr of himself".<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the British officials were right. Agwuna was the first to voice the threat of 'positive action' when, at a meeting of the Lagos branch of the NCNC on October 9th 1948 at the Yaba Stadium, he proposed a resolution accusing the government of fanning tribal discord by encouraging "minority elements".<sup>48</sup> He then called upon those present to pledge themselves 'to take any measure to silence the "minority" and to overthrow the Government and hand over power to the NCNC'.<sup>49</sup> As the report shows, wiser counsels prevailed and the resolution was withdrawn.

However, three weeks later in late October, Agwuna followed it up with a lecture which he entitled "A Call for Revolution". He said that Nigeria had two enemies: the first was the Government, and the second was the fear

of the people to rise and drive the Government out. As far as he was concerned the only hope of salvation was progressive revolution beginning with a civil disobedience campaign. He then recommended that every taxable Nigerian should refuse to pay tax to the Government but should pay an equivalent amount into the NCNC funds; Empire Day should stop forthwith; nobody should join the civil service or the army; the NCNC on its forthcoming tour should "preach a doctrine of hate and contempt for the Government".<sup>50</sup> It is important to highlight Agwuna's speech: "A Call For Revolution", in order to identify its marxist leaning.

"A CALL FOR REVOLUTION":

(a) "Like heroes let us show the spirit to dare and conquer; let us forget the momentary interests of our cumbrous flesh and pursue a lasting pearl that is freedom; let us fight for the honour of smashing the present Imperialist State machine BY AS FOUL AND VICIOUS METHODS AS WITH WHICH WE ARE STILL CAPTIVATED (emphasis by Agwuna); let us for once cast aside that simplicity and complacency which have been a curse to our race and cultivate those wordy virtues which speak, use and understand the language of the World in every changing epoch";

"Our youth must then assimilate the methods of India, Burma, Indonesia, Lybia (sic) and Palestine, where

unwilling Rulers have been shown their way out; MUST DAMN RELIGIOUS AND HUMANIST INHIBITIONS (emphasis by Agwuna) and, where the means is certain of the end, work on the hypothesis that the end justifies the means. MUST EMBRACE ACTIVE REVOLUTION AS THE CURRENT WORLD ORDER, MUST EMBRACE THE SCIENTIFIC USE OF FORCE (emphasis by Agwuna) for justice without force, it is said, is powerless; and force without justice is tyranny".

(b) "The youths of Africa should interest themselves in Military tactics of defence, in physical adventures of all kinds and should demonstrate more than a passing and academic interest in the methods and tactics of revolutionary movements in other countries and seek communion with them. In particular, they should organise themselves for intensified picketing and boycott. DELIBERATE GROUP VIOLATION OF EVERY LAW (emphasis by Agwuna) and executive order which they deem to be tyrannical and a breach of human right, and for various forms of revolutionary activities and should highly resolve to save this continent from the predatory clutches of Imperialism through any mean".<sup>51</sup>

As a result Agwuna, Anthony Enahoro - chairman of the meeting - Duke Dafe and Ralph Aniedobe were arrested and prosecuted for sedition by the colonial court. Although the arrests did not occasion much excitement



initially, some of the ex-servicemen soon came out with attacks on Azikiwe saying that "he put these young men up to making the speech and that if he was the patriot he held himself to be he would have insisted on going to prison with them".<sup>52</sup>

The prosecution of these men notwithstanding, other Zikists continued the struggle. In mid-November 1948, an unsigned message was issued from the Zikist Movement secretariat in Lagos and distributed throughout the country. The message read thus:

NATIONALIST MESSAGE LAGOS

Be it known by all Zikists and freedom-loving Nigerians that this is the hour. The Zikist Movement can no longer hope to have reason where, it is evident, respect for reason does not exist. The movement is therefore calling upon the youths of the country to support it in the present struggle for freedom. We cannot allow this challenge to our manhood to go. The Zikist Movement, in humble obedience to the call, is now ordering all the branches and regional presidents to organise and lead campaigns throughout the country so as to make our stand known. Our branches and branch officers should not antagonise any tribal and political groups. The campaign should aim at focusing the attention of the masses towards the one common central danger - the British Government.<sup>53</sup>

While the Azikiwe-led NCNC seemed ambivalent, Abdallah and other Zikists were in favour of identifying themselves completely with Agwuna on the need for a "positive action". The Zikists lost no time in trying to whip up excitement both in Lagos and in the provinces. In late November 1948, seven instructions were passed on to branches outside Lagos for its executives' implementation. These were:

(i) "A campaign should be held by summoning meetings with executives of private unions, family unions, headmasters, explaining to them the need for progressive revolution beginning with civil disobedience without violence or non-cooperation";

(ii) "If our men now standing trial are sentenced without option of fine, the workers and market women should make positive demands to government to release them. Such demands should be followed up with an ultimatum, organised slow strike and stop marketing";

(iii) "In the event of the government contravening such ultimatum, a country-wide demonstration should follow by damaging mercantile houses, prison walls, post offices, police barracks and police rifles should be seized first; time limit for all these will be December 24th 1948";

(iv) "Our order to all branches should read as follows:-

"I believe in genuine and beneficial cooperation - ZAKARI";

(v) "On receipt of this instruction, summon all regional presidents and secretaries and distribute these instructions to them";

(vi) "From now onwards all private and important documents should be dispatched to the headquarters only by sending a messenger by land"; and

(vii) "Our struggle for freedom does not consist only

in pouring abuse, what we need to do is to wage war on those forces against us".<sup>54</sup>

These instructions led to an assembly of people who disturbed the proceedings of the preliminary investigation of the sedition cases against the Zikists in Lagos, as well as a demonstration in Onitsha which led to the closure of the market for one day.<sup>55</sup>

On this occasion, Abdallah and Oged Macaulay were arrested, leaving Eze, Okoye, Ndulue and others to continue with the struggle. On September 5th 1949, the Zikist Movement, under the momentary leadership of Eze and Okoye, issued an operation order to its members. They were asked to organize "a peasant movement throughout the country".<sup>56</sup> In addition, members were implored to infiltrate trade unions and seek positions there as part of preparations for a civil disobedience at a later date.<sup>57</sup> The order also encouraged youths to "embrace active revolution and deliberate group violation of every law and executive order".<sup>58</sup> There is no doubt that this operational order has a Communist undertone as it called for active revolution and the re-awakening of the peasantry and the working class. It shows the extent to which the Zikists under Eze and his cronies, were influenced by marxism, and their efforts towards

establishing a "Communist State".

In late February 1950, men of the Nigerian police and the Special Branch raided the Zikist Movement's headquarters and arrested sixteen people. Three were discharged, one was fined £25; ten were sentenced to six months imprisonment and the remaining two to four weeks and thirty-three months respectively.<sup>59</sup> Mokwugo Okoye, the secretary - general of the Zikist Movement, was the hardest hit. He was sentenced to thirty-three months imprisonment after being found guilty of possessing seditious documents. Hence, when others regained their freedom, he was still serving his sentence. Ndulue sought the support of Fenner Brockway and Reginald Sorenson, Labour MPs, in seeking a Royal pardon.<sup>60</sup>

Brockway's appeal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies was turned down because in the first instance the Royal Prerogative was exercised by the Governor and not the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Secretary of State for the Colonies only intervened if there was evidence of a failure of due process in the colonial courts. A Colonial Office official noted that, "the circumstances of the case do not justify his own intervention in a matter in which the Governor is in the best position to judge the desirability or otherwise of

exercising his powers".<sup>61</sup> The Colonial Office was therefore right to have concluded that "it was not only wrong for Brockway to send an appeal directly to London, the Zikists were engaged in a plot and not a riot, and as such the invocation of liberalism to permit the release of those found guilty of plotting violence is a trifle inappropriate".<sup>62</sup>

It is important to stress at this juncture that anxiety about communism and Zikists' activities were not limited to nationalist groups, but had also penetrated student groups and the labour unions as well. Both the Americans, and the British administrators, in Lagos were concerned about growing radical tendencies within the University College, Ibadan. As Erwin Keeler noted in a despatch to the State Department in Washington D.C.:

... The intensely political and radical atmosphere of the campus is already established, with the encouragement and direct assistance by the local nationalist leaders...<sup>63</sup>

He noted further that the attitude of the nationalist leaders towards the College could be found in the remarks of Kingsley Mbadiwe, an NCNC leader, during the 1952 budget session of the Nigerian House of Representatives.<sup>64</sup> During the discussion of government financial support of the College, Mbadiwe stated that,

"if money was to be spent upon the College it should and must be made a place where young Nigerians were trained to be nationalists".<sup>65</sup> The government was however, more concerned about the students being "a prime target of the communists at such future time as the opportunity might become auspicious for them".<sup>66</sup> It was, however, in the labour unions that official anxiety became more vociferous. I shall discuss this shortly.

(4.3) The Careers Of Nduka Eze, Gogo Chu Nzeribe and Sam Akpata:

The careers of Nduka Eze, Gogo Chu Nzeribe and Samuel Akpata in labour unionism further explain attempts by communists to infiltrate into sectors of the Nigerian colonial state. While there were other communists and their sympathizers during the same period, these men are unique in view of their credentials. Concerning Eze for instance, records from the CPGB indicates that he was "the most outstanding" personality in "the history of the Nigerian working class movement" during the colonial era.<sup>67</sup>

The year 1950 remained memorable in the life of Nduka Eze. First, he established contact with the CPGB leaders such as Harry Pollitt, Margot, Barbara Ruheman,

Idris Cox, perhaps through Okafor and Onowochei who had joined the CPGB around 1946 in England. Second, he was instrumental in the publication of Labour Champion, the first Nigerian labour newspaper. Though short-lived, Labour Champion was a clear expression of Marxist influence, with a strong emphasis on the principles of international unity. With this paper, he was in close contact with officials of the Daily Worker, a communist newspaper in London. In fact, he was reported to have sent one of his young reporters, Idise Dafe to the Daily Worker (London) to be trained as a journalist.<sup>68</sup> Eze had earlier sought financial support from the British TUC in setting up the Labour Champion in June 1949.<sup>69</sup>

However, the response was negative because TUC officials were clearly informed about Eze's role in the defunct Nigerian Trades Union Congress in March 1949 and his marxian doctriation.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the Labour Adviser in Nigeria, Roberts Curry, was not in support of Eze's appeal as he viewed it as, one of the Communists tactics of presenting themselves as pro-Western leaders in the colonies only to turn out to propagate Communist ideology through the paper. In his words: "Eze's methods are typically Communist, his speeches and press reports are very obviously inspired from outside sources".<sup>71</sup>

Eze was, at one time, President - General of the Zikist Movement; the Secretary of the United African Company Workers' Union and the Nigerian National Federation of Labour, a breakaway organisation from the (Nigeria) Trade Union Congress, apart from being the Secretary of the National Scholarships Board formed in May 1950.<sup>72</sup> Of Igbo origin, he joined the U.A.C. as a manager- in-training in 1944. He took an active part in trade union activities and in 1946 became the secretary of his branch of the UAC Workers Union.<sup>73</sup>

There are conflicting reports about the circumstances that led to his exit from the UAC staff list. To the CPGB, Eze left the UAC voluntarily in 1947 after many "attempts by the management to buy him off and intimidate him failed".<sup>74</sup> To British officials, however, many activists had indeed been sacked but for a variety of reasons including, as in Eze's case, "insubordination".<sup>75</sup>

As President of the Lagos branch, executive member, and later President of the Zikist Movement, Eze constantly inspired and educated young men in the movement in the spirit of Marxism. He taught Marxism, not in the abstract, but in relation to the needs of the Nigerian Labour movement and the political situation in



Nigeria generally. He gathered around himself a group of young men who had developed a deep interest in Marxism, composed of Osita Agwuna, O.I. Dafe, J. Onwugbuzio, Mokwugo Okoye, G. Nzeribe, I. Nzimiro, A. Ikoru, Ezuma, C.K. Opara, Mallam Abdallah, M. Kolagbodi, Chikwendu Nwariaku, and others who began to apply Marxism in their practical political activities and carried it to the labour movement.<sup>76</sup>

It was through many of his activities that he sought and received supports from Communist bodies in Europe. One of his activities was in connection with the selection of Nigerian students for study in East Germany and Czechoslovakia.<sup>77</sup> In order to succeed in this he formed the National Scholarships Board in 1950. Needless to say Eze and his group were in close contact with the Free German Youth in East Germany. In fact, a solidarity message was sent by the *Free German Youth* (FGY) to Eze on the Enugu incident.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the *FGY* had since 1950 made specific offers indicating that they were prepared to admit selected Nigerian students into East Germany to study at universities or secondary schools. The *FGY* also stressed that all expenses once the students were across the German border, would be paid by them.<sup>79</sup>

Immediately there followed local advertisements

sponsored by the newly formed National Scholarships Board under the presidency of Folarin Coker<sup>80</sup> and the secretaryship of Nduka Eze. An unspecified number of scholarships were allotted for university training. For secondary education, ten places were made available for applicants not exceeding fourteen years of age. Moreover, all board, tuition and lodging were free and the Scholarships Board was apparently prepared to provide passage money. Importantly, such students were to be recommended by 'democratic organisations' after the payment of a small affiliation fee.<sup>81</sup>

By October 1950 the Board was able to send two students, who were accompanied by one N.E. Kolagbodi, an ex-Zikist, to Berlin and Prague. And by early November 1950, about six and nine students respectively had applied for placement at secondary schools and universities in Berlin and Prague through the Board.<sup>82</sup> In order to expedite processing of the students' passage, Edward Onowochei, a Nigerian member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, was appointed London liaison officer for Eze's National Scholarships Board. He was in charge of student welfare and their onward passage to either Berlin or Prague.<sup>83</sup> In 1951, the American Consul General in Nigeria, A.W. Childs, concluded that "Onowochei was directing the entire scheme and appeared

to act as liaison officer with both the Free German Youth and the Communist Party of Great Britain".<sup>84</sup>

In March 1951, another batch of seven students arrived in Berlin. The eighth was said to have been held up for some time by legal complications in London, but she later arrived in Berlin in April.<sup>85</sup> It was reported that apart from Onowochei, the CPGB and WFTU, the Czech and Soviet Embassies assisted Nigerians, as well as other colonial students' journeys to Berlin and Prague.<sup>86</sup>

By April 1951, a report from Germany indicated that students were provided by the Soviets with clothing, food and recreation. And, more importantly, "political science" became a mandatory course that must be taken by all students, particularly those from colonies. During the same month, fifteen students were selected for Agricultural and Forestry Workers Scholarship in Eastern Germany.<sup>87</sup> By May 1951, another batch of eight students was sent to Berlin under the Scholarships Board scheme.

Despite strict observation of non-issuance of international passports to Nigerians intending to go behind the Iron Curtain, Eze's machinations seemed to succeed. A.W. Childs noted that, "in at least one and probably more cases passports have been obtained by means

of forged application and blank passport forms".<sup>88</sup> This led to criticism of the local passport authority in Lagos for "laxness in allowing blank passports to be stolen, and not controlling immigration more efficiently to prevent students from reaching Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany and Russia".<sup>89</sup>

Men of the Nigerian police and the Special Branch raided the headquarters of the NSP in 1951. Eze and Onwurike (a beneficiary of the NSP Award), were arrested and charged with being in possession of forged passports and blank forms. Further investigations resulted in the arrest of an immigration police corporal, Ajayi Busari, in November 1951. Onwurike and Eze were fined £10 and £50 respectively for possessing a false passport. On the other hand, Busari was sentenced to three years imprisonment for theft and sale of passports, passport application forms and making false entries in the passport register.<sup>90</sup>

Nduka Eze was involved in labour unionism which was his primary constituency for the greater part of his career. As he did for the Scholarships Board, he was able to gather funds for the labour movement to foster their anti-British activities. His first move in labour movement was to dislodge pro-Western leaders such as

Adio-Moses from the Nigerian TUC in late 1949. His formation of the Nigerian National Federation of Labour in late 1949 was the seal of his dominance of the labour movement in Nigeria during the period. By 1950 he had affiliated the body with the World Federation of Trade Unions in Paris, and established, a fraternity with the Communist Party of Great Britain.

It was through his links with the WFTU and the CPGB that, he was able to get sponsorships from these bodies and other satellite groups. In early 1951, the sum of £2,300 was transferred from the Communist Third International in Prague to Ezuma's account at the Barclays Bank DC and O in Lagos. There is need for a historical background to the WFTU grant. When the Labour Champion could not meet its financial obligations in late 1950, it naturally died. Attempts to resuscitate it led to Eze, Ikoro, Ezuma and Nzimiro's appeal to WFTU early in 1951.

Ezuma was sent to Paris to solicit for WFTU assistance under the guise that the Labour Champion belonged to the Nigerian Labour Congress. Naturally, it was easy for the sympathy of the WFTU to be enlisted for the only newspaper owned by the workers of Nigeria. And more importantly they were aware about Eze's credentials

as a frontline Marxist. Two errors were committed: the first was believing that the Labour Champion was owned by the NLC, and second, the deposit of the grant into a private account - Ezuma's.<sup>91</sup> It is however unfortunate that the Labour Champion was never resuscitated despite the receipt of the money.

The US consular noted that the sum of £200 was given to the Nigerian Labour Congress on the agreement that certain communist sympathizers were nominated to the executive of the Congress.<sup>92</sup> Later in the year, WFTU deposited another £2,000 into the account of the union.<sup>93</sup> It was thus, easy for the Daily Times and the West African Pilot, to "prove that the Communist World, far from trying to help Nigerian workers was aiming at financing destructive (sic) activities in Nigeria".<sup>94</sup>

The aftermath was a crisis in the labour union and a split in *All-Nigeria Trade Union Federation* (ANTUF), which led to the emergence of new groups.<sup>95</sup> While those who objected to the communist fund later formed the National Council of Trade Unions, Nigeria, the Left-Wing emerged under the name of Trade Union Congress, Nigeria (TUCN). The National Council of Trade Unions, Nigeria, under Borha, Adio-Moses and Adebola, were in support of membership of the *International Confederation of Trade*

*Unions* (ICFTU, while the Trade Union Congress, Nigeria, (TUCN) under Eze, Nzeribe, Imoudu and Wahab Goodluck, preferred to join the *World Federation of Trade Unions* (WFTU).<sup>96</sup> The split in the labour movement during the period could be interpreted as a struggle between communism and capitalism.<sup>97</sup>

The split did not, however, solve the problem among the Left-Wing as several hundreds of workers who lost their jobs in December 1950 when a communist-organised general strike failed, demanded strike and unemployment pay.<sup>98</sup> A member union of the Congress, the *Nigeria Brewery Workers' Union*, demanded that a General Council meeting of the Congress be called forthwith to discuss the allocation of the communist funds.<sup>99</sup> There was also dissension in the union as to the control and expenditure of union funds. When members of the *Trade Union Congress* began to make allegations of corruption against Eze, the colonial administration effectively used this to clamp down on him by charging him with corruption and other offenses, such as passport forging.<sup>100</sup>

It must be stated that Eze's activities in Nigeria attracted the attention of the CPGB leaders in London. Some of them believed that he had showed some leadership quality and could lead a Marxist party if given further

supports. Not all CPGB leaders were in favour of Eze however. There were some who were worried about Nigeria trade union members allegation of corruption against Eze and his vulnerability to government in this regard.

Gogo Chu Nzeribe was born in 1930 at Oguta. He was educated at the prestigious King's College, Lagos. Like Eze, he had served as councillor on the Lagos Town Council in 1950-51. Nzeribe was the founding secretary of the *All-Nigeria Trade Union Federation*.<sup>101</sup> He was also the Secretary General of the Union of Posts and Telecommunications Workers of Nigeria from 1952 to 1954. To British officials, Nzeribe was a rebel, while to his opponents he was a communist. To the Americans, he was "a courageous champion of the rights of the workers and certainly a radical and probably a communist sympathizer".<sup>102</sup>

He soon proved officials right, when, on the morning of March 19th 1958, an estimated 3,000 employees of the Posts and Telegraphs Department ceased work in response to a call to strike by Gogo Chu Nzeribe.<sup>103</sup> Although Nzeribe described it as a "48-hour protest demonstration" against management inefficiency and ineptitude, the government and the press described it as a communist tactic to attack the government.<sup>104</sup>



I should point out that by this period, anti-communism had become an instrument used by many folks (both officials and non-officials) to silence opposition. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the management of Posts and Telegraph referred to the strike as communist-inspired. While not denying Nzeribe's socialist inclination, management's conclusion of the strike as being sponsored by Communists is however suspect and inaccurate. It nonetheless highlights the fear of the Nigerian Federal Labour Minister, Okotie-Eboh, in July 1957 concerning the potentials of Gogo Chu Nzeribe.<sup>105</sup>

The strike was unique in several respects. In the first place, it was the most efficiently organised and most widely based strike to have occurred in the country in several years. Secondly, the secrecy with which the strike was arranged taking the public and the government by complete surprise, was little short of astounding. Thirdly, one can say that the complete ruthlessness and disregard for public welfare which characterised the strike suggests, and was condemned by the press, as communist tactics.<sup>106</sup>

British officials were astonished. Nigerian

administrators and politicians who had assumed partial governance during the mid-1950s, did not take kindly to communism in labour unions. To the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, Francis Nwokedi, "the disruptive tactics employed by Nzeribe were typically communist", and to the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, "the government probably underestimated him".<sup>107</sup>

Another closely monitored and highly educated communist during the period was Samuel Bankole Akpata. Born in Lagos in 1920, Akpata was educated at Umuahia Government College, and Yaba Higher College, where he spent two years. From Yaba, he went to the United Kingdom in 1941 to study at London University. It was there that he associated with *W.A.S.U; Communist Party Of Great Britain; World Federation of Democratic Youth, International Union of Students*, and the *Free German Youth*.

By late 1945 he had been elected into the executive of the WFDY. Also in late 1945, Akpata was involved in the formation of the West African National Secretariat. The antecedent was a secret meeting held with Nkrumah, Botsio, Nikoi, Wallace and Awooner-Renner in London.

At the meeting, the party agreed to "form a radical

progressive organisation for seizing power in Africa as quickly as possible". Their ultimate aim was "national unity, independence and a union of African Socialist Republic".<sup>108</sup> He was an assistant secretary, and later secretary of the WANS in early 1947. He also supported the Gold Coast Students Union rally at Trafalgar square on March 8th 1948, where he denounced the colonial Government's handling of the February 1948 riot in Accra.<sup>109</sup>

The *Communist Party of the Soviet Union* later offered him a scholarship to read for his Masters and Ph.D at the Charles University, Prague, in 1949. Between 1949 and 1953 he attended various communist conferences among them the *World Federation of Democratic Youth* conference in Budapest in 1949, where he claimed to represent *Youth Congress of Nigeria*, and the communist organised Berlin Conference of 1951. He returned to Nigeria in July 1953 and was appointed Secretary General of the *Railway Workers Union* on a salary of £240 per annum.<sup>110</sup> At the height of his career, he became the Librarian of the University College, Ibadan.<sup>111</sup>

(4.4) Communists or Sympathizers?: The Case of H.O. Davies and Funmilayo Kutí:

Apart from Nduka Eze, another personality closely watched was H.O. Davies. His activities as a member of the West African Students Union in the 1920s is well documented and need not be repeated here.<sup>112</sup> Davies more than anyone else was the defender of the radicals and professed marxists in Nigeria during the period under review. Apart from his legal work, he formed an embryonic political party called the *People's Congress Party*. He also established a newspaper called The Nigerian People's Voice.<sup>113</sup> The *PCP* seems to have had two major planks in its platform: a denunciation of Nigerian tribalism and regionalism, and support of the workers with a 'self characterisation of being the friend of the workers'.<sup>114</sup>

Robert Ross, the American vice consul, summarised the place of Davies during the period under review thus:

... a man to watch on the local political scene as a potentially strong leader of the Leftist elements of the politically conscious minority in Nigeria. He might well become a likely candidate to fill the position of chief communist contact because of his very high intellect and political maturity.<sup>115</sup>

Ironically, Ross was proved wrong by later events as Davies pitched camp with Azikiwe in the *NCNC*, a party considered, like the *Action Group* and the *Northern People's Congress*, as favouring constitutional and

gradual decolonisation, rather than the revolutionary liberation of Nigeria.<sup>116</sup> He, like Azikiwe, opted for Fabian socialism and pragmatic ideas that preached non-violence. This was one of the ways through which Azikiwe contained the Leftists in the NCNC.<sup>117</sup>

I should note that Ross was not the only one that was proved wrong. Leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain (who had hoped for his leadership of a marxist group, that would metamorphosed into a Nigeria Communist party), were also disappointed about his liberal attitude towards British rule in Nigeria after 1945. Davies had been close with some British members of the CPGB during the World War and immediately after.

He was reported to have visited the CPGB office while in London as a student. The case of Davies, it seems to me, is that of someone in search of knowledge. He was interested in knowing about marxism and communism, and whether it could be adapted to situation in the colony. A CPGB document in late 1951 titled: "Draft Discussion on the Nature and Personnel of the Leadership of the Nigerian Trade Union and National Movement", highlights the disappointment of the organisation about Davies' switch to the right.<sup>118</sup>

Their hope in him as a leader of a marxist group was dashed as he joined the NCNC. Leaders of the CPGB concluded that Davies "character as a Yoruba separatist and splitter of the national movement is now so well known that it requires no further comment".<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, anxiety about communism during the 1950s can be seen in the way Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was treated by the government. The wife of Rev. Ransome-Kuti, Funmilayo was, perhaps, the most vocal and radically educated woman in Nigeria during the devolution period. She and her husband had been exposed internationally through close contacts with Ladipo Solanke (founder of WASU), Reginald Sorenson, Arthur and Violet Creech Jones, Freda Grimble, and the Labour Party leadership before 1947.<sup>120</sup> It has to be noted that none of these people was remotely connected with communism. They nonetheless inspired her in her attitude and perception of British rule in Nigeria.

She was included as a member of the NCNC delegation to London in 1947 to present the views of the party on the Richards Constitution to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It was during this period that she joined the *Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)*, a USSR inspired organisation founded in Paris in 1945. Its aims were to: "unite women regardless of race,

nationality, religion and political opinion, so that they may work together to win, implement and defend national independence and democratic freedoms, eliminate apartheid, racial discrimination and fascism; work for peace and universal disarmament".<sup>121</sup>

Between 1946 and 1957, Funmilayo was involved in the *WIDF* activities. She, in fact, contributed a chapter in a communist sponsored book in 1948 where she criticised British rule in Nigeria and called for the improvement of women's condition in the colonies and protectorates.<sup>122</sup> She attended a *WIDF* conference in Vienna on the defence of children on April 9th 1952, as well as participated during the Copenhagen Congress in June 1953 where she was elected as one of the vice-presidents of the *WIDF*. Her paper was published along with others in 1954 by *WIDF* entitled: That They May Live: 'African Women Arise'.

Given her international connections, she formed an embryonic organisation called the *National Women's Union* (NWU) in 1952, through which she sought to educate women about their socio-economic conditions under British rule. The partial success of this organisation could be seen in its refusing to pay the water rate levy in Abeokuta district in 1952.

However, the government banned *WIDF* literature in July 1954 after the visit of the organisation's Secretary General to Funmilayo at Abeokuta in the same month.<sup>123</sup> Earlier in 1955, she was refused a passport to travel to Helsinki, Finland, to attend a communist sponsored World Assembly of Peace.

Funmilayo was also actively involved with other organisations during and after the colonial period, although her private papers did not detail the extent or outcome of such contacts. As far back as 1949, Funmilayo had contacted Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association's Women's corp.<sup>124</sup> She also corresponded with women in Trinidad, Korea and Vietnam.<sup>125</sup> In Africa, she visited the Gold Coast (Ghana) several times and assisted in the formation of its Women's Movement in 1960.<sup>126</sup>

Her quest for women development was also instrumental in her joining the British Women's International Association, a non-communist organisation in 1952. Although McGregor Wood, leader of BWIA was sceptical about Funmilayo's ideological leaning, she was assured by Solanke that "Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti is not a communist".<sup>127</sup> This assurance from the WASU leader and Funmilayo's correspondence with Wood was instrumental in the acceptance of her membership and the affiliation



of the Nigerian Women Association to BWIA.

Funmilayo's case shows that, some nationalists were only interested in what they could benefit from some international organisations, as a means towards achieving their set goal. While it has been difficult to identify other nationalist in this category, one can argue that it was a miscalculation for any nationalist to have joined a pro-communist organisation during the period. While official intelligence reports maintained that she was a communist, her biographers are of the view that Funmilayo "was a pragmatist unwilling to be controlled by any of them (East or West)".<sup>128</sup>

Although she was allowed to visit Peking in 1956 to attend a *WIDF* council meeting, her passport was not endorsed for the 1957 *WIDF* conference. It should be stressed that leading nationalists who occupied high office during the mid-1950s maintained anti-communist measures hitherto in place. Although official non-endorsement of Funmilayo's passport drew many criticisms (as it was a restriction of individual freedom of movement and expression), Balewa, as the Head of Government Business (later Prime Minister) remarked that "in the past when it was thought Mrs Kuti might be an innocent victim of communist schemes, she was informed

officially ... but now it can be assumed that it is her intention to influence the various Nigerian women's organisations with which she is connected with communist ideas and policies ... On those grounds the government would not renew her passport".<sup>129</sup> Despite her protests Balewa's government did not change its decision until after independence when approval was given for the renewal of her passport.<sup>130</sup>

#### (4.5) Conclusion:

In summary, communism was seen as a threat to the sustainance of a "nurtured capitalism" and the survival of a world-wide capitalism.<sup>131</sup> In Nigeria during the period under review, the ideology of Communism was imbibed by some labour leaders and the nationalist groups particularly the younger elements. It had assumed a potent force within the Labour/Trade Unions largely because of the activities of people like Eze, Nzeribe, Akpata, Basse, Imoudu, and Wahab Goodluck. With the banning of the Zikist Movement in April 1950, efforts to rejuvenate marxist ideas within the nationalist and labour groups were met with counter-measures by the central and regional governments. Hence marxist organisations that emerged in the 1950s enjoyed, at best, a suspended animation as they found it difficult to co-

exist with the stiff governments measures. The next chapter is about activities of marxist groups that emerged in the 50s.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR:

1. FO371/80125/1017/4: "Note on the Aims, Strategy and Procedure of the Communists in Africa", May 1st, 1950, PRO, London; "AMCONGEN, Lagos, to Secretary of State: Communism in Nigeria, 1949", File 848L.00B/9-2849, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, Maryland, USA; PSF Box 254-64: "Soviet Bloc Capabilities through mid-1953", Harry S. Truman Library (HTL), Independence, Missouri; Hammonds, T.T. and Farrell, R. (eds) The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers (New Haven, 1975).

2. See, Halpern, M. "The Middle East and North Africa", p.319-320; Lewis, W.H. "sub-Saharan Africa", p.370-371; in Black, C.E. and Thornton, T.P. (ed) Communism and Revolution... op.cit:

3. Lewis, W.H. "sub-Saharan Africa", op.cit: pp.372.

4. Ibid. pp.383; Joseph, R. Radical Nationalism in Cameroon: Social Origins of the UPC Rebellion op.cit:

5. CO537/5263: A Survey of Communism in Africa 1950, PRO, London; pp.3-60.

6. "Amcongen, Lagos, to D.O.S.: Communist activity in Nigeria - File 745H.001/1-656, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA; pp.1. The British TUC was also of the same view. See Mss292/File 966.3/2: W.F.T.U. activities in Nigeria n.d. (probably late 1950), TUC Registry Files 1948-51, Modern Record Centre, The University of Warwick, Warwick, England.

7. Coleman, J.S. Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, 1958); Anyiam, F.U. Men and Matters in Nigerian Politics, 1934-1958 (Lagos, 1958); Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation (Princeton, 1963); Olusanya, G.O. "The Zikist Movement: A Study in Political Radicalism", Journal of Modern African Studies, vol.4, 1966; The Second World War ... op.cit; pp.36-37, 116; Aluko, O. "Politics of Decolonization in British West Africa, 1945-1960", in Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M. (eds) History of West Africa, vol II, (London, 1974).

8. Padmore, G. Communism or Pan-Africanism?... op.cit; Ajala, A. Pan-Africanism: Evolution... op.cit; Esedebe, P.O. Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement... op.cit; Leo Spitzer and Denzer, L. "I.T.A. Wallace Johnson and the West African Youth League", Journal of African Historical Studies, vol:6, nos.3-4, 1973; Asante, S.K.B. Pan-African

Protests: West Africa and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934-1941 (London, 1977); Olusanya, G.O. The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958 (Ibadan, 1982); Adi, H. and Sherwood, M. The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited (London, 1995); Okonkwo, R. Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930 (New York, 1995).

9. Falola, T. Development Planning and Decolonization... op.cit; pp.20.

10. Coleman, J.S. Nigeria ... op.cit; pp.249.

11. Ibid.

12. Awa, E.O. "The Place of Ideology in Nigerian Politics", African Review... op.cit; pp.369.

13. Pearce has briefly narrated that Azikiwe's visit to College of Good Hope, Caux-sur-Montreux, Switzerland in November 1949, was partly instrumental in his change of heart from violence to "constitutionalism and peaceful means". See his "Governors, Nationalists, and the Constitution in Nigeria, 1935-1951", JICH, vol.ix, no.3, May 1981; pp.304. His view that constitutional changes were not influenced by nationalists is inaccurate and

suspect.

14. Azikiwe, N. Ideology for Nigeria: Capitalism, Socialism or Welfarism ? (Lagos, 1980); pp.90.

15. Ibid. pp.91. One of the leading radicals of the period, Mokuwago Okoye, notes that, "... it was not until the end of the World War II ... that the ideas of the revolution spread like prairie fire and captivated the proletarian masses..."; See, Okoye, M. A Letter to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe: A Dissent Remembered (Enugu, 1979), pp.1.

16. Azikiwe, N. Ideology for Nigeria...op.cit; pp.91.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid. pp.91-92.

22. The organization was formed in 1946 without the participation of Zik himself. See, C0537/7171: The Zikist

Movement, 1950; CO537/5807: R.J. Vile to J.K. Thompson, April 27th 1950, PRO, London.

23. CO537/7171: The Zikist Movement op.cit;

24. CO537/3694: "Political Summary of Nigeria, 1950", PRO, London.

25. Ibid. In fact, the government accused the Zikists for the escalation of the Enugu colliery miners' strike in November 1949. The Fitzgerald Commission's Report however remarked that the incident was purely an industrial issue between the management of the colliery and the miners. To them, there was no trace of external influence. See, Report of the commission into the Disorders in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria, no.256, H.M.S.O. (London, 1950).

26. See, Raji Abdallah's letter to the Zikists and his northern brethren in West African Pilot, February 25th 1949; CO537/3649: Nigeria - Political Summary October - November, 1948, PRO; pp.4-5.

27. Ibid. On Ghana see, Rathbone, R. (ed) Ghana Part I and II, op.cit;



28. Daily Mirror, March 8th 1950; Nzimiro, I. On Being a Marxist... op.cit; is an in-depth account of his role during the period. An analysis of newspaper reports of the sedition trial is contained in Iweriebor, E.E.G. Radical Politics in Nigeria... op.cit; pp.171 - 209.

29. Daily Mirror, March 8th 1950.

30. C0537/5807: R.J. Vile to J.K. Thompson, April 27th 1950, PRO, London.

31. C0583/302/13: Macpherson to Secretary of State for colonies, February 25th 1950, PRO, London.

32. Daily Times, March 14th 1950.

33. C0583/302/13: Macpherson to S of S..., op.cit;

34. Ibid. Iweriebor has used newspaper reports to analyze the Kaduna conference. See Radical Politics... op.cit; pp.231-235. He is however silent about the recruitment of some members as "assassins" to carry out the 1950 plot, neither is he aware about Okoye's appointment as the leader of the group.

35. Daily Telegraph (London), July 21st 1950. Mokwugo

Okoye notes that "Following a public demand, Ugokwe was released after six years in prison, with tuberculosis as a parting gift, and died two years later" (1958). See, Okoye, M. A Letter to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe... op.cit; pp.30.

36. NSUDIV8/1/305: Why Government Banned the Zikist Movement, April 29th 1950, National Archives Enugu (NAE), Nigeria; Government Notices nos.21, vol.37, April 1950, Nigerian Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria.

37. For instance, Lawal, O.A. "British Decolonisation in Nigeria, 1945-1960", Ph.D History Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1991, wrongly concludes that anti-communism ceased with the banning of the Zikists in 1950. See his third chapter. Archival records and memoirs of some of the activists indicates that anti-communism went beyond 1950. See, Okoye, M. A Letter to Dr.Nnamdi Azikiwe... op.cit; pp.56ff. The infiltration of the bourgeoisie group was one of the steps taken by the communists and socialists in Nigeria to make themselves relevant in colonial politics. This perhaps explain why they returned to the major political parties in 1954/55 in order to renew their struggle. See chapter six "British Anti-communism in Nigeria", particularly the sub-section about the role of the major political parties in anti-

communism.

38. OYO Prof.1/4957: Secretary Western Province to The Resident, Oyo Province - Zikist Movement in Nigeria 1950, NAI; Extraordinary Gazette, no.13, April 1950.

39. CO968/353: Benion to Shaw and Huijsman, November 1950, PRO, London. I should note that Benion's papers (part three) at Rhodes House Library, Oxford, relating to his activities as a colonial security officer are still closed to the public.

40. DEFE82/51: Undesirable Publication Policy, June 10th 1953. For instance, in 1953 Samuel Ikoku was arrested and jailed for being in possession of Nigerian Socialist Review See Adi, H. "West African ...", op.cit; pp.256.

41. "AMCONGEN, Lagos to Department of State: Communism in Nigeria Today", File747H.0018-1453, August 14th 1953, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA; pp.4.

42. NSUDIV8/1/305: "Why Government Banned the Zikist Movement", op.cit;

43. "AMCONGEN, Lagos to Department of State: Zikist Movement", File848L.00/7-1047, July 10th 1947, College

Park, Maryland, USA.

44. Nigerian Spokesman, Editorial, September 3rd 1946.

45. Okoye, M. A Letter to Dr.Nnamdi Azikiwe... op.cit;  
pp.14-15.

46. CO537/3649: Nigeria-Political Summary, October-  
November 1948, PRO, London.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid. pp.2-3.

49. Ibid. pp.3.

50. NSUDIV 8/1/305: Why the Government banned the Zikist  
Movement, May 29th 1950; Appendix 2, NAE.

51. CO537/3649: Nigeria - Political Summary ... op.cit;  
pp.3.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid. pp.3-4.

54. Ibid. The National Church, a religious wing of the Zikist Movement held services for the accused at its Ebute-Metta East office during the sedition trials. It also organised rally to keep the spirit on. See Ilogu, E. "Nationalism and the Church in Nigeria", International Review of Missions, 51, October 1962, pp.442f; Furlong, P.J. "Azikiwe and the National Church of Nigeria and the Cameroons: A Case Study of the Political Use of Religion in African Nationalism", African Affairs, vol.91, no.364, July 1992, pp.445f. Ironically, these important studies failed to mention the place of Moral Re-armament Movement in Azikiwe's religious inclination vis-a-vis his lukewarm perception of the radical National Church.

55. NSUDIV8/1/305: Why Government Banned the Zikist Movement, op.cit;

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. CO537/7171: The Zikist Movement, op.cit; Amechi, M. The Forgotten Heroes of Nigerian Independence op.cit; pp.91ff. Amechi was the Assistant Secretary-General of Eze's Nigeria National Federation of Labour in 1950, as well as Assistant Secretary, Public Utility Board Staff

Union.

59. CO537/7171: The Zikist Movement - Ndulue's letter enclosed.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. "Keeler to Department of State: Communism in Nigeria- August 14th 1953", File745H.001/8-1453, College Park, Maryland, USA; pp.4.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid. Official steps towards stemming communism are discussed in chapter six.

66. Adi, H. "West Africans and the communist Party...", op.cit; pp.9-10.

67. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Draft Discussion Document... November 1951, NMLHA op.cit; pp.3.

68. CP/CENT/INT/50/3: "Marxist" Groups in Nigeria - Draft for Commission, August 4th 1953, NMLHA op.cit; C0537/5807: R.J. Vile to J.K. Thompson, op.cit; pp.1-24; Also, "AMCONGEN, Lagos to Department of State: The Case of Nduka Eze-Communist Leader in Nigeria", File745H.00/8-251, College Park, Maryland, USA; pp.1. At the peak of his career, he became the Action Group chairman for Asaba District in 1956. One can conclude that this was largely because of the success of government anti-communist measures. Nduka Eze died however in December 1995 before my fieldwork in Nigeria. Efforts to gain access to his private papers, if any, was abortive.

69. Mss292/File 966.3/2, Nduka Eze to Mr. Kemmis, Secretary TUC Colonial Advisory Committee, June 7th 1949, TUC Registry Files 1948-51, Modern Record Centre, The University of Warwick, Warwick, England.

70. Ibid. Curry to Tewson, March 23rd 1949; Curry to H.B. Kemmis, June 24th 1949.

71. Curry to Tewson, March 23rd 1949.

72. C0537/3649: Nigeria-Political Summary... op.cit; pp.2.

73. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Draft Discussion Document...  
op.cit;

74. Ibid.

75. "...The Case of Nduka Eze...", File745H.00/8-251,  
op.cit; In fact, Eze and some ex-Zikists had by 1951  
renounced Zikism for a more specific ideology of  
revolutionary socialism. See, Sklar, R.Nigerian Political  
Parties...op.cit; pp.81.

76. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Draft Discussion Document...  
op.cit;

77. CAB134/1353: Communist Penetration - Africa Report,  
1958, PRO, London. While much information about the  
activities of the Czechs is yet to be unfolded, the  
Colonial Office "A Survey of Communism in Africa" op.cit;  
has showed that they have been interested in West Africa  
since the late 1940s. By 1949, a Bata Shoe Factory was  
established in Lagos, and at least one Nigerian was said  
to have been sent to Zlin for training and probably  
indoctrination. Attempts to locate a file about the Bata  
Factory activities during the period at the Nigeria  
National Archives proved abortive.



78. "... The Case of Nduka Eze...", File745H.00/8-251,  
op.cit; pp.2.

79. C0537/4632: Nigeria - Political Summary ...,op.cit;  
Folarin Coker later reneged on communism. See his letter  
to Miss Darlow of *The Guild*, University College, Exeter,  
U.K.

80. "...The Case of Nduka Eze...", File745H.00/8-251.  
op.cit; pp.2.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid. pp.3.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. "Fortnightly Review: November 4th-17th, 1951, File745H.00/11-1951;"Fortnightly Review: July 2nd-14th, 1951,File745H.00/7-1751;"Fortnightly Review:August 12th-25th, 1951,File745.008/8-2751;and "Fortnightly Newsletter, December 16th-29th, 1951, File745H.00/12-2951; College Park, Maryland, USA.

90. "AMCONSUL, Lagos to Department of State: Communist Fund for Nigerian Labor - August 19th 1951", File745H.001/1-1951, College Park, Maryland, USA.

91. CP/CENT/INT/25/01: Report on the Trade Union Movement in Nigeria, Autumn 1951, NMLHA op.cit; pp.7.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid. pp.8.

95. Ananaba, W. The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria (London,1969); pp. 141; 298; 300 and 322; Cohen, R. Labour and Politics in Nigeria (2nd Edition, London, 1981); pp.79; Tokunboh, M.A. Labour Movement in Nigeria, Past and Present (Lagos, 1985); pp.50-58.

96. "...Communist Fund for Nigerian Labor Union...", File745H.001/1-1951, op.cit; Also, see, Daily Mirror (London), January 18th 1951; Ananaba, W. The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria...op.cit; pp.141-155.

97. "Review of Recent Labor Developments in Nigeria - August 8th 1958", File845H.06/8-857, College Park, Maryland; pp.3.

98. "...The Case of Nduka Eze...", op.cit; pp.1.

99. Ibid.

100. "... Recent Labor Developments...", File845H.06/8-857, op.cit; pp.3; Egboh, E.A. "The Early Years of Trade Unionism in Nigeria", Africa Quarterly, vol.viii, no1, April-June 1968; pp.59-69. Richard Sklar cannot be right when he referred to Gogo Chu Nzeribe as "a relatively unknown candidate at the 1953 All-Nigerian Trade Union Movement conference". See Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties... op.cit; pp.81ff and 529.

101. "... Recent Labor Developments..." File845H.06/8-857, op.cit;

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. Mss292/File 966.3/3: Notes on visit of Nigerian Ministers - Okotie-Eboh and C. Okwu, July 2nd 1957, TUC Registry Files 1951-60, Modern Record Centre op.cit;

106. "... Recent Labor Developments..." File845H.06/8-857, op.cit; Perhaps one can argue that this was purely a trade union tactics.

107. See, Sherwood, M. Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad, 1935 -1947 (Legon, 1996); pp.125-127.

108. Ibid. pp.153.

109. CO1039/34: Nigerian Council of Ministers Miscellaneous Papers 1954, PRO, London.

110. Sherwood, M. Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad, 1935-1947 (Legon, 1996); pp.128.

111. Davies, H.O. Memoirs (Ibadan, 1989); Olusanya, G.O. The West African Students' Union and the Politics of

Decolonisation, 1925 - 1958 (Ibadan, 1982); Adi, H. "West African Students and West African Nationalism...", op.cit;

112. "AMCONSUL, Lagos to Department of State: Development of two Leftist Groups - October 25th 1951", File 745H.00/10-2351, College Park, Maryland, USA; pp.2-3.

113. Ibid.

114. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Draft Discussion Document... op.cit; pp.1.

115. Ibid.

116. For a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, see, Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties... op.cit; pp.115.

117. This is further explored in chapter six. Also, see, Azikiwe, N. Ideology for Nigeria... op.cit; pp.88f.

118. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Nina Mba of the Department of History, University of Lagos, who drew my attention to this. See, Awe, B. (ed) Nigerian Women in Historical Perspectives (Ibadan, 1992); Mba, N.E. and Johnson-Odim, C. For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo

Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria (Illinois, 1997), particularly chapter six "For Their Freedoms - The International Sphere". Also, see "Letter from Mrs. Freda Gimble, London Women's Parliament Committee", August 29th 1947, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti Papers (FRK), University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

119. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Draft Discussion Document...  
op.cit;

120. Ibid.

121. Mba and Johnson-Odim For Women and the Nation...  
op.cit; chapters six and seven.

122. Ibid. Also, The Women of Asia and Africa: Documents (Prague, 1948). See "Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti Diary 1952", FRK Paper op.cit;

123. Mba, N.E. Nigerian Women Mobilised (Berkeley, 1982); pp.142-164. Also, Solanke Paper, Box 73, File 81, August 20th 1952, Gandhi Library, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

124. SD/B9: "Passport - Mr.Prime Minister: Statement in Parliament", Government Publications (Lagos, 1964), West African Pilot, August 4th 1954.

125. See "Correspondence, Box 4", FRK Papers op.cit;

126. Ibid. "Box 5".

127. Ibid.

128. Nina Mba and Cheryl Johnson-Odim, For Women and the Nation... op.cit;

129. Ibid. Chapter six.

130. Ibid. Newspaper reports of the incident can be found in West African Pilot, December 30th 1957; Daily Times (Nigeria), January 21st 1957; and Daily Service (Nigeria) March 4th 1958.

131. "... Communism in Nigeria Today ...", File 745H.001/8-1453, op.cit;

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MARXIST ORGANISATIONS IN THE 1950s

#### (5.1) INTRODUCTION:

Marxist ideas<sup>1</sup> developed in Nigeria with the rising tide of national liberation movement after World War II. Such ideas were reflected both in politics and trade unionism during the period. Nigerians were not isolated from the divisions between many followers of Marx and Engels as relates to actualization of a Communist State. More important is their attempts to interpret Communism in relation to their colonial situation. Hence, some of them claimed to be Marxists, Stalinists, Titoists and Maoists. These divisions, as will be shown shortly, created many pseudo-Marxist organizations in the '50s and beyond. The primary purpose in this chapter is to further show that the banning of the Zikist Movement did not lead to the collapse of Marxian ideology in Nigeria. Rather, it partly put in disarray, as well as made difficult, the formation of a nation-wide organisation.

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As in the '40s, the history of the Nigerian working class movement was connected with an entirely different set of people. But, unlike the '40s, there emerged many embryonic Marxist organisations in Nigeria in the '50s. In fact, the Communist Party of Great Britain, the main satellite with which Nigerian marxists were closely associated (as far as official records have revealed), was disturbed about the series of marxist splinter groups that were formed and re-formed on many occasions during the decade preceeding Nigerian independence.

#### (5.2) THE MARXIST GROUPS:

At least, six different groups of marxist organisations were identified in 1953 as existing in Nigeria by the Communist Party of Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> In fact, CPGB officials noted that there might have been some of which they did not have real knowledge.<sup>3</sup> In November 1950, Nduka Eze, undoubtedly the most outstanding defender of the Nigerian working class, formed the Freedom Movement. Their aim was to continue along with his comrades, the crusade for the emancipation of Nigerians generally. The group hoped to replace the banned Zikist Movement, and continue the struggle for Nigeria's independence, obviously the communist way. It organised marxist lectures and discussions and circulated

marxist literature on different subjects.<sup>4</sup> By October 1951, however, the group had ceased to exist partly because of different opinions among members, as well as stiff government opposition.

Earlier in 1951 another group emerged in Ibadan which called themselves The Communist Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons. The only record of the organisation is a letter sent to CPGB office (London), from Ibadan on March 19th 1951 by Samuel Alamu and O.O. Gbolahan. The list of members are not available, neither is the record of their activities like most marxist groups during the period. This must have been a clique of youth interested in CPGB and the Daily Worker's assistance in realising the educational pursuit of their members.<sup>5</sup> The organisation was only a Communist Party in name and not much impact was made on the political scene. The group was later associated with the "Lagos Marxist" which formed The League in February 1951.

Formed as a result of the momentary fusion of two existing Marxist groups in Lagos (Eze and Ikoku/Ogunsheye factions), The League emerged to "initiate, direct and guide the building of a many-sided and nation-wide working class movement on the basis of Marxism".<sup>6</sup> This was the first time, and perhaps the last, when the

Marxists were united. By early 1952, Ikoku/Ogunsheye group had formed another group called the Committee for People's Independence. This was later changed to Peoples Committee for Independence in February 1952.

The League within its short span however made some impact. Comprising of eighteen comrades, The League's activities were threefold:

(a) "To disseminate Marxist thought throughout the country";

(b) "To initiate purely Marxist ideas through trade unions, political and other organisations"; and,

(c) "To formulate policies for the individual of the Marxist organisations (i.e. trade unions, political parties, peasants, youths, women, student and ex-servicemen's organisations)".<sup>7</sup>

The League met once a week to discuss the ideological education of members. At every meeting an aspect of Marxism was discussed, to be followed by a discussion on a topic of the day in order to train comrades to apply their knowledge.

As time went by, however, it was realised that justice could not be done to the study of marxism in the ordinary meetings. A number of special meetings were

therefore arranged (mostly secretly). Topics dealt with covered both local and international issues. Emphasis was placed upon:

- (a) "Marxism as a scientific approach to the study of human society";
- (b) "Social development and the laws that govern it";
- (c) "The nature of capitalist society";
- (d) "Imperialism";
- (e) "The post-war tactics of imperialism";
- (f) "Marxist tactics (general - in the trade unions, reactionary parliaments, compromise, etc);
- (g) "The dangers of overseas capital with special reference to Nigerian Government policy;
- (h) "The Persian oil dispute";
- (i) "The local political scene (from time to time)"; and,
- (j) "The constitution".<sup>8</sup>

While it is difficult to assess the success of these programmes, one can say that it marked an improvement on Marxists' efforts to make an impact on the political economy of the colonial state during the 50s. By early 1953 however, The League had died, primarily because of personality clashes amongst its leaders. Those who left (Agwuna, Ogunsheye, Nzimiro, Ikoku, etc) formed the Peoples Committee for Independence, which I will discuss shortly.

There also emerged a few months after The League in 1951, a group called the Nigeria Convention Peoples Party. This was not a political party but another splinter Marxist group formed by Eze's former cronies. One of its leading members was Ikoro, a former close associate of Eze. This group was more inclined towards the Gold Coast CPP and made fruitless efforts to garner financial supports from it.<sup>9</sup>

As in the case of previously organised groups, one of the main reasons for its formation was the personality clashes that existed among Nigerian Marxists since the failure of the December 1950 labour strike. The group nonetheless preached "scientific socialism to the masses in the village, workers in the factory, unemployed ex-servicemen, youths, and progressive intellectuals".<sup>10</sup> With inspiration from Palme Dutt's "Britain's Crisis of the Empire", its leader, Ikoro published a pamphlet titled "Imperialism versus the People", where he castigated British rule in Nigeria and warned Nigerian Marxists that theory alone will not win socialism for Africans".<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, unlike other groups, the Nigeria CPP openly stated its willingness to accept directives from the CPGB concerning its activities in Nigeria.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most formidable group that emerged out of Eze's debacle was the Peoples Committee for Independence, formed in February 1952. With its office in Yaba, a Lagos suburb, the new group set an ultimate objective of building a mass and united nationalist movement. Its aim was to conquer political power and establish a socialist society. This involved "waging of an uncompromising battle against British imperialism and the reactionary forces within the ranks of our countrymen".<sup>13</sup>

To this end, they maintained that Marxism is a guide to action which embodies the experiences of common people all over the world in the struggle for national independence. Thus, Marxism to them is "open to adaptation and should not be seen as a set of ready-made rules".<sup>14</sup> Like previous groups they emphasised ideological education, the use of trade unions, and unity, as important in the struggle.

At a meeting on May 7th 1952, executive members of the Peoples Committee for Independence (Ikoku, Ogunsheye, Gogo Nzeribe, D. Fatogun, J. Onwugbuzie) made an important stride in the political field. They agreed to form a nation-wide Marxist-Leninist political party which would unify all existing pseudo-Marxist groups.<sup>15</sup> Their un-doing perhaps was the criticism of other Marxist

groups and the presentation of themselves as saints, which fell short of CPGB officials' expectations.

Some members of the Peoples Committee for Independence were also involved in the formation of another group in July 1952 called, United Working People's Party. At first, its secretary was Ogunsheye, who was replaced by Uche Omo, upon the former's appointment in the Labour Department in late 1952.<sup>16</sup> It comprised of some "returnees" such as Anozie, Anagbogu and Onwugbuzie to mention a few. This group distanced themselves from the main political parties maintaining that Communism had remained elusive because of the domineering position of the bourgeoisie.<sup>17</sup>

In the absence of adequate information (even from the CPGB and British TUC archives) it is difficult to assess the strength and influence of the U.W.P.P. It is, however, clear that the group was confined to the Eastern Region. By 1955, they had changed their anti-party position by openly working in alliance with the Action Group and the U.N.I.P. (Chike Obi's party - a break-away from the N.C.N.C).<sup>18</sup>

In September 1955, the U.W.P.P. and U.N.I.P. made futile attempts to disrupt activities of the Azikiwe led

N.C.N.C. government in the Eastern Region. A joint statement calling for an army to fight "the combined forms of imperialism and reactionary leadership of the N.C.N.C." was issued in Enugu.<sup>19</sup> There is no indication that the Action Group was involved in this.<sup>20</sup> When most of its leading members joined the main political parties or became employed by government departments, the U.W.P.P. died naturally before the end of 1955.

(5.3) IKOKU AND "THE NIGERIAN SOCIALIST REVIEW" :

One of the most prolific Marxists during the 50s was Samuel Ikoku. One of Eze's followers, Ikoku soon broke along with others to form the Peoples Committee for Independence and later the United Working Peoples Party, both in 1952. In his various correspondence with CPGB and WFTU leaders, he emphasised the need for a sustainable press through which Marxist ideas could be propagated.<sup>21</sup> It has to be noted that Ikoku was a joint editor of the Labour Champion, established in 1950. The collapse of the Labour Champion was disappointing to Ikoku, who put the blame on Eze and Ezumah.

With support from CPGB and the WFTU, Ikoku began the publication of another newspaper in February 1952 called, Nigerian Socialist Review.<sup>22</sup> The paper, like its predecessor, did not last long as government soon clamped



down on its editor in late 1952. The first edition was published on February 29th 1952. In its editorial, the paper called for a new party of the working class made up Marxist intellectuals and the poor peasant.<sup>23</sup>

"The new party", according to Ikoku, "must be the rallying centre of all the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organisations of the working class and frequently lead them".<sup>24</sup> By non-party organisations, he was referring to U.W.P.P. and P.C.I. , Marxist groups of which he was a member. This was in defiance of Eze's idea that Marxists should work within existing political parties.

The new party was to be guided strictly by the theory of Marxist-Leninism. He maintained that the party should "adopt the road of open and determined revolutionary struggle against imperialism and against all forces of exploitation and oppression. It must be an efficient and virile organisation on a national scale".<sup>25</sup>

There is no doubting the fact that Ikoku and other members of the editorial board (C.O. Mmaba and Meke Anagbogu) were Stalinists. Their position as shown in the various publication before the government clamp-down on them (in late 1952 and early 1953), was strictly Stalinist. They seemed to have imbibed the idea that,

"there is no alternative to Stalinism in the Marx-Lenin tradition".<sup>26</sup> Emphasising the need for a working class party, Ikoku quoted Stalin to justify his position thus:

Its function is to combine the work  
of all the mass organisations of the  
proletariat (i.e. the working class)  
without exception and to direct their  
activities toward a single goal, the goal of the  
emancipation of the proletariat.<sup>27</sup>

This was the first stage in the struggle. Ikoku's philosophy was that a new party would make the Marxists truly independent of the bourgeoisie. This stage was to lead to the second stage when a National Front would be formed to act as the army of the revolution.<sup>28</sup> Successful completion of this stage, and the defeat of British imperialism, according to him, would usher in the third stage - completion of the democratic revolution (the fight for the security and guarantee of political rights for all).<sup>29</sup>

Acquiring political power and concentrating it in the hands of the "toiling masses", was seen as the last stage in their revolution in Nigeria. Ikoku maintained that "this is the road for us to tread, this is our line of march". He concluded, like a true Stalinist that, "it is the only sure road to national independence and working class emancipation". Assurance of a victory was

however placed on the need for a new party.<sup>30</sup> In a short article titled "A Young Socialist at Work", C.O. Mmaba supported Ikoku's idea of a new party. He reiterated the need for unity among marxist intellectuals as a prelude to a successful inauguration of a working peoples party consisting of all existing Marxist groups.<sup>31</sup>

When the second edition of Nigerian Socialist Review was published on March 14th 1952, Ikoku concentrated upon the workers themselves. He noted that, emancipation of the working class can only be achieved by the workers themselves. The principle, according to him, is that Nigerian workers must organise independent parties, associations and trade unions in order to propagate and realise the ideas of Communism.<sup>32</sup> It was in support of this position that Meke Anagbogu in an article titled: "Unfurling the banner of Struggle for Independence and Socialism", remarked that "only a revolutionary mass movement, headed by the working class and its political party, can effectively and sincerely fight for independence and socialism not for reforms and capitalism".<sup>33</sup>

As should be expected, the paper was outlawed in January 1953 under the "Unlawful Publication Ordinance 1950". Its editor was later jailed for sedition and

unlawful possession of some copies.<sup>34</sup>

(5.4) PERCEPTION OF THE CPGB:

In the 50s, the International Department of the CPGB was responsible for moulding and guiding ideological orientation of members and fraternities in the colonies. Officials such as Palme Dutt, Margot, Cox, Harry Pollitt, Barbara Rehuman etc, were concerned about the conflict of opinion among Nigerian Marxists. The International Department was thus charged with uniting the divided house in Nigeria. To this extent, the CPGB intervened in the Nigerian situation.

The main emphasis of the International Department therefore was "the need to unite all progressive elements claiming to be Marxists, and to speed the formation of a united Marxist Party".<sup>35</sup> It must be stressed, however, that it refused to choose between rival Marxist groups. Rather, it urged them to come together, thrash out their differences, and formulate an agreed policy and programme.<sup>36</sup>

The main reason for this line of action is that there had been occasions when individual Nigerians have returned from England and Europe claiming to have the

backing of the Communist Movement. Such claims only heightened an already tensed situation, and increased the gap among Nigerian Marxists. In fact, it became necessary for Harry Pollitt to issue a letter making it clear that no one returning to Nigeria had any authority to speak for the CPGB.<sup>37</sup>

An example was Anagbogu's claim upon his return to Nigeria in December 1952 that, he had secured pledges of "fraternal assistance from abroad", and Agggams' claim that he had the backing of the CPGB.<sup>38</sup> It should not be surprising therefore that the International Department from the early '50s onward refrained from any official contact, even by post. All the letters which passed to and fro were between individuals and were sent in the form of personal messages.<sup>39</sup>

However, the CPGB seemed to have supported Eze's view about the "road to a Marxist Party" in Nigeria. To the CPGB leadership "a Marxist can only work effectively as a member of an organised party, which has close relations with the working class and the peasantry, and which seeks to win mass backing for the policy which it pursues in the wider movement".<sup>40</sup> They maintained that:

A Marxist party in Nigeria would aim to  
develop militant trade unionism... to  
create an alliance between the working class

and the peasantry and to win a leading position for the working class, and the Marxist party in the broader national movement.<sup>41</sup>

Taking the situation as a whole, and bearing in mind all the complications of the rival Marxist groups in Nigeria, the CPGB evolved four guidelines throughout the '50s. These were:

(1) Maintain friendly contact with all Marxist groups in Nigeria and all individuals interested in Marxism.

(2) Refrain from official recognition of any Marxist group, but urge all professed Marxists to unite and reach a policy and programme that would speed up the formation of a Marxist Party.

(3) Ensure a more adequate supply of Marxist literature to groups and individuals, and other means of assistance for the regular publication of material in Nigeria.

(4) Regularly make a more thorough on-the-spot review of situation in Nigeria before making an official pronouncement.

(5.5) CONCLUSION:

Between the late 1950 and towards the end of 1960, Marxists intensified their activities in Nigeria. The momentum was however lower than in the previous years. In November 1960, a group of youths made largely of members

of the Nigerian Youth Congress (of which I shall discuss fully in chapter seven) formed the Communist Party of Nigeria in Kano. Official record indicates that the idea was influenced and sponsored by the Communist Party of Great Britain. The question that readily comes to mind is why was the party formed in Kano?. Who are the leaders of this group?. Official records are silent on these. The little information available is that its membership list (which is still classified) is larger than that of the Communist Party of Nigeria formed earlier at Ibadan in 1951. Interestingly, its Constitution was based on the 1945 Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>42</sup> However whether it received financial sponsorship and political directives from the Chinese Communist Party is not yet clear as official record is silenced about these. The only available evidence is that financial supports came from Egypt and Ghana, perhaps for nationalistic purposes rather than in the furtherance of Communism as official record would want us believe.

Another group identified by official intelligence report is the "Nucleus" made up of returnees from the Iron Curtain countries. The "Nucleus" probably emerged in late 1959 and early 1960. But because of its secretive nature, officials could not penetrate into its membership activities. The United States intelligence was of the

view that "although small in members it presents a long-term threat to security since its leaders are indoctrinated disciplined Communists with close relations with the Soviet bloc and markedly untainted by the corruption and venality which afflicts other pseudo-Communist bodies in Nigeria".<sup>43</sup> This is the group that the Communists looked up to in a post-independent Nigeria to provide the impetus towards detaching the country from International Capitalism. The British and their allies (both Nigerians and the Western powers) did not allow the pendulum to swing in favour of the Nigerian Marxists as policy was initiated and effectively executed to counter the ideology of Communism during the period.



ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE:

1. A marxist is someone who belief in the thoughts and ideas of Karl Marx, and of course his pal, Friedrich Engels. Marx never took a dogmatic view as to any single course which the socialist movement would necessarily have to follow. While noting that socialism in developed Europe could be achieved peacefully, he nevertheless ruled out the possibility of violence and revolution if occasion demand it. The modification of Marx's idea was first noticed in Lenin's Russia (Soviet Union). The elitism that characterised Lenin's Russia; "the theory of the party as a dedicated revolutionary order, the tightening regime of party discipline, the absolutism of the party line, the intolerance of disagreement and compromise, and the manipulatory attitude toward mass organization" constituted Leninism. See, Fainsord, M. Soviet Communism", International Encyclopeadia of the Social Sciences op.cit; pp.105. Stalinism implies further modification of Lenin's idea to suit Stalin's Soviet Union. Perhaps, infallibility of the leadership, the relegation of the role of the party committee and the domineering status of Soviet Union over other European communist parties are the main ingredients in Stalinism. On the other hand, Titoism and Maoism are adaptation of

Marx's thought in Yugoslavia and China under Marshall Tito and Chairman Mao respectively. Titoism not only emphasised the role of the proletariat and the working class in the struggle, it rejects domination or directives from Stalin Soviet Union. It is against bureaucratism. Maoism includes some elements of Titoism. It entails Mao's concept of permanent revolution which rests upon "non-antagonistic contradictions" and "antagonistic contradictions". The former implies conflict within the socialist regime or between members of the Communist Party which could be resolved through fraternal or self criticism. The latter implies conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie or the ruling elite which can only be resolved by revolution. All these ideas remained an illusion in colonial Nigeria as both Regional and Federal governments were opposed to communism.

2. CP/CENT/INT/50/03: "Marxist" Groups in Nigeria - Draft for Commission, August 4th 1953, National Museum of Labour History Archive (NMLH), Manchester; pp.2.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. CP/CENT/INT/50/05: The Communist Party (Nigeria and Cameroons), Ibadan, to, The Executive Committee, The Communist Party, London, March 19th 1951, NMLH; pp.1.
6. CP/CENT/INT/25/01: Statement Issued by The League, Lagos, Nigeria, October 1951, NMLH; pp.1.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. CP/CENT/INT/50/05: Idise Dafe - Report on Visit to Nigeria, n.d. (probably 1951 or 1952), NMLH; pp.4.
10. CP/CENT/INT/550/05: Amaefule Ikoro to Communist Party of Great Britain, 1951, NMLH.
11. Ibid. pp.1.
12. Ibid.
13. CP/CENT/INT/50/05: Peoples Committee for Independence - Circular Letter No.1/52, February 22nd 1952, NMLH.
14. Ibid. pp.1; CP/CENT/INT/25/01: Peoples Committee for Independence, Lagos, to Guisepe Di Vittorio and Louis

Saillant (WFTU), Paris, May 7th 1952, pp.1.

15. CP/CENT/INT/25/01: op.cit; pp.1; and, CP/CENT/INT/50/05: Ikoku, S.G. et.al Manifesto of the.....Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons, n.d. NMLH.

16. CP/CENT/INT/50/03: "Marxist" Groups in Nigeria, op.cit; pp.3.

17. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Nigeria - Report for January 1956, pp.13.

18. Ibid. Also, CP/CENT/INT/50/03: op.cit; pp.9.

19. CP/CENT/INT/24/04: Nigeria op.cit; pp.13.

20. Ibid.

21. CP/CENT/INT/25/01: Peoples Committee... op.cit; Also, CP/CENT/INT/25/01: Ikoku, S.G. Report on the trade union movement in Nigeria, Autumn 1951, op.cit;

22. Editorial Comments: Nigerian Socialist Review, No.1, February 29th 1952.

23. Ibid. pp.1.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Kolakowski, L. Main Currents of Marxism - Volume 3  
(Oxford, 1981).

27. Nigerian Socialist Review, No.2, March 14th 1952;  
pp.2.

28. Nigerian Socialist Review, No.1, op.cit; pp.1-2.

29. Ibid.

30. Nigerian Socialist Review, No.2, op.cit; pp.2.

31. Mmaba, C.O. "A Young Socialist at Work", Nigerian Socialist Review, No.1 op.cit; Anagbogbu, M. "Unfurling the banner of struggle for Independence and Socialism", Nigerian Socialist Review, No.2, op.cit; pp.2.

32. Editorial, Nigerian Socialist Review, No.2, op.cit;

33. Anagbogbu, M. "Unfurling the banner..." Nigerian Socialist Review, No.2, op.cit;

34. Ikoku, S.G. Nigeria for Nigerians: A Study of Contemporary Nigerian Politics From a Socialist Point of View (Takoradi, 1962).

35. CP/CENT/INT/50/03: "Marxist" Groups in Nigeria, op.cit; pp.4.

36. Ibid. pp.5.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid. pp.5-6.

39. CP/CENT/INT/48/01: What Next in Nigeria? - 1954, pp.18.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Africa - Communism: Communist in the Federation of Nigeria, 1961, pp.1, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, The University of Texas at Austin, USA.

43. Ibid. pp.2.

CHAPTER SIX  
ANTI-COMMUNISM IN NIGERIA FROM THE 1940s TO  
THE LATE 1950s

(6.1) INTRODUCTION:

This chapter is about the evolution and implementation of an anti-communist policy in Nigeria after World War II. It analyses both official and non-official anti-communist measures from the late 1940s to independence. Anti-communist policies evolved partly as a result of colonial disorder, and, the infiltration of communist literature into the colonies.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, it was evolved to stall the formation of a nation-wide Marxist movement in Nigeria. The third reason was the emergence of a bipolar world after World War II. The threat of fascism and nazism during the war was replaced by that of the Soviets and Cominform after 1945. In other words, Russia's renewed interest in Africa after World War II, the emergence of militant nationalism, and the presence of some Marxists and their sympathizers were partly instrumental in the evolution and implementation of anti-communist policies in Nigeria, as elsewhere, in British colonies.<sup>2</sup> One might

add that it was also aimed at satisfying British Allies, particularly the United States of America, as part of the Cold War efforts.

Dunbabin is right when he writes that, "communism was perceived as a major threat during the two postwar decades within which decolonization was concentrated".<sup>3</sup> He notes further that, "the enlistment against it of local nationalism was regarded as an important counter not only by the United States but also by Britain".<sup>4</sup> I should add that at the local level, anti-communism became an instrument used by many folks (officials and leading politicians) to garner support for a policy or further other interests.

Hyam, Goldsworthy and Rathbone have separately noted the significance of British anti-communist policies after World War II. They have individually highlighted British documents on the subject without giving details about Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> My task is to complement their works and bring anti-communism to the forefront of studies about British decolonization in Nigeria.

## (6.2) THE BACKGROUND: EVOLUTION AND POLITICS:

Although available evidence seems to suggest that



there was no unified opinion between the Colonial and Foreign Offices, and Administering Officers in the colonies, on how to curtail communism, they all recognized the danger of communists taking over the colonies.<sup>6</sup> As early as 1947 an anti-communist publicity committee, with members drawn from both the Colonial and Foreign Offices, had been set up. At its meeting on December 30th 1947, members noted "His Majesty's Government's use of the Third Force to counter communist propaganda in Europe as a right step in the right direction".<sup>7</sup>

In a letter, C.F.A. Warner, Regional Information Officer in West Africa, suggested to K.W. Blackburne, the Director of Information in the Colonial Office, London, that, "the Third Force could be effectively used in West Africa in view of the growing communist threats".<sup>8</sup> Trafford Smith, an Assistant Secretary in the Colonial Office (1945-1950) and Rees-Williams (later Lord Ogmores), a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (1950), noted however, that, "as at the end of 1948 there was no policy towards containing communism in the colonies".<sup>9</sup>

Trafford Smith and Rees-Williams identified five reasons for this. These are:

(1) "some believed that the best policy against communism

was to appoint information officers to conduct counter-propaganda;

(2) some believed in an outright ban on communist literature;

(3) some advocated the introduction of education against communism;

(4) some believed that the issue should not be over-blown stating that there was nothing to fear; and,

(5) some believed that incorporating the nationalists into colonial administration, and the labour leaders into I.C.F.T.U. and T.U.C. would influence a pro-Western labour/nationalist group in the colonies".<sup>10</sup>

To the Labour Government's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ernest Bevin, the whole approach to communism was that of defence and security.<sup>11</sup> In his contribution on how to curtail the menace in the colonies, he suggested "a Colonial Office conference as soon as possible so that decisions could be taken and orders given to colonial governors on how to curtail communism in the colonies".<sup>12</sup>

The Foreign Secretary's view only reinforced earlier efforts of the Secretary of State for Colonies. In October 1948, Creech Jones held a meeting with senior officials in the Colonial Office. During the meeting he reiterated the anxiety of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary on the danger of communism infiltrating the colonies and the need for the Colonial Office to give general guidelines on how to curtail it.<sup>13</sup>

The CO had always taken the initiative on the communist menace. Earlier in August 1948 for instance, the Secretary of State for the Colonies sent a circular to Administering Officers in colonies on the need to review police and security forces in relation to communist infiltration.<sup>14</sup> He maintained that colonial police, intelligence units and the Special Branch should be strengthened in line with the "metropolitan countries and the methods which have been developed there".<sup>15</sup> On August 20th 1948, a Police Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies was appointed to advise on general police matters, the organization of security and intelligence services, especially Special Branch work in colonial police forces.<sup>16</sup>

Creech Jones, however, warned that "the Special Branch should not be treated as an elite group, rather Administering Officers should seek the assistance of defence security officers (where they exist), other police sources, provincial/district officers and any other unofficial persons, whom governments may be accustomed to look for reliable information as to the state of public feeling".<sup>17</sup> In other words, the two streams (police and political) were seen as valuable cross checks on one another in the maintenance of peace and order. The Administering Officers' response was swift

and quick. In Nigeria, for instance, Governor Macpherson noted that his government had taken necessary measures, since July 15th 1948, to control disorder and communist infiltration. According to him:

... new intelligence organization which includes the expansion of the Special Branch of the police; the appointment of an administrative officer and a police officer in each region who devote all their time to intelligence work and corresponding direct with the Central Intelligence Committee in Lagos at which representatives of the Administration, Police and the Military meet every week, and more often when necessary, to collate and review the intelligence reports coming in.<sup>18</sup>

By late 1948, officials in the Colonial and Foreign Offices had agreed on the need for collation of political intelligence reports from the colonies, so that action could be taken on different situations as they presented themselves.<sup>19</sup> It was concluded that action should be taken to:

(a) "establish in colonial territories civil and military organizations capable of dealing with any foreseeable emergency;

(b) improve the machinery in the Colonial Office for the collation of security and political intelligence;

(c) formulate positive and constructive policies against communism in all its manifestations and to give colonies the lead;

(d) ensure that the public in the colonies were educated to appreciate the nature of communism and steps which

were being taken to counter it".

This involved:

- (i) "improvement and extension of broadcast propaganda;
- (ii) building up of information services;
- (iii) use of the press; and
- (iv) control of newspapers and other literature".<sup>20</sup>

Three main objectives thus emerged: "to secure our people against aggression; to sustain a foreign policy dominated by global resistance to the onrush of communist influence; and to achieve the most rapid development practicable of our overseas possessions".<sup>21</sup> And as A.V. Alexander (Labour Minister of Defence-1949) put it, "without such colonial development there can be no major improvement in the standard of living of our people at home".<sup>22</sup> Simply put, if nationalist and labour movements are controlled there will be peace and harmony, the bedrock of effective exploitation of colonial resources by the metropole. Communist exploitation of colonial disorder on the other hand aimed at disrupting the colonial economy.

Between late 1949 and 1950, the Colonial and Foreign Offices took further steps toward curtailing communism in the colonies. The training of colonial and home staff was uppermost during this period. The CO cooperated with the

FO in organizing international conferences for junior and senior staff involved in colonial and foreign administration. The Information and Research Department of the Foreign Office was most useful in this regard.<sup>23</sup>

The IRD staff documented activities and scope of communism in Africa and played a major role in the training of officials in England. Ralph Murray, the head of the IRD, gave the first lecture on security and other matters at the conference on May 23rd 1950, during which he explained how to manage communist propoganda in the colonies.<sup>24</sup> A similar conference was organised for labour officers in London to enable them to handle the growing communist infiltration of the labour sector. As will be stressed later, the Labour Department between the late 1940s and 1960, left no stone unturned in its efforts at building sound industrial relations between employers and employees, either in government or private establishments.<sup>25</sup>

Another step taken was the encouragement of defence discussions for colonial officials on leave in London. Although such meetings were voluntary, it should be pointed out that the CO got nominations for the meetings at the rate of twenty-five and thirty for three discussions annually. This was quite large, given the

fact that not many officials would normally want to engage in any official matter during vacations.

An official noted that "we think not only that this is as much as we can conveniently handle, but also that it provides a very suitable cross section of the colonial service".<sup>26</sup> One advantage of such meetings was that experiences were shared by officials from different parts of the British Empire. Such experiences were later adapted to local situations which, perhaps, aided the success of measures taken in most of the colonies before independence.

Two general training courses were organised for colonial administrative staff. The first course lasted about a year at Oxford, Cambridge or London University, and was for newly selected officers who had not yet taken up their appointments in the colonies.<sup>27</sup> I must mention that this was not solely about Communism however. The second course was taken by officers who had spent three or four years in the colonies, and lasted two or three terms.<sup>28</sup> The first course started in 1950 and it included a "summer school" at Cambridge between August 8th and 17th for all the officers. The second course also started with a "summer school" in September in Cambridge. Lectures and discussions focused more on communism and

anti-communism. O.H. Morris, the CO representative for the courses liaised with the FO on suitable speakers for the occasion. The Colonial Service Clubs at Oxford, Cambridge and London, also organized occasional talks on the communist question.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the defeat of the Labour Party in the 1951 elections, the Conservative Party that assumed power pursued anti-communist goals similar to those of the Labour Party. The Conservative government set up a committee of enquiry in October 1952, to look into overseas information services with a view to assessing their potential. The committee was also charged with assessing the possible roles of the Colonial and Foreign Offices, the Commonwealth Relations Office, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the British Council in an anti-communist crusade.<sup>30</sup> The committee members viewed their objectives as important and were prepared to work out modes of operation with officials in the colonies. As they noted in their recommendation in November 1953:

It is vitally important to maintain our ties with the colonies at a time when they are advancing so rapidly towards self-government and are becoming increasingly threatened by communism.<sup>31</sup>

The committee recommended that four information offices should be established in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, East



Africa and the West Indies which cost Her Majesty's Government £60,000. Although there was debate as to whose vote should be used, the government could not afford to allow such discussion to delay the realisation of a firm and realistic policy.<sup>32</sup>

(6.3) FROM MACPHERSON TO BALEWA: 1948 to Late 1950s:

The effect of various correspondence, discussions and meetings was the overhaul of security intelligence arrangements for the colonies. In West Africa, a liaison officer was stationed in Accra to coordinate security and intelligence reports for the region. And, by May 1948, a Political Intelligence network had been set up in Nigeria to facilitate the work of the Special Branch and Central Intelligence Committee.<sup>33</sup> Marika Sherwood notes that: "The quality of surveillance was improved in the colonies from mid-1948, without any pressure from the FO". She maintains that, "in the very first fortnightly report on communism it is stated that 'senior members of the Secret Service from the UK on a recent visit put the Special Branch work on a more efficient basis: officers will be going to the UK for training soon'".<sup>34</sup>

That aside, intensification of security measures in Nigeria might have been influenced by some local

newspaper editorials. An example was the Daily Times editorial of November 11th, 1948. In response to the growing threat of communism in Nigerian affairs, the editor stated that:

... the fact cannot be denied that some communist minded people are working hard behind the scene to infuse communist ideas into the youths and exploit the latter' ignorance to their selfish ends....<sup>35</sup>

The paper suggested that, the Nigerian Government must do something to arrest the situation. As the editorial stated, "Government should now see the writing on the wall, and be alive to its duty in respect of this. No measure can be considered too strict to rid the country of this threat".<sup>36</sup>

One of the first steps was to sanitize the civil service and prepare it for the task ahead. Africanisation aimed at increasing African participation in both local and central government. This could be said to be "the best defence against communism" as well as "the best chance of getting future African states to remain in the Commonwealth".<sup>37</sup> Towards achieving this goal the colonial administration in Nigeria set up the Foot Commission in 1948 to work out ways of increasing the number of Nigerians in the senior level of the public service. This

perhaps was the first step in pacifying the nationalists, an indication that Britain was willing to reform.

However, we should note that this did not involve losing control. As Williams noted with reference to Nigeria: "Through their control of the political process of decolonization, the British promoted class and power relations which would ensure the continued domination of Nigeria by international capitalism".<sup>38</sup> He concludes that, "while new opportunities for political, administrative, and commercial activities were opened up for Nigerians, the British moved with severity against radical nationalists and trade unionists".<sup>39</sup>

And concerning the overhaul of security and intelligence, the Attorney General, Sir Gerald Howe (who later chaired the All-Nigerian Constitutional conference in 1950), laid a Bill before the Legislative Council on December 31st 1949, in order to amend previous laws on disorder and emergencies.<sup>40</sup> After some deliberations, the Nigerian Legislative Council passed the Criminal Code Ordinance in 1950.

The Criminal Code stated that, "any person who by any means whatever, causes, or attempts to cause, or does any act calculated to cause disaffection amongst persons

serving as members of His Majesty's forces, police officers or prison officers, or does any act calculated to induce any person serving as aforesaid to withhold his services or to commit breaches of discipline, shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to a fine not exceeding £300, or to both".<sup>41</sup> It was stressed that "if a police officer or prison officer defected, he shall forfeit all pension rights and be disqualified from being a police or prison officer".<sup>42</sup> The Criminal Code of 1950, which was primarily a response to the Zikists' call for defection from the police and army, made adequate provision for the punishment of persons, attempting to undermine the discipline and loyalty of the armed forces or of police/prison officers. Needless to say the Act had the support of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>43</sup>

Sir John Macpherson, the Governor (later Governor-General, 1948-1955), unlike Arthur Richards before him, was willing to carry out reforms in Nigeria. His most significant effort was in stemming the tide of radical nationalism, and putting into disarray, the Marxist groups. Part of his strategy was to involve the nationalists in evolving a constitution for the country. In 1949, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council was set up to prepare the background for the 1950 All-

Nigerian Constitutional conference. Macpherson never hid his courtship of liberal nationalists. He, along with his officials, isolated the Marxists during the 1950 All-Nigerian Conference, and afterwards. The conference came up with the Macpherson constitution of 1951. While there are studies of the provisions of the constitution<sup>44</sup>, we should note that it marked the beginning of exclusion of the Left-Wing nationalists from participating in the decolonization process.

During the same period, Macpherson's government took measures to disunite the Zikist Movement and other known Marxist groups. The first step was to seek collaborators from amongst them. And the second step was to persuade the collaborators to preach the gospel of constitutionalism as the only practicable way forward. It is now known that British officials held secret talks with Azikiwe, Emejulu, Kola Balogun and Onyiocha.<sup>45</sup> The success of the secret talks was the repudiation of the Zikists' "Call for Revolution" by some of its officials and leading NCNC members.

This partly explains Azikiwe's silence which the young Zikists, like Nzimiro, Abdallah, Ndulue and Okoye, could not understand.<sup>46</sup> As Pearce graphically put it: "Zik shut himself away for a day, and when he came to a

decision it was to repudiate violence. Instead of visiting Moscow and Prague he went to see Cohen and Creech Jones".<sup>47</sup>

In addition, eminent members of the Zikist Movement such as Emmanuel Ojaleye, who was also the Federal Treasurer of the NCNC, threatened to resign from the body and all connected bodies of which he was a member, unless they reverted to more constitutional means.<sup>48</sup> While Kola Balogun disassociated himself from the revolutionary Zikists, talks were held with Emejulu, the Secretary of the Railway Workers' Union, and a member of the NCNC and the Zikist Movement, so as to break Michael Imoudu's power there. All these men were prevailed upon by the Acting Chief Secretary, A.W.L. Savage, to follow a constitutional course, rather than, resort to violence.<sup>49</sup>

Sir John Macpherson had always seen the courtship of liberals as one of the steps by which the Left-Wing could be dealt with. Upon his appointment in March 1948, he met Adio-Moses at Trafalgar House in London, to discuss how responsible labour union and a sound industrial relations could be evolved in Nigeria. Adio-Moses was previously the Secretary General of the Nigerian Trades Union Congress and was on a British TUC scholarship in England. As I shall point out later, he was one of the liberal

labour leaders used by government, and the United States, to counter Marxists in the labour movement. Needless to say that the meeting between Adio-Moses and Macpherson was facilitated by the British TUC officials which regarded him as a trusted labour leader of the liberal school.<sup>50</sup>

The most discernible effort of the communists in Nigeria was the distribution of thousands of propaganda pamphlets. At the initial stage the policy of the Nigerian government was to allow the importation and distribution of these publications as long as they were not openly seditious. This policy was as a result of the CO suggestion that if they withheld or made illegal the distribution of such literature, local people would develop an abnormal interest in such information. However, all shipments and materials making seditious attacks upon the governing power were scrutinized and confiscated at the port, presumably by the joint task force of the men of the customs and excise and the Special Branch, without public knowledge. An example of this was when they took possession of a large air shipment of World Federation of Trade Union pamphlets at Lagos airport in mid-1953.<sup>51</sup>

Another measure was to counter communist or

"near-communist" literature by "utilising information derived" from such literature, "to bring the truth to the educated few and through them to the illiterate masses".<sup>52</sup> Macpherson, along with his political officers and the police, felt that among the best methods of combating communist propaganda was to counter it with publications designed to belie communist material, and, to explain the policies of the government to the people.<sup>53</sup>

This, however, was not without a lead from the Colonial Office. Between January 1949 and July 1953, the Colonial Office issued many policy papers as part of their effort towards combating the communist menace. Such policy papers included: "Broadcasting in the Colonies, 1949", and, "Undesirable Publications Policy, 1952-53". In order to ensure that more government programmes/projects were publicised in the colonies, the "Working Party For Colonial Information Policy Committee" was created around 1949 in the Colonial Office, with F.R.A. Murray of the International Research Department of the Foreign Office as the Chairman. Other members were drawn from the Central Office of Information, the Commonwealth Relations Office, the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the British Broadcasting Corporation. The WPCIPC viewed with seriousness, the growing communist



menace in the colonies. Its discussions focused on "hampering movements of undesirables", "Anti-communist Publicity machinery in Africa"; "Commonwealth Journalists to visit the colonies"; "Trade Unions and the colonies" etc.<sup>54</sup>

The body was significant in moulding a colonial broadcasting policy against communist propaganda. The aim of the Colonial Office, as that of the Committee, was to ensure that broadcasting services in the colonies developed "as instruments of social and educational advancement and that every effective opportunity will be taken to counter attacks upon democracy (West) by means of positive explanation and advocacy of its methods and achievements".<sup>55</sup> A technical survey team was sent to West Africa early in 1949 to advise on the development of broadcasting services. As a result of its report, the sum of £295,000 was allocated to West Africa compared with £178,000 and £42,000 to East and Central Africa respectively, from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund for the purpose.<sup>56</sup>

It was made clear that, "broadcasting services are also seen as an effective service under public control with its unique powers operating against misrepresentation and rumour".<sup>57</sup> The Colonial Office

prejudice the success of its primary task of explaining government to the people.<sup>61</sup> The Public Relations Department accordingly stimulated anti-communist propaganda through unofficial channels, such as the Nigerian Bureau of Publicity which published a pamphlet on Korea, and encouraged Nigerian politicians and businessmen to establish a 'Freedom Bookshop'.<sup>62</sup>

It was in the light of pro-government propaganda that the "Third Force" became important. From the late 1940s onwards, the Moral Re-armament Movement made its impact in the anti-communist politics of West Africa. Founded at about 1922 by a United States citizen, Frank Buchman, in Hartford, Connecticut, as a protestant group, it soon sought to deepen the spiritual life of its members by preaching the gospel of "absolute honesty, love, harmony, change and non-violence". In fact, as far back as 1938, Frank had called for a programme of "moral and spiritual re-armament" to address the root causes of conflict, and work towards a "hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world".

At the end of the World War II, it became one of the "Third Force" used in disseminating anti-communist ideas. By 1949 it had succeeded in winning the heart of eminent nationalists such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Matthew Mbu,

Emmanuel Emejulu, Zudonu etc. Apart from its activities among nationalist and labour groups, the MRM also concentrated its efforts on the youth in secondary schools and colleges throughout the country. Its activities also involved attempts to bridge the gap between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.<sup>63</sup>

Padmore noted that Moral Re-armament Movement emerged as the most formidable challenger to the communists after World War II. "Because of its financial resources and its lavish entertainment and seductive propaganda", he wrote, "M.R.A. is the only organization active among coloured colonials in Britain which has been able to make headway against communist infiltration in Africa".<sup>64</sup> For instance, Moral Re-armament's Task Force tour of West Africa in 1953 yielded fruits in the battle for the hearts and souls of colonial peoples. Many leading nationalists, labour leaders and traditional chiefs in the Gold Coast and Nigeria became members.

By 1954 an All-Nigerian Moral Re-armament Movement had been formed, with the "objective of combating communism and save Africa (Nigeria) for the West".<sup>65</sup> And by 1959 leading pro-Western labour leaders had remarked that the MRM was supportive in their battle against the few Communists. In the words of Egwunwoke, "Moral Re-

armament has given us sound moral and spiritual leadership which communism can never give us". He concludes that: "There is no stronger foundation on which a united labour union movement can be built than MRA".<sup>66</sup>

The Conference of West African Governors was also concerned about the communist menace, and put up its view on how it could be curtailed. Between January 23rd and 24th 1951, the West African Governors meeting in Accra noted increased communist activities particularly in Nigeria and the Gold Coast.<sup>67</sup> The Governors emphasised the importance of counter-propaganda being "positive" rather than "negative". "Counter-propaganda", according to the Governors, "should emphasise the advantages presented to Africa by the opportunities of constitutional advance". "The aim", it seems, "was to immunise West Africans from a disease, not to cure them of a disease from which they were not yet suffering".<sup>68</sup> W.H.Ingram noted that in view of the recurrent Soviet interest in Nigeria in particular, the Colonial Office, with the approval of the Treasury, had approved an unspecified amount for counter-propaganda in Nigeria and the Gold Coast.<sup>69</sup>

An unspecified amount was reportedly given to the "Friends of Freedom" which handled the publishing of

counter-propagandist documents, as well as organised discussion groups in the colonies. In collaboration with the Public Relations Department, the British Council, "The Friends of Freedom", and the Moral Re-armament Movement showed films in many parts of the country. Such films were laden with Western views on self-government and freedom. The most important one was a film titled "Freedom" showed in about 1956.<sup>70</sup>

Another agent in this regard is the British Council. The British Council, founded in 1934, provided a wider knowledge of British culture.<sup>71</sup> It was financed by the government to teach English abroad; develop the teaching of science and to maintain libraries and information centres. Its office was opened in Lagos in 1943 to propagate British culture amongst Nigerians. With the onset of the Cold War, it became one of the "agents" of the Public Relations Department in its initiatives in disseminating governments' programmes in Nigeria. As Royle notes: "In Africa, not only was it considered a useful means of furthering knowledge about democratic institutions and creating cultural bonds with Britain, but also of countering Communist propaganda".<sup>72</sup>

Also worthy of mentioning is the University of Oxford Delegacy of Extra-Mural Studies under Thomas

Hodgkin. Conham, a former Senior District Commissioner in the Gold Coast noted that:

... Thomas Hodgkins... introduced a group of people who had a profound influence on assisting the transfer of power in Ghana by setting up the Extra-Mural activities, holding lectures and discussions, many of which were about the way in which democracy worked, and of course with particular reference to what we have been calling the Westminster Model.<sup>73</sup>

Needless to say that the group also worked in Nigeria alongside the British TUC and the British Council. In fact, it had a representative on the TUC Educational and Colonial Advisory Committees.<sup>74</sup>

J.A. Lean (a member of the group, and, its representative on TUC Educational and Colonial Advisory Committee), visited Nigeria on behalf of the group in July 1948, to assess its activities. He noted that, attendance at the groups lectures and meetings varies from 14 and 500 peoples. Lectures were given on topics such as: Economic History and Problems; Political Theory and World Affairs; The Place of Colonies in the Modern World; Democracy and Communism in the Modern World; The Liberal World Outlook etc.<sup>75</sup> While it is difficult to assess the number of "converts", the group, nonetheless, contributed towards efforts at improving the knowledge of the colonial people about world politics.

Saburi Biobaku (one of the first generation of Nigerian academic historians) has narrated the role of another group used by the Public Relations Department in the 1950s. These were the Schofields. It is not clear whether they were members of the "Friends of Freedom" or, indeed, the main organisers. Giving their role as narrated by Biobaku, one can assume that the Schofields might have been close to the latter group. They collaborated with the British Council to organise public lectures and debates in Lagos and its environs, and possibly in Enugu and Kaduna. They also operated a mobile library where books were made available for Nigerians interested in reading for general knowledge. The volume and perceptibility of these books is not known. However, one can suggest that they might have been books sponsored by the government.<sup>76</sup>

It seems to me therefore, that government might have been keeping in line with Ingram's remark in 1952 that, "the most important thing was the provision of 'positive' literature describing the Western way of life and British institutions etc, for general use. The briefing of officials came next, and definitely anti-communist literature for general use was last".<sup>77</sup>

As part of measures against Communist penetration

the colonial government initiated a total ban on overt communist literature, considered to be insensitive to governments' activities. Some senior officials maintained that "there is every justification for banning the productions of overt enemy organisations such as the WFTU".<sup>78</sup> In fact, the Secretary of State for the Colonies gave a blanket approval to Administering Officers in the colonies to take appropriate action towards communism, even if it meant outright banning.<sup>79</sup>

With the pronouncement of the Macpherson constitution in 1951, a diarchy was introduced into Nigeria. Henceforth, British and Nigerian politicians cooperated in the administration of Britain's largest colony in Africa.<sup>80</sup> It should be stressed that emergent Nigerian administrators and politicians in central and regional governments were men of constitutional and pragmatic ideas. They were the backbone of British anti-communist measures.

At the beginning of 1953, the Nigerian government set up the "Central Co-ordinating Committee" to look into the problem of communism. Its members included Shillingford (Acting Inspector of General Education), Macdonald (Acting Inspector General of Police), Stocker (Acting Public Relations Officer), and Mr. Justice



Jibowu, the senior *Puisne Judge*. The committee generated advice on how to curtail communism within Nigeria. On April 8th 1953, at its fourth meeting, the committee noted that the volume, nature and effect of communist propaganda entering Nigeria demanded a more restrictive policy than before.

Government was advised to contemplate selective banning combined with blanket banning of the publications of particular organisations such as the W.F.T.U.<sup>81</sup> It also recommended an increase in Special Branch staff to carry out searches.<sup>82</sup> The Nigerian Council of Ministers at its July 1953 meeting, approved the recommendations of the Central Coordinating Committee. It further noted that Nigerian Government policy not to ban the importation of communist literature should be revised. In this regard it recommended that, a committee should be set up to advise the Governor of the Federation (as he then was) on publications that should be banned.<sup>83</sup>

From May 1953 onwards the government seems to have been successful in its use of the print media at containing communism. The government successfully used the Daily and Sunday Times, and, the Gaskiya Corporation for disseminating its programmes to the people. The Nigerian Broadcasting Service also supported government

in this regard. The NBS, like other government-owned media, was used to counter "lies and misinterpretations of government plans".<sup>84</sup> There was encouragement from the Colonial Office too. S.H. Evans, head of the Information Department at the Colonial Office advised:

... the governor, senior members of the administration and responsible politicians to make very frequent public statements and speeches expressing the views for which currency is required.<sup>85</sup>

In pursuit of its selective banning of communist literature into the country, the government banned a total of thirty-three books, pamphlets and other publications carrying communist propaganda in early 1955. Also in 1955, the government distributed either free of charge, or at a very low prices, over half a million informational and propaganda publications designed to counter communist propaganda.<sup>86</sup>

This material ranged from strong anti-communist materials produced by the government in the United Kingdom, to straight forward informational booklets concerning the British administration in Nigeria. Topics covered included the Council of Ministers, the history of British administration in Nigeria and elsewhere; the operation of various Government departments; the functions of development and welfare bodies; the

operation of Marketing Boards etc.<sup>87</sup>

Another aspect of anti-communism was the review of passport and immigration ordinances in order to prevent notable radicals and communists from entering or leaving the country. The activities of Eze and his cohorts made it important to control the issuing of passports to Nigerians. Beginning in 1949 the government amended the 1945 immigration ordinance to suit its anti-communist objectives. The most significant aspect of the 1949 Immigration Amendment Ordinance was Section II(2)[c] and [d] and Section 12. Section II(2)[c] stated that "any person who from official government records, or from information officially received by the Governor from a Secretary of State, or from the Officer Administering the Government of any British colony or protectorate....is decided by the Governor to be undesirable, will be prevented from entering the country". Section 12 further emphasised the absolute power of the Governor. It read thus:

Notwithstanding anything in this ordinance contained, the Governor may, in his absolute discretion, prohibit the entry into Nigeria of any person, not being native of Nigeria.<sup>88</sup>

This particular section was used to prevent known

communists, or those the government believed might constitute a threat to the peace and order of the country, from entering Nigeria.<sup>89</sup> On September 4th 1950, the government further amended its policy on immigration to include immigrants and visitors. This effort was aimed at reducing, the number of communists into the country. The Immigration Policy of 1950 stated that:

... intending immigrants or visitors will have to be acceptable from the security aspect... no citizen of a communist or communist dominated state, and no known or suspected communist should be led to suppose that he will be granted an entry permit unless prior approval has been obtained from this Government.<sup>90</sup>

The government was strict on immigration policy. For instance, Basil Davidson who had organised various marxist meetings among colonial students in London was not permitted to enter Nigeria in late 1950.<sup>91</sup> Also, Abdoulaye Diallo of the WFTU was prevented from entering Nigeria in 1951, to consult with Eze and others, under this Ordinance. Eze had earlier being declared "an unfit British protected person to secure a British passport" by the government, presumably under the ordinance.<sup>92</sup>

Another case was the prevention of a Canadian citizen, Daniel Halperin, to take appointment on the staff of the ZIK Press Ltd in July 1950. Whether or not

Azikiwe was aware about Halperin's membership of the Canadian Communist Party is yet to be ascertained. One can only proffer that he must have yielded to government pressure that Halperin was "most undesirable on the staff of the Zik's Press Ltd". It was basis that he was declared "a prohibited immigrant by the Governor".<sup>93</sup> It was also under this Ordinance that members of the communist sponsored organisation, Union des Populations du Camerounais (UPC), were prevented from entering the country on many occasions.<sup>94</sup> In fact, its deputy leader, Ernest Quandie, was placed under police surveillance, while in transit in Lagos in May 1959.<sup>95</sup>

The colonial government was quite successful in implementing this policy. This is further reflected by a United States consular intelligence report for 1953, which states that "present procedures of the Nigerian Government of controlling the movement of Nigerians to the countries of the iron curtain are quite strict".<sup>96</sup> With the full support of the Council of Ministers, the immigration and passport control authorities began, in late 1953 and from early 1954 onwards, to endorse all passports in such a way that made them invalid for travel to Iron Curtain countries.

A stricter policy was also imposed on the issuing of

passports to Nigerians, none being issued to those known to be planning attendance at communist-inspired conferences abroad, or for what was believed to be communist-inspired reasons. The colonial authorities were assisted in carrying out this policy by a policy of refusing to make known reasons for the rejection of a particular passport application.<sup>97</sup> As the Federal Intelligence Committee noted in 1958: "a solution was proffered which will prevent the 'red-followers' from embarking on a journey to the Iron Curtain ...".<sup>98</sup>

Apart from preventing Nigerians from seeking educational advancement in the Iron Curtain countries, the colonial government was also apprehensive of scholarships from radical Muslim universities such as the King Farouk of Egypt scholarship to Nigerians, tenable at Al-Azhar University, Cairo.<sup>99</sup> Official rejection of King Farouk's scholarship showed that, resistance to communism was not really different from other foreign radical ideas, such as fanatic Islamic groups or Nasserism. One can argue that since the type of education given to the youth was one of the central aim of anti-communist policies, Britain was conscious not only about Iron Curtain schools but also other foreign radical schools. Hence, official opposition to scholarship offers tenable at Al-Azhar should not be surprising.

The background to this was an official report from Cairo to the Colonial Office in 1947 that Al-Azhar and Al-Awal Universities students had evolved a "crude nationalism" which was not only detrimental to their studies but was also hostile to the relationship between Britain and Egypt. "The students here", wrote J.R. Cotton of the Foreign Office, "have acquired an unenviable reputation for extreme nationalism coupled with xenophobia and communism".<sup>100</sup> Hence, when Nigerian newspapers reported the offer of thirty scholarships to the Muslim Congress of Nigeria, with headquarters in Ijebu Ode, Western Region, Macpherson wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that "we shall naturally place whatever obstacles we can in way of these scholarships being taken".<sup>101</sup>

This position was supported by the British Embassy in Alexandria, Egypt. As the Embassy Chancery noted in June 1951, "Azharis students [and] nearly all political agitators rely on El-Azhar for a *claque* and that so many current communist-inspired lines of propaganda, such as anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, 'neutrality' etc, have a great appeal for this class of youth".<sup>102</sup> On July 16th 1951, the Colonial Office, acting on the advice of the Foreign Office, upheld the Nigerian government's view and more efforts were geared towards monitoring the few

Nigerian students already in Egypt.<sup>103</sup>

There was also a direct government efforts at isolating Nigerian students in the UK during the 1950s from the communist camp. In furtherance of this, the government courted the Nigeria Union (UK) formed in about 1950. The courtship was based upon Colonial Office assurance that the group under Obahiagbon, was only interested in marxism for intellectual purposes. It is, however, difficult to ascertain how many Nigerian were solely interested in marxism for intellectual purpose. Officials not only attended summer schools organised by the group in London, but "promised a more permanent liaison between the union, the Colonial Office and the new Nigeria Office".<sup>104</sup>

As part of its anti-communist effort within the educational sector, the Nigerian government took a step further by ensuring that the few communists at the University College, Ibadan (as well as its Extra-Mural Unit), were closely watched and their influence amongst students curtailed.<sup>105</sup> The government, on the advice of the Colonial Office, adopted a policy of vetting appointees to teaching and technical posts at the University College.<sup>106</sup> Although such vetting was contrary to the academic independence of the university, its



head, Dr. Mellanby, willingly cooperated with the colonial administration.

At a secret meeting on September 19th 1951 at the Colonial Office, Macpherson and Mellanby reached an agreement on the recruitment of academics for UCI. It was agreed that recruitment would be managed by Mr. Adams of the Inter-University Council in London, and shortlisted candidates would be sent for security clearance without the knowledge of the College's Selection Committee (except that of Mellanby), before their names were forwarded to UCI for appointment.

As regards employment of other professionals from the United Kingdom, it was agreed that applications should be made through the Crown Agents who arranged for the security check. And in those rare cases where it was necessary to recruit a technician direct, the security check was carried out by Mr. Adams and Mr. Bourn of the Inter-University Council and the Colonial Office respectively.<sup>107</sup>

So far as local recruitment was concerned, the Chief Secretary's clearance was necessary before appointments were made. A case in point was the appointment of Dr. Chike Obi as Lecturer Grade II in Mathematics in

September 1951. Dr Obi was cleared by the Chief Secretary for appointment as a lecturer because the government was satisfied that his earlier contact with Nduka Eze and the Communist Party while in the United Kingdom, had been overtaken by his rather liberal tone and break-up with Eze and his organisation in early 1951.<sup>108</sup> In brief, through the vetting system, government was able to monitor academic appointments in higher education institutions throughout the period.

(6.4) The Ban On the Employment of Communists in the Nigerian Public Service:

In 1950, Nigeria was placed in the "Special Category of front-line colonies" because "it had become a major object of Soviet Cold War attention".<sup>109</sup> On May 1st 1951, Macpherson, in carrying forward his anti-communist measures, requested approval from James Griffiths, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the ban of communists in government employment.<sup>110</sup> Griffiths' response was that the Nigerian Council of Ministers should deliberate on the matter.

However, it was not until May 25th 1954 that the Federal Council of Ministers asked for the submission of a paper on steps that might be taken against communist

infiltration into the civil service and trade union movement. It seems that this was provoked by Dr. Nkrumah's speech at the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly on February 25th 1954 that his government would in future refuse to employ in certain branches of the Public Service persons who had proved to be active communists.<sup>111</sup> These branches were the administrative, education, community development, labour, information services, police, army and the Gold Coast Commissioners' Offices overseas. And two years later, Nkrumah was proud to say that: "the infiltration by Communist agents into 'our workers' organisations has now been completely checked".<sup>112</sup>

The background to Colonial Governments' ban on the employment of Communists and fellow-travellers, cannot be exonerated from metropolitan initiatives. Despite Labour Government's past relationship with the Communist Party and the Labour movement generally, the government was sincere in its anti-communist positions. I should mention that participants at the various Labour Party Annual conferences during the 1940s noted the fundamental differences between the Labour Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain. As one participant put it: "... our Party seeks to achieve Socialism by persuasion and the ballot boxes in contrast to the Communist party

doctrine of the overthrow of capitalism by armed force if necessary..."<sup>113</sup> This partly explains the futile attempts to affiliate the Communist Party with the Labour Party during the 1946 and 1947 conferences.<sup>114</sup>

It should not be surprising therefore that the foundation of anti-communist policies was laid under a Labour government. Attlee on the floor of the House of Commons on March 15th 1948, announced that:

... a civil servant suspected of membership or association with the Communist Party or a Fascist organisation in such a way as to raise legitimate doubts of his reliability, shall be summarily dismissed or transferred to less sensitive sector of the National parastatals.<sup>115</sup>

In an answer to a question during the debate, Attlee maintained that: "Experience, both in this country and elsewhere, has shown that membership of, and other forms of continuing association with, the Communist Party may involve the acceptance by the individual of a loyalty, which in certain circumstances can be inimical to the State".<sup>116</sup>

Although acknowledging the difficulty of reading the minds of men, the Prime Minister maintained that "there is no way of distinguishing such people from those who, if opportunity offered, would be prepared to endanger the

security of the State in the interests of another Power".<sup>117</sup> The policy was, however, only applicable to Communists and fellow-travellers. Fabian-Socialists, who are also influential in the Labour Party, were exempted from the ban. This gave the opposition (Conservatives) room for criticism, as they opined that Socialism is a transitory stage to Communism. They also criticised government's secret trial of suspected Communists or fellow-travellers maintaining that it's against democracy.<sup>118</sup>

Such criticism did not stop Attlee and his cabinet from executing the policy. As he graphically noted: "I say that, owing to the fact that they have a different loyalty, they cannot serve the State".<sup>119</sup> And by mid-1948, Sir W. Smithers, representing Orpington in the House of Commons, had called on the government "to take effective steps to outlaw Communism in this country", rather than what he called, "fiddling about with the Civil Service".<sup>120</sup> And at the Annual Labour Party conference in 1948, majority of the members present supported government action.<sup>121</sup>

The matter was again raised on the floor of the House of Lords by Lord Vansittart in March 1950. In his address titled, "Communists in the Public Service", Lord

Vansittart reiterated the government position and noted that "continuous and resolute precautions are necessary for public security".<sup>122</sup> He was supported by Lord Milverton, formerly Governor of Nigeria, who noted that, "there is no room for Communism in the world".<sup>123</sup> Some, however, were mild in their criticism of the communists. To the Earl of Iddlesleigh, "Communists are better left alone to continue their loud orations in order not to drive them underground".<sup>124</sup>

Despite their criticism of some aspects of the policy, the Conservative Government also pursued anti-communist policies. Keeping Communism within bounds was seen as a step towards preserving democratic freedoms a la Westminster. In the colonies, both nationalist and labour leaders were expected to be wholeheartedly anti-communist. Any suspicious act could reverse the course of development in the colonies as in the case of British Guiana in 1953.<sup>125</sup>

As Sir T. Lloyd (Permanent Under Secretary, 1947-1956) noted: "Events in British Guiana have shown that their (Communists) tactics may take the form of building up and practising Communism while denying that they are Communists, not only to the World at large but also to their own followers".<sup>126</sup> He concluded that: "A small

minority of determined Communists will do everything to exercise the greatest possible influence and they will use that influence solely for the purposes of disruption. This is not a remote danger, but a very near one".<sup>127</sup>

In West Africa, nationalist governments were encouraged to make policies aimed at curtailing Communism. Like Balewa, Nkrumah also prop-up some labour leaders as fronts in his anti-communist crusade. He initiated the merger between the Gold Coast TUC and the Ghana TUC in order to place his supporters at an advantage position in the new labour union.<sup>128</sup>

Nkrumah however, did not succeed immediately in checking activities of Communists such as Woode, Ocran and Kumah in the new Ghana TUC that emerged.<sup>129</sup> By early 1954, however, Nkrumah and his cabinet had succeeded in expelling known Communists such as Woode and Ocran from the CPP, as well as institute the vetting procedure in Civil Service appointments. As Rathbone rightly concludes, "the adoption of these apparently draconian measures by the CPP dominated government was only partly intended to reassure the Conservative government in London".<sup>130</sup>

By February 18th 1954, Lyttelton, the Secretary of

State for the Colonies informed the Cabinet at Whitehall that the Gold Coast government under Nkrumah had taken the following steps:

(1) "ban the entry of all Communist literature into the Gold Coast";

(2) "exclude any European with Communist sympathies from the public service and exclude any African with Communist sympathies from a certain number of Departments like the Administration, the police and the Department of Education";

(3) "confiscate the passports of the few Gold Coast Communists who wish to travel behind the Iron Curtain".<sup>131</sup>

In Nigeria, it was recognised that the most effective prophylactic against communism was the education of the community as to its aims and objectives. Communism was portrayed as being opposed to the goals of independence within the Commonwealth. In view of the communists in-road into labour unions, the Council of Ministers noted that the greatest danger lay within organized labour.<sup>132</sup>

On October 18th 1954, both Federal and Regional Governments took a step further in their anti-communist measures when they finally resolved to place a ban on the employment of communists and their sympathizers in the



public service. On October 19th 1954, J.O. Field, Principal Assistant Secretary of the Federation, and J.S. Dudding, Senior Assistant Secretary for Security and Defence, addressed a press conference on government policy on communism.<sup>133</sup> A press statement was released, captioned "Council of Ministers Report"; it was published as "Government Notice No.1769: Statement of policy on the employment of communists in the public services". It read thus:

After careful examination of the situation in Nigeria and in other countries, particularly those in the British Commonwealth... the Council of Ministers has reached the conclusion that steps are necessary to prevent the infiltration of active communists into posts in the service of the country in which divided loyalty might be dangerous to the interests of Nigeria. The first loyalty of a communist lies not to Nigeria, but to a foreign communist organisation, the objective of which is the political, economic and social subjugation of Nigeria. The Governments of Nigeria are therefore of the opinion that persons who are indoctrinated with communism should not be permitted to occupy posts in the service of Government in which it is possible for them to further the ends of the organisation to which they owe allegiance. It has therefore proved to the satisfaction of Government that active communists will in future not be employed in the following branches of the Nigerian Public Services: Administration, Education, Labour, Police, Posts and Telegraphs, Railway, Civil Aviation, or in certain key posts in other branches of the Public Services.<sup>134</sup>

Both active Communists and their sympathizers were

taken into consideration. Another point in the policy statement was the remark that employers of labour should also take steps to prevent communist penetration of the commercial sector.<sup>135</sup> During this period, about ten communists were identified as being in the public service, while not less than two hundred were said to be out of the public service.<sup>136</sup> Some newspapers' comments were favourable to the Government's decision. An editorial in the Daily Service of October 16th 1954 captured the mood of the press. It noted that:

.... Based on the past performances of communists in non-communist countries, we fully endorse the principle outlines in the statement, but we will add that other positive approaches must be made to combat the growth of communism. You may not give active communist job (sic), but that will not stop communism from growing. What will stop it is to carry out social programmes which will build an educated public in a prosperous country and will also eradicate social injustice. Communism thrives on ignorance and poverty.<sup>137</sup>

To the West African Pilot, owned by Dr. Azikiwe, the best recipe against communism was not repression or persecution but rather the "application of a more powerful ideology which is based on moral goodness on the part of those who govern and those who are governed, thus leading ultimately to real existence of freedom of thought, speech or association".<sup>138</sup> The success of

governments (central and regional) measures cannot be over-emphasized. As the American consul, Herbert T. Krueger noted in January 1956, "The drastic decrease in the shipment of such propaganda, as compared to the 1953-early 1954 period, attests to the effectiveness of the ban on communist publications ...", and the employment of communists in the civil service.<sup>139</sup>

The effect of this policy was felt by Marxist leaders, both in Nigeria and the Great Britain. The situation was not helped by deteriorating race relation between CPGB leaders and Nigerian members who had complained about "arrogance" among the leaders. The Nigerian government ban on the employment of communists, announced in October 1954, further reduced the morale of some Nigerian members of the CPGB who had earlier thought about resigning from the body. As Adi rightly notes: "In 1954, the decline in membership was no doubt accelerated by an announcement by the Federal and Regional governments in Nigeria, that no known Communist would be employed in 'essential public services' or in the civil service".<sup>140</sup>

Meanwhile, at its meeting of December 29th 1954, the Federal Council of Ministers took further action to ban communists from the Public Service by applying much the

same screening methods used at the University College, Ibadan, since 1951, on the appointment of Nigerians and expatriates in the public sector.<sup>141</sup> Azikiwe in a conversation with the American Consul-General, McLaughlin, remarked that the measure had succeeded throughout the country and particularly in his area of control (the Eastern Region).<sup>142</sup>

In May 1955, the Eastern Region Ministry of Education circulated a notice to all private schools receiving government support to the effect that State funds will be withdrawn from those schools which continue to employ communist teachers after December 31st 1955.<sup>143</sup> Awolowo also confirmed that the measure had succeeded in the Western Region and Lagos where most of the communists and their sympathizers lived and worked. Unlike Azikiwe, he added that the governments had been over-zealous about the whole matter.<sup>144</sup>

(6.5) Anti-communism: Commercial Firms and Organised Labour:

The initial and most embarrassing problem is that the workers are wont to look up to Communist and Communist influenced International Labour Organisations for material and financial aid... The psychological frailty and weakness of the average

Nigerian worker which - virtually - are engendered by want, insecurity and manumission, constitute the most fertile soil on which the baneful doctrine Communism thrives than ever.<sup>145</sup>

The percentage of the Nigerian working class was put at three percent of the total population in 1954. Official figures indicates that there are 152,000 trade union members organised in 116 trade unions. Seven of the unions had over 5,000 members. These are: the Nigerian Union of Teachers (26,000); Amalgamated Union of the United Africa Company Workers Union (19,000); Public Utility Technical and General Workers Union of Nigeria and the Cameroons (12,000); Nigeria African Mineworkers Union (11,000); Railway Workers Union (11,000); and the Nigerian Civil Service Union (6,000).<sup>146</sup>

As the figure show a majority of Nigerian workers were employed by the colonial government, which thus gave them, a key position to exercise pressure on British rule. To Nigerian Marxists, a trade union member should stand aloof in the struggle against imperialism as practised by the British. They seems to have imbibed the doctrine as laid down by the CPGB leaders. As the CPGB leaders noted in one of their political ideological classes, "Non-political trade unionism is a betrayal of the interests of the workers and of the national

struggle".<sup>147</sup> They, however, realised governments' determined effort to keep "trade unions subservient to the employers and the Government, and to keep them isolated from the national struggle".<sup>148</sup>

Having noted that the sector of the society most vulnerable to communism was the labour union, the government took three major steps in an effort to combat the menace. These were: the training of Labour and Industrial Officers; the encouragement of the International Confederation of Trade Union (ICFTU) as against the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU); and the encouragement of a pro-Western Labour Congress through the support of activists like Cole, Adebola, Borha, Adio-Moses, Porbeni, Labinjoh etc.

British colonial administration's efforts at guiding and building trade union and industrial relations in the colonies, however, predates East-West ideological differences. Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb), the Secretary of State for the colonies in a despatch to colonial governors in 1930, warned them: "... to deal with trade unions with a spirit of tolerance and understanding". Regarding trade union development, he noted that: "... there is a danger that, without sympathetic supervision and guidance, organisation of labourers without

experience... may fall under the domination of disaffected persons, by whom their activities may be diverted to improper and mischievous ends".<sup>149</sup> This was the genesis of government intervention in moulding labour unionism in the colonies.

The 1930s saw the appointment of a Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State, the creation of Labour Inspectorates (later Departments), and the appointments of trade union officers "to guide and train leaders in the art and practice of trade unionism", in the colonies.<sup>150</sup> These were some of the objectives of the Trade Union Ordinance of 1938. During the war efforts of the Inspector of Labour in Nigeria, C.H. Crossdale, were aimed at nurturing the various unions for war needs and maintenance of a sound industrial relations between government and European employers.<sup>151</sup> In fact, Labour and Welfare Officers were often sent to sensitive government parastatals to act as the bridge between the government and its employees.<sup>152</sup>

The Nigeria colonial government provided the lead by awarding scholarships to Nigerians to train at the University of London or under the British TUC. Between the late 1940s and 1952, eleven scholarships were awarded to Nigerians in this respect.<sup>153</sup> The United States Foreign

Leaders Grant was also made available in the training of some Nigerians in US colleges and universities in Labour and Industrial Relations. One of the first beneficiaries was Matthew Ayodele Tokunboh. Having benefitted from the government scholarship during World War II to study at the London School of Economics, he was selected for the US Leaders Grant to study Labour and Industrial Relations at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. He soon rose to the post of a Labour Officer by late 1940s. Other beneficiaries included: Adio-Moses, Beyioku, Cole, Olugbake and Porbeni.<sup>154</sup>

Between 1950 and 1960, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University College, Ibadan, was charged with providing local courses/programmes for future labour officers and unionist. The task was shouldered by Tokunboh, its first director (1950-1957). Although the literature used was provided by the Department of Labour, the British TUC, the British Council, the USIS and the Colonial Office, the participants at the Departmental conference in 1953 advised that, "courses should not appear to have been sponsored, arranged, or unduly influenced by Government".<sup>155</sup> Also sessional lecturers were invited to give lectures on trade unionism and industrial relations. These included: Nancy Sears (LSE), W. Hood (British TUC), H.E. Hannah (US Trade Union



official), G.F. McRay (Trade Union College, Kampala), and G. Paxton (British TUC).<sup>156</sup>

In 1957 the Department of Labour also introduced "Training Within Industry" (TWI) courses in job instructions and job relations, involving industrial relations, apprenticeship, training and factory organisation. And by 1959 the Department had been assisted by H.A. Tulaz, of the British TUC, in establishing a Trade Union School in Lagos where courses were conducted in trade union and industrial relations.<sup>157</sup> While it is difficult to ascertain government success in this direction, one can say that it left no stone unturned in its desire to build pro-western trade union.

Another agent of government in its drive towards creating a pro-Western trade unionists was the ICFTU. As early as March 1949, Roberts Curry, the Labour Adviser in Nigeria had written to Vincent Tewson the British TUC Secretary, concerning the activities of the WFTU in Nigeria, and the need for TUC/ICFTU initiatives. Curry noted that: "The W.F.T.U. will now be concentrating its energies on the backward countries and I have grave suspicions that Nigeria is one of the fertile grounds for their activities". He concluded that: "The Government... is very concerned about the matter and I am advising

Government on the methods to combat this menace of Communism from spreading its ugly head amongst these simple people".<sup>158</sup>

Earlier in January 1950, J.H. Oldenboek, the General Secretary of the ICFTU, wrote to the Secretary of State, Creech Jones, to support the visit of a panel of the ICFTU to British territories in Central and West Africa later in the year.<sup>159</sup> The primary motive was to assist in the development of free and democratic trade unions. At its executive board meeting of November 1950, it was resolved that the goal of ICFTU was to wrest the initiative from the communists and communist-led trade unions, to which it was prepared to devote substantial resources.<sup>160</sup> This move was supported by the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) and labour officers in Nigeria.<sup>161</sup> On November 20th 1950, Sir Vincent Tewson of the TUC wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the TUC would be holding a meeting with the ICFTU in Douala towards the end of January 1951, in order to prevent a similar plan by WFTU.<sup>162</sup>

In view of its concern about communism in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, the British TUC sent a six-person delegation to these countries, prior to the Douala conference, to study the level of

communist penetration with the aim of detaching them from WFTU and bringing them into the orbit of the ICFTU.<sup>163</sup> In fact, out of £250,000 raised to combat communism the British TUC was said to have contributed a sum of £100,000.<sup>164</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies was delighted about the British TUC/ICFTU initiative since it was difficult for government to become directly involved in labour matters. Accordingly Administering Officers, particularly in Nigeria, where Eze's Labour Congress had affiliated with the WFTU, were directed to give every support to the delegation.<sup>165</sup>

The response from Nigeria was very swift. Accommodation and transport were arranged at the expense of the Nigerian government. In order not to create fear in labour circles and to disguise its anti-communist motive from the labour movement, the government insisted that publicity for the ICFTU visit would only be carried out by the ICFTU and not the government.<sup>166</sup> The ICFTU/TUC trip from London was, however, funded by the Colonial Office.<sup>167</sup> The endeavour was seen as an important stabilising influence on trade union movement that would provide valuable combat against communist infiltration into the movement.<sup>168</sup>

On February 15th 1951, the ICFTU delegation arrived

in Nigeria to propagate the aims of free democracy. These included:

(i) "To inform trade union groups of the purposes and aims of the ICFTU;

(ii) To obtain the maximum interest and support for the West African Trade Union Conference to be held at Douala between 26th and 28th February 1951;

(iii) To endeavour to win over groups at present supporting the communist-controlled WFTU; and,

(iv) To inform the ICFTU on labour conditions and the stage of trade union development in West Africa".<sup>169</sup>

Although they had some difficulties, it seems, however that they succeeded in most respects in Nigeria and indeed other British West African colonies.<sup>170</sup> The task of the ICFTU/TUC in anti-communism in organised labour was to bolster up the moderate and responsible elements in colonial labour unions. It was also to encourage the production of more leaders opposed to WFTU interference. The first step in this direction was the setting up of an Information and Advice Centre in Accra, which became a Regional Office of the body.<sup>171</sup>

A second significant effort of the ICFTU during this period was its support for the Adio-Moses, Borha, Adebola

and Esua group in their effort at establishing a pro-Western trade union. Despite Eze's attempt at bargaining for financial assistance as a prelude to withdrawing his section of the Union's affiliation with the WFTU, the ICFTU delegation under Fred Dalley of the British TUC, was only willing to assist Adio-Moses' group. It is not surprising that Adio-Moses, E.A. Cowan and A.B.O. Cole were selected to represent Nigeria at the Douala meeting.<sup>172</sup>

Adio-Moses later moved the motion at the Douala meeting on March 7th 1951 that the ICFTU should establish regional machinery for the co-ordination of trade union training in West and Central Africa, including the establishment of Trade Union Colleges, and the promotion of lectures. These proposals were adopted and machinery was set in motion to counter communist influence in labour movements.<sup>173</sup>

By the end of 1951, Adio-Moses with the assistance of Cowan, Borha and Cole had been able to gain some ground within the Nigerian labour movement.<sup>174</sup> An 'Action Committee' was set up under Adio-Moses through which the conference recommendations were carried out. The 'Action Committee' or 'The Council of Action' as it was variously referred to in the TUC record, aimed at:

- (1) Formation of a democratic national centre; and,
- (2) Building up of branches along British TUC/ICFTU line.<sup>175</sup>

One way towards achieving these goals, was the setting up of Trade Union Educational Committees and mini-libraries at trade union secretariats in major parts of the country, with books supplied by the TUC.<sup>176</sup>

It should be noted that Adio-Moses had been one of the beneficiaries of TUC scholarships as far back as 1947. Based on the advice of the TUC Colonial Advisory Committee, the General Council offered him a scholarship to study trade unionism and industrial relations at Ruskin College, Oxford. Adio had earlier benefitted from the TUC Educational Trust Fund which enabled him to spend sometime attending meetings, lectures and conferences in England.<sup>177</sup> Needless to say that there were other beneficiaries from other parts of the British colonies during the period.

Activities of the ICFTU was felt in all parts of colonial Africa (and indeed in independent African States) during the period. Apart from its regional office in Accra which published Africa Labour (later Labour Africa Survey), conferences and lectures were organised

from time to time, to ensure a democratic trade unionism on the continent. One of such conferences was the All-African conference on trade unionism held at Accra between January 14th and 18th 1956. According to the organisers, it was part of initiatives towards combating the Communist led WFTU activities in Africa.<sup>178</sup> This was complemented by the opening of the Labour College at Kampala, Uganda, in November 1958.<sup>179</sup>

In addition to the offer of scholarships to colonial trade unionists, the TUC General Council assisted colonial trade union movements in the provision of educational facilities for their members in the form of Ruskin College correspondence courses. These were made available to trade unionists in the West Indies, West Africa, Burma and Malaya, with the TUC meeting the cost.<sup>180</sup> The TUC also supported Extra-Mural courses at the London School of Economics and Political Science, as it did for the Ruskin College, Glasgow, Southampton and Manchester Universities.<sup>181</sup> The essence was to aid government efforts in building a sound industrial relations and labour unions as a step towards combating the Communists.

Between 1946 and 1952 seventeen Nigerians benefitted from TUC training facilities for overseas trade

unionists. Out of the fifty-two places in the General Training Courses since its inception in 1946/47, twelve were allotted to Nigeria, nine to Germany, six to India, four to the West Indies, three to Norway and Trinidad, two to Burma and Sierra Leone, and one each to the Gold Coast, Kenya, British Guiana, Malaya, Australia, Belgium, Sweden, Greece, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya and Holland.<sup>182</sup>

The private sector was not left out in the overall attempts at curtailing communism. European firms were generally apprehensive of communist infiltration of their workers' unions. In England, they formed a pressure group called the Overseas Employers Federation. Through this organisation they were able to press for more measures against communism. These included Bank of British West Africa Limited; Barclays Bank (D.C.O); British and French Bank; John Holt; Rowntree-Fry-Cadbury; UAC; Elder Dempster; Peterson Zochonis etc.<sup>183</sup> They cooperated with the Labour Department and the British TUC on ways towards building a sound industrial and labour relations.

In response to Lyttelton's request of December 9th 1953 for co-operation between the CO and the TUC, the TUC General Council met with Government officials on January 28th 1954 to work out modules of operation. It was agreed that private firms had a part to play in the development



of good industrial relations. To that end, it was suggested that the Colonial Office should meet the representatives of the Overseas Employers Federation. This was to be followed by a meeting between the three bodies.<sup>184</sup>

In a meeting in 1954 between the OEF, the CO and the British TUC, it was agreed that steps against communism in colonial labour unions should remain secret.<sup>185</sup> In a response to A.R. Mellor, the director of the United Africa Company, the Secretary of State for the Colonies stressed however that, "while it was communism which made the job so urgent ... communism itself could only be met by developing sound industrial relations".<sup>186</sup>

Leading commercial firms in Nigeria, such as, the Lever Brothers, the Leventis Group, John Holt Ltd, the United Africa Company, Van Der Bergh and Elder Dempster supported government anti-communist measures through their disposition to notable marxist labour leaders. For instance, the managements of Lever Brothers and Van Der Bergh did not recognise Wahab Goodluck as the representative of their Workers' Union during a trade dispute in 1957 partly because he was a communist.<sup>187</sup>

During the talks with the Commissioner of Labour,

management stated categorically that "all we had done was to prevent a communist from causing industrial chaos by being allowed unrestricted access to our premises".<sup>188</sup> The management of Lever Brothers and Van Der Bergh sought the support of the government in upholding their decision to restrict Goodluck and his cohorts from their premises, since, in their view, "government was serious in its declared attitude towards communism".<sup>189</sup>

The Director of Elder Dempster Lines Limited, Bruce Glasier, was also concerned about the activities of Wari Orumbie (a.k.a. Sidi Omar Khayam), who was believed to have the backing of a Trotskyist Group in Liverpool, to disrupt cordial labour relations between staff and management of Elder Dempster in Lagos.<sup>190</sup> The background to this was the seamen's strike on board 'M.V. Apapa' at Liverpool in 1957, and the subsequent dismissal of the workers by the management of Elder Dempster.<sup>191</sup> By November 1958 Orumbie had successfully staged a walk-out in Lagos which disrupted the activities of the company. Elder Dempster's tactics were to sponsor other workers to disrupt the activities of Orumbie. In this the company was successful.<sup>192</sup> To the government however, the most plausible counter to communism was the building of sound industrial relations between the management and the workers.

Further government attempts at eliminating communism can be seen in their fostering of the National Council of Trade Unions, Nigeria (NCTUN) under Cole in 1957.<sup>193</sup> The background was N.D. Watson's memorandum of 1953, where he argued that "it is no use trying to break communist leaders if there is nobody to step into their places".<sup>194</sup> He maintained that "quite apart ... from any repressive or deterrent action in the administrative, legal or propaganda fields that H.M.G. or Colonial Governments may be able to take, the fact will always remain that resistance to communist infiltration must come from within the trade union movement itself".<sup>195</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies' advice to Colonial Governments was that "it is by influence and persuasion that the work would have to be done".<sup>196</sup>

Like Nkrumah in the Ghana, Balewa's government secretly sponsored activists like Labinjoh, Adebola and Borha to join the communist dominated All-Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF).<sup>197</sup> The return of these men to ANTUF, led to the resignation of Gogo Chu Nzeribe and his cohorts from the body and the temporary declaration of ANTUF support for ICFTU.<sup>198</sup> But for Adebola this was not enough because the goal of the ICFTU at the Douala meeting was not to create another faction in the ANTUF but "to clean out the minority communist group and preserve ANTUF".<sup>199</sup>

The argument was that irrespective of the resignation of Nzeribe and his cohorts, Wahab Goodluck and Sunday Basseyy still held official positions which could only be wrested from them through an election. The solution, according to Adebola, was that "ANTUF must be completely dissolved; a new centre probably reverting to the old name of Nigerian Trade Union Congress, would be formed with the NCTUN as the nucleus; and membership would be considered individually and no union harbouring known pro-communist elements in its executive would be eligible for affiliation".<sup>200</sup>

These machinations soon paid dividends. On March 7th 1959, approximately one hundred and fifty labour leaders representing seventy unions met at Enugu, Eastern Region, to organise a new trade union organisation. With the exception of M.A.O. Imoudu, who was elected President-General of the new Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), all of the officers of the new organisation had been previously closely associated with NCTUN (an anti-communist group).<sup>201</sup> The important position of Secretary-General was captured by L.L. Borha, who defeated S.U. Basseyy, Secretary-General of ANTUF, by eighty-five votes to fifty-two.<sup>202</sup> The Deputy President-General elect was S.I. Eze, President of the Nigerian Transport Staff Union affiliate of NCTUN. O.

Zudonu was elected first Vice-President, and O. Egwunwoke as Treasurer. The former was President, and the latter, Secretary of the Marine Floating Staff Union, which was affiliated to NCTUN. It should be noted that both men had earlier visited the United States and Caux (Switzerland) as strong supporters of the Moral Re-armament Movement.<sup>203</sup>

To achieve this sweep of important offices in the TUC, supporters of NCTUN are said to have caucused both before and during the merger and adopted a common policy.<sup>204</sup> As Theo Adams, the American Consul noted, "an internal split among ANTUF representatives to the conference combined with an apathy toward ANTUF on the part of the regional leaders defeated their aspirants".<sup>205</sup> The Daily Times in its editorial of March 11th 1959, remarked that "the new TUC must look into the past and learn from the pitfalls of its predecessor, the old TUC" under Nduka Eze.<sup>206</sup> In the final analysis the constitution of the new TUC categorically stated as one of the objectives of the new labour movement that "it will safeguard against the projection of communism into the labour movement".<sup>207</sup>

#### (6.6) THE ROLE OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES:

Ideological questions did not emerge in party

politics and the wider nationalist movement in Nigeria until 1944, when the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon was formed. Although the marxists were unable to make NCNC a communist-oriented organisation, their efforts, thenceforth, were aimed at establishing themselves in strategic positions within the party. To the NCNC, a Communist Party of Nigeria may have had the right to exist. But whether a party that preached violence should enjoy existence remained a vital question. The party opted for gradualism and a constitutional route to independence as against the radicals idea of violent liberation.<sup>208</sup>

In addition, the Action Group (the most accommodating of all the major political parties) and the Northern Peoples Congress were anti-communist. This, perhaps, was based upon their significant support from traditional institutions. Both the AG and the NPC first emerged as cultural associations called "Egbe Omo Oduduwa" and "Jamatul Islamiyyah Arewa" respectively in the late 1940s. They, however, became political parties in 1951. To the marxists, both parties were conservative and could not serve their purpose (a base for militant communist action). However, this view about the Action Group later changed. By and large, the AG and NPC membership was made up of politicians who had been

schooled in the virtues of capitalism and communism. While most opted for capitalism and Fabian socialism, some who had earlier been associated with the CPGB in London, renounced communism upon returning to Nigeria. These were barristers, businessman, teachers and aristocrats. Both parties were manifestly interested in anti-communism.

In view of the governments stiff opposition to communism, the Marxists had, by mid-1950s, decided to join registered political parties. There was, however, a dilemma among the Marxist Groups concerning which of the political parties they should join. A majority of them however, preferred the Action Group. Sklar identified four reasons for this. First, the Left had recently suffered set-backs due to Azikiwe's anti-communism; second, they were impressed by the organisation and methodical planning of the Action Group; Third, their membership was concentrated in the West; and fourth, they preferred AG's federalism to the NCNC preference for a unitary system.<sup>209</sup> They were also attracted to the Action Group, because of its soft-spot for socialist intellectuals, whom it used in its "summer school" programmes. The AG used the "summer school" to teach party aims, activities and strategies. Between 1952 and 1960 the Action Group repeatedly made known its

preference for free enterprise and welfarism. To Awolowo these included, free education, health services, full employment and unemployment relief, as well as support and encouragement of peasant farmers.<sup>210</sup>

Ideological questions in the north are better understood by explaining attitude of the NPC to opposition parties, such as the Northern Elements Peoples Party (NEPU) and other minorities. The NPC leadership under Ahmadu Bello, did not mince words in its stiff opposition to communism and radicalism.<sup>211</sup> This explains his attitude towards socialists and radicals in the Northern Region during the period. Examples of radicalism include opposition to the Native Authority system in any form. An example of socialist ideology includes NEPU's declared principle of resuscitating the role of the "Talaka" in politics. In fact, the North's Native Authority was the NPC and vice versa. Thus opposition to the NA system meant opposition to the NPC. Aminu Kano perceptively summed up the situation thus: "We interpret democracy in its more traditional, radical sense, and that is the rule of the common people, the poor, the illiterate, while our opponents (the NPC) interpret it in its modern Tory sense, and that is the rule of the enlightened and prosperous minority in the supposed interest of the common people".<sup>212</sup>



Aminu Kano's position, according to Dudley, "provided the middle-class led opposition with a radical, revolutionary ideology which drew its inspiration from Marxian concepts".<sup>213</sup> Unlike marxists in the south, NEPU under Kano, aimed at restructuring the fabric of northern society, and propagated the need for wider political and economic opportunities based upon meritocracy rather than ascription.<sup>214</sup> Dudley described NEPU's ideology as "the building up of the economy on socialist lines, which the party interprets to mean the conversion of villages into co-operatives and the gradual nationalization of some assets".<sup>215</sup> The NPC, like the NCNC, did not tolerate socialism and any opposition to aristocracy, preached by NEPU and other minority groups in the north.<sup>216</sup> As it was in the south, there was no place for the marxists in the north. Unlike the southern parties however, the NPC did not accept radicals into its fold even if they were willing to shed their "red garments".<sup>217</sup>

(6.7) CONCLUSION:

In the meantime, London was also concerned about other matters such as economic, constitutional and the socio-political development of the country. While many studies have focused on these aspects, I should point out that they were accompanied by anti-communist measures. By

the late 1950s, Britain with the assistance of leading Nigerian politicians, had been able to stall the growth of communism in Nigeria. She also established practical policies on socio-political and economic development as well. What remained was how to sustain these policies in a post-independence Nigeria. The next chapter focus on these measures as a prelude to eventual transfer of power on October 1st 1960.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER SIX:

1. The emergence of communist parties and pseudo-communist organisations in some colonies was also instrumental in evolving an anti-communist policy. Stockwell, A.J. has demonstrated this in the case of Malaya (Malaysia). See, Stockwell, A.J. (ed) British Documents on the end of empire: Malaya, Parts I, II and III, op.cit;

2. Coleman, J.S. Nigeria: Background to Nationalism ... op. cit; pp.248-250. This study generally, and this chapter in particular, strives to debunk Olusanya's assumption that communism was of no significance during the colonial period in Nigeria. See, Olusanya, G.O. The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939 - 1953 (London, 1973).

3. Dunbabin, J.P.D. International Relations Since 1945: The Cold War - The Great Powers and their Allies (London, 1994); pp.62.

4. Ibid. pp.62-63.

5. Hyam, R. (ed) British Documents ... Part 1, High Policy and Administration ... op.cit; Goldsworthy, D.

(ed) British Documents ... The Conservative Government ... Part II, Politics and Administration ... op.cit;  
Rathbone, R. (ed) British Documents and the end of empire: Ghana, Part 1, ... op.cit;

6. See chapter three, particularly the section about "British Socio-Political High Policies".

7. FO371/71648/N245: Communism: Publicity in British West Africa, January 19th, 1948, PRO, London. The best scholarly account of the use of propaganda in moulding public opinion is Mackenzie, J.M. Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of the British Public Opinion, 1880 - 1960 (Manchester, 1984).

8. FO371/71648/N134: Third Force Propaganda, January 5th 1948; FO371/71648/N245: Warner to Blackburne, January 19th, 1948, PRO, London.

9. CO537/2758: Minutes by Trafford Smith and Rees-Williams, October 11th, 1948, PRO, London.

10. Ibid.

11. Owendale, R. British Defence Policy Since 1945 (Manchester, 1994).

12. Bevin's idea is best highlighted in his memorandum titled "European Policy", where he eulogised the concept of "Third World Power" or the consolidation of the West in the colonies. This can be found in FO800/435, November 6th, 1948; and CAB129/37/1, October 18th, 1949, PRO, London.

13. CO537/2758: Notes by I.H. Harris, October 18th, 1948, PRO, London. Mr. Harris was an Assistant Principal in the Colonial Office.

14. CO537/2782: Creech Jones to Officer Administering Nigeria, August 5th, 1948, PRO, London. Lucid analyses of policing and decolonisation can be found in Anderson, D. and Killingray, D. (ed) Policing and Decolonisation: Politics, Nationalism and the Police, 1917-1965 (London, 1992).

15. CO537/2782: Creech Jones to Officer Administering Nigeria, op.cit;

16. Ibid. pp.2.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid. Macpherson to Creech Jones, September 3rd,

1948.

19. C0537/2758: Communists in the colonial Empire - Secretary of State to Trafford Smith and Rees-Williams, October 11th, 1948, PRO, London.

20. C0537/2758: Notes by Harris ...; op. cit; pp.1.

21. Quoted from Hyam, R. (ed) British Documents ... Part 1, ... op. cit; pp.xxiii.

22. Ibid.

23. C0537/6569: Training of colonial service personnel in anti-communism, June 1950, PRO, London.

24. Ibid.

25. See the section about anti-communism in firms and organised labour.

26. C0537/6569: Training of colonial service personnel in anticommunism ...; op.cit;

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid. It was suggested during one of the training sections that the Gaskiya Corporation in Northern Nigeria and the East Africa Literature Bureau could be used as agencies of anti-communism through the publication of newspapers, periodicals and booklets for the African population.

30. CAB129/64: Report of Independent Committee of Inquiry into the Overseas Information Services, November 13th, 1953, PRO, London.

31. Ibid.

32. FO371/71660: Problems connected with defence against communist infiltration in the colonies - Minutes by J.K. Roberts, November 5th; Bevin to Prime Minister, November 6th, 1948, PRO, London.

33. CO537/3658: Communist influence in West Africa, July 14th, 1948, PRO, London; Stallard, P. "The Chief Secretary as the Man in the Middle", in Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. (ed) Africa in the Colonial Period - The Transfer of Power... op.cit; pp.60-66.

34. Sherwood, M. Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad ...  
op.cit; pp.182.

35. Daily Times (Nigeria), November 11th, 1948; Also,  
C0537/3653: Political Intelligence Reports - West Africa,  
Report on communism, December 16th, 1948, PRO, London.

36. Daily Times, op. cit;

37. Hyam, R. British Documents ... Part 1 ... op.cit;  
pp.xxxvii.

38. Williams, G. "Nigeria: A Political Economy",  
Williams, G. (ed) Nigeria: Economy and Society (London,  
1976), pp.28.

39. Ibid. Other efforts made in the 1950s towards  
Africanisation (Nigerianisation) of the civil service  
were: (a) The Phillipson-Adebo Commission which reviewed  
the Foot report of 1950. See, Nigeria: The  
Nigerianisation of the civil service - A Review of Policy  
Machinery, by Sydney Phillipson and S.O. Adebo (Lagos,  
1954); (b) The appointment of Sir Phillipson in 1957 as  
a "Nigerianisation officer" by Sir James Robertson.  
Phillipson was replaced with Francis Nwokedi after  
criticism by members of the House of Representative that



a Nigerian ought to occupy such a position. It should be noted that this was purely an advisory position in the Federal Public Service Commission, the Scholarship Board and the Establishment branch of the Chief Secretary's office; (c) On March 25th 1958, Balewa inaugurated a five-man committee of the House of Representatives to study the problem of Nigerianisation and make recommendations. See, Nigeria: Views of the Government of the Federation on the Interim Report of the committee on Nigerianisation - House of Representative sessional paper no.7, 1958 (Lagos, 1958).

40. CO537/5782: Criminal Code Legislation 1950 - Introduction, January 24th, 1950.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid. Macpherson to the Secretary of State. The background to this was the activities of Eze's Nigerian Federation of Labour and the Zikists' incitement of disaffection among members of the Police and Prison warders.

44. Elias, T.O. Nigeria: The Development of its Laws and

Constitution (London, 1967).

45. Olusanya, G.O. "Constitutional Developments in Nigeria 1861 - 1960"; Tamuno, T.N. "British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century", both in Obaro, I. (ed) Groundwork of Nigerian History op.cit; pp.529-534 and 393-409 respectively.

46. CO537/3557: Nigeria Political Situation, November 27th, 1948, PRO, London.

47. Pearce, R.D. "Governors, Nationalists and the Constitution..." op.cit. pp.304. Mr. Hugh Elliott, C.M.G. C.O.N; corroborated this view when during an informal talk with me in September 1996 at the MRM office, Victoria, London. He was a personal secretary to Azikiwe between 1949 and 1960, and a member of the MRM.

48. See, Okoye, M. A Letter to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe ... op.cit;

49. CO537/3649: Macpherson to the Secretary of State, December 26th, 1948, PRO, London.

50. Mss292/File 966.3/1: John Macpherson, Governor Designate, Nigeria, to Adio-Moses, March 29th 1948,

Edingburg; Resume of interview between Sir John Macpherson, Governor Designate of Nigeria and Adio-Moses, Secretary-General, Nigeria TUC, Trafalgar House, Waterloo Place, London, March 6th 1948, TUC Registry Files, Modern Record Centre op.cit;

51. Co537/3649: Macpherson to Secretary of State, op.cit; pp.3-4.

52. CO537/6797: Political Intelligence Summaries, February 28th 1951, pp.4-5.

53. "AMCONSUL, Lagos to Department of State, Washington D.C. - Governor's comment on communist activity in Nigeria", File745H.001/1-1551, February 15th, 1951, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA.

54. Ibid.

55. CO537/6587: Working Party for colonial information policy committee, March 23rd, 1950, PRO, London.

56. CO537/6585: Circular Despatch, March 9th, 1949, PRO, London.

57. Ibid. Memorandum - The development of broadcasting in

the colonies - Finance, pp.96-97.

58. C0537/6587: Working Party ...; op. cit;

59. C0537/6585: Memorandum ...; op. cit;

60. Ibid. pp.40.

61. C0537/6782: Communism in the colonies, West Africa, 1951, PRO, London.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid. It seems that both "Friends of Freedom" and "Freedom Bookshop" acted as fronts for the Public Relations Department in its crusade against communism in Nigeria.

64. Group interview with the following former activists: Hugh Elliot, C.M.G. C.O.N; Russell Carpenter; Jeffrey Craig; Jim Baynard-Smith and Eric Clark at MRM office, Victoria, London, November 27th 1996. For general discussion about MRM's role in government, see, Johnston, D. and Sampson, C. (ed) Religion, The Missing Dimensions of Statecraft (Oxford, 1994).

65. Padmore, G. Pan-Africanism or Communism ... op.cit;  
pp.366.

66. Mss292/File 966.3/10: Superior Strategy defeats  
Communist Plan - Nigerian T.U. Movement Finds Unity - MRA  
Information Service, vol.8, no.193, 1959, Caux,  
Switzerland, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

67. Ibid. pp.367.

68. CO537/6781: Communism in the colonies - West African  
Governors Meeting, January 23rd - 24th, 1951, PRO,  
London.

69. Ibid. Extracts from minutes of meeting of West  
African Governors in Accra, January 23rd - 24th, 1951.

70. Ibid.

71. Donaldson, F. The British Council: The First Fifty  
Years (London, 1984).

72. Royle, T. Winds of Change: The End of Empire in  
Africa (London, 1996); pp.106.

73. Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. (ed) ... The Transfer of Power...

op.cit; pp.102; Symonds, R. Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause? (Revised Edition, Oxford, 1991); pp.97.

74. TUC Annual Reports 1947-1959, TUC Collections...  
op.cit;

75. Mss292/File 966.3/1: Oxford University Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies - Report on Mr. J.A. Lean's Visit on Behalf of the Delegacy to Northern Nigeria, July 25th-August 1st 1948; Visits to Enugu, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Calabar, May-July 1948, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

76. CO537/6781: Communism in the colonies - Extracts from minutes of meeting of West African Governors, op.cit;  
Also "Freedom", MRM Archives, Victoria, London.

77. Biobaku, S. When We Were Young (Ibadan, 1992).

78. CO968/353: Undesirable Publication Policy, 1952 - 1953, Extract from minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet official committee on communism held at the Cabinet office, September 24th, 1952.

79. Ibid. Trafford Smith to N.D. Watson, January 16th, 1953.

80. Ibid.

81. The marriage seemed threatened when nationalists began to demand more concessions a few years after the constitution was promulgated. Both internal and external factors made constitutional change inevitable. In February 1953, the Eastern regional ministers questioned the power of the Eastern House of Assembly to dissolve it without applying the rules contained in Section 133 (b) of the Order-in Council 1951 which stipulated that the revocation of the appointment of any minister could only be decided by secret ballot. In March 1953, Anthony Enahoro, an Action Group member, moved a motion in the House of Representatives for self-government in 1956. Attempts to seek supporters for this led to riots in Kano in May 1953, where fifty people lost their lives and over two hundred were wounded. The contemplation of further constitutional changes in the Gold Coast during this period, did not go down well with Macpherson because nationalists in Nigeria would use it as reason for demanding more concessions. As Macpherson noted in response to Arden-Clarke's proposal (i.e. further devolution of power to Africans and the elimination of the ex-officio ministers): "If Nigeria were small and homogeneous one might, conceivably, in spite of the danger to the decent folk, to traditional authority and

to the country as a whole, give in to demands for further concessions such as those proposed for the Gold Coast ... If a clamour for further concessions is raised by the South I believe that the North would seriously consider withdrawing from the whole set-up". See CO554/298: Sir John Macpherson to Sir T. Lloyd, January 18th 1952. While subsequent events proved Macpherson right, Gold Coast advancement in 1953 seemed inevitable. See Rathbone, R, (ed) Ghana ... Part II, op.cit; pp.271. The essence of this narrative is to highlight that both internal and external factors were responsible for constitutional change in Nigeria during this period. And, between July 30th 1953 and January 1954, British officials and Nigerian politicians fashioned a new constitution which laid the basis of a Federal system for the country. This was the Lyttelton constitution of 1954.

82. CO986/353: Extract from semi-official letter from M.J. Bennion (a senior colonial official in charge of security organisation and intelligence in Northern Nigeria) to S.H. Evans (Head, Information Department in the Colonial Office), July 23rd, 1953.

83. Ibid. Extract from Minutes of the Nigerian Central Coordinating Committee held on April 8th, 1953. Although the papers of the Special Branch of the Nigeria Police



are currently classified as secret, Sir Bryan Sherwood Smith (Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria) has shed light on the activities and importance of the unit. According to him, "Our security organization was built by Victor Collison and perfected by Maurice Bennion and Trevor Clark". He noted that, the liaison between the administration and the police (Special Branch) was cordial. He revealed that John O'Sullivan, head of the Special Branch, had regular meetings with him to discuss security and intelligence matters. See, Smith, B.S. But Always as Friends... op.cit; pp.307-308.

84. CO986/353: Extract from the minutes of the 5th meeting of the Nigerian Central Coordinating Committee, July 15th, 1953.

85. CO554/604: S.H. Evans to C.Y. Carstairs, May 22nd, 1953, PRO, London.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid. Also, Laws of Nigeria, nos.75, 1955, Government publication, Lagos, 1956; pp.B181-182. This might have been a response to Tarkwa Book Agency's distribution of 2,000 copies of the "Soviet Weekly" which had earlier arrived from the UK. See, "Amcongen, Lagos to D.O.S. -

File 745H.001/1-656, op.cit; pp.2. Much is yet to be known about the activities of this bookshop.

88. CO554/604: S.H. Evans to C.Y. Carstairs, op. cit;

89. CO537/4626: Political development of Nigeria, December 31st, 1949, PRO, London.

90. Ibid. Macpherson to Secretary of State for colonies, September 30th, 1949.

91. CO538/303/16: Immigration Policy 1950, September 4th, 1950, PRO, London; pp.3.

92. CP/CENT/INT/20/01: The Nigerian Commission 1950-1953, Eze to Margot, January 6th 1953. Also, talk with Anthony Kirk-Greene, Oxford, March 1995. Kirk-Greene was a colonial official in Nigeria and is a leading expert on the colonial history of Nigeria. He is currently an Emeritus Senior Fellow at St. Anthony's College, Oxford.

93. FO371/80125: Gorsuch to Cotton, July 18th 1950, PRO, London.

94. CO537/6704: WFTU activities 1951, PRO, London.

95. West Africa, May 25th, 1959.
96. "Adams to the Department of State", File745H.005-559, May 5th, 1959, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA; Tingwey, P.F. "Communism and Cameroon", The Kamerun Student, 4, May 1965; Levine, V.T. "Cameroon, 1955 - 1962", Condit, D. and Cooper, B.H. (eds) Challenge and Response...op.cit; pp.239 -269; The African Communist, Editorial Comment: "African Martyr - Ernest Quandie", African Communist, 46, Third Quarter, 1971; Joseph, R.A. Radical Nationalism in Cameroon ... op.cit;
97. "AMCONGEN, Lagos to the Department of State", File745H.001/8-1453, August 1953; pp.5.
98. "AMCONGEN, Lagos to the Department of State", File745H.00/8-251, op. cit; While I have discussed the issue as it relates to Funmilayo Kuti in chapter four, I should note that, Robertson/Balewa's government also prevented Michael Imoudu and Sunday Basseyy from attending a communist conference in Prague in late 1958.
99. Daily Service (Nigeria) March 10th, 1951.
100. CO554/1998: Labour Matters in Nigeria 1957 - 1959; Extracts from the Federal Intelligence Committee No.5/58,

Lagos.

101. C0537/7172: J.R. Cotton to M. Phillips, April 19th, 1951, PRO, London.

102. Ibid. Macpherson to Secretary of State for colonies, March 24th, 1951.

103. Ibid. Chancery, British Embassy, Egypt, to Africa Department, Foreign Office, June 22nd, 1951.

104. Ibid. Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor, Nigeria, July 16th, 1951. By the time Gamel Abdul Nasser became the Head of State in Egypt, and subsequent to his pro-Eastern position, James Robertson and Balewa intensified efforts aimed at preventing Nigerian youth from visiting Egypt. In fact Balewa had by early 1958 begun to present himself as an alternative to Nasser and Nkrumah on African issues.

105. Mellanby, however, queried the success of anti-communism amongst students at the University College. To him, the influx of pro-Western publications only heightened students' anti-American position. See Mellanby, K. The Birth of Nigeria's University (London, 1958); pp.223f.

106. Adi, H. West African Students Union and Nationalism... op.cit; pp.234-235.

107. CO537/6783: Communism in West Africa - Appointments to University Colleges, 1951 - 1952, PRO, London.

108. Ibid. The background to this was the appointment of two communists in 1948 and 1950 to the teaching staff. J.W. Harris and J. Harper were appointed before the introduction of the vetting system and the Immigration Ordinance of 1950.

109. Ibid. Minutes of September 19th, 1950. In fact, Chike Obi was one of the first Colonial Government sponsored students to the United Kingdom.

110. Ibid. Minutes of November 2nd, 1951.

111. Ibid. Macpherson to Secretary of State for colonies, James Griffiths, May 1st, 1951.

112. Ibid. Manchester Guardian, October 28th 1956.

113. The Labour Party Annual Report 1947-1948, "Campaign Against Communism", (London, 1948), pp.205-208.

114. Ibid. pp.208.
115. TUC Annual Report 1948, TUC Collections op.cit;  
pp.305 and 532; House of Commons Debate [448] March 15th  
1948, pp.1703-1708; Rathbone, R. Documents on the end of  
Empire... Part II, op.cit; pp.81.
116. House of Commons Debate [448] op.cit; pp.1703.
117. Ibid. pp.1703-1704.
118. Ibid. pp.1704-1706; 3392-3398.
119. Ibid. pp.3424.
120. Ibid. pp.1299-1300.
121. The Labour Party Annual Report 1947-1948 op.cit;  
pp.208.
122. House of Lords Report, vol.166, no.10, March 29th  
1950.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.

125. Rathbone, R. British Documents... Part II op.cit; pp.79.

126. Ibid. Also CO554/371: Sir T. Lloyd to Sir C. Arden-Clarke, January 4th 1954.

127. Ibid. I refer to both sources in note 126 above.

128. Rathbone, op.cit. pp.75.

129. Ibid. Also CO554/371: Sir C. Arden-Clarke to W.L. Gorell Barnes, December 4th 1953.

130. Rathbone, op.cit; pp.82.

131. Ibid. Also PREM 11/1367: Cabinet Memorandum by Lyttelton, February 18th 1954.

132. CO537/6787: Macpherson to Secretary of State...  
op.cit;

133. Ibid. Also, see the section about anti-communism in firm and organised labour for more information.

134. Daily Times (Nigeria); Daily Service (Nigeria) and the West African Pilot of October 20th, 1954; Also,

"AMCONGEN, Lagos to the Department of State -Ban on employment of communist in Nigerian Public services", File745H.14/10-2254, October 22nd, 1954, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA.

135. Federation of Nigeria Official Gazette, nos.57 of October 14th, 1954, Government Publishing House, Lagos, 1955.

136. Ibid.

137. See, Daily Service (Nigeria), October 20th, 1954. For instance, in July 1957, the last colonial Chief Secretary in Nigeria reiterated that, "... this policy [anti-communism] has been followed voluntarily by a number of commercial organisations ...". See, Osoba, S.O. "The Economic Foundations of Nigeria's Foreign Policy During the First Republic, 1960 - 1965", in Akinjogbin, I.A. and Osoba, S.O. (eds) Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History (Ile Ife, 1980), pp.226.

138. Daily Service, October 16th, 1954.

139. West African Pilot, October 15th, 1954.

140. Adi, H. "West Africans and the Communist Party",



op.cit; pp.9.

141. "Amcongen ... to D.O.S.; File 745H.001/1-656, op.cit; pp.2.

142. CO1039/34: Nigerian Council of Ministers Meeting, December 29th, 1954, PRO, London; pp.12-14. The Council of Ministers during this period consists of Sir John Macpherson (Governor); F.R.A. Grey (Ag. Chief Secretary); A.R.W. Robertson (Financial Secretary); Hon. Shettima Kashim (Education); Hon. A.T. Balewa (Transport); Hon. Mohamradu Ribadu (Mines and Power); S.L. Akintola (Health); M.T. Mbu (Labour); F.O. Awosika (Works); R.A. Njoku (Commerce and Industries); A. Prest (Communications); and Sir A. Aderemi (the Ooni of Ile-Ife) as minister without portfolio. The policy was also supported by the regional governments hence it was a national decision.

143. "McLaughlin to Department of State", File745H.00/6-155, June 1st, 1956, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA.

144. "Amcongen, Lagos to D.O.S. - East Bans Communist Teachers", File745H.00/6-155, June 1st, 1955, NARA, College Park, USA; pp.1.

145. Mss292/File 966.3/6: Anunobi to Tewson, July 27th 1956, TUC Registry Files op.cit; Anunobi was the National Secretary of Mercantile Unions of Nigeria and Cameroons during the period. He was a strong anti-communist and influential labour leader.

146. Nigeria - Department of Labour Annual Report 1954 (Lagos, 1955), NAI.

147. CP/CENT/INT/48/01: The Working Class Movement and the need for a Marxist Party, 1954, NMLHA op.cit; pp.16.

148. Ibid.

149. "Hunt to the Department of State", File745H.11/00/11-2157, October 8th, 1957, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA. In view of many official documents and newspaper reports, we can now say that the biographer of Dr. Michael Okpara distorted the history of the relationship between Okpara and Balewa on one hand, and Okpara and Macpherson on the other hand. He failed to distinguish between official policy on the employment of Nigerians trained behind the Iron Curtain and Okpara's preference in the 1960s for "pragmatic socialism". He also distorted the background to Dr. Majekodunmi's mission to Russia in order to bail out stranded Nigerian

students who had travelled to the Soviet Union without passports. Moreover, Okpara was in fact a party to the official policy on the ban of the employment of communists in the Federal and Regional Public Services. Okpara's interest in employing Meke Anagbogu, a former Zikist and a Marxist, was entirely a different matter which needed security clearance. See, Offodile, C. Dr. M.I. Okpara: A Biography (Enugu, 1980), pp.72 - 77.

150. Tokunboh, M.A. Labour Movements in Nigeria ...  
op.cit; pp.25-26.

151. Mss292/File 966.3/1: Nigeria, Correspondence/TU  
Development 1941-8, TUC Registry File op.cit;

152. Ibid.

153. Tokunboh op.cit; pp.26; TUC Colonial Advisory  
Committee File 1, 1948-49, December 15th 1948, pp.2; File  
2, 1948-49, April 21st 1949, pp.6, TUC Collections,  
University of North London. Other beneficiaries includes:  
T.O. Sangonuga, A.F.A. Awolana, J.W. Wamuo and Abubakar  
Liman Umaru. See Mss292/File 966.3/4: Winterbottom to  
Curry, March 4th 1952, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

154. Tokunboh op.cit; pp.26. Adio-Moses also benefitted

from the US Foreign Leader Programme in 1951. See Mss292/File 966.3/2: Adio-Moses to Walter Hood, April 27th 1951, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

155. Ibid. See, TUC Annual Report 1953... op.cit; pp.212; TUC Annual Report 1956... op.cit; pp.215.

156. C0554/329: Departmental Labour Conferences, Nigeria 1953, PRO.

157. Tokunboh, M.A. Labour Movements ... op.cit; pp.117.

158. Mss292/File 966.3/2: Curry to Tewson, March 23rd 1949, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

159. Tokunboh op.cit; pp.118.

160. C0537/6704: Oldenboek to James Griffiths, January 8th, 1950, PRO, London.

161. Mss292/File 966.3/2: Extracts from letter received from G.B. Lynch, Trade Union Officer, Labour Department, Lagos, Nigeria, January 21st 1950; Lynch to Tewson, May 16th 1950; TUC Registry Files op.cit;

162. Ibid. Cutting from The Times (London), November

12th, 1950.

163. CO537/6704: Sir Vincent Tewson to S of S, James Griffiths, November 20th, 1950.

164. Ibid.

165. See "Fortnightly Newsletter", File745H.00/2-2552, February 11th - 23rd, 1952, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA.

166. CO537/6704: Secretary of State for colonies to O.A.G of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Gambia and the Sierra Leone, December 5th, 1950, PRO, London.

167. Ibid. O.A.G to S of S, December 16th, 1950.

168. Ibid. Watson to Parry, January 13th, 1951.

169. Ibid. James Griffiths to O.A.G (West Africa), January 16th, 1951.

170. Ibid. ICFTU delegation to West Africa, 1950/1951, PRO, London. Also, Mss292/File 966.3/3: Extracts from report of visit to Nigeria by Mr.E. Parry, C.E. Ponsonby and Dalgleish, to James Griffith, July-August 1950, TUC

Registry Files op.cit;

171. West Africa, Editorial, London, January 27th, 1951; Colonial Advisory Committee Minute (CACM), File 2 (1950-51), February 21st 1951, pp.7; File 3, May 10th 1951, pp.9-11; File 4, September 21st 1951, pp.13; TUC Annual Report 1952, pp.174.

172. See Carew, A. "Charles Millard, A Canadian in the International Labour Movement: A Case Study of the ICFTU 1955-1961", Labour/Le travail, 37 (Spring 1996); pp.121-148.

173. CO537/6704: Smith to Gorsuch, April 2nd, 1951.

174. Ibid. At the peak of his career, Adio-Moses rose to the position of Labour Officer in the Western Region in 1958.

175. Mss292/File 966.3/2: Nigeria 1948-51, Walter Hood to Curry, May 7th 1951; TUC Registry Files op.cit;

176. Mss292/File 966.3/4: Nigeria 1951-53, TUC Registry Files op.cit; Works of the Trade Union Education Committee was supported by the Commissioner of Labour, A.H. Couzens. See, Couzens to Barltrop, November 20th

1951.

177. The Christian Science Monitor (Boston) had earlier reported that the basic drive of the ICFTU initiatives "is for free labor group". See July 2nd 1956 edition. Also, Manchester Guardian, November 20th 1956; TUC Annual Report 1957, TUC Collections... op.cit;

178. African Labour, no.5, January 1959; pp.2.

179. TUC Annual Report 1950, TUC Collections... op.cit; pp.155.

180. TUC Annual Report 1951, TUC Collections... op.cit; pp.223.

181. TUC Annual Report 1952, TUC Collections... op.cit; pp.154.

182. TUC Annual Report 1954, TUC Collections... op.cit; pp.228.

183. Mss292/File 966.3/6: Nigeria - Background notes for meeting with Overseas Employers, February 1956, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

184. C0537/6704: Smith to Gorsuch, op. cit;

185. Goldsworthy, D. (ed) The Conservative Government ... Part III. op.cit; pp.374.

186. Ibid.

187. C0554/1998: Labour Matters in Nigeria, 1957-1959, PRO, London. Also, West African Pilot, February 18th, 1949.

188. Ibid. I refer to both sources in note 187 above.

189. C0554/1998: Labour Matters ...; op. cit;

190. Ibid.

191. Ibid. Also, see "Labour disputes on the M.V. Apapa, 1957-1959", PRO, London; "Board of Inquiry into the Trade Dispute Between the Elder Dempster Lines Limited and the Nigerian Union of Seamen Report, 1959", Government Publications, Lagos, 1959; I acknowledged the assistance of Michele Powell of the US Department of State Library, Washington, D.C. for making a copy available. My deduction from the "Report" is that the issue was purely a trade dispute. No where was communism ever mentioned by



the panel of inquiry. To the management of Elder Dempster, the event was stage-managed by the communist labour leaders. Perhaps, this justifies the view that anti-communism became an instrument used by colonial officials, European firms and Nigerian politicians to pursue other interests.

192. Ibid. I refer to both sources in note 191 above. Also, "AMCONGEN to the Department of State -Labour dispute involving W.O. Goodluck, Secretary of Lever Brothers and Van Der Bergh workers' union", File845H.062/7-3158, July 31st 1958, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA; Daily Times (Nigeria), July 19th 1958; and West African Pilot, July 23rd, 1958.

193. "AMCONGEN to the Department of State - Status of ANTUF/NCTUN struggle for control of Nigerian Trade Union Movement", File845H.062/6-2658, June 26th,1958, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA.

194. C0859/748: Communism in the Colonial Territories and the Trade Unions -Memorandum by N.D. Watson, November 9th, 1953.

195. Ibid.

196. Ibid. Draft CO record of a discussion between Mr. Lyttelton and the representatives of the TUC and the Overseas Employers Federation, July 12th, 1954. Influence and persuasion had been used to resolve the Malaya labour crises earlier in 1954. As the Secretary of State for the Colonies noted in the draft, "the situation in Malaya had been extremely dangerous a little time ago but the talks which had taken place with Mr. Narayanon and Mr. Ascoli were largely responsible for the happy outcome ...".

197. Rathbone, R. (ed) Ghana, Part II ... op.cit; pp.75-83.

198. "Labour: Further developments in Nigerian Trade Union Movement", File845H.06/8-2057, August 20th, 1957, College Park, Maryland, USA.

199. Ibid.

200. Ibid.

201. "AMCONSUL, Lagos to D.O.S.: Conference of Nigerian labor leaders creates new national organisation", File 845H.06/3-2359, March 23rd, 1959, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA.

202. Ibid. Also, Egboh, E.O. "Central Trade Unionism in Nigeria (1941-1966), Geneve Afrique, vol.vi, no.2...  
op.cit;

203. "AMCONSUL, Lagos to D.O.S. : Conference of Nigerian Labor Leaders..." op.cit; .

204. CP/CENT/INT/20/01: The N.E.P.U. Party of Northern Nigeria - Declaration of Principles, n.d. NMLHA op.cit;

205. Ibid.

206. Ibid.

207. Daily Times (Nigeria), March 11th, 1959.

208. "Constitution of Trade Union Congress of Nigeria", File845H.062/6-3059, June 30th, 1959, NARA, College Park, Maryland, USA; "ICFTU Collections: HD6868 - Nigeria (General)", TUC Collections op.cit;; "Superior Strategy Defeats Communist Plan - Nigerian T.U. Movement Finds Unity", MRA Information Service, vol.8, no.193, 1959, Caux, Switzerland, TUC Registry Files op.cit;

209. Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties... op.cit;  
pp.270.

210. Ibid. pp.270-271.

211. Ibid.

212. "The Action Group: Report of the fourth annual congress", Calabar, Eastern Region, April 28th - May 2nd, 1958, Sopolu Library, Ikenne, Ogun State, Nigeria. Also, Zachernuk, P. "Awolowo's Economic Thought in Historical Perspective", pp.276-313; Alade, C.A. "From a Bourgeois To Social Democrat: A study in the Evolution of Awolowo's Concept of Ideology", pp.318-319; in Oyelaran, O.O. et al (eds) Obafemi Awolowo: The End of An Era?... op.cit;

213. Bello, A. My Life ... op.cit; pp.239. Also see, Paden, J.N. Ahmadu Bello - Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria (London, 1986).

214. Quoted from Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties ... op. cit; pp.372.

215. Dudley, B.J. Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria (London, 1968), pp.169.

216. Sklar, R. Nigerian Political Parties ... op.cit; pp.366-376; Dudley, B.J. Parties and Politics ... op.cit; pp.169.

217. Dudley, B.J. Parties and Politics ... op. cit;  
Feinstein, A. African Revolutionary: The Life and Times  
of Nigeria's Aminu Kano (London, 1992).

CHAPTER SEVENON THE EVE OF THE TRANSFER OF POWER -  
ATTEMPTS AT A SUSTAINABLE ANTI-COMMUNISM(7.1) INTRODUCTION:

Between 1958 and 1960, British officials pursued policies aimed at sustaining various anti-communist measures implemented since the 1940s. Inasmuch as they were concerned with the exodus of British personnel from Nigeria, efforts were geared to drafting a Technical Co-operation Scheme, a Defence Agreement, ensuring the maintenance of economic links, Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth, and her adherence to a non-neutralist foreign policy after independence. These measures were initiated as part of an effort at maintaining and sustaining Western powers' position in Nigeria after independence.

The background to this was the Soviet Union's new perception of Africa in 1958 and afterwards as well as the need for Britain to show her Allies that she was not leaving a stone untouched. The Soviets' new vision was

based upon economic and technical aid to newly independent African nations in order to encourage their support in world affairs.<sup>1</sup> By late 1958 therefore, British officials had concretized measures to be taken in terms of Britain's future relationships with emerging African states. Britain during this period was interested in retaining the sympathy and support of newly independent states of Africa as well as preventing them from being subverted by Soviet influence.<sup>2</sup>

By the beginning of 1959 the Cabinet African (Official) Committee was confronted with analysing various reports and memoranda concerning the future of British relationships with her colonies. Of note were the Colonial Office memorandum on "Future Constitutional Development in the Colonies"; the Foreign Office's "Africa: The Next Ten Years"; and NATO's "Report on Communist Penetration in Africa".<sup>3</sup> The Committee met on January 6th 1959 to consider the CO memorandum about "Future Constitutional Development in the Colonies". While the members agreed that constitutional development in Nigeria had prepared her for independence within the Commonwealth, they noted that "all the governments in Nigeria have publicly condemned international communism as a threat to their own freedom".<sup>4</sup>

At another meeting the Committee noted that, "None of the leaders of the majority parties have sympathy with communism and none of them, except perhaps in his heart of hearts Dr. Azikiwe, advocates a purely 'neutralist' policy".<sup>5</sup> The assurance of a non-neutralist policy in world affairs, membership of the Sterling Area and the Commonwealth, was to be complemented by a Technical Co-operation Scheme and a Defence Agreement. The essence of all these was to deny the USSR any advantage in post-independence Nigeria.

(7.2) NON-NEUTRALIST POLICY:

In 1959 officials were concerned about Nigeria's future role as an ally.<sup>6</sup> Colonial officials maintained that so long as Balewa and his peers remained at the helm of Nigerian affairs there was nothing to worry about. They were satisfied with the outcome of the December 1959 elections which gave the NPC a slight majority in the parliament thereby making it a senior partner in the coalition with the NCNC.

Earlier in March, Northern self-government had been granted, the Eastern and Western regions having been self-governing since 1957. Balewa's success in the December 12th 1959 elections, seems to have increased the



confidence of British officials.<sup>7</sup> They noted that Balewa had displayed remarkable wisdom and statesmanship in his capacity as a Minister, Leader of Government Business, and later as Prime Minister.<sup>8</sup>

The policy of non-neutralism was predicated upon Nigeria's alignment with the Western powers in world affairs. Britain could not allow Nigeria to become non-aligned in world politics because of her strategic location, size and potential. The Cabinet Committee concluded at one of its meetings that;

Neutralist policies were not at present in favour in Nigeria; instead there was a strong pro-Commonwealth and anti-Communist feeling and it was unlikely that a substantial change in this outlook would occur, provided that the policies of the West were not such as to be completely unacceptable to Nigerian opinion.<sup>9</sup>

While the British had some reservations about Azikiwe,<sup>10</sup> they were confident about the support and solidarity of other leading nationalists. These men included regional premiers, ministers and senior party-men who were committed to the prevention of communist infiltration.

Part of the enthusiasm for non-neutralism as part of

Nigeria's post-independence foreign policy was the result of NATO's Report of 1959 which suggested that colonial powers, as members of NATO, should ensure the support of their old colonies against the Eastern bloc.<sup>11</sup> It however added that "it would be counter-productive to attempt to prevent Soviet contacts by force, it would be better to convince the Africans that the new colonialist was the U.S.S.R. and let them experience the fact at first hand".<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, Britain recognized the fact that economic, commercial, cultural and emotional bonds with her old colonies was to remain intact. An editorial in The Times (London) summed up the situation as "a game of diplomatic ju-jitsu which the contestant using the least force will win".<sup>13</sup>

### (7.3) BALEWA AND NON-NEUTRALIST POLICY:

It is notable that the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was more emphatic about non-neutrality than other politicians. He was the champion of non-neutrality in Anglophone Africa. In his reported conversation with Kwame Nkrumah in February 1959, Balewa emphatically voiced his admiration of the West and the need for non-neutrality among Africans as a way of

consolidating the long relationship with Britain.<sup>14</sup> He not only pledged mutual support in the defence field with the United Kingdom, but also, showed no wish to adopt a neutralist line in foreign affairs after independence.<sup>15</sup> As he reported, "I told him categorically that we were going to stand by the West and that we could be full partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations, that we disliked neutrality and did not believe in it".<sup>16</sup>

While Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth could be seen as a fait accompli, the government took steps toward delaying the opening of a Russian Embassy in Nigeria.<sup>17</sup> The politics of delaying the opening of the USSR's Embassy in Nigeria began in January 1960 when the Foreign Office outlined strict measures that should be followed before permission would be granted to any country wishing to open an embassy in Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently accreditation and opening of an embassy was based upon a Foreign Office memorandum. This, perhaps, was responsible for the USSR's late application for opening an embassy which was only made after October 1960 in the hope that the new regime would grant permission more easily.

They were wrong. Balewa sought the advice of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

about the steps to be taken. As he wrote, "the Russians were being insistent about opening an embassy, and I put them off by saying that it was a question of applying in the usual way".<sup>19</sup> Balewa had taken the line that applications would be dealt with in the following order of priority: Commonwealth countries; countries already having offices in Lagos; and new applications according to their merits.<sup>20</sup>

In a conversation with Balewa, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs noted that the government had taken the necessary steps to stall the USSR's application.<sup>21</sup> This explains why the USSR had no embassy in Nigeria until 1961. Nigeria on the other hand, was represented in the USSR by the British Embassy until 1962 when she opened her first mission in Moscow, the first in the Eastern bloc.

On the eve of independence, Sir James Robertson relinquished the offices of internal affairs, police, finance and economic development to Balewa and his ministers. Subsequently, the office of the Governor-General was given to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. As part of the training process, Robertson had allowed Balewa to read foreign and diplomatic papers, as well as those on defense.<sup>22</sup> According to Robertson, this prepared Balewa

for the task of handling foreign and defense matters.<sup>23</sup>

Adequate machinery and personnel were also set up at the External Affairs Department in Lagos, and Nigeria's office at the United Nations in New York. The administrators at both offices had been trained in the United Kingdom and the United States as well as in other British Embassies. They were men whom senior officials could vouch for when it came to security and the continuity of non-neutralist policy in foreign affairs.

Beginning in 1957, Reginald Barrett, a Briton in charge of the Nigerian Liaison Office in Washington, was asked to train six mid-career Nigerians who later became Assistant Secretaries in the External Affairs Department on completion of their training. About forty in all were selected to undergo training in Washington and other British embassies. They were tutored in international relations, protocol and diplomatic procedures by officials of the British Embassy and the United States' Department of State. These men also offered a course on "Issues in International Relations" at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.<sup>24</sup>

One of the most important figures in the External Affairs Department during this period was L.O.V. Anionwu,

who first acted as a liaison officer for Balewa's government in London. In his recommendation on July 4th 1960, the Director of the Imperial Defence College, London, Sir Robert Scott, suggested to the Foreign Office that Anionwu would be a reliable candidate for the position of a Permanent Under-Secretary of Defence and External Affairs in independent Nigeria. Anionwu had taken a series of courses on diplomacy, protocol and international politics, and had imbibed the spirit of anti-communism while in the Imperial Defence College. Sir Robert Scott remarked that Anionwu was:

... very friendly ... African department could, I am sure, speak to him with complete freedom about Foreign Office thinking on Nigeria ... it would be a very good investment and well worth the trouble.<sup>25</sup>

It was not surprising, therefore, that Anionwu became an adviser and Under-Secretary to Balewa on Defense and Foreign Affairs on the eve of independence.

On the other hand, both Ifeagwu and Aig-Imoukhuede were posted to the Nigerian Permanent Mission in the United Nations in 1959 to study western diplomatic protocol. Ifeagwu had earlier served with the U.K. Consulate General in Washington for three years, before being appointed to the United Nations. Aig-Imoukhuede had

worked at both the Nigerian Daily Times and Sunday Times between 1955 and 1957. Between 1957 and 1958, he was the editor of Federal Nigeria, a publication of the Ministry of Research and Information. His success there, as the government's image maker was, perhaps, responsible for his being recommended for the UN job, by Kola Balogun, the Minister for Research and Information.

Suffice it to say that the Nigerian Foreign Service was built on pro-Western ideological premises. The Robertson/Balewa's government was careful in its appointment and secondment of personnel to the nascent External Affairs Department. In fact, appointments or secondment into the External Affairs Department (later Ministry of External and Commonwealth Affairs) since the 1950s were based upon the ideological orientation of the individuals. This became glaring from 1957 onwards, when non-career diplomats were seconded from the civil service to the External Affairs Department.

It should not be surprising therefore, that, men like Nwokedi, Simeon Adebo, N.A. Martins, Anionwu, Osakwe, Ogbu, G.M. Garba and Iyalla (all civil servants); and Mohammadu Ngileruma, Baba Gana, Abdul Maliki, J.T. Yesufu, Bello Malabu, Ignatius Durlong and Sanni Kontagora (all party stalwarts), were appointed into

various positions in the Foreign Service. These were the men who executed Balewa's non-neutralist policies.

(7.4) ANGLO-NIGERIAN DEFENCE PACT:

Perhaps, one of the ways by which Britain satisfied her Western Allies was the consummation and realisation of a defence pact with her colonies. In the case of Nigeria (as in other parts of the empire), the idea of a defence pact did not just emerge in 1958. If viewed from a Cold War perspective, as it should be, the idea was aimed at consolidating the gains of the Western Allies generally in defence and strategy against the Soviet led Eastern bloc. It should not be surprising therefore that the Soviet Union was the first to criticise the idea on the floor of the United Nations when it was first signed with Ceylon in 1947.

Gupta and John Kent have argued that defence strategy had been part of British Cold War tactics since 1947.<sup>26</sup> As early as 1951, senior Colonial Office officials had identified two major roles for the colonies in defence matters. And as Trafford Smith noted, colonies played their part in defence in two ways:

(1) "By raising and maintaining forces from their local manpower. These forces have the primary role of safeguarding internal security in their territories,



thereby preserving the usefulness of the territories as bases and sources of manpower, raw materials, etc; and,

(2) By maintaining or increasing their contribution to the pool of economic resources available for the Commonwealth war effort".<sup>27</sup>

This view, thus, juxtapose my position that the thrust of Anglo-Nigerian defence pact was the need to sustain Britain's influence in Nigeria after independence.

As spelt out in the policy paper, "Defence Policy and Global Strategy" in March 1952, Britain's obligation was based on her role in Europe, NATO, the Commonwealth and the will to remain a leading power. Africa was not left out of the overall defence strategy. Lord Salisbury noted in July 1954 that, "Britain was to continue to play an eminent role in checking the spread of communism; she was to preserve security and develop stable government in colonial territories".<sup>28</sup>

Two short-term steps were taken towards realising this. First was the encouragement of defence co-operation conferences with other colonial powers, South Africa and the United States. Two conferences were held in Nairobi and Dakar in August 1951 and March 1954 respectively. Second, based upon the Ministry of Defence Official Committee's recommendation on August 15th 1955, the

Cabinet approved the appointment of a military adviser in East and West Africa, if administering officers and local politicians finally approved of it.<sup>29</sup>

As to long-term measures, Sir Harold Parker (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, 1948-1956) noted that:

We should hope that the West African territories on achieving independence would agree to undertake some external defence commitment, on the lines of the present commitment to provide a Brigade for use in a major war, as part of the obligations arising from Commonwealth membership.<sup>30</sup>

Officials in the colonies were directed to seek the views of local politicians as soon as the opportunity arose. In Nigeria, Britain used the opportunity of the constitutional conferences in late 1957 and 1958 to seek the views of politicians as to the desirability of a defence pact after independence.

Contrary to general opinion, Nigerians were not coerced into signing the Defence Pact with the United Kingdom in 1960.<sup>31</sup> First, the final decision about the pact rested upon Parliaments' approval and the signature of the Prime Minister after independence. This line was adopted after the USSR's criticism of a similar pact with Ceylon earlier in 1947.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, available evidence

suggests that Nigerian politicians viewed it as part of the good-will and cooperation between the two countries. In fact, Nigerian politicians believed that, it would ensure the territorial integrity of the nascent nation and help defend her from external aggression.<sup>33</sup>

Towards the end of 1958, the Prime Minister, Federal Ministers and the three Regional Premiers agreed to enter into a defence agreement with Britain after independence. Azikiwe had earlier taken the view that it would be in the interests of Nigeria and Great Britain to sign a defence agreement whereby the UK would have "full facilities to use Kano and Lagos airfields for the transport of troops and supplies in peace or war time; to use the harbours of Lagos and Port Harcourt and the communications thence with Kano".<sup>34</sup> Amongst the reasons for these was that any loss of airfield facilities at Kano would have a serious effect on Britain's ability to safeguard her interests in the Indian Ocean in the post-independence period.<sup>35</sup> In addition Nigeria could not at the time afford the huge cost of training her military personnel and the buying of military equipment.

The United Kingdom's Defence Pact with Nigeria, like those with Ceylon, Malaya and the Gold Coast, should be seen as part of a general desire to sustain anti-

communism and maintain Western interests in peace and war. It was, in part, a political move to prevent the subversive influence of the USSR. As the Foreign Office noted:

we have certain requirements in Africa which need to be examined... They partly derived from considerations of internal security and partly from considerations of global strategic policy.<sup>36</sup>

This involved the presence in Kenya of element of Britain's strategic reserves; aircraft staging rights in Nigeria, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Kenya; and rights to overfly territories between the staging points. In return for the use of Nigerian airfields, harbours and ports, Britain agreed to train Nigerian army and naval personnel in the United Kingdom.<sup>37</sup> While a significant proportion of the cost was to be paid by Nigeria, Her Majesty's Government nonetheless assisted in defraying part of it. The Nigerian Parliament passed the bill by a vote of 149 to 39 on November 19th 1960.<sup>38</sup> Official signing of the treaty between the two governments did not take place until January 5th 1961.

Nigerian youth were, however, not happy with the defence pact. It presented Marxists with an opportunity to revive their idea that the whole process of decolonization and the transfer of power was aimed at

creating a neo-colonial dependency. As Claude Phillips noted: "From the beginning of independence, Nigeria has faced a bewildering array of internal pressures attempting to establish, alter, or repudiate the foreign policy of the country". He concluded that: "the articulate challenges against the government were by no means limited to parliament". According to him, "Non-governmental groups such as political parties, labor unions, university student unions, youth groups, newspapers, and others joined the radical politicians in condemning Government actions and policies".<sup>39</sup>

Under the leadership of a Soviet trained pharmacist, Otegbeye, the Nigerian Youth Congress, the Zikist National Vanguard and the National University Students' Union staged several protests in Lagos and other parts of the country.<sup>40</sup> They identified five obnoxious aspects of the pact. These were:

(1) "If a British soldier kills a Nigerian he cannot be tried in the courts of Nigeria, but can be acquitted on the strength of a mere exonerating statement by a British superior;

(2) The British soldiers have an unlimited right to carry guns wherever they go in Nigeria. Yet no Nigerian can carry arms without permission from the Governor-General;

(3) Nigeria guarantees to the British soldiers full exemption from passport and visa formalities;

(4) The British soldiers are entitled to complete fiscal immunities, full exemption from exchange regulations, and

absolute freedom from customs duties and inspection at ports of entry; and,

(5) All vehicles of the British servicemen are exempted from all licensing and insurance regulations".<sup>41</sup>

Because of the many serious disturbances that followed, Balewa's government had no option other than to abrogate the defence pact in January 1962. We should note however that Nigerian military continued to receive training in the United Kingdom despite the abrogation.

(7.5) OTHER ISSUES :

There are other areas that should be considered as part of Britain's effort at sustaining anti-communism in Nigeria on the eve of independence. Linking the economy with the Sterling Area,<sup>42</sup> and Nigerian membership of the Commonwealth were significant. The colonial economy, unsurprisingly, was closely linked with Britain and the Sterling Area. It was principally based on the production and export of primary produce, the price of which depended on world trade. There was an increase in the volume of exports of primary produce from Nigeria to Western countries particularly Britain during the period. Whether or not this led to development or underdevelopment is another debate.<sup>43</sup> What is of interest here is that, the economy was linked with the Sterling Area as

part of the efforts towards cementing financial relationship between Britain and her colonies.<sup>44</sup>

In official circles, preference for the Sterling Area was linked with the future of the Commonwealth.<sup>45</sup> As early as 1953, Sir Norman Brook, Secretary to the Cabinet (1947-1962), wrote a memorandum, which later became a Cabinet paper: "The Future of Commonwealth Membership". Brook argued that, Britain should aim to keep the colonies in category [a] (particularly those which could expect independence in the next ten or twenty years) in the Commonwealth after independence. His argument was that through this Britain would maintain the political cohesion of the Sterling Area.<sup>46</sup> This idea was supported by senior Colonial Office officials such as Sir Hilton Poynton (Deputy Under-Secretary of State, 1948 - August 1959). In a minute, he stressed that Britain should strengthen moves towards the political cohesion of the Sterling Area and the Commonwealth.<sup>47</sup> He raised three questions and provided answers to them. These were:-

(1) "Will the territories in category [a] be willing to remain in the Sterling Area when independent?;

(2) Could their continued membership of the Sterling Area be made a condition of their membership of the Commonwealth?; and,

(3) Would their continued membership of the Sterling Area, whether within or without the Commonwealth, be a source of strength?".<sup>48</sup>

As to question one, Poynton noted that much depended upon the success of the Sterling Area in international trade. "Decisions", according to Poynton, "will be taken on their own judgment of self-interest, though one naturally hopes that judgment will lead them to remain within the Sterling Area".<sup>49</sup>

In his answer to the second question he argued that "we could not make continued membership of the Sterling Area a condition of full membership of the Commonwealth, partly because Canada is already outside the Sterling Area but inside the Commonwealth".<sup>50</sup> He concluded that, "the crucial point is really not membership of the Commonwealth but membership of the Sterling Area".<sup>51</sup>

This was, perhaps, why the Cabinet Africa Official Committee in its meeting in January 1959 concluded that:

The Sterling area would suffer a moderate loss of dollar exchange if Nigeria were to leave it; departure from the Commonwealth, without leaving the Sterling area, would have little or no effect on the latter.<sup>52</sup>

Officials were however confident that Nigeria would remain in the Commonwealth after independence. Their assurance was based on Nigerian politicians' preference for membership of the Commonwealth which they believed



would strengthen their relationship with the United Kingdom.<sup>53</sup> Much, however, depended upon whether or not ex-masters and ex-servants remained "always as friends".

I should add that a key factor in the future relationship between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, was the extent of the latter's economic aid for development after independence.<sup>54</sup> In 1959 for instance, the Foreign Office stated that Russia's tactics in Africa had changed considerably. There was now more Soviet economic aid to newly independent African states such as Guinea, Ghana and Egypt. As the FO memorandum stated, "their technique is at present to represent themselves as an alternative source of economic and technical help".<sup>55</sup>

The Cabinet Africa (Official) Committee deliberated upon the FO's memorandum on January 21st 1959. As it relates to Nigeria, members concluded that:

It would be of the highest value if, in agreement with Nigerian leaders, arrangements could be made before independence for the introduction at that time of a technical co-operation scheme similar in form, but larger in size, than that which had been introduced for Ghana.<sup>56</sup>

The Committee suggested that the CO should circulate a memorandum discussing the means of encouraging economic development in Nigeria, with a view to the possible

formulation of a technical co-operation scheme.<sup>57</sup>

The Cabinet Africa (Official) Committee met on February 20th 1959 to discuss the CO memorandum on technical co-operation scheme for Nigeria. At the meeting, C.G. Eastwood (Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1955 - 1965) presented the CO memorandum which set out the possible lines on which a scheme of technical co-operation with Nigeria after independence might be developed.<sup>58</sup> The memorandum proposed a bilateral scheme (which was heavily weighted towards UK assistance at the outset) rather than an international or Commonwealth multilateral plan.<sup>59</sup>

The Colonial Office was of the view that "the scheme would need to be on a generous scale so that our effort compared reasonably favourably with those of other countries..."<sup>60</sup> The Cabinet Committee concluded that the United Kingdom was bound to make a contribution to Nigerian development, and that, the need for a technical assistance scheme should be acceptable in principle.<sup>61</sup> The Treasury was, however, asked to determine how much could be used in this way.<sup>62</sup> Like the Defence Agreement, Nigerian leaders accepted the offer of a Technical Co-operation Scheme after independence. This was the genesis of Nigeria/UK bilateral co-operation in education,

agriculture, science and technology after independence.

(7.6) CONCLUSION:

By late 1959 one can arguably say that Britain, with the assistance of leading politicians, had shaped the world outlook of most Nigerians towards the West. No doubt the ideological orientation of the Nigerian ruling elite was pro-Western: the principle of "free enterprise" and "open door" loomed-large in Nigerian economic and developmental programmes. A "nurtured-capitalism" had been established. What remained was its consolidation after independence.<sup>63</sup> Upon successful completion of the general elections of December 1959, the Secretary of State for the Colonies introduced the Nigerian Independence Bill to the House of Commons which was unanimously passed. At this point in late 1959 and early 1960, the British could not afford to risk what they had striven hard to build - the confidence and respect of Nigerian politicians - by refusing or delaying independence. On October 1st 1960, power was eventually transferred to Nigerian politicians with the hope that Britain and Nigeria would remain as allies.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN:

1. CAB134/1355: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: NATO Report on Communist Penetration in Africa - Note by the Foreign Office, May 27th 1959; pp.2; CAB134/1355: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Soviet Bloc Economic Offensive in Africa -Note by the Foreign Office, October 26th 1959, PRO, London.

2. FO371/137972: Foreign Office Memorandum - Africa: The Next Ten Years, November 23rd 1959. See Morgan, D.J. The Official History of Colonial Development, Volume Three... op.cit; pp.211-266.

3. For a background discussion of the period, see, Morgan, D.J. The Official History... Volume Three... op.cit; pp.84-91.

4. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Future Constitutional Development in the Colonies - East and West Africa: Notes by the Secretaries, January 6th 1959; pp.3.

5. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Prospects for the African Territories for which the

Colonial Office is Responsible - Memorandum by the Colonial Office, January 1959; paragraph 24.

6. Ibid. paragraph 25-27.

7. Ibid. Also, Ojedokun, O. "The Anglo-Nigerian Entente and its demise, 1960-1962", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, vol.ix, no.3, November 1971, pp.210-233.

8. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Prospects for the African Territories...op.cit; paragraph 27.

9. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Minutes of Meeting - The Next Ten Years in Africa - West Africa, January 21st 1959; pp.5.

10. Their reservation might have being informed by Azikiwe's support of a "neutralist" foreign policy in 1959. See Daily Times, August 22nd 1959; For details about foreign policy and the 1959 election campaign, see, Phillips, C.S. The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy (Evanston, 1964); pp.14-24; Post, K.W.J. The Nigeria Federal Election of 1959 ... op.cit; pp.311f.

11. CAB134/1355: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee:  
NATO Report ... op.cit; pp.2.

12. Ibid. pp.2.

13. Quoted from CAB134/1354: The Political Scene in  
Tropical Africa, November 1958.

14. Aluko, O. Ghana and Nigeria 1957 - 1970: A Study in  
Inter-African Discord (London, 1976).

15. CAB134/1354: The Political Scene in Tropical Africa,  
op.cit; pp.4.

16. Ibid. pp.2.

17. FO371/146827: Problems Involved in Establishing and  
Maintaining Diplomatic Relations With Soviet Union,  
January 12th 1960.

18. Ibid.

19. FO371/146832: Meeting of the Prime Minister of  
Nigeria with the Secretary of State for Foreign and  
Commonwealth Affairs and the Colonial Secretary at the  
Foreign Office, November 29th 1960.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Robertson, J. Transition in Africa: From Direct Rule To Independence - A Memoir (London, 1974).

23. Sir James Robertson, "Sovereign Nigeria", African Affairs, vol.59, no.239, April 1961; pp.145-154. Also, his Transition in Africa: From Direct Rule To Independence. A Memoir (London, 1974).

24. McKay, V. Africa in World Politics (2nd Edition, Westport, 1974); pp.399-400. Kirk-Greene identified three people who later occupied eminent positions in the Ministry of External and Commonwealth Affairs after independence. Isa Wali, G.H. Dove-Edwin and E.O. Sanu. See his "Diplomacy and Diplomats: The Formation of Foreign Service Cadres in Black Africa", in Ingham, K. (ed) Foreign Relations of African States ... op.cit; pp.298.

25. FO371/146831: Sir Robert Scott to Foreign Office, July 4th 1960.

26. Gupta, P.S. Imperialism and the British Labour

Movement, 1914-1964 (London, 1975), pp.286-290; Kent, J. British Imperial Strategy and the Origin of the Cold War, 1944 - 1949 (London, 1993).

27. DEFE7/415: Memorandum by Trafford Smith, October 24th 1951.

28. CAB129/69: Cabinet Memorandum by Lord Salisbury, July 24th 1954.

29. See Goldsworthy, D. (ed) The Conservative Government...Part I, op.cit; pp.200-201.

30. CAB130/111: Note by Sir H. Parker, August 15th 1955.

31. DEFE7/1484: Nigeria Defence Agreement, 1960-1961. During the riots Awolowo was reported to have said that he along with Azikiwe, Balewa and Bello were forced to initiate the agreement in 1958. Evidence now points to the contrary. See Senate Debates (Nigeria), March - May 1960 session, pp.238; Daily Times (Nigeria) May 11th 1960; Nigerian Tribune, May 4th 1960; House of Representatives Debates (Nigeria), November 1960, pp.61; Gambari, I.A. Party Politics and Foreign Policy: Nigeria Under the First Republic (Zaria, 1980), pp.33-53.



32. After 1947 Britain took a serious view of the implications of signing defence agreements with colonies before independence. This was a result of the USSR's criticism in the United Nations of the Anglo-Ceylon Defence Agreement signed before Ceylon's independence. The idea of defence pacts was thereafter postponed until after independence as in the case of Nigeria. Margaret Vogt wrongly asserts that the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact was signed in 1958. There was only a mutual consent on the part of the parties during the resumed Constitutional Conference in 1958. See Vogt, M. "Nigeria's Defence Policy: An Overview", Ekoko, A.E. and Vogt, M. (eds) Nigeria Defence Policy: Issues and Problems (Lagos, 1990), pp.95. Ekoko also missed the date when he stated that the pact was signed on the eve of independence. See Ekoko, A.E. "The Principles and Practices of Alliance Formation and Nigeria's Defence", in Ekoko and Vogt (eds) op.cit; In another study with Ajayi however, they both concluded that the pact was initialled in July 1960 and formerly signed on January 5th 1961. See Ajayi, J.F.A. and Ekoko, A.E. "Transfer of Power in Nigeria: Its Origins and Consequences", Gifford, P. and Louis, W.R. (eds) Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfers of Power in Africa, 1960 - 1980 (New Haven, 1988), pp.263.

33. The British also viewed it in the same light. An official minuted that: "The greater our concern for the future security of Nigeria, the stronger is the reason for this predominantly pro-Western and friendly Government to give us what we are asking for under the Defence and stations of forces Agreement". See PREM11/3047: Nigeria - Defence Agreement Part 1, January 1960. It was reported that Awolowo even promised land in the Western Region to be used as the British base. See DEFE7/1484: Nigeria Defence Agreement ... op.cit; Moreover, the first Nigerian Minister of Defence, Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu viewed it as a "reaffirmation of the friendly and cordial ties which already exist and are known to exist between Nigeria and the United Kingdom". See House of Representatives Debates (Nigeria) November 1959, pp.56.

34. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Prospects for the African Territories... Memorandum by the Colonial Office..., op.cit; also see Draft Defence Agreement between the Government of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federation of Nigeria, Sessional Paper no.4 1960.

35. CAB134/1353 op.cit; paragraph 24; Also CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Office) Committee: Future

Constitutional Development in Colonies ... op.cit; pp.5.

36. FO371/137972: Africa ... op.cit; pp.5 and 20.

37. Draft Defence Agreement... Article II, no.2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 op.cit;

38. DEFE 7/1484: Nigeria Defence Agreement 1960 - 1961. Also, Idang, G. "The Politics of Nigerian Foreign Policy: The Ratification and Renunciation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Agreement", African Studies Review, vol.xiii, no.2, September 1970, pp.230.

39. Phillips, C.S. The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy ... op.cit; pp.86.

40. See Phillips, C.S. The Development of ... op.cit; pp.72-77; Idang, G.J. Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy... op.cit; pp.82-84.

41. West African Pilot, December 3rd 1960; Babatope, E. Student Power in Nigeria, 1960 - 1970 : A Documentary Sourcebook of Student Militancy in Nigeria, Volume 1 (Yaba, 1974); pp.13; Nassal, R. "Die Anfänge der Kommunistischen Partei in Nigeria", Internationales Afrika Forum, 1, 4, April 1965; pp.25-29, is a detailed account

of the Nigerian communists' role during the anti Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact crisis after independence. I want to thank Monsieur Rufus Folaranmi, a teacher, translator and interpreter, of Strasbourg, France, for reading the article to me in the English language.

42. This is well analyzed by Hinds, A.E. "Sterling and imperial Policy, 1945-1951", JICH, vol.xv, no.2, January 1987; pp.148-169; "Imperial Policy and Colonial Sterling Balances, 1943-56", JICH, vol.xix, no.1, January 1991; pp.24-44; As it relates to Europe is analyzed by Newton, S. "Britain, the Sterling Area and European Integration, 1945-1950", JICH, vol.xiii, no.3, May 1985; pp.163-182.

43. Falola, T. (ed) Britain and Nigeria: Development or Under-Development? ... op.cit; Williams, G. "Nigeria: A Political Economy", Williams, G. (ed) Nigeria: Economy and Society (London, 1976), pp.1-54; and, Lawal, A.O. "British Commercial Interests and the Decolonization process in Nigeria, 1950 - 1960", African Economic History, 22, 1994, pp.93 - 110.

44. Morgan, D.J. The Official History... Volume Three.. op.cit; pp.157-182.

45. Ibid.

46. CO967/203: Imperial Preference and the Sterling Area: Minutes by Sir H. Poynton, November 26th 1953.

47. Ibid. Colonial policies and the future of the Commonwealth is detailed in chapter three in this study.

48. Goldsworthy, D. (ed) The Conservative Government ... Part III, op.cit; pp.68.

49. CO967/203: ... Minutes by Sir H. Poynton, op.cit; Also, Goldsworthy, D. The Conservative Government ... op.cit; pp.68-69.

50. Ibid. I refer to both sources in note 49 above.

51. Ibid.

52. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Future Constitutional Development... op.cit; paragraph 28, pp.6.

53. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Prospects for the African Territories ... Memorandum by the CO...op.cit; paragraph 31.

54. Morgan, D.J. The Official History... Volume Three...

op.cit; pp.211-232.

55. FO371/137972: Africa: The Next Ten Years ..., op.cit; p.20; See, Morgan, D.J. The Official History... Volume Three... op.cit; pp.236-266.

56. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Minutes of Meeting -The Next Ten Years in Africa: West Africa, January 21st 1959; pp.5.

57. Ibid. pp.6.

58. CAB134/1353: Cabinet - Africa (Official) Committee: Technical Co-operation Scheme for Nigeria, February 20th 1959; pp.1.

59. Ibid. pp.1.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid. pp.2.

62. Ibid.

63. Schatz, S.P. Nigerian Capitalism (Berkeley/London, 1977); Kirby, P. Industrialization in an Open Economy:

Nigeria 1945-1966 (Cambridge, 1969); O'Connell, J. "The Political Class and Economic Growth", Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, vol.8, March 1966.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF ANTI-  
COMMUNISM

(8.1) INTRODUCTION:

We are frequently warned about the danger and horrors of communism, of which we are fully aware and against which we are armed.

(Sir Ahmadu Bello, 1962; p.236).

Theoretically, a Nigerian Communist Party may have the right to exist and disseminate its beliefs; but practically, it is a problem which needs a political solution: whether a party which believes in the use of violence and bloodshed to attain and maintain power should be allowed to exercise and enjoy such a fundamental human right in a democratic society.

(Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, 1979, p.56).

We are opposing Communism not because of any gain but because we are convinced that Communism is not in the good interest of societies.

(H.P. Adebola, 1954).

The quotations above highlights the level of seriousness with which leading nationalists were prepared



to ensure the success of anti-communism in Nigeria. Having imbibed ideas of western capitalism they pursued, in collaboration with British officials, policies aimed at purging the colonial state of communist elements, as well as curtailing the spread of communist literature. This chapter concludes the study by highlighting reasons for the success of British anti-communism in Nigeria during the terminal colonial era.

(8.2) PLAUSIBLE REASONS:

While I have highlighted at different points in this study the attractiveness and unattractiveness of Communism as an ideology, this section focus upon identifiable local reasons for the success of British anti-communism in Nigeria. Unlike Malaya, where Britain engaged in military action to suppress communism<sup>1</sup>, efforts in Nigeria were geared towards administrative reforms, improved security and intelligence, constitutional change, summer school training, counter-propaganda and collaboration.<sup>2</sup>

But first a summary of the CPGB fact-finding missions to Nigeria in 1950s would be a good explanation of the failure of Communism in Nigeria during the period. For instance, Idise Dafe's (formerly of Eze's Labour

Champion) "Report on visit to Nigeria" is an acceptance of the failure of the Marxists in Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> As part of an effort to see whether Communism has gained some ground in Nigeria, Idise Dafe was sent in 1951 to tour the country and assess efforts being made by CPGB members that had returned to Nigeria since the late 1940s and the early 1950s. Dafe, it should be noted was a recipient of Eze's Labour Champion and the Daily Worker (London) training arrangement, who joined the CPGB upon arrival in England early in 1950.

Dafe's "Report" was not only pessimistic but a true reflection of the ineffectiveness and episodic nature of the several Marxist organisations in Nigeria during the period. He identified among others, a leadership crisis, incoherence and stiff government measures, as reasons for the failure of Communism in Nigeria.<sup>4</sup> He lamented that: "Our Nigerian comrades do return to our fatherland and that is all we hear of them".<sup>5</sup>

In 1956 Palme Dutt also admitted the failure of communism in Nigeria despite various attempts since the late 1940s to form a united communist front. He added as a factor for its failure the fact that "there was considerable disagreement in estimating the political forces... and any differences of estimation in our press

and other organs of the international Communist movement are quickly taken advantage of by the enemies of Communism in Nigeria".<sup>6</sup>

Another plausible explanation for the success of anti-communism lies in the religious beliefs of the people. By late 1930s, the dominant religions in Nigeria were Christianity, Islam and traditional religions. While Islam permeated lives in the Northern Region, large numbers of Muslims could be found in the south, particularly in the Western Region during the same period. Christianity was also important in the south. One remarkable aspect of both religions is that, they are both foreign (non-indigenous) to the peoples of present day Nigeria. And within a single family, even in the North, one could find a Muslim, Christian and practitioners of traditional religion. The three religions however belief in the existence of God.<sup>7</sup>

The Marxian idea that religion is the opiate of the masses had a strong hold on many communists. This is partly why communism was viewed by most nationalists, particularly the northern leaders, as being against their beliefs and aspirations. As a US official noted in February, 1953, 'Northern political leaders are in

complete opposition to the anti-government activities or communism taking place in the south of Nigeria'.<sup>8</sup>

In fact Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sark of Sokoto, and the first premier of Northern Region, saw himself not only as a political leader but also as the spiritual leader of the North, whose duty it was to spread Islam to all parts of the country.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Michael Okpara, the Eastern Region leaders, Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Akintola, the Western Region Leaders, did not hide their hatred of communism.<sup>10</sup>

Since communism was opposed to religion, it was bound to fail in Nigeria, either during the colonial or the post-colonial era, as many people were religious. Melady is therefore right to have concluded that "the Nigerian people, firm in religious traditions, whether muslim or christian, do not offer a fertile market for the communists".<sup>11</sup>

Earlier evidence of antagonism towards communism in Nigeria is to be found in Reverend Father A. Foley's lecture titled, "Catholic and Communism" published in the Daily Comet of October 30th, 1948. While noting the importance of press freedom and the influx of communist literature into Nigeria during the late 1940s, he went on

to highlight the role of the press in Russia to his readers.<sup>12</sup> He noted that, freedom of speech and the press were a sham in Russia, where 'one is not free to select a job for himself or establish a profitable business'.<sup>13</sup> This view is supported by a nationalist, labour and Muslim leader, H.P. Adebola, when he stated that: "I, personally, as a Muslim detest what Communist Russia has been doing to the Muslims in Asia".<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore Foley told his readers that communism had no room for religion and morality. He advised all Catholics, and Christians generally, to dread it. He admonished his readers to:

... insure that the helping hand so  
 warmly stretched forth does not slip  
 unnoticed to their throats and stifle in their  
 infancy hard won freedoms of democracy or perhaps  
 extinguish for generations legitimate  
 aspirations for independence,  
 nationalism and  
 self-determination.<sup>15</sup>

To Reverend Foley and his peers, independence became legitimate, only if nationalists and labour unionists were prepared to do away with communism. The Nigerian Catholic Herald, a weekly publication of the St. Paul Catholic Press of Ebute Metta, Lagos, and an organ of Nigeria's National Catholic Church, also contained in its issue of October 29th 1948, an editorial, which concluded

that, 'communism thrives when and where the social order is disrupted'.<sup>16</sup>

Another explanation for the success of anti-communism was the role of the newspapers and their editorial comments. Despite various press reports of Cominform interest in Nigeria, which were often reprinted by Eze's Labour Champion (established in February 1950) and Ikoku's Nigerian Socialist Review (established in 1952), the press generally was not in favour of communism as an alternative to British colonialism. Moreover both the Labour Champion and the Nigerian Socialist Review, enjoyed a few readers limited to Marxists in the south.

Most leading and highly circulated newspapers were pro-government and anti-communist in their editorials. In fact the Zikist Movement leadership was shocked to the core when the West African Pilot, hitherto known for its anti-British sentiments, began to attack communist elements in an editorial which rapped that "no greater treachery can be inflicted by anybody upon the cause of Nigerian freedom than to import communism into this country".<sup>17</sup> The editorial further described the communists as "a clique of muddled brained individuals who talk glibly on the principal ideology of which they have not even the foggiest idea".<sup>18</sup>

Some of the newspapers also published negative reports about communist states in Europe in order to dissuade Nigerians from imbibing communist ideas. An example was an editorial published by J. V. Clinton in the Nigerian Eastern Mail. Willard Quincy Stanton, the United States Consul General in Lagos reported that the 'paper has a circulation of about 2,500 and is frequently moderate in tone as well as friendly to American interests'.<sup>19</sup> Clinton was not however, totally in support of the West. Writing in an editorial of November 25th, 1950, he told his readers not to be partisan in the Cold War between the Eastern and Western blocs.<sup>20</sup>

As he noted, "as a West African nationalist, and even one who dislikes communism, we cannot be wholehearted partisan in the quarrel between the Communist World and the Western capitalist World".<sup>21</sup> This, to him, was the only righteous path to self-government and independence in Nigeria, and indeed, other parts of British West Africa. It seems to me that followers of this idea were limited to the so called 2,500 readers if we assume that they all support the editorial.

In fact CPGB research about main newspapers and their political/ideological interests in Nigeria during

the period show that there were more newspapers in support of government than the Marxists. As at May 1952, thirteen of these were identified. These were:

(1) "West African Pilot - Reformist and bourgeois nationalism, owned by Zik".

(2) "Nigerian Tribune - Conservative bourgeois intellectualism".

(3) "The People - Conservative bourgeois businessmen".

(4) "Daily Service - Conservative bourgeois intellectualism".

(5) "Eastern States Express - Conservative bourgeois intellectualism".

(6) "Eastern Guardian, Southern Defender and Nigerian Spokesman - controlled by West African Pilot".

(7) "Peoples Voice - Bourgeois reformism".

(8) "Daily Success - bourgeois nationalism. Owned by a limited liability trading company".

(9) "The Citizen and 22 weeklies and periodicals - imperialist and owned by the Gaskiya Corporation (a newspaper corporation maintained by funds supplied by the Nigerian Government and the Colonial Development Fund).

(10) "Daily Times - imperialist and owned by the London Daily Mirror."

(11) "Nigerian Review - imperialist and owned by the Public Relations Department of the Nigerian Government".<sup>22</sup>



The choice of a post-colonial leader for Nigeria was also instrumental in the success of anti-communism. After the December 1959 elections, and the success of NPC/NCNC coalition this was not difficult.<sup>23</sup> Sir James Robertson, the Governor-General on the eve of the transfer of power came straight to the point when he wrote that, "when a Prime Minister had to be appointed in 1959, the choice was not difficult. Balewa was the choice".<sup>24</sup>

Lawal has identified three factors which explain this. Firstly, Balewa was pro-British to the core; secondly, he was more accommodating than Ahmadu Bello; and thirdly he believed in the north first, then Nigeria.<sup>25</sup> While I agree on the first two points, available evidence seems to disprove the third point. As Clark's biography of Tafawa Balewa has shown, he was interested above all in the unity of Nigeria.<sup>26</sup> Unlike Ahmadu Bello he was prepared to come to the Central Legislature in Lagos to take part in the decolonization process and indeed in combating communism, real or unreal.

The success of anti-communism in Nigeria was also due to the Marxists' inability to actualise their goal of revolutionary take-over since 1948. They were also unable to penetrate the minds of a greater number of the people.

Their organisation could not match the rapidity with which the colonial administration responded to a "Call for Revolution". They noted in their memoirs that they lacked the mass support to actualise their dream - revolution.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, former members of the CPGB upon returning to Nigeria had to abandon the "revolution" as well. This, perhaps, might have been influenced by Government's desire to deal with known communists or their sympathizers. These groups might have realised that colonial administration had succeeded in its various anti-communist measures prior to their arrival. For instance, Akpata warned 'fellow travellers', who had returned to West Africa before him, not to engage in "a romantic revolution". Marika Sherwood notes that in one of his letters to Nkrumah in 1948 Akpata warned that "... mass enthusiasm can never be a substitute for a strong and disciplined mass organization".<sup>28</sup> Nwabufo Uweicha, another former CPGB member, noted that the revolution had to be postponed till after independence because, to engage in a revolution would prolong independence in the colonies.<sup>29</sup>

Lastly, Britain enjoyed the support of Bello, Balewa, Azikiwe and Awolowo, undoubtedly the

personalities around whom devolution revolved during the period. Leading labour leaders such as Adio-Moses, Esua, Porbeni, Egwuwonike, Adebola, Borha, Cole etc, also contributed to the success of anti-communism in Nigeria. Also organisations such as the British TUC, ICFTU, MRM, the British Council etc played important roles in the process. It was with the support of these men and organisations that the Colonial State was able to effectively combat communist penetration into Nigeria. The colonial state thus instituted a system that prevented any communist from partaking in the governance of Nigeria in a post-independence period.<sup>30</sup>

### (8.3) CONCLUSION:

In the final analysis, British anti-communism in Nigeria not only kept pace with the decolonisation process, it partly created a class of political leaders who, at independence, were unwilling to embark on any radical programme. Anti-communism as a theme in Britain's transfer of power in Nigeria should be seen as a way of drawing more collaborators within her fold. The idea was to isolate the extremists and help consolidate the position of the moderate Nigerian politicians.

This implied, in official circles, the simultaneous

cultivation of individual liberal nationalist leaders and the repression of the marxists. These was followed by constitutional reforms, development planning and anti-communist measures. Once this was successful, Britain willingly transferred power in Nigeria.

This study analyses British policies against communists and her efforts to ensure sustainable anti-communism in late colonial and post-independence Nigeria. It established that there was evidence of subversive activities by the Communist International/Cominform and its satellites in Africa, Asia and Europe. In West Africa there was the presence of communist literature and notable Marxists in labour and nationalist movements. There is evidence of the Soviet Union's interests in Nigeria, as well as financial support from communist satellites in Eastern Europe to labour unions in Nigeria. The communists also sponsored Nigerians to study in various degree courses in the Eastern bloc. These were used to justify anti-communist policies during the period under review.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT:

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2. See chapters three and six in this study for details.

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4. Ibid.

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11. Melady, T.P. Profiles of African Leaders (New York, 1961); pp.157.

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20. Ibid. Also, Nigerian Eastern Mail, November 25th 1950.

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26. Clark, T. A Right Honourable Gentleman ... op.cit;

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28. Sherwood, M. Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad ... op.cit; pp.151-153.

29. Ibid. pp.130, footnote 19.

30. Osoba, O.S. "Ideological Trends in the National Liberation ..." op.cit;

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